Reflections on English and Spanish

(Reflexiones sobre el inglés y el español)

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This essay is dedicated to my wife Rosa Isela who grew up in Jalisco, México. She has helped me greatly with Spanish and was the inspiration for this essay.

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PREFACE

For several years, my wife Rosa Isela and I have discussed the ideas for this essay: "Reflections on English and Spanish." Rosa thought that because I learned Spanish voluntarily as an adult – not as a student in elementary, middle or high school who was required to take it – I would have a different perspective on differences between the two languages.

I did not take any foreign languages in elementary nor middle school, but took Latin in high school. I also did not take any foreign languages during my university years: six years at the University of California (B.S. Industrial Engineering and Master of Business Administration (MBA) and several years at Colorado State University (Ph.D. Economics)). For personal interest, I took three classes in Spanish at a local community college.

I was interested in writing the essay that Rosa and I were discussing but **did not have time**. I was working full-time as a programmer and playing the piano in a classic piano-bass-drums jazz trio that performed regularly. I finally retired last year and have had a bit more time for this essay. However, I continue to be surprised at how <u>very busy I am in retirement</u>, working on an accumulation of back-logged projects and working on new ones that proliferate. I have not yet experienced any of that "free time" we hear about in retirement.

Fittingly, I was finally able to write this essay in late January 2023 while on a short vacation in my wife's hometown (pueblito) in Jalisco, México. The essay is copied

into this email and also **attached as a Word document (with formatting intact, <u>recommended for viewing this essay</u>)**.

I am a second-generation Irish-American who grew up with immigrant Irish grandparents and aunts in Oakland, California. I am a graduate of Oakland High School and am fluent in Spanish.

When my grandparents and aunts and uncles left Ireland, it was an English colony, and they were colonial subjects of Queen Victoria. My grandmother and aunts grew up in rural County Galway (in western Ireland) speaking English and Irish. However, I never heard them speak Irish. During the long centuries when the English harshly controlled Ireland, they suppressed the Irish language and tried to eradicate it.

PART I. The English and Spanish Languages-General

Chapter 1

The Influence of Latin on English, Spanish and the World

Latin was the language of the ancient Romans and their empire and was used as the Lingua Franca all through Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and later. Some 70 percent of current English is derived from Latin, first introduced by the Romans during their almost 400-year occupation of England. This 70 percent figure is comprised of 35 percent from Latin directly and 35 percent via French (following the Norman French conquest in 1066). In the vocabulary of the sciences and technology, the 70 percent figure rises to over 90 percent.

The Spanish language is derived from Latin which was brought to the Iberian Peninsula by the Romans after their occupation of the peninsula that started in the late 3rd century BC. The rules of grammar and syntax of Spanish are mainly from Latin, and around 75% of Spanish words have Latin roots.

During the Middle Ages and until comparatively recent times, Latin was the language most widely used in the West for scholarly and literary purposes. For example, in 1687, Sir Isaac Newton wrote his book Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica, which explained his laws of motion and gravity, in the Latin language. Latin continued to be used as a scientific and technical language because it became a written rather than spoken language and was therefore immune to vocal anomalies, vowel changes, consonant variations, and colloquial

modification. To this day, Latin remains the official language of the Roman Catholic Church.

Martin Luther began his education at a Latin school in Mansfeld in the spring of 1488. There he received a thorough training in the Latin language and learned by rote in Latin the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and morning and evening prayers. Luther spoke to his fellow monks in his monastery in Latin, not in German. Latin was the lingua franca in Germany until 1790 when it was replaced with German. Latin was the official language of France until 1539 when King Francis I made French the official language of administration and court proceedings in France. (Note: French grammar and syntax and 87 percent of French vocabulary are derived from Latin.)

Latin grammar is orderly, logical, disciplined, structured, systematic, and consistent. For centuries (and at least until the third quarter of the twentieth century), Latin was recommended as part of a college-prep curriculum because it was believed that studying Latin taught logic.

Of the at least 70 percent of current English words derived from Latin, most are specific or technical in nature and are **not part of "everyday" English** although they are used in specialized applications and are used by professional writers. Most of these words relate to elevated subject matter such as academia, religion, medicine, science or legal practice.

Many of the words which came into English from French (following the Norman French conquest) have to do with politics, literature, art and the military and did **not become part of the vocabulary of the average person in England**. After 1066, the country had a two-tiered society with the aristocracy speaking French and the lower-class speaking Anglo-Saxon.

Another driving force behind English lexical development was the Industrial Revolution which created the need for new words to describe newly discovered knowledge. These new words were predominantly derived from Latin, for example, words such as machinery, mechanics, molecule, ratio, structure, and vertebra.

Chapter 2

The English Language

In 43 CE, the Romans conquered Britain (which was inhabited by Celtic tribes who spoke Celtic languages) and made it a province of the Roman empire. The Romans controlled much of Britain, especially central and southern-western Britain, for almost 400 years, until roughly 410 CE. Celts who lived in Roman-controlled parts of Britain were disarmed and pacified by the Romans. During their occupation of Britain, the Romans introduced their language, Latin. (To put this is almost 400 years of Roman occupation in perspective, Spain controlled México for 300 years, 1520-1820.)

The Angles and Saxons, who came from southern Denmark and northern Germany, attempted to invade England in the latter part of the 4th century, but were repelled by the Romans. In 410 CE, the Romans left Britain to return to Italy to protect it and especially Rome from "barbarian" invasions from the north. After the Romans left, the Angles and Saxons resumed their invasions of England which this time were successful. They subdued the Celtic tribes (whose martial capabilities had atrophied during the almost four hundred years of Roman occupation) and pushed them into western or northern England, e.g., Wales.

The Anglo-Saxons ruled England (the word "England" is from the Angles) until 1066 when the Norman French invaded and conquered England at the Battle of Hastings. The Normans spoke French. After this point, the country had a two-tiered society with the aristocracy speaking French and the lower-class speaking Anglo-Saxon.

As the English language developed after this, it incorporated many Latin-derived words, either directly from Latin or via French, a Romance language. (French grammar and syntax and 87 percent of French vocabulary are derived from Latin.) As discussed in Chapter 1, some 70 percent of current English is derived from Latin, 35 percent from Latin directly and 35 percent via French (following the Norman French conquest in 1066). In the vocabulary of the sciences and technology, the 70 percent figure rises to over 90 percent.

How many words are there in the English language after this great infusion of Latin-derived words? There are a number of widely-varying estimates:

- Some 130,000 words in total current use.
- The Second Edition of the 20-volume Oxford English Dictionary contains full entries for 171,476 words in current use (and 47,156 obsolete words).
- Merriam-Webster online dictionary informs its readers that their latest official edition includes approximately 470,000 entries. Main page of Oxford English Dictionary official website states that they cover over 600,000 terms. Jul 8, 2021

That's a lot of words? How many of these words does today's average English speaker use? As noted in Chapter 1, of the at least 70 percent of current English words derived from Latin, most are specific or technical in nature and are **not part of "everyday" English** although they are used in specialized applications and are

used by professional writers. Most of these words relate to elevated subject matter such as academia, religion, medicine, science or legal practice.

