

Spanish-influenced varieties of english

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Spanish Influenced Varieties of English When one takes a look at a Latino standing beside an African American and that person is asked, “ What is similar about those two people?”, the knee-jerk answer to the question would be, “ There is nothing similar about them.” In a way, that answer would be right, after all the difference in skin color is already a dead give-away. However, aside from differences in skin color and appearance, these two groups have some not so obvious similarities. In a way, it is the diverse history of their groups and cultural backgrounds that seem to have a merging effect on the relationship of these two groups. The first being that the African-Americans and Latinos have a problem with their sub-culture classifications, survival, and happiness. Even more surprising is that these very similarities in their quest for an ethnic identity and acceptance are the very same reasons that these two groups remain divided. The main difference in ethnic identity between the African-Americans and Latinos stem from the fact that their origins also have mixed ethnic identities within. This means that the African-Americans also have a mixed African heritage, just like their Latino counterparts. However, when we find ourselves in a discussion about ethnic identity, African Americans are not included in the group because they are already classified as a type of American subculture. Whereas Latinos, who come from highly different backgrounds and countries, are forced to fit into the pigeon holed image of a Hispanic person. African-Americans are discussed in terms of race, Latinos, in terms of ethnicity. There is also a huge difference in the spoken tongue of the two groups. African Americans have completely forgotten their native tongues over the generations that passed, allowing them to completely immerse themselves

in the American culture and giving them the opportunity to speak the English language in its purity. The Latinos on the other hand, refuse to allow themselves to be taken over by the English language in its totality. They continue to fight for the survival of their mother tongue. Even if it means having to create a bastardized language known as Spanglish to ensure that they still speak Spanish one way or another in their new adopted country. They do this in order to feel connected to their mother country. It would seem that the Latinos have a problem letting go of their heritage in order to embrace a new one. African-Americans never had this problem when it came to their ethnicity. As their generations evolved, the old African ways became irrelevant and died a natural death as the new generation of African Americans fully embraced the culture of the country they consider their home. Having said that, one cannot help but wonder as to why the Latinos seem to have a problem letting go of their past. Regardless of how irrelevant its existence may be in their new surroundings, they insist on finding a place for it. Using the language whenever they can, however they can. This I believe, is why they proudly speak Spanglish in their home environments. The reason they are overtly proud of their Spanglish tongue is really simple. It gives them a sense of uniqueness in a country over populated by immigrant races. They speak differently from everyone else and, if you happen to be a Latino new to America, you will find this spoken version of Spanish-English fascinating. Making you wish that you knew how to speak it in order to gain acceptance into the social circle. The pride that they have in speaking the language covertly stems from their ethnic ability to be able to create various versions of Spanglish in relation to the type of Spanish that

they spoke in their mother country. It is their way of honoring both their past and present heritage. By creating the new English language that they feel at home speaking, they are able to more easily assimilate into their new surroundings. The unique language also helps the new comers to America get an easier grasp of the English language as opposed to if they were forced to speak the pure form immediately upon their arrival in the country. However, the overt and covert sense of pride that the Latinos have for their Spanglish language is also what makes life harder for them in the new country. Due to their desire to keep their own language alive for generations to come, they pigeon hole themselves into their area of residence, always afraid to venture into other parts of the city where their version of English is not spoke because they are afraid of being considered weird and an outsider. In the end though, what is good about the emergence of Spanglish is that a new American dialect is born and it is one that will continue to benefit the future Latinos in America. Provided the educators find a way to make it work for the mainstream population as well.