

Research areas for Guatemalan Spanish

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Last revision August 2006

Research topics on Guatemalan Spanish that need immediate linguistic attention are posted here in the hope that investigators and students interested in Spanish dialectology may become interested in pursuing one or more of these important and fascinating topics.

Phonology

- Distribution of the assibilated R with description of social correlations and phonological contexts as well as processes of change underway
- Distribution and characterization of fricative series, especially the variation affecting /j/
- Occurrence and distribution of glottal stops
- Distribution of the variants of /y/ with special attention to the age-related social contexts
- Systematic analysis of the viability and possible phonemicity of the palatal fricative [š]
- Intonation patterns
- Gender differences in intonation

Morphosyntax

- Verbal tense and aspect, especially distribution of present, present perfect, and other perfects
- Distribution and uses of subjunctive, especially absence of subjunctive when expected in temporal clauses and other contexts of subordination
- *Lo que* and *de que* as subordinators
- Distribution and use of negatives
- Distribution and use of reflexives
- Voice, especially uses of passive and medio-passive
- Use of auxiliary constructions instead of subjunctive and/or future

Lexicon

- Documentation of rural and regional forms in danger of disappearing
- Documentation of degree of English borrowing in contemporary urban speech
- Documentation of youth speech forms related to experience as migrants
- Etymological investigation of geographic labels and toponyms
- Comparison of Mexican and Guatemalan realizations of Nahuatl loanwords, e.g., *guacamole* vs. *guacamol*
- Documentation of potential Mayan loanwords
- Documentation of Basque, Catalan and other Spanish regional loanwords
- More thorough documentation of archaic vocabulary
- Documentation of disappearing lexicon of flora, fauna, and medicinals

Semantics

- Semantics of agency
- Semantics of possession

- Semantics of movement and direction

Sociolinguistics

- Distribution of voseo and other forms of address with special attention to issues of gender
- Detailed description of rural speech forms
- Use of diminutive and augmentative forms by gender, genre, formality, etc.
- Analysis of characteristics of educated Mayan Spanish
- Detailed description of youth speech, especially as influenced by experiences in the US
- Detailed examination of language use in bilingual communities

Discourse

- Types and distribution of discourse markers
- Patterns of constructed speech in narration
- Inventory of proverbs, sayings, and idioms with analysis of distribution and contexts of use
- Documentation of folktales among older ladinos, both rural and urban
- Oral histories of the 20th century

History

- Documentation of speech forms in communities settled by Spaniards in 18th century and relatively isolated since then (endangered dialects)
- Documentation of regional immigration patterns as related to regional linguistic contact, e.g., with German in the Verapaces or Catalan in Oriente
- Analysis of patterns of language change affecting Mayan languages in contact with each other and with Spanish in early settlements
- Documentation of medical vocabulary and practice introduced in early colonial period
- Documentation of processes of contact between Spanish and local languages during early colonial period

Applied

- Methods and materials for improvement of orthography
- Methods and materials for improvement of bilingual instruction
- Methods and materials for encouraging a habit of reading
- Justification of inclusion of individual items of regional vocabulary in general or American Spanish dictionaries
- Comparison of national (Mexican vs. Guatemalan) orthographic traditions in indigenous languages and their relationship to Spanish

Topics related to the Sandoval dictionary

- The ideology represented in the entries, examples, names, etc. of the dictionary as a reflection of the society in which Sandoval lived and worked
- Specific study of the slang, idioms, sayings, and proverbs in the dictionary as related to social context and language change
- Study of French, Catalán, English, and other loanwords
- Analysis of the various categories of stigmatized speech: corruptela, barbarismo, vulgarismo, etc.

- Summary analysis of types of phonological processes documented in the entries
- Study of specialized lexical domains, including, for example, words related to cockfighting, maize cultivation, drunkenness, and physical description
- Analysis of grammatical content on topics such as movement and direction, prepositional usage, verb tense/aspect, etc. as part of investigations outlined under other categories

Greatest needs

- A linguistically and etymologically sophisticated dictionary of Guatemalan Spanish, including toponyms and geographic labels, personal names and nicknames, that clearly distinguishes regional variation and indicates geographic distribution of entries (e.g., regional Guatemalan, Guatemalan, Chiapas and Guatemala, Central American, etc.)
- An inventory of proverbs, *dichos*, sayings, idioms, etc. that defines and describes distribution and contexts of use
- Comparative analysis of possible cases of Mayan influence in Chiapas, Yucatecan, and Guatemalan Spanish