

The Progress of Spanish Inclusive Language in Latin America



Emily Hernandez and Megan Madhosingh and Adriana Gordillo Barahona



Introduction:

Spanish, as a gendered language, assigns words a grammatical gender, typically male or female, reinforcing a binary understanding of gender. This structure reflects cultural norms that assume only two genders, making it difficult for nonbinary and transgender individuals to be accurately represented in language. Language plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions of gender, as seen in the ways that female associated terms often carry negative connotations or in the lack of gender neutral options for nonbinary individuals. Recent efforts to create inclusive Spanish terms, such as the use of "-e" and "-x" morphemes, have sparked discussion and debate, particularly in Spanish-speaking countries like Colombia and Argentina. However, there are gaps in existing research regarding its adoption and perception within Hispanic communities. While some research explores how inclusive language is received in Spain, there is less information on how it is used in Latin American countries, where cultural and political landscapes differ. Colombia and Argentina, in particular, have distinct histories with gender rights and language reform, making them key locations for understanding the implementation of neutral language. The purpose of this research is to investigate the use and acceptance of inclusive language in Spanish, specifically focusing on the "-e" and "-x" morphemes within the Hispanic populations of Colombia and Argentina. By studying how people in these countries use and respond to inclusive language, this research seeks to understand whether linguistic change is actively taking place and how it correlates with societal attitudes toward gender inclusivity. The hypothesis is that as societies become more progressive, individuals are more likely to adopt gender inclusive language, reflecting a shift toward greater acceptance of nonbinary and transgender individuals. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the role of language in shaping gender norms and promoting inclusivity in Spanish-speaking communities.

Methods:

The subject of this study are the residents of Latin America, specifically, from Colombia and Argentina.

My mentor traveled to both of those countries and visited colleges throughout them. She selected 10-12 people to interview in each country. For the interviews, she had a prepared set of 20 questions and would ask the people she selected to interview. The questions pertained to their view on inclusive language and its widespread usage. Did they approve of it or not?

The data has yet to be analyzed as we are still in the transcription phase but what we will do is sort through all of our qualitative data and from that gather common ideas among Latin Americans about inclusive language and gender inclusivity. From this, we will be able to gain better insight on the values and ideals of Latin Americans.



Colombia



Argentina

Results:

Although the results of this research have not been found yet there are results that we predict will be found. We will determine the final results by thoroughly examining each interview and marking all the ideas that we have seen be repeated throughout different interviews.

We will make note of common themes within people's responses and document this as our findings. Through this, we will find out the common ideas about inclusive language.

As a majority of the people interviewed were university students or people associated with university administration and education, we know that they are familiar with inclusive language. We predict that most of the people interviewed feel positively about inclusive language and want it to be used in official settings.

Implications:

This study has not come to conclusive results yet as it is still in the process of being evaluated. The results we have gathered so far from this study suggest that Latin Americans are confused when it comes to their views of inclusive language and that many of the individuals in the study did not know what to believe. Additionally, a pattern that was noticed is that individuals in Colombia are more open to using gender-neutral language compared to those in Argentina. This difference is likely influenced by Colombia's increasingly progressive political climate, which fosters greater acceptance of diverse gender identities and inclusive practices. In contrast, Argentina's government has imposed restrictions on the use of gender-neutral language in official settings, which may discourage its use and contribute to a slower rate of adoption among the population. Despite these differences, the overall findings are expected to show that as more individuals incorporate gender-neutral language into their everyday speech, its usage becomes increasingly normalized. This shift reflects a broader societal movement toward greater inclusivity, suggesting that continued exposure and practice can help reshape cultural perceptions of gender, ultimately making inclusive language a more natural and accepted part of communication in both countries. Finally, the research also suggests that there is much more research to be done when it comes to Latin American opinions on gendered language since the sample population was small.

References:

