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## **Journey With Language - Variations in Spanish (1) Spain**

This course features regional variations of Spanish language in a series of 12 lectures starting in February 2006. Although Spanish is a widely spoken language (spoken by 350 million people in 20 countries), its regional variations are relatively small compared to other languages. Yet there are differences in pronunciation as well as forms and meanings of words. In this course, we will only discuss the characteristics that are especially noteworthy in each region.

This series of lectures consists of three parts: 1) Destination, 2) Pursuit of Language, and 3) Language Variations. The regional characteristics will be introduced briefly in Part 1, explanation of the Spanish variation study will be given in Part 2, and various interpretation of a specific word will be shown with a map in Part 3. We will be introducing some of the research results of our study group throughout the course.



**【Picture 1: City Map of Madrid】**

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## ●Destination --Spain

Spanish-speaking countries are generally categorized into the following groups based on their linguistic characteristics:

1. Spain and Equatorial Guinea
2. Caribbean countries
3. Mexico, Central America
4. Columbia, Venezuela
5. Andean countries
6. Rio de la Plata countries

We will look at the Spanish language in each region in the above order, beginning with Spain.

Spain is a member of the EU (*Unión Europea*), and we have seen the results of its considerable economic growth in 1992 at the Barcelona Olympics (*Juegos Olímpicos en Barcelona*) and the Universal Exposition in Sevilla (*Exposición Universal en Sevilla*). The development of Madrid, the capital, is remarkable; transportation systems such as roads and subways are being improved, and the city maps are renewed every year. The subway (*metro*) was already running up to Madrid Barajas Airport (*Aeropuerto de Barajas*) last year (1999).



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**【Picture 2: Subway at Barajas Airport】**

When you arrive in the airport, and first hear Spanish spoken by people from different countries, pronunciation is perhaps the easiest aspect to distinguish one from another. There are some differences in words and grammar, but in most cases they remain unnoticed until later while the difference in pronunciation is recognized instantly. The characteristics of Spanish spoken in Spain (North-Central) are: the [θ] sound with which the tip on the tongue shows between upper and lower teeth, the hard fricative [x] sound of the “j”, “gi” and “ge” consonants, and the “sh” sound heard when “s” is pronounced.

The notable grammatical characteristics are: the pronoun of *vosotros*, conjugation of verbs (*cantáis, coméis, vivís*), and *le* used instead of *lo* for the personal pronoun as a direct object. (e.g. *Le conozco*. “I know him.”).

On the other hand, there are countless numbers of differences in words that are used. A computer (*computador*) is “ordenador” and a ticket (boleto) is “billete” to name a few. The following chart shows some examples of everyday words that are different in Spain and Latin America.

Meaning	Spain	Latin America
sweater	<i>jersey</i>	<i>suéter</i>
jacket	<i>cazadora</i>	<i>casaca, chamarra, chompa, chumpa</i>
overalls	<i>mono</i>	<i>jardinero, jardinera, mameluco, overol</i>
sports wear	<i>chándal</i>	<i>buzo, mono, sudadera, traje deportivo</i>
swim suit	<i>bañador</i>	<i>malla, ropa de baño (also used in Spain), traje de baño, trusa, vestido de baño</i>
refrigerator	<i>frigorífico</i>	<i>frigorifera, frío, refrigerador, nevera (also used in Spain)</i>
remote	<i>mando (a distancia)</i>	<i>control (remoto)</i>
headphones	<i>casco</i>	<i>audífonos</i>
speakers	<i>altavoces</i>	<i>bocinas, parlantes</i>
deck chair	<i>hamaca, tumbona</i>	<i>chieslon, perezosa, playera, reposera,</i>

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		<i>silla de extensión, silla de sol, silla plegable, silla reclinable</i>
slingshot	<i>tirachinas</i>	<i>cauchera, gomera, honda, hondilla, hondita, hulera, resortera, tirapiedras, cata</i>
long distance call	<i>conferencia</i>	<i>larga distancia</i>

### ●Pursuit of Language - Preparation

We started with Spain for a historical reason. It is easier to start with the traditional Spanish derived from Latin in the Middle Ages, then to compare it with the Spanish which was spread across Latin America in recent times. It is of course important to learn Latin American Spanish these days, but here we will look at the language as “universal Spanish” rather than discussing which Spanish is more important or which is better to learn.

“Traditional Spanish of Spain” is always changing as well. As we see changes in society and culture, the language is also bound to change. Here are some of the new words found in present day: *contestador* (answering machine), *culebrón* (TV drama that are produced in Mexico and Venezuela and aired in Spain), *estrés* (stress), *móvil* (mobile phone), *teletienda* (telephone shopping). These are the words that have not yet made entry into dictionaries, and we need to obtain the latest information from the local media (newspaper, news coverage), prints, study reports etc. I personally carry a notebook and write down new things as I notice them.

Useful as those references may be, it is always best to directly observe and investigate the language in each region. Spanish-speaking countries used to seem very far from Japan, and it was not easy to travel there. Now the airfare is much cheaper, and local information is easy to get. Our study group conducts one or two research tours every year.

The itinerary is prepared thoroughly in advance, and there are only a few minor changes made during the stay. Contacting local collaborators is essential, and emails have made the correspondence extremely easy and efficient. We always carry our notebooks and cameras, and add a tape recorder, a video or a laptop when necessary.

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●Language Variations --"Glasses"

Our study group has been keeping a record of Spanish variations in different regions. We will look at the variation of the word "glasses" as an example. *Gafas* is commonly used (shown as **G** in the map) in Spain and some other regions. *Anteojos* (**A**) and *lentes* (**L**) are widely used in Latin America, and *espejuelos* (**E**) is used in the Caribbean countries.

Other variations in Spanish can be found in our Web site.

<http://gamp.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~ueda/varilex.htm>



【Map: "Glasses"】

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**\*Assignment -1a**

Explain the phonetic characteristics of Spanish spoken in Spain with phonetic terms and graphics showing points of articulation. The characteristics, as discussed in the lecture, are: “the [θ] sound with which the tip on the tongue shows between upper and lower teeth, the hard fricative [x] sound of the ‘j’, ‘gi’ and ‘ge’ consonants, and the ‘sh’ sound you hear when ‘s’ is pronounced”.

**\*Assignment -1b**

“Leísmo” is a phenomenon found when ‘le’ is used instead of ‘lo’ for the personal pronoun as a direct object”. Refer to a grammar book for further research on the subject.

**\*Assignment -1c**

Show the outline of dialects in Spanish-speaking countries using the reference below.

**\*Reference:**

Lipski, John M. 1994. *Latin American Spanish*. London, Longman, pp.3-33; *El Español de América*, Madrid, Cátedra (trad. Silvia Iglesias Recuero), 1996. pp.15-47.