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LINGUA SPENCER



"Our A Level MFL students have demonstrated exactly what it means to be a linguist at GSA as they provide a celebration of the vibrant world of language learning. With a passion for linguistic diversity and cultural exploration, our students will take you on a journey that opens doors to global understanding as they share the impact of their language learning on their academic and personal growth."

Miss K. Chuter
Curriculum Leader, Modern Foreign Languages

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THE INFLUENCES OF SPANISH-SPEAKING CELEBRITIES IN SPAIN AND ACROSS THE WORLD

Georgia Wiseman – Year 12

Introduction

Spanish-speaking celebrities make a great impression on many different industries on an international level and can influence people and things on an immense scale. However, sometimes these influences are not always positive. They can lead to a poor impact not only in Spanish-speaking countries, but also around other countries across the globe.

Celebrities usually have the most influence on younger children and teenagers who are more impressionable than adults, and are more likely to follow up in doing something based on what their favourite celebrity has done - which can be a problem if the activities or what they are saying are not ideal.

However, their influence usually has a widely positive effect and can push people to get involved in more volunteering activities as well as charity work. It can be really inspiring to be able



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to look up to someone who represents your language and gives more representation, which could mean more people are motivated to enter industries such as the music or film industry.

Shakira

Over the years, Shakira's popularity has ballooned to the extent that she is one of the most well-known Spanish speaking celebrities worldwide. She has had a truly outstanding impact on multiple industries.

At the age of just 18, Shakira created her own foundation called the Pies Descalzos Foundation. This foundation has accumulated some amazing achievements, including helping over 152,000 children and 887,000 families.

Because of Shakira getting involved in something as big as this, it has certainly influenced many fans all over the world to get involved in her foundation and even other charities, creating a largely positive effect as more people are becoming associated with volunteering, which is always a good thing.

As well as charity, Shakira has influenced many other musicians in Latin America by drawing inspiration from her heritage and spreading it proudly across the globe. Younger Spanish-speaking children in particular are inspired by her as she is usually credited for the rising popularity of Spanish language music on a global level. As a result, more people are being influenced into getting involved with the music industry.



Shakira continued

Despite all the wonderful contributions Shakira has made to society as a whole, she has also faced some questionable moments that may prove her to be a bad influence. One of these is her many tax fraud allegations. Under Spanish law, people who spend more than six months in the country are considered residents for tax purposes. However, Shakira says Spain was not where she was mainly living at the time. This dispute had been ongoing for a while in court, with Shakira constantly denying any wrongdoing, but she finally settled by paying a £6.3 million fine - whilst prosecutors had wanted to jail her for eight years and fine her £20.8 million.

These actions may be confusing to some, especially her fans on the younger side, and may have had a big influence on other people's actions. If people see their idol getting involved in crimes such as tax fraud, this may influence more people to join their favourite celebrity in pursuing further criminal activity. Alternatively, people may hold on to this controversy and be somewhat 'deinfluenced' by what Shakira has said or done in the past in relation to these moments; people who once looked up to Shakira and were influenced to embrace their culture may look back on those moments and wonder if what she advocated for was actually correct.

"PEOPLE WHO ONCE LOOKED UP TO SHAKIRA... MAY LOOK BACK ON THOSE MOMENTS AND WONDER IF WHAT SHE ADVOCATED FOR WAS ACTUALLY CORRECT"

Georgia Wiseman

Bad Bunny

Bad Bunny has become incredibly well-known worldwide in the reggaeton industry. However, one problem with reggaeton is the constant criticism that it is too offensive and explicit. Many people are worried about the influence of his music and songs especially with regard to younger boys. His music contains highly inappropriate sexual themes as well as misogynistic language. Many claim that this genre damages children's mindsets, even saying most of the songs encourage violence against women. Young boys may be influenced by these lyrics and start to change their behaviour, even starting to adapt to some of the attitudes represented in these lyrics.

Despite his lyrics and ideology, it isn't all bad - Bad Bunny believes that we should treat one another as who we are because we are human. He has always believed that being Latino is a gift, once saying,

"Be proud to be Latino and never lose that pride."

Being proud of who he is has reflected on others, meaning that many Latino children have stopped hiding their culture and have instead embraced it. Like many others, Bad Bunny has also started his own foundation: according to its mission statement, the non-profit organisation works to improve the quality of life of Puerto Rican youth and future stars through supporting youth



arts and sports initiatives, in collaboration with other non-profit organisations. In 2018, The Good Bunny Foundation organised the very first annual La Nueva Tradición event, distributing gifts to 30,000 Puerto Rican children. It also runs basketball sessions in different Puerto Rican communities and a golf tournament to fund social impact projects.

