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## 10 Language contact and the indigenous languages of Uruguay

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Present-day Uruguay has been inhabited for about 12,000 years. The Spanish and the Portuguese arrived five centuries ago, marking the beginning of relentless interactions with the several ethnic groups that inhabited the region. The events of the last five centuries have been partially recorded through colonial documents. However, accessing the history that preceded colonization requires archeological work, given that the original peoples were preliterate.

Although in some places contact between Spanish and the languages spoken in America continues, in Uruguay, no indigenous language has survived. The absence of native language manifestations leaves us with no option but to resort to written testimonies and official records of the time. But anyone who intends to study Uruguay's autochthonous languages will soon realize with dismay that there are just a few sources available. Unfortunately, these sources do not constitute grammars or thorough vocabularies, making it impossible to reconstruct the languages.<sup>1</sup>

National historiography has reasserted the idea that Uruguay is a European country imbedded in America, where the nation's history begins with the arrival of the first Europeans in the 16th century. This narrative presents the Indians as marginal characters in the process of national identity and ignores the fact that some of them, mainly the Guaraní Indians of missionary origin and their ancestors, comprised the creole population of Uruguay (Pi Hugarte 1993). Guaraní was the language that left the most indelible footprint on the Spanish spoken in Uruguay, a claim supported by the fact that between 1770 and 1780, about half of the population of Uruguay consisted of Guaraní Indians who had been born in the Jesuit missions.

This chapter discusses the impact of indigenous languages on Uruguayan Spanish. Section 1 presents the original peoples of present-day Uruguay, what we know about the tongues they spoke, and the possible reasons for the extinction of their languages. Section 2 describes the impact of Guaraní on Uruguayan Spanish, and Section 3 displays a snapshot of sociolinguistic studies on the vitality of some Guaraní loanwords.

## 1 The original peoples of present-day Uruguay and their languages

Language diversity in the Americas at the time of the first European arrivals was tremendously rich (Martinell 1992), and the River Plate region was no exception. Even though Uruguay is the only country in South America with no current indigenous population, many indigenous communities occupied the area when the Europeans arrived in the region. Some depended on agricultural practices, while others relied on hunting, gathering, and fishing. These groups had been largely interacting among themselves, but the European invasion introduced three more parties to the stage: the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the Jesuits.

Spain used to refer to the area composed of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay as *Virreinato del Río de la Plata* “Viceroyalty of River Plate.” In the colonial period, present-day Uruguay was known as the *Banda Oriental* ‘East Bank,’ because of its location east of the estuary. Uruguay would later take its name from the river to its west, *Río Uruguay* ‘River Uruguay.’ In fact, the complete name of Uruguay is *República Oriental del Uruguay*, which literally translates to “Eastern Republic of Uruguay” (*Uruguay* being a Guaraní word).

In the present work, I will use the term *Uruguay* even though the interaction between the Indigenous peoples and Europeans took place while Uruguay’s territory was still part of the *Banda Oriental* and its modern borders do not correspond to the geographic landscape that these peoples inhabited. Besides, it should be noted that these borders lacked significance during the period in which the original groups inhabited this area.

We cannot be certain about the number of groups inhabiting the area by the time of the European arrival, due to the shortage of sources from the 16th century (in which there is no mention of the interior of the country) (Bracco 2004). Through documents from the explorer Félix de Azara, we learn that there were at least six indigenous groups in the region: the *Charrúas*, the Yaros, the Bohanes, the Chanás, the Guenoas, and the Guaraní, each of them with their own language (Bertolotti and Coll 2014). During the inauguration of the first public library in Montevideo in 1816, Larrañaga, a Montevidean priest, gave a speech that predicted the imminent death of those peoples’ native languages:

This small enclosure has more than six different languages: these are Minuan, *Charrúa*, Chaná, Boane, Guenoa, Guaraní [. . .] in a short time there will be no trace of them; and it is our duty to preserve them.

(1951: 33)<sup>2</sup>

In the following three sections, I will present the most salient characteristics of the Chaná, the *Charrúas*, and the Guenoas, that is, some cultural features, the areas they are believed to have occupied, and the available data for the study of their languages. These are the only languages for which we have documented records. Even though the three languages are not well known, the coincidences regarding pronouns, numbers, and some words have caused researchers to conclude that they

belong to the same language family (Loukotka 1968; Kaufman 1994; Campbell 2012).<sup>3</sup> The fourth section will provide a description of the Guaraní and their interactions with other indigenous groups, namely Spaniards and *criollos*. Finally, the fifth section will discuss the possible reasons for the language loss.

### 1.1 *Chanás*

By the time of the invasions, the Chanás occupied the zone comprising the north of Buenos Aires, part of Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, and the opposing bank of the River Plate, in today's Uruguay. As nomads, they moved along the river using canoes and lived mainly by hunting, fishing, and gathering. They were also good ceramists.

The last document that mentions them is a poem from 1872 written by Hilario Ascasubí, in which there is a character nicknamed *el chaná*. With regards to their language, in 1813, Father Larrañaga wrote some facts about Chaná during a single day trip to Soriano, based on a conversation with three of the oldest Indians who lived there (1923). These notes include remarks about their pronunciation, some grammatical features, and about 70 words and phrases, which include pronouns, adverbs, and nouns. Said documents used to represent the only sources available for linguistic research on Chaná. However, by the end of 2004, a semispeaker of Chaná from Entre Ríos decided to share his secret with the intention of finding other speakers (Fiorotto 2005).

Unfortunately, Blas W. Omar Jaime seems to be the only Chaná speaker. His family managed to keep the language alive in the domestic domain, covertly passing it from generation to generation. Many experts have shown interest in this peculiar case, and many works have referred to him and the data he has provided (Dietrich 2002–2012; Bourlot 2008; Moseley 2010; Adelaar 2010; Ottalango 2010). The linguist Viegas is the scholar who has devoted the most time to the detailed study of Chaná in collaboration with the last of its speakers. He has been able to collect an inventory of 250 words and expressions, which he confirmed with those of Larrañaga's notes. Here are some of the many words he has been able to confirm as Chaná: *amptí* 'we, us,' *dioí* 'sun,' *huamá* 'friend.'

