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# Baseball: a U.S. Sport with a Spanish-American Stamp

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**Topic:** Spanish language and participation of Spanish-American players in Major League Baseball.

**Summary:** The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of the Spanish language and the remarkable contribution to Major League Baseball by Spanish-American players.

**Keywords:** baseball, sports, Major League Baseball, Spanish, Latinos

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the remarkable contribution made to Major League Baseball (MLB) by players from Spanish America both in terms of

quantity and quality.<sup>1</sup> The central idea is that the significant and valuable Spanish-American presence in the sports arena has a very positive impact on the collective psyche of the immigrant community to which these athletes belong. Moreover, this impact extends beyond the limited context of sport since, in addition to the obvious economic benefits for many families, it enhances the image of the Spanish-speaking community in the United States. At the level of language, contact allows English to influence Spanish, especially in the area of vocabulary, which Spanish assimilates and adapts according to its own peculiar structures.

Baseball, which was invented in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century, was introduced into Spanish America about thirty or forty years later. Gradually, it gained popularity in several of these countries until it has become their favorite sport. The enthusiasm with which it is practiced has facilitated the development of the native abilities of thousands of young Spanish Americans, with the result that hundreds of them have been able to join the MLB, where the sport is played at the highest level.

Today it is difficult to imagine that the MLB would be able to function as well as it does without the participation of its Spanish-American athletes, who make up more than 20% of the total number of active players. There is no team in either the National or in the American League that does not have in its lineup of nine players, two or three with Spanish names, not to mention the six or more that are invariably found on its full roster of 25 players. This remarkable fact gives baseball a Spanish-American stamp and clearly distinguishes it from other sports that originated in the United States such as basketball and American football. In

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<sup>1</sup> The MLB (Major League Baseball: <http://mlb.mlb.com/home>) is the most important baseball organization in the world. It is made up of two leagues, the American and the National, each with 15 teams. In Spanish, the MLB is known as the 'Grandes Ligas' (GL).

the professional leagues of these sports we do find the odd player of Spanish-American origin, but their presence is nowhere as significant as it is in baseball.

2015 Kansas City Royals	2015 Houston Astros	2015 Detroit Tigers	2015 Pittsburgh Pirates
<i>Most games by position</i>	<i>Most games by position</i>	<i>Most games by position</i>	<i>Most games by position</i>
C <i>Salvador Pérez</i>	C <i>Jason Castro</i>	C James McCann	C <i>Francisco Cervelli</i>
1B Eric Hosmer	1B Chris Carter	1B <i>Miguel Cabrera</i>	1B <i>Pedro Álvarez</i>
2B <i>Omar Infante</i>	2B <i>José Altuve</i>	2B Ian Kinsler	2B Neil Walker
3B Mike Moustakas	3B <i>Luis Valbuena</i>	3B <i>Nick Castellanos</i>	3B Josh Harrison
SS <i>Alcides Escobar</i>	SS <i>Carlos Correa</i>	SS <i>José Iglesias</i>	SS Jordy Mercer
LF Alex Gordon	LF Preston Tucker	LF <i>Yoenis Céspedes</i>	LF <i>Starling Marte</i>
CF Lorenzo Cain	CF Jake Marisnick	CF Anthony Gose	CF Andrew McCutchen
RF <i>Alex Ríos</i>	RF George Springer	RF <i>J.D. Martínez</i>	RF <i>Gregory Polanco</i>

Table 1. Regular lineup of several teams according to position during 2015 season

Table 1 lists those players who most often occupied their respective positions in the initial lineup during the current season.

## Baseball's international expansion

As far as its spread is concerned, baseball is played within a relatively limited geographical area, especially when compared with soccer, which is played all over the world. In addition to the United States, it is practised with varying degrees of popularity in Mexico, Canada, the Spanish-speaking West Indies (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), Central America, especially Nicaragua and Panama, and South America, specifically in Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil. It has a limited presence in Australia, as well as a growing popularity in Asia, notably in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Europe does not play baseball, except for the Netherlands, Italy and Spain, where it is practised on a very small scale.

The presence of baseball in Latin America is, of course, intimately connected with geographical proximity to the United States. For example, it is no coincidence that the sport is enormously popular in Mexico and the Caribbean, but completely unknown in Chile or Argentina. In fact, Cuba served as the gateway for baseball to enter Latin America. Towards the end of the nineteenth century many wealthy or middle-class Cuban families sent their sons to study in U.S. schools and universities. There many of them came into contact with baseball, introducing and contributing to its expansion in Cuba upon their return to their homeland. Although the subject remains controversial, abounding in conjecture and contradiction, it seems clear, at least as far as we can tell from an article published in *El Artista*, a newspaper of the time, that the first baseball game was played in Havana on 27 December 1874. This first game featured Esteban Bellán, a young Cuban who had studied at Fordham University from 1863 to 1868 and the first Latin American to play in the Major league. At Fordham, Bellán learned to play the new sport and, according to the university library's archives, went on to join the Troy Haymakers, a New York team for which played as third baseman from 1869 to 1872.<sup>2</sup> After several seasons with the Haymakers, Bellán returned to Cuba, where, in addition to playing in the 1874 game, he later led the Havana team to victory in several national championships.

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There are many stories associated with the introduction of baseball into Cuba. In connection with these, the journalist Delgado Averhoff (*The First Game of Baseball in Cuba* ESPNDeportes.com) quotes Roberto González, researcher and professor at Yale University (*The Glory of Cuba. The History of Baseball in the Island*), as follows: "Baseball was played in contempt of the Spanish authorities, who considered the sport to be a manifestation of separatist ideology, as well as

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<sup>2</sup> In 1871, the Haymakers joined the National Association, which became in 1876 the National League of the MLB. The Haymakers later became the New York Giants. Today, they are the San Francisco Giants.

extremely dangerous due to its use of bats.” The author also says “sometimes the boys had to flee the police or the security guards who manned the fortresses surrounding the city. These adolescents were proud of the fact that the sport they practised was modern and exotic.” Now, as Delgado Averhoff observes, whether or not this information on the date and other circumstances connected with the origin of baseball in the island are true, “for Cuba it comes down to the same thing: without baseball there is no paradise.”

