

PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF RIO GRANDE DO SUL  
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LETTERS

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**SPANISH AS A MINORITY LANGUAGE IN THE UNITED STATES: DEMOGRAPHIC  
ANALYSES UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF *CORPUS* AND  
*STATUS***

Porto Alegre  
2022

GRADUAÇÃO



Pontifícia Universidade Católica  
do Rio Grande do Sul

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Monograph presented as a partial requirement  
for obtaining a Teaching Degree in Language  
Arts: English from the Language Arts: English  
course at the Pontifical Catholic University of  
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Advisor: Aline Evers, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze demographic data regarding the Spanish-speaking population of the United States since 1850 in order to understand how this population reached the current number of 40 million, as well as the large percentage of 61% of the speakers of languages other than English. The research is based on the concepts of *corpus* — production of the language, that is, the number of speakers — and *status* — how recognized a language is in a given territory —, both sociolinguistic concepts proposed by Chaudenson (1991) and discussed by Calvet (2007). For that, historical, political, cultural, and geographical factors that have influenced the relationship between the United States and Mexico are analyzed, searching for a broader comprehension of the rapid growth in the number of Spanish speakers in the country over the decades, especially in the Southwestern region. In doing so, we compare Spanish to other minority languages in the US in terms of number, examine socio-cultural relations between Mexico and the Southwest, and analyze the foreign-born population from Latin America and other regions of the globe. The results show that factors such as the proximity of the US to Mexico and the resulting historical and cultural connections among these two nations, which also culminates in a particular pattern of immigration, are the main reasons for the current corpus of Spanish in the country and its demographic highlight among the speakers of other minority languages.

**Keywords:** Spanish; Hispanic American; minority languages; *corpus* and *status*.

## RESUMO

O presente trabalho visa analisar dados demográficos referentes à população falante de espanhol dos Estados Unidos desde 1850 de maneira a compreender como essa população atingiu o atual número de 40 milhões, bem como a porcentagem de 61% entre os falantes de línguas que não a inglesa. A pesquisa é pautada nos conceitos sociolinguísticos de *corpus* — produção da língua, isto é, o número de falantes — e *status* — o quão reconhecida uma língua é em determinado território —, ambos conceitos sociolinguísticos propostos por Chaudenson (1991) e discutidos por Calvet (2007). Para tanto, são analisados fatores históricos, políticos, culturais e geográficos que influenciaram as relações entre Estados Unidos e México, visando a um maior entendimento do rápido crescimento no número de falantes de espanhol no país através das décadas, especialmente na região sudoeste. Ao fazê-lo, compara-se o espanhol a outras línguas minoritárias nos Estados Unidos em termos numéricos, examina-se as relações socioculturais entre o México e o sudoeste americano e também compara-se a população estrangeira dos Estados Unidos vinda da América Latina com a de outras regiões do globo. Os resultados mostram que fatores como a proximidade dos Estados Unidos com o México e as consequentes conexões históricas e culturais entre as duas nações, que também culminaram em padrões particulares de imigração, são as principais razões pelo atual *corpus* do espanhol no país e seu destaque demográfico entre os falantes de outras línguas minoritárias.

**Palavras-chave:** espanhol; Americano Hispânico; línguas minoritárias; *corpus* e *status*.

## RESUMEN

El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar datos demográficos referentes a la población hispanohablante de los Estados Unidos desde 1850 con el fin de comprender cómo esta población alcanzó la cifra actual de 40 millones, así como el porcentaje del 61% entre hablantes de otros idiomas. que el inglés. La investigación se basa en los conceptos sociolingüísticos de *corpus* —producción de la lengua, es decir, el número de hablantes— y *status* —qué tan reconocida es una lengua en un territorio determinado— , ambos conceptos sociolingüísticos propuestos por Chaudenson (1991) y discutidos por Calvet (2007). Para ello, se analizan los factores históricos, políticos, culturales y geográficos que influyeron en las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y México, con el objetivo de comprender mejor el rápido crecimiento del número de hispanohablantes en el país a lo largo de las décadas, especialmente en la región suroeste. Al hacerlo, compara el español con otros idiomas minoritarios en los Estados Unidos en términos numéricos, examina las relaciones socioculturales entre México y el suroeste americano, y también compara la población extranjera de los Estados Unidos de América Latina con la de otras regiones. del globo Los resultados muestran que factores como la proximidad de Estados Unidos a México y las consecuentes conexiones históricas y culturales entre las dos naciones, que también culminaron en patrones particulares de inmigración, son las principales razones del *corpus* de español en el país y su prominencia demográfica entre los hablantes de otras lenguas minoritarias.

**Palabras clave:** español; Estadounidense Hispano; idiomas minoritarios; *corpus* y *status*.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The United States is known worldwide as the core of the English language, given its history of colonization that resulted in the institutional dominance and protagonism of such language in the country. However, the different dynamics in the region over the centuries led to an expressive growth in the number of speakers of languages other than English. According to the Census Bureau (2020), 21.5% of the American population speaks a minority language at home, making up a group of 66 million individuals. Nearly 61% of these people are native Spanish speakers, representing 13.2% of the country's population (40 million people).

There is an apparent lack of knowledge about the United States linguistic diversity generated by common sense, given that the country is commonly associated with the English language, whose corpus, despite being huge, also shares space with several other languages, mainly Spanish. Moreover, Hispanic people have fought against segregation and discrimination in the country for a long time, and American society, in general, seems not to know how significant the long-term presence of Hispanics there has influenced the culture of the Southwest region. For instance, New Mexico, Texas, and California have sizable Hispanic populations. The large percentage of Spanish speakers out of the population of speakers of minority languages in the United States is, therefore, a fact that can not be ignored. Faced with that, the predominance of Spanish among other minority languages in the United States is the focus of this study.

The scenario mentioned above triggered my passion for History and Geography. However, this final paper is also a result of my reflections on working in an international school where the common languages are English and Portuguese, with little representativity of the languages spoken by students from several countries – including those where the primary language is Spanish.

Such study, therefore, is an interdisciplinary study that combines Sociolinguistics, History, and Geography, especially Demographics. As an English undergraduate student who wrote this final paper, its focus is language-related. In the Sociolinguistics field, one can find concepts to integrate interdisciplinary analysis like the one we propose. More specifically, Language Policy, a branch of Sociolinguistics, allowed us to reflect on the social and political processes through which the Spanish language was implemented and maintained in the American Southwest, as well as the processes that made it become the minority language with the largest number of native speakers in the country.

The primary source of theoretical background is the work *Les politiques linguistiques*, by Jean Calvet (2007). In this work, Calvet works with the concepts of *corpus* and *status*, together with other linguistic concepts such as *major language*, *minor language*, and *language of special status*. This monograph focuses on the concepts mentioned: *corpus* and *status*. *Corpus* represents the production of a language in a particular territory – in other words, the number of speakers of the language – and *status* refers to the institutionality and recognition of the language in the country studied.

Since Spanish has been spoken for centuries in what is currently the US and due to its predominance among other minority languages, we formulated three research questions:

- a) Why is the *corpus* of Spanish much larger than any other minority language in the United States?;
- b) How have historical and geographical factors maintained an expressive corpus of Spanish in the American Southwest over the centuries?; and
- c) What do media and institutionality tell us about the status of Spanish in the region?

Unfolding these questions, we ended up with three aims for this research: 1) to compare Spanish with other minority languages in terms of numbers; 2) to understand how the historical connection between the American Southwest and Mexico may influence the maintenance of Spanish in the American territory and over generations; and 3) to comprehend how immigration of different ethnical groups influenced the current numbers of native speakers of the main minority languages. This investigation uses mainly a literature review concerning topics related to Spanish in the United States, also tying it to demographic data about the population of Spanish speakers in the country. The analyses are linked to the concepts proposed by Calvet.

This final paper is organized into six chapters. In chapter 2, we introduce the theoretical background, presenting the concepts of *corpus*, *status*, and other concepts such as *major language*, *minor language*, and *language of special status*, also going over the *in vitro* and *in vivo* types of language management. The section regarding these terms summarizes the main dynamics among different languages that coexist in the same territory. There is a second section on the status of Spanish in the United States, which considers laws and the vehicularity of the language in the media as ways to gauge the status of the language in the country, following Calvet's propositions.

Chapter 3 presents definitions of minority languages in the American scenery. It discusses the tolerance of the United States towards languages other than English over the centuries. It also compares the number of Spanish native speakers in the country to other languages, pointing to the large difference in their *corpora*.

In chapter 4, we explain how Spanish was implemented in the Southwest region of the United States and how it was maintained in the region even with the expressive presence of Anglo-Americans. The latter occupied the region upon its conquest due to the Mexican American War. It links the cultural connections between the region and Mexico to the massive presence of Spanish speakers in the region, which has been growing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, in chapter 5, we relate immigration to the growth and maintenance of a huge *corpus* of Spanish. To do so, we compare immigration from Latin America to immigration from other regions since 1850.

We finish this paper with the final considerations of the monograph, followed by the references used as the basis for the present paper. Our hope with this final paper is to enlarge perspectives about linguistic diversity and language contact since it discusses the situation of a minority language with a large corpus in the world's largest economy. This study may also reflect on the role of Spanish in American history and culture since it tackles issues such as discrimination and segregation.