Many of the words which came into English from French (following the Norman French conquest) have to do with politics, literature, art and the military and **did not become part of the vocabulary of the average person in England. After the Norman French conquest in 1066, the average person kept speaking Anglo-Saxon.**

Are today's English speakers like Anglo-Saxon speakers in the decades after 1066?

English speakers today are more educated than the average Anglo-Saxon speaker in the decades after 1066. So, you would think that they incorporate more Latin-derived English words into their active vocabularies rather than use mainly Anglo-Saxon words. Research shows, however, that **this is not the case**:

Short, often mono-syllabic Anglo-Saxon words are the backbone of English.

4,500 Anglo-Saxon words survive in current English today. While they make up only about 1 percent of the comprehensive Oxford English Dictionary, they make up nearly all of the most commonly used words that are the backbone of English. These 4,500 Anglo-Saxon words comprise the fundamental basis of English and, indeed, its grammar too. 83 percent of the most common 1,000 words in today's English are of Anglo-Saxon origin. Recall estimates of the number of words in the English language cited above:

• Some 130,000 words in total current use.

• 171,476 words in current use (and 47,156 obsolete words).

- 470,000 – 600,000 entries, Oxford English Dictionary,

Why aren't today's English speakers using more of this abundance of words rather than depending so heavily on a relatively small number of short, often mono-syllabic Anglo-Saxon words?

The Dominance of short, often mono-syllabic Anglo-Saxon words

Short Anglo-Saxon words such as "how" (see Chapter 5) and "get" (see Chapter 7) roll off the tongue easily and accustom the speaker to using a series of short Anglo-Saxon words. This tendency militates against the use of longer, multi-syllabic, Latin-derived words (which comprise at least 70 percent of English vocabulary).

Spanish, in contrast, is a Romance language, and its speakers are comfortable with multi-syllabic, Latin-derived words. Also, Spanish pronunciation facilitates using multi-syllabic, Latin-derived words. As discussed in Chapter 3, Spanish has words from languages other than Latin, for example, Arabic. But these words tend to be nouns which don't alter the underlying Latin-derived grammar and syntax of Spanish. Spanish is conducive to the regular use of multi-syllabic Latin-derived words, but English is not.

Chapter 3

The Spanish Language

The Spanish language is derived from Latin which was brought to the Iberian Peninsula by the Romans after their occupation of the peninsula that started in the late 3rd century BC. The rules of Spanish grammar and syntax are mainly from Latin, and around 75% of Spanish words have Latin roots*. However, Spanish has also other influences such as Celtiberian, Basque, Gothic, **Arabic**, and some of the native languages of the Americas.

(* 86.53 percent of words in French are from Latin. Le fonds latin constitue l'essentiel de notre patrimoine héréditaire : 86.53%.Aug 29, 2016)

Estimates of the number of **Arabic** loanwords in the Spanish language range from 2000 to 3000 words, a large majority of which are nouns which do not substantially change the grammar or basic structure of the Spanish language which is derived from Latin.

Many of these Arabic-derived words begin with "A" or "Al" which is typical of Arabic.

Spanish	Arabic
Aceituna (olive)	Az-zaytuna
Albóndiga (meatball)	Albunduqa (hazelnut)
Algodón (cotton)	Al-qutn
Alhambra (palace)	Al Hamra (the red one, stones of the palace in Granada)
Almohada (pillow)	Miḥaddah

Asesino (murderer)	Haššāšīn
Alcohol (alcohol)	Kuḥl
Algebra (math subject)	Al-jabr (reunion, resettling of broken parts)
Alquimia (alchemy)	Al-kimiya
Arroz (rice)	Aruzz
Barrio (neighborhood)	Barri (city outskirts)
Sandía (watermelon)	Sindiyyah
Taza (cup)	Tassah

Fluent, native speakers of Spanish have vocabularies of between 20,000 and 40,000 words; the large range reflects individual differences in size of vocabulary.

PART II. Differences Between English and Spanish

Chapter 4

Spanish Tends to Be More Logical Than English.

The following are representative examples which show that Spanish tends to be more logical than English.

THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO LIKE"

I like Mexican food.   Anglo-Saxon English

Me gusta la comida méxicana.   Spanish

In Anglo-Saxon English in the example above, "to like" is an active, transitive verb: "I" is the subject, "like" is the verb, and "Mexican food" is the direct object. This is not good logic. "Liking something" is not an action you take, but rather your reaction to something. Upon eating Mexican food, it is pleasing to you or it is not. You don't actively decide whether you like or don't like Mexican food; you have a reaction to it (i.e., it does something to you).

Compare the sentence "I like Mexican food" to the sentence "I cooked Mexican food last night." To "cook Mexican food" is something you actively do. In contrast, "I like Mexican food" is your reaction to tasting Mexican food.

The Spanish way of saying "I like Mexican food" is "Me gusta la comida méxicana" and is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English way of saying it. The literal English translation of "Me gusta la comida méxicana" is "Mexican food is pleasing to me". Whether we like or don't like Mexican food is a passive reaction to the experience: Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

The analysis presented above for "I like Mexican food" also applies to its negation: "I don't like Mexican food"

I don't like Mexican food.   Anglo-Saxon English

No me gusta la comida méxicana.   Spanish

OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO LIKE"

I like that man.   Anglo-Saxon English

Me gusta ese hombre.   Spanish

Me cae bien ese hombre.   Spanish

I don't like that man.   Anglo-Saxon English

No me gusta ese hombre.   Spanish

No me cae bien ese hombre.   Spanish

The logic of Anglo-Saxon English is not correct. We don't actively decide whether we like or don't like someone; we have a reaction to that person. Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

I like modern art.	Anglo-Saxon English
Me gusta el arte moderno.	Spanish
I don't like modern art.	Anglo-Saxon English
No me gusta el arte moderno.	Spanish
I like chocolate ice cream.	Anglo-Saxon English
Me gusta el helado chocolate.	Spanish
I don't like chocolate ice cream.	Anglo-Saxon English
No me gusta el helado chocolate.	Spanish

THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO LOSE" SOMETHING

I lost my wallet.	Anglo-Saxon English
Se me perdió la cartera.	Spanish

In Anglo-Saxon English in the example above, "to lose" is an active, transitive verb: "I" is the subject, "lose" is the verb, and "wallet" is the direct object. This is not good logic. "Losing something" is not an action you take, but rather

something that happens to you. (Note: In Spanish, you could also say "Perdí mi cartera." But "Se me perdió la cartera" is how Spanish is commonly spoken.)

The Spanish way of saying "I lost my wallet," "Se me perdió el reloj," is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English way. The literal English translation of "Se me perdió el reloj" is "My wallet was lost to me." Losing your wallet is something that happens to you; not something you actively do. Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

Compare the sentence "I lost my wallet" to the sentence "I put my wallet in the drawer." To put your wallet in a drawer is something you actively do. In contrast, to lose your wallet is something that happens to you.

I want to lose weight.   Anglo-Saxon English

Quiero bajar de peso.   Spanish

When we lose something, we are the passive recipient of an action. For example, "I lose things a lot" or "I lost my cell phone again." We don't actively lose things; rather, bad things happen to us.

