



LANGUAGES OF LATIN AMERICA

WHITE PAPER

About Andovar

Andovar is a global provider of multilingual content solutions. Our services range from text translation and content creation, through audio and video recording, to turnkey localization of websites, software, eLearning and games. Our headquarters is in Singapore, and offices in Thailand, Colombia, USA and India.

About This White Paper

Andovar opened an office in Medellín, Colombia in 2011 to better serve our clients in the Americas and to improve our capabilities in the languages of the region. This white paper is part of this effort and hopes to educate on the intricacies of Latin American languages.

There is no one definition of the term "Latin America". It can refer to territories that used to be colonies of European powers; all Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries; or all areas south of the United States including the Caribbean. In this white paper, we will follow the last definition.

The main source of data on number of speakers and languages comes from Ethnologue. For other sources, please visit the Sources section at the end of the document.

Hard data on minor languages is difficult to obtain and names and definitions of languages and dialects change over time. As such, there may be mistakes or missing information which will be added in future updates. Please contact marketing@andovar.com with any questions or suggestions.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| History | 3 |
| Before the Conquest | 3 |
| Mesoamerican Civilizations | 3 |
| Andean Civilizations | 6 |
| The European Conquest | 8 |
| Colonial Times | 11 |
| Modern Days | 13 |
| Languages | 15 |
| Brazilian Portuguese | 17 |
| Compared with European Variety | 19 |
| Spanish | 22 |
| Compared with European Variety | 22 |
| Andean Spanish | 24 |
| Caribbean Spanish | 24 |
| Central American Spanish | 25 |
| Chilean Spanish | 26 |
| Equatorial Spanish | 26 |
| Mexican Spanish | 27 |
| Rioplatense Spanish | 28 |
| Universal Spanish | 29 |
| Aymara | 31 |
| Dutch | 32 |
| English | 33 |
| French | 34 |
| Guaraní | 35 |
| Mapudungun | 37 |
| Mayan | 38 |
| Nahuatl | 39 |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Papiamentu | 40 |
| Quechua | 41 |
| Others | 43 |
| Countries | 45 |
| Argentina | 45 |
| Bolivia | 46 |
| Brazil | 46 |
| Chile | 47 |
| Colombia | 47 |
| Costa Rica | 48 |
| Cuba | 48 |
| Dominican Republic | 48 |
| Ecuador | 49 |
| El Salvador | 49 |
| Guatemala | 50 |
| Guyana | 50 |
| Haiti | 50 |
| Honduras | 51 |
| Jamaica | 51 |
| Mexico | 51 |
| Nicaragua | 52 |
| Panama | 52 |
| Paraguay | 53 |
| Peru | 53 |
| Puerto Rico | 54 |
| Suriname | 54 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 55 |
| Uruguay | 55 |
| Venezuela | 56 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Conclusions | 57 |
| Sources | 58 |
| Appendices | 59 |
| Appendix 1 – Examples of Spanish Variants | 59 |
| English Source | 59 |
| Colombian Spanish | 60 |
| Rioplatense Spanish | 61 |
| Mexican Spanish | 62 |
| Universal Spanish | 63 |
| Spanish for Spain | 64 |
| Appendix 2 – Examples of Portuguese Variants | 65 |
| English Source | 65 |
| Portuguese for Portugal | 66 |
| Brazilian Portuguese | 67 |
| Appendix 3 – Data on Countries | 68 |

Introduction

The idea that part of the New World has a linguistic affinity with the Romance cultures as a whole can be traced back to the writing of the French economist and statesman Michel Chevalier in the 1830s. He postulated that part of the Americas was inhabited by people of the "Latin" race, and that it should, ally itself with "Latin Europe" in a struggle against "Teutonic Europe", "Anglo-Saxon America" and "Slavic Europe". This notion was taken up by Latin American intellectuals and political leaders of the late-nineteenth century, who no longer looked to Spain or Portugal as cultural models, but rather to revolutionary France. The French Empire of Napoleon III championed the idea of "Latin America" during the French invasion of Mexico as a way to assert French influence there.

Today, there is no single agreed definition of the term. Latin America may refer to territories where the Spanish or Portuguese languages prevail, or all areas of the Americas that were once part of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires. In the USA, the term more broadly refers to all of the Americas south of the United States, including the Guianas and the Anglophone, Francophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. This definition emphasizes a similar socioeconomic history of the region characterized by formal or informal colonialism, rather than cultural aspects. In a more literal definition, Latin America designates countries in the Americas where a language derived from Latin predominates: Spanish, Portuguese, French and creole languages based upon these. Neither Latin nor Anglo America is culturally or linguistically homogeneous.

Despite plentiful definitions, nobody thought to ask the inhabitants themselves what they would like to be called or whether they would like to share a common name at all. Indeed, some consider the name Latin America misleading, outdated and foreign. Casual references to "Latin" temperament, dancing, or attitude to life, group them together, ignoring complexities of the area with 20 million square kilometers, population of over 600 million and a combined nominal GDP of nearly 6 trillion USD. This disconnect reflects a bigger notion in the region's history – that of world powers which brought Spanish, Portuguese, English and French with little regard for the existing multitude of cultures and languages. The result is a region with a mix of indigenous tongues struggling for survival, colonial languages which are both objects of resentment and status symbols, and recent creations like the creole languages and variants of Spanish and Portuguese straddling the border of dialects and separate languages.

This multitude is what this white paper will examine and what everyone interested in localization for the region should be aware of.

*They very quickly learn such words as are spoken to them.
If it please our Lord, I intend at my return to carry home six of them to
your Highnesses, that they may learn our language.*

— Journal of the Voyage of Christopher Columbus, 1492 —

History

Everywhere around the world, languages grow and shrink, some die and others branch out to form dialects and new languages. However, few events have had a more dramatic impact on linguistic landscapes of whole continents than the European conquest of the New World.

Before the Conquest

Native inhabitants of North and South America spoke thousands of languages prior to their first contact with Europeans. Before the conquest, the two main poles of civilization present were essentially isolated from each other and largely unaware of the other's existence: Mesoamerica and the Central Andes. Each had seen a succession of major states that occasionally came together in single, powerful empires, including the two the Spaniards met on their arrival - the Aztecs and Incas respectively.

Mesoamerican Civilizations

Between 2000 and 300 BCE, complex cultures began to form in Mesoamerica. Some matured into advanced civilizations such as the Olmec, Maya, Toltec, and Mexica, also known as the Aztecs. The "Aztecs" should more correctly be called the Triple Alliance, since they were three smaller kingdoms loosely united together, which flourished for nearly 3500 years before the first contact with Europeans.

The earliest known civilization in the region were the Olmec. The Olmec civilization began between 1600 and 1500 BCE, with its capital at a site today known as San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán near the coast in southeast Veracruz (see map). The Olmec influence extended across Mexico, into Central America, and along the Gulf of Mexico. They introduced new ways of government, writing, astronomy, art, mathematics, economics, and religion. Their achievements paved the way for the greatness of the Maya civilization in the east and other civilizations to the west in central Mexico.

Mesoamerica

Mesoamerica is a region and cultural area in the Americas, extending approximately from present-day Central Mexico to Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica. A number of pre-Columbian societies flourished there before the Spanish colonization in the 15th and 16th centuries. It is one of six areas in the world where ancient civilization arose independently, and the second in the Americas after Norte Chico in present-day northern coastal Peru.

The term comes from Greek, and literally means: "middle America".



The extent of Olmec civilization and other important pre-Columbian cities

The decline of the Olmec resulted in a power vacuum. Emerging from that vacuum was the new power center of Teotihuacan, which rose to become the first true metropolis of North America around 150 CE. Teotihuacan established a new economic and political order never before seen in the region. Its influence stretched into Central America, founding new dynasties in the Maya cities of Tikal, Copan and Kaminaljuyú. Teotihuacan had a diverse and cosmopolitan population and by 500 CE it was the largest city in the world. Its monumental architecture reflected a new era in Mexican civilization. By 650 CE it was declining in political power, but maintained cultural influence for the better part of a millennium.

Contemporary with Teotihuacan was the greatness of the Maya civilization. The period between 250 CE and 650 CE was a time of intense Mayan accomplishments. While the many Maya city-states never achieved political unity on the order of the central Mexican civilizations, they exerted a tremendous intellectual and cultural influence upon the region. The Maya built some of the most elaborate cities on the continent, and made innovations in mathematics, astronomy, and the calendar. They also created the only true writing system native to the Americas, using pictographs and syllabic elements inscribed on stone, pottery, wood, and books made from bark.



Mayan glyph in stucco

The next civilization worth mentioning are the Toltec, who dominated a state centered in Tula, in the 9th to 11th centuries CE. Most of what we know about the Toltec empire comes from writings created by the Aztec-Mexica, who saw the Toltec as their intellectual and cultural predecessors and described their culture as the epitome of civilization. Today, debate remains how real and powerful that civilization actually was and how much of the accounts was romanticized.

With the decline of the Toltec civilization came the Mexica. They were a desert people, one of seven groups who formerly called themselves "Azteca" in memory of Aztlán, the legendary ancestral home of the Aztec peoples, but changed their name after years of migrating. Since they were not from the Valley of Mexico, they were initially perceived as crude and unrefined. Through political maneuvers and ferocious fighting skills, they managed to become the rulers of the region as the head of the so-called Triple Alliance, which included the cities of Tenochtitlan (not to be confused with the Olmec site of San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán), Texcoco and Tlacopan. Latecomers to Mexico's central plateau, the Mexica nevertheless thought of themselves as heirs of the civilizations that had preceded them.

The Mexica-Aztecs were the rulers of much of central Mexico, having subjugated most of the other regional states by the 1470s. The modern name "Mexico" comes from the name of this people and their capital, Tenochtitlan, is the site of modern-day Mexico City. At its peak, it was one of the largest cities in the world with population estimates of 300,000. The market established there was the largest ever seen by the conquistadors on arrival. They spoke Nahuatl language since at least the 7th century CE and their influence caused the variety of Nahuatl spoken by the residents of Tenochtitlan to become a prestige language in Mesoamerica.

Andean Civilizations

By the first millennium, South America's vast rainforests, mountains, plains, and coasts were the home of tens of millions of people. The Chibchas of modern-day Colombia, Valdivia of Ecuador, the Quechuas of Peru, and the Aymara of Bolivia were the four most important sedentary Amerindian groups in South America. Since the 1970s, numerous glyphs have been discovered on deforested land in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil, supporting Spanish accounts of yet another complex and virtually unknown Amazonian civilization.

The Chibcha linguistic communities were the most numerous, the most territorially extended and the most socio-economically developed of the pre-Hispanic Colombians. By the 3rd century CE, they had established their civilization in the northern Andes and at one point occupied part of what is now Panama, and the high plains of the Eastern Sierra of Colombia. They developed the most populous zone between the Mayan and Inca empires. Next to the Quechua of Peru and the Aymara in Bolivia, the Chibcha of the eastern and northeastern highlands of Colombia developed the most notable culture among the sedentary indigenous peoples in South America. In the Oriental Andes, they comprised several tribes who spoke the same language, Chibchan.

However, the two main languages of the Andes at the time were Aymara and Quechua. While their populations were in intense, prolonged contact, little is known about the details of their relationships or the history of these languages and their speakers before the Spanish invasion. When the Spaniards arrived, they found Quechua used as the *lingua franca* of the Inca Empire. However, the part that is now northern Bolivia was Aymara-speaking when the Incas conquered it, and remained so during the Incas' century or so of control. Moreover, there were many other minor languages spoken throughout the Andes, most of which have since died out.

Many theories have been proposed trying to tie Quechua and Aymara languages to various peoples and civilizations we know of from archeology, but there is no real consensus and little is certain. One popular proposal suggests that both Quechua and Aymara started out as minor languages spoken in small areas, which expanded hugely through history. It is not known for certain where either family originated, but it could have been in regions near modern-day capital of Peru, Lima. From this homeland, both languages began expanding into the highlands: Quechua first northwards, into central Peru, and Aymara southeastwards. Quite when this happened is unclear, though some time during the first millennium of the Common Era. Continued expansion of Aymara later may also be thanks to the last great civilization before the Incas to control much of the Andes. It ruled from around 600 to 1000 CE, although some dispute remains whether this culture was Aymara-speaking. Regardless of that, by the time it collapsed, Aymara appears to have spread over much of southern Peru and northern Bolivia.

Altiplano

The Altiplano (Spanish for "high plain"), also known as the Andean or Bolivian Plateau, is the most extensive area of high plateau on Earth outside of Tibet. The bulk of the Altiplano lies within Bolivian and Peruvian territory while its southern parts lie in Chile and Argentina. The Altiplano plateau hosts several cities like Puno, Oruro, Potosí, Cuzco and La Paz, the capital of Bolivia. At the Bolivia-Peru border lies Lake Titicaca, the largest lake in South America. The Altiplano was the site of several Pre-Columbine cultures including the Inca Empire. Spain conquered the region in the 16th century.

Thereafter, there were a few centuries apparently without any overall dominant power, though linguistically Quechua seems to have gotten the upper hand, and began steadily spreading into much of the Aymara area, including around Cuzco. One of the tribes who may have originally spoken Aymara, but then at some point switched to Quechua, were the ancestors of the Incas, who emerged in the mid-1400s and built a massive empire in less than a century.

Holding their capital at the great cougar-shaped city of Cuzco, the Inca civilization dominated the Andes region from approximately 1438 to 1533. Known as Tawantinsuyu, or "the land of the four regions" in Quechua, the Inca civilization was highly distinct and developed. Inca rule extended to nearly a hundred linguistic or ethnic communities, and some 9 to 14 million people connected by a 25,000-kilometer road system. Cities were built with precise, peerless stonework, constructed over many levels of mountain terrain. Terrace farming was a common form of agriculture. There is evidence of excellent metalwork and even successful brain surgery in Inca civilization. The iconic Machu Picchu remains its symbol.