## 2 LANGUAGE POLICY

In this chapter, we discuss the theoretical background, presenting the concepts of *corpus*, *status*, as well as concepts such as *major language*, *minor language*, and *language of special status*, also going over the *in vitro* and *in vivo* kinds of language management. The subchapter about these terms summarizes the main dynamics among different languages that coexist in the same territory. In the second subchapter, we describe the status of Spanish in the United States based on laws and the vehicularity of the language in the media.

The field of Language Policy rose as an area of study in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly related to multilingualism. Before its emergence, the area of Linguistics addressing such issues was Sociolinguistics, whose main concern was variation and dialectology. Since most studies in the field presented variation analyses in the same language, Sociolinguistics is seen by many as a synonym for *dialectology* (OLIVEIRA, 2007), but studies in the field are not reduced to that. Studying a language's situation in a territory where it is not the dominant language is also one of the objectives of Sociolinguistics studies, which involves understanding language contact and language policies. According to Calvet,

Politics always have privileged a given language, choosing to lead a State in a certain language or even imposing a language to the people. However, language policy (determination of the great decisions regarding the relations between the languages and the society) and language planning are recent concepts that involve only part of these old practices. (2007, p. 11).

For Calvet, Language Policy and Language Planning must be studied in a variety of ways. Such a binomial is the focus of his 2007 work, *Les politiques linguistiques*. It discusses the main dynamics of language management, such as the elaboration of laws and the officialization of grammar and orthographic rules, along with situations in which two or more languages coexist in the same country. Most of the situations presented, however, take place in French-speaking nations. Nevertheless, the book discusses several situations of language contact, as well as the relevance and recognition of languages in countries such as Morocco and Mali — an analysis fairly applicable to the American Southwest.

The term *language planning* was first mentioned in 1959 by Einar Haugen in research about linguistic problems in Norway. His main aim was to demonstrate the intervention of the government in the orthography of the Norwegian language, concerned basically with building a national identity (CALVET, 2007).

Initially, *language policy* was predominantly associated with actions in a given language, not considering bilingual or multilingual contexts. In the 1960s, Charles Ferguson

published an article about the contexts in which two varieties of the same language were used, naming this phenomenon *diglossia*. One of his examples was the Arabic language, which has many dialects (regional and social). Eventually, he broadened this concept by stating that *diglossia* might always occur when two varieties of the same language or even when different languages are spoken in different contexts of a given society (CALVET, 2007). Such a concept of diglossia applies to the context in which English and Spanish coexist in the Southwest of the United States.

Ferguson (apud CALVET, 2007) also proposed three categories of language status: *major language*, *minor language*, and *language of special status*. According to him, a language could be considered a *major language* if it showed one of the three features in a given country: a) to be spoken by more than 25% of the population or by at least 1 million speakers; b) to be an official language; and c) to be the teaching language of more than 50% of the secondary schools of the country. Considering the conditions just mentioned, one can conclude that, according to a), the United States would have quite a few major languages once some languages have more than 1 million native speakers in the country. Spanish is not spoken by 25% of the country's population, but in some states it is, such as California, New Mexico, and Texas (Census Bureau, 2020). However, Ferguson does not define the concepts of *minor language* and *language of special status*.

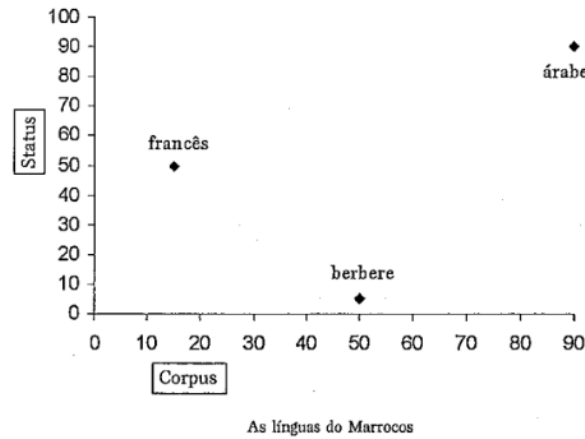
The concepts of *diglossia*, *minor language*, and *language of special status* are useful for this paper because millions of people in the United States use English and Spanish in different social contexts once both languages coexist in the Southwest and have different statuses in the region and in the country as a whole. They are related to language policies since they describe social dynamics related to languages that coexist. Next, our objective is to present concepts that are helpful to understand Spanish in the US and the processes that led the language to its current situation nowadays.

## 2.1 STATUS, CORPUS, AND IN VIVO AND IN VITRO MANAGEMENT

Chaudenson, in the 1990s, proposed the analysis of languages in countries using the terms *status* and *corpus*, in which *status* is about how important a language is in the country at stake (considering officiality, institutional uses, education, mass media, and use in secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy) and *corpus* considers how much the language is produced in the country. One can interpret that *status* is related to how institutional a language is, and *corpus* is about its number of speakers. He analyzed the linguistic situation of Morocco, Mali,

and the Central African Republic and presented his analysis on a graph (CALVET, 2007), as shown below:

Figure 1 - Languages of Morocco



Source: Chaudenson apud Calvet, 2007.

In Morocco, Arabic has a large corpus, once more than 90% of the population speaks Arabic. Its status is proportional to its corpus, given the fact that Arabic is an official language in the country and widely used in the media and institutionally. French has a much smaller corpus, but its status is much bigger than its corpus due to the past of French colonization in the region. The Berber language, contrariwise, shows an inverse situation compared to French: in spite of having a large corpus, being spoken by more than half of Morocco's population, it has no institutional recognition, which makes its status much lower than its corpus.

Concerning the United States, a graph with the languages spoken would be fairly feasible, given the factual data on the number of native speakers of the main languages. The main issue would be the criteria used to determine how "institutional" a language is since the country does not have an official language.

Calvet (2007) mentions two ways of language management to solve linguistic problems: *in vitro* and *in vivo*. *In vitro* management refers to all the decisions made institutionally by linguists and/or governors to modify the structure or the use of a language. *In vivo* management is how people deal with their linguistic issues without institutional intervention. When a government decides that the spelling of a given word needs to be officially changed, we have an *in vitro* kind of management. An example of *in vivo* management is the spontaneous rise of neologisms to describe concepts or objects that the community of speakers had not been in contact with so far, such as the term *jikiru* (meaning *water stone*) to refer to ice in the Bambara language in Mali.



He also mentions the concept of *linguistic environment*, describing it as “the presence or absence of languages in their oral or written form” (CALVET, 2007, p. 72). To exemplify *linguistic environment*, Calvet uses as an example New York City, where many different languages coexist. In such a city and other global cities, the presence of written language in public spaces may be seen as a “delimitation of territory.” Moreover, this presence has two different effects: at the denotation level, the texts mean something to the people that can read the language, which limits the number of receptors; at the connotation level, on the other hand, the texts, despite not being readable for other people, are a signal of the presence of the language at stake. An advertisement in Arabic in New York, therefore, has a denotation meaning for Arabic speakers, while for others, it is a mark that the language is present in that context.

Another study related to this matter is *O Português Afro-Brasileiro* (LUCCHESI; BAXTER; RIBEIRO, 2009). This work consists of the history of the Brazilian Portuguese spoken by African slaves and their descendants over the centuries, along with grammar topics specific to this segment of the population. There is a subchapter about how Portuguese was implemented in Brazil and why Brazilians speak Portuguese rather than a creole-based Portuguese language, given the large number of Africans who were enslaved and brought here. To do so, the study had to analyze demographic data on the race of people over the centuries of colonization, comparing it to the same demographic data in Jamaica and Haiti, where there are creoles spoken as primary languages. Moreover, the authors explicitly use the term *contato entre línguas* (language contact) to describe the linguistic dynamics in colonial Brazil. This is a very similar case to Spanish in the United States, where there is a situation of contact between two languages that have coexisted for long. Like Calvet, they also analyze demographic data, the sort of analysis we will do in this monograph.

For this study, we will stick to the concepts of *status* and *corpus*, more *corpus* than *status*. Considering the fact that Spanish has the second largest corpus in the United States, only behind English, one can say it is a minority language with the largest *corpus*. Since the main goal of this study is to analyze social factors that have contributed to the establishment of the current number (*corpus*) of Spanish native speakers in the country — focusing on the Southwest region from 1850 to now —, analyzing the *corpus* and its growth over the centuries in the region requires the analysis of the status as well once both concepts are related and cannot be studied separately.

## 2.2 STATUS OF SPANISH IN THE UNITED STATES

### 2.2.1 Institutionally

The United States does not have an official language at the federal level, even though some states do. In 1848, the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* established the new border between Mexico and the US. In spite of guaranteeing Mexicans who lived in the conquered land the right to become American citizens, the treaty does not mention anything related to language use. Social circumstances, however, allow us to understand the dynamics concerning the coexistence of English and Spanish in the region.

In 1849, the first *Constitutional Convention of California* was promulgated. The number of *Californios*<sup>1</sup> in this year is estimated at 15,000, out of a population of 92,000 people. It explains the participation of Hispanic signatories in the Constitution. All the laws, therefore, should be published in both English and Spanish. However, the constitution was ratified in 1879, and English became the state's official language. Laws could not be published in a language other than that anymore. English has remained the official language to this day. Nevertheless, "A person unable to understand English who is charged with a crime has a right to an interpreter throughout the proceedings" (California Constitution, Art. 1. Sec. 14).

