

¿Mba'eteko, Che?

An Examination of the Roles of the Guaraní and Spanish Languages in the Cultural Identity of Paraguayan Migrants in Greater Buenos Aires



by Calvin Kocher

Senior Thesis submitted to Oregon State University Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Anthropology, Honors Scholar
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Calvin Kocher for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Anthropology and Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in International Studies presented on May 4, 2018. Title: ¿Mba'eteko, Che?: An Examination of the Roles of the Guaraní and Spanish Languages in the Cultural Identity of Paraguayan Migrants in Greater Buenos Aires.

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The purpose of this project was to investigate the roles of different languages (namely Guaraní, Jopará, and Spanish) in the formation of Paraguayan cultural identity among Paraguayan migrants to the greater Buenos Aires region of Argentina. Though the Paraguayan community makes up the largest immigrant population in Argentina, outside of studies focusing on their participation in the labor market, very little about them has been studied. Paraguay's role as the only officially bilingual country on a national level in South America¹ and the only country where the majority of the people speak an indigenous language give it a unique cultural identity in which language plays an disproportionate role.

Fieldwork for this project was realized in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, as well as in its suburbs in the province of Buenos Aires, in Gonzalo Catán and La Matanza. First, Paraguayan cultural spaces in Buenos Aires were

¹ This is in contrast with other countries, such as Bolivia, where Spanish is one of many national languages but is the only language whose usage is constitutionally mandated nationwide, or Peru, in which Aymara and Quechua are co-official, but only on a regional basis.

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observed in order to discern the language practice of the Paraguayan community in Argentina. In addition, six Paraguayan migrants from diverse backgrounds, social classes, and reasons for migrating were interviewed about how much of a role language played in the formation of their respective cultural identities.

The initial conclusions drawn are that while Guaraní is seldom used in its purest form, instead eschewed for its more creole form, Jopará, it plays a critical role in the formation of Paraguayan identity. The proficiency that most Paraguayans have in either of the two languages links them to their sense of nationhood and makes them feel unique, especially when living outside their country and being surrounded by monolingual Hispanophones. In an environment where their language practice and ability make them stand out, maintaining their Guaraní and Jopará language skills is often a way for migrant Paraguayans to form social circles with other Paraguayan expatriates and stay connected to their cultural roots.

Key Words: Paraguay, Argentina, Buenos Aires, Guaraní, Spanish, Jopará, cultural identity, language ideology, migration

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Calvin Kocher, Author

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Introduction

This paper will investigate the role that language plays in the formation of the cultural identities of Paraguayan migrants living in and around Buenos Aires, the largest city and capital of Argentina that plays host to the majority of the country's Paraguayan migrant population.

Paraguayans make up the largest expatriate group in Argentina, with over half a million Paraguayan-born people currently living in Argentina and with over one million Argentines estimated to have Paraguayan ancestry. The history behind this population's migration to Argentina as well as their labor practices have been extensively documented. However, their cultural identification and their linguistic practices have had little to no scholastic research performed. With Paraguay's unique linguistic and cultural identity within Latin America, this omission is somewhat shocking. This project sought to remedy this lack of research by studying the linguistic behavior and cultural identity of the modern-day Paraguayan-Argentine population.

This project's title is a little bit of a linguistic joke; the first word of the title, "mba'eteko," is a Guaraní greeting, while "che" is an interjection that, while difficult to translate, is roughly equivalent to the term "dude" as it's used in the Western United States. The title of this paper, then, would be a common greeting

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among Paraguayans living in Argentina, indexing both identities by using defining linguistic markers of both nationalities; indeed, over the course of my research there, I heard this exact greeting more than a few times.

Members of the Paraguayan migrant community were asked about their cultural and linguistic identities with respect to Paraguayan Spanish, Argentine Spanish (also called Rioplatense Spanish or Porteño Spanish), and Guaraní. Additionally, through observation of Paraguayan spaces, the linguistic behavior of Paraguayans in Argentina was observed to identify if they had any linguistic preferences, or if there were situations in which one language was preferred over the others.

After a summary of the terms and topics of the thesis, this paper will go into a little bit of background information to give some context to the project. The history of the Guaraní language, the variants of Spanish spoken in Paraguay and Argentina, and the long history of migration from Paraguay to Argentina will be among the topics of discussion.

Lastly, in the analysis, the findings of the interviews will be reviewed and the connection found between the preferred language of Paraguayan migrants and their cultural identities will be established.

Methodology

Six Paraguayans of different backgrounds were interviewed to establish a diverse viewpoint of what it means to be Paraguayan. All people that participated in the project were acquaintances of the investigator's Paraguayan contacts or contacts of professors from the Instituto del Desarrollo Económico y Social (Institute of Economic and Social Development) in Buenos Aires so as to ensure no personal connection between the investigator and the interviewees. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and the information was later translated into English.

Additionally, Paraguayan spaces in Buenos Aires were observed, including the public festival held in the city celebrating Paraguay's Independence Day (14 May). This was done to determine the linguistic practice of Paraguayans in predominantly Paraguayan spaces to see which language they preferred to use. The proportions of Guaraní and of Spanish that were used were observed, as well as the uses of each language, who was speaking each, and when.

All questions asked in interviews were made into a script before the start of the project. This script appears at the end of the document in an appendix.

Background

Cultural Identity and “Paraguayanness” (*paraguayidad*)

Cultural identity is a very important fact of our identity as human beings.

It can be defined as the feeling of belonging to a certain group that is characterized by shared aspects, such as country of origin, language, race, religion, class, generation, age, disability, ethnicity, region of origin, sexuality, level of education, criminal status, or other characteristics that demonstrate independence and the formation of a particular community based on defined characteristics (Ennaji, 2005).

“Paraguayanness,” or *paraguayidad* in Spanish (*teko* in Guaraní), can be defined as Paraguayan cultural identity (Colmán, 2015). This identity has various components that distinguish it from other Latin American, Hispanophone, or Hispanic cultures. Paraguayan culture has its roots in the laws in the early parts of the 19th century, when the Supreme Dictator José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia mandated that ethnic Spaniards could not marry among themselves, but rather with people of indigenous, African, or mixed ancestry in order to combat the vestiges of the Spanish racial caste system. Due to these laws, the population of Paraguay is very homogenous; 95% of the population self-identifies as mestizo, or having mixed European and indigenous ancestry (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016).

Due to this mixed heritage, Paraguay is the only country in Latin America where a majority of the population speaks an indigenous language, despite the fact that indigenous peoples make up less than 5% of the nation's total population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Though many Paraguayans (especially those living in larger metropolitan areas like Asunción and Ciudad del Este) speak less Guaraní than their rural counterparts, the status of Guaraní in the country demonstrates national unity and pride. This is highlighted by Paraguayan expatriates, who use the language to connect with other Paraguayans outside the country, no matter their main language (Romero, 2012).

Another factor that defines Paraguayan culture is food. In any Paraguayan community outside the country, it is almost certain that they maintain the culture surrounding the drink *tereré*, a refreshing infusion of yerba mate with mint and ice water that is used as a social drink among friends and family. The drink is often presented as a symbol of Paraguayan culture and factors heavily in everyday Paraguayan life. Other foods that are only found in Paraguay and surrounding Guaraní-influenced regions, such as *chipa guazú*, *sopa paraguaya*, *chipa*, boiled cassava root, *surubí* soup, and *vorí*, are cited by many Paraguayans as elements that define Paraguayan culture; for example, a common saying in

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Paraguay is to say that someone or something is “more Paraguayan than cassava root” (*más paraguayo que la mandioca*).

Traditional Paraguayan folk music is very prevalent both in Paraguay and in expatriate communities. Two styles of music and dance, the *galopa* and the *guarania*, were developed in Paraguay, whereas the polka, brought to the country by German immigrants, has become wildly popular, with a Paraguayan variation on the music and dance becoming the most prevalent. Additionally, the Paraguayan harp, a diatonic instrument first developed in the Jesuit Guaraní missions, is widely held in high esteem as a symbol of the country due to its being invented in and only being found in Paraguay (Countries and Their Cultures, 2017).