According to Viegas Barros and Blas (2013), Larrañaga's data are enough to conclude that Chaná is related to at least two other languages on which we have data, Guenoa (Minuán) and *Charrúa*. There may be more, but we lack any information on them.

### 1.2 *Charrúas*

The Spanish settled in Charruan territory, which stretched from Montevideo to the bank of the River Uruguay. Therefore, Europeans interacted more with them than with the Guenoas, who occupied land further inland. The *Charrúas* were nomads, and with the incorporation of the horse, became part of the equestrian cultural complex of the region. They did not practice agriculture nor make ceramics. Their economy was based on the exploitation of big game such as the *ñandú* (rhea).

Most of what we know about the Charruan language comes from two small vocabularies composed by Vilardebó at the beginning of the 19th century.

Compelled by his concern about its imminent extinction, the Uruguayan naturalist recorded a few Charruan words (nouns of different semantic fields and numerals) which Sargent Benito Silva and an indigenous woman from Manuel Arias dictated to him in 1842. Years later, Gómez Haedo (1937) would publish them in the article “An unknown *Charruan* vocabulary.” There are also three others supposedly Charruan words in the works of the missionary Paucke (Viegas 2013) and in a text collected in the north of Uruguay at the end of the 19th century (Martínez 1901). There is a list of allegedly Charruan terms in André Thevet’s *La cosmographie Vniverselle (Universal Cosmography)*, from 1575, published by Lehmann-Niersche in 1938 (Barrios Pintos 2008). Rona (1964) also documented some proper names of Charruan origin from mission registers.

Regrettably, those in contact with *Charrúas* during the 18th and 19th centuries only give subjective opinions about their language. Azara (1998), for instance, mentioned that their tongue was so different from all the rest, and so guttural, that the Spanish alphabet would not be able to represent their sounds.

Other sources about the Charruan language seem to have been lost. In 1964, Rona and Petit Muñoz contacted a *Charrúa* speaker in Villaguay (Entre Ríos), bringing back with them a series of photographs and audio that they were studying with the intention of preparing a publication (Martínez Barbosa 1996). Unfortunately, apart from the publication of a couple of photographs in a local newspaper, no publications have yet been made.

By the end of the colonial period, some *Charrúas* had probably learned to speak Guaraní and Guenoa, given that they had been coexisting for a long time (Barrios Pintos 2008).

### 1.3 *Guenoas*

The Guenoas inhabited the area between Montevideo, San Borja, and Rio Grande do Sul. Nonetheless, during the first half of the colonial period, Uruguay’s interior did not interest Europeans. In fact, the colonizers used rivers as their transport routes and only went inland when there was no alternative. Consequently, those lands went unexplored for many years, and the Guenoa remained hidden from the Spanish settlements, behind the barrier that the *Charrúas* had constructed along the bank of the River Uruguay.

Behind this curtain, there was a populous group with a hierarchical political organization. Their territory received attention by the mid-17th century, when cattle attracted commercial, political, and military interest. The Jesuits were particularly keen on converting them since that would have granted the missionaries free access to the enormous amount of livestock on their lands. Bracco (1998) presents documents that show how often the Guenoas negotiated with the Spanish and the Portuguese, according to the occasional interests. It is through these encounters that they seem to have kept the missionaries’ hopes of conversion alive, using their missions as occasional shelter, which some of them would choose as their permanent residences.

According to Bracco, the Guenoas and *Charrúas* seem to have been in a constant state of war. Even though they were probably originally part of the Charruan group, they were no longer related to them. In fact, they were generally enemies, except for the last years of the colonial period, when they joined forces with other groups.

Due to the almost non-existent interactions with the Guenoas, there are very few sources from the 16th century. Documents regarding their language are even more scarce. The only one we know of is a catechism written by Father Camaño and published by Lorenzo Hervás y Panduro (1787) in his *Saggio pratico delle lingue*. However, these bilingual catechisms were not literal translations of the prayers. They consisted instead of more functional translations, making it hard for linguists to establish correspondences between the two languages, especially with such limited data.<sup>4</sup>

