

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Language Group Specific Informational Reports

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Language Group: Spanish
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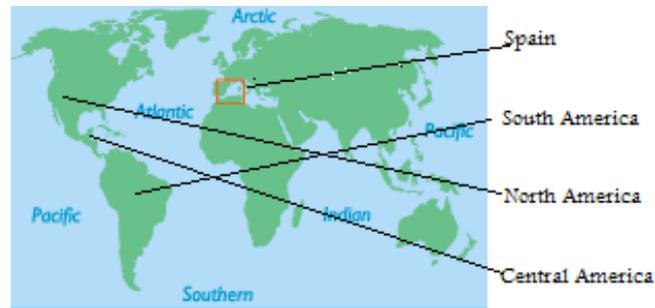
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Factors Affecting Native Spanish Speakers Learning English

by: Ingrid Corrigan

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History of Spanish

- Romance language; dates back to 3rd - 2nd centuries BC.
- Developed from the Vulgar Latin; many dialects: including the Castilian Spanish, or Castile, which later became the standard in that area.
- Spoken by nearly 400,000,000 people around the world.
- Spoken in Spain, all of South America (except Brazil), Central America, and many states within the United States, including New Mexico, California, Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico.



(Inglese, A., <http://ainglese.myweb.uga.edu/edit6190/css/samerica.html>, 2009).

Spanish Dialects

- Differences between dialects are mostly confined to **vocabulary** and **pronunciation**.
- One of the main differences between the dialects of Spain and those of Latin America is the use of pronouns. In Spain, “tu” is commonly used to refer to someone in the second person singular. However, some Latin American countries use "vos". Tú and vos are informal and used with friends. Usted is universally regarded as the formal form, and is used as a mark of respect, as when addressing one's elders.



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Phonology/Grammar

Influence of spelling on pronunciation

Consonant system is similar to English

Spanish has five pure vowels and few diphthongs

Grammar

- Spanish has grammatical gender, thus all nouns, as well as related articles and adjectives, are masculine or feminine.
- Verbs show the normal range of tenses (past, present, future, progressive, perfect). Thus, common errors may include: *“May you come tomorrow?”* or *“I see you this evening.”*
- Double negatives are common in Spanish, often leading to errors, such as: *“I didn’t see nobody.”*
- *Five Ways Spanish is the same as English:*
<http://www.learn-spanish-faster.com/articles/spanish-is-similar.html>

Grammar (cont.)

- **Definite articles - often lead to *confusion* for native Spanish speakers because...**
 - The definite article is used with mass and plural count nouns that are used with a general meaning; “Do you like the ice skating?”
 - Spanish uses the definite article with possessive pronouns; “That is the yours, and this is the mine.”
 - Spanish makes no distinction between the indefinite article and the number one.
 - In some expressions (where the distinction between one and many is irrelevant), singular count nouns need no article; “Do you have car?”
 - The indefinite article has a plural form, which causes beginners to make mistakes; “I have ones nice doctors.”

Phonology

- Vowels: ee/l (peeg for pig); E/ae (pet/pat)
- Consonants: b/v, ch/sh are often substituted for each other
- /j/ sound does not exist; y takes its place
- voiced and voiceless “th” do not exist in Spanish
- Spanish /s/ is pronounced more frontally than in English
- /r/ is tapped or trilled (carries over to English)

Rhythm and Stress

- Spanish is a syllable-timed language - all syllables take about the same length of time to pronounce.
- English contains *stressed* syllables – carry a pitch change and are pronounced more distinctly.
- Common error: Spanish speakers may stress words equally; making it difficult for an English listener to understand and decode the structure of the sentence.

Differences Commonly Observed Among Spanish Speakers

- **Language Differences**

- Adjective comes after noun
- Adverb follows the verb
- Past tense *-ed* is omitted, e.g., “he walk yesterday”
- ‘s is often omitted in plurals and possessives
- Superiority is demonstrated by using *mas*
- Double negatives are required

- **Articulation Differences**

- Final consonants are often devoiced
- /t, d, n/ may be dentalized
- Voiceless “th” does not exist in Spanish
- Initial consonant clusters are often voiced with a schwa inserted, e.g., *stop* is *estop*

Communication Styles

- Collectivism - a fundamental Hispanic value that emphasizes the objectives and needs of the group, rather than emphasizing competition or individualism.
- Emphasis is on positive personal interactions; characterized by empathy for others, harmony.
- Embraces between friends/family members during greetings and departures are quite common.
- Hispanics tend to stand closer to each other during conversations (compared to Anglos).



Communication Styles (cont.)

Hispanic children tend to interact verbally more with siblings and peers than with adults.



(<http://wl4k.blogspot.com/2011/02/spanish-class-at-darby-building-mt.html>)

- Most Hispanic children are not asked to voice their preferences or give personal opinions.
- Hispanic children often learn through observation and hands-on participation rather than through verbal interaction with adults.
- Children are expected to show respect and deference to adults (may avoid eye contact or lower their heads when speaking to an adult); they are not expected to interrupt or partake in adult conversations.
- Most Hispanic parents do not verbalize about ongoing events; they do not relate actions to words, (Roseberry-McKibbin).

- <http://www.nlc.org/common/index2.htm>

Influence of Socio-linguistic Factors on Child- Adult Interactions



(<http://www.pimsleurapproach.com/resources/spanish/articles/teach-kids-spanish/>)

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