Trying to lose weight, in contrast, is something we actively try to do and is inconsistent with all other uses of "to lose" where the subject is a passive recipient of an (unwanted) action. Spanish uses the verb "bajar de peso" to express "to lose weight." Bajar translates to English as "to go down"; that is, we want to go down in weight, something we actively try to do.

English does not have a single verb counterpart for bajar. So, we string together two words, the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" and the Anglo-Saxon adverb "down." It would be logical to say "I want to go down in weight" ("Quiero bajar de peso"). But this is not what we say. Instead, we say "I want to lose weight" which is not a logical use of the verb "to lose." Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO DROP" SOMETHING

I dropped the plate.   Anglo-Saxon English

Se me cayó el plato.   Spanish

In Anglo-Saxon English in the example above, "to drop" is an active, transitive verb: "I" is the subject, "drop" is the verb, and "plate" is the direct object. This is not good logic. "Dropping a plate" is not an action you take, but rather something that happens to you.

The Spanish way of saying "I dropped the plate" is "Se me cayó el plato." and is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English way of saying it. The literal English translation of "Se me cayó el plato" is "The plate fell to me." Dropping a plate is something that happens to you; not something you actively do. Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

Compare the sentence "I dropped the plate" to the sentence "I put the plate on the table." To put a plate on the table is something you actively do. In contrast, to drop a plate is something that happens to you; you don't actively drop a plate.

THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO FORGET" SOMETHING

I forgot my ID number.   Anglo-Saxon English

Se me olvidó mi número de ID.   Spanish

In Anglo-Saxon English in the example above, "to forget" is an active, transitive verb: "I" is the subject, "forget" is the verb, and "ID number" is the direct object. This is not good logic. Forgetting something is not an action you take, but rather something that happens to you.

The Spanish way of saying "I forgot my ID number" is "Se me olvidó mi número de ID" and is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English way of saying it. The literal English translation of "Se me olvidó mi número de ID" is "My ID number was forgotten to me." Forgetting your ID number is something that happens to you, not something you actively do. Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

THE ANGLO-SAXON "TO FALL"

I fell in the street.   Anglo-Saxon English

Me caí en la calle.   Spanish

In Anglo-Saxon English in the example above, "to fall" is an active verb: "I" is the subject, and "fell" is the verb. This is not good logic. Falling is not an action you take, but rather something that happens to you.

The Spanish way of saying "I fell in the street" is "Me caí en la calle" and is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English way of saying it. When a Spanish verb such as caer(se) is used reflexively, it indicates something that happens to the subject of the sentence ("I"), not something the subject actively does. Spanish has the logic right, but Anglo-Saxon English does not.

Note: You can also say "Caí en la calle," but "Me caí en la calle" is the common way of saying this in Spanish. Another example of the reflexive use of a Spanish verb is enfermar(se): "Me enfermé ayer" which is expressed in English as "I got sick yesterday." Getting sick is something that happens to you, not something you actively do. The sentence "I got sick yesterday" has the sense of an active verb such as "I **got** a new car" or "I **got** a new job."

Note: When a human or other living creature falls, caer(se) is used reflexively, but when an inanimate object falls, it is used non-reflexively as in the example
Las hojas comienzan a caer en septiembre.
The leaves start to fall in September.

Chapter 5

Odd and Excessive Uses of the "How" Word

From Chapter 2,

"4,500 Anglo-Saxon words survive in current English today. While they make up only about 1 percent of the comprehensive Oxford English Dictionary, they make up nearly all of the most commonly used words that are the backbone of English. These 4,500 Anglo-Saxon words comprise the fundamental basis of English and, indeed, its grammar too. 83 percent of the most common 1,000 words in today's English are of Anglo-Saxon origin."

The "**how**" word is among the most common 1,000 Anglo-Saxon words in today's English. It is used heavily, even excessively, in everyday conversation and often used in an odd or silly way. The following are some representative examples.

Use of the Anglo-Saxon adverb "<u>how</u>" to ask for counts, measurements, and durations

(Spanish has a word "cómo" for the English "how,"
but it is not used in the following section to translate from English.)

As noted in Chapter 2, short (usually mono-syllabic) Anglo-Saxon words make up only about 1 percent of the comprehensive Oxford English Dictionary but dominate everyday conversation in English. The Anglo-Saxon adverb "how" rolls off the tongue easily and is ubiquitous or excessive in everyday English. The dominance of "how" leads English speakers to say things in an odd or silly way.

"**How** old is María?"

Suppose you are visiting friends who have a four-year-old daughter María. You want to ask **her age.** A sensible way to ask this question would "What is Maria's age? In the vast majority of instances, however, this is not the question Americans would pose. Because of the dominance of the "how" word, they would instead, ask "How old is María?".

This is a silly way to pose the question. You don't want to know "how old" María is; you want to know her age. An appropriate answer to the question "How old is María?" is "Not very old."

Asking someone's age is done more sensibly in Spanish.

¿Que edad tiene Juan? or
¿Cuantos años tiene María?

Both these questions in Spanish ask what María's age is, not "how old" María is.

Note: Cuanto, -a is used in Spanish for the count, measurement or duration of something.

"**How** tall is María?"

Suppose you also want to ask **Maria's height**. A sensible way to ask this question would be "What is Maria's height? In the vast majority of instances, however, this is not the question Americans would pose. Because of the dominance of the "how" word, they would instead, ask "How is tall María?".

This is a silly way to pose the question. You don't want to know "how tall" four-year-old María is; you want to know her height. An appropriate answer to the question "How tall is María?" is "Not very tall."

Asking someone's height is done more sensibly in Spanish.
¿Cuánto mide María?

What is María's height? not "How is tall María?".

"**How** much does María weigh?"

Suppose you also want to ask **Maria's weight**. A sensible way to ask this question would be "What is Maria's weight? In the vast majority of instances, however, this is not the question Americans would pose. Because of the dominance of the "how" word, they would instead, ask "How much does María weigh?".

This is a silly way to pose the question. You don't want to know "how much María weighs"; you want to know her weight. An appropriate answer to the question "How much does María weigh?" would be "Not very much."

Asking someone's weight is done more sensibly in Spanish.
¿Cuánto pesa María?
What is María's weight? not "How much does María weigh?".

Suppose that during your visit with María's parents, Mark and Lisa, you talk about a variety of things.

You ask Lisa the **height of her office** building. The sensible way to ask this question would be "What is the height of your building?" Because of the dominance of the "how" word, however, you instead, ask "How tall is the building?".

This is a silly way to pose the question. You don't want to know "how tall the building is"; you want to know its height. An appropriate answer to the question "How tall is the building?" might be "Really tall."

Asking the height of a building is done more sensibly in Spanish.
¿Qué altura tiene el edificio?
What is the height of the building? not "How tall is the building?".

More examples

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English: How high is the fence?
Answer: Not very high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la cerca?
What is the height of the fence?

English: How thick is the wall?
Answer: Really thick.

Spanish: ¿Qué espesor tiene la pared?
What is the thickness of the wall?

English: How tall is the statue?
Answer: Pretty tall.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la estatua?
What is the height of the statue?

English: How tall is the Eiffel Tower?
Answer: Very tall.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la Torre Eiffel?
What is the height of the Eiffel Tower?