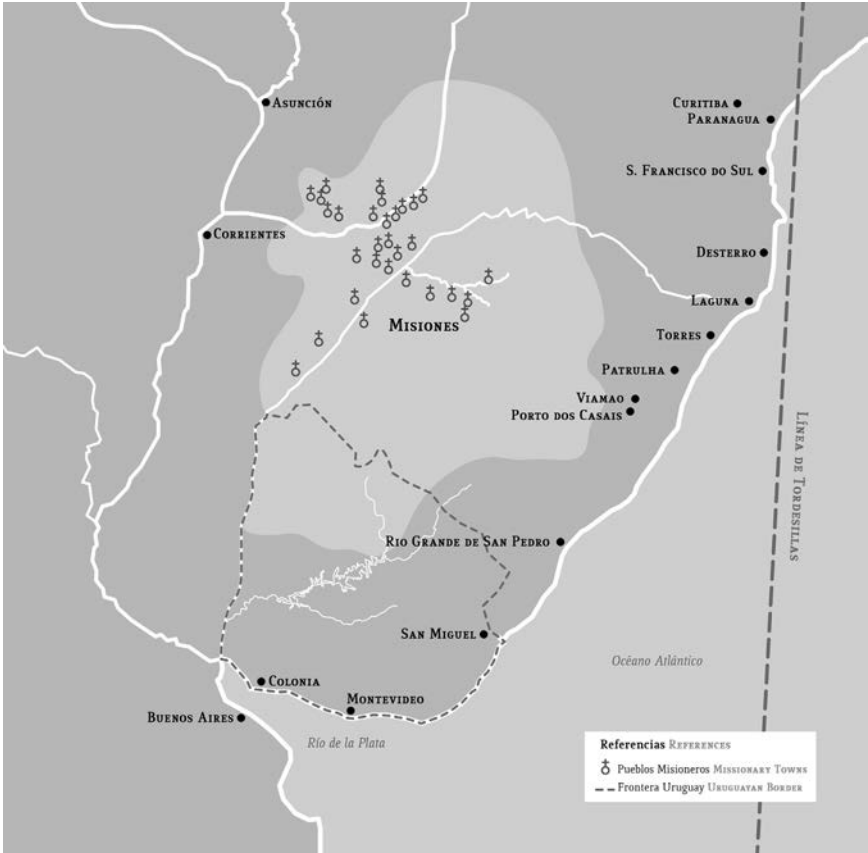
#### 1.4 *Guarani*

There is enough archeological evidence to prove that there were pre-Hispanic Guarani groups in the territory that we now call Uruguay. Remains of their pottery have been found along the interior course of the River Uruguay, as well as in the east of the country, indicating two routes of infiltration (Pi Hugarte 1993). Nevertheless, there is no evidence in the Uruguayan territory of villages composed of collective huts surrounded by protective fences, as was usual of the Guarani peoples. They might not have been settled in the region, but they definitely visited the mouth of River Santa Lucia frequently.

Archeologists have studied numerous ceramic artifact that show the dispersion of these societies in the Uruguayan territory (Curbelo 2013). Ceramics with Guarani attributes have been identified in the basin area of both the Merín Lagoon and the River Uruguay; also from the River Negro to the mouth of the River Tacuarembó; and from the River Plate to the mouth of the River Santa Lucia.

Everything seems to indicate that, at the time of the conquest, the Guarani indigenous ethnic group inhabited the Uruguayan territory. Other Guarani would later have a strong influence on the formation and culture of the rural population of Uruguay, that is, those Guarani of missionary origin who would leave the Jesuit towns to settle in present-day Uruguay. More than 100,000 Guarani Indians are thought to have lived in the Jesuit reductions. These towns had the objective of *reducing* the hitherto dispersed bands of Indians into structured settlements with the intention of evangelizing them and creating a writing system for their language while also creating systematic grammatical descriptions and written ecclesiastical materials (Muysken 2012).

In the 1620s, the Jesuits began to set up reductions in the north of Uruguay. They would later use the River Plate to carry goods across the Virreinato. The Guarani were already skilled canoeists, and with the arrival of the horse, they became excellent riders who would periodically herd cows toward the reductions, interacting with the Guenoas. Map 10.1 illustrates where the Jesuits towns were located and the areas to which Jesuits had access.



Map 10.1 Missionary towns and land belonging to the Jesuit order in the middle of the 18th century

Adapted from Curbelo (2014)

During those contacts, some Guaraní would stay with the Guenoas, and some Genoas would go to live in the Jesuit towns. The reductions were habitually attacked by *bandeirantes*, who wanted to kidnap and enslave them. On occasion, they were also harmed by the European authorities who were uneasy with the Jesuits' success, which lasted until 1767, when Spain finally expelled the Order from America.

The dismissal of the Jesuit order from America was preceded by a series of events, one of which was the *Tratado de Permuta* 'Exchange Treaty' in 1750, which precipitated the Guaranitic war. With the signing of this treaty, Spain and Portugal exchanged disputed territories by realigning the borders of their American empires. Colonia del Sacramento became Spanish while seven Jesuit reductions east of the River Uruguay passed over to Portugal. The Guaraní living on the eastern banks of the river were fearful about this decision, given that

the Portuguese *bandeirantes* had repeatedly raided their towns. The Guaraní resisted the treaty and turned to the independence forces of local caudillos – first to those of Artigas and later to those of Rivera. These conflicts boosted the desertion of the towns, making the Indians turn to settling in Uruguayan land (Pi Hugarte 1993).

They established themselves in lands that belonged to other ethnic groups, such as the *Charriás* and Guenoas. The latter, leaving aside their differences, joined them to go to war against a combined army of the Spanish and Portuguese.

Some years later, the treaty was annulled, and even though the priests did not directly participate in the Guaranitic war, they were accused of aiding the Indians. In 1767, the Spanish crown would finally decide to expel the Jesuit congregation *Compañía de Jesús* from the New World. Accordingly, many Guaraní emigrated and settled in present-day Uruguay. By the 19th century, the predominant language in inland Uruguay was Guaraní, mainly in the lands disputed by Spain and Portugal.

### 1.5 *The disappearance of the native languages*

In the light of the historical legacy presented above, the existence of long-lasting language contact, both among the indigenous populations and between natives and Europeans, cannot be ignored, particularly in an area that appears to have had much intercommunication (see Bracco 2004 for documents demonstrating the strong interaction among the native societies of the region). However, the autochthonous peoples would eventually stop using their languages.

The process through which the indigenous populations replaced their native tongues with Spanish has been addressed by Bertolotti and Coll (2013). Their work is the only one to analyze the possible reasons for this outcome, proposing sociodemographic, ethnolinguistic, historical, cultural, and technological circumstances that could have favored the disappearance of the aforementioned languages. Considering their cultural history, it could also be hypothesized that learning foreign languages was a natural practice for the Indians. Therefore, the adoption of Spanish could have been a new phase in an already established custom.

There were cases of indigenous peoples learning another indigenous language, like the case of Lucía, a Guenoa woman who was a captive of a Charruan chief and had learned his language (an official document records this fact in Lopez Mazz and Bracco 2010). The same authors also offer testimonial proof of Guenoas speaking Guaraní and even one that spoke Spanish, Guaraní, *Charrúa*, and Guenoa. These linguists also hypothesize that the intelligibility among Guaraní and *Charrúa* could have fostered the adoption of Spanish. Both the acquisition of Guaraní and Spanish eventually resulted in the extinction of the other languages.

## 2 **Indigenous footprints on Uruguayan Spanish**

Spanish contact with the indigenous American languages is 500 years old. Consequently, the history of *Spanish in the New World* forms part of the history of the Spanish language. Rivarola (2004) argues that the introduction of Spanish



to the Americas was more than just a geographic transplant; it fundamentally altered the history of the language, giving rise to a new mental space within which the signs of a new language identity were slowly developing. Palacios (1997) clarifies that while in colonial times the indigenous settlers outnumbered the Spaniards, the characteristics of their colonization did not always result in the indigenous languages influencing Spanish. She explains this with the case of the Antilles, where the indigenous population disappeared in a short period of time and linguistic influence is limited to the lexical field. She points out that we find the same situation in other regions, and provides as an example the case of Uruguay, where most of the indigenous communities were isolated, exterminated, or quickly Hispanicized.