The Incas carried their Quechua with them to much of their territory, including southern Bolivia and northern Argentina. However, Quechua presence in central Peru dates not from the Incas, but from the initial expansion of the Quechua-speaking peoples many centuries earlier. The Incas were conquering areas that already spoke Quechua, only different dialects to their own. Even today, varieties from the two main groups of dialects have become so different that it is difficult for their speakers to communicate effectively.

It is not clear when and how Quechua reached Ecuador. The dialect spoken there is more similar to the southern varieties of Quechua in Ayacucho, Cuzco, Bolivia and Argentina, than it is to Central dialects of Quechua in northern Peru. However, while Ecuadoran Quechua seems too similar to Cuzco Quechua to have arrived in the first wave of expansion northwards, it also seems rather too different to have been brought by the Incas. One theory is that it was something of a *lingua franca* learnt by many ethnic groups as a common trading language, without being the native language of any of them.

At the same time, the Cambeba were a populous, organized indigenous society in Brazil's Amazon basin in the late Pre-Columbian era. The Spanish explorer Francisco de Orellana traversed the Amazon River during the 16th century and reported densely populated regions running hundreds of kilometers along the river. These populations left no lasting monuments, possibly because they used wood as their construction material as stone was not locally available.

The European Conquest

European colonization of the Americas began as early as the 10th century, when Norse sailors explored and settled limited areas on the shores of present-day Greenland and Canada. According to Norse folklore, violent conflicts with the indigenous population ultimately made them abandon those settlements.

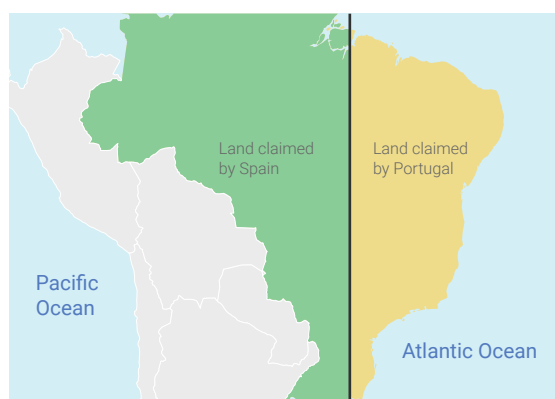
Apart from that, before 1492 no European had heard of the continents we now call North and South America. By 1550, Spain — a small kingdom that had not even existed a century earlier — controlled the better part of both continents and had become the most powerful nation in Europe. In half a century of brave exploration and brutal conquest, both Europe and America changed forever.



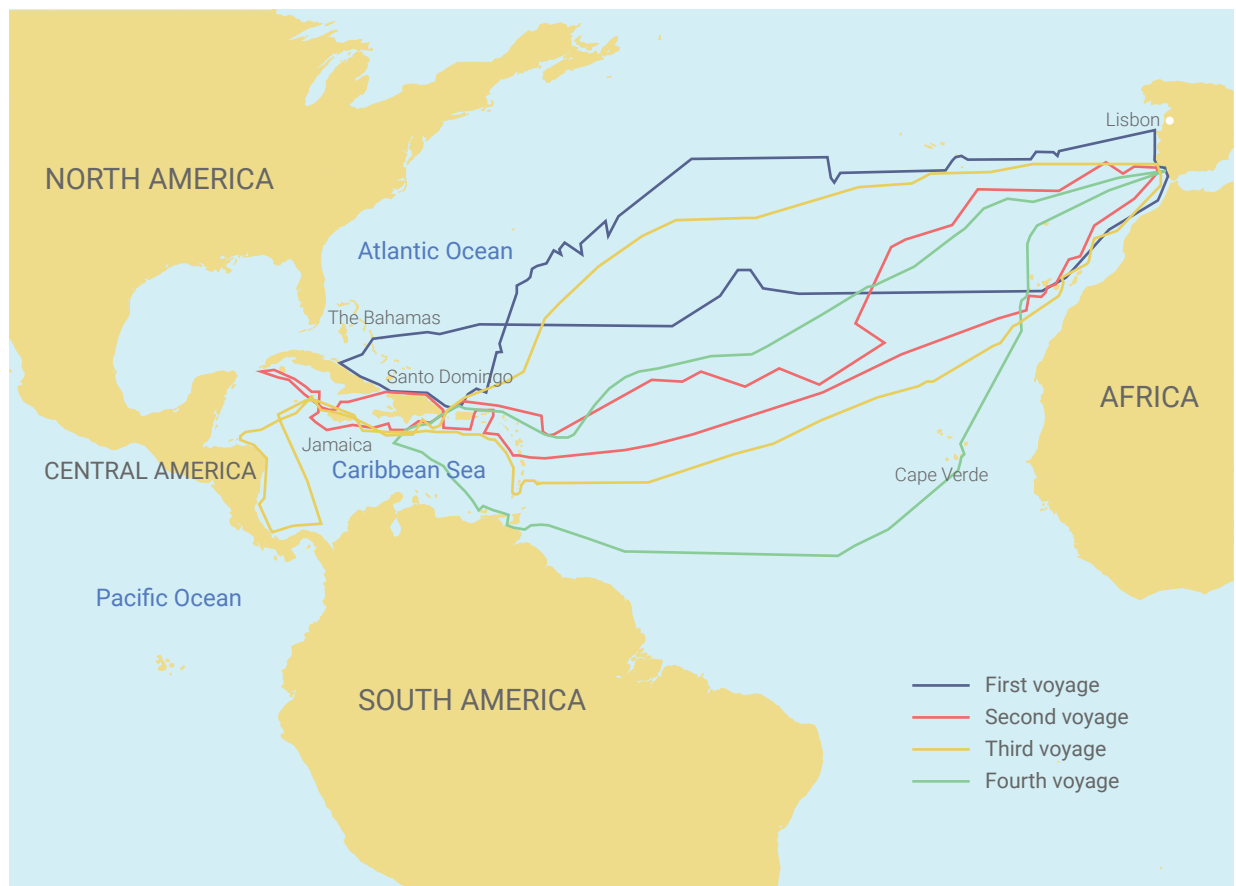
Columbus' arrival in the New World

Extensive European colonization began in 1492, when a Spanish expedition headed by Christopher Columbus from Genoa, then an independent city-state in northern Italy. He sailed westwards to find a new trade route to the Far East in Asia, but inadvertently found the Americas. European conquest, large-scale exploration, colonization and industrial development soon followed. Columbus's first two voyages (1492–93) reached the Bahamas and various Caribbean islands, including Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Cuba. In 1497, sailing from Bristol on behalf of England, John Cabot (born in Italy as Giovanni Caboto) landed on the North American coast, and a year later, Columbus's third voyage reached South America. As sponsor of his voyages, Spain was the first European power to settle and colonize the largest areas, from North America and the Caribbean to the southern tip of South America. Founded in 1496, Santo Domingo in today's Dominican Republic was the first Spanish city in the New World.

The Portuguese soon followed and in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, ratified by the Pope, these two kingdoms divided the entire non-European world between themselves, with a line drawn through South America. Based on this treaty and the claims by Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa to all lands touching the Pacific Ocean, the Spanish rapidly conquered territory, overthrowing the Aztec and Inca Empires to gain control of much of western South America, Central America, and Mexico by the mid-sixteenth century, in addition to its earlier Caribbean conquests. Over this same period, Portugal conquered eastern South America, naming it Brazil after the brazilwood tree, which was its earliest commercially exploited product.



Brazil divided between Spain and Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas



The four voyages of Christopher Columbus

In 1519, Hernán Cortés arrived in Mexico from Cuba with 11 galleons, 550 men, and 16 horses — the first horses on the American continent. Within two years, his *conquistadores* had won control of the Aztec kingdom that spanned most of present-day Mexico and Central America. The conquest of the Inca was carried out by Francisco Pizarro between 1532 and 1535. A common misconception is that they conquered vast territories aided only by disease epidemics and their powerful *caballeros*. In fact, recent archaeological excavations suggest a vast Spanish-Indian alliance numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

It is not clear how big the original population of the Americas was when the Conquest started, but 20 million seems a reasonable figure. Within a few decades of the Europeans' arrival well over half the entire population died as a result of wars, slavery, and devastating epidemics of imported diseases.

Colonial Times

The European colonizers and their successor states had varying attitudes towards Native American languages. In many Latin American colonies, Spanish and Portuguese missionaries learned local languages and cultures in order to preach to the natives in their own tongues and relate the Christian message to their indigenous religions. However, since the European conquest the fate of the native languages of the Americas has overwhelmingly been one of decline. It is true that for the two major languages Quechua and Aymara, there was also some growth at first, though essentially only at the expense of smaller Andean languages. Quechua also made it into some low-lying jungle areas as they were colonized by Quechua-speakers from the highlands.

One of the main reasons that Aymara and Quechua were able to expand even under Spanish rule was the mining industry, one of the lynchpins of the colonial economy. The way the Spaniards ensured work force for their all-important mines was by a forced labor draft, rotating through all Indian communities. The effect of this was to bring together many Indian tribes speaking different languages from all over southern Peru and Bolivia. As a common language among them, the Spaniards favored Aymara, and later Quechua, as the two most widespread Indian languages. At least in part due to this official attitude, over the centuries following the Conquest, minor languages steadily lost out to these two dominant ones.

Not surprisingly, there were also a number of indigenous rebellions against the colonists, including a huge one in 1780, following which Quechua was banned. When Peruvian and Bolivian independence finally came in 1821 and 1825 respectively, it was not under the control of any indigenous movement, but as in the USA - a rebellion of native-born whites against the colonial system, which kept power in the hands of the mother country. Therefore, independence actually meant little for the native peoples, other than a change of masters. Native languages continued as second-class, underprivileged, unwritten, and scorned by the wealthy and powerful. They were gradually abandoned in favor of the socially far more acceptable and valuable Spanish and Portuguese.



European colonization of the Americas - 1763

The colonial plantation economies were very labor-intensive and facing labor shortages, the Portuguese were the first in the New World to engage in the slave trade in the beginning of the 16th century. Others soon followed, and the Atlantic slave trade continued until the 19th century. The numbers were so great that Africans who came by way of the slave trade became the most numerous immigrants in both North and South America before the late 18th century. Far more slaves were taken to South America than to the north, with the most popular destinations being Brazil and islands in the Caribbean.

| Destination | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Portuguese America | 38.50% |
| British America (minus North America) | 18.40% |
| Spanish Empire | 17.50% |
| French Americas | 13.60% |
| British North America | 6.45% |
| English Americas | 3.25% |
| Dutch West Indies | 2.00% |
| Danish West Indies | 0.30% |

Destinations of enslaved Africans (1519–1867)

Today, their descendants form significant ethnic minorities in several continental Latin American countries, and they are the dominant element in many Caribbean nations. Over the centuries, they have contributed to the cultural mix of their respective societies and exerted a deep influence on all facets of life, especially in music, dance, the arts, literature, speech forms, and religious practices in the region. Examples of words of African origin are *marimba*, *congo* and *merengue*. This African adaptation to local American conditions is called creolization.

In countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, African immigrants were the minority, and they had to deal with a significant and dynamic form of European society and culture. The African communities survived, and in some instances grew against the stiff and relentless competition of the dominant culture, and pieces of the African subculture were eventually adopted by the mainstream. On the other hand, in plantation societies of the Caribbean islands, people of African ancestry had substantial control over their daily lives. The lack of cultural homogeneity provided a unique opportunity for the African masses to create their own society and culture. Nowadays, Caribbean people speak variants of the standard European languages which reflect West African speech patterns regardless of whether the spoken language is English, Spanish, French or Dutch. The French spoken in Haiti constitutes a language of its own. Papiamentu, a blend of Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese, is one of the official languages in Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire. None of these Creole languages is limited to the poorer, uneducated classes and they have great respect in the literature and political life of the Caribbean islands.

Modern Days

Decolonization of the Americas began with the American Revolution and the Haitian Revolution in the late 1700s. This was followed by numerous Latin American wars of independence in the early 1800s. Between 1811 and 1825, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Gran Colombia, the United Provinces of Central America, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia gained independence from Spain and Portugal in armed uprisings. The last violent episode of decolonization was the Cuban War of Independence, which became the Spanish–American War. It resulted in the independence of Cuba in 1898 and the transfer of sovereignty over Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States. Peaceful decolonization began with the purchase by the United States of Louisiana from France in 1803, Florida from Spain in 1819, Alaska from Russia in 1867, and the Danish West Indies from Denmark in 1916. The remaining European colonies began to achieve peaceful independence beginning with Jamaica in 1962. Trinidad and Tobago also became independent in 1962, while Guyana and Barbados both achieved independence in 1966. In the 1970s, the Bahamas, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines all became independent of the United Kingdom, and Suriname of the Netherlands. Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis achieved independence from the United Kingdom in the 1980s.

Despite decolonization, race and skin color correlate very strongly with social and economic status in Latin America. The rich and powerful strata are dominated by whites, while the poorest by indigenous peoples and blacks. In most countries, there are also large numbers of *mestizos* – of mixed white and Indian ancestry – who tend to form an in-between society. They often speak Spanish, live in towns and cities, and are generally less badly off. Indigenous peoples still often see *mestizos* as outsiders to their own communities and identities. In Quechua the loanword *misti* has this specific sense, as opposed to *runa*, as they call themselves. Quechua is known as *runa simi*, the language of the runa.

Recent decades have also seen massive migration from the countryside to the cities, so there are now many pureblood Indians there, who are adapting to urban and more westernized lifestyles. This involves them preferring to speak to their children in Spanish, perceived as more valuable in urban environments, and deliberately not passing on their own native languages, which are now restricted to remote and endangered rural communities.