In New Mexico, even though there is not an official language, Spanish speakers have their linguistic rights protected. One of the reasons why New Mexico and Arizona, initially a single territory, gained two different statehoods is the presence of Mexicans in the region:

the decided racial difference between the people of New Mexico, who are not only different in race and largely in language, but have entirely different customs, laws and ideals and would have but little prospect of successful amalgamation ... [and] the objection of the people of Arizona, 95 percent of whom are Americans, to the probability of the control of public affairs by people of a different race, many of whom do not speak the English language, and who outnumber the people of Arizona two to one. (US Senate Document 216, 59th Cong., 1st Sess. Feb. 12, 1906, pp. 1-2.)

According to Stull (2012, p. 20):

they [Arizona and New Mexico] have the most differing legislative laws regarding language rights between any two states in the United States (Crawford, 1992; Piatt, 1990). Presently, New Mexico has some of the most inclusive and humane policies regarding language protection, multicultural education, and the rights of immigrants. In contrast, Arizona has an English-only declaration and enactment of contemporary policies that are discriminatory to the point of being constitutionally questionable.

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<sup>1</sup> Hispanics of Alta California, part of Mexico until 1848.

In 1988, an amendment in the constitution of Arizona declared English the official language of the state, also protecting English speakers' rights: "a person shall not be discriminated against or penalized in any way because the person uses or attempts to use English in public or private communication" (Art. XXVIII, § 3.B.). On the other hand, New Mexico, one year later, created a resolution named *English Plus*. The resolution was created to promote language diversity and rights in the state: "English Plus best serves the national interest since it promotes the concept that all members of society have full access to opportunities to effectively learn English" (§ 2).

In Texas, the status of English and Spanish has changed a few times since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The document *The Laws of Texas* provides information about language status from 1822 until now. In 1834, the state of Coahuila and Texas guaranteed the publication of laws in both languages. Even though the region was still a Mexican state, the already significant presence of Americans was probably the reason for this resolution. In 1837, two years after the independence of the Republic of Texas, the Congress ensured the laws were published in Spanish besides English, even though the region was suddenly overwhelmed by Anglo populations. The publication of laws in Spanish was suspended in 1841, being reenacted the following year. In 1846, after gaining statehood, the legislation required laws to be translated into German and Spanish. In 1856, the state allowed judges to conduct legal proceedings in Spanish. However, in 1858 an act required all public schools to give instructions exclusively in English. In 1927, counties bordering Mexico were allowed to give instructions in Spanish at schools since the city had a population of at least 5,000 people.

Therefore, one can see that Spanish is not a truly institutionally recognized language in the United States. It is not the official language of any state in the country. Among the four states bordering Mexico, also former Mexican territories, two of them — California and Arizona — have English as their official language. Arizona is even more restrictive about the use of English. In Texas, the legislation seems to be more inclusive, but it just allows the use of Spanish in some circumstances, not promoting it. Only New Mexico has broader legislation concerning language. Even though it does not have an official language, the legislation promotes language diversity and inclusion for Spanish speakers and speakers of other languages. In Texas and New Mexico, there is more specific legislation about languages for instruction at schools, whereas, in Arizona and California, there is no information regarding this topic. It is also important to consider that, even in the states where Spanish can be a language of instruction, it refers to public schools. There are no specific laws for schools in general — neither permission nor prohibition.

### 2.2.2 Presence in the media

The first kind of media produced in Spanish in what today is the United States was the newspaper. The first Spanish newspaper in the region was published in 1808. When the Southwest became an American territory, the number of newspapers in Spanish increased. By 1900, more than 100 newspapers of this kind were being published in the former Mexican territory. This material served three main roles: institutions of social control since English papers owned Spanish papers; institutions of activism, which would expose prejudice and oppression suffered by Mexican-Americans; and reflections on everyday life and cultural identity. By this time, mainstream English-language papers would also publish material in Spanish for Spanish-speaking audiences (RETIS, 2019).

The number of Spanish-language newspapers grew significantly throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reinforced by the growth of the Hispanic population. During the 1990s and early 2000, the number of Spanish newspapers more than tripled, while the English language ones increased by only 11%. Recently, the number of newspapers in Spanish has experienced a decline, especially those which used to be published daily. This decline, however, is not exclusive to Hispanic newspapers, also happening to the mainstream English printed press.

Along with the increase in the number of Spanish-language newspapers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, other segments of media also arose, such as the radio, which became popular among the Mexican American community in the late 1920s in Texas and California, especially in San Antonio and Los Angeles through the companies KONO and KFWB, respectively. These were English radio companies that would allow Spanish-language announcers, and those would later be able to resell their announcements.

Because most radio owners would sell their odd hours — that is, the hours when there would not be any audience, such as night — for Spanish programming, putting it in economic and cultural marginality, Spanish-language producers started interacting with local ethnic entrepreneurs. As a result, ethnic store owners and immigrant cultural and political organizations furnished advertising revenues to maintain Spanish-language production on air (RETIS, p. 7, 2019). Besides providing entertainment for a Spanish-speaking audience, Spanish-language radio programming would also serve as a source of information regarding political issues for Hispanics in the United States.

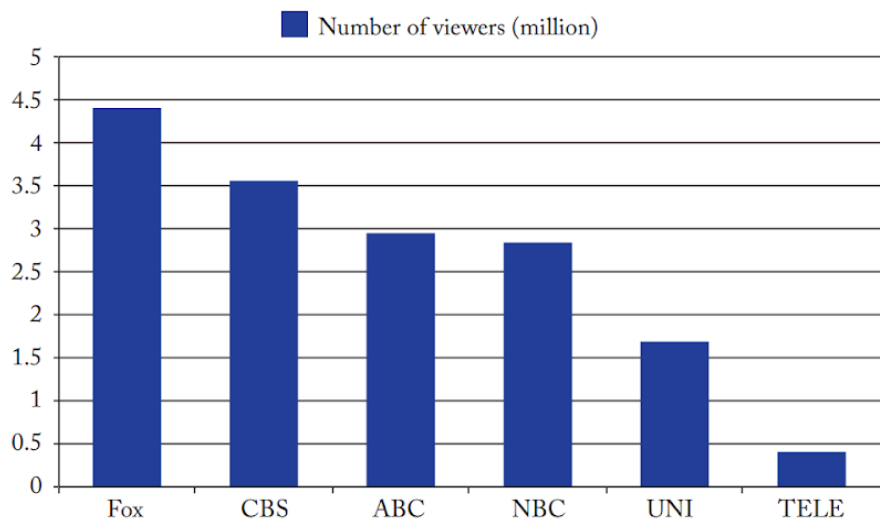
The popularity of Hispanic radio rapidly grew through the rest of the century. In the 1960s, two-thirds of the foreign broadcasts were in Spanish. Moreover, by 1966, more than 300 Spanish radio programs were on air in the country. Later on, Gallup (1979) conducted a study

to identify the popularity of these radio programs among Hispanic Americans. He divided the population into the age groups of 18-34, 35-49, and +50. 58% of those aged between 18 and 34 used to listen to radio programs in Spanish, compared to 65% in the two remaining age groups.

Due to segregation, Spanish-language radio took place mainly through private rather than public spaces. Therefore, radio programs played a crucial role in Spanish speakers' communication and language practices at home. Even though entrepreneurs would see the economic benefits of providing Spanish-language broadcasts for a Hispanic audience, such people would be seen as consumers rather than citizens. That was the main reason why Spanish radio was confined to private spaces. The fact that Spanish speakers were not seen as citizens says a lot about the status of the language in the region.

Hispanic television has drastically changed since its beginning as a minority television segment in the 1970s. Similar to Spanish language radio, television in Spanish also followed the Hispanic population growth in the subsequent decades. As of 2011, the most popular Hispanic broadcasters — Univision and Telemundo — have been great competitors in mainstream US television.

Figure 2 - American television networks and their number of viewers



Source: Pew Research Center, 2011.

In spite of the increase in the number of viewers of Hispanic American television, Spanish has become a slightly less common language among the community, and many Hispanics are becoming English-dominant. As a response, some Hispanic broadcasters have been investing in English language programs to attract a Hispanic audience whose dominant language is English. Research conducted by Hispanic Fact Pack in 2017 shows the language preference among Hispanics over 18, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Language Preference among US Hispanics

<b>HISPANIC LANGUAGE PREFERENCES BY MEDIA TYPE (FOR AGES 18 AND UP)</b>				
	<b>READING</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>RADIO</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
Only in English	37.9%	31.6%	26.8%	44.4%
Mostly in English, but some Spanish	26.1%	31.4%	29.6%	19.9%
Mostly in Spanish, but some English	14.8%	16.6%	18.5%	9.1%
Only in Spanish	17.5%	13.3%	17.5%	13.9%
In some other language	0.3%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%

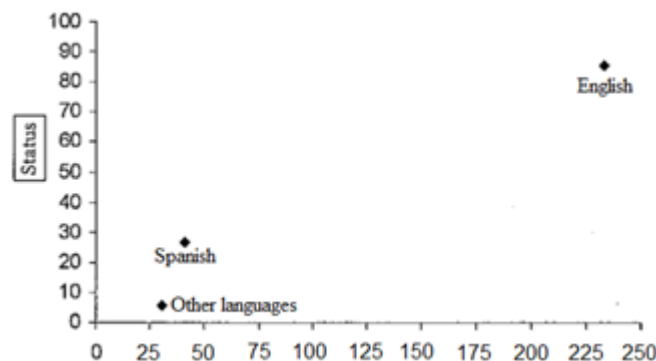
Source: Hispanic Fact Pack, 2017 apud Retis, 2019.