In Puerto Rico, according to information drawn from various sources, the game was introduced by a few Cuban residents shortly before the tiny island became a dependency of the United States.<sup>3</sup> It seems reasonable to suppose that the transcendental events of 1898 helped foster practice of the game as the new government began to implement its policies. In the 1938-1939 season, the island organized its first professional baseball league comprising six teams: Guayama, Ponce, Humacao, San Juan, Caguas and Mayagüez. Since then, Puerto Rico has produced players of enormous stature like Hiram Bithorn, who, as a member of the Chicago Cubs, became the first Puerto Rican to play in the MLB. Later there were other outstanding players, including Rubén Gómez, Roberto Clemente, Orlando Cepeda, Roberto Alomar, Carlos Beltrán, Édgar Martínez, Carlos Delgado, Iván Rodríguez.

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There are several accounts of the introduction of baseball in the Dominican Republic. The most widely accepted account is that it was started by two Cuban brothers, Ignacio y Ubaldo Alomá, who settled there in 1891. Very soon the game spread, capturing the imagination of the younger generations of the country. Professional baseball in the Dominican Republic may be divided into two time periods. The first comprises more or less the first half of the twentieth century. It

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<sup>3</sup> Much of this is drawn from the notes of journalist Beto Villa published on the Internet as *La historia del béisbol en Latinoamérica*. Beto Villa is a Venezuelan sports commentator. In fact he was the main commentator in Spanish for the Yankees from 1997 to 2013. His review is dated 10 August 2008.

begins in 1907 with the formation of the Tigres del Licey in Santo Domingo and ends in 1951. That same year the island's League was born, celebrating its first professional baseball championship in which the following teams participated: Tigres del Licey, Estrellas Orientales, Leones del Escogido and Águilas Cibaeñas. In 1955, the Dominican Republic fully entered the realm of professional baseball. Since then it has produced star players like Osvaldo Virgil, the first Dominican to play in the Major League, the Rojas Alou brothers (Felipe, Mateo and Jesús), Julián Javier, Juan Marichal, Ricardo Carty, César Cedeño, Pedro Guerrero, George Bell, Sammy Sosa, Pedro Martínez, Albert Pujols and Alfonso Soriano.

The history of baseball in Venezuela starts in 1894, when a few young Venezuelans studying in the United States returned to their homeland with bats, gloves and balls and began to practise the sport. The first team, which was given the name Caracas, was founded in 1895. Other teams followed and, in 1927, the Federation of Venezuelan Baseball was created. In 1939, the pitcher Alejandro Carrasquel made his debut with the Washington Senators and became the first Venezuelan to play in the MLB. The Venezuelan League of Professional Baseball was created in 1946 with four teams: Navegantes del Magallanes, Cervecería Caracas, Textileros del Vargas and Patriotas de Venezuela. Notable examples of Venezuelan baseball players include Alfonso "Chico" Carrasquel, Luis Aparicio, Víctor Davalillo, César Tovar, David Concepción, Antonio Armas, Manny Trillo, Oswaldo Guillén, Andrés Galarraga, Omar Vizquel, Johán Santana, Magglio Ordóñez, Miguel Cabrera and Félix Hernández.

The origin of baseball in Mexico is no less controversial. Although we cannot be precise, it appears to lie somewhere between 1897 and 1900, with several Mexican cities claiming the honour of being the first to practise the sport: Mazatlán, Guaymas y Tamaulipas. The Mexican League did not exist officially until 1925. Its history can be divided into three periods. The first stretches from 1925 to 1940, fielding numerous Cuban players like Martín Dihigo, Lázaro

Salazar and Agustín Bejerano; the second from 1940 to 1951, with the Pasquel brothers trying to raise the Mexican league to the level of the MLB by hiring black players who could not play in the MLB, like Satchel Paige, Ray Dandridge, Ray Brown, Roy Campanella, Monte Irvin. Some white Cuban players also began to move to Mexico in order to avoid being drafted to fight in the Second World War; and the third, which began in 1955, when the Mexican League was granted the status of a Double-A league in U.S. Minor League Baseball. In 1967, the Mexican League was elevated to the Triple-A class –the highest level of Minor League Baseball in the U.S.– which is where it continues to be today. There is also a Mexican Pacific League. Several players from this league and from the Summer League have played in the Major League: Melo Almada, the first Mexican to do so, as well as players like Aurelio Rodríguez, Fernando Valenzuela, Vinicio Castilla, Esteban Loaiza, Rodrigo López and Jorge Cantú.

As far as we can tell, baseball was played for the first time in Panama in January of 1883. Some believe that it was initiated by members of the U.S. Navy who crossed the Isthmus with a cargo of gold. Following Panama’s independence from Colombia in 1903, when the U.S. began construction of the Canal, baseball grew in popularity. The Panama Professional Baseball League was created in 1945. After several successful years, the league disappeared in 1969 for economic reasons. Nevertheless, baseball continues to be played there as an amateur sport to this day. Among the great players of Panamanian extraction are the pitcher Humberto Robinson, the first Panamanian to play in the Major League in 1955, Héctor López, Adolfo Phillips, Rod Carew, Manny Sanguillén, Rennie Stennett, Omar Moreno, Juan Berenguer, Roberto Kelly, Olmedo Sáez, Mariano Rivera and Carlos Lee.

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Since 1949 the teams that win the national Winter League in Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic take part in a tournament known as the Caribbean Series. Over the years the Dominican Republic has won more of these tournaments than any of the other countries: Dominican Republic (17 titles), Puerto Rico (14), Venezuela (7) and Mexico (5).