In some countries, there is official status for indigenous languages, and programs proclaiming bilingual education. A lot of them mean little in practice however, particularly in Peru. Bolivia and Ecuador seem to be further than Peru on the road towards having their languages recognized in official circles. In practice, indigenous languages are still very much underprivileged, have no real official position, and are very rarely written.



Years of independence of Latin American countries

Despite appearances, and figures of speakers in the millions, it can be argued that all indigenous languages are in danger of extinction. While this is not imminent for the major varieties of Quechua and Aymara, which still have safety in numbers, they are also in steady decline. Unless social trends change radically, which seems rather unlikely, even the major ones may not last much longer than a few more generations. Others, including endangered varieties of Quechua, are doomed to disappear much sooner.

There is one exception to the threat of extinction hanging over native languages of the Americas: the Guaraní language. While spoken in parts of Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina, it is in Paraguay where it really thrives. It is not only a *de iure*, but also a *de facto* official language in the country, with 95% of the population bilingual in it, including many of the richer and more powerful groups. Many politicians, including presidents, are Guaraní speakers, and there is a fair amount of publishing in the language.

In a way, it is surprising that any native languages of Latin America have managed to hold out until now. The key factor has undoubtedly been simply remoteness – social as well as geographical. To a certain extent this applies even to Guaraní, in the sense that Paraguay is one of the most isolated countries in Latin America, much of it remote desert.

The prospects of the indigenous languages are dire, although there are now incipient efforts at conservation. This includes establishing alphabets and a standard written form, at least for the various main dialects. This has largely been achieved for Aymara and various forms of Quechua, though arguments continue on the precise alphabets to be used. There are also efforts to introduce native languages as languages of education, to have written works published in them, and to give them a greater presence in modern media.

For many years, Latin America was seemingly permanently stuck halfway down the road to economic development, overtaken by Asia and forgotten by the United States and Europe. The 1960s and 1970s saw the region immersed in brutal military dictatorships, almost without exception. A good part of the 1980s was lost to inflation, foreign debt crises and spiraling violence, including narco-guerrilla movements, kidnappings and extortion. Intimidation of the local and international business and political communities was common. Successive economic and political shocks hit the region in the 1990s, with several presidents pushed out of power by military coups, popular revolts or congressional impeachments. Argentina and Brazil pegged their currencies to the US dollar to elude inflation, only to see these measures fall apart a few years later.

Times are changing fast, however. The future is yet unwritten, but in the case of Latin America it looks decidedly promising. Favorable economic and political winds now propel the continent forward with a self-confidence not felt in the region in living memory. Important gains have been made in terms of free and independent elections, freedom of the press, debt renegotiation and access to technology, especially broadband internet access and mobile phones. Nowadays, there is increasing optimism about the future of the region and growing interest from international businesses looking at entering its markets.

Languages

The languages of Latin America can be divided into three broad groups: the languages of the colonial powers; indigenous languages, some of which enjoy co-official status; and various pockets of other languages spoken by immigrant populations.



Major languages spoken in Latin America

The languages imposed by the process of European colonization of the Americas are mainly Indo-European. By a small margin, Portuguese is the majority language of South America, but looking at whole of Latin America, Spanish has more speakers. Dutch is the official language of Suriname; English is spoken in the Falkland Islands and is the official language of Guyana, although there are many other languages spoken in that country. French is the official language of the French overseas department of French Guiana.

Accurate figures for the number of speakers of indigenous languages in the Americas are hard to come by. However, those that make it to one million speakers or above, are found in three areas:

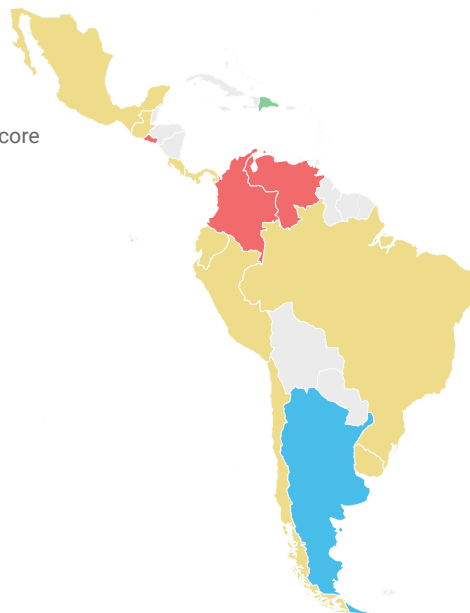
- ▶ Mesoamerica - home to Mayan, Nahuatl, Zapotec, Mixtec and many others.
- ▶ Paraguay - the only Latin American country where an indigenous language - Guaraní - has a truly meaningful official status.
- ▶ Central Andes - rugged mountainous regions are home to two: Aymara and Quechua.

In Bolivia, Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní are co-official alongside Spanish. In Paraguay, Guaraní shares joint official status with Spanish. In Colombia, more than 60 languages of the country's ethnic groups are constitutionally recognized. In Peru, Quechua, Aymara, and other indigenous languages are co-official in the areas where they are predominant. In Brazil, there are around 180 confirmed indigenous languages.

Other languages include Hindi and Javanese in Guyana and Suriname; Italian in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Venezuela and Colombia; and German in certain pockets in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Colombia and Paraguay. In Brazil, Italian and German dialects, specifically Talian, Pomeranian and Riograndenser Hunsrückisch, went as far as reaching co-official status alongside Portuguese in about a dozen cities, and are becoming mandatory subjects in schools in other municipalities. Welsh remains spoken and written in the historic towns of Trelew and Rawson in the Argentine Patagonia. There are small Croatian, Polish and Russian-speaking communities in Brazil, Chile, Peru and Argentina, and small clusters of Japanese-speakers in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Ecuador. Arabic speakers, often of Lebanese, Syrian or Palestinian descent, are found in Arab communities in Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay, and less frequently in Chile. The Rapa Nui language of Polynesian origin and Maori are found on Easter Island, Chile.

In most countries, the upper classes and well-educated people study English, French, German or Italian. In those areas where tourism is a significant industry, English and other European languages are often spoken. However, overall, the levels of English proficiency are low as evidenced by English Proficiency Index (EPI) rankings prepared by English First:

| Rank | Country | EF EPI Score |
|------|--------------------|--------------|
| 15 | Argentina | 60.26 |
| 24 | Dominican Republic | 56.71 |
| 35 | Peru | 52.46 |
| 36 | Chile | 51.88 |
| 38 | Ecuador | 51.67 |
| 40 | Mexico | 51.34 |
| 41 | Brazil | 51.05 |
| 43 | Costa Rica | 50.53 |
| 44 | Uruguay | 50.25 |
| 46 | Guatemala | 49.67 |
| 48 | Panama | 48.77 |
| 54 | Colombia | 46.54 |
| 59 | Venezuela | 46.14 |
| 61 | El Salvador | 45.52 |



Latin America – English First English Proficiency Index 2015

We will first look in-depth at the two dominant languages of the region: Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish, then at other important tongues, and finally at minor but still relevant indigenous languages.

Brazilian Portuguese

Brazilian Portuguese (*português do Brasil*) is a set of dialects of the Portuguese language used mostly in Brazil. It is the second most important language in Latin America and the sole official language of Brazil. It belongs to the same branch of Romance languages as Galician spoken in the Spanish autonomous community of Galicia just north of Portugal.

Brazilian Portuguese has had its own development, and is somewhat different, mostly in phonology (the sounds of the language), from the variant spoken in Portugal and other Portuguese-speaking countries. The dialects of the other countries have a closer connection to contemporary European Portuguese, partly because of the more recent end of Portuguese colonialism in these regions. The degree of difference between the two variants of the Portuguese language is a controversial topic. In formal writing, the written Brazilian standard differs from the European one to about the same extent that written American English differs from British English. The differences are noticeable in spelling, lexicon, and grammar. However, Brazilian and European Portuguese differ more from each other in phonology and prosody (stress and intonation). In 1990, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), which included representatives from all countries with Portuguese as the official language, reached an agreement on the reform of the Portuguese orthography to unify the two standards then in use by Brazil on one side and the remaining Lusophone (i.e. Portuguese-speaking) countries on the other. This spelling reform went into effect in Brazil on 1 January 2009. The president of Portugal signed it into law on 21 July 2008, allowing for a six-year adaptation period during which both orthographies would co-exist. The transition period in Portugal ended on the 12th of May of 2015. As of January 2016, transition has also ended in Cape Verde, making the reformed Portuguese orthography obligatory in three of the nine lusophone countries. The remaining countries are free to establish their own transition timetables.

Brazilian Portuguese has been influenced by the languages that it displaced in Brazil, primarily in terms of vocabulary, but also in the phonology and grammar. There are words that are used today in Brazilian Portuguese that originated from Guaraní and Yoruba.

Dialects: In spite of the use of Brazilian Portuguese by people of various linguistic backgrounds, a number of factors, especially its comparatively recent development and strong government support accorded to the written standard, have helped to maintain the unity of the language over the whole of Brazil. Starting in the 1960s, the nationwide dominance of television networks based in the southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo has made the accents of that region into a common spoken standard for the mass media.



Did you know?

The OK sign that Americans often use may be considered inappropriate in Brazil, because it looks similar to an offensive gesture. As an alternative, use the “thumbs up” gesture, which is as positive in Brazil as it is in the US.

In recent years, a few Brazilian states have given various minority languages co-official status. Both German and Pomeranian, a German dialect, are co-official languages in the southeastern state of Espírito Santo, while Riograndenser Hunsrückisch German has this status in Rio Grande do Sul, the country's southernmost state. Likewise, Talian, a dialect of Venetian, is a co-official language in both Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina states. A few Brazilian municipalities have also granted co-official status to indigenous languages. Guaraní, primarily spoken in Paraguay, is recognized in the nearby Brazilian municipality of Tacuru.

Compared with European Variety

With eighteen times the population of Portugal, Brazil is significantly larger. Brazilian music is popular around the world and Portuguese speakers in many countries tune in to Brazilian *telenovelas* (soap operas). This may explain why European Portuguese speakers have an easier time understanding spoken Brazilian Portuguese than the other way around. It is similar to the situation that exists between the United States and Britain. With five times the population of the UK and an area equivalent to half of South America, the US is slightly larger than Brazil. American music and films are exported worldwide, which may similarly explain why Britons are able to understand spoken American English better than Americans understanding some varieties of British English.

Rigid colonization policies of Portugal banned the existence of institutions of higher education, local newspapers or any kind of press in the colonies. Therefore, Brazil lacked some of the most powerful means available to other colonies to slow down the changing process that languages naturally undergo. It was also a barrier to bringing to Portugal the linguistic changes that were taking place in the colony. Similarly, new materials and linguistic changes taking place in Portugal were not disseminated among Brazilians. To a higher degree than other European colonial languages, Brazilian Portuguese kept some forms that became obsolete in Portugal and more rapidly incorporated others unknown to speakers of continental Portuguese. It was not until the Portuguese Court and Government fled the Napoleonic invasion and temporarily transferred to Rio de Janeiro in the first decade of the 19th century, that universities and a press were finally allowed in Brazil.

In many situations, the use of European Portuguese is unacceptable to Brazilians, and vice-versa. The choice of words can be completely different and sometimes sound funny or strange. This is especially true when it comes to technical texts, where even the choices of "imported" words are different. A Brazilian person can read a book or hear an interview on the radio—but that is the extent of the use of European Portuguese in Brazil. In Portugal, Brazilian Portuguese would carry a lot of "mistakes" and awkward word choices.

With regards to a few lines on packaging, one version may suffice, however regulations vary from country to country. Portugal is part of the European Union and regulatory demands require European Portuguese on packaging to that country. If a product is targeted to a specific market niche for widespread use, there should be two versions, one Brazilian and one European. Another factor to consider is national pride - the response of a consumer to a message that is obviously not directed to them.

While a text can be translated for one target country and then adapted for another, it is not a cost-effective solution in this case. Brazilian and European Portuguese translators would rather translate from scratch than edit a text translated for another market, since the changes are usually extensive and the time required for the task might be longer than what's required for normal editing.

The relevance of the difference between the two forms of Portuguese does not apply to all situations. José Saramago, for instance, is considered a great writer in most Portuguese-speaking countries. The more formal the language, the easier it will be to understand in another lusophone country; but there is no such thing as standard Portuguese.

Vocabulary: Distance and immigration have contributed to differences between Brazilian and European Portuguese. Italians, Germans, Japanese and their Spanish-speaking neighbors have introduced new words into the language. Other words have entered through contact with foreign products and technologies. However, some experts attribute the greatest differences between the languages to the influence of Amerindian languages, such as Guaraní, which was the language used by the natives to communicate with Portuguese traders, missionaries and adventurers. Take for example, the word for pineapple. In European Portuguese, it is *ananas*, similar to other European languages, but in Brazilian Portuguese, it is *abacaxi*, as in Amerindian.

Brazil has accepted more US technical terms into the language. Words such as software, mouse and site remain in English in Brazil, but in Portugal, they are translated to: *logicial*, *rato* and *sítio*. On the other hand, the term for screen in Portugal is *écran* or *ecrã* (from the French *écran*), but in Brazil, it is *tela*.

Pronunciation: The most noticeable differences in pronunciation are that European Portuguese uses a lot more "sh" and "zh" (as in pleasure) sounds than Brazilian Portuguese, and that some word endings are not pronounced in Portugal, while they are in Brazil. When an "s" comes at the end of a word in European Portuguese, it becomes an "sh" sound, as in *Português* - pronounced "por-too-geysh" in Portugal, but "por-too-geys" in Brazil. Amerindian influence contributed to Brazilian Portuguese speakers' pronunciation becoming more nasal and slower, pronouncing all the vowels. On the other hand, European Portuguese has been influenced by its neighbors, particularly Spain and France.