English: How tall is the Empire State Building?
Answer: Very, very tall.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene el Empire State Building?
What is the height of the Empire State Building?

English: How high is the Brooklyn Bridge?
Answer: Pretty high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene el puente de Brooklyn?
What is the height of the Brooklyn Bridge?

English: How high is the Golden Gate Bridge?
Answer: Super high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene el puente Golden Gate?
What is the height of the Golden Gate Bridge?

English: How tall is the telephone pole?
Answer: Fairly high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene el poste de teléfono?
What is the height of the telephone pole?

English: How tall is the transmission tower?
Answer: Not as high as you would think.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la torre de transmisión?
What is the height of the transmission tower?

English: How high is the basketball net?
Answer: Not too high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la red de baloncesto?
What is the height the of basketball net?

English: How high is the roof of your home?
Answer: Fairly high.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene el techo de tu casa?
What is the height of the roof of your home?

English: How tall is the ladder?
Answer: On the tall side.

Spanish: ¿Qué altura tiene la escalera?
What is the height of the ladder?

English: How far is San Diego from Los Angeles?
Answer: A bit far.

Spanish: ¿Qué distancia hay de San Diego a Los Ángeles?
What is the distance from San Diego to Los Ángeles?

English: How long do you have to wait for an appointment?
Answer: A long time.

Spanish: ¿Cuánto tiempo hay que esperar para una cita?
What length of time does one have to wait for an appointment?

English: How long have you been waiting?
Answer: Pretty long.

Spanish: ¿Cuánto has estado esperando?
For what length of time have you been waiting?

English: How long did you have to wait?
Answer: Fairly long.

Spanish: ¿Cuánto tiempo tuviste que esperar?
For what length of time did you have to wait?

English: How long will Barbara be here?
Answer: Not very long.

Spanish: ¿Cuánto tiempo estará Bárbara aquí?
For what length of time will Barbara be here?

English: How long is the drive?
Answer: Fairly long.

Spanish: ¿Cuánto dura el viaje?
What is the time duration of the trip?

English: How far can John run?
                Answer: Really far.

Spanish: ¿Qué distancia puede correr Juan?
                What distance can John run?

Use of the Anglo-Saxon adverb "how" to ask about the well-being of others.

The Spanish adverb "cómo" corresponds
to the English "how" in this context.

English   **Spanish**

How do you feel?   ¿Cómo te sientes?

How are you?   ¿Cómo estás?

Use of the Anglo-Saxon adverb "how" to ask how to do something.

The Spanish adverb "cómo" corresponds
to the English "how" in this context.

How did **you** do it?
¿Cómo lo hiciste?

How do **you** say "table" in Spanish?
¿Cómo se dice "mesa" en inglés?

How do **you** write "table" in Spanish?
¿Cómo se escribe "mesa" en inglés?

How do **you** assemble this piece of furniture?
¿Cómo se arma este mueble? or
¿Cómo se monta este mueble?

How do **you** open this container?
¿Cómo se abre este contenedor?

How do **you** close this container?
¿Cómo se cierra este contenedor?

As shown by the examples above, Spanish typically uses the impersonal passive

voice for sentences like "¿Cómo se dice 'mesa' en inglés?". The impersonal

passive voice exists in English (e.g., How is "table" said in Spanish?) but is rarely

used because of the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon pronoun "**you**." So instead,

we say, "How do **you** say 'table' in Spanish?" "**You**" rolls off the tongue almost as

readily as "how" or "get."

Chapter 6

Spanish Is Rich in Dedicated Verbs.

Spanish is rich in dedicated verbs in everyday usage to describe specific actions. English, in contrast, often strings together short Anglo-Saxon words to describe the action. The words strung together are typically a mono-syllabic verb and a mono-syllabic adverb. Some representative examples follow.

It ran out.	Se acabó.
The food ran out.	Se acabó la comida.
We ran out of water.	Se nos acabó el agua

The Spanish verb acabar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to run" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "out." Acabarse translates to English as "to be ended" or "to be finished" or "to run out." In this example, the Spanish verb terminar(se) could also be used as in

The food ran out.   Se terminó la comida.

Additionally, the Anglo-Saxon "to run out" sounds odd and silly in the above context where it means that the supply of something ended or terminated: for example, in the sentence

The food **ran out** so Jill **ran out** to get more after her husband **ran out** on her.

Our children are falling behind in school.
Nuestros niños se retrasan en la escuela.

The Spanish verb retrasar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to fall" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "behind." Retrasarse translates to English as "to fall behind."

Additionally, the Anglo-Saxon "to fall behind" sounds odd, for example in the sentence:
Our children **fell down** in the school yard and thereafter **fell behind** in school.

We said goodbye to Sara.
Nos despedimos de Sara.

The Spanish verb despedir(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to say" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "goodbye." Despedirse de translates to English as "to say goodbye to" or "to bid farewell to."

I go to bed early in winter.
Me acuesto temprano en invierno.

The Spanish verb acostar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" plus the prepositional phrase "to bed." Acostarse translates to English as "to go to bed."

I go to sleep easily without sleeping pills.
Me duermo facil sin pastillas para dormir.

The Spanish verb dormir(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" plus the prepositional phrase "to sleep." Dormirse translates to English as "go to sleep."

Dormir can also be used as a non-reflexive, intransitive verb in the active case.
I sleep seven hours per night.
Duermo siete horas por noche.

Siempre me despierto temprano sin despertador.
I always wake up early without an alarm clock.

The Spanish verb despertar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to wake" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "up." Despertarse translates to English as "to wake up."

Despertar can also be used as a transitive verb in the active case.
Mi despertador siempre me despierta a las cinco de la mañana.
My alarm clock always wakes me up at five o'clock in the morning.

These boxes get in the way.
Estas cajas estorban.

Your things are in the way.
Tus cosas estorban.

The Spanish verb estorbar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to get" or "to be" plus the Anglo-Saxon prepositional phrase "in the way." Estorbar translates to English as "to get in the way" or "to be in the way."
(Note: The Spanish verb "estobar" is also discussed in Chapter 7.)

We went up the stairs.
Subimos las escaleras.

The Spanish verb subir obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "up." Subir translates to English as "to go up."

We went down the stairs.
Bajamos las escaleras.

The Spanish verb bajar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "down." Bajar translates to English as "to go down."

The garbage workers pick up the garbage on Tuesdays.
Los basureros recogen la basura los martes.

The Spanish verb recoger obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to pick" plus

the Anglo-Saxon adverb "up." Recoger translates to English as "to pick up."

It is convenient for me to arrive at work early and to leave early.
Me conviene llegar temprano al trabajo y salir temprano.

The Spanish verb convenir obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to be" plus

the adjective "convenient." Convenir translates to English as "to be convenient."

What is your opinion about this suggestion?
¿Que opinas de esta sugerencia?

The Spanish verb opinar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "is" plus the

adjective and noun "your opinion." Opinar translates to English as "to have an

opinion (about something)."

That cruel man leaves his dog tied up for the entire day while he is at work.
Ese hombre cruel deja a su perro amarrado por el día mientras está el trabajo.

The Spanish verb amarrar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to tie" plus
the Anglo-Saxon adverb "up." Amarrar translates to English as "to tie up."