## Numerical importance of Spanish-American players in MLB

United States (16,118)			
	<a href="#">Alabama</a> (319)	<a href="#">Louisiana</a> (243)	<a href="#">Ohio</a> (1,010)
	<a href="#">Alaska</a> (11)	<a href="#">Maine</a> (74)	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a> (253)
	<a href="#">Arizona</a> (99)	<a href="#">Maryland</a> (277)	<a href="#">Oregon</a> (127)
	<a href="#">Arkansas</a> (152)	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a> (658)	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a> (1,379)
	<a href="#">California</a> (2,129)	<a href="#">Michigan</a> (425)	<a href="#">Rhode Island</a> (75)
	<a href="#">Colorado</a> (87)	<a href="#">Minnesota</a> (164)	<a href="#">South Carolina</a> (179)
	<a href="#">Connecticut</a> (188)	<a href="#">Mississippi</a> (198)	<a href="#">South Dakota</a> (38)
	<a href="#">Delaware</a> (52)	<a href="#">Missouri</a> (596)	<a href="#">Tennessee</a> (293)
	<a href="#">Florida</a> (479)	<a href="#">Montana</a> (22)	<a href="#">Texas</a> (878)
	<a href="#">Georgia</a> (342)	<a href="#">Nebraska</a> (112)	<a href="#">Utah</a> (38)
	<a href="#">Hawaii</a> (40)	<a href="#">Nevada</a> (37)	<a href="#">Vermont</a> (38)
	<a href="#">Idaho</a> (29)	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a> (50)	<a href="#">Virginia</a> (280)
	<a href="#">Illinois</a> (1,033)	<a href="#">New Jersey</a> (414)	<a href="#">Washington</a> (192)
	<a href="#">Indiana</a> (367)	<a href="#">New Mexico</a> (26)	<a href="#">Washington, D.C.</a> (95)
	<a href="#">Iowa</a> (217)	<a href="#">New York</a> (1,124)	<a href="#">West Virginia</a> (121)
	<a href="#">Kansas</a> (212)	<a href="#">North Carolina</a> (397)	<a href="#">Wisconsin</a> (239)
	<a href="#">Kentucky</a> (280)	<a href="#">North Dakota</a> (16)	<a href="#">Wyoming</a> (14)



Additional Countries / Territories			
	<a href="#">Afghanistan</a> (1)	<a href="#">Dominican Republic</a> (631)	<a href="#">Panama Canal Zone</a> (4)
	<a href="#">American Samoa</a> (1)	<a href="#">England</a> (32)	<a href="#">Philippines</a> (1)
	<a href="#">Aruba</a> (5)	<a href="#">Finland</a> (1)	<a href="#">Poland</a> (4)
	<a href="#">Atlantic Ocean</a> (1)	<a href="#">France</a> (8)	<a href="#">Puerto Rico</a> (250)
	<a href="#">Australia</a> (28)	<a href="#">Germany</a> (29)	<a href="#">Russia</a> (8)
	<a href="#">Austria</a> (1)	<a href="#">Greece</a> (1)	<a href="#">Saudi Arabia</a> (2)
	<a href="#">Austria-Hungary</a> (4)	<a href="#">Guam</a> (1)	<a href="#">Scotland</a> (7)
	<a href="#">Bahamas</a> (6)	<a href="#">Honduras</a> (1)	<a href="#">Singapore</a> (1)
	<a href="#">Belgium</a> (1)	<a href="#">Indonesia</a> (1)	<a href="#">South Korea</a> (17)
	<a href="#">Brazil</a> (3)	<a href="#">Ireland</a> (43)	<a href="#">South Vietnam</a> (1)
	<a href="#">British Honduras</a> (1)	<a href="#">Italy</a> (7)	<a href="#">Spain</a> (3)
	<a href="#">Canada</a> (242)	<a href="#">Jamaica</a> (4)	<a href="#">Sweden</a> (4)
	<a href="#">Canary Islands</a> (1)	<a href="#">Japan</a> (62)	<a href="#">Switzerland</a> (1)
	<a href="#">China</a> (1)	<a href="#">Lithuania</a> (1)	<a href="#">Taiwan</a> (11)
	<a href="#">Colombia</a> (16)	<a href="#">Mexico</a> (118)	<a href="#">Unknown</a> (33)
	<a href="#">Cuba</a> (187)	<a href="#">Netherlands</a> (11)	<a href="#">Venezuela</a> (336)
	<a href="#">Curacao</a> (14)	<a href="#">Nicaragua</a> (14)	<a href="#">Virgin Islands</a> (12)
	<a href="#">Czechoslovakia</a> (3)	<a href="#">Norway</a> (3)	<a href="#">Wales</a> (3)
	<a href="#">Denmark</a> (1)	<a href="#">Panama</a> (51)	<a href="#">West Germany</a> (11)

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Table 2. Baseball players, according to country of birth, throughout the history of MLB

The global figures presented in the previous table relating to numbers of players who participate, or have participated, in the tournaments organized by the MLB

were taken from the Baseball Almanac (<http://www.baseball-almanac.com/>).<sup>4</sup> This table shows that all fifty U.S. states, as well as over forty-five countries, have produced at least one player in the MLB, with 18,363 players having participated in these championships since they were officially organized in the 19th century. Of this total, 16,118 players were born in the U.S. and 2,245 were born abroad. The data in table 2 are used in table 3 to show those U.S. states with the greatest numbers of players.

	N	%
California	2,129/16,118	13
Pennsylvania	1,379/16,118	9
Nueva York	1,124/16,118	7
Illinois	1,033/16,118	6
Ohio	1,010/16,118	6
Texas	878/16,118	5
Massachusetts	658/16,118	4

Table 3. U.S. States with the greatest numbers of players

California's dominance in relation to the rest of the U.S. is clear, although Pennsylvania, in second place, and New York, in third, are also well represented. At the other extreme, are those states which historically have fielded far fewer players (less than 40): Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming.

Out of a total of 2,245 foreign players, 1,612 or 72% are of Hispanic origin. These players represent just 9% of the total number (18,363), which today seems a very modest figure indeed. However, it is important to remember that Hispanics did not regularly join the Major League until well into the 1950s, more than 70 years

<sup>4</sup> Baseball Almanac is an Internet website providing an interactive encyclopedia of baseball whose purpose is to preserve the history of this U.S. national sport. It runs to 500,000 pages and contains biographical facts, curiosities, statistics and survey results.

after the organization was founded. In fact, it wasn't until the 1960s that Dominicans, who represent the majority of Hispanic baseball players, began to enter the game in larger numbers. Before the first Dominican, Osvardo Virgil, began to play the sport at the highest level in 1956, the few Spanish Americans playing baseball came from Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico y Panamá. Today the situation is very different, with the Dominican Republic leading the way. If we look at the Spanish-American contribution to the sport throughout the history of the Major League, we see that those countries that have had the greatest impact are, in descending order, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Cuba y Mexico, as Table 4 illustrates.