As the table in Figure 3 exemplifies, US Hispanics aged 18 or above show a fairly high preference for English in their use of media, with less than 40% consuming media exclusively or at least mostly in Spanish. Something important to consider here is that this preference refers to Hispanics as a whole, not Spanish native speakers. The population of Hispanic origin in the US is 62 million, larger than the number of Spanish native speakers — 40 million. That means that over 20 million Hispanics do not speak Spanish.

Spanish media has always been important in Hispanic Americans' lives. In spite of the presence of Anglo Americans in the Southwest, Mexicans continued consuming printed press in Spanish, and the number of Spanish newspapers grew even more after the annexation of the Southwest by the United States. The same happened to radio, starting in the 1920s, and television, in the 1970s.

Considering what has been said about Spanish media laws, we interpret the United States' linguistic situation as shown in Figure 4:

Figure 4 - Languages of the United States



Source: the author, 2022.

One may observe that English has a situation very similar to Arabic in Morocco. Even though 21.5% of the US population speaks a language other than English at home, only 8.2% speak English less than “very well”, according to the Census Bureau (2020). Despite not being the country's official language at the federal level, it is the official language of 35 American states and territories, besides being the common language in mass media.

The status of Spanish in the US, as elaborated and shown in Figure 4, was based on the following premises:

a) it is the official language only in the territory of Puerto Rico, where most people speak Spanish at home, and the language is commonly used, which makes its corpus equivalent to its status in this region specifically. In two states of the Southwest — New Mexico and Texas —, there are some laws regarding the use of Spanish (section 4 explains it further);

b) the large presence of Spanish in the media reinforces its condition as a vehicular language. In spite of not being present in mainstream American media, there is a wide range of Spanish TV shows, soap operas, radios, and newspapers in the country that are available for the Spanish-speaking population (more details about Spanish media are in the next subsection).

It is essential to consider that one cannot expect Spanish to have the same degree of recognition as English due to the corpus of English speakers, which is much larger than that of Spanish speakers. Given the expressive presence of Spanish in the media and some laws created specifically for Spanish speakers in New Mexico and Texas, we considered that Spanish has a *status* slightly lower than its *corpus*, also considering the lack of laws and initiatives regarding the maintenance of Spanish over generations.

Furthermore, even though media in Spanish is not usually consumed by non-Hispanic Americans, its presence in the country has turned Hispanic media companies into great competitors in the mainstream American scene. New waves of immigrants from Latin American countries have reinforced the presence of Spanish in mass media and the status of Spanish as a vehicular language.

### 3 MINORITY LANGUAGES IN THE UNITED STATES

This chapter consists of an overview of the languages spoken in the United States besides English, along with the conceptualization of minority languages. The chapter also provides historical background on how tolerant the American government has been towards different languages over the centuries, as well as data concerning the main languages spoken in the country.

Most of the data were collected from the United States Census Bureau, the primary and most reliable source of demographic data. The most recent data was published in 2020. The languages spoken in the US may fall into the following categories: “only English”, “Spanish”, “French, Haitin, or Cajun”, “German or other West Germanic languages”, “Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages”, “other Indo-European languages”, “Korean”, “Chinese”, “Vietnamese”, “Tagalog”, “other Asian and Pacific Island languages”, “Arabic”, and “other unspecified languages”.

#### 3.1 MINORITY LANGUAGES

In the simplest definition, “a minority language is simply one spoken by less than 50 percent of a population in a given region, state or country” (GRENOBLE; SINGERMAN, 2017). Reports from Ethnologue (2022) estimate the number of languages in the world at 7,151. Considering the 195 nations and the more than 7 billion people on earth, the average number of speakers of each language would be less than one million, and 30 countries per language. It is known, however, that the number of inhabitants is not equally distributed among the languages. Eight languages alone, 0.1% of the total, have more than 2,5 billion speakers, around 40% of the global population. Furthermore, 77 other languages, 1.1% of the total, have 2,4 billion speakers, 38% of the total world’s people. Nearly 6,000 languages in the world have less than 100,000 speakers (ALONSO; DURAND; GUTIÉRREZ, 2014), and 3,045 languages are endangered today (Ethnologue, 2022).

Something important to analyze is the specific social and geographic context of a language to be considered a minority. In some situations, the minority language(s) may be associated with positive aspects, such as social prestige. In contrast, other languages, in other contexts, are frequently regarded as inferior and related to marginalized populations. In former French colonies, for instance, French is a prestigious language, mostly related to education and economic advancement, and spoken by few people. The speakers of the Ainu language in Japan,



on the other hand, often face discrimination and prejudice. Spanish also has different statuses in different contexts. While it is the majority and institutional language of many countries, it is a minority language in the United States, despite being spoken by most inhabitants of many American towns and counties (specially in Texas and New Mexico) and having more native speakers than in other mainly Spanish-speaking nations (GRENOBLE; SINGERMAN, 2017). In *Les politiques linguistiques*, mentioned in the previous sections, neither Calvet nor the authors he mentions — Chaudenson and Ferguson — give a clear definition for minority languages. They examined the linguistic situation of multilingual countries, where multiple languages are not necessarily equally recognized.

Considering the context of languages spoken in the United States exclusively, this study will define minority language as any language other than English. The country does not have an official language, even though some states do. Moreover, 66,093,076 people speak a language besides English at home (Census Bureau, 2022). States like California have high shares of speakers of other languages.

### 3.2 TOLERANCE TOWARDS FOREIGN LANGUAGES

According to Ovando (2003), in the United States there has always been a tolerance towards the use of languages other than English, since “the government has never required the media to use English” and “Religious institutions have always been free to use their heritage languages in their worship services and materials” (p. 109). Despite the myth that the country was a predominant English-only cultural region since the beginning, it is known that white Anglo-Saxon colonizers had been frequently in contact with other people from different linguistic backgrounds, those being European (German, Italian, and French), indigenous, and even a mix of both (Hispanics from the current American Southwest, part of Mexico until 1848). However, “there has also been a certain degree of intolerance. Issues of linguistic inclusion or exclusion have often been used as a veil, concealing racist, classist, and religious prejudices” (p. 109).

Ovando (2003) proposes dividing the history of the American government's tolerance of languages into four periods. The first is the **Permissive Period** (from 1700 to 1880), in which there was plain tolerance of languages other than English. That tolerance seems to be more related to other European languages, however.

This period is followed by the **Restrictive Period** (from 1880 to 1960), whose main characteristic was the goal of civilizing indigenous people. Due to English-only policies

supported by the Federal Indian Office, missionary leaders failed in schooling indigenous children in their native language. Moreover, the Naturalization Act of 1906 made the use of English by immigrants a requirement for them to become American citizens. Later, right after the World Wars, the anti-German sentiment increased even more, which led to the prohibition of teaching German in public schools.

The **Opportunist Period** (from 1960 to 1980) is characterized mainly by the teaching of foreign languages due to the fellowships between the US and other powers. Such process was potentialized, especially by the effects of the Cold War. The teaching of foreign languages to native English speakers was quite efficient at that period. Moreover, the Civil Rights Movement, along with the large numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, brought to attention the need for bilingual instructions for students whose mother tongue was not English.

The **Dismissive Period** (starting in the 1980s) is followed by a series of anti-bilingual education initiatives, most of them based on the premise that English was threatened by using other languages, especially Spanish. Some would also argue against bilingual education in favor of the immigrants' life in an American society, which requires the plain use of English.

Nowadays, even though the percentage of Americans who speak only English is high, the percentage of people who speak a language other than English at home is also fairly high (contradicting common sense): 21.5% (Census Bureau, 2020). The percentage of Spanish native speakers in the country is very expressive, 13.2%, which means that this populational cleavage (Spanish native speakers in the US) makes up around 61% of all speakers of minority languages.

### 3.3 AVAILABLE DATA

According to the United States Census Bureau, the American population was estimated at 331,449,281 in 2020. When it comes to language use, the Census considers only people aged five or above, which reduces the population to 306,919,116. Below is a table with the most spoken languages in the country, their corpus (number of native speakers), and the percentage of the population who speak them.

Table 1 - Most spoken languages in the US.

<b>Language</b>	<b>Corpus</b>	<b>% of the population</b>
<b>Only English</b>	240,826,040	78.5%
<b>Spanish</b>	40,537,337	13.2%
<b>French, Haitian, or Cajun</b>	2,060,712	0.6%
<b>German or other West Germanic languages</b>	1,400,064	0.4%
<b>Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages</b>	2,044,717	0.6%
<b>Other Indo-European languages</b>	5,765,141	1.8%
<b>Korean</b>	1,093,097	0.3%
<b>Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)</b>	3,429,292	1.1%
<b>Vietnamese</b>	1,528,587	0.4%
<b>Tagalog (incl. Filipino)</b>	1,712,452	0.5%
<b>Other Asian and Pacific Island languages</b>	3,037,042	0.9%
<b>Arabic</b>	1,248,652	0.4%
<b>Other and unspecified languages</b>	2,235,983	0.7%

Source: Census Bureau, 2020.

