

THE LANGUAGES OF NEW YORK STATE:

A CUNY-NYSIEB GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



LUISANGELYN MOLINA, GRADE 9

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CUNY-NYS INITIATIVE ON
EMERGENT BILINGUALS

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About This Guide

This Guide to the Languages of New York State is designed as a resource for all education professionals, but with particular consideration to those who work with bilingual¹ students. Several ideas have underpinned its conception and execution:

- a) the languages other than English (LOTEs) spoken by bilingual students are neither obstacles nor excess baggage, but **resources of great value** to our community;
- b) the mission of supporting and encouraging students in home language development belongs to **all teachers**, not only those from similar linguistic backgrounds and/or certified in language education;
- c) **language and culture** are sufficiently intertwined as to make the understanding of one without the other a distinctively hollow experience;

and...

- d) the development of translingual and transcultural competence is not an on-off switch, but rather a **lifelong process** of engaging with different communities.

Educators constantly face the task of overcoming distances: between us and our students, between families and schools, between student performance and classroom objectives, and so on. In nearly all cases, these distances are best bridged when both sides extend toward each other, and it is no exception when it comes to language. The sense of linguistic distance between emergent bilinguals² and the English-speaking world can seem vast, and while great efforts should be and are made to help these students extend themselves toward ever-greater inclusion in the Anglosphere, one of the strongest positive messages we can send as educators is that we will work to **bridge linguistic distance** from our end, too. This Guide is a means to following through on that message.

¹ We use the word *bilingual* throughout to mean ‘speaking more than one language.’ *Multilingual* has certain advantages over this term, but the disadvantage of denoting ‘more than two languages.’ *Plurilingual* signifies exactly what we have in mind, but in our view hampers the reading experience by dint of its unfamiliarity.

² Consistent with the CUNY-NYSIEB vision, we use the term *emergent bilingual* to denote students traditionally referred to as *English Language Learners*. “[O]ur use of the term... conceptualizes these students as much more than learners of English only, since they are developing proficiency and literacy in academic English from the base of home language practices. Furthermore, the term *emergent bilinguals* acknowledges that the education of these students must go beyond simply English language learning, to include a challenging curriculum in the content areas that also meets their social and emotional needs.” For more: <http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/our-vision/>

Spanish

1. Spanish in Brief

Spanish for 'Spanish (language)':

español [es.pa.'nol]

Spanish word for 'English (language)':

inglés [inj.'gles]

Writing system(s):

Latin (alphabetic)

Official national language (*co-official) in:

Argentina

*Bolivia

Chile

Colombia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Dominican Republic

Ecuador

*Equatorial Guinea

El Salvador

Guatemala

Honduras

Mexico (de facto)

Nicaragua

Panama

*Paraguay

*Peru

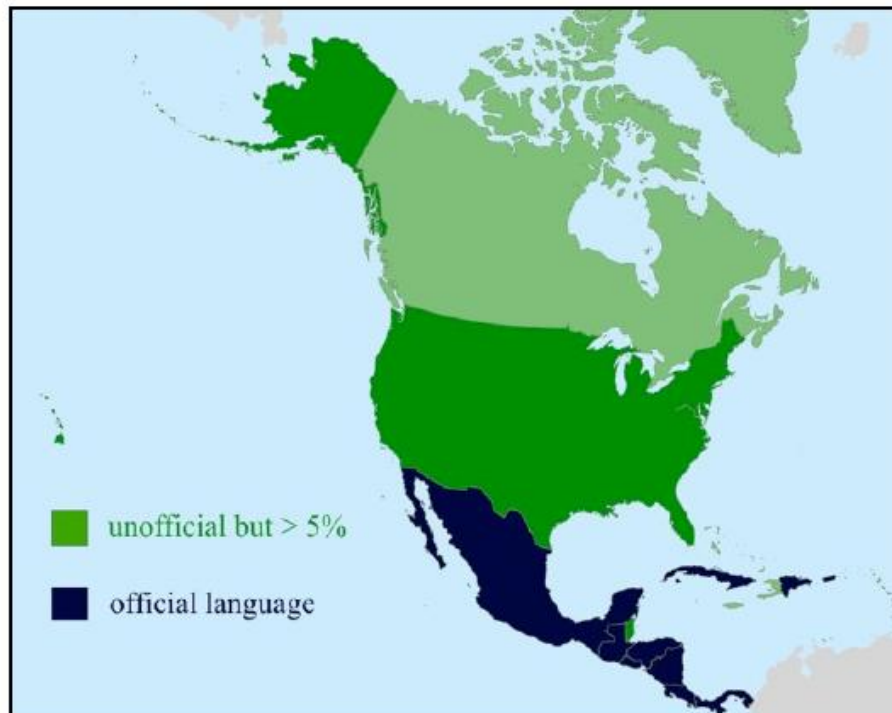
Puerto Rico (U.S. terr.)

Spain

Uruguay

Venezuela

(CIA, 2012)



Minority language (> 5% speakers):

Belize (46%)

United States (11%)

Language family (related languages):

Indo-European / Romance (Catalan, Portuguese)

US Speakers (2007 ACS):

34,547,077

Ethnic Hispanics/Latinos in US (2010 ACS):

50,477,594

Top 3 US Metro areas where Spanish is spoken (2007 ACS):

Los Angeles, New York, Miami

Did you know that...

... the USA's 34 million Spanish speakers make it the world's fifth-largest Hispanophone country, trailing only Mexico (115 mil.), Spain (47), Colombia (45), and Argentina (42)?
... if you include Puerto Rico's population and estimates of undocumented immigrants in the US mainland, the USA may be the world's second-largest Spanish speaking nation?
... the only Hispanophone nation in Africa--Equatorial Guinea--is also the second richest?
... the term *América Latina* 'Latin America' originally referred to all parts of the continent in which Romance languages were spoken, including Quebec and Louisiana?