Language Ideology and Practice

Language ideology is essentially what a person or a group of people think of a language or a dialect, or what they think of an individual and their community that speaks it (Ahearn, 2012). They may have these thoughts consciously or subconsciously, and these judgments can be based in truth, on personal beliefs, or on stereotypes. For example, the idea that French is a very romantic language or that Argentine accents are hard to understand would both be language ideologies. Normally, language ideologies serve to express the

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prejudices and stereotypes that one people group has about another (Ahearn, 2012).

Language practice is self-explanatory: it is the behavior of an individual or a group of individuals when it comes to their language; in other words: what language they use, when they use it, with whom they use it, and in which situations they use it. Language practice is greatly influenced by social environments; individuals are not completely free to make their own decisions due to outside influences, but neither are they completely under their environment's control. A mixture of free will and external pressure is usually what determines an individual's language practice (Ahearn, 2012).

Official Languages

An official language is a language that has official legal status in a region or country. If no language has official status, then the language that is used by the government is considered the official language (McArthur, 1998).

Argentina does not have a *de jure* official language, but its *de facto* official language is Spanish, which is spoken natively by almost all Argentines (Simon and Fennig, 2017). Paraguay is constitutionally a bilingual republic, with Guaraní and Spanish having equal status under the law (Constitution of the Republic of

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Paraguay, Part II, Title I, Chapter I, Article 140). Another commonly spoken language, Jopará, a mix of Spanish and Guaraní, has no official status.

Dialects

A dialect or variant of a language is considered a version of a language that is spoken in a particular place or by a particular demographic group that has certain characteristics that are distinct from the standard form of that language, such as grammar or pronunciation. The difference between a dialect and a language is very hotly debated among modern linguists today (McWhorter, 2016).

The Guaraní Language and Its History in Paraguay

The Guaraní language originated among the indigenous peoples of the interior of the South American continent, occupying lands that today make up Paraguay, north and northeastern Argentina, southeastern Bolivia, and south and southeastern Brazil. The language is a member of the South American Tupí-Guaraní language (Gutman & Avanzati, 2013). Pre-colonization, the language was universal among the tribes that inhabited the region and was used as a lingua franca. When Europeans first reached modern-day Paraguay and contacted these tribes in 1537, they found few natural resources, especially when compared to the resource-rich Andean region. Because of this, the area was not prioritized for settlement and resource extraction and stayed relatively free from

colonial influence. Therefore, the first major impact made by Europeans in Guaraní-inhabited lands was made by the Jesuits, with the establishment of the first Jesuit reduction² in San Ignacio Guazú in 1609 (Page, 1999).

The Jesuits constructed many missions in the Paraná River basin that, today, have become UNESCO World Heritage Sites³. Since the region did not have much material wealth, not many Spanish colonists had settled there, meaning that the natives did not speak much Spanish and the language had not gained much of a foothold in the colony, then a part of the Viceroyalty of Perú. Therefore, in order to better proselytize Catholicism to the natives, the Jesuits decided to use Guaraní as the main language in their missions in the area. Because of this, many religious texts in Guaraní rapidly became very prevalent; one of the longest and purest⁴ Guaraní language texts to this day is still the Bible. This indirectly increased the indigenous literacy rate in the region to one of the highest in the Americas. As an indirect result of these factors, many of the

² A type of religious settlement with the goal of concentrating populations of native tribes so as to harness their labor as well as expose them to European culture and Christianity. The most successful and most notable of these reductions are currently in the Triple Frontier region of South America centered around modern-day Ciudad del Este, Paraguay.

³ Today, the ruins of these Jesuit missions are located in the provinces of Misiones, Argentina; Paraná, Brazil, and Alto Paraná and Itapúa, Paraguay.

⁴ Purest in this case means with as few loanwords from Spanish as possible.

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Guaraní who lived in these missions became increasingly reluctant to learn Spanish, not seeing any need for it (Ganson, 2003).

Additionally, the few Spaniards that settled the region tended to be men. Seeing as there was a dearth of European females, these men married indigenous women, giving way to a new generation of mixed-race children who were raised by their mothers to speak more Guaraní than Spanish (Fernández, 2002). For these reasons, Guaraní quickly became the principal language and the lingua franca of the colony.

After Paraguay declared independence in 1811, the first leader of the new nation was Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, who very soon declared himself the Supreme and Perpetual Dictator of the country. He was very isolationist: he closed the borders of the country and created a law that prohibited the marriage of two people of European descent with the intention of destroying the last vestiges of the Spanish colonial race-based caste system. The country quickly became predominantly mestizo, or of mixed ancestry, and as a result of these two policies, the use of Guaraní spiked (Lambert, 2015).

However, shortly after taking power, de Francia died, and power passed to the López family – first to Carlos Antonio López and, upon his passing, to his son, Francisco Solano. They heavily restricted the use of Guaraní in the country

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by outlawing its teaching in the few schools in which it was used as well as the use of last names with Guaraní origins (Nickson, 2009). These new restrictions, combined with the reopening of the country's borders, brought about a resurgence of interest in the Spanish language, which was seen as a more modern language that was more useful for trade with Europe, the United States, and Paraguay's Latin American neighbors (Fernández, 2002).

The reign of the López family came to an abrupt and unfortunate end with Paraguay's defeat in the War of the Triple Alliance, known also as the Paraguayan War, which was fought against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. During the war, the Guaraní language was frequently used among the troops on the front line so that enemy soldiers would not be able to understand their communications.

After the war, Brazilian and Argentine troops occupied the country, and the language became heavily repressed. As a result of the war, Paraguay had lost much of its territory from its northern, southern, and eastern regions that were majority Guaranophone⁵ and had a long history with the language and with the Jesuit missions that had helped to preserve it. The loss of those territories massively shrunk the proportion of the Paraguayan population who spoke

⁵ Guaraní-speaking

Guaraní as a native language. Besides this loss, the foreign occupiers of the country were frustrated that the Paraguayans had a language that they could use amongst themselves so that foreign soldiers wouldn't be able to understand them, just like in the war. Because of this, these occupiers supported politicians in the Paraguayan government that not only supported the foreign occupation of the country, but also those who had a low opinion of the Guaraní language (Nickson, 2009). Through this political subterfuge, Guaraní was portrayed as a backwards language that was only used by those who did not fit in modern society, a mentality that was strengthened by the new wave of European migrants coming to the country and these immigrants' affluence.

This policy was maintained by the Liberal Party (*el Partido Liberal*), the party in power from 1870, the year when the War of the Triple Alliance ended, up until 1936, the year that the Chaco War against Bolivia ended. The Colorado Party (*el Partido Colorado*, literally, *The Colored Party*), the opposition party of the time, came to power afterwards after capitalizing on the ineptitude of the Liberal Party's handling of the latter war. The Liberals lost much of its support due to its misallocation of funds during the war that often left Paraguay's troops without weapons, training, or even boots. Guaraní already had a history being used on

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the front lines during wartime amongst Paraguayan troops during the War of the Triple Alliance and was similarly used to help defeat Bolivia in the Chaco War.

Additionally, the Colorado Party took advantage of the fact that the Liberal Party undervalued the language and adopted it, portraying it as one of the nation's strengths and molding into an incontrovertible aspect of Paraguayan patriotism that distinguished them from other Latin American countries, much like de Francia did. In a broken political system where both parties were often corrupt, this tack differentiated them from the unpopular Liberals, and the party took advantage of the momentum they were gaining by claiming that the Chaco War was won despite Liberal leadership, not because of it. In addition, after seeing its success during the war, Guaraní began to be utilized by the armed forces as a unique communications tool that only Paraguay had, and since nationalism and patriotism in the country were inextricably linked to the armed forces, the seeds of the connections between the Guaraní language, patriotism, and Paraguayan national identity were planted and began to grow (Nickson, 2009).

