

Language diversity and neighborhood characteristics in DC

Introduction

Washington DC, like many major cities, is highly diverse - in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status just to start. From affluent neighborhoods to more impoverished areas, inhabitants of the city can live in very different worlds.

One component of this diversity is linguistic: DC residents use many languages besides English, both at home and beyond.

This project addresses the following questions:

- How does language diversity differ in different parts of the city? Which areas are most and least diverse?
- Which languages (besides English) are most characteristic of different neighborhoods?
- How does the linguistic diversity of the city correlate with diversity of venues? Are there predictable types of venues that correlate with the linguistic characteristics of a neighborhood?

The answers to these questions can have multiple applications for individuals, businesses and for DC's city government. For example, are sufficient services available in more linguistically diverse neighborhoods? Do more diverse neighborhoods tend to support more diverse businesses? Where should someone look to move to if they are seeking a diverse neighborhood with access to particular types of venues?

For the purposes of this project, I will consider a specific business use case: for a new business seeking to establish itself in DC - a language school which specializes in teaching English to speakers of a variety of different languages - in what parts of the city might the business expect to do well? A neighborhood with high language diversity would be promising! However, other factors about the neighborhood will likely influence students' willingness to enroll in the school and the price they will be willing to pay, including the availability of nearby restaurants, coffee shops and other attractions. What would be the most promising location?