2 Spanish in Global Context

With over 300 million home language speakers and official status on four continents, Spanish is one of the three most widely spoken languages in the world (Lewis, 2009). Like English, it is a **colonial language** whose expansion came through 16th century exploration and conquest: today, Spanish is the primary language of the western half of South America, nearly all of Central America, a majority of the population in the Caribbean, Mexico, and its European homeland Spain. Spanish is similar to Chinese in that it exerts a particularly dominant influence in one region: a traveller could traverse the entire Western Hemisphere from the Rio Grande south to Tierra del Fuego--'Latin America'--without once entering a non-Hispanophone nation. In doing so, however, that traveller would leave behind roughly **10% of the world's Spanish speakers**, as the USA boasts a larger Spanish-



speaking population than Chile, Cuba, Peru or Venezuela. Indeed, by many estimates, the USA is now the second largest Spanish speaking country in the world (Ruiz Mantilla, 2008).

2.1 History and Politics

Like fellow Romance languages French, Portuguese, and Italian, Spanish is a ‘genetic’ descendant of Latin, which is to say that there is “an unbroken chain of speakers, each learning his or her language from parents and contemporaries, stretching from the people of the Western Roman Empire two thousand years ago to the present population of the Spanish speaking world” (Penny, 2002). One could go as far as to say that Spanish is **Latin in modern form**, but this would blur the facts of its significant evolution over two millennia, as well as of the significant differences between Spanish and the other Romance tongues. The linguistic and cultural aspects that set Spanish apart stem primarily from its status in the Roman empire, its seven-century co-existence with Arabic, and its wide colonial diffusion in the Western Hemisphere.



Rome established forts and settlements on the Iberian peninsula earlier than in its other colonies, and the inland towns of ‘Hispania’ remained somewhat isolated from direct contact with Rome. These facts have led scholars to conclude that modern Spanish is based on an **antiquated and conservative variety of Latin**: quite a number of Spanish words like *queso* ‘cheese,’ *mesa* ‘table,’ and *hombro* ‘shoulder’ (as well as their

Portuguese equivalents) derive from Classical Latin terms, while the French, Italian, and Catalan words (e.g., French *fromage*, Italian *tavolo*, and Catalan *espatlla*) trace their etymologies back to later Latin words (Penny, 2002).

The Germanic-speaking Visigoths took control of Hispania in the 5th century A.D., but do not appear to have left much of a mark on the language, instead adapting the (Latin) language of their subjects quite quickly. The 8th century invasion of Arabs and Berbers from Africa was a different matter: the Islamic emirate and caliphate based in Cordoba used **Arabic as the prestige language** of law, literature, schooling, and religion, relegating Latin dialects to second-class, typically unwritten status for several centuries. By the time Isabella of Castile and Fernando of Aragon united to expel the *moros* ‘Moors’ from the peninsula in 1492, the Arabic language had left an indelible mark even on *castellano* ‘Castilian,’ a linguistic neighbor to the north that would become standard Spanish. Hundreds of modern Spanish words, from *alcalde* ‘mayor’ to *barrio* ‘neighborhood,’ from *arroz* ‘rice’ to *azúcar* ‘sugar,’ were **borrowed from Arabic** during this

period, as was the [x] sound written with the letter 'j,' as in *ojalá* [o.xa.'la] 'hopefully,' itself an Arabic borrowing.

The momentous year of 1492 also marked the dawn of Spain's empire in the Western Hemisphere, with **Colombus** landing in Hispaniola, site of the modern Dominican Republic. Though the newly unified Spanish state had precious little time to standardize its language before wholesale colonization, the New World viceroyalties of Peru, New Granada and New Spain exhibited--and continue to exhibit, in their modern incarnations--a relatively **narrow range of variation** (Green, 1987), closely centered around Spain's Andalusian dialect. This is likely a consequence of several 'bottleneck' aspects of Spain's colonization program: the colonists, some Andalusian, but many also from Galicia and the Basque country, gathered in the Andalusian city of Seville prior to departure, often for several weeks or months, where dialect levelling may have occurred; they were then channeled to the West Indies, typically San Juan or Havana, from which points they were dispersed in groups that did not necessarily correspond to speech communities, again encouraging linguistic coalescence rather than divergence. Finally, nearly all official trans-Atlantic communication passed directly between Seville and one of two cities (Mexico City or Lima, the two viceregal capitals), enabling a level of institutional standardization that would have been far more difficult spread among more locations (Penny, 2002).

At the height of its global empire, Spain held colonies in Africa, Asia, and throughout the Americas, from Tierra del Fuego nearly up to Alaska. Almost all of these territories won independence in the first third of the 19th century: *El Libertador* 'The Liberator' **Simon Bolivar** spearheaded the independence movements of several South American nations during this period. Post-colonial Latin America has struggled to escape the unwanted influence--direct and indirect--of international powers, most notably the USA, but also France (which briefly 're-colonized' Mexico in the 1860s), England, Spain and the USSR. Many of the 20th century dictators who inspired the denigration of Latin American governments as 'banana republics' were trained and/or supported by the USA's military and intelligence apparatus, most notably Batista in Cuba, Noriega in Panama, Pinochet in Chile, and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Though the Cold War climate that fostered the emergence of these despots has receded, Latin America continues to have an **ambivalent relationship with the English-speaking hegemon** to its north: most countries have strong connections to the USA through immigration and/or trade, but there is wide support for governments willing to stand up to the *yanquis*, increasingly through capitalist competition like the Mercosur common market, but also in non-capitalist forms like Hugo Chavez's socialist Venezuela, or the Castros' communist Cuba.

Fig. 1: Historical Timeline

pre 300 B.C.	Celtic and non-Indo-European languages predominate in Iberian peninsula
3rd c. B.C.	Romans land in Iberia (218), drive Carthaginians out at Battle of Ilipa (206)
415	Romanized Visigoths take power amidst chaos of disintegrating Roman empire
711-718	Arabic-, Berber-speaking Umayyad Muslims conquer most of Iberia
9th-14th c.	Non-Muslim <i>mozárabes</i> [mo.'sa.ra.βes] tolerated in Muslim 'Al-Andalus'; Caliphate of Córdoba: golden age of Moorish Spain (929-1009)
11-14th c.	Morocco-based dynasties control fractured and shrinking Al-Andalus
1492	Battle of Granada completes <i>Reconquista</i> ; Moors, Jews targeted by Inquisition; Columbus 'discovers' New World for <i>Reyes Católicos</i> 'Catholic Monarchs'
16th c.	Spanish develop colonies in viceroyalties Peru (Lima), New Spain (Mexico City)
1713	Foundation of the <i>Real Academia Española</i> 'Spanish Royal Academy' in Madrid
1717	Viceroyalty of <i>Nueva Granada</i> 'New Granada' established in NW South America
1810-1829	Wars of Independence : most of Spanish-speaking America breaks from Spain
1831	Simon Bolivar's <i>Gran Colombia</i> breaks up into Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela
1834	Federal Republic of Central America splits into Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
1898	Spain loses Cuba, Guam, Phillippines, Puerto Rico to USA in Span.-Am. War
1930s	FDR 'Good Neighbor Policy' ends covert US <i>Guerras Bananeras</i> 'Banana Wars'; Spanish civil war (1936-39) brings dictator Francisco Franco to power
1970s	Military dictatorship flourishes in Hispanophone America, dies out in Spain
2000s	'Pink tide' of leftist leaders elected in Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru

2.2 Culture and Lifestyle

The Spanish language is widely diffused but not far-flung or scattered: its concentration in a contiguous swath of the Western Hemisphere has fostered a shared sense of *hispanidad* 'Hispanic identity' that extends beyond language. Perhaps more coherent than *hispanidad*--and more germane to the present discussion--is the notion of '**Latin American culture**,' an overlapping concept that includes the African and Amerindian elements not part of *hispanidad* proper, as well as the influence of Brazil and other neighboring but non-Hispanosphere cultures. Given that the region contributes 99% of the USA's Spanish-speaking immigrants, this discussion will henceforth take Latin American culture as its focus.

Catholicism is perhaps the strongest non-linguistic inheritance common to Latin American people, as--unlike the mercantilism and religious tolerance that motivated the foundation of many English colonies--Catholic beliefs fueled Spain's *reconquista* and New World *conquista* 'conquest' alike. Latin America has seen recent growth in the number of people 'unaffiliated' with organized religion, as well of Protestants, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals, but nearly every country has a **Roman Catholic population well above 50%**, with Uruguay the lowest non-communist total at 47.1% (CIA, 2012). New World Catholicism has often taken on

decidedly local flavors in each local society with traditions, most notably Mexico's *Día de los Muertos* 'Day of the Dead.'

The economic variation among Spanish-speaking Latin American countries is also relatively small: none ranks in the top 40 nations by per capita GDP, and none in the bottom 40, with the gap between richest (Uruguay) and poorest (Nicaragua) significantly smaller in dollar values than that between the world's #1 and #2, Monaco and Liechtenstein. However, at the level of the individual citizen there is **great income inequality** in Spanish-speaking Latin America: only Venezuela and Uruguay rank below the USA in GINI scores (a standard measure of inequality), with all other countries in the top 41 (CIA, 2012; no data available for Cuba).

Racial and ethnic identity are a diverse and complex phenomenon. Colonial society typically distinguished between *peninsulares* ('Spanish-born,' also known derogatively as *godos* 'Goths') *criollos* ('Creoles,' whites born in the New World), *mestizos* (Euro-Indians), *mulatos* 'mulattoes,' *indios* ('Native Americans'), *zambos* 'Afro-Indians,' and *negros* 'blacks' in generally decreasing order of status. During the colonial era, both Native Americans and Africans were enslaved or otherwise bound into involuntary labor as part of the *encomienda* system, and--though today Central and South America are arguably the most **racially mixed** of the world's continents--tensions and issues related to this historic stratification linger.

Latin American food is popular the world over, from Peruvian *ceviche* 'marinated raw fish' to Salvadoran *pupusas* 'filled tortillas,' Argentine *chimichurri* 'parsley and garlic sauce,' and Cuban *ropa vieja* 'shredded flank, brisket or skirt steak' (literally, 'old clothing'). In 2010, UNESCO declared Mexican cuisine part of the 'intangible world heritage,' an honor granted to only one other cuisine, that of the Mediterranean. In literature, the **Latin American boom** of the 1960s brought writers like Borges, Marquez, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Carpentier and Rulfo to international acclaim, as well as the regional narrative genre of 'magic realism.' Some of the world's biggest pop music stars--Shakira and Daddy Yankee, among others--call Latin America home, as do a **huge number of musical genres**, including Andean, bachata, mariachi, merengue, reggaeton, salsa and tango, to name just a salient handful. No other part of the world is as passionate or united in its love of *fútbol* 'soccer,' but *béisbol* is a competitor in the Caribbean, a region that produces an enormous number of major league ballplayers.