In 1954, Colorado Party politician Alfredo Stroessner assumed control of the government and became dictator. He had grown up in the province of Itapúa, a region that has a long history with the Guaraní language and has many

ruins of Jesuit missions, and grew up speaking Guaraní with his mother. Due to his close connections with the language, when he took power, the Guaraní language also benefitted and took a more important role in the country. Guaraní, as well as a creole language called Jopará that uses Guaraní grammar and sentence structure with Spanish words⁶, was used heavily by Stroessner and other Colorado Party politicians to connect more with the mainly rural and Guaranophone Paraguayan people and to project a softer and more relatable public image.

During Stroessner's reign, commonly called *el stronato* in Spanish, Guaraní was officially recognized in the national constitution when it was rewritten in 1967, though it did not yet have the same status as Spanish (Nickson, 2009). In 1972, during the inauguration of this new constitution, Stroessner famously declared "Guaraní constitutes the most highly valued cultural heritage of our country and it is the duty of every Paraguayan to learn it, disseminate it, and enrich it, since it is the vernacular language of our land" (Gynan, 2007).

⁶ In Guaraní, the name of the language is written *jopara*; in Spanish, it's written as *yopará*. This language is very common in modern day Paraguay. Many Spanish words came into Guaraní as loanwords, and over time, while some communities that speak *guaraniete*, or pure Guaraní, still use the original Guaraní words, many Paraguayans who speak Jopará—and even those who speak Guaraní—use Spanish loanwords. Today, many common words in both Guaraní and Jopará alike, such as the words for "play," "understand," "soccer," or "cow," are almost entirely referred by using Spanish loanwords. The name Jopará comes from a Guaraní word meaning "mixed."

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Additionally, during this period, Jopará began to be more commonly used in public spaces as opposed to solely in private; the language began to appear on television, on the radio, and in public speeches by politicians and other famous personalities. However, despite all this, Spanish still maintained its place as the language of commerce, business, and education, as well as its prestige, as it was still the preferred language of the country's elite.

When Stroessner was ousted in 1989, a new national constitution was written that elevated Guaraní to the level of official national language alongside Spanish. With its new official status in the country, Guaraní began to be more used in public spaces and less stigmatized in the country (Villagra-Batoux, 2008). Today, every school in Paraguay, from kindergarten to university, teaches Guaraní as a mandatory subject, though the language is taught more like a foreign language and is not used as a primary language of instruction. Additionally, all government services are (at least nominally) required to be offered in both Spanish and Guaraní.

Though there are still problems with discrimination against monolingual Guaraní speakers and rural Guaranophone farmers as well as with the lack of knowledge of the language among Paraguay's urban conglomerations, Guaraní is stronger and healthier now than it has been at almost any point in Paraguayan

history. The language solidly maintains its status as the second most widely spoken indigenous American language (after Quechua), with over six million speakers. It is also the only indigenous language in the Americas that is widely spoken by a non-indigenous population, an anomaly on a continent where mixed-race populations historically and universally exchanged indigenous languages for colonial European tongues, and the only one not to be tied to a specific indigenous community (Lustig, 2010; Romero, 2012).

Today, around 90% of Paraguayans speak Guaraní either monolingually or bilingually, compared to only around 55% who speak Spanish (Gynan, 2007).

This is by far the smallest proportion of Spanish speakers throughout any country in Latin America with Spanish as an official language, smaller than even Peru or Bolivia, other countries with strong indigenous language traditions.

Though Spanish remains the language of prestige in the country, being almost the sole language used in education, business, and written communications⁷,

Guaraní is widely accepted as the everyday language of the Paraguayan people.

⁷ The clear majority of books, magazines, and newspapers published in Paraguay are written in Spanish. There are Guaraní language publications, including periodicals, news segments, and advertisements, but they are not nearly as ubiquitous as their Spanish counterparts (Gynan, 2007). Additionally, the number of people literate in Guaraní is drastically lower than the number literate in Spanish, even though there are more Guaraní speakers. This is because Guaraní is generally an orally transmitted language, as well as the ubiquity of Spanish-language print media.

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It is important to note, however, that the language's prevalence does not implicate the dominance of the culture of the indigenous Guaraní peoples; rather, the language became associated with the mixed-race children of Guaraní natives and European migrants, creating a new hybrid culture dominated by European influences but with Guaraní as its main language (Ganson, 2003).

Varieties of Spanish (Rioplatense and Paraguayan)

The Spanish language, also known as the Castilian language, is an Indo-European and Romance language that was formed in Castile in modern day Spain with a basis in Vulgar Latin. During the colonization of the Americas, Spanish conquistadors brought their tongue with them, and with the immigration of European colonists to the continent, the language quickly spread amongst all Spanish colonies. Today, with over five hundred million native speakers, Spanish is the second most spoken native language in the world after Mandarin Chinese, and the most widely spoken language in the Americas. It is the official language in twenty countries, eighteen of which are in the Americas, and plays an important role in many more, including Puerto Rico⁸, the United States, Andorra, the Philippines, Portugal, Gibraltar⁹, the Western Sahara¹⁰, and Belize (Simons & Fennig, 2017). Due to the geographic separation of the world's

⁸ Not a country, but rather an American territory

⁹ Not a country, but a British overseas territory

¹⁰ Disputed territory, with Morocco claiming sovereignty

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Spanish speaking countries, the accents and dialects that developed throughout the American continent turned out vastly different from one another.

Rioplatense Spanish, also known as Porteño or Buenos Aires Spanish, is the variant of Spanish spoken in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area in Argentina and its surroundings, including in Uruguay and surrounding Argentina provinces such as Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, and Buenos Aires (the province). This dialect of Spanish has heavy influences from southern Italy due to the large quantity of immigrants who came to the region from southern Italy, especially the region surrounding Naples. It is recognized in the Spanish speaking world for having an inflection with strong Italian influences, a unique vocabulary¹¹, the usage of the periphrasis in the formation of the future tense (e.g. *ir a* + verb, literally *going to*) instead of using the simple future tense, the use of *voseo*¹² and

¹¹ Rioplatense Spanish has many words with various origins that are uncommon or unused in other varieties of the language. For example: *boludo* (idiot or friend), *quilombo* (mess, bad situation), *frutilla* (strawberry), *pancho* (hot dog), *pibe* o *chabón* (boy, guy), *mina* o *piba* (girl), *valija* (suitcase), *baúl* (trunk of a car), *pollera* (skirt), *poroto* (bean), *chamuyo* (to talk for the sake of talking, to swindle).

¹² A different second person singular pronoun used in place of the more universal *tú*.

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*seseo*¹³, the use of the interjection *che*, and a *yeísmo*¹⁴ that heavily uses the /ʃ/ sound like in the word *sheep* (Mackenzie, 1999).

Paraguayan Spanish is similar, but it also has its differences. It has many sentence structures and grammatical constructions influenced by Guaraní, such as the use of the phrase *un poco* (a little bit) at the end of imperative phrases to soften their effect, the use of the word *de* (of) with a personal pronoun in directional phrases¹⁵, the use of *para* (for) before direct objects¹⁶, and the use of loanwords from Guaraní.¹⁷ Some phonemes are different as well: in Paraguay, there is no *yeísmo*; if a word ends in S, the letter is often not pronounced; the letter R is pronounced similarly to the way it's pronounced in American English; and the voiceless glottal stop, represented by an apostrophe in Guaraní, often appears in Paraguayans' Spanish (Trusted Translations, 2017). Despite this, there are many similarities between Paraguayan and Rioplatense Spanish, including

¹³ The merging of the /θ/ phoneme, represented in Spanish with the letter Z as well as the letter C if followed by an E or an I, with the /s/ phoneme, represented by the letter S. This phenomenon is common in most Spanish dialects outside Europe.

¹⁴ A feature of certain varieties of spoken Spanish where the phonemes represented by the letters *ll* (typically representing the phoneme /ʎ/) and *y* (typically representing the phoneme /j/). In Rioplatense Spanish, these are both realized as the phoneme /ʃ/.