Some languages in Table 1 do not have their corpus specified. French, for instance, is grouped with Haitian creole and Cajun (a variety of French spoken in the American state of Louisiana). German and Russian are also grouped with other languages that share the same origin.

Even though the number of speakers of some languages is not discriminated, it is clear that, if we sum their corpora, it will not reach the number of Spanish speakers, which are around 61% of the speakers of languages that are not English. Another company, named Statista, brings more specific data. These are the most common languages spoken in the US other than English, in descending order:

Table 2 - Most spoken languages in the US other than English

<b>Language</b>	<b>Corpus</b>
<b>Spanish</b>	40,537,337
<b>Chinese</b>	3,429,292
<b>Tagalog</b>	1,712,452
<b>Vietnamese</b>	1,528,587
<b>Arabic</b>	1,248,652
<b>French</b>	1,209,540
<b>Korean</b>	1,093,097
<b>Russian</b>	942,945
<b>German</b>	881,159
<b>Haitian</b>	851,172

Source: Statista, 2022.

Table 2 brings data regarding the ten minority languages in the US with the largest numbers of native speakers. According to the description on the Statista website, the data was taken from the Census Bureau, which explains that most languages have the same number as in Table 1. The main difference is that French, German, Russian, and Haitian are separate.

One may see that Chinese, the third most spoken language, has a much lower corpus than Spanish. All the languages below Chinese in the ranking have a small number of speakers. Some have between 1 and 2 million, whereas the rest have less than 1 million.

Spanish has been spoken in the United States since the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since colonial times, it has been one of the few languages from the table to have a cultural relationship with the region. Among those languages, only French and German have a long-term presence in American territory.

French was initially spoken in New France, a region that comprises the current state of Louisiana along with the Canadian province of Quebec and other portions of North America. The region remained under French rule from 1608 to 1763, when the northmost part was ceded to Britain and the South to Spain. The French language and culture have an expressive presence in the Canadian province of Quebec until the present day (MATHIEU, 2013). The area controlled by Spain returned to France in 1803, just some weeks before it was annexed by the United States (Britannica, 2022). Today, French is spoken roughly by 1.2 million people. However, the number of people of French ancestry is much larger: around 10 million (Census Bureau, 2019).

German was brought to the United States mainly by immigrants who moved to the region during the colonial period. Even though there is no accurate data on the number of German or German descendants during the time of the Thirteen Colonies, it is known that there were German people among the first colonists of Jamestown, the first English settlement in North America (The Library of the Congress, 2014). This long-term presence in the territory has had a strong influence on the ancestry of the population, once 43,038,145 Americans claim German descent today (Census Bureau, 2019). German native speakers, however, are estimated only at 881,159, as shown in Table 2.

The other languages, except for Russian, are all Asian languages brought to the country much later. Data from the Migration Policy Institute (2019) show that the number of Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Arabic immigrants is slightly lower than that of native speakers of the languages corresponding to those ethnicities, which means that most of their native speakers were born abroad. The only language whose number of native speakers is lower than that of

immigrants is Tagalog, a language spoken in the Philippines, where there are also other languages widely spoken.

Chinese is probably the first Asian language brought to the US after its independence from Britain. There are registers of Chinese people who went to the country in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant wave of migration from China to the US happened in 1851, when around 25,000 Chinese, mostly males, left China to work in California during the Gold Rush era (The Library of Congress). Nowadays, the population of people of Chinese origin in the country is estimated at 5,121,528, according to the Census Bureau (data published in 2020).

According to Table 2, Spanish, French, and German are Indo-European languages spoken in the present territory of the United States since colonial times. Spanish, however, is the only one that stands out in terms of number, which is a characteristic that makes Spanish a unique minority language in the nation. Moreover, it is the mother tongue of over 20% of the population of states such as California, Texas, and New Mexico (Census Bureau, 2020). The number of Spanish speakers is higher in the US than in countries such as Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, being close to the number of speakers of the language in Argentina and Spain (Statista, 2021).

#### 4 SPANISH MAINTENANCE IN THE SOUTHWEST

As previously mentioned, Spanish has been continuously spoken in the territory that today belongs to the United States since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the current territory of Mexico, along with the current territories of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado were firstly explored and populated by colonists from Spain. In 1848, those territories were annexed by the United States after the Mexican-American War (1846-1848).<sup>2</sup>

Due to the changes that occurred in the region upon annexation, Mexican people became a small minority, considering the migratory process of Anglo-Americans to former Mexican land. However, despite those changes, Spanish retained its established presence in the American Southwest. According to Alonso, Durand, and Gutiérrez (2014, p. 4), “the signs of resistance to first language loss [in Spanish] are stronger than in other migrant communities”. Spanish, therefore, has been spoken in what today is the United States, especially along the Río Grande corridor, since 1598, brought by the arrival of settlers from Zacatecas, Mexico, then under Spanish rule, with the aim of populating the Northern part of the colony (VILLA; RIVERA-MILLS, 2009).

Data from Table 2 of the previous section show that Spanish has a much larger corpus than any of the most common languages. Moreover, there seems to be more retention of Spanish over generations than in the other languages. Languages such as German, Italian, and Polish have virtually disappeared among second-generation people, whereas Spanish shows to have a different fate: first-generation immigrants rarely learn English; second-generation ones usually do not lose their mother tongue; and third-generation Hispanics have been recovering their ancestry language (ALONSO; DURAND; GUTIÉRREZ, 2014).

In this chapter, we discuss how this cultural relationship between the American Southwest and Mexico may influence the long-standing and expressive presence in the United States. Furthermore, there will be a section on the loss of Spanish over migrant generations. Through the section, topics such as the Mexican-American border will be presented.

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<sup>2</sup> War was triggered by the United States against Mexico to acquire the Mexican states of Tejas, Nuevo México, and Alta California.

#### 4.1 THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST AND ITS CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH MEXICO

It is unclear which states belong to the Southwest region of the United States. Most sources include Arizona and New Mexico and frequently include California, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. Texas is more often associated with the South region; however, for this paper, and due to Texas' Mexican background, we will include it in the American Southwest as well. All of the states mentioned in this paragraph became American territories when the new Mexican-American border was established by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed by Mexico and the United States in 1848 (after the victory of the United States in the Mexican-American War).

The region, therefore, is part of a much larger cultural region of North America, including this region and six Northern Mexico states: Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California. The area has a common ecology of deserts, mountains, rivers, flora and fauna; there are also interdependent and asymmetrical political and economic activities between the Mexican and the American sides of the border. The most important feature of the area, however, is the presence of common cultural populations, which include indigenous and Spanish descent people, the most common ethnic-racial aspect of Mexico (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014). Moreover, the four border American states, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, have high percentages of Hispanic populations: 39%, 31%, 49%, and 39%, respectively (Census Bureau, 2020).

Figure 5 - Southwest states and Mexico



Source: Wikipedia, 2022.

The maintenance of Spanish in the Mexican Cession seems to be a unique case of the permanence of a language among the territories conquered by the United States upon its independence. According to Alonso, Durand, and Gutiérrez (2014, p. 12), “the American colonial system managed to impose the English language on all of its colonies and annexed territories, except those of Hispanic origin”. Whereas in the Philippines and Guam English became a *lingua franca*, the same did not happen in Puerto Rico, where introducing English as an official language was a failed attempt. Americans also annexed the Hawaiian archipelago and managed to reduce the number of native speakers of the Hawaiian language to only 2,000 (0,1% of the archipelago population). In the American Southwest, on the other hand, Spanish continued resisting the dominance of English, especially in Northern New Mexico, in border towns, such as Laredo and El Paso (both in Texas), as well as in other former Spanish/Mexican cities such as San Antonio and Los Angeles.

A possible explanation for that is the instance of the American government towards the remaining Mexicans in the newly conquered territory. Unlike indigenous people, Mexicans had



the status of American citizens, something guaranteed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. According to Gratton and Merchant,

By waging effective war against indigenous groups, forcing them onto reservations, and expropriating their territory and resources, the US government removed the core impediment to nonindigenous settlement. While Americans had no affection for the Hispanic population, official policy treated those of Mexican origin — who were guaranteed American citizenship under the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo — very differently than it treated the indigenous population. US rule thus provided the first sustained period of physical security for Hispanics since the original Spanish entrada in the sixteenth century. Nearly all of the demographic increase occurred through reproduction in the resident population rather than through immigration. (2015, p. 523-526).

The number of Hispanic Americans in 1850 (right after the annexation of the Southwest) can be estimated at 111,669; out of these, 84,442 were Mexican. By 1900, they had reached the number of 496,381 (University of Washington, 2015).

Upon American conquest, many Anglo-Americans moved to the Mexican Cession and, even though Spanish never disappeared from the region, Mexicans became a small minority. Regarding the use of language,

[...] there is no provision in any treaty that such a choice required neither the erasure of Spanish nor the learning of the English language. Yet, except for New Mexico, all conquered or annexed territories eventually either under state or territorial control demanded that all of its residents learn to read and speak English to the detriment of local cultural and linguistic capital. (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014, p. 58).

Initially, in California, laws were published in both English and Spanish, guaranteed by the state's first constitution, published in 1849. At that time, there were around 15,000 *Californios* in the region, out of a population estimated at 92,000 (University of Washington, 2015; Census Bureau). The participation of several *Californios* in the Constitutional Convention explains the publication of laws in both languages. Nonetheless, in 1879, California published its second constitution and established English as the state's official language.