	N	%
Dominican Republic	631/1,612	39
Venezuela	336/1,612	21
Puerto Rico	250/1,612	16
Cuba	187/1,612	12
Mexico	118/1,612	7

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Table 4. Spanish-American countries fielding the largest number of MLB players

Furthermore, a quick glance at history reveals that the Spanish-American presence in Major League baseball has experienced a steady increase over time. Table 5 shows the nature of this increase over the last 55 years.

YEAR	HISPANICS as % of total number of MLB players	HISPANICS as % of total number of MLB foreign players	DOMINICANS as % of Hispanic players	CUBANS as % of Hispanic players	PUERTO RICANS as % of Hispanic players	VENEZUELANOS as % of Hispanic players
1960	49/637: <b>8%</b>	49/63: 78%	7/49: <b>14%</b>	25/49: <b>51%</b>	11/49: <b>22%</b>	3/49: <b>6%</b>
1965	60/751: <b>8%</b>	60/76: 79%	12/60: <b>20%</b>	27/60: <b>45%</b>	14/60: <b>23%</b>	3/60: <b>5%</b>
1970	96/919: <b>10%</b>	96/113: 85%	17/96: <b>18%</b>	30/96: <b>31%</b>	21/96: <b>22%</b>	13/96: <b>14%</b>
1975	78/907: <b>9%</b>	78/94: 83%	21/78: <b>27%</b>	13/78: <b>17%</b>	25/78: <b>32%</b>	6/78: <b>8%</b>
1980	98/950: <b>10%</b>	98/112: 88%	31/98: <b>32%</b>	9/98: <b>9%</b>	29/98: <b>30%</b>	9/98: <b>9%</b>
1985	99/998: <b>10%</b>	99/117: 85%	39/99: <b>39%</b>	3/99: <b>3%</b>	28/99: <b>28%</b>	15/99: <b>15%</b>
1991	144/1,086: <b>13%</b>	144/167: 86%	58/144: <b>40%</b>	4/144: <b>3%</b>	43/144: <b>30%</b>	20/144: <b>14%</b>
1995	192/1,253: <b>15%</b>	192/218: 88%	90/192: <b>47%</b>	5/192: <b>3%</b>	45/192: <b>23%</b>	26/192: <b>14%</b>
2000	279/1,381: <b>20%</b>	279/328: 85%	116/279: <b>42%</b>	13/279: <b>5%</b>	51/279: <b>18%</b>	52/279: <b>19%</b>
2005	313/1,327: <b>24%</b>	313/377: 83%	144/313: <b>46%</b>	12/313: <b>4%</b>	51/313: <b>16%</b>	69/313: <b>22%</b>
2009	324/1,388: <b>23%</b>	324/389: 83%	139/324: <b>43%</b>	16/324: <b>5%</b>	39/324: <b>12%</b>	94/324: <b>29%</b>
2014	326/1,407: <b>23%</b>	326/384: 85%	150/326: <b>46%</b>	26/326: <b>8%</b>	25/326: <b>8%</b>	99/326: <b>30%</b>
2015	296/1,204: <b>19%</b>	296/338: 86%	127/296: <b>43%</b>	23/296: <b>8%</b>	22/296: <b>7%</b>	93/296: <b>31%</b>

Table 5. Number of Hispanic players in MLB (1960-2015)

These figures reveal the following fascinating facts:

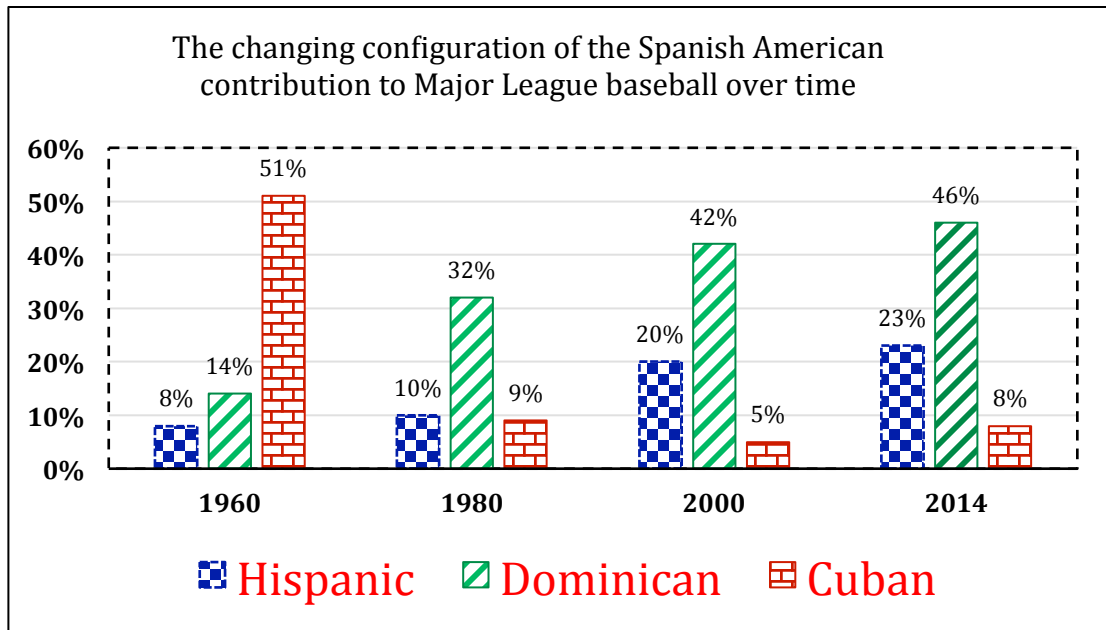
1. The overall presence of Spanish Americans has grown steadily, especially since 1995. In fact, for the last 15 years it has represented over 20% of the total number of players. Since the 1960s, the proportion of Spanish Americans has tripled in size. However, if we focus on the total number of players, we see that this growth is astounding: the numbers of players has actually increased sixfold, from around 50 players in 1960 to more than 300 in 2014.
2. With regard to the total number of foreigners, the proportion of Spanish Americans has remained stable at over 80%. The fact that less than 20%

of foreign players come from other continents is, of course, understandable given the limited geographical spread of baseball, as has already been noted.