Take advantage of this opportunity.
Aprovecha esta oportunidad.

I took advantage of the opportunity.
Aproveché la oportunidad.

The Spanish verb aprovechar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to take" plus the noun "advantage." Aprovechar translates to English as "to take advantage of."

I'm putting you in charge of closing the store at 9:00 PM.
Te encargo de cerrar la tienda a las 9:00 PM.
   The Spanish verb encargar used as a transitive verb in the active voice.

I'll take charge of closing the store at 9:00 PM.
Me encargo de cerrar la tienda a las 9:00 PM.
   The Spanish verb encargarse used reflexively.

In the first example (as a transitive verb), the Spanish verb encargar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to put" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "in charge of." In the second example (as a reflexive verb), the Spanish verb encargarse obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to take" plus the phrase "charge of."

Alfred puts the cotton out in the sun to dry.
Alfredo asolea el algodón

My grandmother warms herself in the sunshine in the afternoon.
Mi abuela se asolea por la tarde.

In the first example (as a transitive verb), the Spanish verb asolear obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to put" plus the phrase "out in the sun to dry." In the second example (as a reflexive verb), the Spanish verb asolearse obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to warm" plus the phrase "herself in the sunshine."

The light bulb burned out.
Se fundió el foco.

The Spanish verb fundir(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to burn" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "out." Fundirse translates to English as "to burn out."

The house burned down.
Se quemó la casa.

The Spanish verb quemar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to burn" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "down." Quemar(se) translates to English as "to burn down."

Jane took off her clothes.
Jane se quitó la ropa.

The Spanish verb quitar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to take" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "off." Quitarse translates to English as "to take off."

Mark put on his clothes.
Mark se puso la ropa.

The Spanish verb poner(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to put" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "on." Ponerse translates to English as "to put on."

I take a shower every other day.
Me ducho cada dos días.

The Spanish verb duchar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to take" plus the noun "shower." Ducharse translates to English as "to take a shower."

I had an accident at work.
I got into an accident at work.
Me accidenté en el trabajo.

In the first example, the Spanish verb accidentarse obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to have" plus the noun "accident." In this case, accidentarse translates to English as "to have an accident."

In the second example, the Spanish verb accidentarse obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to get" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "into" plus the noun "accident." In this case, accidentarse translates to English as "to get into an accident."

I caught a cold yesterday.
Me resfrié ayer.

The Spanish verb resfriar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to catch" plus the Anglo-Saxon noun "cold." Resfriarse translates to English as "to catch a cold."

Additionally, the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to catch" sounds odd in the above context where it means to contract an illness: for example, in the sentence

I **caught** a cold yesterday when I was outside **catching** raccoons.
Me resfrié ayer cuando estaba afuera atrapando mapaches.

Cállate   Keep quiet.   (or Be quiet.)
Me callé.   I kept quiet.

The Spanish verb callar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon

verb "to keep" or "to be" plus the adjective "quiet." Callarse translates to English

as "to keep quiet" or "to be quiet."

     Note that Callar can also be used as a transitive verb in the active case.
María calla a sus oponentes con argumentos sólidos.
Mary silences her opponents with solid arguments.

María calló a sus oponentes con argumentos sólidos.
Mary silenced her opponents with solid arguments.

I stuck my head out the window.
Me asomé por la ventana.

The Spanish verb asomar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon

verb "to stick" plus the Anglo-Saxon noun "head" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb

"out." Asomarse translates to English as "to stick your head out."

Ayer estrené el vestido,
Yesterday I wore the dress for the first time.

Voy a estrenar la sartén que me regalaste.
I am going to use the new frying pan you bought me for the first time.
(Note: "el sartén" is also used.)

The verb "estrenar" basically translates to English as to do, wear, or use

something for the first time. English does not have a counterpart for this Spanish

verb.

Te equivocas mucho.
You make mistakes often.

I made a mistake.
Me equivoqué.

The Spanish verb equivocarse obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to make" plus the Anglo-Saxon noun "mistake." Equivocarse translates to English as "to make a mistake."

It is urgent for us to buy a new washing machine.
Nos urge comprar una lavadora nueva.

The Spanish verb urgir obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "is" plus the adjective "urgent." Urgir translates to English as "to be urgent."

He went around like a crazy man.
Andaba como un loco.

The Spanish verb andar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to go" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "around." Andar translates to English as "to go around."

It **turned out** that so many people **turned out** for the job offerings that many were **turned down**.
Resultó que tantas personas salieron para las ofertas de trabajo que se rechazó a muchas.

The English sentence sounds odd or even ridiculous with three occurrences with three different meanings of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to turn" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverb "out" or the Anglo-Saxon adverb "down." This sentence is expressed better in Spanish.

Chapter 7

Spanish Is Rich in Dedicated Verbs that Obviate the "Get" Word.

Spanish is rich in dedicated verbs in everyday usage to describe specific actions that in English are expressed in English by the mono-syllabic Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus usually, but not always, an adjective.

From Chapter 2,

"4,500 Anglo-Saxon words survive in current English today. While they make up only about 1 percent of the comprehensive Oxford English Dictionary, they make up nearly all of the most commonly used words that are the backbone of English. These 4,500 Anglo-Saxon words comprise the fundamental basis of English and, indeed, its grammar too. 83 percent of the most common 1,000 words in today's English are of Anglo-Saxon origin."

The "**get**" word is perhaps the most used (or over-used) of the most common 1,000 Anglo-Saxon words in today's English. It is used heavily, tediously, and excessively in everyday conversation. Spanish obviates the excessive and tedious use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" and often expresses the action in a more logical way. Representative examples follow.

Beginning of examples of "to get" plus an adjective

I **get** sick when we travel.
Me enfermo cuando viajamos.

I **got** sick on our trip to Mexico.
Me enfermé en nuestro viaje a México.

The Spanish verb enfermar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "sick" in the English sentence. Enfermarse translates to English as "to **get** sick."

Note: Many Spanish verbs such as enfermar(se) can also be used non-reflexively as active, transitive verbs.

Traveling makes me sick.
Viajar me enferma.

It **gets** blurry up close.
Se borra de cerca.

It **gets** blurry far away.
Se borra a la distancia.

The Spanish verb borrar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "blurry" in the English sentence. Borrarse translates to English as "to **get** blurry."

It **gets** light early in summer.
Amanece temprano en invierno.

The Spanish verb amanecer obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "light" in the English sentence. Amanecer translates to English as "to **get** light (in the morning)."

It **gets** dark early in winter.
Se oscurece temprano en invierno.

The Spanish verb oscurecer(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "dark" in the English sentence. Oscurecerse translates to English as "to **get** dark."

Alístate.
Get ready.

I **got** ready to go to the concert
Me alisté para ir al concierto.

The Spanish verb alistar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon

verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "ready" in the English sentence. Alistarse

translates to English as "to **get** ready."

I **get** bored listening to Rachel's interminable chatter.
Me aburro escuchando la charla interminable de Rachel.

The Spanish verb aburrir(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon

verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "bored" in the English sentence. Aburrirse

translates to English as "to **get** bored."