2.3 Linguistic Variation and Contact

The primary split in Spanish varieties falls between Europe and the Americas. Iberian Spanish, often called *castellano*, and American Spanish have high mutual intelligibility, but differ in a number of key ways. Two of the most prominent are the 2nd person plural pronoun system and the pronunciation of letters 'z' and 'c':

	<u>Iberian</u>	<u>American</u>
2nd person plural pronoun	<i>vosotros</i> (inf.), <i>ustedes</i> (for.)	<i>ustedes</i> (informal and formal)
pronunciation of 'z,' 'ce,' 'ci'	[θ], [θe], [θi]	[s], [se], [si]

Both Iberian and American Spanish exhibit great internal variation. Within American Spanish, linguists generally agree on five to seven broad regional dialect groups. One key distinguishing trait is *voseo*, the use of the form *vos* ‘you’ for the 2nd person singular, as opposed to the Iberian and Mexican standard *tú*: this is most typical in River Plate Spanish (spoken in Argentina and Uruguay), but also occurs in many Central American varieties. Most of the other distinguishing features are phonological--such as [h] replacing [s] in some contexts, and different pronunciations of the sound spelled ‘ll’--or lexical, involving different terms for the same object or concept (e.g. *gafas*, *anteojos* or *lentes* for ‘glasses’; *coche*, *carro*, or *auto* for ‘car’).

Fig. 2: Some aspects of regional *dialectos* ‘dialects’ of American Spanish, illustrated

‘Who should <u>you</u> (sing. inf.) call?’		
Mexican	¿Quién debes llamar tú?	[kjen 'ðe.βes ja. 'mar tu]
Central American	¿Quién debés llamar vos?	[kjen ðe. 'βes ja. 'mar βos]
Caribbean	¿Quién tú debes llamar?	[kjen tu 'ðe.βeh ja. 'ma]
Andean	¿Quién debes llamar tú?	[kjen 'ðe.βes λa. 'mar tu]
Chilean	¿Quién debís llamar tú?	[kjen ðe. 'βis ja. 'mar tu]
River Plate	¿Quién debés llamar vos?	[kjen ðe. 'βes ja. 'mar βos]

These are only the roughest sketches of what are in any case dialect groups: Caribbean Spanish is far from a unified entity, but itself consists of varieties such as Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban Spanish. Furthermore, several of the variables illustrated in boldface above are marked as informal; in writing or formal/polite speech, speakers tend to use them less, gravitating instead toward a normative ‘Neutral Spanish.’ Foreign films are typically dubbed into two, three or four varieties, with Iberian and American the two basic alternatives, and Mexican and River Plate versions occasionally appearing as well. The ‘neutral’ American Spanish is often performed by Mexican or Puerto Rican speakers, but de-emphasizing regional traits (source TBD).

Many differences in vocabulary between these dialect groups stem from their **contact with different indigenous languages**. Mexican Spanish’s *huarache* ‘leather sandal’ comes from P’urhépecha; River Plate’s *pororó* ‘popcorn’ from Guaraní; Caribbean’s *conuco* ‘farm/field’ from Taíno. The relationship between Spanish and local indigenous tongues is discussed further in 2.4 below.

Given the enormous and growing number of Spanish speakers in the USA and their constant contact with English, we might reasonably expect a **US Spanish dialect** to emerge, and there is evidence that a certain amount of dialect leveling is occurring. It appears that US Spanish speakers a) tend to minimize formality distinctions in pronouns; b) may use subject pronouns in contexts that would be redundant in other varieties; and c) employ many ‘anglicisms’ like *lonchear* ‘to eat lunch,’ as well as longer word- and phrase-calques such as *librería* ‘library’ and *perder peso* ‘lose weight,’ which show the clear influence of English when compared to the standard Spanish words *biblioteca* and *rebajar* (Zentella, 1997). Any US Spanish remains

emergent, however; regulatory institutions such as the *Real Academia* have yet to treat it as a coherent dialect, and *lonchea* remains absent from the Academy's dictionary.