¹⁵ For example: *Se perdió de mí mi libro* (I lost my book) as opposed to the standard *Se me perdió mi libro* or *Perdí mi libro*.

¹⁶ For example: *Hice para mi tarea*. (I did my homework) instead of *Hice mi tarea*.

¹⁷ For example: *así gua'u* (that's how it is), *anichene* (you're kidding), *mba'eichapa* or *mba'eteko* or *mba'e la porte* (How are you?), *michimĩ* (a little bit), *karai* (man), *kuña* (woman), *kuñatai* (girl), *mitã* or *mita'i* (child or boy), *puréte* (cool, awesome), *jaha* (let's go), and *ja'u la terere* (Let's have some *tereré*).

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slang words, the use of *voseo* and *seseo*, and the eschewing of the future simple in favor of the *ir a + verb* construction seen above.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Paraguayan Spanish is its use of particles from Guaraní, which are often inserted into Spanish language discourse by members of all socioeconomic group and regardless of bilingual status.

Particles such as *-na* (please), *-pa* (question particle), *-py* and *-pio* (interrogative particles), *gua'u* (untranslatable, usually used for emphasis), *-ko* (used for emphasis), *-mĩ* or *-'i* (diminutive particle), *-ne* (indicating something is likely to happen), *-nte* (only, just), *-ma* (indicating something is completed), *-pota* (indicating possibility of something happening), *-ete* or *-etere'i* (very), and *-se* (indicating desire).

The Interesting Case of Jopará: The Mixing of Two Languages

The Jopará language (Guaraní: *jopara*; Spanish: *yopará*, meaning “mixed” or “mixture” in Guaraní) is a language often defined as a colloquial form of Guaraní with heavy Spanish influences and loanwords. This language is very common in modern day Paraguay (Lustig, 2010). Many Spanish words came into Guaraní as loanwords, and over time, began to replace the original Guaraní words, while other Spanish words were used for concepts or animals that Europeans brought to the region. Today, many common words in both Guaraní

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and Jopará alike, such as the words for “play,” “understand,” “soccer,” “cow,” or almost all kinship terms, are almost entirely referred by using Spanish loanwords. However, most other languages in Guaraní’s language family, such as Kaiwá and Nhandevá, maintain their own terms for these words and remain much less influenced by the Spanish language (Dietrich, 2010).¹⁸

While some (mostly rural) communities still speak *guaraniete*, or pure Guaraní, and stay away from Spanish borrowings, most Paraguayans regularly code switch in and out of Spanish while speaking Guaraní and vice versa, raising the question of which language they are speaking: Spanish, Guaraní, or Jopará. Often, when a loanword has become so embedded in one language, multilingual speakers do not realize that it is a loanword, such as with *tereré*, a Guaraní term which is used so often in Spanish that the true Spanish equivalent, *mate frío*, is perpetually forgotten. Another example is the Guaraní word for “mustache” (*vigóte*), as observed in the *Atlas Lingüístico Guaraní-Románico* and written about by Wolf Dietrich, which was taken from Spanish (*bigote*) so long ago that Guaraní speakers, when asked (in Guaraní) what the Spanish word for “mustache” was, often did not know. Many words like this have crossed over between Guaraní

¹⁸ For further reading on the syntax, grammar, construction, and orthography of Jopará, please refer to Wolf Lustig’s “Mba’éichapa oiko la guarani? Guaraní y *jopara* en Paraguay”.

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and Spanish to the point where today, many speakers do not know to what language a word belongs (Dietrich, 2010).

Since Spanish and Guaraní have been in contact for around 500 years in modern day Paraguay, a large amount of mixing has taken place. This was observed as early as 1780 by a Jesuit missionary, Martin Dobrizhoffer, who wrote that "all people...speak Guaraní as their mother tongue, though most of them also speak Spanish quite well. Actually, they mix up both languages and understand neither very well at all" (Dietrich, 2010).

Today, in modern speech, pure Guaraní is almost exclusively reserved for use as a literary language or in very formal and traditional settings, pure Spanish is reserved for interactions with foreigners or for official purposes such as business or education, and in all other less formal situations, the two are interchanged regularly. As Wolf Lustig, a linguistics professor at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz in Germany who has extensively studied Guaraní, succinctly put the Paraguayan mentality: "If progress comes, it comes in Spanish." This highlights the huge diglossia that has come to be the norm in the country, with education, business, international relations, literature, and Western culture coming to the country through Hispanophone channels.

In Paraguay, a form of double diglossia has come into effect, with Spanish serving as the high language, Guaraní as the low language, and literary “pure” Guaraní serving as an aspirational high language that is little used, though not completely unused. Jopará serves as a bridge between these two languages by assuming a more neutral social status. While some defend literary Guaraní as unsullied by Spanish loanwords and as purer, many others reject it as an unrepresentative form of how the language is used in real life (Gynan, 2007).

The proportion of Spanish and Guaraní used by the speaker while speaking Jopará differs heavily from speaker to speaker. Many Paraguayans do not acknowledge the existence of Jopará and refer to it as a colloquial dialect of Guaraní, including the government, which does not consider it a language and omits it from national censuses. Among these detractors was the famous Paraguayan author, Augusto Roa Bastos, who in his novel *El Fiscal* called Jopará a horrendous dialect, and continued: “...it resembles the idiotic speech of collective senility, the insane tongue of the weak-minded, of an infirm society...”¹⁹ Ironically enough, in this statement itself, Roa Bastos mixed in

¹⁹ The original text: “...parece el habla idiota de la senilidad colectiva, el ñe'ẽ tavy del débil mental, de una sociedad enferma...” Translation by author.

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Guaraní phrases, showing at least some understanding of either a Guaraní-influenced Spanish or Jopará itself.

Only pure Guaraní (*guaraniete*) is mandated to be taught in schools, which is complicated, namely because most Guaraní speakers speak Jopará more than they speak pure Guaraní. Additionally, the usage of Spanish almost exclusively as the language of education, relegates a bookish, literary form of Guaraní to being taught as if it were a foreign language, whereas colloquial Guaraní and/or Jopará are not acknowledged at all and are left to be learned orally outside of school. This results in low levels of Guaraní-language literacy and comparatively high levels of Spanish-language literacy, even though more Paraguayans speak Guaraní.

Urban Paraguayans, such as those growing up in or around Asunción, tend to be Spanish-dominant, but still use Guaraní words in everyday speech, with profanity, food items, and particles being the most common carryovers. On the other hand, more rural Guaraní speakers tend to do the opposite—speaking Guaraní the majority of the time while incorporating Spanish loanwords into its grammatical structure. This can be seen in the figure below, first published by Shaw N. Gynan in an article entitled “Language Planning and Policy in Paraguay,” where urban departments of Paraguay, such as the Central and Alto

Paraná departments as well as the Asunción Capital district, have drastically lower levels of Guaraní native speakers than the more rural departments in the center of the country.