3. Within the overall Spanish-American participation in the sport, the group that has grown most is that of the Dominicans, who for the past 25 years or so have constituted more than 40% of the Spanish Americans who play in the MLB. In just 50 years, Dominicans have increased their participation from a modest 14% to an astonishing 43% of the total of Spanish-American players. In absolute numbers, Dominicans have gone from 7 players in 1960 to an annual average of 140 over the last five seasons. In other words, their participation is today 20 times larger than it was in 1960.
4. Venezuela is the country that has shown the next largest increase in terms of numbers of players. Since 2000, in particular, Venezuelans have come to represent 30% of the total number of Spanish-American players. The number playing in the Major League exploded from just 3 during the 1960s to a stable total of over 90 since 2009.
5. Puerto Rico's contribution was significant (around 30%) up until the 1990s. However, since then its influence has diminished. Today, fewer than 10% of Spanish-American players hail from this island.
6. Cuban players outnumbered those of any other country up to 1970. During the sixties, for instance, they made up around half of the total number of Spanish Americans in the Major League. Since the 1970s, however, their influence has declined drastically to the point that today they make up less than 10% of the total. As is well known, this decline has

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political causes, specifically the breaking off of relations between the island and the United States.



Graph 1. The changing configuration of the Spanish-American presence in baseball over time

Using data from table 5, graph 1 summarizes the increasing proportion of Spanish-American players in Major League baseball over the past five decades and, more specifically, that of Dominicans and Cubans within this larger group. As already indicated, the global participation of Spanish-American players was calculated in relation to the total numbers of players and that of Dominicans and Cubans in relation to the total number of Spanish-American players. A cursory glance at this graph allows us to see clearly and immediately the evolving nature of their participation in the Major League since 1960. On the one hand, we see a steady increase in the Spanish-American presence overall; on the other, we see the dramatic contrast between consistent growth in the number of Dominicans and the equally consistent decline in the number of Cubans as a proportion of the total number of Spanish-American players.

The tables that follow provide exact numbers, by state within the U.S. and by country outside the U.S., in order to illustrate more clearly and in greater detail this extraordinary growth in the Spanish-American presence within the Major League from 1960 to 2014, with additional figures being provided for the years 1980 and 2000.

United States (574)			
Alabama (21)	Indiana (10)	Nebraska (9)	South Carolina (12)
Alaska (0)	Iowa (2)	Nevada (0)	South Dakota (2)
Arizona (2)	Kansas (5)	New Hampshire (1)	Tennessee (12)
Arkansas (12)	Kentucky (5)	New Jersey (10)	Texas (24)
California (67)	Louisiana (8)	New Mexico (0)	Utah (0)
Colorado (1)	Maine (1)	New York (45)	Vermont (0)
Connecticut (6)	Maryland (9)	North Carolina (20)	Virginia (13)
Delaware (3)	Massachusetts (15)	North Dakota (1)	Washington (4)
Florida (4)	Michigan (28)	Ohio (33)	Washington, D.C. (3)
Georgia (7)	Minnesota (11)	Oklahoma (14)	West Virginia (7)
Hawaii (0)	Mississippi (9)	Oregon (2)	Wisconsin (10)
Idaho (5)	Missouri (28)	Pennsylvania (48)	Wyoming (1)
Illinois (38)	Montana (2)	Rhode Island (4)	
Other countries and territories (63) – Spanish America: 49			
Bahamas (2)	Cuba (25)	Italia (1)	Poland (1)
Canada (5)	Scotland (2)	Mexico (1)	Puerto Rico (11)
Czechoslovakia (2)	Virgin Islands (1)	Panamá (2)	Dominican Republic (7)
			Venezuela (3)

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Table 6. MLB players according to place of birth – 1960 Season

United States (838)			
Alabama (23)	Indiana (12)	Nebraska (0)	South Carolina (11)
Alaska (1)	Iowa (9)	Nevada (0)	South Dakota (4)
Arizona (6)	Kansas (11)	New Hampshire (3)	Tennessee (11)
Arkansas (6)	Kentucky (7)	New Jersey (20)	Texas (55)
California (208)	Louisiana (12)	New Mexico (1)	Utah (2)
Colorado (6)	Maine (3)	New York (39)	Vermont (2)
Connecticut (3)	Maryland (5)	North Carolina (13)	Virginia (20)
Delaware (1)	Massachusetts (16)	North Dakota (0)	Washington (14)
Florida (33)	Michigan (42)	Ohio (50)	Washington, D.C. (3)
Georgia (15)	Minnesota (14)	Oklahoma (19)	West Virginia (6)
Hawaii (7)	Mississippi (7)	Oregon (9)	Wisconsin (6)
Idaho (2)	Missouri (22)	Pennsylvania (37)	Wyoming (2)
Illinois (35)	Montana (2)	Rhode Island (3)	
Other countries and territories (112) – Spanish America: 98			
Germany (1)	France (2)	Mexico (13)	Puerto Rico (29)
Canada (7)	Holland (2)	Nicaragua (2)	Dominican Republic (31)
Cuba (9)	Virgin Islands (1)	Panamá (6)	Venezuela (9)

Table 7. MLB players according to place of birth – 1980 Season

United States (1,053)			
Alabama (23)	Indiana (14)	Nebraska (9)	South Carolina (16)
Alaska (3)	Iowa (13)	Nevada (3)	South Dakota (2)
Arizona (9)	Kansas (11)	New Hampshire (1)	Tennessee (12)
Arkansas (6)	Kentucky (15)	New Jersey (23)	Texas (64)
California (235)	Louisiana (29)	New Mexico (2)	Utah (1)
Colorado (7)	Maine (1)	New York (63)	Vermont (0)
Connecticut (11)	Maryland (17)	North Carolina (16)	Virginia (25)
Delaware (7)	Massachusetts (27)	North Dakota (2)	Washington (19)
Florida (68)	Michigan (26)	Ohio (55)	Washington, D.C. (2)
Georgia (31)	Minnesota (3)	Oklahoma (12)	West Virginia (4)
Hawaii (4)	Mississippi (17)	Oregon (14)	Wisconsin (17)
Idaho (1)	Missouri (17)	Pennsylvania (36)	Wyoming (2)
Illinois (55)	Montana (1)	Rhode Island (2)	
Other countries and territories (328) – Spanish America: 279			
Germany (1)	Colombia (3)	England (1)	Nicaragua (4)
Aruba (3)	South Korea (3)	Virgin Islands (2)	Panamá (12)
Australia (4)	Cuba (13)	Jamaica (1)	Puerto Rico (51)
Belgium (1)	Curaçao (2)	Japan (11)	Dominican Republic (116)
Canada (18)	Filipinas (1)	Mexico (28)	Venezuela (52)
			Vietnam del Sur (1)

Table 8. MLB players according to place of birth – 2000 Season

United States (1,023)			
Alabama (20)	Indiana (22)	Nebraska (6)	South Carolina (13)
Alaska (0)	Iowa (4)	Nevada (8)	South Dakota (3)
Arizona (19)	Kansas (9)	New Hampshire (3)	Tennessee (23)
Arkansas (8)	Kentucky (20)	New Jersey (18)	Texas (119)
California (217)	Louisiana (16)	New Mexico (5)	Utah (0)
Colorado (6)	Maine (3)	New York (28)	Vermont (1)
Connecticut (15)	Maryland (7)	North Carolina (23)	Virginia (23)
Delaware (2)	Massachusetts (12)	North Dakota (1)	Washington (22)
Florida (89)	Michigan (15)	Ohio (30)	Washington, D.C. (5)
Georgia (46)	Minnesota (11)	Oklahoma (17)	West Virginia (2)
Hawaii (8)	Mississippi (12)	Oregon (12)	Wisconsin (5)
Idaho (3)	Missouri (27)	Pennsylvania (25)	Wyoming (4)
Illinois (33)	Montana (0)	Rhode Island (3)	
Other countries and territories (384) – Spanish America: 326			
Germany (3)	Brazil (2)	Curaçao (6)	Nicaragua (3)
Saudi Arabia (1)	Canada (20)	Holland (1)	Panamá (5)
Aruba (1)	Colombia (6)	Jamaica (2)	Puerto Rico (25)
Australia (4)	South Korea (2)	Japan (12)	Dominican Republic (150)
Bahamas (1)	Cuba (26)	Mexico (12)	Taiwan (3)
			Venezuela (99)

Table 9. MLB players according to place of birth – 2014 Season



## Qualitative importance of Spanish Americans in MLB

Despite the above, it must be said that the Spanish-American contribution to Major League Baseball is not just a matter of numbers. Many of these players have excelled in the sport and continue to do so. Over the past thirteen seasons (from 2002 to the present), the leading hitter in the American League has been Spanish-American no less than six times: Manny Ramírez (2002), Magglio Ordóñez (2007), Miguel Cabrera (2011, 2012 and 2013), and José Altuve (2014). In the National League during the same period, the title has been won by a Spanish-American on five occasions: Albert Pujols (2003), Freddy Sánchez (2006), Hanley Ramírez (2009), Carlos González (2010) and José Reyes (2011).

In the category of home runs, Spanish-American dominance is even clearer, with its players taking the title in the American League in twelve of the thirteen seasons. In 2002: Alex Rodríguez with 57 home runs; 2003: Alex Rodríguez with 47; 2004: Manny Ramírez with 43; 2005: Alex Rodríguez with 48; 2006: David Ortiz with 54; 2007: Alex Rodríguez with 54; 2008: Miguel Cabrera with 37; 2009: Carlos Peña with 39; 2010: José Bautista with 54; 2011: José Bautista with 43; 2012: Miguel Cabrera with 44; 2014: Nelson Cruz with 40. In the National League, five Spanish Americans won the title during the same period. In 2002: Sammy Sosa with 49 home runs; 2004: Adrian Beltré with 48; 2009: Albert Pujols with 47; 2010: Albert Pujols with 42; 2013: Pedro Álvarez with 36.

In the category of best pitcher, in the 16 seasons of the American League from 1999 to 2014, the title has gone to Spanish-Americans ten times, as Table 10 shows, with the Dominican Pedro Martínez winning it four times and two Venezuelans (Johan Santana and Félix Hernández) winning it twice each.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ERA is the average number of earned runs allowed by a pitcher; total number of earned runs allowed multiplied by 9 divided by the number of innings pitched. Naturally the best average is the one that allows the fewest runs. An index of 4 or more is thought not to be very good.

Year	Pitcher	ERA	Year	Pitcher	ERA
<a href="#">1999</a>	<a href="#">Pedro Martínez</a>	2.07	<a href="#">2007</a>	<a href="#">John Lackey</a>	3.01
<a href="#">2000</a>	<a href="#">Pedro Martínez</a>	1.74	<a href="#">2008</a>	<a href="#">Cliff Lee</a>	2.54
<a href="#">2001</a>	<a href="#">Freddy García</a>	3.05	<a href="#">2009</a>	<a href="#">Zack Greinke</a>	2.16
<a href="#">2002</a>	<a href="#">Pedro Martínez</a>	2.26	<a href="#">2010</a>	<a href="#">Félix Hernández</a>	2.27
<a href="#">2003</a>	<a href="#">Pedro Martínez</a>	2.22	<a href="#">2011</a>	<a href="#">Justin Verlander</a>	2.40
<a href="#">2004</a>	<a href="#">Johan Santana</a>	2.61	<a href="#">2012</a>	<a href="#">David Price</a>	2.56
<a href="#">2005</a>	<a href="#">Kevin Millwood</a>	2.86	<a href="#">2013</a>	<a href="#">Aníbal Sánchez</a>	2.57
<a href="#">2006</a>	<a href="#">Johan Santana</a>	2.77	<a href="#">2014</a>	<a href="#">Félix Hernández</a>	2.14

Table 10. Pitchers with best ERA (1999–2014)

A further indicator of the quality of Spanish-American baseball players may be found in the 2004 All Star Game in which Dominican players confirmed their extraordinary skills with a brilliant performance. In this game, which features the best players selected from both leagues, the most voted player by the fans (Alfonso Soriano) also proved to be the MVP. Moreover, in the home run hitting competition, which usually takes place the day before the game, the winner was Miguel Tejada. Other Dominicans who gave outstanding performances were Albert Pujols, Vladimir Guerrero, David Ortiz, Sammy Sosa and Álex Rodríguez. And as if to confirm that 2004 was no fluke, Dominican players also led the way in the 2005 All Star Game. Of the nine star players representing the American League selected to start the game, five were Dominican: David Ortiz, Álex Rodríguez, Manny Ramírez, Miguel Tejada and Vladimir Guerrero. In recognition of his extraordinary performance, Miguel Tejada was declared the most valuable player in the game. If this were not enough, at the end of the 2005 season several Dominicans won best player title in their respective categories: Bartolo Colón received the Cy Young award, as the best pitcher in the American League; Albert Pujols was recognized as the MVP in the National League; and Alex Rodríguez was recognized as the MVP in the American League in a hard fought battle with David Ortiz, who earned second place.