Conclusion

Overall, I strongly believe that celebrities as a whole have an immense influence on others, but Spanish-speaking celebrities especially have a wide influence, causing a significant impact in Latino and Hispanic culture.

Communities are now advocating for everyone to embrace their culture and not be embarrassed by this, and to be proud of who they are. This influence can be used on a scale that can persuade people to get more involved in foundation work and charity work, therefore not only benefitting themselves, but also benefitting many others.

Even though some influence can be negative, it is usually overpowered by positive influences. Across the world, influential Spanish-speaking celebrities will continue forward - hopefully many more will join them in supporting others and providing a good influence.



THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL LANGUAGE TO REGIONAL IDENTITY IN POST-FRANCOIST SPAIN

Alex Smith – Year 13

Introduction

During Franco's dictatorship (1936-75), Spain suffered a period of heavy linguistic repression which saw the public use of Catalan and Basque prohibited, including in schools, social and cultural associations, printed material, religious ceremonies and radio broadcasts. This was a clear attempt to create a unified Spanish people, something hitherto unseen in Spain.

This had lasting impacts on Spain's autonomous regions, visible through the persistent divide between the two worst affected regions - the Basque Country and Catalonia - and the rest of Spain. This divide is based in historic cultural differences, but also on continuous linguistic friction between the regions. The linguistic divide has only worsened since Franco's dictatorship and its repressive attitudes towards non-Castilian languages in Spain.



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Case studies

The effects of this policy can best be seen through two autonomous regions in Spain: the Basque Country and Catalonia. Both of these regions have legal protections for their respective regional languages, and have a co-official language alongside Spanish. During the dictatorship, these languages were prohibited in all forms, making them excellent case studies for the impact on regional languages in post-Francoist Spain.

The Basque Country

Before 1936, Basque language schools, called Ikastolas, were growing in popularity as Basque language education became commonplace for the first time. This stopped after 1936 when Franco took power, but after his death in 1975 the Ikastolas made a return. Their return was largely driven by the rising Basque nationalism in the 1960s, which was in turn caused by the vast quantity of immigrants that arrived in the Basque country as a result of its economic prosperity. In the late 1970s, immigrants accounted for almost 40 per cent of the population of the region. This caused the Basque people to fear that the Basque language - and with it their culture - faced extinction from the increasing linguistic pressure from Castilian. This drove the Vasquistas' need for Ikastolas, believing that if the current youth generation were cut off from the Basque language, then their descendants would also be alienated from their culture. This demonstrates the significance of regional languages to identity in Spain as the death of the Basque language is seen as the end of the Basque country as an autonomous region with its own history and culture. This suggests that, to the Basque people, the main differentiating factor between them and the Spanish was their language, and therefore losing Basque would be the same as total homogenisation.

This conflation of language and identity has continued into younger Basque generations, especially amongst Basque-educated students. This group considers Basque to be a key part of their identity, in contrast to their Spanish-educated counterparts, who are more likely to claim a bi-ethnic identity rooted in territory, not in linguistics. This suggests that belonging to a group linguistically is highly important to whether or not Basque students consider themselves to be a part of that group, suggesting that their regional language is a highly important element of their regional identity. For them, the linguistic element of speaking Basque is more important than being from the Basque Country when it comes to ethnic self-identification. This is suggested by the reluctance of non-Basque speaking students to claim to

be fully ethnically Basque, while those that do speak Basque have no issues with this.

Catalonia

In 1983, the Catalan education department restructured schools to be in Catalan in order to normalise the language in Catalonia. Since then, Catalan has become the main vehicle language in Catalan schools. This is highly significant to identity in Catalonia, as the presence of a unique Catalan language has been seen as the basis for the claim that Catalonia can be "considered as something more than a mere region." This policy received heavy criticism from Spanish politicians who accused the Catalan government of indoctrinating children into Catalan nationalism and of deliberately disadvantaging non-Catalan students. This criticism further demonstrates the importance of regional languages to identity in modern Spain, as the preservation of regional languages is widely viewed in Spanish politics as inherently separatist. This conveys the perceived link between regional language and pro-independence sentiments which suggests that regional language is - or is at least perceived to be - closely connected with regional identity.