Between 1848 and 1912, New Mexico and Arizona were a single territory. Due to their cultural differences, they gained statehood and became two states. Whereas in Arizona, the population had become predominantly Anglo-American, and most schools would give instructions in English, New Mexico remained a mostly Hispanic region until the 1900s and had interpreters for native Spanish speakers at schools (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014). Despite the strong presence of Anglos that went to New Mexico in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the percentage of Hispanics in the state has never dropped to less than 29%, according to data from the University

of Washington on the number of people of Hispanic origin in different American states and territories and their total population from the Census Bureau since 1850.

Vélez-Ibáñez states that

[...] once the border region is established two contending dynamic processes became established: the first the practice of establishing English as the hegemonic language without any legal precedent in the 19th century; and second, the continued movement of Mexicans to former Mexican territories due to changes in the structure of economy of the Southwest Border Region as well as intensive networks of relations that crisscrossed the border: economic and kinship. (2014, p. 58).

One sees, therefore, that the influx of Mexican-born people to the United States has been a social phenomenon since right after the establishment of the new border, even though it intensified expressively only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ovando (2003) says that “after the military conquest of Mexico by the United States, the Mexicans of the Southwest suddenly became a subjugated people, foreigners in their own homeland”, and “Spanish was no longer the respected language of a proud and independent people, but the despised tongue of a stubborn foreign minority who refused to accept English”. Nonetheless, for new Mexican immigrants, the border was “an artificial barrier at best”, since in the Southwest, they would encounter “a people like themselves and a culture hardly distinguishable from their own” (OVANDO, 2003, p. 108). Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were, therefore, the primary source of labor in the Southwest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They usually worked on “clearing land of mesquite and cactus, building dams, digging irrigation canals, constructing railroads, and expanding vegetable and cotton production” (HAVERLUK, 1997, p. 137).

Something that deserves attention is the presence of multiple newspapers published in Spanish in the Southwest in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first one, *El Misisipi*, was published in 1808 in New Orleans and followed by other newspapers in different cities. Curiously, the number of Spanish magazines and newspapers increased much more after the Mexican-American War, which may be related to their expansion through the area in this period. In the 1880s, thirteen newspapers were published entirely in Spanish in the region. The main ones first published in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are *La revista católica* of Las Vegas, *El tiempo* of Las Cruces, *El boletín popular* of Santa Fe, *La voz del pueblo*, founded in Santa Fe and moved to Las Vegas, *El nuevo mexicano* of Santa Fe, *El independiente* of Las Vegas, *El Clamor Público* of Los Angeles, *El Correo de Laredo* of Laredo, and many others (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014).

The French Intervention in Mexico seems to have had an important influence on the literary activities in Spanish in the Southwest. Due to this event, many Mexicans moved to the American side of the border in 1865. Among those immigrants were intellectuals that established themselves in Tucson, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas. Along with the Hispanics who were already residents of the region, they managed to create a good deal of literary works, and with later Mexican waves of immigrants, they could extend their production to a broader and increasing audience. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Mexican-American community of Tucson would have a frequent participation in literary activities, such as reciting poetry and writing prose. They were also readers of Mexican and Latin American classics (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014). Sheridan (1986) found essays, poetry, and short stories published in 32 Spanish newspapers and magazines between 1877 and 1921 in Tucson.

In New Mexico, the presence of the press in Spanish was also significant. According to Arturo Fernandez-Gilbert (apud Vélez-Ibáñez), “*Nuevomexicanos* managed to produce and sustain a booming Spanish-language press during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century” (2014, p. 70).

In Texas, 150 newspapers were published in Spanish in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and more than 300 in the 20<sup>th</sup>. In California, 192 Spanish newspapers were published between the first publication of *El Clamor Público*, in 1855, and the period of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Only in Los Angeles, 84 Spanish newspapers were documented during that period (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014).

The content just mentioned in this section allowed us to see how decisive a cultural link to Mexico is in the maintenance of Spanish in the American Southwest. Haverluk states that

The pre-1850 linkages between the northern Mexican frontier (now the US Southwest) and the Mexican interior continued during the American period. [...] The historic linkages between Mexico and the United States were an essential component to American economic expansion as people, money, and ideas flowed virtually unimpeded between the two countries. (1997, p. 137).

Moreover, the presence of a terrestrial border with the country facilitates the influx of people from Mexico to the United States, and the long-standing presence of US-born Mexicans creates a cultural realm with many similarities with Mexican culture. The expressive presence of Spanish language newspapers and magazines is also an indicator of the intense cultural and literary activities among Hispanics in the region, indicating the presence of Spanish in mass media, which might be associated with the status of a language, as mentioned by Calvet.

## 4.2 SPANISH ACROSS GENERATIONS

As previously mentioned, the number of Spanish native speakers as of 2020 was estimated at 40,537,337, according to the Census Bureau. The Census also brings information on the number of people of Hispanic origin, 59,361,020 people. Out of this population cleavage (Hispanic Americans), 19,474,073 are foreign-born (32%) and 39,886,947 (68%) are US-born.

According to Jenkins (2018, p. 59), “As immigrant populations move to new linguistic communities, the invariable result is a shift away from the immigrant language to the dominant language in the community”. He also states that

The most common manifestation of language shift occurs over three generations, in which the first generation is dominant in its native language while learning the second language (English in the United States) in non-native fashion; the second generation approximates balanced bilingualism as it maintains the language of the parents in home-related domains, while acquiring English, at the very latest, upon entering school. This second generation in the United States typically receives a formal education in English and will dominate formal registers within that language. The norm for the third generation is most often complete shift to English, with very little (or no) competency in the first language of their grandparents. This pattern is not unique to Spanish, English, or to the United States, but rather is a universal trend among language immigrant populations throughout the world and throughout history (POTOWSKI, 2010; VELTMAN, 1983 apud JENKINS, 2018, p. 59).

Data from the Pew Research Center (2019) show that 72% of Hispanics aged five or above are proficient in English. This percentage, however, varies much from the place of birth: it is 91% for US-born Hispanics and 37% for the foreign-born ones. The same happens with proficiency in Spanish. Overall, 70% of Hispanic Americans speak Spanish at home. 57% of the ones born in the US can speak the language, a percentage that increases to 94% for those born in Latin America.

Another study from the Pew Research Center (2015) analyzed the linguistic profile of Hispanic Americans by giving them the options “Spanish dominant”, “bilingual”, and “English dominant”, also comparing foreign-born Hispanics, second generation, and third or higher generation. The results are shown in Table 3:

Table 3 - Language Preference among Hispanic Americans

	<b>Spanish dominant</b>	<b>Bilingual</b>	<b>English dominant</b>
<b>Hispanics (overall)</b>	36%	36%	28%
<b>Foreign-born</b>	61%	32%	7%
<b>Second generation</b>	6%	51%	43%
<b>Third or higher generation</b>	1%	24%	75%

Source: Pew Research Center (2015).

The use of Spanish by people of Latin American origin in the United States has shown a tendency to fade in the last few years. In 2017, the Pew Research Center compared the shares of Spanish speakers among the Hispanic community of some American metropolitan areas in 2010 and 2015. All the metropolitan areas showed a decline. Moreover, that study attributed the highest shares of Spanish speakers among Hispanics in some cities to the equally high share of immigrants. Cities with more Latin American people (born in Latin America) tend to have more Spanish speakers among their Hispanic inhabitants. In contrast, those with more US-born Hispanics usually have smaller percentages of Spanish spoken at home. In Miami, for instance, 90% of Latinos spoke Spanish at home in 2015. It happens because 64% of them were immigrants. In San Antonio, on the other hand, the share of Spanish spoken among Hispanics was only 64%, considering the 16% of Latino people were immigrants. There are some exceptions, however. In the city of McAllen, Texas, the percentage of Spanish-speaking Latinos is as high as in Miami, at 90%. However, the share of immigrants from Latin America was only 32%. A possible explanation for that is its proximity to the border with Mexico.

The Mexican-American border is another factor that influences the maintenance of Spanish across generations. A study conducted by Bills, Chávez, and Hudson (1995) analyzed data from the 1980 Census Bureau in the 22 largest cities of the Southwest, including California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas to investigate the influence of the border on the proficiency in Spanish among people of Hispanic origin. For that study, they used the term *language loyalty* to refer to a ratio of the number of people who claim Spanish as their home language divided by the number of people of Hispanic descent. Since that time, the border has shown a great impact on the maintenance of the language. Language loyalty showed to be higher in border cities, diminishing with distance. In the most distant cities, the use of Spanish was mostly related to the number of people born in Mexico. In contrast, in cities near the border, the percentages of Spanish speakers were fairly higher than that of Mexico-born Hispanics. The only exception among the cities was Albuquerque, New Mexico, where language loyalty was related neither to the proximity to the border nor to the presence of Hispanics born in Mexico (once Mexico-born people represented only 3% of Hispanics in 1980). Hickey (2012) also

makes some considerations about the Mexican border and the maintenance of Spanish. By comparing studies by Mejías, Sánchez, and Amastae, she concludes that the loss of Spanish is slower in the Low Rio Grande Valley (border region between Mexico and Texas).