2.4 Language and Education

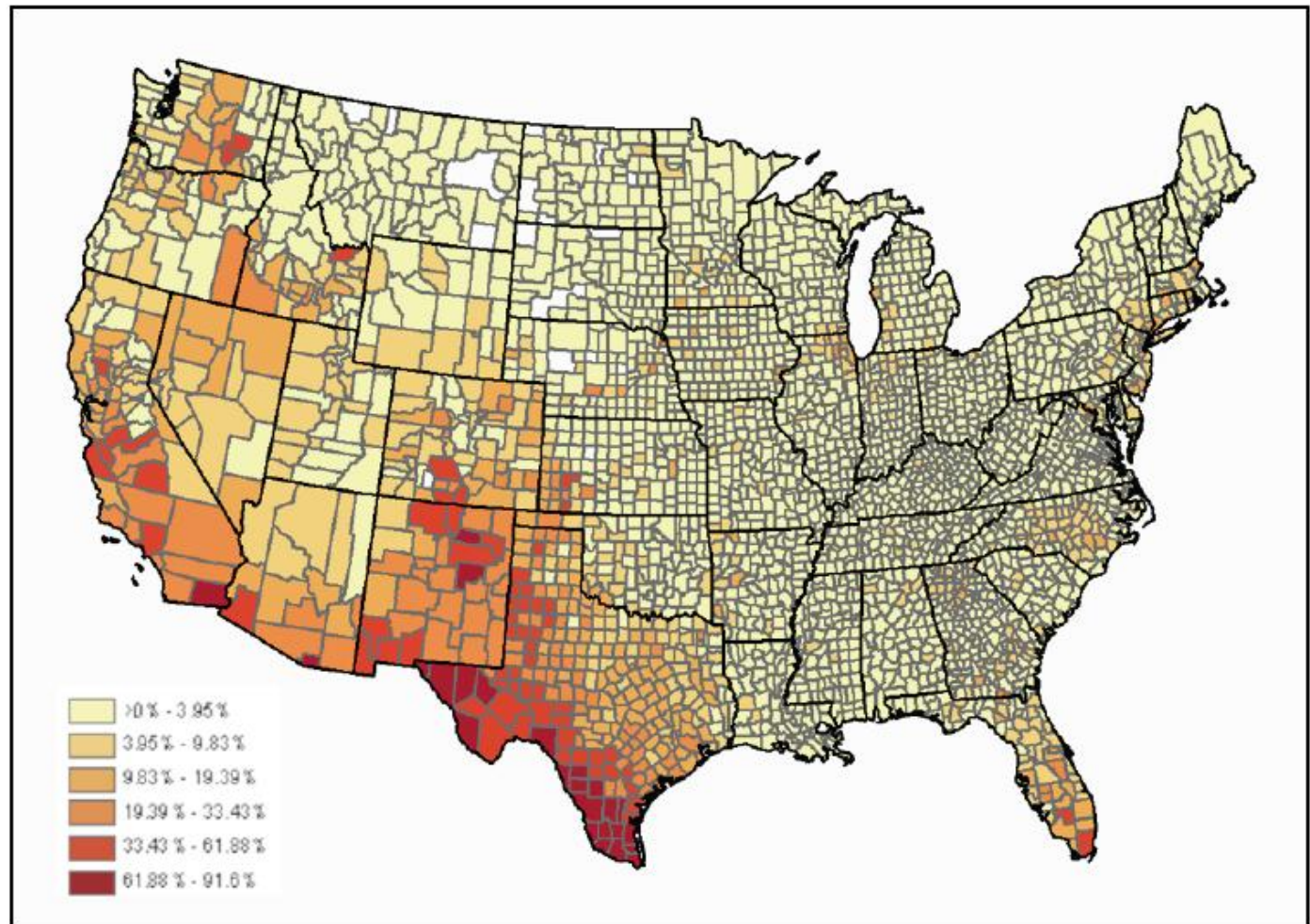
Though Latin America as whole boasts **relatively high literacy rates**--over 90%, on the whole (World Bank)--the performance of students on international exams like PISA indicates some weakness in the educational systems. 2009 PISA reading scores for the USA and US Latinos as a subgroup were 500 and 466, respectively, while Chile's students had the highest Latin American reading score at 449, Nicaragua's the lowest at 330.

After centuries of Latin American language policies supporting European languages at the expense of **indigenous languages**, the Peruvian government took a significant step towards multilingualism in 1975 by recognizing Quechua as a co-official language alongside Spanish. Bolivia and Paraguay followed suit shortly thereafter, recognizing both Quechua and Aymara in the former country, and Guaraní in the latter. Linguists and activists have since labored to prepare materials and promote literature in these languages in order to encourage their cultivation in schools, while Bolivia's ambitious 1994 education reform introduced 30 minority languages into the schools as subjects or media of instruction (Hornberger, 1998). In general, while Latin America has seen recent movement towards protecting the 'rights' of indigenous languages, it has not yet progressed very far in expressing any governmental 'obligation' to provide education in them, Bolivia's reforms notwithstanding.

3. Spanish in the United States

The city of St. Augustine, Florida, founded by Spanish settlers in 1565, predates the first permanent English-speaking colony in the present-day USA by nearly half a century, which is to say that the first European language to take root in this country was Spanish, not English. Subsequent inflows of Spanish speakers to the USA came through the annexation of formerly Spanish territories: the Louisiana Purchase (1803), parts of northern Mexico, including Texas and California (1848), and Puerto Rico (1898). The 20th century saw the USA develop something of a schizophrenic attitude toward Hispanic immigration, with immigrant workers meeting critical labor demands during the two World Wars, only to then be accused of "stealing American jobs" or "living off public relief"--often, paradoxically, both at once (Pettus, 2007)--and prompting '**Hispanophobic**' reactions like the Mexican Repatriation of the 1930s, in which tens of thousands of Mexican-Americans were deported, or more recent calls for an impenetrable fence--electrified, even!--along the entire Mexico-USA border. By the end of the 20th century, Latinos/Hispanics comprised 14 percent of the US population (Potowski & Carreira, 2010), and had overtaken African-Americans as the nation's most numerous Census-identified minority group.

Fig 3: % of population that speaks Spanish, by US county (2005 Census via MLA, 2012)



3.1 National Trends

California and Texas have the most Spanish speakers in the United States, followed by Florida and New York. Mexico continues to be far and away the predominant source of immigration to the USA, claiming 29% of the US foreign-born population. By way of contrast, China is the second largest country of birth with 5%, and El Salvador the next largest Latin American source at 3% (ACS 2009a). **Undocumented immigration** from Latin America has long been a provocative issue in American society, though in recent years both covert border crossings and the furor over them have subsided somewhat, most likely due to the 2008 economic crisis and ensuing recession (Esquivel et al, 2012). The key issues remain unresolved, however, and flare-ups like that in 2010 surrounding Arizona's SB 1070 law, which essentially directed police to question anybody suspected of lacking residency documents, will likely return before long.