Spelling: Brazilian and European Portuguese words differ slightly, but the two countries have made efforts to standardize the rules of spelling so the written form is usually mutually intelligible. For example, Brazilian Portuguese tends to suppress surplus letters and consonant doublings that are common in European Portuguese. The following are a few examples:

| English | Portuguese (EU) | Portuguese (BR) |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| stockholder | accionista | acionista |
| fact | facto | fato |
| subtle | subtil | sutil |
| action | acção | ação |
| actual | actual | atual |
| selections | selecções | seleções |
| optimum | óptima | ótima |

Examples of vocabulary differences between Portuguese spoken in Brazil and in Portugal

Grammatical Differences: There are several differences in grammar, for example the use of infinitive vs. gerund. In European Portuguese "I am working" is: *estou a trabalhar* and "I am writing" is: *estou a escrever*. However, in Brazilian Portuguese the gerund is used instead - *estou trabalhando*, *estou escrevendo*. Both forms are understood in Brazil and Portugal, but may sound strange.

Another difference is in position of object pronouns. Brazilians use them before the verb, even in formal writing, but the Portuguese do not:

| English | Portuguese (EU) | Portuguese (BR) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Someone told me | Alguém disse-me | Alguém me disse |
| Someone saw me | Alguém viu-me | Alguém me viu |

One of the grammatical tenses used in Portugal - called pluperfect - has disappeared from Brazilian Portuguese. The second person plural is used in Portugal but not in Brazil, and compound tenses are more widely used in Brazil than in Portugal.

Spanish

Spanish is one of the main Romance languages, which means that much of its vocabulary, sounds, and grammar comes from the language of Rome - Latin. An estimated 70% of Spanish is derived from Latin and the other 30% from Arabic. In Latin America, Spanish has also adopted a significant vocabulary from native languages and other languages such as English. Around the world about 450 million people speak Spanish as their native language, and over 300 million of these are in Latin America.

The form spoken in Spain is called Castilian Spanish, European Spanish, Peninsular Spanish or Spanish for Spain (while Spaniards would just call their language *español*, and not *castellano*); and there are many dialects spoken in the Americas. However, speakers of almost all Spanish dialects can understand each other without major difficulties.

Compared with European Variety

Pronunciation varies from country to country and from region to region, just as English pronunciation varies from one place to another. We will look at various Latin American dialects of Spanish one by one, but there are also general differences between how the language is spoken in Spain and in the New World:

- ▶ Differences occur mostly in pronunciation and vocabulary, and less so in grammar.
- ▶ In general, coastal dialects throughout Latin America show strong similarities to Atlantic-Andalusian (western Andalusia and the Canary Islands) speech patterns, while inland regions in Mexico and Andean countries are not similar to any particular dialect in Spain.
- ▶ The distinction between the phonemes [s] and [θ] is maintained in northern and central Spain, while the two phonemes are merged in Latin America and most of southern Spain. The merged phoneme is realized as [s] in the Spanish of the Americas and Canary Islands, and as either [s] or [θ] in different parts of Andalusia in southern Spain. Depending on this realization, the use of the merged phoneme is called either *seseo* or *ceceo*, respectively.
- ▶ In Latin American Spanish, direct loanwords from English are more frequent, often used without adapting the spelling to the traditional norms. The most notorious example is the use of the word "email" or "e-mail" in Latin American instead of the more literal translation, *correo electrónico*, used in Spain; or *la computadora* instead of *el ordenador*.
- ▶ Indigenous languages have left their mark on American Spanish, which is particularly evident in vocabulary to do with flora, fauna, cultural habits and proper names.

- ▶ Since Latin American Spanish is closer to the dialects spoken in the south of Spain, synonyms of Arabic origin are more common. Examples include *alcoba* along with standard *cuarto*, *recámara*, *habitación*, *dormitorio*, *aposento* or *pieza* (bedroom), or *alhaja* for standard *joya* (jewel).
- ▶ Most Latin American Spanish dialects feature *yeísmo*—that is, there is no distinction between "ll" and "y", and both are pronounced [j]. However, *yeísmo* is an expanding and now dominant feature also in European Spanish. Additionally, speakers of Rioplatense Spanish pronounce both "ll" and "y" as [ʒ] or [ʝ], so that for example the first sound of the word *Yo* ("I") is similar to either the English sound of "s" in vision or the "sh" in shop.
- ▶ Most speakers of Caribbean and coastal dialects debuccalize syllable-final "s" to [h], or drop it entirely, so that *está* [es'ta] ("s/he is") sounds like [eh'ta] or [e'ta], like in southern Spain.
- ▶ In some areas of Spanish America, final "n" is pronounced as velar [ŋ], so a word like *pan* (bread) is often articulated [pɑŋ], a phenomenon known as velarization.
- ▶ For the second person formal, virtually all Spanish dialects of Spain and the Americas use *usted* and *ustedes* (singular and plural respectively), but for the second person informal, there is regional variation—between *tú* and *vos* for the singular, and between *vosotros* and *ustedes* for the plural. The use of *vos* (and its corresponding verb forms) rather than *tú* is called *voseo*.

There are also different conventions in punctuation between Latin American countries:

| | Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela | Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Puerto Rico |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Decimal Separator | , | . |
| Decimal Separator Example | 0,25 cm | 0.25 cm |
| Thousand Separator | . | , |
| Thousand Separator Example | \$ 1.500,00 | \$ 1,500.00 |

Differences in punctuation between Latin American countries

Andean Spanish

The term Andean Spanish is commonly applied to the spectrum of speech types encountered in the highland area stretching from the equator to the Tropic of Capricorn. In the colonial era, the Andean region was part of the Viceroyalty of Peru and was administered from Lima on the Pacific coast. Between 1535 and 1739, Lima was the capital of the Spanish Empire in South America, from which the culture spread, and its speech was considered by many as the purest because it was the home of the famous University of San Marcos of Lima and also because the city had the highest number of Castilian noble titles outside of Spain. The other main variety of Spanish from the coast of Peru appeared after the penetration of the linguistic habits of the mountain areas and of the rural environment into the coastal cities and Lima.

On the other hand, language contact between Spanish and indigenous languages Quechua and Aymara has been long-lasting and intense. In many areas stable forms of interlanguage Spanish have been in use for centuries. Some words from Quechua are for example: *alpaca*, *guano*, *vicuña* or *china*.

Caribbean Spanish

This is a Spanish marked with idioms, influenced by those who speak Andalusian, Canarian and above all the African presence. It is spoken in the island territories of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, as well as the coastal areas and, by extension, the interior of Venezuela, northern Colombia and the majority of Panama. It is also the most common Spanish in Miami and New York in the United States and the form most used by Salsa singers.

The Spanish colonial enterprise in the Americas was initiated in the Caribbean. Columbus's famous discovery of America in 1492 actually consisted of the "discovery" of Hispaniola, the island that is now divided into the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Two themes dominate the demographic make-up of the Caribbean: the importation of black slaves and immigration from the Canary Islands. Concerning the former, it is important to note that Caribbean ports – above all Cartagena – handled the bulk of slave imports from Africa until well into the 18th century. In the most extreme case, in Cuba, 40% of the population in the first quarter of the century consisted of African slaves. The African contribution to Caribbean speech is significant.

Secondly, Canary Islanders participated in the settlement of the Caribbean from the earliest phases of the colonial period, but their greatest impact stems from the waves of immigration that began in the 18th century and continued until the 1960s. The principal motivation for their settlement in the New World was economic hardship at home but in the 19th century immigration was also actively encouraged by the Spanish government as part of its attempt to stem the tide of nationalism in the colonies. Loyalist immigration of this type focused on Cuba and Puerto Rico, the two territories that remained under Spanish control the longest. The demographic impact of the Canary Islanders was significant in the Caribbean. As early as 1714, half the white population of the city of Caracas was composed of Canary Islanders. As a consequence of this heritage, the Spanish spoken in many areas of the Caribbean exhibits undeniable similarities to Canary Island Spanish.

Central American Spanish

The Central American republics of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, together with the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, have a shared colonial history. The territories in question originally formed a single administrative unit, the Audiencia of Guatemala. Though nominally subordinate to the Viceroyalty of Nueva España, whose capital was Mexico City, this *audiencia* in practice enjoyed a good deal of autonomy. Even after the territory became independent from Spain in 1821, the Central American nations remained unified, as the Federal Republic of Central America, for a further 17 years.

This along with common economic and cultural trends of decline and isolation throughout the colonial period and afterwards, has resulted in a broad linguistic unity throughout the area. Central American Spanish is characterized by a combination of archaism and innovation away from standard Spanish.

Parts of Central America lie outside the pale of Central American Spanish. Most of Panama belongs to the Caribbean dialect area, while the Caribbean lowlands of Nicaragua were never really Hispanized. They were only incorporated into the Nicaraguan political and social system well after the end of the colonial period, with the consequence that Spanish is a minority language spoken mainly by immigrants from western Nicaragua.

All of the phonological features of Central American Spanish are similar to Andalusian, Canarian, and Caribbean, and other Latin American Spanish dialects. It represents an intermediate point between the dialects of the highlands and the lowlands of the Americas and incorporates Amerindian words such as: *bohío* (hut/shack), *yuca* (lie/tough/hard), *sabana* (savannah) and *naguas/enaguas* (petticoat).

Chilean Spanish

Chile occupied a rather peripheral position in the Spanish Empire, isolated from the principle trading routes and administrative lines of communication. It belonged to the Viceroyalty of Peru and was governed from Lima, albeit with a significant degree of administrative autonomy from 1563, when the *Audiencia de Chile* came into existence. For much of the early colonial period the indigenous Mapuches harried the Spanish, while the area's natural resources were not fully exploited until the 19th century. For centuries, the Chilean economy's sole function was to provide the Viceroyalty of Peru with commodities like tallow, wheat, and leather. Like that of its sister nations to the east of the Andes, the Spanish of Chile drifted away from the Castilian model, and remained archaic compared to it. On the other hand, a number of features set it apart from Rioplatense Spanish (discussed later) and linguists tend to see Chile as forming a special dialectal enclave.

The Spanish spoken in Chile differs with other Latin American dialects in pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary. It is recognized for having a wide variety of registers for each situation and for its conjugation of the second person singular *tú*. In Chile, there are not many differences between the Spanish spoken in the Northern, Central and Southern parts of the country, but there is variation in the Spanish spoken by different social classes and depending on familiarity between speakers.

Equatorial Spanish

Also called Coastal Colombian-Ecuadorian dialect or Chocoano, it is a dialect of Spanish spoken mainly in the coastal region of Ecuador, as well as bordering coastal areas of northern Peru and southern Colombia. It is considered to be transitional between the Caribbean and Andean Spanish. The major influential linguistic center is the city of Guayaquil, Quito, Buenaventura, and Bogota. There is an important sub-variety of this dialect spoken by African-descent communities dwelling on the border between coastal Colombia and Ecuador which add African influences to the dialect spoken there.

Mexican Spanish

Historically, the evolution of Mexican Spanish coincides in a number of respects with the development of Andean Spanish. Like Lima, Mexico City was for centuries the hub of one of the great viceroyalties of colonial America, which stretched from the middle of what is now the United States in the north to Panama in the south. As a natural result of Mexico City's prominent role in the colonial administration north of the equator, the population of the city included relatively large numbers of speakers from the center of the Spanish empire - Castile. Consequently, like Lima within the Audiencia of Lima, Mexico City exercised a standardizing effect within its sphere of influence.

The territory of contemporary Mexico is not identical with Mexican Spanish usage. Firstly, the Spanish of the Yucatán peninsula is similar to the dialects of Central America, as is the Spanish spoken in the areas that border Guatemala. Secondly, the waves of 19th and 20th century migration from Mexico to the USA have caused Mexican Spanish to become the most widely spoken variety of Spanish throughout the USA. The Caribbean coastal areas of Veracruz and Tabasco are also distinctive, as the Spanish spoken there exhibits more Caribbean phonetic traits. Finally, Mexico City, the capital of the country, hosts most of the mass communication media with international reach. Because of this, most of the dubbing identified abroad with the label "Mexican Spanish" or "Latin American Spanish" actually corresponds to the Central Mexican variation.

The Spanish spoken in Mexico has an indigenous Nahuatl foundation. While in vocabulary the indigenous influence is undeniable, it is hardly felt in the area of grammar. Sometimes the Nahuatl vocabulary co-exists with the Spanish, as in the cases of *cuate* and *amigo* (friend), *guajolote* and *pavo* (turkey), *chamaco* and *niño* (boy), *mecate* and *reata* (rope). In other cases, the indigenous word differs slightly from the Spanish, as in the cases of *huarache*, which is a type of sandal; *tlapalería*, a type of hardware store, *molcajete*, a stone mortar. Finally, Mexican Spanish involves the universal use of the personal pronoun *ustedes* for formal and informal situations, the *seseo* and the *yeísmo*.

Rioplatense Spanish

The area around the Río de la Plata is now one of the most densely populated in Latin America, but throughout much of the colonial period it was an economic and cultural backwater. With the prohibition on direct trade across the Atlantic, for centuries it was accessible only by an enormous overland journey across the continent. The full importance of the area was only acknowledged with the formation of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata in 1776, comprising present-day Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia. This historical isolation from the centers of power, culture and education is reflected in a variety of Spanish characterized by archaism and non-standard innovation. This regional form of Spanish is also found in other areas, not geographically close but culturally influenced, for example parts of Paraguay and in all of Patagonia. Rioplatense is the standard in audiovisual media in Argentina and Uruguay.

The settlement of Argentina was carried out from three different points. In the first place, settlement of the area immediately around the Río de la Plata came directly from Spain, with the foundation of Buenos Aires in 1536. Throughout the bulk of Argentina, excluding the northwest, the Cuyo region next to Chile and the Guaraní-speaking areas close to the northeastern border with Paraguay, Buenos Aires is regarded as the locus of the standard Argentine variety of Spanish. Northwestern Argentina was settled from Peru, via Bolivia. The Spanish of this area is similar to the Andean varieties of the language, especially as this region once contained a significant Quechua-speaking population. Finally, the Cuyo region in the extreme west was settled from Chile and the speech of this area still bears a close resemblance to the Spanish of central Chile.