Note: Many Spanish verbs such as aburrir(se) can also be used non-reflexively as
active, transitive verbs.

Rachel bores me with her interminable chatter.
Raquel me aburre con su parloteo interminable.

You **get** yourself dirty a lot.
Te ensucias mucho.

Don't **get** yourself dirty.
No te ensucies.

The Spanish verb ensuciar(se) obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**"

plus the adjective "dirty" in the English sentence. Ensuciarse translates to English

as "to **get** dirty."

Note: Many Spanish verbs such as ensuciar(se) can also be used non-reflexively as active, transitive verbs.

You **get** the house dirty a lot.
Ensucias la casa mucho.

Don't **get** the house dirty.
No ensucies la casa.

John **got** hurt when he fell.
Juan se lastimó cuando se cayó.

The Spanish verb lastimar(se) obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**"

plus the adjective "hurt" in the English sentence. Lastimarse translates to English

as "to **get** hurt."

Also, the Spanish usage is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English usage.

Getting hurt is something that happens to you, not something you actively do.

The sentence "John **got** hurt when he fell" has the sense of an active verb such as

"I **got** a new car" or "I **got** a new job."

Note: Many Spanish verbs such as lastimar(se) can also be used non-reflexively as active, transitive verbs.

You hurt me when you say things like that.
Me lastimas cuando dices cosas así.

You hurt me last night.
Me lastimaste anoche.

Get lost.
Piérdete.

We **got** lost on the hike.
Nos perdimos en la caminata.

The Spanish verb perder(se) obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "lost" in the English sentence. Perderse translates to English as "to **get** lost."

Martha **got** rich in the software business.
Se enriqueció Marta en el negocio de software.

The Spanish verb enriquecer(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective 'rich" in the English sentence. Enriquecerse translates to English as "to **get** rich."

I **get** sad when I read about the poor people in the world.
Me entristezco cuando leo de los pobres del mundo.

The Spanish verb entristecer(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "sad" in the English sentence. Entristecerse translates to English as "to **get** sad."

I **get** distracted easily when I'm studying.

Me distraigo facil cuando estudio.

The Spanish verb distraer(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "distracted" in the English sentence. Distraerse translates to English as "to **get** distracted."

Note: Many Spanish verbs such as distraer(se) can also be used non-reflexively as active, transitive verbs.

The radio distracts me.
Me distrae la radio.

I **get** impatient easily.
Me impaciento facil.

The Spanish verb impacientar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "impatient" in the English sentence.

Impacientarse translates to English as "to **get** impatient."

Allison **got** thin to look good in her bikini for her trip to Hawaii.
Allison se adelgazó para lucir bien en su bikini para su viaje a Hawaii.

The Spanish verb adelgazar(se) obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "thin" in the English sentence. Adelgazarse translates to English as "to **get** thin."

We're all **getting** older.
Nos envejecemos todos.

The Spanish verb envejecer(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "older" in the English sentence.

Envejercerse translates to English as "to **get** older."

The motor **got** hot.
Se calentó el motor.

I **got** hot on the run.
Me calenté en la corrida.

The Spanish verb calentar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the adjective "hot" in the English sentence. Calentarse translates to English as "to **get** hot."

Also, the Spanish usage is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English usage. Getting hot on a run is something that happens to you, not something you actively do. The sentences "The motor **got** hot" or "I **got** hot on the run" have the sense of an active verb such as "I **got** a new car" or "I **got** a new job."

End of examples of "to get" plus an adjective

Spanish has many alternatives to the tedious use of the verb "to **get**" in English.

I **get** cold feet in winter.
Se me enfrían los pies en invierno.

The Spanish verb enfriar(se) used reflexively obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus adjective "cold" in the English sentence. Enfriarse translates to English as "to **get** cold."

Also, the Spanish usage is more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English usage. **Getting** cold feet is something that happens to you, not something you actively do. The sentence "I **get** cold feet in winter" has the sense of an active verb such as "I **got** a new car" or "I **got** a new job."

We **get** up early to take advantage of the whole day.
Madrugamos para aprovechar el día entero.

The verb madrugar obviates the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" plus the Anglo-Saxon adverbs "up" and "early" in the English sentence.

Madrugar translates to English as "to get up early."
Aprovechar translates to English as "to take advantage of."

I **got** COVID-19 on the cruise.
Me dió COVID-19 en el crucero.   Common usage in Spanish.
Me contagié de COVID-19 en el crucero.   Also used but less common.

Both Spanish sentences obviate the use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" and also are more logical than the Anglo-Saxon English usage. Contracting COVID-19 is something that happens to you, not something you actively do. The sentence "I **got** COVID-19 on the cruise" has the sense of an active verb such as "I **got** a new car" or "I **got** a new job."

I **got** used to **getting** up early.
Me acostumbré de madrugar.

The Spanish verbs acostumbrar(se) and madrugar obviate the double usage of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **get**" in the English sentence. Acostumbrar(se) translates to English as "to **get** accustomed to something." Madrugar translates to English as "to **get** up early."

We just **got** here.
Acabamos de llegar.

Rosa **got** here when she was 18 years old.
Rosa llegó a los 18.

We **got fed up** with how they **fed** us **up** five times a day to fatten us up for the slave auction.

Estábamos hartos de como nos alimentaron cinco veces al día para engordarnos para la subasta de esclavos.
    To get fed up   estar harto(a)

The Anglo-Saxon "to get fed up" sounds odd and silly in the above context where it means that you have passed your limits of tolerance for something or that "you've had it." (Note: The Anglo-Saxon verb "to get fed up" is also discussed in Chapter 9.)

Your things **get** in the way.
Tus cosas estorban.
(Note: The Spanish verb "estobar" is also discussed in Chapter 6.)

John **got** into a fight.
Juan se metió en una pelea.

Get in the car.
Entra al coche.

Get out of the car.
Sal del coche.

Do you **get** it?
¿Lo entiendes?

Chapter 8

Spanish Is Rich in Dedicated Nouns.

Spanish is rich in dedicated nouns in everyday usage for specific names of things. English, in contrast, often strings words together for the same name. Some representative examples follow.

Spanish	**English**
lupa	magnifying glass
liga	rubber band
florero (la flor = the flower)	flower vase
sartén	frying pan
sillón (silla = chair)	easy chair
despertador	alarm clock
plumón (pluma = pen)	felt-tipped pen
bolígrafo	ball-point pen
lapizero (lapíz = pencil	mechanical pencil
vinatería (vino = wine)	wine shop
nevería	ice cream parlor
paletería	popsicle shop
paletero, -a (paleta = popsicle)	popsicle vender
papelería (papel = paper)	stationary store

salsero, -a (salsa = a dance)	salsa dancer
pelotero, -a (pelota = ball)	baseball player
elotero, -a (elote = corn)	street vender who roasts corn-on-the-cob
basurero, -a (basura = garbage)	garbage worker
barredora (barrer = to sweep)	street sweeper
toallero (toalla = towel)	towel rack
guantera (guante = glove)	glove compartment
llavero (llave = key)	key case
archivero (archive = file)	file cabinet
perforadora	three-holed paper punch
frutería (fruta = fruit)	fruit stand
maderería (madera = wood)	wood-working shop
salero (sal = salt)	salt shaker
pimientero (pimienta = pepper)	pepper shaker
azucadera (azúcar = sugar)	sugar bowl
enfermo, -a	sick person

el culpable   the guilty one
  (culpa = blame)

el malo   the bad one
  (malo = bad)

English words with the prefix "grand" on the word string.