Similar to the case of Southern Texas, the fade of Spanish in New Mexico also shows a different path. According to Fernandez-Gibert (2013), at the time of the annexation of the Mexican Cession, New Mexico was by far the most populated territory. Whereas California and Eastern Texas were overwhelmed by Anglo immigration, New Mexico remained a predominantly Hispanic region until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This Hispanic majority not only kept Spanish dominant but also produced an expressive press of newspapers and magazines in Spanish, as previously mentioned. Such press, along with the presence of the Roman Catholic Church and its schools (which provided instruction in Spanish) in the region, contributed to both the maintenance of Spanish and the growth of literacy in the language. The Hispanic predominance in the region had been an obstacle in the gaining of statehood for many decades. In 1912, when the territory of New Mexico became a state, instruction in Spanish at schools slowly decreased through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the use of Spanish at home. Nowadays, it is complex to precise the number of New Mexican Spanish native speakers due to the constant connections of the region to Mexico and its migrants that have influenced the Spanish spoken there. It is known, however, that there is a distinct dialect of Spanish spoken only in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. A study of such dialect was conducted by Gerland D. Bills and Neddy A. Vigil, being published in 2008 by the title of *The Spanish Language of New Mexico and Southern Colorado: a Linguistic Atlas*. The number of Spanish native speakers in New Mexico is 514,071 (Census Bureau, 2020).

These two cases of regional maintenance of Spanish, New Mexico and Southern Texas, can be related to the established presence of Hispanic people in such regions. Nostrand (1980) and Carlson (1990) named this majority Hispanic presence in New Mexico *Hispano Homeland*. In the territory of New Mexico, the US military power managed to control the indigenous people that surrounded the area, such as the Apache and the Comanche. New Mexican Hispanics, therefore, spread to other regions of the state and also to Southern Colorado. “Some unique cultural attributes in the *Hispano Homeland* include archaic Spanish words, long lots along irrigation ditches, and Penitente *moradas* (meeting houses)” (HAVERLUK, 2017, p. 136). In the South of Texas, especially in the Low Rio Grande Valley, there is a second homeland called the *Tejano Homeland* by Arreola (1993). In 1900, when the two homelands were established, *Tejanos* were more than 50% of the population of thirteen counties in Texas. “Like the *Hispano Homeland*, the *Tejano Homeland* has distinctive characteristics, including a

high percentage of central town plazas, unique festival celebrations, and a distinctive music” (HAVERLUK, 2017, p. 136). This is a possible reason why the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico, did not show the same pattern of language loyalty in the 1995 study conducted by Bills *et al.*

Other factors may contribute to the use of Spanish by US-born Hispanics. As previously mentioned by Alonso, Durand and Gutiérrez (2014), Spanish loss tendency is lower than in other minority languages. Alba (2005) says that English monolingualism among third-generation Hispanics is lower than in ethnic minorities such as Japanese and Koreans, even though it is clear that a majority of these third-generation Hispanics are English-only speakers. It is not certain, however, that they will not be able to learn Spanish. The connection to the grandparents is a great source of input of Spanish, not only because most of them (the grandparents) cannot speak English, but also because they encourage the use of Spanish (even when the grandparents are proficient in English). The frequency Spanish is used in the community and the concentration of Spanish speakers in a given region, as well as the attitudes towards Spanish from the people of the community and the government, are also crucial in this case of retention of the language (SILVA-CORVALÁN, 2012). The presence of recent immigrants is also a significant factor in the maintenance of Spanish over generations and in a specific area (GROSJEAN, 1982; SILVA-CORVALÁN, 2004; VELTMAN, 1983; ZENTELLA, 1997 apud JENKINS, 2018, p. 59).

Villa and Rivera-Mills propose the term *heartland* to refer to the regions of the Southwest with large concentrations of Spanish speakers:

The ‘heartland’ can be defined as a region in which those of Spanish-speaking origin have a historic presence, form a demographic majority in many areas and move back and forth across national and international political borders, thus creating a bilingual dynamic in which Spanish is lost or maintained in relation to its affective and instrumental values. (2009, p. 29).

They also conducted a study to analyze the retention of Spanish over generations of Hispanics in New Mexico and South Texas. Most researchers follow the model of three generations, thus the pattern in which the ancestry language is lost by the third generation. Villa and Rivera-Mills, however, analyzed Hispanics of first through seventh generation or higher. Besides having found retention of Spanish in high generations, they also found Hispanics who had English as their first language and learned Spanish later as a second language. They called this a circular process of maintenance of bilingualism. Some English monolingual Hispanics may rely on their parents' or grandparents' first language to get Spanish input. This

phenomenon, in spite of happening also in Puerto Rican Hispanics in New York, is much more frequent with Mexican Americans in the Southwest:

The concept of a circular process of language maintenance and shift is particularly appropriate for Spanish speakers of the Southwest. As previously mentioned, the constant influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants into the area, its proximity to Mexico, and its unique historical and cultural position with respect to Spanish/ English language contact, may make it a more fertile region for the maintenance and/or revitalization of the Spanish language across generations. (2009, p. 31).

It is quite difficult to compare Spanish to other minority languages regarding its maintenance over generations. If we consider French and German, the two languages from Table 2 that have had a historical link to the United States since colonial times, we will see that their corpus is much lower than the corpus of Spanish. People of French ancestry sum more than 10 million people, even though the number of French native speakers is around 1.2 million. The numbers of German native speakers and German descendants are even more discrepant: 881 thousand and 43 million, respectively. This comparison, however, is not fair, considering that Spanish native speakers have a high percentage of people born in countries where Spanish is the dominant language. Other languages, such as Tagalog and Arabic, are mainly spoken in countries where other languages are also widely spoken, which means that the US residents born in those countries are not necessarily native speakers of those languages.



## 5 IMMIGRATION FROM SPANISH-SPEAKING NATIONS

This chapter aims to analyze the number of Hispanic Americans over the decades in order to trace possible explanations for the number of Spanish native speakers being much larger than in other minority languages. Even though the Hispanic identity does not necessarily imply proficiency in Spanish, the presence of Hispanic people in the United States may be evidence of the use of the language in the country as a whole.

Since half of the languages from Table 2 originated in Asia and most of their native speakers are from the continent, the first section compares the number of Hispanic Americans and Asian-Americans from 1850 to 2020. There is also a table which compares the percentages of foreign-born people by place of origin.

### 5.1 HISPANIC AMERICAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATIONS (1848-PRESENT)

By comparing the number of people of Latino origin to other ethnic minorities over the decades, one may analyze the growth of such populations and comprehend how Spanish reached the high number of native speakers it has nowadays, differently from the other languages that show significantly lower numbers of native speakers.

The definition of the terms *Hispanic* or *Latino* is quite dubious. In 1850, data from the first American Census after the annexation of the Mexican Cession was published. That year, the only categories for race were *white* and *black* (Census Bureau, 2014). Most of the just conquered Mexicans in the region would fall into the white category, which makes it difficult to precise the official number of Mexican origin people in the nation. The University of Washington, through the America's Great Migrations Project, conducted by James Gregory, has estimates of the number of Hispanics of 111,669 in 1850, most of them being Mexicans and Mexican-Americans residents of the Southwest. Other researchers estimate a similar number.

As mentioned in the previous section, Mexican immigration to the United States has been a social phenomenon since the establishment of the new border between the two nations (VÉLEZ-IBÁÑEZ, 2014), especially because of the need for workers in the new Anglo farms in the Southwest. In spite of this early migratory process, the Latino population grew slowly through the rest of the 19th century. In 1900, there were around 500,000 Hispanics in the country. Roughly three-quarters of them were US-born (Gregory, 2015).

From 1900 to 1930 Mexican immigration increased exponentially. That was basically due to the economic changes that had been happening in the region, such as the construction of railroads that connected the Southwest to the rest of the United States. Between 1900 and 1925, roughly 700,000 Mexicans migrated North of the border, which was easily crossable given the lack of patrol (DANIELS, 1990 apud HAVERLUK, 1997).

In 1930, the category *Mexican* was added to the census. 1,422,533 people identified as Mexican in the Census, 56% being US-born (University of New Mexico). Gregory (2015) estimates the total number of Hispanics at 2,087,641 this same year, considering also non-Mexican Hispanics. According to the official census, Mexicans were the second largest ethnic minority, only behind African-Americans, that traditionally speak English. Such census also included the categories *Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, Korean, Hawaiian, Malay, Siamese, and Samoan*. All of these ethnicities are related to different languages too; however, they do not sum 600,000 people. It shows, therefore, that since 1930 Hispanics (that time predominantly Mexicans) have had a predominant percentage among minorities that have ancestry languages, even though the data shows only the ethnicities, not the languages their people spoke.

According to Haverluk,

Until the 1960s, the US Latino population was overwhelmingly Mexican and western, and so was the Hispanic cultural imprint. After 1965, changes in immigration laws led to new migrant streams from Central and South America to the eastern and southern United States. These new migrant streams created a more geographically and socially heterogeneous Latino population whose influence is now felt beyond the West. (1997, p. 144).

The Hispanic American population, therefore, grew slowly during the 19th century, reaching 500,000 in 1900. In 1930, the number of Hispanics can be estimated at 1,422,533 (University of New Mexico), even though there is also data from other sources that estimate a larger number due to there being non-Mexican Hispanics. In the Censuses of 1940, 1950, and 1960, the category *Mexican* was excluded, and all Hispanics were counted as white in these three decades. Just in 1970 the Secretary of Commerce added the category *Hispanic* to the Census, which makes it clearer to analyze the number of people whose ancestry can be from Spanish-speaking countries other than Mexico. Moreover, the diversification process of the US Hispanic community from 1960 on shows also the increase in the migration of people not only from Mexico, but also from Central and South America.