Although the linguistic relations between Spanish and the indigenous languages of America respond to the most diverse modalities that may arise in language contact situations (Lapesa 1980), contact linguistics studies have been more interested in the areas where there are several speakers of indigenous languages, and consequently, where the linguistic sequels of the contact are more evident. This is not the case in Uruguay, given that there are no contemporary indigenous language speakers, and therefore, the linguistic influence is confined to the lexicon. Nevertheless, this phenomenon also deserves scientific attention by linguists and anthropologists, since the lexicon of a language can reflect social and cultural traits of a community (Sapir 1912).

Spanish borrowed words from Amerindian languages and vice versa, but the phenomenon of lexical borrowing between indigenous languages was also a common practice. Some words have been adapted in parallel or in a chain from generally more dominant or prestigious languages (Muysken 2012). Adelaar and Muysken point out the example of the Quechua word for ‘chicken,’ *atawalya*, that spread through 35 pre-Andean Amazonian languages. It is highly unlikely, as the authors point out, that all these languages borrowed this word from Quechua one by one (2004: 500). It is very probable that the word spread in a chain. As we will see in Section 2.2, we also find Quechua loanwords in Uruguayan Spanish.

## **2.1 *The Spanish spoken in Uruguay***

Except for its lexicon, the Spanish spoken in Uruguay does not have exclusive features. It has a combination of traits that are also found in other modalities of Spanish. Uruguayan Spanish is the product of Peninsular Spanish dialects in contact with African languages, other European languages, and autochthonous languages. Bertolotti and Coll (2014) classify the linguistic history of Uruguay in three stages: (1) the exclusive presence of indigenous languages; (2) Portuguese and Spanish contact with indigenous and African languages; and (3) the introduction of European immigrants (English, French, Italian, Galician, among others) and enslaved Africans while Spanish, Portuguese, and some indigenous languages remained in use, albeit the latter only briefly.

The common denominator of all the stages are the native languages, even though none ultimately survived. Guaraní was the language that left the most durable footprint. At present, the linguistic contribution of the indigenous populations to the Spanish spoken in Uruguay can be observed mainly in place-names and loanwords.

## 2.2 *Place-names and loanwords*

Contact with the Guaraní was much more frequent and intense than with the other indigenous languages spoken in Uruguay before the arrival of the conquerors. Large numbers of Guaraní Indians from the Missions (from all the Jesuit areas including Misiones, Corrientes, and Paraguay) arrived in the River Plate region during the existence of the Jesuit Republic and in even greater numbers after the expulsion of the Jesuits. In personal investigations carried out in the parochial archives of several Uruguayan cities, Rona concluded that approximately half of the population of Uruguay between 1770 and 1780 consisted of Guaraní Indians born in the Missions, proving that the contact had been permanent and intense (1963: 98).

The Guaraní were integrated into the society of the time and contributed to populating the uninhabited territories of the Banda Oriental, preferring to settle in the rural areas, which can be explained by their skill in livestock and agricultural activities (González and Rodríguez 1990). There were many tasks that neither the *criollos* nor the Spaniards were willing to perform, for example, masonry, blacksmithing, carpentry, saddlery, and raising of defenses, skills which naturally fell into the domain of Guaraní expertise. An example of the latter is the fact that a large contingent of missionary Guaraní raised the walls of Montevideo in 1790.

At this stage, Spanish and Guaraní worked as vehicular languages for interethnic communication (Bertolotti 2014). During the second stage of the linguistic history of Uruguay, there were Europeans and Indians who learned the other group's language(s) to serve as intergroup mediators (Bertolotti and Coll 2013). There are records of this mediation since the late 18th and 19th centuries (Bértola and Fernández 2011; Bertolotti and Coll 2014). Not surprisingly, because of this strong bilingual contact situation, we find evidence of Guaraní in Uruguayan Spanish, mainly as place-names and loanwords.

Regarding place-names, historians and archeologists consider that this toponymy is empirical evidence of the Guaraní presence in Uruguayan territory, since place-names have a function like that of fossils in the biological sciences, revealing what language was spoken at a certain place and time (Jordan 2014). According to Pi Hugarte (1993), Uruguay's Guaraní place-names do not have a pre-Hispanic origin. Instead, they were established during the early arrival of Guaraní *baqueanos* to the interior. Subsequently, the application of Guaraní names to the geographical barriers was amplified by the increasing penetration of Guaraní Indians coming from the missions

looking for cattle, in herds directed by the Jesuit fathers and other agents. The expulsion of the *Compañía de Jesús* and the subsequent dissolution of the towns increased the number of the Guaraní that settled down in the Banda Oriental.

Guaraní place-names are most evident in the northern part of the country, that is, north of Río Negro, a river that divides Uruguay in two. This is a non-exhaustive list of the place-names with Guaraní origin:

<i>Aceguá</i>	<i>Caraguatá</i>	<i>Guaviyú</i>	<i>Ñangapiré</i>	<i>Uruguay</i>
<i>Aiguá</i>	<i>Carapé</i>	<i>Iporá</i>	<i>Ñaquiná</i>	<i>Yaguari</i>
<i>Arapey</i>	<i>Casupá</i>	<i>Itacumbú</i>	<i>Queguay</i>	<i>Yaguarón</i>
<i>Arequita</i>	<i>Chapicuy</i>	<i>Itapebí</i>	<i>Sarandí</i>	<i>Yí</i>
<i>Arerunguá</i>	<i>Chuí</i>	<i>Kiyú</i>	<i>Tacuarembó</i>	
<i>Bacacay</i>	<i>Cuareim</i>	<i>Mandiyú</i>	<i>Tacuari</i>	
<i>Batoví</i>	<i>Cuñapirú</i>	<i>Merím</i>	<i>Tupambaé</i>	

There are very few place-names with other indigenous origins, for instance, *Marmarajá*, which is thought to be Charruan. Apart from place-names, we also find a considerable amount of native flora and fauna of Guaraní origin (i.e. loanwords). Loanwords are a particular case among the studies of languages in contact. One of the first definitions was provided by Haugen, who defined a loanword as “the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another” (1950: 212). Loanwords are always words (i.e. lexemes) in the narrow sense, not lexical phrases, and they are generally unanalyzable units in the recipient language (Haspelmath 2009). The term ‘borrowing,’ however, has been used in two different senses:

- (1) As a general term for all kinds of transfer or copying processes (e.g. native speakers adopting elements from another language, non-native speakers imposing properties of their mother tongue onto a recipient language).
- (2) “To refer to the incorporation of foreign elements into the speaker’s native language” (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 21).