Modern Uruguay, in contrast, has a much shorter history. It remained pretty much unsettled by Europeans until the Portuguese incursions from 1680 onwards. Montevideo was only established in 1726 by Spaniards from Buenos Aires as a garrison designed to repel the Portuguese. From then on, the territory was fought over, first by Spaniards and Portuguese, and later by Argentines and Brazilians, until it was established as an independent state in 1828.

About 70% of the Uruguayan population lives in Montevideo, and much of the Spanish spoken in Uruguay can be regarded as an extension of the Buenos Aires dialect. An exception is the bilingual *fronterizo* speech encountered close to the border with Brazil, the legacy of a long history of settlement and annexation on the part of Uruguay's Portuguese-speaking neighbor.

Río de la Plata

The Río de la Plata (Silver River, also called River Plate in English) is the estuary formed by the confluence of the Uruguay River and the Paraná River on the border between Argentina and Uruguay. It is a funnel-shaped indentation on the southeastern coastline of South America, about 290 kilometers long.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the arrival of tens of thousands of Italians in Río de la Plata cities resulted in a major demographic shift, with residents of Italian origin accounting at the peak of the immigration for almost half the population of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The Italo-Spanish interlanguage that flourished among Italian immigrants was known as *cocoliche*. Much caricatured in literature and on the stage, it came to occupy a prominent position in popular culture but has now more or less died out. Canary Island immigration to the region in the 19th and 20th centuries was also significant, and it is not difficult to find similarities between Rioplatense and Canary speech.

Main outstanding features of Rioplatense Spanish is widespread use of *vos* instead of *tú*, with their corresponding verb conjugation changed, especially in their accentuation, so that the words with "ll" sound like "ye" and in some regions like "sh".

While there are vocabulary differences between Argentinian Spanish and Uruguayan Spanish, both incorporate terms from Guaraní such as: *tapir*, *ananá* (pineapple), *caracú* (bone marrow), *yacaré* (alligator), *tapioca*, *mandioca* (cassava/tapioca/manioc). Some words also came from Quechua, for example: *guacho* or *guacha* (originally *wakcha* "poor person, vagabond, orphan"), which may be related to gaucho, name for the native cowboys of the Pampas. There is also expanded use of augmentatives and diminutives, such as: *pesitos*, *cerquita*, *amigazo*, *buenazo*, *grandote*. The phrasal verb "ir a" replaces the future tense, for example, *voy a ir* (instead of *iré*), *voy a cantar* (instead of *cantaré*). Finally, some terms used locally are: *lindo* (*bonito* - beautiful), *pollera* (*falda* - skirt), *vereda* (*acera* - pavement/sidewalk), *flete* (*caballo* - horse).

Universal Spanish

While the differences between Spanish spoken in different Latin American countries are not as pronounced as those between for example German and Chinese, they exist and shouldn't be ignored.

At the same time, the need to localize into "neutral" or "international Spanish" is a recurrent theme. The terms do not refer to any specific dialect of the language, but rather to an artificial creation using terms or phrases best suited to a multinational target audience. This form of Spanish is perceived to be the best solution in encompassing broad linguistic differences, as it is the lowest common denominator of all Spanish variants and eliminates idioms and regional mannerisms. For example, the term "computer" can be translated as *computadora*, *computador* or *ordenador* depending on the country or region in which that term is used. In order to avoid controversy, some decide to use either *PC* or *equipo*.

Another example is the use of the Spanish pronouns: *tú*, *vos*, *usted*, *ustedes* and *vosotros*. Since it varies from area to area in the Spanish-speaking world, the recommendation is to use the formal form *usted* to address the user. However, there might be cases where it is necessary to address the user in an informal way. In those cases, *tú* or *ustedes* may be used. But since the use of *ustedes* for the second person plural form of addressing the users also presents a problem, it may be necessary to rephrase the sentences to avoid the use of the pronoun. With a little bit of creativity, a translator would usually be able to achieve this.

| English | Spanish (Spain) | Spanish (LA) | Universal Spanish |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Take | Coger | Agarrar | Tomar |
| Suitcase | Maleta | Valija | Equipaje |
| Ticket | Billete | Boleto | Pasaje |
| Apartment/Flat | Piso | Departamento | Apartamento |
| Computer | Ordenador | Computadora | Equipo/PC |
| Glasses | Gafas | Anteojos/Lentes | Lentes |
| Mobile phone | Móvil | Celular | Teléfono móvil |
| Car | Coche | Carro/Auto | Automóvil |

Examples of different words used in Spanish for Spain, for Latin America, and Universal Spanish

Companies that use Universal Spanish do so for practical reasons. It is often not possible or too costly to produce multiple Spanish versions of the same document at the same time. While a universal form of the language can be used instead, it is important to remember that the more universal and generic the language, the less powerful it becomes. The following guidelines will help to understand when Universal Spanish may be used:

1. It is more suitable for dry technical content, since volumes are usually high and there are fewer differences between countries in technical language. On the other hand, marketing documents, such as ads, commercials, and brochures, should be localized for each market.
2. Universal Spanish will always be recognized as such and will feel dry and alien to the target audience regardless of the country. It is up to you to decide whether this is an acceptable price for the savings you make.
3. It will often not be possible to find a perfectly universal term which will work in every Spanish-speaking country. In some cases, you will need to decide between two mutually-exclusive choices. However, very rarely will it cause the message to be misunderstood.
4. Readers will be more forgiving if you are honest about your use of Universal Spanish. Include a note explaining that the choice was made to make the content as widely understood as possible.

| Universal Spanish | Spanish (LA) + Spanish (EU) | Spanish (EU) + Spanish for each major region in LA | Different for each country |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Low budget | ←—————→ | | High budget |
| Dry, technical content | ←—————→ | | Marketing, creative content |
| Low risk, not sensitive | ←—————→ | | High risk, sensitive |

When can Universal Spanish be considered?

Universal Spanish has been advocated not only for texts but also for speech. "We need an interpreter who speaks neutral Spanish" is the request sometimes heard in international events. But no such interpreter exists. Spoken Spanish has many variants and it is impossible to create a middle ground between them. The best way to overcome this issue is to make efforts to eliminate the salient features of national or local speech.

Aymara

Language family: Quechuamaran is a language-family proposal that unites Quechua and Aymara. It has not been universally accepted.

Speakers: Around 2 million

Status: Aymara is an official language of Bolivia along with Quechua and Spanish.

Distribution: Most speakers are in western Bolivia, the rest in northern Chile and southernmost part of Peru around Lake Titicaca.

Dialects: Central Aymara spoken in Bolivia and Chile, and Southern Aymara in Peru.

GDP of speakers: Low



Did you know?

For anyone who thinks in Aymara, the past is in front and the future behind. Time moves relentlessly forward. The unknown is behind our backs and what has already happened – right in front of us. The word *qaruru* (tomorrow) is composed of two elements: *qaru* (right behind) and *uru* (day); to express it the speaker gestures up and towards the back. For *masuru* (yesterday), the gestures are down and towards the front.

Aymara was spoken by people who settled the shores of Lake Titicaca three thousand years ago and still inhabit Bolivia and Peru. Neither the Incas nor the Spaniards were able to wipe out this ancestral language of the Altiplano. Both Quechua and Spanish were forcibly imposed upon the Aymara rather than accepted willingly. One wonders how the Aymara language could possibly have survived for centuries without literature or dictionaries, and despite the fact that Aymara-speaking people have been oppressed since the Altiplano was conquered by the Incas.

Dutch

Language family: Indo-European

Speakers: over 200 000

Status: Statutory national language in Caribbean Netherlands, *de facto* national language of Suriname.

Distribution: Spoken in former Dutch colonies, around 200 000 speakers in Suriname and 30 to 40 thousands altogether in Aruba, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

Dialects: "Surinaams-Nederlands" ("Surinamese Dutch") is the national dialect equal to "Nederlands-Nederlands" ("Dutch Dutch") and "Vlaams-Nederlands" ("Flemish Dutch").

GDP of speakers: Medium



Did you know?

The regulation of the Dutch language is done through a joint Dutch-Belgian-Surinamese organization, the Dutch Language Union, and thus has no regional differences regarding spelling. Suriname has been an associate member of this Nederlandse Taalunie since 2005. Therefore, many typical Surinamese words were added to the official Wordlist of Standard Dutch, known as "the Green Booklet" (Groene Boekje).

English

Language family: Indo-European

Speakers: Around 4 million.

Status: Statutory national language of: Caribbean Netherlands, Falkland Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Sint Maarten. Statutory national working language in Puerto Rico. *De facto* national language of: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Distribution: English is the *de facto* national language of many island nations in the Caribbean, especially those that were British colonies. There are around two million speakers in Puerto Rico, over one million speakers in Jamaica and similar numbers in Trinidad and Tobago, over 100 000 in both Turks and Caicos Islands and US Virgin Islands, between 10 and 100 000 in Honduras, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Dominica and Guyana.

Dialects: English spoken in Latin America is invariably affected by other languages of each country, most commonly Spanish. One example is Jamaican Patois (or Patwa), which is an English-based creole.

GDP of speakers: Medium



Did you know?

Jamaican English like Canadian English, resembles parts of both British English and American English dialects due to influences from both sources. Uniquely, it has many aspects of Irish intonation.

French

Language family: Indo-European

Speakers: Around 600 000.

Status: Statutory national language in French Guyana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Barthélemy, Saint Martin. Statutory national working language in Haiti.

Distribution: Mostly second-language users in French Guyana and Haiti, a few thousand in each of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin.

Dialects: French Guianese Creole is widely spoken in French Guiana, Haitian Creole in Haiti, Antillean Creole French in the Lesser Antilles.

GDP of speakers: Medium



Did you know?

While the two official languages of Haiti are French and Haitian Creole, French is spoken by all educated Haitians, and is used in administration, the press, as the medium of instruction in most schools, and in the business sector.

Guaraní

Language family: Tupí-Guaraní

Speakers: Around 5 million

Status: An official language of Paraguay along with Spanish; second official language of the Argentine province of Corrientes, and an official language of Mercosur (Southern Common Market) along with Portuguese and Spanish.

Distribution: Most speakers are in Paraguay where it's spoken by the majority of the population. It is also spoken in parts of northeastern Argentina, southeastern Bolivia and southwestern Brazil, and is a second official language of the Argentine province of Corrientes since 2004.

Dialects: Of the main surviving Amerindian languages, Guaraní is the only one that can boast a big population all speaking a fairly homogenous single language. *Jopará* or *Yopará* is a colloquial form of Guaraní spoken in Paraguay, which uses large numbers of Spanish loan words. Since 1992, under the Paraguay's Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) Act, Guaraní in its "pure form" — different from the day-to-day speech of *jopará* — has been taught in schools.

GDP of speakers: Medium



Did you know?

There is one Guaraní word you have probably come across. It is in the name of the famous hero of the Cuban Revolution, Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Che was a nickname given to him by the Cubans. This is originally a Tupi word for brother, used as an informal term of address to friends, like "hey, brother!" in some forms of English.

Guaraní is spoken by 95% of the population of Paraguay and in small pockets in neighboring countries, to a total of five million speakers. Guaraní is also often talked about in the same breath as Tupi, which is the wider language family, with minor tribes scattered across much of Brazilian Amazonia.

Unlike many languages indigenous to Latin America, the bulk of which have disappeared since European colonization, Guaraní has survived for centuries and became an official language of Paraguay in 1992. While other indigenous languages in the region have also gained legitimate status, their use is largely limited to indigenous populations. By contrast, Guaraní is spoken by the vast majority of Paraguayans, most of whom are *mestizos*, with a mixture of European and Amerindian ancestry. Despite Guaraní's widespread use and official status in Paraguay, Spanish is dominant in official domains such as public administration, schooling, mass media, business, and commerce. In the context of education, although the majority of Paraguayan children, especially in rural areas, speak Guaraní natively, the language of instruction is predominantly Spanish.

There are several explanations for the survival of Guaraní, one of which concerns Paraguayan geography. The country is surrounded by the Paraguayan and the Parana Rivers, running from the Atlantic to the eastern foothills of the Andes. This geographical factor has helped Paraguay avoid external invasions, massive immigration, and cultural influences, though the use of Guaraní has not been solely limited within the territories between the two rivers.

Secondly, under the Spanish, various Tupi-Guaraní speaking tribes around the Iguazu Falls, in the borderlands of modern-day Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, were brought into the famous Jesuit missionary settlements. The contribution of Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries was a critical element in the survival of Guaraní. The Jesuits studied and created a written form of Guaraní and made it the only official language in the Jesuit provinces. The 1980s film *The Mission* gives an insight into their nature at their peak, and their ultimate deliberate destruction for enslavement when the Jesuits were expelled.

The political attitude toward Guaraní has fluctuated throughout Paraguayan history, largely dependent on ruling political leaders and prevailing sociopolitical contexts. From 1954 through 1989, the Guaraní language was considered a national symbol of unification and patriotism. However, although the National Constitution of 1967 declared both Guaraní and Spanish as co-national languages, only Spanish received the prestigious status of an official language. After the fall of the Stroessner government in 1989, as part of the process of democratization, along with Spanish, Guaraní became recognized as an official language by the New National Constitution in 1992. The New Educational Reform of the same year mandates the teaching of both Guaraní and Spanish in school.

Mapudungun

Language family: Araucanian

Speakers: Around 150 000.

Status: Mapudungun is not an official language of Chile or Argentina, and has received virtually no government support throughout its history.

Distribution: Almost all in south-central Chile, a few thousand in west central Argentina.

