
Spanglish: America's bilingual challenge. When language meets identity

We are launching a call for papers for a collective volume on Spanglish, a linguistic phenomenon resulting from interactions between Spanish and English in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. We invite scholars to submit abstracts on this topic. Accepted articles will be published in a special issue of the journal *Cycnos*.

Overview

In the last U.S. census, 54 million people reported as Hispanic or Latino, out of a total population of 331 million, or around 16% of the national population (Cf. U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). In 2019, the same census estimated that 41 million people spoke Spanish at home in the United States. The actual figures may of course be higher, as they obviously do not include illegal immigrants. Moreover, projections indicate that the number of Spanish speakers will continue to rise in the years to come.

The national origins of these Spanish speakers are, in descending order of importance, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican and Central American (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras). The states in which those Spanish speakers are highly represented are New Mexico, California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Florida, Colorado and New York, but it should be noted that some communities were in fact 'absorbed' by the evolution of the border during the 19th and even 20th centuries (with the particular case of Puerto Rico). In the United States, Spanish is traditionally spoken by three different demographic groups: newly arrived Hispanics, who are essentially monolingual and retain dialectal linguistic traits from their countries of origin; bilingual Hispanics, who were born in the United States and speak English and Spanish like native speakers; and finally, people of Hispanic descent, who sometimes have a more passive and fragmentary knowledge of Spanish. It was against this backdrop that the term 'Spanglish' emerged, to refer more or less precisely to the language spoken by all these speakers. Originally an intellectual term (coined in the mid-twentieth century by the Puerto Rican writer Salvador Tió), it has been used historically and to this day with two main meanings: one centred on the language and the other more focused on its users and their culture.

The first meaning includes the strictly linguistic features (lexical, syntactic, phonetic, phraseological, etc.) of English that are transferred to Spanish and vice versa, as well as 'hybrid' words and constructions that did not exist in either of the two original languages; it also includes the practice of code-switching between Spanish and English; and finally, it broadly refers to US Spanish and even to the English spoken by some US Hispanics.

As for the second meaning, that which refers to its users and their culture, it relates to the communal use of Spanish and English among Hispanic speakers in the United States and thus points to the sociolinguistic problem of their dual identity and their specific

conceptualization of the world. It manifests itself in the art, culture, literature, music, media, etc., produced by Hispanics or Latinos in the United States, whose identity is bicultural.

However, the concept of 'Spanglish' itself is controversial and has given rise to extensive debates about its relevance, validity and theoretical usefulness, provoking objections from linguists, philologists and journalists almost since its creation. Some authors consider that its usage is inaccurate from a linguistic perspective (since it includes both Spanish and English spoken by Spanish speakers in the United States), that it is too polysemous, that it lacks scientific rigour and that, ultimately, it analyses the situation of Spanish in the United States differently from that of any other Spanish-speaking area.

Nevertheless, other authors (as well as many of its speakers in the Spanish-speaking community in the United States) consider that the use of this term is fully justified, as it is, at any rate, a necessary term to describe a set of linguistic characteristics that are distinctive of a situation of linguistic contact, as well as a complex heritage that is the consequence of the cultural mixing of a border community, both literally and figuratively. Spanglish is said to contribute to the integration of individuals and the expression of culturally specific concepts.

In this call for papers, we invite scholars to explore these issues in order to offer a clearer and more precise vision of the Spanglish question. The aim is not only to contextualize and precisely define the limits of the concept, but also to study its linguistic and cultural characteristics and implications.

We therefore welcome articles that either address the concept of Spanglish (the relevance and limits of this controversial term) or explore strictly linguistic, social, cultural or artistic aspects, and offer new perspectives on this complex and evolving phenomenon.

Topics of interest

The contributions might include but are not restricted to the following topics:

Topic 1. The emergence and evolution of Spanglish in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States: history and limits of the concept.

Topic 2. The linguistic analysis of Spanglish: syntax, lexicon, morphology, phonetics, variation, language contact, bilingualism, etc.

Topic 3. The sociolinguistic dynamics of Spanglish: attitudes, perceptions and uses in relation to English and Spanish.

Topic 4. The use of Spanglish in literature, the media and the arts: the assertion of a dual identity?

About the journal

Cycnos was founded in Nice in 1984 and has been supported by LIRCES (Laboratoire interdisciplinaire récits cultures et sociétés) since 2008. The journal focuses on literature, civilization, cinema and linguistics in English-speaking countries, mainly the UK and the

USA. It is indexed in the bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America and in Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory (Bowker, New Jersey, USA).

Websites: <https://www.editions-harmattan.fr/catalogue/revue/cynos/166> and <https://epi-revel.univ-cotedazur.fr/collections/show/76>

Submission guidelines

Please send

- 1) a file containing the author's name and a brief biographical note and
- 2) a file containing an abstract of approximately 1000 words (2 pages, excluding bibliography) and 3 to 5 keywords to Ruxandra PAVELCHIEVICI and Didier REVEST (email them at: firstname.LASTNAME@univ-cotedazur.fr) by 1st May 2025.

The authors of the selected abstracts must then submit the full article (15 to 20 pages, 7,500 to 10,000 words) respecting the Cynos stylesheet by 1st September 2025.

The abstracts and the selected articles may be written in French, English or Spanish.

Suggested bibliography

- Ardila, A. (2005). "Spanglish: An Anglicized Spanish Dialect". *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. 27:1, 60-81
- Guzzardo Tamargo, RE., Mazak, CM. & Parafita Couto, MC. (2016). *Spanish-English codeswitching in the Caribbean and the US*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lipski, J. M. (2020). "Spanish, English or Spanglish? Truth and consequences of U.S. Latino bilingualism", in Nelsy Echavez-Solano et Kenya C. Dworkin y Mendez (eds.) *Spanish and Empire*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press: 197–218
- Lipski, J. M. (2008). *Varieties of Spanish in the United States*. Georgetown University Press.
- López García-Molins, A. (2015) *Teoría del Spanglish*. Valencia: Tirant Humanidades.
- Otheguy, R., & Stern, N. (2010). "On so-called Spanglish". *International Journal Of Bilingualism*, 15(1), 85-100.
- Otheguy, R., Zentella, A.C. (2012). *Spanish in New York: language contact, dialectal leveling, and structural continuity*. Oxford University Press.
- Reagan, T. «The Emergence of a Contact Language: Spanglish in the United States». *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies*, vol. 7, n.o 1, mai 2023.
- Stavans, I. (2003). *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language*. New York: Rayo.
- Thomas, Erik R. (2019). *Mexican American English. Substrate Influence and the Birth of an Ethnolect*. Cambridge University Press.
- Toribio, A. J. (2002). "Spanish-English code-switching among US Latinos." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Vol. 2002 (Issue 158), pp. 89-119.
- Zentella, A. C. (1997). *Growing up bilingual: Puerto Rico Children in New York*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Keywords

Spanglish, sociolinguistics, bilingualism, biculturalism, Latinos, code-switching.

Contacts

For any questions or further information, please contact Nicolas TRAPATEAU or Christian VICENTE (email them at firstname.LASTNAME@univ-cotedazur.fr)