The Guaraní loanwords present in Uruguayan Spanish (e.g. *tatú*, *yacaré*, *mangangá*, *jacarandá*, *ñandubay*, *ombú*) are for the most part cultural borrowings. That is, they designate a concept that did not previously exist in the recipient language (Myers-Scotton 2002). These words can be motivated by convenience since it is often easier to incorporate a foreign term than to coin a new one (Field 2002). When many speakers know a concept by one particular word, and not by another, it is more efficient to use the best-known word even if it belongs to a foreign language. The more a donor language is known, the more chances a new concept has of being expressed in that language, whereas when only a few speakers know it, neologisms tend to be created (Haspelmath 2009).

Examples of Guaraní loanwords in Uruguayan Spanish from the *Uruguayan Spanish Dictionary* are:

<i>Aguaí</i>	<i>biguá</i>	<i>curupí</i>	<i>macá</i>	<i>pitanga</i>	<i>timbó</i>
<i>aguará</i>	<i>burucuyá</i>	<i>cururú</i>	<i>mambí</i>	<i>pororó</i>	<i>tipoy</i>
<i>aguaribay</i>	<i>caburé</i>	<i>envira</i>	<i>mandioca</i>	<i>quillapí</i>	<i>vacaray</i>
<i>ají</i>	<i>cambará</i>	<i>guabiyú</i>	<i>ñacundá</i>	<i>sarandí</i>	<i>viraró</i>
<i>ananá</i>	<i>camoatí</i>	<i>guaycurú</i>	<i>ñacurutú</i>	<i>tacuara</i>	<i>yacaré</i>
<i>apereá</i>	<i>caracú</i>	<i>hocó</i>	<i>ñandú</i>	<i>tacuaruzú</i>	<i>yaguané</i>
<i>arazá</i>	<i>caraguatá</i>	<i>ibirapitá</i>	<i>ñandutí</i>	<i>tapera</i>	<i>yarará</i>
<i>atí</i>	<i>caranday</i>	<i>ingá</i>	<i>ñangapiré</i>	<i>tarumá</i>	<i>yatay</i>
<i>bacaray</i>	<i>cipó</i>	<i>isauí</i>	<i>ñapindá</i>	<i>tayuyá</i>	<i>yuá</i>
<i>batarás</i>	<i>cuatí</i>	<i>isipó</i>	<i>ombú</i>	<i>tembetá</i>	
<i>batitú</i>	<i>curupay</i>	<i>jacarandá</i>	<i>pindó</i>	<i>tembetarí</i>	

A fascinating loanword is the interjection *che*, which also has a Guaraní origin, according to linguists Rona (1963) and Bertolotti (2010).

The other American language to have loaned words to Uruguayan Spanish is Quechua. In the *Uruguayan Spanish Dictionary*, we find several loanwords from this Andean language:

<i>¡Achalay!</i>	<i>charqui</i>	<i>chorito</i>	<i>guacha</i>	<i>opa</i>	<i>quinoa</i>
<i>achira</i>	<i>chasque</i>	<i>chúcaro</i>	<i>guasca</i>	<i>palta</i>	<i>tala</i>
<i>achura</i>	<i>chasqui</i>	<i>chúcara</i>	<i>gurí</i>	<i>paspar</i>	<i>tambo</i>
<i>cacharpas</i>	<i>chaura</i>	<i>chucho</i>	<i>mate</i>	<i>payana</i>	<i>tоторa</i>
<i>cancha</i>	<i>chinchulín</i>	<i>chuño</i>	<i>molle</i>	<i>pitar</i>	<i>vincha</i>
<i>catanga</i>	<i>chino</i>	<i>chuzo</i>	<i>morocho</i>	<i>pucho</i>	<i>yapa</i>
<i>chacra</i>	<i>china</i>	<i>chuza</i>	<i>nana</i>	<i>pupo</i>	<i>yuyo</i>
<i>charque</i>	<i>choclo</i>	<i>guacho</i>	<i>ojota</i>	<i>quincha</i>	<i>zapallo</i>

Currently, there are no studies addressing the case of these Quechua loanwords. However, it should be noted that Bracco (2004) asserts through the careful analysis of 16th-century documents that the indigenous peoples had active relations with the Andean regions.

### 3 Guaraní loanword vitality: phonological adaptation, availability, and assimilation

Guaraní and Spanish are typologically different languages. Guaraní is part of the Tupi language family, more specifically of the Tupi-Guaraní branch, named after the two most common language groups at the time of colonization in Brazil, Tupinamba and Guaraní (Jensen 1999). Spanish, on the other hand, is part of the Indo-European family of languages, among which Spanish can be further classified as a Romance language. Guaraní is agglutinative, meaning that complex

words are formed by stringing together morphemes. The indigenous languages of lowland South America are generally classified as polysynthetic (Payne 1990), and Guarani is no exception. In contrast, Spanish is an inflectional language; its verbs are conjugated while adjectives and nouns carry gender and number information. It could then be hypothesized that these differences will affect the transference of one system to the other.