Latinos' large and growing numerical strength has fostered a sense of pride and connection to Latin American culture generally, and to the Spanish language specifically. Research indicates

that Latinos **continue using their home language** at far higher rates than do immigrants from other backgrounds, with more than half of second generation Latinos reporting an ability to speak Spanish ‘very well’ (Rumbaut et al, 2006). Some view this as a sign of danger, potentially damaging to the cohesion of America’s social fabric, particularly given the concentration in areas close to their country of origin (Samuel Huntington as paraphrased in Pettus, 2007). In response, Latinos point out that they **serve in the US military in greater proportion** than the general populace (Segal & Segal, 2007), and that research suggests that Latinos are more patriotic than the population as a whole (de la Garza et al, 1996).

Educational outcomes remain lower for Latinos: in 2009, 39% of Hispanic adults did not have a high school diploma, as opposed to 10% of the non-Hispanic white population (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). There are, nonetheless, many Latino role models who have achieved great success in the United States.

Fig. 4: Latino-American boldface names

Isabel Allende	author (<i>La Casa de los Espíritus</i>), grew up in Peru, Chile
César Chavez	Mexican-American civil rights activist
Oscar de la Renta	fashion designer; born in Dominican Republic
John Leguizamo	actor; moved to Queens from Colombia at age four
Jennifer Lopez	singer, actress; born in Bronx to Puerto Rican parents
Ricky Martin	Grammy-winning singer, born in Puerto Rico
Alex Rodriguez	baseball star; born in Manhattan, moved to D.R., then Miami
Marco Rubio	US Senator (FL); parents immigrated from Cuba
Hilda Solis	US Secretary of Labor; Nicaraguan & Mexican parents
Sonia Sotomayor	Supreme Court justice; Bronx-born; Puerto Rican parents

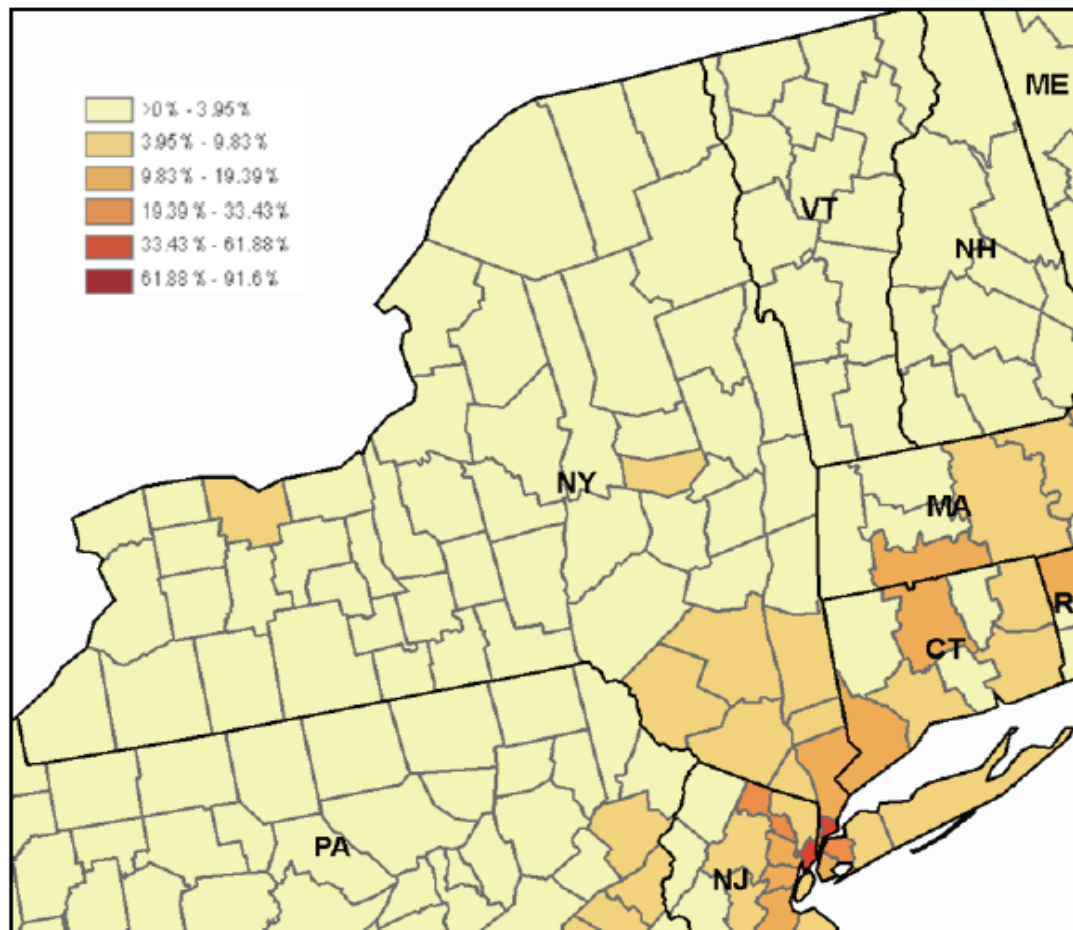
Spanish is the **most widely taught foreign language** in the USA, with roughly half of all college-level language study dedicated to it; two-thirds of US high school students were studying Spanish in 2000. The US Latino market is the largest Spanish-speaking market in the world, and the ninth largest overall market, so there is increasing value attached to Spanish-English transcultural and translingual competence in the business world. The continued development of **heritage speaker** abilities is also of growing interest among educators, though the number of courses and programs remains relatively small (Potowski & Carreira, 2010).

