

# Spanglish: A new American language

## 1 Spanglish everywhere

Like Hinglish, Spanglish is a mixture of two languages: of Spanish and English. Sometimes you can see or hear a sentence with both English and Spanish words. Or it can be a new word that is influenced (beeinflusst) by English. For example, young Spanish speakers have begun to use the word 'carro' instead of 'coche' when they are talking about a car.

Look at these examples of Spanglish. What do you think they mean?



Feeling sick? No te sientes bien?  
 Watch un poco de television  
 Drink your té con miel y limón  
 Habla on the telephone  
 Before you know it, y de repente,  
 you'll be feeling ¡excelente!

## 2 Different points of view

Did you know that 15 % of the American population is Hispanic and the US is the third largest Spanish-speaking country in the world? Among young urban<sup>1</sup> Hispanics born in the US Spanglish has become especially popular. These two Spanish-speaking high school students have been asked to talk about Spanglish.

Read what they have to say.

I have two sisters and a brother and we were all born in the US. We speak English, Spanish and sometimes Spanglish, but we wouldn't think of speaking Spanglish at home. My parents hate it. My father is a proud man. He and my mother left the Dominican Republic in 1975 and came to America for a better life. He loves his country and his language. He's learned enough English to communicate, but he wants us to be perfect in Spanish and English. I think he's right. What you speak is what you are. English and Spanish belong to different cultures. If you want to be part of American culture, you have to speak perfect English. It's the same for the Dominican Republic. You won't be accepted by people if you have an accent or don't know the right words. Also, Spanglish is the language of people who don't have an education. And a lot of people, not just young people, use English words just to sound cool. I think it sounds stupid.




I think it's cool and, anyway, I can't really help it<sup>2</sup>. It just comes out. If I'm in a conversation with another Latino, I say a word in Spanish because it's easier than trying to think of the English word. And they know the word so it's OK. And then they say something in Spanish and it just goes on like that. My parents do it, too. My mother is from Mexico. My father was born in the US but his parents came here from Mexico, too. Mostly they speak Spanish at home, but sometimes there are better words in English. Especially when my mother gets angry! I think I like it because it's my way of saying 'Look, I can do both.' I feel like an American with my own style. For other people, I think they're still trying to learn English and until they get there, they have to speak a

mixture of Spanish and English. When you're Spanish and English-speaking you live in two worlds that come together all the time. That's why the languages get mixed up.

<sup>1</sup>urban ['3:bn] – in der Stadt aufgewachsen • <sup>2</sup>not to be able to help it [ˌeɪbl tə ˈhelp\_ɪt] – nichts dafür können

a) What do the sentences mean?

1. "What you speak is what you are."
2. "You live in two worlds that come together all the time."

 b) In Germany a lot of people speak 'Denglisch' – they use English words while they are speaking German. How does it sound to you? Talk about it with a partner. Give examples.

c) The two teenagers above have given different reasons why people use a mixture of English and Spanish. Why do you think Germans use English words and expressions? How is it similar to or different from Spanglish in the United States?

## Lösung

### Lösungsvorschläge Seite 1

**1**

a)

1. We are open half a day and at night.
2. We buy junk cars (carros instead of coches).
3. 2 meses baidefeis = two months for free (from English "by the face")
4. Happy hours every day from 20 to 22 o'clock / Drinks and beers / Offer all night / 1 table for two people (tabla instead of mesa) / plus two pitchers
5. Feeling sick? Not feeling well?  
Watch a little TV.  
Drink your tea with honey and lemon  
Talk on the telephone.  
Before you know it, suddenly, you'll be feeling excellent!

### Lösungsvorschläge Seite 2

**2**

a)

1. From the way somebody speaks a language, you often recognize what region they come from, what education they've had and if they are native speakers.
2. If people speak two languages where they live, they think in two languages and understand and live in two cultures.

b)

#### *Individuelle Schülerlösungen*

c)

#### *Individuelle Schülerlösungen*

Spanglish/Denglisch – similar: English words are mixed with words from another language, often invented by bilingual speakers, to communicate internationally. People sometimes use Denglisch to sound cool and maybe there's a better word in English than in German.

Spanglish/Denglisch – different: no need to speak English to fit in Germany. People don't live in two worlds. Also, people who use Denglisch usually have an education.