Heterogeneity of Socioeconomic Status on College Enrollment for English Language Learners

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**Introduction**

**Purpose**
This study explores postsecondary outcomes between English language learners (ELLs) and non-English language learners within the same socioeconomic status.

**Motivation**
- Academically qualified students face significant barriers to college (Bettinger, 2015; Kim, 2012)
- English language learners are the fastest growing population in U.S. public schools (Flores & Drake, 2014).
- English learners face additional challenges to postsecondary education
  - One in eight ELLs earn a bachelor’s degree
  - Early college planning stage is the most challenging for ELLs (Kanno & Cromley, 2013, 2015)
- High School socioeconomic status influences college enrollment (Engberg & Wolniak, 2014; Klugman & Lee, 2019)

**Research Question**
Does college enrollment differ between ELLs and non-ELLs within the same socioeconomic status?

**Methodology**

**Data:** Educational Longitudinal Survey of 2002

**Defining ELL (IV)**
- Home language not English
- Deficient in English language skills: speaking, listening, reading & writing
- Ever in ESL program

**Dependent Variable:** Ever attended Post Secondary institution

**Covariates:** Gender, race, math & English test scores, GPA (9th & 12th grades)

**Final dataset:** 8,652 students
- Non-ELL: 85.95%
- ELL: 14.05%

**Empirical Strategy**

**Matching:**
Step I: Estimate propensity score for each subgroup
Step II: Match one-to-one on estimated propensity scores and estimate ATT (Dehejia & Wahba, 1999).

**Preliminary Results**

**Matching - ATT Estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>High-SES</th>
<th>Low-SES</th>
<th>Mid-SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>0.054*</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.040)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Treated | 213 | 581 | 422 |
| Matched | 213 | 581 | 422 |
| Observations | 2321 | 2248 | 4083 |

Abadie-Imbens Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

**Results**

**Logistic Regression Estimates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Postsecondary Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-SES ELL</td>
<td>1.271*** (0.318)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-SES ELL</td>
<td>0.440*** (0.148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariates</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-4.585*** (0.180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>8652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>7739.781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

**Conclusion**

- Results of logistic regression provide evidence of low postsecondary attendance among low SES students compared to students in middle and high SES.
- When matched to non-ELLs within the same SES, average effect of ELL status on postsecondary enrollment is positive and significant among high SES students.