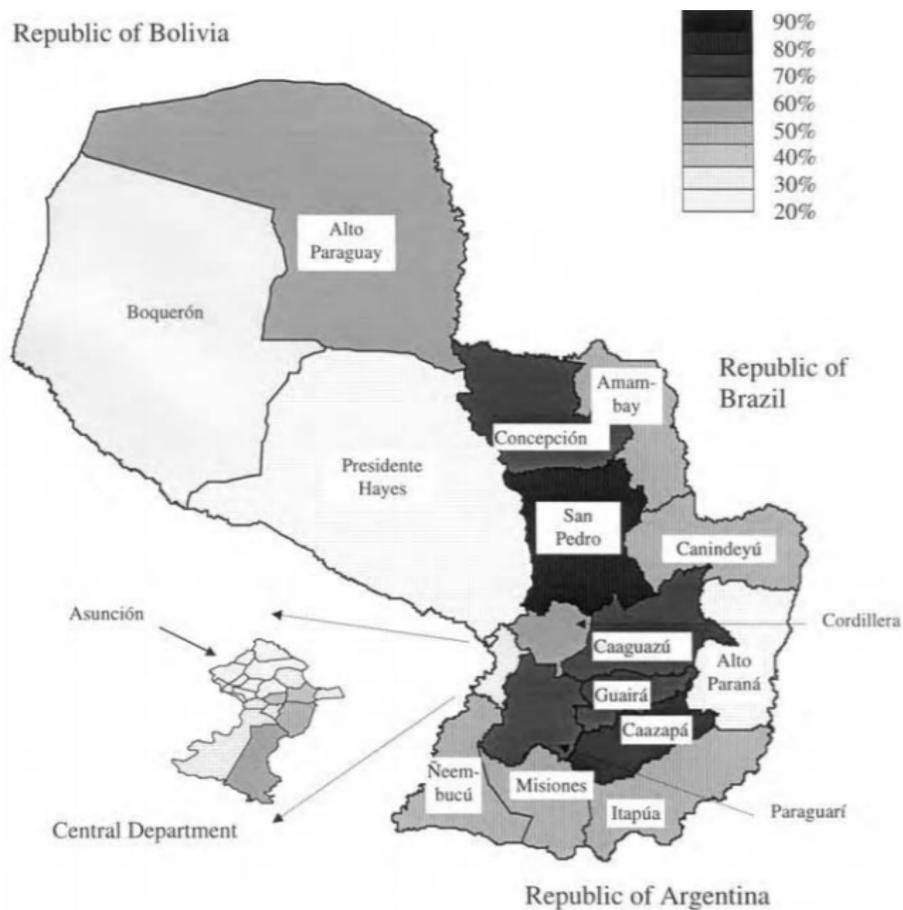


Figure 1: Map of Paraguay by department, with shading to indicate the percentage of the department's population that is monolingual in Guaraní (Gynan, 2007).

It is worth noting that the western departments, though highly rural, are sparsely populated and have populations that have high numbers of German-speaking Mennonites as well as other tribes of indigenous peoples, so fewer people there speak either Guaraní or Spanish as a native language.

A chart of the differences in language use by class is shown below, with darker colors signifying the frequency of the dialect of speech indicated:

	Pure Guaraní	Guaraníified Jopará	True Jopará	Hispanicized Jopará	Pure Spanish
Paraguayan Literature					
Rural Paraguayans					
Micropolitan Paraguayans					
Metropolitan Paraguayans					
Foreigners in Paraguay					

Figure 2: The spectrum of speech used by different Paraguayan populations. This chart is based off of the time the researcher has spent in both Paraguay and Argentina and is corroborated based on academic sources.

Spanish influences are not limited to just vocabulary in modern Guaraní, however. Reflexive constructions of verbs, which are traditionally rare in formal Guaraní, have become more prevalent with the increasing influence of Portuguese and Spanish, as well as sentence constructions including the verb “to have” as opposed to more traditional sentence constructions using predicative nominals. For example, the sentence “I have two dogs” would be phrased *Che che jagua mokõi*²⁰ in pure Guaraní, whereas those who speak a Hispanicized version of Guaraní (that could be referred to as Jopará) use the more traditionally Spanish sentence structure of *Che areko mokõi jagua*²¹ (Lustig, 2010).

²⁰ Literally: I my-dogs two.

²¹ Literally: I I-have two dogs.

Despite the lexical and grammatical influence that Spanish has had on the Guaraní language, phonemically, the language has remained quite distinct, resisting vowel elision and changes in pronunciation. Many of the language's phonemes, such as seven of its fourteen vowels (including six nasal vowels with no Spanish equivalent), three of its five nasal consonants, the glottal stop, and the labiodental approximant (represented by the letter V), do not exist in Spanish but are nevertheless maintained in Guaraní (Gynan, 2007).

Many linguists argue that pure Guaraní does not exist and that Jopará is the only form of the language in today's day and age; others make the case that pure Guaraní is a literary language and the basis for spoken colloquial Guaraní and therefore still relevant; while still others argue that there are still monolingual Guaraní communities that speak the language free from the majority of modern-day Spanish influences. Many Paraguayans feel that neither pure Guaraní nor pure Spanish fully reflects on who they are as people, and it is a third language, Jopará, invented from the scraps of the first two and having no set rules governing its construction, that best represents who they are in a country stuck between the indigenous and the colonizer and represented by neither. This theme is omnipresent in the famous Paraguayan literary work *Ramona Quebranto* by Margot Ayala de Michelagnoli, written just after Stroessner

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fell (Rubí, 2011). However, it is undeniable that all forms of Guaraní have had some form of influence from the Spanish language over 450 years of colonization and intermixing that remains present and relevant in all forms of Guaraní spoken today.

The History of Paraguayan Migration to Argentina

Paraguayan immigrants represent 30.5% of all foreigners residing in Argentina, with over 550,000 people born in Paraguay currently living in the country. If the children of Paraguayan migrants with Argentine citizenship are also counted, this number grows to over one and a half million people.

According to the Argentine National Census of Population, Homes, and Households of 2010, combined, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA) and the province of Buenos Aires contain 76% of the country's Paraguayan population. This population, which officially is around 350,000 Paraguayans, makes Buenos Aires the city with the second largest Paraguayan population in the world²². During the last thirty years, Paraguayan immigration to Argentina has grown exponentially; from 1991 to the present, the population of Paraguayans in Argentina has doubled (National Census, 2010).

²² The only city with a higher population of Paraguayans is Asunción, the capital and largest city of Paraguay.

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Paraguayan migration to Argentina has been fairly stable during the majority of the history of the two countries. Historically, Paraguayan movement to Argentina was limited to the Argentine provinces bordering Paraguay, such as Misiones, Formosa, Corrientes, and Chaco, due to their proximity to Paraguay as well as their similar Guaraní-influenced cultures. The first notable wave of Paraguayan immigration in the modern era happened between 1947 and 1960, in the years following a civil war that ended with the self-installation of Alfredo Stroessner as Paraguay's president and dictator (Bruno, 2009).

During the 1970s, both Paraguay and Argentina experienced a change in which large urban areas began to develop and become large centers of commerce and culture. This happened due to both countries' economies starting to move away from solely relying on agriculture, which diversified the labor market, created demand for workers in urban areas, and created an economic boom in these cities. This phenomenon created strong waves of internal migration towards large urban centers, with Buenos Aires being the main destination as a hub of the Southern Cone region.

Paraguayans living in Argentina followed the same migration pattern as the Argentines themselves, moving en masse to larger cities and relocating the center of Paraguayan migrant life in the country from Formosa and Misiones to

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greater Buenos Aires. After this time, Buenos Aires—both the city and the province alike—has been the most common destination for Paraguayan immigrants due to its economic diversity that allows for specialization often not offered in Paraguay, while the city's large Paraguayan population meant that prospective migrants had a support network upon their arrival (Bruno, 2009). Additionally, during the reign of Stroessner (*el stronato*), many Paraguayans wanted to flee the country due to violence, unemployment, and instability, with Argentina being a close and easy option with a culturally and linguistically similar population.

Historically, especially in the years after the War of the Triple Alliance, Paraguayan migration to Argentina has been focused on the diversity of work opportunities that Argentina has in comparison to Paraguay, a much smaller country located much farther out on the global periphery. Since Argentina has historically been larger and more developed than Paraguay in the postbellum era, it has and has had a much larger economy with more job opportunities for unskilled laborers (Vargas, 2005). Some areas of study or industries that Argentina has simply do not exist in Paraguay, or if they do, they are tremendously underdeveloped. Argentina, and especially Buenos Aires, offers Paraguayan migrants an opportunity to live and work in a seat of international

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commerce and trade and to escape the instability and lack of public resources (both past and present) in their underdeveloped country.