But how much do these typological differences affect the permeability of loanwords? According to Thomason (2006), social factors easily override linguistic factors. She explains that typological distance between the source language and the receiving language affects the likelihood that the structure will be borrowed. The more similar the systems are, the easier it is for a feature to diffuse from one to the other. However, with sufficiently intense contact, any feature can be transferred from any language to any other, in spite of their typological differences. Since Spanish and Guarani are very different languages in terms of their structure, the borrowing process is probably a consequence of strong interaction in a context of direct contact.

Nowadays, Guarani loanwords present high vitality in Uruguayan Spanish, that is, these words are still part of the linguistic conventions of the speech community. In other words, they have been adapted to the phonotactic rules of the recipient language, can be easily retrieved from the speakers' mental lexicon, and are considered part of the language.

3.1 Phonological adaptation

A source word (i.e. the word that serves as a model for the loanword) has phonological properties in its original language that may not fit into the recipient language's system. Therefore, loanwords suffer adaptations to fit into the recipient language. These adaptations, i.e. the transformations that apply to words when they are borrowed from a foreign language (Peperkamp 2005), are generally a requisite for integration to take place.

There are six vowels in Guarani. Table 10.1 shows how each of them exists in both a nasal and an oral series (Lustig 1996), while there are no nasalized vowels in Spanish. With regards to the consonant system, some of the most noteworthy differences from the Romance language (and the most relevant for the present study) are the alveolar /<sup>d</sup>j/ and glottal stop /ʔ/, called *puso*. With respects to its prosody, Clopper and Tonhauser (2011) explain that the stress in Guarani most frequently falls on the last

Table 10.1 Guarani vowel system

	Oral			Nasal		
	Front	Central	Back	Front	Central	Back
close	i	ɨ	u	ĩ	ĩ	ũ
mid	e		o	ẽ		õ
open		a			ã	

Table 10.2 Guaraní and Uruguayan Spanish pronunciations

Guaraní		Uruguayan Spanish	
jata'i	/d[ <sup>d</sup> jataʔi]	yataí/yatay	[ʃa'tai]
jakare	/d[ <sup>d</sup> jaka're]	yacaré	[ʃaka're]
jaguarete	/d[ <sup>d</sup> jaware'te]	yaguareté	[ʃaware'te]
jarara	/d[ <sup>d</sup> jara'ra]	yarará	[ʃara'ra]

syllable of a word, whereas stress in Spanish usually occurs on the penultimate syllable (Lleo 2003).

Guaraní loanwords in Spanish present a simplified pronunciation, which lacks typical Guaraní features like the prevocalic and intervocalic glottal stops and the nasalized vowels. Words have been fully adapted to Uruguayan Spanish phonology. It should be noted that the age of loanwords can be decisive in determining the degree of adaptation. In particular, this involves the use of the voiceless palatal continuant, which is characteristic of the pronunciation of Río de la Plata Spanish. Consequently, words like *yatay*, *yacaré*, *yaguareté*, and *yarará* present that sound [ç] in an initial position, instead of [dʒ], as depicted in Table 10.2. Moreover, most loanwords appear to have kept the prototypical Guaraní stress on the last syllable.

In Guaraní, /d/ and /b/ only exist in the group /mb/ and /nd/ followed by a vowel at the beginning of a word (Guasch 1983). An example of this is the Guaraní word *mburukuja*. Although it can appear in literary texts with *mb-* (*mburucuyá*), in oral-ity and in Spanish dictionaries it appears without the initial <m> (i.e. *burucuyá*). Interestingly, during the fieldwork that I will discuss in the following section, many informants over the age of 60 pointed out that the correct pronunciation was *mburucuyá*, accentuating the initial <m>.

### 3.2 Availability

Languages have a great number of words with very concrete semantic content, whose frequency in a corpus is not always representative of their vitality. López Morales (1996) explains that our mental lexicon has a series of terms that are not used unless one needs to communicate very specific information. Hence, to analyze those words, it is necessary to resort to other techniques, such as studying speakers' lexical availability.

The lexical availability of 28 Guaraní loanwords was measured by conducting interviews with 72 Uruguayan Spanish native speakers (36 females) (see Rodríguez 2017 for partial results). Since age stratification of linguistic variables is considered the primary correlate of real-time language change (Chambers 2002; Eckert 1997), informants from a wide range of ages were recruited to see signs of real time language change (18 to 84 years old). All regions were represented with a minimum of two informants, following geolinguistic methodology. These parameters were set because using a combination of both static (i.e. gender and origin) and dynamic variables (age) might help to expand the study of loanwords.

During the interview, informants were presented with pictures of the loanwords' referents (e.g. a photograph of the animal *tatú*) and were asked to name what they saw. The visual and oral stimuli were identical for all informants. A protocol was established in case informants reported not remembering or not knowing the signifier of the referent; namely, the interviewer pronounced the first syllable of the word meant to work as a cue. Table 10.3 shows three levels of availability which were set given that the words that come first to our memory – as the result of a reaction to a stimulus – are those that are most available (López Morales 1996).

The words with the highest degree of availability (i.e. non-assisted utterance of the loanword by the informant) were *ananá* and *ñandú*, as showed in Figure 10.1.

Table 10.3 Availability levels

Availability level	Informants' answers
<b>High</b>	The Guaraní word.
<b>Low</b>	Another word in Spanish, but when asked if they know another word, they give the Guaraní word. Or Report not knowing the word/another word, but when they listen to the first syllable, they say the Guaraní word.
<b>Null or passive</b>	Report not knowing the Guaraní word.