3.2 Spanish in New York State

The New York City area has the highest numbers and percentages of Spanish speakers in New York State--with the Bronx boasting the biggest concentration, followed by Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan--though Latino communities can be found in every county of the state. New York’s Spanish-speaking population has historically been and continues to be **unique in its diversity**: Mexico is the birthplace of more New York State foreign-born Latinos than any other country, but it only contributes 5.5% of the state’s foreign-born population, as opposed to 29%

nationwide, and only 10% of New York state's Latin American immigrants (MPI). Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans have historically exerted more of an impact on New York's Latino culture, particularly within the five boroughs; these remain the two largest communities in New York City, and those that have established the clearest ethnic neighborhoods, starting with the heavily Puerto Rican *Barrio* in Spanish Harlem, and later the Dominican *Quisqueya* section of Washington Heights (Zentella, 1997). The influence of Mexican immigration is growing nonetheless: in 2007, Mexicans were the fastest growing ethnic group in New York City (Limonic, 2007), and neighborhoods such as Spanish Harlem and Elmhurst/Corona in Queens are increasingly taking on Mexican flavor.

Fig. 5: % of population that speaks Spanish, by NY county (2005 Census via MLA, 2012)



Research indicates a strong interest in bilingualism among New York's Hispanic parents (Zentella, 1997), and the city currently provides 79 dual-language programs to encourage this, as well as to develop stronger Spanish skills in students whose home language is English; these are in addition to the myriad transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs that exist for Spanish speakers.

4 Structures of Note in Spanish

4.1 Sound System

Spanish differs from many of its linguistic neighbors in having very **little vowel reduction**; its five vowels tend to be pronounced in their ‘pure’ forms even when unstressed. The word *cafetería*, for example, retains [e] and [a] for the second and fourth vowels, whereas the same word (*cafeteria*) in English, Portuguese and Catalan yields a [ə]-like vowel for both analogues. The voiced consonants written ‘b,’ ‘d,’ and ‘g’ are usually pronounced in a ‘softer’ way in Spanish than they are in English, as [β], [ð], and [ɣ], e.g. *bodega* [βo.ˈðe.ɣa] ‘grocery store/cellar,’ though ‘harder’ pronunciations will not impede communication, and appear to be growing in US Spanish. The sound written with an ‘r’ can be trilled or flapped, but is not standardly pronounced with the ‘back in the throat’ sound typical of American English.

English, in turn, presents a number of sound contrasts that do not exist in American Spanish, and may therefore be challenging to learners:

(Consonants)

- [θ] at the beginning of ‘thin’
vs. [ð] at the beginning of ‘this’
- [b] at the beginning of ‘ban’
vs. [v] at the beginning of ‘van’
- [dʒ] at the beginning of ‘joke’
vs. [j] at the beginning of ‘yolk’
- [ʃ] at the beginning of ‘ship’
vs. [tʃ] at the beginning of ‘chip’
- [z] at the beginning of ‘zip’
vs. [s] at the beginning of ‘sip’

(Vowels)

- [æ] in the middle of ‘pat’
vs. [a] at the beginning of ‘pot’
- [ɛ] in the middle of ‘let’
vs. [e] in the middle of ‘late’
- [ɪ] at the beginning of ‘it’
vs. [i] at the beginning of ‘eat’
- [ɔ] in the middle of ‘walk’
vs. [o] in the middle of ‘woke’
- [ʊ] in the middle of ‘look’
vs. [u] in the middle of ‘Luke’
- [ə] in the middle of ‘putt’
vs. [a] in the middle of ‘pot’

The notorious inconsistency of the English writing system can also present serious obstacles, especially for students literate in Spanish and thereby accustomed to **more straightforward sound-to-symbol correspondences**. For these students, words like English *pot* may yield ‘spelling pronunciations’ like [pɒt].

Spanish allows fewer consonant clusters than English. Most notable is the unacceptability of [s] clusters at the beginning of syllables, which can lead Spanish speakers to **add a vowel** (and thereby syllable) to the beginning of English words like *street*, *Spanish*, *slide* and *scratch*, yielding [es.ˈtrit], for example. English speakers do much the same thing when confronted with the ‘impossible’ consonant cluster in *Sbarro* (the Italian food chain), adding a vowel to create [sə.ˈba.ro], the only difference with the Spanish adjustment being the placement of the vowel.

4.2 Writing Systems

Spanish is written with the Latin alphabet, and widely reputed to employ a phonetically ('phonemically,' to be more precise) **transparent orthography**: letters are typically pronounced one way only. At a very fine level of detail, this is inaccurate, but the broad generalization holds that decoding in the direction text-to-speech should not pose great difficulty to the Spanish learner. The letter 'c' echoes the behavior of the same letter in English (only with greater consistency): in American Spanish it is pronounced [s] when preceding 'i' or 'e,' and [k] in other contexts. Spanish vowels follow the Latin pattern also used by the IPA;

The digraph 'qu' is pronounced with no [w] sound: ¿*Qué quiere Quique?* [ke kje.re kike] 'What does Quique want?'. The digraphs 'ch' and 'll' are consistently pronounced [tʃ] and [j] respectively (though see Figure 2 above for Andean and River Plate alternates to the latter); and the letter 'ñ' is pronounced as [ɲ], much like 'ny' in English *canyon*, a borrowing from Spanish *cañon*. **Accents are marked over vowels** of syllables that receive stress not predictable from broader patterns, as in *película* 'film' and *constitución* 'constitution,' or occasionally to differentiate meanings, as in *sí* 'yes' and *si* 'if.'

The letters 'b' and 'v' are pronounced the same way (mostly [β]), as are 'z' and 's' (usually [s]). These redundancies undercut the notion of pure transparency often touted with regard to Spanish writing, but present a problem more for spelling or transcribing spoken language than for pronouncing written text.