Analysis

Observations of Paraguayan Places

In order to have an idea of the linguistic practice of Paraguayan-Argentines when communicating amongst themselves, a public festival for Paraguayan Independence Day that was put on by the municipal government of Buenos Aires was observed. The situation was not perfect: the event was open to the public, and as such, even though most of the people there were Paraguayan, there were many Argentines and tourists there as well. Regardless, the event presented a great opportunity to observe a concentrated group of Paraguayans outside their country of origin and made possible the observation of their use of language as a starting point for the investigation.

The event was fairly large. There was a large stage in the Plaza de Mayo and tents selling food and other Paraguayan goods lined the Avenida de Mayo (the main avenue of Buenos Aires) for almost a mile, with the street being closed to vehicular traffic for the event and consequentially being full of people. There were Paraguayan flags up and down the entire street, and almost everyone there had some type of Paraguayan clothing, be it the country's soccer jersey, *ao po'i* (a type of Paraguayan loose-weave shirt), Paraguayan cockades, or other clothes in

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the country's national colors. It was very apparent from the beginning that the participants were not ashamed of expressing their cultural identities and patriotism openly in Buenos Aires, and the performances of traditional music and dance, complete with Paraguayan harps (the national instrument) and dresses made from Paraguayan lace, or *ñanduti*, were very well received by Paraguayans and Argentines alike.

Related to language practice, Spanish was almost exclusively used by the presenters onstage as well as most of the vendors. This was the same as in Paraguay, as Spanish is usually the dominant language in public spaces, so this was not surprising. However, based on what was observed, almost all the participants in the festival used only Spanish or a version of Jopará that leaned very heavily towards Spanish. Most of the Guaraní heard at the festival was only isolated words and phrases intermixed with the dominant Spanish used the rest of the time; that is, it was incorporated into a heavily Hispanicized Jopará. The use of Guaraní was limited to specific phrases that were carefully chosen to showcase the level of Paraguayanness of the speaker more than anything and were not used solely to communicate. For example, the phrases *Pesapukai Paraguay haḡũã!*²³ and *Mba'eteko pio?*²⁴ were heavily used alongside the Guaraní

²³ Shout for Paraguay!

²⁴ What's up?

interjections *che ra'a*²⁵ and *nde rakore*.²⁶ Though there were Guaraní-language conversations, the majority of those were either mixed together with Spanish or took place between groups of older men. Very few usages of Guaraní were observed to have taken place between members of different generations.

The usage of the Guaraní language by mixing it with Spanish is also known by the name Jopará, as mentioned earlier, with many considering it a separate language. Most Paraguayans, when speaking of Guaraní or speaking in Guaraní, use this creolized language instead of pure Guaraní. Even though one could say that Jopará is more spoken than either Guaraní or Spanish (Simons & Fennig, 2017), its use is controversial in Paraguay, whose politicians promote purer versions of Spanish and Guaraní, since these are the officially recognized national languages.

In the end, it was fairly straightforward to put the pieces together and realize that the festival was Paraguayan, especially due to the Paraguayan music, dress, flags, and food, but also linguistically, with Guaraní being used to showcase Paraguayan identity rather than solely for communicative purposes. Based on the observations made at the festival, it is impossible to deny that

²⁵ Dude

²⁶ Vulgar interjection

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language plays an important part in the construction of Paraguayan cultural identity among Paraguayans abroad. Even though it was not spoken as a primary language or even as a communicative medium, Guaraní was heavily leaned upon as an index of Paraguayanness, or something that showed other Paraguayans the true Paraguayan nature of the speaker, and the Paraguayan accent in the Spanish language, especially the Asunción accent, was extremely prevalent throughout the entire festival. This accent while speaking Spanish further highlighted an individual's Paraguayanness by distinguishing their accent from the particularly heavy and distinctive one associated with the city of Buenos Aires. The many placards with Paraguayan place names, the announcements of the presenters, and the letters of many of the traditional Paraguayan pieces of music were other notable uses of Guaraní to further differentiate Paraguayans from Argentines at the event.

Additionally, at the end of the field work, a majority Paraguayan space, a house located in a town on the outskirts of the Buenos Aires metropolitan area named Gonzalo Catán where a feminist organization, Las Juanas, worked, was observed, as well as the environment in a Paraguayan social club (Club Atlético Deportivo Paraguayo) in the Constitución neighborhood of Buenos Aires. While the environment in the latter was very similar to that at the festival, with heavier

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leanings on Jopará and pure Guaraní (especially among the older generation), the former space had a different feel to it.

In this space, it was noted that the space was shared between Paraguayans and Argentines; Guaraní was much less used among the women there, and much less amongst their children. Normally, the mothers communicated with their children exclusively in Spanish, with their reasoning being that the children would go to monolingual Argentine kindergartens and elementary schools and that their mothers didn't want their children's level of Spanish to suffer. Consequentially, the children's Spanish tended to be much better than their Guaraní. Speaking amongst themselves, the mothers used a little bit of Jopará, but since there were monolingual Spanish speakers who were also served at the house, the majority of conversations took place in Spanish so as not to exclude them.

[The Interviews](#)

Six Paraguayans who migrated from various towns in Paraguay to Buenos Aires were interviewed over the course of this project. All individuals interviewed were secondary contacts of the investigator (contacts of the investigator's previous contacts or those of the investigator's professors in Buenos Aires) to ensure that none of them personally knew the investigator. The

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individuals interviewed represent a diverse demographic array of Paraguayans in order to take into account many different experiences of Paraguayan culture and society. They represent students and workers, young and old, Spanish speakers and Guaraní speakers and multilinguals, city dwellers and rural farmers, as well as diverse reasons that pushed them to emigrate from their country. The small number of interviews is due to the similarity of the responses, with the conclusion being drawn after six interviews that any further interviews would be similarly redundant.

All interviews took place in coffee shops, schools, or similarly public places and were conducted wholly in Spanish. The names of the individuals interviewed have been shortened to initials so as to protect their identities.

Paraguayan Culture in Argentina

All people interviewed said that they still identify as Paraguayan, despite many of them having spent decades of their life in Argentina. Most of them came for economic or educational reasons, not cultural ones, and still identify much more with their home country's culture. However, many of the interviewees stated that normally, the children of Paraguayan migrants born on Argentine soil tend to grow up much more Argentine than Paraguayan, and don't grow up with much knowledge of their roots or their home country's culture:

My home is a floor above the house of my sister. I still talk with my sister [in Guaraní], but I can't do that with my nieces and nephews anymore. They don't speak very much Guaraní at all. But my sister never spoke [Guaraní] to them directly, while I made sure to with my kids. With my kids, a lot of the time when I get angry and yell at them, it comes out in Guaraní. But another reason is that [my kids] used to live in Paraguay and they loved it there.

—M.G., 52 years old

...I have an aunt who has a—well, my little brother as well. I have a brother [who was born in Argentina] who thinks that Guaraní sounds very strange, very weird. I don't think that he's interested in learning it at all. I don't see it. So, it's different.

—E.S., 20 years old

They're born with a different culture... Even though some parents instill the Guaraní language in their children. My daughter is more Paraguayan since she grew up in Paraguay. She has an Argentine daughter. I also have a son, Paraguayan as well. I brought him here [to Buenos Aires] when he was five. He's already very Porteño²⁷. What happens is that he came when he was very young and he's attending an Argentine kindergarten. Therefore, he's become very Argentinized.

—A.S., 57 years old

One reason that was given was the diminished importance of the Guaraní language in Argentina. In general, immigrants that leave their country at a younger age tend to speak less of the language of their country of origin and more of the language of the country in which they live. Most languages are documented as having died out after the second generation post-migration; the first generation speaks the language natively and uses it in all contexts, but the second generation typically only speaks it at home and neither speaks it well

²⁷ Demyonym for people from Buenos Aires.

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enough to pass it on nor associates with the culture it's connected to (Ho, 2013).

Additionally, immigrants that intermarry with natives of their destination country tend to speak less of their native language at home, creating a substantial obstacle for their children to learn the language. These phenomena indicate a pattern of Paraguayans not learning Guaraní when growing up in Buenos Aires and not a Guaranophone or bilingual region such as Paraguay.