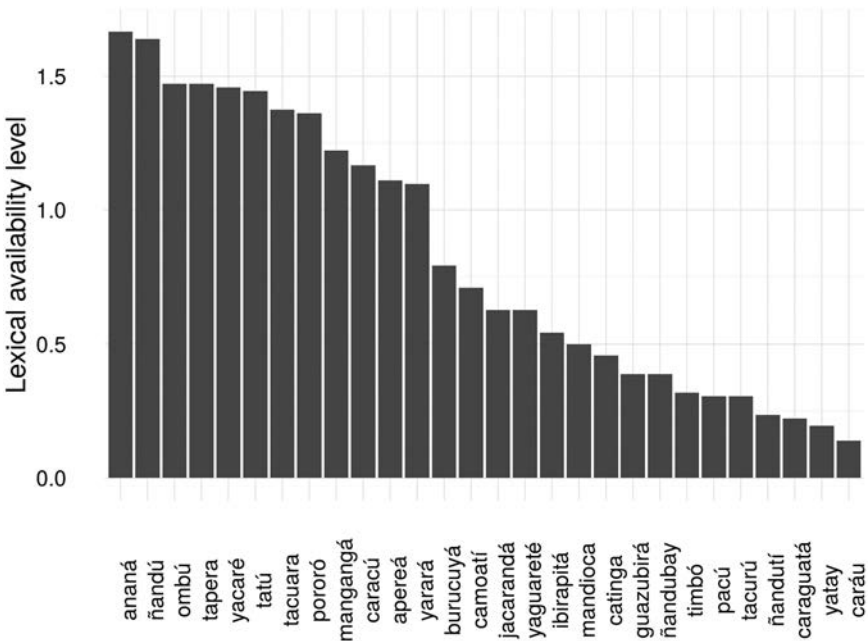


Figure 10.1 Loanword availability

Author's creation



The rest of the terms showed low lexical availability levels, but no words had an average of null availability.

Regarding age, we noticed that the youngest age group (< 32) was the one who performed most poorly, followed by the oldest (> 62). In the case of the latter, the slight reduction in performance could be because, for healthy aging people, naming difficulty is situated at the label retrieval stage (Nicholas 1985), and that aging impacts cognitive function, including speed of processing, working memory, long-term memory, and inhibition or cognitive control (Park and Reuter-Lorenz 2009). However, the more significant poor performance of the youngest age group needs a different explanation. Some might argue that these words are beginning to lose their vitality. On the other hand, it could also be the case that, since these words present a low frequency in their use, this group of speakers has not yet had the opportunity to encode them.

### 3.3 Assimilation

Poplack, Sankoff and Miller (1988) point out that there are two facets when it comes to the assimilation of a loanword into a recipient language: linguistic integration and the sociological process of acceptance. Haspelmath defines integration as “the degree to which a word is felt to be a full member of the recipient language system” (2009: 43). Grosjean (2010) defines a loanword as the integration of one language into another. Acceptance, on the other hand, only exists when “native speakers judge a donor-language word to be an appropriate designation whether or not they are aware of its etymological origins” (Poplack and Sankoff 1984: 104). In fact, German distinguishes *Fremdwörter* ‘foreign word’ from *Lehnwörter* ‘adapted, integrated, established borrowing’ (Haspelmath 2009). Both may be adapted to the syntactic, morphological, and phonological rules of the recipient language, but the former neither feel nor are considered part of the language lexicon. Therefore, the distinction between *Fremdwörter* and *Lehnwörter* depends not only on the degree of adaptation but also on the degree of assimilation – integration and acceptance.

Hasselmo (1969) observes that the manifestation of a foreign form with a high degree of social integration – for him, acceptance and use by the speech community – can be interpreted as a loanword. When a foreign word presents a low degree of social integration, it is likely to be code-switching. The assimilation of loanwords is a diachronic process, and it should ideally be studied over time. However, when there are no historical data available, one can study intergenerational differences among living speakers.

In order to study Guaraní loanword assimilation, the same group of informants were asked to explain what all the words they had been uttering had in common. The data obtained were organized in the following categories: (1) Uruguayan words, (2) words from the countryside, (3) other, and (4) no answer.

A considerable number of informants seem to consider the words as typical of the Spanish spoken in Uruguay, as portrayed in Figure 10.2. These data show that the words are well assimilated since most informants consider the words to be theirs, from Uruguay, or from the countryside. Surprisingly, only one informant



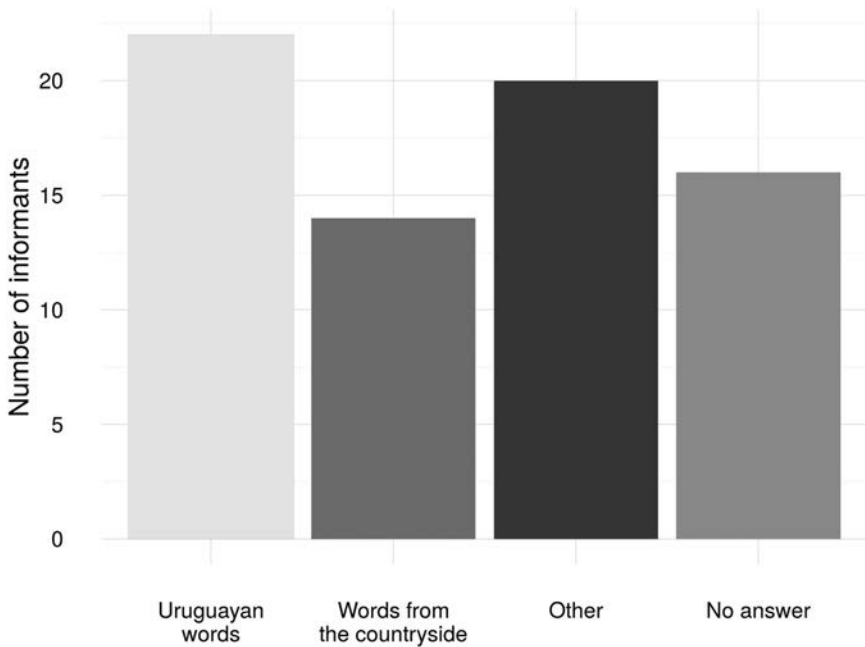


Figure 10.2 Loanword assimilation

Author's creation

responded that they were all indigenous words (her answer was computed in category 3, together with responses such as “words that are used a lot” and “words of the region”). The fact that only one informant noticed that they were words originally from another language makes it clear that they are well integrated into the recipient language.

#### 4 Concluding remarks

The bibliography and documents reviewed indicate numerous historical facts that evidence native contact with Europeans and *criollos* through explorations, military actions, reductions, religious conversions, commercial exchanges, wars, struggles, and treaties among each other and with the Europeans. The success of the Spanish takeover, to the detriment of the native languages of the region, seems to be the result of forced immersion in colonial society.