Dialects: Linguists recognize four to eight dialects of Mapudungun.

GDP of speakers: Low



Did you know?

Nearly all Mapuche people are bilingual or monolingual in Spanish.

Mapudungun (from *mapu* – “earth, land” and *dungun* – “speak, speech”) is a language isolate spoken in Chile and Argentina by the Mapuche people (from *mapu* “earth” and *che* “people”). It is also spelled Mapuzugun and Mapudungu, and was formerly called Araucanian by the Spaniards. Today, the Mapuche consider this term offensive and a remnant of Spanish colonialism. It is not used as a language of instruction in either Chile or Argentina’s educational systems. There is an ongoing political debate over which alphabet to use as the standard alphabet of written Mapudungun.

Mayan

Language family: Proto-Mayan

Speakers: Around 6 million

Status: 21 Mayan languages are officially recognized in Guatemala, 8 more in Mexico.

Distribution: Mayan languages are spoken primarily in Guatemala, Mexico, Belize and Honduras.

Dialects: Many Mayan dialects or languages and not mutually intelligible.

GDP of speakers: Low



Did you know?

"Sic" is Mayan for "tobacco" and "sicar" means "to smoke tobacco leaves". This is the most likely origin of "cigar" and "cigarette" in English.

Mayan languages were spoken in Mesoamerica before the arrival of various peoples from Europe, and they are still spoken today in a variety of dialects, some of which are so mutually unintelligible as to be considered separate languages. Mayan was and is spoken entirely within the borders of what we now call Central America. Among the living Mayan languages are Kekchi, Mam, Yucatec, Quiché, and Cakchiquel.

The most striking thing about Mayan is that, exceptionally among languages of the New World, it had an original written form. Many Mayan historical writings in this script survived to the Spanish era. Indeed, one particular Spanish priest - Diego de Landa - set about painstakingly collecting all the documents that he could find. He wrote a few notes on the alphabet, before burning everything as heretical. Only four that escaped him have been found since, though there are also a few monumental inscriptions in the script in ruin sites unknown to the Spaniards.

The first great breakthrough in the decipherment of the Mayan writing system was proposed in the 1960s by the Russian Yuri Knorosov, and completed in the years thereafter. Some of the new texts on monumental inscriptions found at newly-discovered Mayan sites in the 1970s were vital in confirming the accuracy of the decipherment.

Nowadays Mayan survives as a language family splintered into a collection of about seventy different dialects or languages, spoken in southern Mexico and Guatemala by Indian populations. In 1996, Guatemala formally recognized 21 Mayan languages by name, and Mexico recognizes eight more. The Mayan language family is one of the best documented and most studied in the Americas.

Nahuatl

Language family: Uto-Aztecan

Speakers: Around 1.5 million

Status: Under Mexico's *Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas* (General Law on the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples) promulgated in 2003, Nahuatl and the other 63 indigenous languages of Mexico are recognized as national languages in the regions where they are spoken, enjoying the same status as Spanish there.

Distribution: Most speakers reside in central Mexico.

Dialects: There are considerable differences among varieties of Nahuatl, and some are mutually unintelligible. Huasteca Nahuatl, with over 1 million speakers, is the most-spoken variety.

GDP of speakers: Low



Did you know?

The word *nahuatl* refers to a trained religious practitioner in the pre-Conquest period, and the word is still used today for native shamans who carry on a modern version of the Aztec religion. It is related to *nahual*, which means someone capable of turning himself into an animal, such as the god-like jaguar.

Known informally as Aztec, this is the native language of people in central and south-central Mexico. This was the principal language of the Mexica people in the central valley, where Mexico City has been for the past 500 years. It was also the principal imperial and trade language of the Aztec empire throughout Mesoamerica for the last two centuries before the Spanish conquest. Currently, this language is spoken by about two million people, principally in the central Mexico highlands.

In linguistic terms, Nahuatl is agglutinative and synthetic, which means that it uses compounding (e.g. *quetzal-coatl* = *Quetzalcoatl*), incorporation, and derivation. Hence, Nahuatl has many prefixes and suffixes, which can make very long words. Official Mexican Spanish has borrowed about a thousand words from it. Here are some frequently used ones: avocado (*ahuacatl*; *aguacate* in Spanish); cacao (*cacahuatl*); chile/ chili (*chilli*); chocolate (*xocolatl*); coyote (*coyotl*); Mexico (*mexihco*); tomato (*xi-tomatl*; tomato or jitomate in Mexican Spanish).

Papiamentu

Language family: Indo-European

Speakers: Around 300 000

Status: Official language of Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba.

Distribution: Almost all speakers in Curaçao.

Dialects: Two main dialects, one in Aruba and one in Curaçao and Bonaire, with lexical and intonational differences.

GDP of speakers: Medium



Did you know?

While Papiamentu is the most widely spoken language on Curaçao, Dutch is the sole language for all administration and legal matters.

Papiamentu or Papiamentu is a combination of Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch representing the respective colonizers. It is the most widely-spoken language on the Caribbean ABC islands, having official status as the native language on the islands of Aruba and Curaçao. The language is also recognized on Bonaire by the Dutch government. Papiamentu is a language derived from African and Portuguese languages with some influences from American Indian languages, English, Dutch and Spanish. Papiamentu has two main dialects: Papiamentu on Aruba; and Papiamentu on Bonaire and Curaçao.

Quechua

Language family: Quechuamaran is a language-family proposal that unites Quechua and Aymara. It has not been universally accepted.

Speakers: Up to 8 – 10 million speakers.

Status: Quechua has the status of an official language in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, along with Spanish.

Distribution: Over 3 million in Peru, about 2 million in Bolivia and Ecuador each, and up to a million in Argentina. The rest in Colombia and Chile.

Dialects: Quechua is divided into:

- ▶ The Central Quechua dialects spoken in the central Andean spine of Peru.
- ▶ The Incas extended Quechua to modern-day Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile. The language continued to expand after the Spanish conquest, and today it is spoken in some areas which were never part of the Inca Empire, such as parts of Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina.
- ▶ Distinctive forms of Quechua are found in the north of Peru (Cajamarca, San Martín, Loreto) and in Ecuador, where it is known as Quichua.
- ▶ The best-known form of Quechua is that spoken in Cuzco in southern Peru and east to Bolivia.

GDP of speakers: Low



Did you know?

The Incas did not lay down before the Spanish docilely. Armed resistance continued for 50 years after the Spanish conquest, and flared up again in 1770 in the rebellion of Tupaq Amaru II, still remembered fondly by the Quechua (and by fans of one American rapper).

Quechua (in Quechua: *Runa Simi*) was the language of the Inca people and the Inca empire for about 100 years before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. It is a language still spoken in the Andean mountains centered around Peru and extending from southern Colombia through the Andean regions of Chile and Argentina. Contemporary Quechua has many loan words from Spanish, while a number of Quechua words are now in Standard English including coca, condor, guano, gaucho, guanaco, Inca, jerky, llama, pampa, puma, quipu, quinine, quinoa and *soroche*, Spanish word for elevation sickness.

From the Spanish conquest until 1975, Quechua was written according to Spanish spelling norms. However, a new spelling system was adopted in Peru in 1975, which was closer to Quechua itself than to Spanish. In 1985, Peru adopted the three-vowel system of Quechua replacing the Spanish five-vowel system used before.

It has long been believed that Quechua and Aymara are related, but doubt has recently been cast on this hypothesis. The chief problem is that the similarity is most pronounced between Cuzco Quechua and its neighbor Aymara; other dialects are less obviously related. It may be that the languages have simply borrowed massively from each other.

Others

Latin America is among the most linguistically abundant and the poorest documented parts of the world. As a result, many relationships between languages and language families have not been determined and some of the relationships proposed are not universally accepted.

Although Quechua and Aymara are now the only two surviving major native languages in the Andes, in the early years of Spanish rule the colonial authorities noted the presence of several others in areas which were later to come to speak Aymara or Quechua, or of course Spanish. It is clear that these other indigenous languages were still spoken over wide areas in southern Peru and Bolivia. Those that crop up often in Spanish colonial documents were called Puquina and Uruquilla (now known as Uru-Chipaya). Whether these are to be recognized as very distinct languages, closely related ones, or just as different names given by the Spaniards for effectively the same language, has been a matter of dispute.

The Uros or Urus of the Bolivian Altiplano were almost the only native communities whom the Spaniards left essentially outside their economic and social systems. They had existed from well before the invasion, small ancient outcast communities forbidden from holding land or animals, and who therefore had to make their living from fishing in the lakes of the Andes. All that is left of the **Uruquilla** (i.e. **Uru-Chipaya**) language are a few pockets of tiny Uros communities, living a humble existence around Lake Titicaca and Lake Poopó, and the Chipaya people in the villages north of Lake Coipasa.

Puquina language appears to be entirely extinct, except for certain traces, which appear to have survived in the language of traders who live in the region east of Lake Titicaca. They speak a mixed language, much of it Quechua but with significant elements of another language, assumed by some to be Puquina.

Arawakan (also known as Arahuan or Maipuran) is a language family that developed among ancient indigenous peoples in South America. Branches migrated to Central America and the Greater Antilles in the Caribbean and the Atlantic, including what is now called the Bahamas. Only present-day Ecuador, Uruguay and Chile did not have peoples who spoke Arawakan languages. Maipuran may be related to other language families in a hypothetical Macro-Arawakan stock.

Cariban languages are an indigenous language family of South America. They are widespread across northernmost South America, from the mouth of the Amazon River to the Colombian Andes, but also appear in central Brazil. Cariban languages are relatively closely related, and number two to three dozen, depending on what is considered a dialect. Most are still spoken, though often by only a few hundred speakers. Some years prior to the arrival of the first Spanish explorers, Caribs invaded and occupied the Lesser Antilles, killing, displacing or assimilating the Arawaks who inhabited the islands. The resulting language was Carib in name but largely Arawak in substance. This was due to invading Carib men killing Arawak men and taking Arawak wives, who then passed their language on to the children.

Garifuna (Karif) is an atypical member of the Arawakan language family since it is spoken outside of the Arawakan language area which is confined to the northern parts of South America, and because it contains an unusually high number of loanwords from both Carib and a number of European languages. The language was once confined to the Antillean island of St. Vincent and Dominica, but due to twists of fate its speakers landed on Mainland Honduras from where the language has since spread south to Nicaragua and north to Guatemala and Belize.

Countries

The following is a brief look at each Latin American country or territory. Excluded are those with populations under 500 000, which are: Anguilla (United Kingdom), Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba (Netherlands), The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda (United Kingdom), Bonaire (Netherlands), British Virgin Islands (United Kingdom), Cayman Islands (United Kingdom), Curaçao (Netherlands), Dominica, Falkland Islands (United Kingdom), French Guiana (France), Grenada, Guadeloupe (France), Martinique (France), Montserrat (United Kingdom), Saba (Netherlands), Saint Barthélemy (France), Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin (France), Saint Pierre and Miquelon (France), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Eustatius (Netherlands), Sint Maarten (Netherlands), South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (United Kingdom), Turks and Caicos Islands (United Kingdom), United States Virgin Islands (United States).

Argentina



Area: 2,766,890 km²

Population: 42 million

GDP: \$947,573

Languages: Spanish (39.5 million speakers)

Status: Spanish is *de facto* national language.

Dialects: Mostly Rioplatense Spanish, Andean Spanish in Northwestern Argentina and Chilean Spanish in Cuyo region in the extreme west.

Argentina is divided into 23 provinces and one autonomous city, Buenos Aires. The culture of Argentina has been principally influenced and formed by its European roots. Because it has both abundant natural resources and a well-educated workforce, Argentina is one of South America's largest economies.

Bolivia



Area: 1,098,580 km²

Population: 10 million

GDP: \$69,963

Languages: Spanish (almost 9 million), Quechua (almost 2 million), Aymara (almost 2 million), 35 additional indigenous languages

Status: Spanish, Guaraní, Aymara, Quechua and 34 other indigenous languages, are statutory official languages.

Dialects: Andean Spanish

Since 2009, a new constitution changed the country's official name to Plurinational State of Bolivia to reflect the fact that Bolivia is multiethnic, with significant numbers of Amerindians, Mestizos, Europeans, Asians and Africans. Bolivia's diversity has contributed greatly to its rich art, cuisine, literature, and music.

Brazil



Area: 8,514,877 km²

Population: 203,106,000

GDP: \$3,263,866

Languages: Brazilian Portuguese

Status: National language

Brazil is the largest country in Latin America, and fifth largest in the world, both by geographical area and by population. It is the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world, and the only one in the Americas. It borders all other South American countries except Ecuador and Chile. Although first a Portuguese colony, it has now dwarfed its parent both in terms of economy and geopolitical power.

Chile



Area: 756,950 km²

Population: 17,773,000

GDP: \$396,923

Languages: Spanish (almost 14 million), Mapudungun, Rapa Nui (on Easter Island)

Status: Spanish is *de facto* national language.

Dialects: Chilean Spanish

Spain conquered and colonized Chile in the mid-16th century, but failed to conquer the independent Mapuche people that inhabited south-central Chile, which allowed their language Mapudungun to survive. Chilean territory includes the Easter Island with its unique language of Rapa Nui. Today, Chile is one of region's most stable and prosperous nations, leading in competitiveness, income per capita, economic freedom, democratic development and low perception of corruption.

Colombia



Area: 1,138,910 km²

Population: 47,757,000

GDP: \$638,357

Languages: Spanish (over 42 million), Amerindian languages

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish in coastal areas, Equatorial Spanish in Southern Colombia, while highland varieties have been historically more conservative. The educated speech of Bogotá holds high popular prestige among Spanish-speakers throughout the Americas.

Colombia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, both in terms of biodiversity and territory, and cultural and ethnic identities. From the 1960s, the country suffered from armed conflict in rural areas fuelled by cocaine trade, but since 2000 the situation has largely stabilized as most guerrilla groups have disbanded.