4.3 Grammar

Spanish has a very rich pattern of verbal inflection: in the present indicative, verbs conjugate differently in five person-number combinations (six for Iberian), with different tense and aspect forms yielding dozens more conjugations for a single verb. This inflectional richness makes **pronouns unnecessary or redundant in many contexts**; sentences like 'they broke the chair' are most naturally expressed without subject pronouns--*rompieron la silla*--with the inclusion of the pronoun in *ellos rompieron la silla* acceptable, but indicating emphasis or contrast. Students with Spanish as a home language have been observed to omit obligatory subject pronouns in English, likely for this reason.

Spanish nouns have inherent **grammatical gender** that is usually marked with final -a for feminine and -o for masculine, e.g., *la mesa* 'the table' is feminine but *el libro* 'the book' is masculine; nouns referring to real-world entities with biological gender are marked with the appropriate setting (*la actriz* 'the actress').

4.4 How Names Work

Spanish names are fairly unique in their structure, which traditionally goes **PERSONALS--FATHER'S PATERNAL FAMILY--MOTHER'S PATERNAL FAMILY**. For instance, Cuban

revolutionary leader Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz has two personal names *Fidel* and *Alejandro*, *Castro* from his father Ángel Castro y Argiz, and *Ruz* from his mother Lina Ruz González, who inherited it from her father. Though Spanish names buck the international trend of immediate patriarchal naming dominance, they merely postpone the disappearance of maternal-line names for one generation; Fidel's children do not inherit *Ruz* from him, but *Castro*.

4.5 'Friends' and Classroom Phrases

Spanish and English share Latin as a source for many academic terms, so the list of academic 'friends' is far longer than that given below:

Fig. 6: Spanish-English Academic 'Friends'

<u>Elementary</u>		<i>fotosíntesis</i>	'photosynthesis'
<i>abreviación</i>	'abbreviation'	<i>proverbio</i>	'proverb'
<i>apóstrofe</i>	'apostrophe'	<i>recíproco</i>	'reciprocal'
<i>gravedad</i>	'gravity'	<i>revolución</i>	'revolution'
<i>hemisferio</i>	'hemisphere'	<i>sistema</i>	'system'
<i>medir</i>	'measure'		
<i>octágono</i>	'octagon'	<u>Secondary</u>	
<i>planeta</i>	'planet'	<i>amplitud</i>	'amplitude'
<i>población</i>	'population'	<i>bacterias</i>	'bacteria'
<i>reproducción</i>	'reproduction'	<i>colonialismo</i>	'colonialism'
<i>sinónimo</i>	'synonym'	<i>hipótesis</i>	'hypothesis'
<i>volumen</i>	'volume'	<i>parábola</i>	'parabola'
		<i>paradoja</i>	'paradox'
<u>Intermediate</u>		<i>precisión</i>	'precision'
<i>ciclo</i>	'cycle'	<i>símbolo</i>	'symbol'
<i>diversidad</i>	'diversity'	<i>teorema</i>	'theorem'
<i>función</i>	'function'	<i>virus</i>	'virus'

Spanish second-person pronouns are marked for formality; the phrases below are written with the informal *tú* 'you' (and agreeing verb forms) typically used by teachers with their students:

Fig. 7: Classroom Phrases in Spanish and English

<u>Greetings & Questions</u>		<i>¿Cómo puedo ayudarte?</i>	
<i>Hola.</i>	'Hello.'	'How can I help you?'	
<i>Bienvenido/a a nuestra clase.</i>		<u>Directions</u>	
'Welcome (m/f) to our classroom.'		<i>Levántate</i>	'Stand up'
<i>¿Cómo estás?</i>	'How are you?'	<i>Siéntate</i>	'Sit down'
<i>¿Qué necesitas?</i>	'What do you need?'	<i>Lee</i>	'Read'
<i>¿Necesitas ir al baño/excusado?</i>	'Do you need to go to the bathroom?'	<i>Escribe</i>	'Write'
<u>Compliments & Niceties</u>		<i>Escucha</i>	'Listen'
<i>¡Buen trabajo!</i>	'Good work!'	<i>Contesta</i>	'Answer'
<i>¡Gracias!</i>	'Thank you!'	<i>Habla con tu compañero/a</i>	
<i>Por favor.</i>	'Please.'	'Talk with your partner (m/f)'	
<i>Perdón.</i>	'Excuse me.'	<i>Trabaja en tu grupo</i>	'Work in your group'
<u>Communication</u>		<i>Abre tu libro/cuaderno</i>	'Open your book/notebook'
<i>Querías decir...?</i>	'Do you mean...?'	<i>Saca tu plumal/lapiz</i>	'Take out your pen/pencil'
<i>¿Qué piensas tú?</i>	'What are your thoughts?'	<i>Cópia la tarea</i>	'Copy the homework'

5 Further Reading and References

5.1 Imaginative Literature

Ages 4-8

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Mora, Pat. *Gracias Thanks*. (Bilingual)

Montes, Marisa. *Juan Bobo Goes to Work: A Puerto Rican Fairy Tale*.

Ages 8-12

Hayes, Joe. *The Day it Snowed Tortillas*. (Bilingual)

Jimenez, Francisco. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*

Munoz Ryan, Pam. *Esperanza Rising*.

Ages 12-16

Alvarez, Julia. *Before we were Free*.

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*.

Soto, Gary. *Buried Onions*.

Ages 16-adult

Alvarez, Julia. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*.

Borges, Jorge Luis. *Ficciones*.
Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*.
Diaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

5.2 English Language Periodicals

Hispania News--<http://www.hispania-news.com/>

5.3 Spanish Language Periodicals

El Diario (New York)--<http://www.eldiariiony.com/>
Excelsior (Mexico)--<http://www.excelsior.com.mx/>
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