When Paraguayans move to Argentina, society demands that they speak Spanish in public, greatly diminishing the opportunities for them to use Guaraní on a daily basis. When Guaraní is used in public, historically, those using it have been marginalized, being stereotyped as uneducated or being victims of xenophobic assumptions that they are talking about the people around them in a language that only they understand. These migrants use Spanish daily for work and for daily life, but Guaraní is only used in the home or in the Paraguayan community, or possibly not at all due to the stigma of illiteracy and poverty that the language has in Paraguay. Therefore, those born to Paraguayan parents in Argentina, by virtue of their upbringing and social environment, are more culturally Argentine than Paraguayan.

Generally, older interviewees said that there was more discrimination directed by Argentines towards Paraguayans than younger ones, especially

when speaking Guaraní or otherwise expressing their cultural identities.

Younger interviewees, on the contrary, did not perceive very much discrimination; they instead claimed that their friends were interested in finding out more about their culture:

I think it interests them. People I know, at least, are always saying “oh, you have to show us this, you have to make us this food or teach us how to say this.” People here seem pretty open about getting to know new things.

—E.B., 22 years old

The discrimination that Paraguayans of earlier generations had to face could have been worse due to the difference in the underlying reasons behind their immigration. Before, during the majority of the 20th century, Paraguay was much more underdeveloped than Argentina, which was then a world power. Because of this, the majority of Paraguayans who migrated to Argentina did so to find work and often came without much formal education. Paraguayan immigrants therefore developed a reputation for being uncultured, uneducated, and always being stuck in the jobs that no Argentine wanted to do.

However, in recent years, Paraguay's level of development has increased drastically, as well as the average level of education. Today, many younger Paraguayans who come to Buenos Aires do so to come study at Argentine high schools and universities and help the city maintain its level as a continental hub

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for education and knowledge. Additionally, many children of prior Paraguayan immigrants who were born in and/or grew up in Argentina are now educated adults and are experiencing a level of social mobility that their parents never had. The increase in the average level of education among Paraguayans in Argentine society seems to have led to a diminishing of the traditional Argentine stereotypes about Paraguayans—although they have not gone away completely—and consequentially, it has also led to a decrease in the discrimination that this migrant population has had to face in recent years.

When interviewees were asked about the construction of Paraguayanness, all of them immediately mentioned Guaraní as a core part of their personal Paraguayan cultural identity, even amongst those interviewed who did not speak it as a native language and those who did not even have much of a working knowledge of the language:

Tons of people ask me about Guaraní, and I would love to speak more of it. In fact, for me, Guaraní should be all our [Paraguayans'] native language. To me, Guaraní should be something that all Paraguayans must know.

—E.B., 22 years old

For each of them, Guaraní was an important facet of Paraguayan culture. However, a large problem with the diffusion of the language in Paraguay is the association of the language with low social class. Historically, Paraguay operated

under a strict diglossia: Guaraní was the basilect²⁸, or the language of the common people, rural farmers, and those without much education, whereas Spanish was the acrolect, or the language of the rich, the colonists, and those in power. Even though Guaraní is more common than Spanish among the general population, it still maintains the stereotype of being a farmer's language that is only spoken by the uneducated:

In Asunción, you'll never see anyone in the middle class speaking Guaraní to someone else. That's just never going to happen. They'd be too embarrassed.

—E.B., 22 years old

Despite this, there was a general sense among all interviewed parties that Guaraní was more appreciated by Paraguayans living outside the country than those still living within its borders. Guaraní is often associated with rural, uneducated populations by Paraguayans living within their own country, even though almost all Paraguayans use it on a daily basis and it is nearly impossible to go a day in the country without hearing it in some form. Paraguayans thus develop a paradoxical relationship with the language: it is the language that they use at home on a daily basis, the language they use among friends, and it is often the language that they feel the most comfortable expressing themselves in, with

²⁸ These terms are more traditionally associated with creoles, but they are very pertinent here, so the literal definitions of basilect and acrolect will be used; that is, they are a low language without prestige and a high language with it, respectively.

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their Spanish being tangled up with Guaraní loanwords, phrases, and grammatical constructions; however, they see Spanish as the only language that they should use in business, education, and writing.

If Paraguayans leave their country, the most popular destination by far is Argentina²⁹, but they at least usually end up in another Latin American country. When they arrive, they soon realize that though their Spanish-language abilities and similar appearances help them blend in when they get to their new homes, that Guaraní is what really sets them apart and makes them unique:

For example, me, when I speak in Spanish, Guaraní just comes out. Our Paraguayaness bursts forth.

—A.S., 57 years old

The quality of Guaraní language education offered in the Paraguayan public education system is very low. Most people in Paraguay speak a more colloquial form of Guaraní, known as Jopará, and the highly academic and less Hispanicized (often referred to as “purer”) form of Guaraní taught in schools is as foreign to Paraguayan students as any other language. Many children, especially in urban areas, pass despite having low test scores and little

²⁹ Brazil, Uruguay, and Spain all have notable Paraguayan populations, but none number over 100,000 individuals. The United States, interestingly, has a tiny Paraguayan population, with Paraguayan-Americans making up the smallest Hispanic group in the country with fewer than 23,000 individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016).

knowledge of the language, and the material drastically differs from year to year with little interconnectedness:

It wasn't structured very well, the process that taught you the language wasn't structured well. It was like, there was a teacher, and they taught you whatever they wanted, and the next year...like, there was no continuity in the courses. Comparatively, with English, we had specific textbooks that set a curriculum that went up by a level each year. The difficulty increases, the vocabulary increases, it had a ton of things that Guaraní [classes] didn't. It was like, each teacher just taught whatever they wanted.

—E.B., 22 years old

But that's the other problem with Guaraní classes over there, they don't emphasize it as important. The students are just allowed to pass no matter what! For example, I have no idea how *my* kids passed. But everyone always does!

—M.G., 52 years old

In Argentina, the language situation is a bit different. The vast majority of Paraguayans are bilingual in Guaraní and Spanish, while Argentines tend to be monolingual in Spanish (Simons & Fennig, 2017). Since most Paraguayans tend to be able to speak Spanish, they don't usually have problems with communication when they decide to move to Argentina, though they tend to have to evolve their lexicon a little bit to cut out the Guaraní influences. In Argentina, Guaraní distinguishes Paraguayans from Argentines as well as from other Latin American migrant populations and unites the Paraguayan migrant population by giving them a common denominator. Additionally, they are able use the language to speak privately in public so that people can't understand

them, which is useful for personal conversations as well as at markets. The

interviewees presented various examples of this:

I, and all Paraguayans, feel more comfortable speaking in Guaraní. You relax and unwind, you speak from the heart. On the other hand, in Spanish, you think “you say it like this, you can’t say it like this,” and sometimes what you want to say comes out wrong and people make fun of you.

—M.G., 52 years old

Pure Guaraní, or *guaraniete*, is not nearly as utilized as Jopará. Many of the interviewees said they spoke Guaraní or preferred to speak Guaraní, but upon asking them about Jopará, changed their answers and said that, more than anything else, they used Jopará while talking to other Paraguayans. The rural population of Paraguay is diminishing, and according to the accounts of the interviewees, the more urban the roots of a Paraguayan, the more Hispanicized their Guaraní, while those who grew up in more rural environments tend to have a Guaraní less influenced by Spanish. Today, Jopará, still considered by many to be a hispanicized dialect of Guaraní, represents the pluriculturalism of Paraguay and the inextricable histories of Europeans and indigenous peoples there.

Many Paraguayans feel more comfortable speaking Jopará or a mixed version of Guaraní than they do speaking either pure Guaraní or pure Spanish, to the point that the language that they often refer to as Guaraní is actually a form of Jopará, with pure Guaraní being referred to instead as *guaraní-guaraní*,

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guaraní puro, *guaraní académico*, or *guaranieté* (Mortimer, 2006). To them, pure

Guaraní is a relic of the past that is taught in school but hardly anyone uses

practically, while pure Spanish is the language of the rich and the colonizers.