Costa Rica



Area: 51,100 km²

Population: 4,667,096

GDP: \$70,974

Languages: Spanish (4 million), English

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Central American Spanish

Following a bloody civil war in the 1940s, Costa Rica permanently abolished its army. The country has since performed well on human development and economic indices, and is known for its progressive environmental policies.

Cuba



Area: 109,886 km²

Population: 11,167,325

GDP: \$234,193

Languages: Spanish (over 11 million)

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. It was a colony of Spain until the Spanish–American War of 1898, after which it gained nominal independence as a *de facto* U.S. protectorate in 1902. Instability of the authoritarian government, led to a communist revolution in 1965 and seizure of power by Fidel Castro and introduction of sanctions by the USA and other Western nations, which have been relaxed only recently.

Dominican Republic



Area: 48,671 km²

Population: 10,378,267

GDP: \$138,007

Languages: Spanish (over 9 million)

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish

The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Both by area and population, it is the second-largest Caribbean nation after Cuba. Although long known for agriculture and mining, the economy is now dominated by services, including tourism.

Ecuador



Area: 283,560 km²

Population: 15,819,400

GDP: \$180,493

Languages: Spanish (over 13 million), Quechua

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Equatorial Spanish in the coast, Andean Spanish in the highlands, and Amazonic Spanish in areas around the Amazon River.

Ecuador is ethnically diverse, with most of its population comprised of *mestizos* followed by large minorities of European, Amerindian, and African descendants. Territory of Ecuador includes the Galápagos Islands, famed for their vast number of endemic species.

El Salvador



Area: 21,041 km²

Population: 6,401,240

GDP: \$50,944

Languages: Spanish (over 6 million)

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Central American Spanish

El Salvador is the smallest and the most densely populated country in Central America. The population consists mostly of *mestizos* of European and Indigenous American descent. From the late 19th to mid-20th century, El Salvador endured chronic political and economic instability characterized by coups, revolts, and a succession of authoritarian rulers, which culminated in the devastating Salvadoran Civil War lasting until 1992. The conflict ended with a settlement that established a multiparty constitutional republic.

Guatemala



Area: 108,889 km²

Population: 15,806,675

GDP: \$119,375

Languages: Spanish (9 million), Garifuna, Mayan languages

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Spanish is statutory national language.

What is today Guatemala was for centuries part of the Mayan civilization. Nowadays, most of the population are *mestizos* and Mayan languages are still in use.

Guyana



Area: 214,999 km²

Population: 784,894

GDP: \$6,256

Languages: Guyanese Creole English (over 700,000)

Status: English is *de facto* national language.

Guyana was originally colonized by the Netherlands and later became a British colony, known as British Guiana until it achieved independence in 1966. It is one of the few Caribbean countries that are considered part of South American continent and the only South American nation in which English is the official language.

Haiti



Area: 27,750 km²

Population: 10,745,665

GDP: \$13,150

Languages: Haitian Creole French (7 million)

Status: French is statutory national language.

Haiti occupies the western, smaller portion of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti gained independence in 1804 becoming the first independent nation of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the only nation in the world established as a result of a successful slave revolt. Recently, Haiti has been plagued by political instability and social strife with a provisional government and security provided by the United Nations.

Honduras



Area: 112,492 km²

Population: 8,555,072

GDP: \$38,420

Languages: Spanish (almost 9 million), Garifuna

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Central American Spanish

Honduras was home to several important Mesoamerican cultures, most notably the Maya, prior to the introduction of Roman Catholicism and the now predominant Spanish language.

Jamaica



Area: 10,991 km²

Population: 2,717,991

GDP: \$25,620

Languages: Jamaican Creole English/Patois (almost 3 million)

Status: English is *de facto* national language.

Once a Spanish possession known as Santiago, in 1655 it came under the rule of England, and was renamed Jamaica. It is the third most populous Anglophone country in the Americas, after the United States and Canada.

Mexico



Area: 1,964,375 km²

Population: 119,713,203

GDP: \$2,125,257

Languages: Spanish (104 million), 68 indigenous languages

Status: Spanish is *de facto* national language.

Dialects: Mainly Mexican Spanish, Caribbean Spanish in coastal areas of Veracruz and Tabasco, Central American Spanish in areas that border Guatemala.

Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world and the second most populous country in Latin America. In pre-Columbian Mexico many cultures matured into advanced civilizations such as the Olmec, the Toltec, the Teotihuacan, the Zapotec, the Maya and the Aztec before first contact with Europeans. Mexico's capital is both the oldest capital city in the Americas and one of only two founded by Amerindians, the other being Quito. The city was originally built in 1325 on an island of Lake Texcoco, as one of the power centers of the Aztec empire called Tenochtitlan.

Nicaragua



Area: 130,373 km²

Population: 6,071,045

GDP: \$27,100

Languages: Spanish (over 5 million), Nicaragua Creole English

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Central American Spanish, while Mestizo speakers of Spanish learn Miskito.

The population of Nicaragua is multiethnic. Segments of the population include indigenous native tribes from the Mosquito Coast, Europeans, Africans, Asians, and people of Middle Eastern origin. The main language is Spanish, although tribes on the eastern coast speak their native languages, as well as English creole. The mixture of cultural traditions has generated substantial diversity in art and literature.

Panama



Area: 75,417 km²

Population: 3,405,813

GDP: \$80,811

Languages: Spanish (over 3 million), Panamanian Creole English

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish

Panama was inhabited by several indigenous tribes prior to settlement by the Spanish in the 16th century. Panama Canal, which connects the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean was transferred to the country fully in 1999 and contributes a significant portion of its GDP.

Paraguay



Area: 406,750 km²

Population: 6,783,374

GDP: \$58,280

Languages: Guaraní, Spanish (almost 4 million)

Status: Spanish and Guaraní are statutory national languages.

Dialects: Rioplatense Spanish, but with a lot of Guaraní influences.

Paraguay is a land-locked country in the center of South America. One of the interesting aspects of Paraguayan social history is the frequency of mixed unions during the colonial period. For much of the era, the typical Paraguayan family consisted of a Spanish-speaking father and a Guaraní-speaking mother, a fact that may partly explain the widespread Spanish-Guaraní bilingualism that exists today. Among bilinguals, there is normally a preference for Guaraní in intimate, personal and familiar situations. Moreover, Guaraní is used more in rural than in urban areas.

Peru



Area: 1,285,220 km²

Population: 30,814,175

GDP: \$371,347

Languages: Spanish (26 million), Quechua, Aymara

Status: Spanish is statutory national language. Also official are Quechua and Aymara in areas where they predominate.

Dialects: Andean Spanish.

Peruvian territory was home to ancient cultures from the Norte Chico civilization, one of the oldest in the world, to the Inca Empire, the largest state in Pre-Columbian America. There is a language divide between the coast where Spanish is more predominant over the Amerindian languages, and the more diverse traditional Andean cultures of the mountains and highlands. The indigenous populations east of the Andes are ethnically distinct from those who live in the mountains.

Puerto Rico



Area: 8,870 km²

Population: 3,615,086

GDP: \$125,630

Languages: Spanish (almost 4 million), English (almost 2 million)

Status: Spanish is statutory national language and English is statutory national working language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish

Originally populated for centuries by aboriginal people known as Taíno, the island was claimed by Christopher Columbus for Spain during his second voyage to the Americas. Like Cuba, Puerto Rico remained a Spanish colony until 1898 when Spain ceded its control of the island to United States following the Spanish–American War. Puerto Rico is now a territory of the United States with limited autonomy.

Suriname



Area: 163,270 km²

Population: 534,189

GDP: \$6,874

Languages: Dutch (over 200 thousand), Hindi-Urdu, Sranan, Javanese, English Creole

Status: Dutch is *de facto* national language.

Suriname was colonized by the English and the Dutch in the 17th century. Between 1667 and 1954, it was governed by the Netherlands as Dutch Guiana and subsequently as a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Since 1975, the country of Suriname left the Kingdom of the Netherlands to become independent. Culturally, it is considered to be a Caribbean country and has extensive trade and cultural exchange with other Caribbean nations.

It is the only Dutch-speaking country in South America, and one of the two non-Romance-speaking countries on the continent, the other being English-speaking Guyana.

Trinidad and Tobago



Area: 5,130 km²

Population: 1,328,019

GDP: \$40,832

Languages: English (over 1 million), Trinidadian Creole, Tobagonian Creole

Status: English is *de facto* national language.

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin island country off the northern edge of South America, near the coast of northeastern Venezuela. It is usually considered part of the Caribbean. The islands of Trinidad and Tobago were ceded to Britain in 1802, but remained separate until 1889. The country Trinidad and Tobago obtained independence in 1962, and became a republic in 1976.

Uruguay



Area: 176,220 km²

Population: 3,286,314

GDP: \$71,414

Languages: Spanish (over 3 million)

Status: Spanish is *de facto* national language.

Dialects: Rioplatense Spanish

Uruguay remained largely uninhabited until the establishment of European settlements in the country by the Portuguese in 1680. The country was an object of a four-way struggle between Spain, Portugal, Argentina and Brazil until it finally won its independence between 1811 and 1828. However, it remained subject to foreign influence and intervention throughout the 19th century. Nowadays, Uruguay is home to 3.3 million people, of which 1.8 million live in the metropolitan area of its capital and largest city, Montevideo.

Venezuela



Area: 916,445 km²

Population: 30,206,307

GDP: \$538,932

Languages: Spanish (26 million) and 40 indigenous languages

Status: Spanish is statutory national language.

Dialects: Caribbean Spanish

The territory currently known as Venezuela was colonized by Spain in 1522 amid resistance from indigenous peoples. In 1811, it became one of the first Spanish-American colonies to declare independence, which was not securely established until 1821. Previously an underdeveloped exporter of agricultural commodities such as coffee and cocoa, since the discovery of oil in the early 20th century, Venezuela has become one of the world's leading exporters of oil.

Conclusions

We started this white paper with a reminder that Latin America used to be treated as a homogeneous region by external powers, and we hope that by now we have shown how untrue that approach was. We have looked at countries and languages one by one and delved deeper into the most important ones.

Thanks to recent advances in development, security and economic growth, Latin America is becoming more and more appealing to international businesses and localization for the region is rising on the agenda. Although Brazilian Portuguese for Brazil and a generic Latin American or Universal Spanish for the rest may have been sufficient in the past, it is time to question this assumption. While the two dominant languages will open the doors to Latin America, they will not be a point of differentiation any longer. As the region develops and there is a rising pride in national and cultural identities, now more than ever there is a rationale to pay closer attention to what the customers in each market respond to best.

Go global by going local.

Sources

This is a list of the most important sources we drew on when writing this white paper. Whenever possible, a live direct link was added to allow you to read more about each topic.

[EF EPI](#) - English Proficiency Ranking by English First

[Logical and Linguistic Problems of Social Communication with the Aymara People](#) by Iván Guzmán de Rojas

[Microsoft Spanish and Portuguese Style Guides](#)

[Quechua](#) by Paul Heggarty

[Spain and America: From Reconquest to Conquest](#) - part of LEARN NC, a program of the UNC School of Education

[The Linguistics of Spanish](#) - website by Newcastle University

[With Spanish, Guaraní lives: a sociolinguistic analysis of bilingual education in Paraguay](#) - in Multilingual Education 2012 2:6

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Examples of Spanish Variants

English Source

After waking up, I went for a quick swim in the pool. Then I got dressed and had a fruit salad with bananas and pineapples for breakfast. I wanted to check my email before leaving home, but internet on the desktop computer was slow. I used the 3G on my smartphone instead. There were no important messages, but I took the opportunity to book a hotel room online and reconfirm my flight to LA. I grabbed the suitcase, went out of the apartment and drove my car to the airport. There was still some time left, so I used the restroom and waited in the business lounge reading a newspaper.

The flight was uneventful, and I slept most of the way in the spacious, first-class seating of the Boeing 787. I had a busy couple of days ahead of me filled with meetings and presentations for clients. I was woken up by the flight attendant on the PA system announcing we were landing soon and asking everyone to buckle up and adjust their seats and tray tables. As the wheels hit the tarmac, I breathed a sigh of relief and looked around for my suitcase. My heart missed a beat – it was gone!

What would you do in this situation?

Colombian Spanish

Después de levantarme fui a nadar un rato a la piscina. De vuelta me vestí y desayuné ensalada de frutas con bananos y piña. Decidí revisar mi correo antes de salir de casa pero el internet de mi PC estaba muy lento así que usé mi celular 3G. No había mensajes importantes pero aproveché para reservar una habitación hotelera y reconfirmar mi vuelo a LA. Tomé mi maletín, salí de apartamento y manejé hasta el aeropuerto. Como tenía algo de tiempo fui al baño y esperé en el Salón VIP leyendo un periódico.

El vuelo fue rutinario y dormí casi todo el vuelo en ese espacioso y cómodo asiento de primera clase del Boeing 787. Los siguientes dos días iba a estar bien ocupado con reuniones y presentaciones para clientes. La azafata me despertó al anunciar por el parlante que ya íbamos a aterrizar y nos pidió que nos ajustáramos los cinturones de seguridad, enderezáramos el asiento y guardáramos las bandejas. Cuando el avión tocó tierra, respiré con alivio y me paré a buscar mi maletín. Mi corazón se detuvo un instante... no estaba el maletín.

¿Qué haría usted en esa situación?

Rioplatense Spanish

Después de levantarme, fui a darme un chapuzón a la pileta. Después me vestí y desayuné una ensalada de frutas con bananas y ananá. Quería mirar a ver si tenía mensajes de email pero el internet de la PC estaba muy lento. Así que usé el 3G del teléfono. No tenía mensajes importantes, pero aproveché para hacer una reserva online de un cuarto de hotel y reconfirmar mi vuelo a Los Ángeles. Agarré la valija, salí del departamento y manejé en auto al aeropuerto. Me quedaba algo de tiempo, así que fui al baño y esperé en la sala VIP leyendo el diario.