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A decade later, Spanish-American participation in the lineups for the 2014 All Star Game was still significant. Of the 70 players representing the American and National leagues, with 35 players taken from each league, 23 players or 33% of the total number were of Spanish-American origin. Most of these hailed from the Dominican Republic (10 players). Venezuela was represented by 6 players, Cuba by 5 and Puerto Rico and Colombia by one player each. José Bautista, who played for Toronto and who has twice been the player with the greatest number of home runs (2010 and 2011), was selected to play in the All Star Game for the fifth time with the largest number of votes (5,859,705). Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels came second with 5,559,705 votes.

American League: Initial line-up: 2014 All Star Game 9 players (5 Spanish Americans)	National League: Initial line-up: 2014 All Star Game 9 players (4 Spanish Americans)
C: <i>Salvador Pérez</i> , Kansas City Royals	C: <i>Yadier Molina</i> , St. Louis Cardinals
1B: <i>Miguel Cabrera</i> , Detroit Tigers	1B: Paul Goldschmidt, Arizona Diamondbacks
2B: <i>Robinson Canó</i> , Seattle Mariners	2B: Chase Utley, Philadelphia Phillies
SS: Derek Jeter, New York Yankees	SS: Troy Tulowitzki, Colorado Rockies
3B: Josh Donaldson, Oakland Athletics	3B: <i>Aramis Ramírez</i> , Milwaukee Brewers
OF: <i>José Bautista</i> , Toronto Blue Jays	OF: Andrew McCutchen, Pittsburgh Pirates
OF: Mike Trout, Los Angeles Angels	OF: <i>Carlos Gómez</i> , Milwaukee Brewers
OF: Adam Jones, Baltimore Orioles	OF: <i>Yasiel Puig</i> , Los Angeles Dodgers
DH: <i>Nelson Cruz</i> , Baltimore Orioles	DH: Giancarlo Stanton, Miami Marlins

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Table 11. Spanish Americans in the initial lineup – 2014 All Star Game

There were 14 Spanish Americans in the full roster of the American League players who participated in the 2014 All Star Game:

Dominican Republic (6):

Robinson Canó (Mariners, second baseman), José Bautista (Blue Jays, outfielder), Nelson Cruz (Orioles, designated hitter), Dellin Betances (Yankees, right-handed pitcher), Adrián Beltré (Rangers, third baseman), Edwin Encarnación (Blue Jays, designated hitter).

Venezuela (5):

Salvador Pérez (Royals, catcher), Miguel Cabrera (Tigers, first baseman), Félix Hernández (Mariners, right-handed pitcher), José Altuve (Astros, second baseman), Víctor Martínez (Tigers, designated hitter).

Cuba (3):

José Abreu (White Sox, first baseman), Alexei Ramírez (White Sox, shortstop), Yoenis Céspedes (Athletics, outfielder).

There were 14 Spanish Americans in the full roster of the National League players who participated in the 2014 All Star Game:

Dominican Republic (4):

Aramis Ramírez (Brewers, third baseman), Carlos Gómez (Brewers, outfielder), Johnny Cueto (Reds, right-handed pitcher), Starlin Castro (Cubs, shortstop).

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Cuba (2):

Yasiel Puig (Dodgers, outfielder), Aroldis Chapman (Reds, left-handed pitcher).

Colombia (1):

Julio Teherán (Braves, right-handed pitcher).

Puerto Rico (1):

Yadier Molina (Cardinals, catcher).

Venezuela (1):

Francisco Rodríguez (Brewers, right-handed pitcher).

## Baseball: a source of pride

It is a sad reality, well known to all, that the majority of the immigrant population of Hispanic origin resident in the United States is characterized by its low level of education and its poverty. Naturally, these factors do nothing to enhance the image of the Hispanic community, which is also viewed negatively because of the

bad behavior of some of its members and which occasionally falls victim to social and racial discrimination by some sectors of society. In view of this, it is comforting, encouraging and even a source of pride that so many baseball players have excelled in the sport. Without realizing it, Spanish-American players are helping to raise the collective spirits of the Hispanic community and, concomitantly, to neutralize, or at least mitigate the sense of inferiority generated by other factors.

The above pages document the tremendous contribution, qualitatively and quantitatively, that players of Spanish-American origin have made to Major League baseball over the past five decades. But this is not all. Recently, the sport started to celebrate every four years what has been come to be known as the World Baseball Classic. This tournament was created basically in response to the decision of the International Olympic Committee to remove baseball as an Olympic sport in 2005. The first tournament took place in 2006 and the second in 2009. On both of these occasions, it was won by Japan. However, the last tournament, which took place in 2013, was won by the Dominican Republic, which defeated Japan by 3 runs to 0 in the final game, winning its first title in the history of the Classic with an uninterrupted series of victories. This resounding Dominican victory confirmed categorically the reputation of Spanish Americans as skilled baseball players.