Jopará, on the other hand, is a middle ground, a language that they can call their

own as well as the one language that they truly know they can speak.

I have conversations in Guaraní, but it's all mixed together [with Spanish] ... Suppose that in Paraguay, it's only acceptable to speak in proper Guaraní. I, to speak Guaraní correctly, would have to study it, because I don't know proper Guaraní. I know Jopará. Some words, yes, I know in proper Guaraní, but not all of them.

—A.S., 57 years old

Many Paraguayans deny the fact that this language exists and lament that their Spanish or their Guaraní aren't good enough or that they're always mixing them, when it can in fact be argued that the modern age is witnessing the formation of a new language that is in fact the true lingua franca of modern-day Paraguay.

Some Paraguayans are embarrassed to speak Guaraní or Jopará when they are around Argentines—not because of embarrassment (none of the six interviewees said that they consciously associated speaking Guaraní with low social class), but rather because of fear of xenophobia when they did so, especially the older interviewees and those who had worked in fields of manual labor such as construction or housework:

Sometimes Argentines discriminate against us because we speak Guaraní. They don't like it [when we do]. To put it simply, I would say that yes, they do want to discriminate against us, because [when] they hear us speaking in Guaraní, they call us "piece of shit Paraguayan," that's discrimination right there.

—R.M., 35 years old

Additionally, a woman interviewed says that she didn't want to be impolite by speaking Guaraní while in a mixed Paraguayan and Argentine group, even though she says that her Spanish is much worse than her Guaraní. To her, it would be rude to speak a language that other people around didn't speak; she didn't want them to feel like she was talking about them behind their backs:

To me, I see that others don't like it. Here, what happens is that we have coworkers who are, I think we're half and half [Paraguayans and Argentines], and I don't like it when my Paraguayan friends speak Guaraní while they're in Argentina because I think it's impolite since they don't understand and you could be talking about them, I just don't like it. I try to not speak in Guaraní, even though my Spanish isn't the best. In Paraguay, I speak even to doctors or whoever I want to talk to in Guaraní. I love it when Paraguayans understand it, but when it comes to Argentines, who don't understand Guaraní, it's another thing entirely.

—A.L., 32 years old

Conclusion

For Paraguayans, the special meaning that this language has is very clear. Ever since before the Spanish arrived, Guaraní has been spoken on Paraguayan soil, and in the past century, the Paraguayan government has worked very hard to harness the power of the language and work with the people to communicate

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with them in their own language. Starting with the beginning of the reign of the Colorado Party at the beginning of the 20th century, the Guaraní language and bilingualism have been inextricably linked with Paraguayan national cultural identity.

Regardless, Jopará, which is very controversial among Guaraní purists, was the language more used among Paraguayans in observed public spaces and with the information given from the interviews. Half of the interviewees spoke better Jopará than either Guaraní or Spanish. However, speaking Jopará requires a working knowledge of both Guaraní and Spanish, as demonstrated earlier in this paper. Jopará in itself is heavily dependent on Guaraní influences, and therefore carries much of the same nationalist connections without taking with it the stigmas associated with pure Guaraní.

Even though Guaraní still has rural and uneducated connotations in Paraguay, outside of it, the Guaraní language was amongst the first things mentioned by interviewed Paraguayans living outside the country when asked about their cultural identities. Despite the many difficulties that the language has had in its native land, when Paraguayans leave their country, they realize how unique their language is, how it represents them, and how it becomes a unifying force for their people in an increasingly globalized society, and they begin to

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value it much more as an unforgettable part of their national identity and their national pride. In the words of an interviewee:

To me, Guaraní is Paraguay. It's our roots, it's what we carry with us in our hearts, it's our tradition, it's everything to us! You can see what there is to offer in Argentina that you can't have there, but you always carry a little Paraguay with you in your soul.

—M.G., 52 years old

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Interviewees

1. E.S., male, 20 years old, student from Asunción
2. M.G., female, 52 years old, Guaraní teacher from La Colmena
3. E.B., female, 22 years old, student from Asunción
4. R.M., female, 35 years old, homemaker from Pedro Juan Caballero
5. A.L., female, 32 years old, cook from La Colmena
6. A.E., male, 57 years old, security guard from Asunción

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Appendix: Interview Script

English script:

Hello. Before we begin, please verbally affirm that you have read and signed the consent document and reassert your consent to participate in this interview verbally.

The purpose of this study is to examine the roles that certain languages play in the formation of Paraguayan cultural identity among Paraguayan migrants to Buenos Aires, specifically focusing on the Guaraní language.

What is your name, age, and country of citizenship?

Can you please talk a little bit about when, how, and why you came to Argentina?

Do you feel Paraguayan? What does being Paraguayan mean to you?

What defines Paraguayan cultural identity to you? How do you personally realize your Paraguayan cultural identity?

How is your level of Guaraní? (Are you comfortable in the language, can you only use it conversationally, can you speak it fluently) How do you use it? (give instructions, express feelings, talking to children, etc.) Was it your first language? Did you speak it at home?

In a normal week, with whom do you normally communicate in Guaraní and for what purposes? (E.g. family, friends, work, school, social club, sports club, neighborhood association, relatives in Paraguay, etc.)

What does Guaraní mean for you? Does it have any special meaning?

If both languages were equally accepted and understood, would you prefer to use Spanish or Guaraní? Which one can you speak more confidently and more fluently?

How is Guaraní viewed in Argentina? Do you feel comfortable using it here?

How is the expression of Paraguayan cultural identity viewed in Argentina? How is it viewed among the children of Paraguayan migrants?

Do you have anything to add about your own personal experiences with Spanish or Guaraní?

Do you have anything to add about your own personal experiences with Paraguayan cultural identity in Argentina?

Guion español:

Buen día. Antes de que comencemos, por favor afirme verbalmente que Ud. ha leído y firmado el documento de consentimiento y reafirme que consientes participar en esta entrevista verbalmente.

El propósito de esta investigación es para examinar los papeles que juegan ciertos idiomas en la formación de la paraguayidad entre migrantes paraguayos en Buenos Aires, enfocando específicamente en el idioma guaraní.

¿Cómo se llama Ud., cuántos años tiene, y qué nacionalidad tiene?

¿Me puede contar Ud. sobre cuándo, cómo, y por qué vino a Argentina?

¿Usted se siente paraguayo? ¿Qué es, para Ud., ser paraguayo?

¿Qué cosa define la paraguayidad para Ud.? ¿Cómo expresa personalmente tu forma de paraguayidad?

¿Cómo es su nivel de guaraní? (Lo habla cómodamente, lo habla sólo conversacionalmente, lo habla fluidamente) ¿Para qué lo usa? (expresar sentimientos, dar instrucciones, hablar con sus hijos, etc.) ¿Era su lengua materna? ¿Lo hablaba en casa?

En una semana normal, ¿con cuáles personas se comunica en guaraní y para cuáles fines? (Familia, trabajo, amigos, escuela, club social/barrial/deportivo, parientes en Paraguay, etc.)

¿El guaraní tiene alguna significancia especial para Ud.?

Si todo fuera igual y los dos fueran igualmente aceptados y entendidos en dónde Ud. está, ¿Ud. preferiría hablar castellano o guaraní? ¿Cuál puede hablar con más confianza o con más fluidez?

¿Cómo les parece el guaraní a los argentinos? ¿Ud. se siente cómodo usarlo acá?

¿Cómo les parecen las expresiones de paraguayidad a los argentinos? ¿Cómo les parecen a los hijos de los paraguayos que nacieron en Argentina?

¿Ud. tiene algo más para decir sobre sus experiencias personales con el castellano o el guaraní?

¿Ud. tiene algo más para decir sobre sus experiencias personales con el paraguayidad y su expresión en Argentina?

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