Although no indigenous language is spoken in the territory we now call Uruguay, the contact with indigenous languages in another historical stage is evident, not only in extant sources but also in abundant place-names and loanwords that we find in Uruguayan Spanish. The presence of Guaraní loanwords is the linguistic imprint of cultural contact between Americans and Europeans. These loanwords still show vitality. In fact, if we follow the taxonomy of Haugen (1950), who

distinguishes two processes in the dynamics of the loan (i.e. the importation and the substitution), we could state that this is a case of substitution, since all the words inadequately reproduce their model (the word source), respecting the phonological patterns of the receiving language. The fact that the loanwords' phonological adaptation is consolidated is probably because they have been part of the Spanish spoken in the region for more than 100 years. In addition, even though speakers can retrieve the words from their mental lexicon, the loanwords are so assimilated into the recipient language that they are not perceived as foreignisms.

Spanish contact with American languages offers a plethora of different language contact scenarios, constituting a unique opportunity to study the exchanges between languages of different typologies. Future studies on contact linguistics in America, and in other parts of the world, should shed more light on language phenomena allowing us to learn more about human cultural interactions.

## Glossary

**bandeirantes:** slave-catchers and fortune hunters composed of 17th-century Portuguese settlers in Brazil who frequently raided reductions searching for Indian slaves. The name comes from the designation of their expeditions, which were called *bandeiras* (Portuguese for 'flags').

**baqueanos:** a person with extensive knowledge of the geography of a territory, its geographical features, and the language and customs of its population.

**caudillos:** a leader wielding military and political power, with great influence over an important number of people. In the history of Latin America, *caudillos* are associated with the independence movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

**criollos:** American-born descendants of the European settlers of Latin America.

**geolinguistics:** the study of the geographical distribution and structure of languages either in isolation, contact, and/or conflict with one another.

**lexical availability:** the words that spring to mind in response to a certain prompt.

**loanword:** a word that was transferred from a donor language to a recipient language.

**phonotactic rules:** restrictions on the permissible combinations of phonemes in a language.

**preliterate:** a preliterate society is one which lacks a written language.

**reductions:** settlements or towns in what in the 1600s was a no-man's-land, in order to sedentarize, evangelize, and assimilate the Indigenous peoples.

**semispeaker:** a person with limited understanding of a language. The last speakers of a language are often 'semispeakers,' given that they are incomplete language learners or have lost knowledge of the language (language attrition) after cessation of daily use.

**toponymy:** the place-names of a region or the etymological study of them.

**vitality:** linguistic vitality is demonstrated by the extent to which a certain language or words are used as a means of communication. Languages or words with high vitality are used extensively in different circumstances and by all generations.

## Notes

- 1 Da Rosa (2013) reviews all past work on the Indigenous languages of Uruguay's region. He concludes that specific knowledge of the different languages only allows for lexicological studies or phylogenetic discussions; however, it is not enough to make progress unless more data becomes available.
- 2 "Este pequeño recinto cuenta con más de seis idiomas diferentes: tales son el minúan, el charrúa, el chaná, el boane, el goanoa, el guaraní [...] en poco tiempo no quedará vestigio alguno de ellos; y así es honor nuestro el conservarlos."
- 3 For many years, the native Indians of Uruguay were thought to have a Guaraní filiation. Pi Hugarte (1993) proposes three reasons for such a mistake: (1) to consider that the Guaraní names assigned to the different groups were the designations of the societies themselves; (2) to believe that the abundant Guaraní place-names in the north of Uruguay had a pre-Hispanic origin; and (3) to misinterpret sources that mention *Charrúas* speaking Guaraní, assuming it was their mother tongue.
- 4 The Guenoas appear in documents from the 17th to the 19th century as *Guanoás*, *Güenoas*, *Guinoas*, *Güinoas*, *Guinoanes*, *Guayantiranes*, *Huenoas*, *Guenoas*, *Guenoanes*, *Gyunoanes*, *Guynoanes*, *Binuanes*, *Binoanes*, *Guinuanes*, *Guinoas*, *Minoas*, *Minoanes*, or *Minuanes*, among others. See Bracco (1998) and Barrios Pintos (2008). It is evident from the sources that the name *Guenoa* and *Minuano* refer to the same group.

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## Topics for discussion

- 1 The contact between Amerindian languages and Spanish gave origin to many varieties of Spanish in different regions of Latin America. Investigate and describe one of these varieties.
- 2 Make a list of six Amerindian loanwords in a non-Amerindian language. For example, American English or Brazilian Portuguese.
- 3 Go to the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger website and find out which other languages, like Chaná, have only one speaker left.

- 4 Elaborate on whether loanwords should keep their original form or whether they should adapt to the recipient language. Find speakers' arguments for each of the cases.
- 5 Uruguayan Spanish has few indigenous imprints. However, other American Spanish varieties have received more influence. Find examples.
- 6 Some people think language death is a natural, inevitable process, while others think all languages should be preserved. Argue for or against these positions.
- 7 Consider other cases of indigenous languages being replaced by Spanish; research the circumstances that led to their replacement and compare them to the case of Uruguay.
- 8 Suggest solutions to how languages can survive the imposition of another language.
- 9 Comment on the following statements.
  - a Language death is a process that takes place at a considerably faster rate than language evolution (McMahon 1994).
  - b Language death usually involves language shift to a new dominant language (McMahon 1994).
  - c Languages ultimately die with their last speaker (Crystal 2000).
  - d Language birth and death are natural, ongoing processes world-wide. However, in recent times, language extinction processes have accelerated, in part due to improved communications and globalization (Aitchinson and Carter 2000; Ortiz Rescaniere 1992).
  - e Currently, about 4% of languages are spoken by 96% of the world's population, whereas 25% of the languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers (Crystal 2000).
  - f Unless current trends change, linguists estimate that 90% of the about 6,000 languages currently spoken may become extinct, or greatly endangered, by the end of this century (Krauss 1992).