El vuelo no tuvo inconvenientes y me la pasé durmiendo casi todo el viaje en el espacioso asiento de primera clase del Boeing 787. Me esperaban un par de días muy agitados, llenos de reuniones y presentaciones con clientes. Me desperté cuando la azafata anunció por los parlantes que pronto aterrizaríamos, pidiéndole a todos los pasajeros que se abrocharan los cinturones, recolocaran los asientos y plegasen las bandejas. Cuando las ruedas tocaron la pista, respiré aliviada y miré alrededor buscando mi valija. Casi me da algo, ¡la valija había desaparecido!

¿(Vos) qué harías en esta situación?

Mexican Spanish

Tras despertar, me di un rápido chapuzón en la piscina. Después me vestí y desayuné una ensalada de frutas con plátano y piña. Quería revisar mi correo electrónico antes de salir de casa, pero la conexión a Internet en la computadora de escritorio era lenta. Opté mejor por usar la conexión 3G en mi smartphone. No había mensajes importantes, pero aproveché la oportunidad de reservar un cuarto de hotel en línea y reconfirmar mi vuelo a LA. Tomé la maleta, salí del apartamento y conduje mi auto hacia el aeropuerto. Aún quedaba algo de tiempo, por lo que usé el baño y esperé en la sala de negocios mientras leía un periódico.

El vuelo no tuvo inconvenientes; dormí la mayor parte del camino en el espacioso asiento de primera clase del Boeing 787. Me esperaban un par de ajetreados días con reuniones y presentaciones para clientes. Desperté por la voz de la auxiliar de vuelo en el sistema de sonido anunciando que aterrizaríamos pronto y pidiendo a todos que abrocharan sus cinturones, ajustaran sus asientos y plegaran sus bandejas. Cuando las ruedas hicieron contacto con la pista de aterrizaje, respiré aliviado y miré a mi alrededor en busca de mi maleta. Mi corazón se detuvo por un instante: ¡había desaparecido!

¿Qué haría usted en esta situación?

Universal Spanish

Después de despertarme, me di un rápido chapuzón en la piscina. Luego me vestí y comí una ensalada de frutas con bananas y piñas como desayuno. Quería chequear mi correo electrónico antes de salir de casa pero la Internet en mi computadora andaba lento. Entonces, usé el 3G de mi teléfono. No tenía mensajes importantes, pero aproveché para reservar online una habitación y confirmar mi vuelo a Los Ángeles. Tomé la maleta, salí del apartamento y manejé hasta el aeropuerto. Todavía había tiempo, así que fui al baño y esperé en el Salón Vip mientras leía el diario.

El vuelo fue tranquilo y dormí durante la mayor parte del trayecto en el asiento espacioso, de primera clase, del Boeing 787. Tenía por delante varios días llenos de reuniones y presentaciones a clientes. Me despertó la azafata, al avisar a través de los parlantes que estábamos por aterrizar y que era necesario ajustar nuestros cintos de seguridad y poner nuestros asientos y mesas en posición. Al tocar las ruedas la pista de aterrizaje, di un suspiro de alivio y miré alrededor buscando mi maleta. Mi corazón se paró por un segundo: ¡mi maleta había desaparecido!

¿Qué harías en esta situación?

Spanish for Spain

Tras despertarme, fui a darme un chapuzón a la piscina. A continuación, me vestí y desayuné una macedonia de plátano y piña. Mi intención era echar un vistazo al correo electrónico antes de salir de casa, pero la conexión a Internet del ordenador era demasiado lenta, así que en su lugar tuve que utilizar el 3G de mi smartphone. No había ningún mensaje importante, pero aproveché para reservar una habitación de hotel online y volver a comprobar mi vuelo a Los Ángeles. Cogí la maleta, salí del apartamento y me dirigí en coche hacia el aeropuerto. Llegué con tiempo de sobra, así que fui al cuarto de baño y esperé en la sala VIP leyendo un periódico.

El vuelo fue muy tranquilo, y me pasé casi todo el viaje durmiendo en el espacioso asiento de primera clase del Boeing 787. Me esperaban un par de días muy ajetreados, llenos de reuniones y presentaciones con los clientes. Me desperté cuando el auxiliar de vuelo anunció por el sistema de megafonía que pronto aterrizaríamos, pidiéndole a todos los pasajeros que se abrochasen los cinturones de seguridad y que recolocasen los asientos y plegasen las bandejas. Cuando las ruedas tocaron la pista, respiré aliviada y busqué mi maleta con la mirada. Casi me da algo, ¡la maleta había desaparecido!

¿Qué harías en esta situación?

Appendix 2 – Examples of Portuguese Variants

English Source

After waking up, I went for a quick swim in the pool. Then I got dressed and had a fruit salad with bananas and pineapples for breakfast. I wanted to check my email before leaving home, but internet on the desktop computer was slow. I used the 3G on my smartphone instead. There were no important messages, but I took the opportunity to book a hotel room online and reconfirm my flight to LA. I grabbed the suitcase, went out of the apartment and drove my car to the airport. There was still some time left, so I used the restroom and waited in the business lounge reading a newspaper.

The flight was uneventful, and I slept most of the way in the spacious, first-class seating of the Boeing 787. I had a busy couple of days ahead of me filled with meetings and presentations for clients. I was woken up by the flight attendant on the PA system announcing we were landing soon and asking everyone to buckle up and adjust their seats and tray tables. As the wheels hit the tarmac, I breathed a sigh of relief and looked around for my suitcase. My heart missed a beat – it was gone!

What would you do in this situation?

Portuguese for Portugal

Depois de acordar, dei um rápido mergulho na piscina. Vesti-me depois e comi uma salada de fruta com banana e ananás ao pequeno-almoço. Queria ver o meu email antes de sair de casa, mas a ligação à Internet do meu computador estava muito lenta. Prefiri utilizar a 3G do meu telemóvel. Não havia nenhuma mensagem importante, mas aproveitei a oportunidade para marcar online um quarto de hotel e para reconfirmar o meu voo para Los Angeles. Peguei na pasta, sai do apartamento e conduzi o meu carro até ao aeroporto. Como ainda tinha algum tempo, fui para a sala de espera e aguardei no lounge executivo enquanto lia um jornal.

O voo foi tranquilo e eu dormi a maior parte do tempo num espaçoso lugar de primeira classe num Boeing 787. Esperavam-me uns dias bastante ocupados, preenchidos com reuniões e apresentações a clientes. Acordei com a voz da hospedeira no altifalante a anunciar que iríamos aterrar em breve e a pedir a todos os passageiros que apertassem o cinto e ajustassem as suas cadeiras e os tabuleiros. Mal as rodas tocaram na pista, respirei de alívio e procurei pela minha pasta. O meu coração parou – tinha desaparecido!

O que faria(m) numa situação destas?

Brazilian Portuguese

Após acordar, dei um mergulho na piscina. Então eu me vesti e comi uma salada de frutas com banana e abacaxi no café da manhã. Queria checar meus e-mails antes de sair de casa, mas a internet no computador estava lenta. Então usei o 3G no meu smartphone. Não havia nenhuma mensagem importante, mas eu aproveitei a oportunidade para reservar um quarto de hotel online e reconfirmar meu voo para Los Angeles. Peguei a mala, saí do apartamento e dirigi meu carro até o aeroporto. Ainda havia algum tempo, então usei o banheiro e aguardei na sala de negócios lendo um jornal.

O voo foi tranquilo e eu dormi a maior parte do tempo no assento espaçoso e de primeira classe do Boeing 787. Tive dois dias ocupados, cheios de reuniões e apresentações para clientes. Fui acordado pela aeromoça no sistema de som, anunciando que estávamos prestes a aterrissar e solicitando a todos que afivelassem seus cintos e ajustassem suas poltronas e mesas. Assim que as rodas tocaram a pista, eu suspirei aliviado e procurei a minha mala. Meu coração parou – ela havia desaparecido!

O que você faria nesta situação?

Appendix 3 – Data on Countries

| Country or territory | Area (km ²) | Population | Languages (official in bold) | GDP (PPP) in million USD |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------------|
|  Anguilla (United Kingdom) | 91 | 13,452 | English | \$175 |
|  Antigua and Barbuda | 442 | 86,295 | Creole, English | \$1,605 |
|  Argentina | 2,766,890 | 42,669,500 | Spanish | \$947,573 |
|  Aruba (Netherlands) | 180 | 101,484 | Papiamentu , Spanish, Dutch , English | \$2,516 |
|  Bahamas, The | 13,943 | 351,461 | Creole, English | \$11,240 |
|  Barbados | 430 | 285,000 | Bajan, English | \$7,169 |
|  Belize | 22,966 | 349,728 | Spanish, Belizean Creole (Kriol), English | \$3,048 |
|  Bermuda (United Kingdom) | 54 | 64,237 | English | \$5,600 |
|  Bolivia | 1,098,580 | 10,027,254 | Spanish , Quechua, Aymara, 35 indigenous languages | \$69,963 |
|  Bonaire (Netherlands) | 294 | 12,093 | Papiamentu , Spanish, Dutch | |
|  Brazil | 8,514,877 | 203,106,000 | Brazilian Portuguese | \$3,263,866 |
|  British Virgin Islands (United Kingdom) | 151 | 29,537 | English | \$500 |
|  Cayman Islands (United Kingdom) | 264 | 55,456 | English | \$2,250 |
|  Chile | 756,950 | 17,773,000 | Spanish | \$396,923 |
|  Colombia | 1,138,910 | 47,757,000 | Spanish , Amerindian languages | \$638,357 |
|  Costa Rica | 51,100 | 4,667,096 | Spanish , English | \$70,974 |
|  Cuba | 109,886 | 11,167,325 | Spanish | \$234,193 |

| Country or territory | Area (km ²) | Population | Languages (official in bold) | GDP (PPP) in million USD |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|--|--------------------------|
|  Curaçao (Netherlands) | 444 | 150,563 | Papiamentu , Dutch, English, Spanish | \$2,838 |
|  Dominica | 751 | 71,293 | French Patois (Antillean Creole), English | \$1,018 |
|  Dominican Republic | 48,671 | 10,378,267 | Spanish | \$138,007 |
|  Ecuador | 283,560 | 15,819,400 | Spanish , Quechua | \$180,493 |
|  El Salvador | 21,041 | 6,401,240 | Spanish | \$50,944 |
|  Falkland Islands (United Kingdom) | 12,173 | 3,000 | English | \$164 |
|  French Guiana (France) | 91,000 | 237,549 | French | |
|  Grenada | 344 | 103,328 | English , Grenadian Creole English, Grenadian Creole French | \$1,467 |
|  Guadeloupe (France) | 1,628 | 405,739 | French | |
|  Guatemala | 108,889 | 15,806,675 | Spanish , Garifuna, Mayan languages | \$119,375 |
|  Guyana | 214,999 | 784,894 | English , Guyanese Creole | \$6,256 |
|  Haiti | 27,750 | 10,745,665 | Haitian Creole , French | \$13,150 |
|  Honduras | 112,492 | 8,555,072 | Spanish , Garifuna | \$38,420 |
|  Jamaica | 10,991 | 2,717,991 | Jamaican Patois, English | \$25,620 |
|  Martinique (France) | 1,128 | 392,291 | French Patois, French | |
|  Mexico | 1,964,375 | 119,713,203 | Spanish , 68 indigenous languages | \$2,125,257 |
|  Montserrat (United Kingdom) | 102 | 4,922 | Creole English, English | \$44 |
|  Nicaragua | 130,373 | 6,071,045 | Spanish | \$27,100 |
|  Panama | 75,417 | 3,405,813 | Spanish , English | \$80,811 |
|  Paraguay | 406,750 | 6,783,374 | Guaraní , Spanish | \$58,280 |

| Country or territory | Area (km ²) | Population | Languages (official in bold) | GDP (PPP) in million USD |
|---|-------------------------|------------|---|--------------------------|
|  Peru | 1,285,220 | 30,814,175 | Spanish, Quechua, Aymara | \$371,347 |
|  Puerto Rico (United States) | 8,870 | 3,615,086 | Spanish, English | \$125,630 |
|  Saba (Netherlands) | 13 | 1,537 | English, Dutch | |
|  Saint Barthélemy (France) | 21 | 8,938 | French | |
|  Saint Kitts and Nevis | 261 | 55,000 | English | \$946 |
|  Saint Lucia | 539 | 180,000 | English, French Creole | \$2,233 |
|  Saint Martin (France) | 54 | 36,979 | French | \$561 |
|  Saint Pierre and Miquelon (France) | 242 | 6,081 | French | \$215 |
|  Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 389 | 109,000 | English | \$1,312 |
|  Sint Eustatius (Netherlands) | 21 | 2,739 | English, Dutch | |
|  Sint Maarten (Netherlands) | 34 | 37,429 | English, Dutch | \$798 |
|  South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (United Kingdom) | 3,093 | 20 | English | |
|  Suriname | 163,270 | 534,189 | Dutch, Hindi-Urdu, Sranan, Javanese, English Creole | \$6,874 |
|  Trinidad and Tobago | 5,130 | 1,328,019 | English, Trinidadian Creole, Tobagonian Creole | \$40,832 |
|  Turks and Caicos Islands (United Kingdom) | 948 | 31,458 | Creole English, English | \$632 |
|  United States Virgin Islands (United States) | 347 | 106,405 | English, Spanish, French | |
|  Uruguay | 176,220 | 3,286,314 | Spanish | \$71,414 |
|  Venezuela | 916,445 | 30,206,307 | Spanish, 40 indigenous languages | \$538,932 |

* Source: Wikipedia