Spanish	**English**
abuelo	grandfather
abuela	grandmother
nieto	grandson
nieta	granddaughter

English words with the suffix "-in-law" on the word string.

Spanish	**English**
cuñado	brother-in-law
cuñada	sister-in-law
suegro	father-in-law
suegra	mother-in-law
yerno	son-in-law
nuera	daughter-in-law

English words with the prefix "god" on the word string.

Spanish	**English**
padrino	godfather
madrina	godmother
ahijado	godson
ahijada	goddaughter
compadre	godfather of my daughter or son
comadre	godmother of my daughter or son

Note: The Spanish words compadre and comadre do not have English counterparts. They refer to the relationship between a child's natural father or mother and the child's godfather or godmother.

English words with the prefix "step" on the word string.

Spanish	English
hijastro	stepson
hijastra	stepdaughter
padastro	stepfather
madastra	stepmother
hermanastro	stepbrother
hermanastra	stepsister

Chapter 9

Spanish Tends to Be More Elegant Than English.

This is a brief chapter to cover items that don't fit nicely into the other chapters or that were cited in other chapters but not developed sufficiently.

In Chapter 8 on dedicated nouns in Spanish, we showed how Spanish can use fewer words than English to describe the same thing. The following is another example of how Spanish uses fewer words than English to say the same thing and to say it more elegantly.

Spanish	**English**
Somos tres en el viaje.	There are three of us on the trip.
Seremos tres en el viaje.	There will be three of us on the trip.

To "run into"

An odd use of the Anglo-Saxon verb "to **run**" combined with an Anglo-Saxon adverb was covered in Chapter 6, Spanish Is Rich in Dedicated Verbs. Here is another instance.

After I **ran into** Tony in Costco, I **ran into** a telephone pole.
Después de encontrarme con Toñyo en Costco, choqué contra un poste de telefóno.

The English sentence looks silly compared to its Spanish counterpart.

To "run ", to "run around," to "run them out"

Jessica managed to **run** every day and still **run** the government.
Jessica lograba correr todos los días y todavía dirigir el gobierno.

Melissa **ran** a marathon in the morning and then **ran** the government in the afternoon.
Melissa corrió un matatón por la mañana y después dirigió el gobierno por la tarde.

The people **running** the government are **running** around like crazies. We should **run them out** of office.
Los que dirigen el gobierno corren como locos. Debemos sacarlos de la oficina.

   run the government   dirigir el gobierno
   run them out of office government   sacarlos de la oficina

The English sentences look odd and silly compared to their Spanish counterparts.

"To be fed up" or "To get fed up"

The expressions "to be **fed up**" or "to get **fed up**" are used often in English to mean that your limits of tolerance for someone or something have been exceeded, in other words, "you've had it." (This topic was touched on Chapter 7.)

I am **fed up** with your lies.
Estoy harto(a) de sus mentiras.

I am **fed up** with this wet weather.
Estoy harto(a) de este clima húmedo.

I get **fed up** listening to her complain.
Me canso de escucharla quejarse.

The verb "to feed up" an animal (or a person) comes from agriculture. For example, farmers "feed up" their pigs to get them ready to sell or to slaughter. If you "feed" an animal or person, you give them food to eat. But if you "**feed them up**," you encourage them to eat extra food. Here are some examples from the Internet of "feeding up" persons.

'I see it as a chance to finally say goodbye': Auschwitz ...https://www.theguardian.com › world › jan › i-see-it-as...

Jan 26, 2020 — When we were liberated, we spent time on a nearby farm, where they **fed us up** like geese, before we made our way back to Borsa.

CNN Newsnight with Aaron Brown - CNN.com - Transcriptshttp://www.cnn.com › TRANSCRIPTS › asb.00.html

Jan 24, 2003 — They **fed us up** to five times a day. And it gets pretty tedious. But on the nice things, we were in prime rain forest.

Kidnapped journalist returns home unharmed (1/30)https://www.dailybreeze.com › 2003/01/29 › kidnappe...

Jan 29, 2003 — "They **fed us up** to five times a day. They weren't beating us, they never mistreated us or insulted us or threatened us.".

Transcription: Tom Holland - Voices of Veteranshttps://voicesofveterans.org › oral-history › assets

Jul 30, 2012 — We stayed there and they **fed us up**, and were there about 8-10 days I guess. What was it like when you finally got back home?

It sounds odd or even ridiculous to say "I'm **fed up**" or "I get **fed up**" to mean that your limits of tolerance for someone or something have been exceeded, for example, in the sentence

We **got fed up** with how they **fed** us **up** five times a day to fatten us up for the slave auction.
Estábamos hartos de como nos alimentaron cinco veces al día para engordarnos para la subasta de esclavos.

    To get fed up   estar harto(a)
    To feed up   alimentar

To say that your limits of tolerance for someone or something have been exceeded are expressed more appropriately and more elegantly in Spanish as in these examples (from above).

I am **fed up** with your lies.
Estoy harto(a) de sus mentiras.

I am **fed up** with this wet weather.
Estoy harto(a) de este clima húmedo.

I get **fed up** listening to her complain.
Me canso de escucharla quejarse.

"<u>Used</u> to <u>use</u>"

Consider these sentences in English and Spanish.

English	**Spanish**
Joe eats a lot.	José come mucho.
Joe **used to** eat a lot.	José comía mucho.
Joe ate a lot last night.	José comió mucho anoche.

These three sentences show the present, imperfect and past tenses. The imperfect tense is for actions that occurred for an indefinite period of time in the past. Spanish has a specific verb conjugation for the imperfect tense (José comía mucho), but English does not. So, English prefixes the past tense of the verb "to use" to the infinitive "to eat" ("Joe **used to** eat a lot). This sounds odd in this instance, but it really sounds odd when "used to" is prefixed to the infinitive "to use" as in the examples below.

English	**Spanish**
Joe uses a cane.	José usa un bastón.
Joe **<u>used</u> to <u>use</u>** a cane.	José usaba un bastón.
Joe used a cane last year.	José usó un bastón el año pasado.

The double use of the verb "**to use**" sounds corny in the example of the imperfect tense in English (Joe **used** to **use** a cane) which has two different meanings of the verb "to use." The first use of the verb "to use" indicates the imperfect tense, and the second use is for the actual meaning of the verb, to utilize something (to use a cane).

This sentence is expressed better and **more elegantly** in Spanish which has a verb conjugation for the imperfect tense

Joe **used** to **use** a cane.   José usaba un bastón.

One use of the imperfect tense in Spanish (usaba) covers the double use of the verb "to use" in English (**used** to **use).**

Note: It is possible to express the imperfect tense in English with "would." So, theoretically you could say,

"Joe would **use** a cane" instead of "Joe **used** to **use** a cane." However, English speakers rarely say this. Rather, they say "Joe **used** to **use** a cane."