Additionally, the language's close ties with independence movements in the region convey its links with regional identity. In 1981, a manifesto issued by

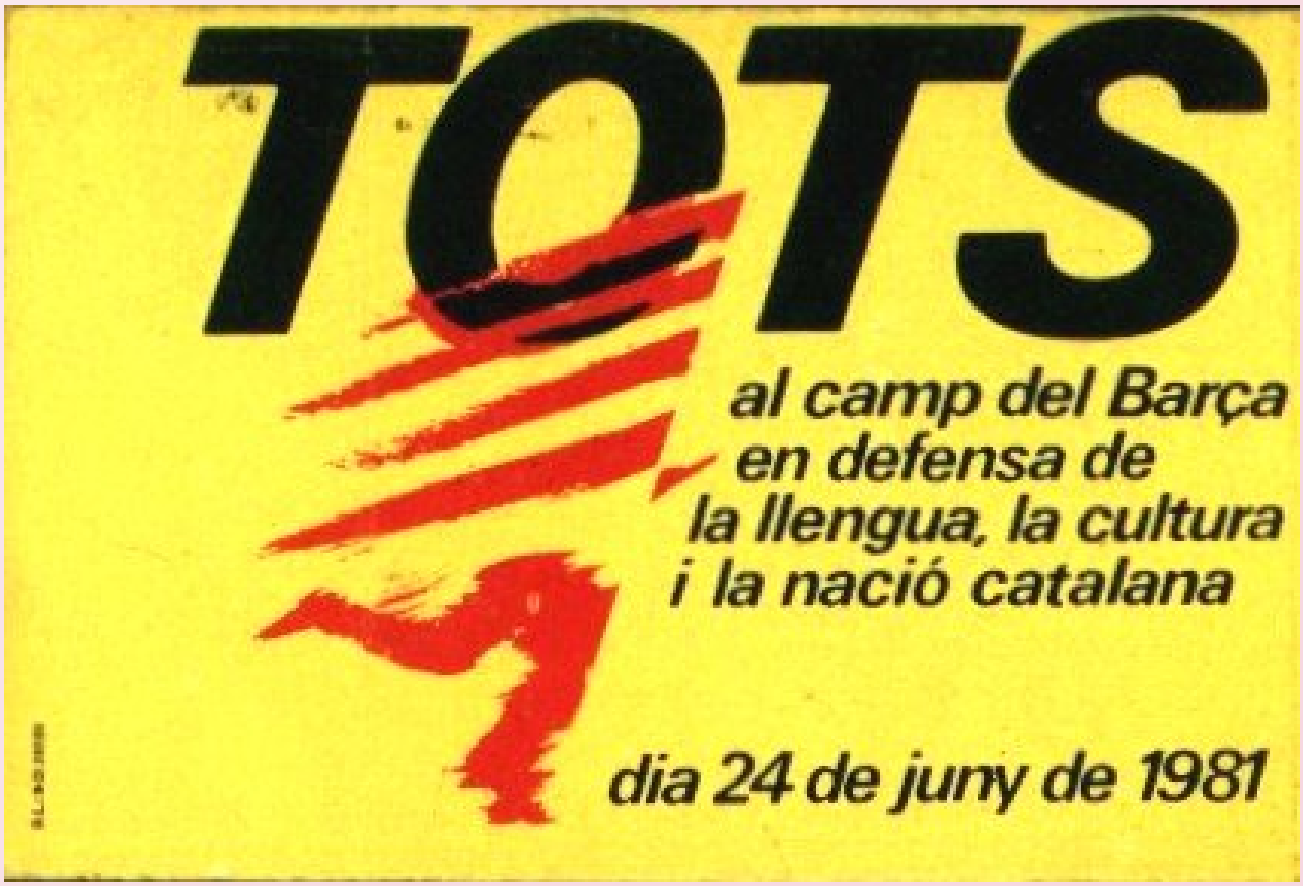
"THE PRESERVATION OF REGIONAL LANGUAGES IS WIDELY VIEWED IN SPANISH POLITICS AS INHERENTLY SEPARATIST"

Alex Smith

Catalan intellectuals claiming discrimination against the Castilian language drew a response calling for the defence of the Catalan language. This letter, **Crida a la Solidaritat en Defensa de la Llengua, la Cultura i la Nació Catalanes** (Call for Solidarity in Defence of the Catalan Language, Culture and Nation), called for a mass meeting at Barcelona University and led to the creation of a popular movement. This movement, whilst initially a cultural movement, began to demand independence. This demonstrates the importance of language to identity, as attacks on the Catalan language were treated as an attack on the 'Catalan Nation'.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the attempts of Franco's dictatorship to create a linguistically homogenous Spain in an effort to unify the Spanish people into a modern nation state were unsuccessful. After his death, regional identities continued to be closely intertwined with their vernacular. This connection was only strengthened by the increased linguistic opposition that they had faced under the dictatorship, leading to the conclusion that, in post-Francoist Spain, regional languages are highly significant to people's regional identity. This can be seen through the efforts to maintain the language for future generations.