Table 4 compares the Hispanic and Asian populations in the United States. The first category related to Asia was *Chinese*, added in 1860. In 1890, people of Japanese descent would

be counted in the same category as Chinese, and in 1930, other Asian minorities began to be included. The asterisk in some decades indicates that there was not a specific category for Hispanics in the Census; the number, therefore, is from the University of Washington. In the decades of 1850, 1910, and 1920, there was no category for Asians.

Table 4 - Hispanic and Asian populations in the United States

	<b>Hispanic Americans</b>	<b>Asian Americans</b>
<b>1850</b>	111,669*	
<b>1860</b>	179,660*	34,933
<b>1870</b>	208,022*	63,254
<b>1900</b>	496,381*	114,189
<b>1910</b>	783,229*	
<b>1920</b>	1,215,928*	
<b>1930</b>	2,087,641*	264,766
<b>1940</b>	1,858,024	254,918
<b>1950</b>	3,180,955*	321,033
<b>1960</b>	5,645,900*	980,337
<b>1970</b>	9,589,216	1,526,401
<b>1980</b>	14,608,673	3,500,439
<b>1990</b>	22,354,059	7,273,662
<b>2000</b>	35,305,818	10,242,998
<b>2010</b>	50,477,594	14,674,252
<b>2020</b>	62,529,064	23,545,238

Source: Census Bureau (2000, 2002, 2010, and 2020), University of Washington (2015).

There is some more information to consider while analyzing Table 4. As already mentioned, the category Mexican was added to the 1930 Census. However, according to Gratton and Merchant,

Mexicans were linked — in official statistics or in the public mind — with a *raza de color*, especially African Americans. In New Mexico and, more critically, in Texas, Mexican American leaders were also acutely conscious of what a nonwhite classification would cost them in civil and social rights. (2016, p. 558).

Moreover, one may perceive a drop in both populations comparing the decades of 1930 and 1940. Such a decrease was an effect of the Great Depression, which led the American government to forcibly return many foreign-born Mexicans to their country. The Mexican-American population increased again only after the end of World War II.

Table 5 shows that the Hispanic population in the United States has always been considerably larger than the Asian population. Between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, several amendments restricted the entrance of Asians in the country. In California, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 excluded Chinese. In 1907, a Gentlemen's

Agreement restricted Japanese immigration as well. As a result, the Asian-American population did not grow much over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contrary to Hispanics.

## 5.2 FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BY PLACE OF ORIGIN

There is also data concerning the foreign-born population by origin. The regions of origins include Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, Latin America, and Northern America. The Census Bureau provides information about this population from 1850 on. Table 5 compares the percentages of foreign-born residents from Europe, Oceania, Northern America, Latin America and Asia. For this comparison the regions Europe, Oceania, and Northern America were grouped in the same category, since most of the languages from Table 2 that are neither Spanish nor Asian languages are European. Northern America implies Canada, where the most common languages are English and, to a smaller degree, French, and Oceania implies Australia and New Zealand, where most people speak English. Like Asians, Europeans can also be from different linguistic backgrounds.

Table 5 - Foreign-born population in the United States by region of origin

	<b>Europe, Oceania, and Northern America</b>	<b>Latin America</b>	<b>Asia</b>
1850	98.9	0.9	0.1
1880	97.0	1.3	1.6
1900	97.5	1.3	1.2
1920	94.0	4.2	1.7
1930	92.3	5.6	1.9
1960	85.2	9.4	5.1
1970	70.8	19.4	8.9
1980	46.1	33.1	19.3
1990	27.4	44.3	26.3

Source: Census Bureau, 1850-1990.

Until the decade of 1960, most of the foreign population of the United States was from Europe, Northern America, or Oceania. From 1850 to 1900, Latin Americans and Asians had similar shares among this population cleavage (foreign-born). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico, intensified. Even though Latin American immigrants remained as a small minority among the foreign-born residents of the country, they began to represent a fairly larger percentage compared to Asians. Furthermore, Asians can be from different linguistic backgrounds, different from Latin Americas, who are mostly Spanish speakers.

One may see, therefore, that the Hispanic population in the United States has been historically larger than that of Asian origin. Concerning the foreign-born population, it is important to consider that the first category of Table 6, Europe, Oceania, and Northern America, englobes the Anglophone countries of Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, which means that foreign people from these regions would not make any difference in the corpus of languages other than English. As Latin American immigrants increased in number among the foreign-born population, the corpus of Spanish also increased, and that is a possible explanation for the expressive presence of Spanish in the United States, quite different from the patterns of the other languages, that had native speaker immigrants in a relatively lower number compared to Spanish from 1960 until this day.

## 6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to provide more information concerning the Spanish language situation in the United States under the light of the concepts of *status* and *corpus*, proposed by Jean Calvet. To do so, I analyzed demographic data regarding the population of Spanish speakers in the country over the centuries in order to comprehend the social and historical dynamics that led Spanish to have a corpus of more than 40 million native speakers in the region, representing more than 60% of the speakers of languages other than English. In order to understand the growth of such a corpus, I needed also to comprehend how the status of the language changed over time, studying factors such as institutional laws and media.

The study shows that Spanish has grown rapidly over four centuries in the Southwest of the United States, especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The status of the language in the region has also changed due to the fact that the people who have lived there have been under different rules, these being Spanish, Mexican, and finally, American.

Three social processes led Spanish to its current situation in the United States: colonialism, since the language was implemented in the region by colonists from Spain and, during three centuries, was the dominant language in the region, even after it became part of Mexico in its independence process; imperialism, with the conquest of the region by the United States and the massive presence of Anglo Americans that went to the region, changing the social status of the language; and immigration, which reinforced the presence of the language there and contributed significantly to the expressive growth of its corpus. The Spanish language, therefore, was the region's dominant language from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century until the Mexican-American war and the victory of the United States. Then, it became a minority language with little relevance to the country as a whole, being restricted only to some specific spots of the Southwest, such as Southern Texas, New Mexico, and Los Angeles. Economic and political factors in the US-Mexico border in the first decades of the 20th century changed the dynamics between the two countries, and large waves of immigrants from Mexico moved to the Southwest, a region where the presence of Mexicans was already established, in spite of its little relevance. During the second half of the century, other dynamics catalyzed the immigration of Latin Americans to the United States, now with more diversity in terms of national origins – also people from Central and South American countries.

The first research question aimed to understand why the corpus of Spanish is much larger than any other minority language in the United States. As mentioned, the Spanish language has a very particular context in the country, which has a terrestrial border with a

Spanish-speaking nation – which has served as a source of Spanish speakers to the United States over the centuries. The other minority languages, represented in Table 2, do not have this feature in that context. This border turns immigration much more feasible compared to countries located in other continents and enables a continuum connection of immigrants to Mexico. Moreover, the historical presence of Spanish speakers in the Southwest is another feature that is not shared with other languages. This historical presence also reinforces the culture connections of the Southwest to Mexico.

The difference between the corpus of Spanish and any other minority languages in the United States might also be the result of the historical and geographical conditions of the two countries. The remaining minority languages of the United States, such as Chinese, Korean, and Arabic, are mainly spoken in distant countries, which makes the constant influx of immigrants from these regions impossible. Moreover, the United States has a terrestrial border with Latin America, making immigration much more feasible. In the case of Mexico, the proximity to the US allows immigrants to stay in constant contact with their relatives on both sides of the border, a phenomenon that has existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Texas-Mexico part of the border. This is the most extensive border between a developed and a developing nation, also being the most crossed border in the world. That responds the second research question, which aims to understand how historical and geographical factors have maintained an expressive corpus of Spanish in the Southwest over the centuries.

The growth in the corpus of Spanish also contributed to the rise of new Spanish media forms, like radio – in the 1920s –, and television – in the 1970s. Newspapers in Spanish, however, have been present in the region since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many Mexican Americans have had access to this kind of media since then. This shows the relevance of the language for its community and may serve as evidence of its condition as a vehicular language (concepts proposed by Calvet). It also responds the third research question, which aims to analyze what media and institutionality tell us about the status of Spanish in the region.

Due to the availability of demographic data provided by American census institutions, we managed to easily access this data, which allowed us to analyze the data and examine the growth in the number of Spanish speakers. In order to analyze the status of the languages, we focused on the Southwestern states and found some laws about it. In California and Arizona, where English is the official language, we found a limited amount of information, whereas, in New Mexico and Texas, we found more concrete data. In terms of media, we also found a good source to give us an overview of the history of Spanish media in the country, as well as some current trends. The use of a language as an instruction language may also be used to gauge its

status. However, finding information about education required a deeper search, so we decided to stick to institutionality and media to examine Spanish status.

Future studies may use this one as a platform for deeper analysis of Hispanic American groups and their relation and attitude towards the use of Spanish. Moreover, considering the fact that immigration from Latin America to the United States has decreased and minority languages tend to fade over generations, it may also serve as an overview of the situation of the language in the region in order to identify the current trends and expectations for the next decades. It might also be related to studies about Spanish in other circumstances, such as different countries and even globally, once Spanish is currently the second most spoken language in the world and has an expressive presence in the United States, the largest power worldwide.



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