



# **influence of indigenous languages on modern latin american spanish !!**

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# colonization history

1493 ~ First Spanish contact with the Americas (Caribbean island of Hispaniola)

1521 ~ Hernan Cortes defeats the Aztec empire, largest and most powerful Indigenous community

Spain rules Mexico as “Nueva España” for 300 years ~ Latin American culture is a melting pot of Indigenous, European, and African cultural elements (we’ll talk more about this later)

Mexican Spanish, Argentinian Spanish, Peruvian Spanish, Spain Spanish, and even Mexican-American Spanish are wildly different in some of their vocabulary and slang ~ because of the influence of different indigenous languages on regional dialects of Spanish

# precolonial language landscape

- 68 distinct linguistic “trunks”
  - Single languages ex. Purepecha
  - Complex linguistic groups (ex. Zapotec)
- Variation in spelling between regions: not fully codified grammar
- Much of culture passed on through oral tradition
- Some written literature in more established languages like Nahuatl
- Nahuatl: The Lingua Franca of the region (used in trade, diplomacy)
- Language of the Aztecs, largest empire who controlled many other tribes at the time — they imposed their language on their subjects
- The name, Nahuatl or Nahua, means “something which sounds clear or pleasant” ~ tl sound !!!!!
- Still has over 1, 300, 000 speakers
- Largest Indigenous language spoken in Mexico



# 40%

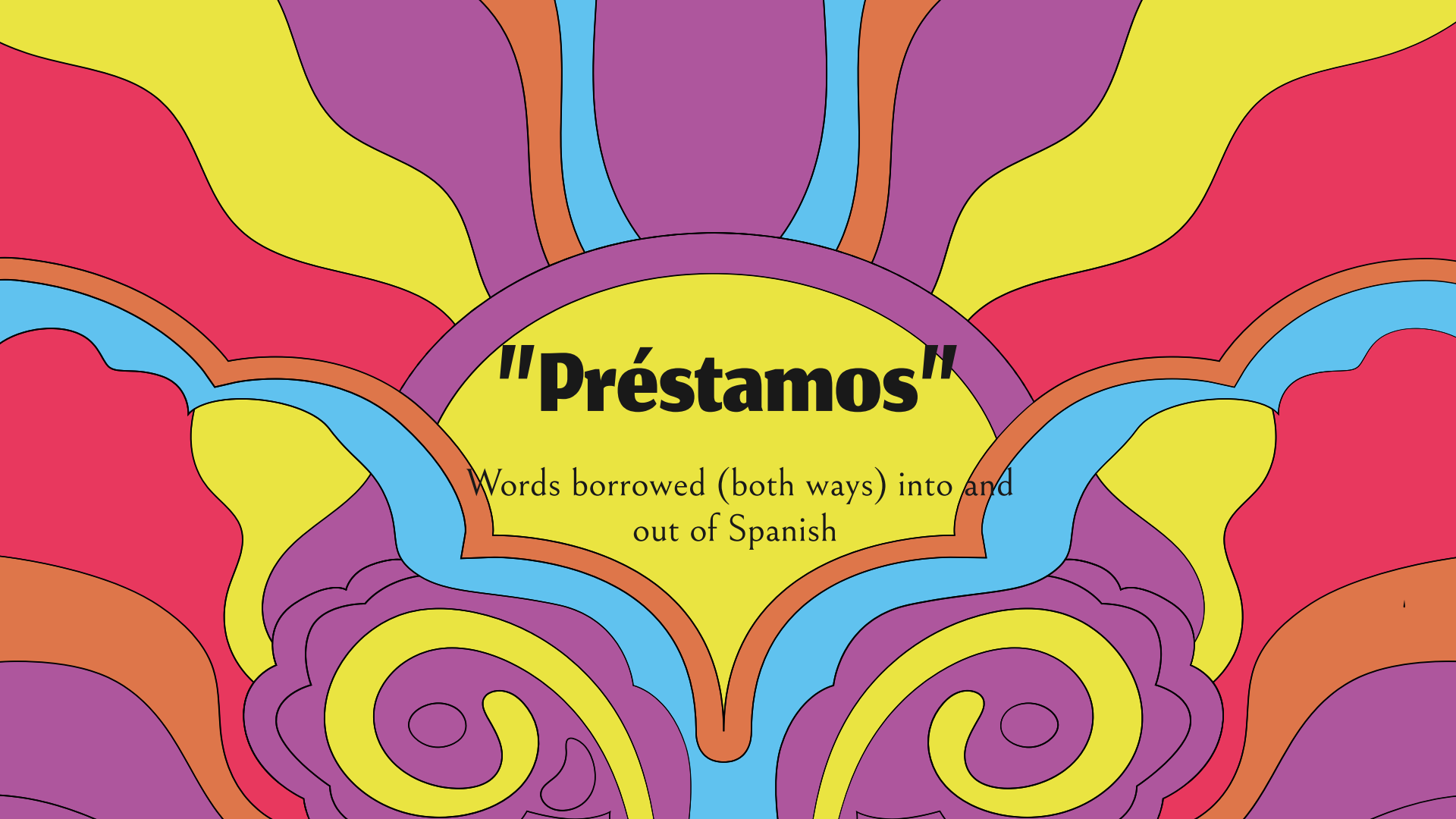
of people in Guatemala speak at least one indigenous language  
(often along with Spanish)

# cultural syncretism as a means of preservation ~

Colonization's imposition of Spanish culture on indigenous people (and African slaves in Spain's New World colonies) decimated speakers of many indigenous languages, but...

Many elements of indigenous culture remained present through *cultural syncretism*, or the practice of creating a new culture (Mexican) fused from elements of other cultures, often subordinated ones (Indigenous and African) who blend with a dominant one (Spain)

This syncretism is shown in food, dance, music, storytelling, cultural values, and language. Elements of indigenous languages are still present in the words we use every day, whether we know it or not.



# **"Préstamos"**

Words borrowed (both ways) into and  
out of Spanish

# "Quechuismos"

Words borrowed into the Spanish language from Quechua, indigenous language of the Peruvian Andes Mountains



# Préstamos you know!

So many words that we use daily as Spanish speakers are originally from indigenous languages! For example:

Aguacate ~ from Nahuatl, “Aguacatl”

Jitomate ~ from Nahuatl, “Xitomatl”

Chicle ~ from Nahuatl, “Tzictli”

Cenote (geographical feature, large hole of stagnant water) ~ from Mayan, “Ts’onot”

Huracán ~ from Taino Arawak

Papaya ~ from Carib

Condór ~ from Quechua

Barbacoa ~ from Taino Arawak

Apapachar (do you guys use this one? for “to spoil”?) ~ from Nahuatl

Chapulín ~ from Nahuatl

Carpa ~ from Nahuatl

Cigarro ~ from Quechua

Chocolate ~ from Nahuatl, “Xocolatl”

Cancha ~ from Quechua

# **bibliography**

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