HOW IMPORTANT ARE FESTIVALS TO HISPANIC CULTURE?

Mary Smith – Year 12

Introduction

Celebrations and festivals play a massive part of Hispanic culture. They are a way to remember ancestors and to keep traditions alive through dance and music.

Every town, city and region has its own traditional holiday in honour of a patron saint, founder or important historical event. Everyone is welcome to join these celebrations where traditional foods and events are enjoyed.

In this article, I will discuss some of the most famous Hispanic festivals, including La Tomatina, Las Fallas de Valencia, El Colacho, Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead), and San Fermín. This article aims to immerse you into the incredible world of Hispanic culture and possibly even inspire you to attend one of these festivals someday.

La Tomatina

La Tomatina is known to be one of the craziest Spanish festivals. It happens once a year on the last Wednesday of August in Buñol, a small town in Valencia. Everybody throws tomatoes at each other for fun and tradition! Thousands of people from all over the world come to attend the "World's Biggest Food Fight". Prior to 2013, this



attracted 40-50,000 people; however, this event has now been limited to 20,000 participants.

At noon, a number of trucks pull up, filled with tomatoes, and the fighting begins once one person has climbed to the top of a two-storey high, greasy wooden pole. The fighting ends an hour later and no more tomatoes are to be thrown after that point. The event is cleaned up by fire trucks which hose down the streets.

The tradition began in 1944-45 and nobody is completely sure as to how it originated. However, a popular theory is that the town was attacked with tomatoes during a festival. The festival honours the town's patron saints, Luis Bertrán and the Mare de Déu dels Desemparats (Mother of God of the Defenceless), a title of the Virgin Mary.

Las Fallas de Valencia

Las Fallas de Valencia happens from 1-19 March in Valencia. It is a festival that combines traditions, satire and art. Throughout the duration of the festival, there are gunpowder displays. On the 15th, the Fallas commissions are judged, and the winning one is the only one that will be saved from the fire. On the 17th, there is the award ceremony where the winners collect their prizes. This begins with a procession. A unique fireworks display is celebrated in the early hours

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Mary Smith

of the 18th. On the 19th, all the Fallas are burnt.

The festival originated from the old carpenter's tradition of burning pieces of wood that held together their winter lights when the start of spring arrived. They began to start adding old belongings and rags which made the structure look more human-like, hence the ninots in today's festival.



Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Day of the Dead is a two-day holiday that is a dedication to the dead. It reunites the living and the dead; families create offerings from the land of the dead. It is a holiday where mourning is an exchange for celebrations.

It happens on the 1st and 2nd of November. The first day is for the spirits of the children; the second day is for the spirits of the adults. Noon on the second day is for the spirits of all the dead.

Día de Muertos is celebrated using things such as Calaveras (skulls), Mexican marigolds and offerings which consist of items such as photographs and personal items of the departed.

El Colacho

El Colacho happens once a year in the middle of June and is a blend of Catholic and pagan rituals representing the triumph of good over evil. It dates back to the 1620s and takes place on the Sunday after the Feast of Corpus Christi - it is rumoured that it was initially a fertility ritual.

In the festival, red and yellow masked devils run through the streets, hurling insults at villagers, whipping them with a horsetail. Babies born during the previous year are laid on mattresses whilst the costumed men jump over them, as it is believed that the devil absorbs the sins of the babies, offering protection against things such as disease. Afterwards, the babies are sprinkled with rose petals and reclaimed by their parents.

Traditionally, the festival was only for babies from the local village, but now people come from all over the world to participate.

San Fermín

This festival is held annually from 6-14 July in Pamplona, Spain. It begins with fireworks and they are followed by the





singing of the traditional song, "Pamploneses, Viva San Fermín, Gora San Fermín". And then, from the 7th to the 14th, the bulls used in bull-fights run through the streets to the bull-ring. The procession takes place on 7 July and is a religious celebration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think that festivals are a very important part of Hispanic culture, as they help to express beliefs and bring the community together.

I think these festivals are something that everyone should try to visit at least once in their lifetime. My personal favourite is Las Fallas de Valencia because of all the fascinating structures, the parade and the fireworks.

In an ever-changing world, it is heartening to see that these festivals continue to bring joy to so many people from Spain and beyond.

Please scan the QR code to give your feedback on **Lingua Spencer**. Let us know what you enjoyed about this edition, and what you would like our students to write about in the future. Thank you!