<u>Who do you trust?</u>

Spanish grammar leads the speaker to say things correctly and militates against incorrect grammar such as "**Who do you trust?**". Incorrect grammar such as this appeared regularly in the subject line of emails I received from high levels of the large corporation I worked for prior to retirement.

In this sentence, "You" is the subject, "trust" is the verb, and "who" is the direct object **which should be "whom."** At least 90 percent or more of native English speakers regularly make this grammar error.

"Who do you trust?" translates to Spanish as "En quien confías." Spanish grammar leads the speaker to say this correctly but English grammar does not.

Another example of incorrect corporate grammar:

"Who did you invite to the meeting with the CEO?". In this sentence, "You" is the subject, "invite" is the verb, and "who" is the direct object **which should be "whom."** At least 90 percent or more of native English speakers regularly make this grammar error.

"Who did you invite to the meeting with the CEO?" translates to Spanish as "A quienes invitaste a la reunión con el CEO?". Spanish grammar leads the speaker to say this correctly but English grammar does not.

Chapter 10

Spanish Tends to Be in the Roof of Your Mouth, Not in Your Throat.

A salient difference between English and Spanish is how the words are articulated. In Spanish the words bounce off the roof of your mouth while in English they tend to be in your throat (guttural). The examples below demonstrate this. When I speak English for an extended period of time in loud settings, my voice tires, but not in Spanish.

La herencia hispana	Spanish heritage
José lo heredó de su familia. John inherited it from his family.	
herederos	heirs
maligno	malignant
benigno	benign
manija de puerta	door handle
la botella	the bottle
papelería	stationary store
el receptáculo	the receptacle
el foco	the light bulb
Nos emulaban. Nos imitaban.	They emulated us. They imitated us.
Le compré el coche a Juan.	I bought the car from John.
la peregrinación	the pilgrimage
Trajimos agua.	We brought water.

Saldamos nuestras facturas.   We settled our bills.

problemas auditorios   auditory problems

parrilla de carbón   charcoal grill

una escasez   a shortage

Esperamos con ansias los resultados.
We anxiously await the results.

la ansia   anxiety

un año desafiante   a challenging year

María calla a sus oponentes con argumentos sólidos.
Mary silences her opponents with solid arguments.

María calló a sus oponentes con argumentos sólidos.
Mary silenced her opponents with solid arguments.

La persona mas extraña que jamás he conocido
The strangest person I have ever met

Chapter 11

Pronunciation and Spelling

The **focus of this essay is on grammar, syntax and vocabulary**, not on pronunciation and spelling. So, this chapter will be brief. It is well-known that English pronunciation and spelling are not consistent. This is true for Anglo-Saxon words, but also for words derived from Latin (either directly or via French).

There are rules for English pronunciation, but if you follow them alone, much of the time you'll pronounce the word wrong. You need to **hear** the word pronounced rather than just try to follow the rules. There are so many exceptions to rules of English pronunciation that you'll do best to just memorize all the exceptions rather than try to follow rules of **pronunciation**. This is also true for English **spelling**. It has rules, but there are many exceptions to the rules. So, you'll do best to just memorize English **spelling**.

Spanish, in contrast, is characterized by regularities. It has a set number of rules for Spanish **pronunciation**. If you learn them and use them, you will pronounce the word right in Spanish even if you have never heard it spoken. This also is true for the rules of **spelling** in Spanish.

Examples of Anglo-Saxon Exceptions to Pronunciation and Spelling.

"Cow" rhymes with "how" but not with "bow" and "low."

"Bow" has one pronunciation as in "bow and arrow" where it rhymes with "low" but a different one in "to take a bow" where it rhymes with "cow."

"Rough "rhymes with "tough" and "cuff" but not with "cough" nor with "bough."

"Bough" rhymes with "cow" and "how." (A bough is the main branch of a tree.)
Note that "rough, "tough," "cough," and "bough" have the same spelling pattern
but have varying rhyme patterns.

"Bough" rhymes with "cow" and "how" but has a different spelling pattern.

"Rough" and "tough" rhyme with cuff" but are spelt differently.

"Hoe" and "foe" rhyme with "low" but are spelt differently.

Examples of Latin-derived Exceptions to Spelling.

Latin, like Spanish, is characterized by regularities. Latin has a set number of rules
for pronunciation. If you learn them and use them, you will pronounce the word
right even if you have never heard it spoken. At least 70 percent of words in
English are derived from Latin. But their English pronunciation, especially the
vowels, varies a lot from Latin and varies between words. Pronunciations of Latin-
derived words have to be learned on a case-by-case basis and memorized. This
subject of the English pronunciation of Latin-derived words will not be covered in
this essay.

Double consonants in Latin-derived words in English.

Many of the Latin-derived words in English have picked up double-consonants
(i.e., the same consonant is repeated) that have nothing to do with pronunciation.
The double consonant is decorative; it does not guide pronunciation. The Spanish
equivalent of these words does not use a decorative double consonant. These
occurrences of double consonants in English have to be learned on a case-by-case
basis and memorized. Examples are

English   **Spanish**

a**tt**ention	atención
to a**pp**rove	aprobar
to a**pp**eal	apelar
to o**ff**er	ofrecer
to o**cc**upy	ocupar
co**ll**oquial	coloquial
misce**ll**aneous	misceláneos, - as
co**mm**on	común
co**mm**unity	comunidad

Numerous Latin-derived verbs in English have a single consonant in the present tense but a double consonant in the past tense. These double consonants are decorative, do not guide pronunciation, and must be learned on a case-by-case basis and memorized. Examples are

English	**Spanish**
to control	controlar

Angie controls the company.   present tense

Angie contro**ll**ed the company until last year.   past tense

to repel	repeler

Angie is planning to repel the hostile takeover of her company.   present tense

Angie repe**ll**ed the hostile takeover of her company.   past tense

Spanish rarely uses double consonants unless they are needed for correct pronunciation. Consider the Spanish word "acción" ("action" in English). If "acción" did not have the double "cc," it would be pronounced like the "c" in "aceite" ("oil" in English) which would be the wrong pronunciation.

The Spanish double consonants "ch", "ll", and "rr" are not decorative; they indicate specific sounds:

- "ch" (che) indicates the "ch" sound in the words "chico" or "leche"
- "ll" (elle) indicates the "y" sound in the words "calle" or "llegar"
- "rr" (erre) indicates a rolled version of the single "r" (ere)

These three "double consonants" are not double consonants, per se. These combinations of two consonants represent another sound which itself is a consonant. These three combination consonants were part of the Spanish alphabet until fairly recently but were officially removed for technical reasons. Regardless, they continue effectively to be distinct consonants which guide Spanish pronunciation.

Examples of Double Consonants in Anglo-Saxon Words

As discussed above, Anglo-Saxon derived words in English have inconsistent pronunciation and spelling. They also **unpredictably use double consonants** which do not guide pronunciation; the double consonants are decorative. Some examples:

"Be**ll**," "ha**ll**," and "bu**ll**" end in the double consonant "ll", but "fool," "feel," and "steel" end in the single consonant "l". Yet the "ll" and "l" are pronounced the same. The double consonant "ll" does not guide pronunciation; it is merely decorative. There are no rules for which of these words have double consonants; you have to memorize each case.