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### *The Baseball Hall of Fame*

The highest recognition that can be awarded to a player at the end of his career is to be admitted to the Baseball Hall of Fame.<sup>6</sup> This highest of honors is reserved for those few players who give consistently extraordinary performances

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<sup>6</sup> The Baseball Hall of Fame is a museum designed to honor the best exponents of the game. It was inaugurated on 12 June 1939 in Cooperstown, N.Y. Each year the players who have been retired for at least five years are eligible to be elected to the Hall of Fame. In order to be elected, candidates must receive 75% of the votes cast by the journalists of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

throughout their careers. To date eight Spanish Americans have received this honour:

3 from Puerto Rico: Roberto Clemente (1973), Orlando Cepeda (1999), Roberto Alomar (2011)

2 from the Dominican Republic: Juan Marichal (1983), Pedro Martínez (2015)

1 from Venezuela: Luis Aparicio (1984)

1 from Panamá: Rod Carew (1991)

1 from Cuba: Tony Pérez (2000)

The last player to receive this honour, just a few months ago, in an emotive ceremony in which the player spoke in Spanish to a group of Dominicans attending the event in Cooperstown, New York, was the Dominican Pedro Martínez.

Currently, several other Spanish-American players are also a source of pride, having been ranked by the baseball press as being among the best players in their respective positions. They will surely be strong candidates for admission into the Hall of Fame when the time comes. They are the following seven individuals:

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Miguel Cabrera (Venezuelan), best hitter

Yadier Molina (Puerto Rican), best catcher

Robinson Canó (Dominican), best second baseman

Félix Hernández (Venezuela), best starting pitcher

Albert Pujols (Dominican), best first baseman

David Ortiz (Dominican), best designated hitter

Mariano Rivera (Panamanian), best relief pitcher

## Linguistics repercussions

The popularity of baseball in several countries of Latin America, the importance of Spanish-American players in the Major League, and the ever growing Hispanic population in the United States, which has now topped 50 million, all work together to encourage radio and television stations within the U.S. to broadcast the games in the Spanish language. All of this, of course, has generated more

discussion in Spanish of baseball, which has become a new focus of interest for the Hispanic community. And sports channels like ESPN and FOX SPORTS have joined the traditional U.S. channels aimed at a Hispanic audience in broadcasting in Spanish. What is more, most Major League teams, particularly those based in states with a large Hispanic population like California, Texas and New York, cater to this audience by broadcasting their own games in Spanish.

#### *Use of Spanish in broadcast of baseball games*

Spanish has been used in broadcast of baseball games in the United States for several decades. It may seem odd that the most famous baseball commentator in Spanish in the U.S., who was also the first of his kind to be honored by the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, is Buck Canel, an Argentinian. However, the oddity vanishes if we become familiar with his life. Buck's father was an American diplomat assigned to the American embassy in Argentina. His wife was already pregnant when she left the U.S. and so the child was born on Argentinian soil. When their assignment was over, Buck's parents returned to the States. It was after this that the great commentator began to become a legend. To his close friends, who were familiar with his origins, he would say jokingly that he never talked about the circumstances of his birth. After all, who would believe that a baseball commentator could come from Argentina?

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Some of Buck Canel's best known phrases, made during his commentaries, have been immortalised, becoming embedded in the narrative style of his successors, as well as in the everyday language of baseball fans: *Le tira y abanica* (He swings and misses), *El inning de la suerte* (The lucky seventh inning), *Se fue la entrada a paso de conga: 1-2-3* (One out after the other: 1-2-3), *No se vayan que esto se pone bueno* (Don't leave. This is just getting good), *El béisbol es un deporte de pulgadas* (Baseball is a game of inches). Canel was born in 1906 and died in 1980.

Rafael (Felo) Ramírez, born in Cuba in 1921, is another baseball commentator who achieved legendary status and whose professional life spanned more than 60 years. He lived for many years in Puerto Rico, where he was elected to the island's Baseball Hall of Fame. In 2001, he received the Ford C. Frick prize from the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. For more than 30 years, he presented with Buck Canel the Gillette Sports Parade, a program broadcasted over a chain of Spanish-American radio stations.

Another important figure is the Dominican commentator and commentator, Billy Berroa. He was the first Dominican to commentate a Major League game live from the United States. Recognized as one of the most important voices in baseball, Berroa began his career as a Major League sportscaster in 1963. He covered the Spanish broadcasts of the New York Mets' games, mainly for Radio WADO 1280 AM, from 1987 to 1993 and again from 1997 to 2007.

Today most teams broadcast all, or at least some, of the season's games in Spanish. Here are some examples of these teams, along with their respective commentators: Los Angeles Angels: the journalists José Mota and Iván Lara; Houston Astros: Alex Treviño and Francisco Ruiz; the Arizona Diamondbacks: Miguel Quintana and Oscar Soria; San Diego Padres: Eduardo Ortega and Juan Ávila; the Texas Rangers: Eleno Ornelas and José Guzmán. The popular Dodgers of Los Angeles employ a team of commentators, including Jaime Jarrín, who was admitted to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1998, and former Dodgers pitcher, Fernando Valenzuela. As one might expect, east coast rivals, the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox, also broadcast in Spanish. While Francisco Rivera and Félix De Jesús commentate for the Yankees, the Boston Red Sox have enlisted the services of the Panamanian Uri Berenguer.

Many of the Major League games broadcast by ESPN and ESPN Sports are covered by the Dominican commentator, Ernesto Jerez. His way of narrating



home runs captures the emotion and passion so many feel for the game: ¡no, no, no, no, no, no, díganle que no a esa pelota! (¡no, no, no, no, no, say no to that ball!).

Table 12, taken from the MLB.com website, provides a list of the radio stations that broadcast the games of the 30 Major League teams. As it shows, 19 out of this total of 30 stations (63%) broadcast in Spanish.

Team	In English	In Spanish
Arizona Diamondbacks	KTAR	KSUN
Atlanta Braves	WGST	TBS
Baltimore Orioles	WBAL	
Boston Red Sox	WEEI	WROL
Chicago Cubs	WGN	
Chicago White Sox	WSCR	WRTO
Cincinnati Reds	WLW	WSAI
Cleveland Indians	WTAM	
Colorado Rockies	KOA	KMXA
Detroit Tigers	WXYZ	
Florida Marlins	WQAM	WQBA
Houston Astros	KTRH	KLAT
Kansas City Royals	WHB	
Los Angeles Angels	ESPN Radio 710	KMXE
Los Angeles Dodgers	KFWB	KWKW
Milwaukee Brewers	WTMJ	
Minnesota Twins	WCCO	
New York Mets	WFAN	WADO
New York Yankees	WCBS	WKDM

Oakland Athletics	KCYC	KZSF
Philadelphia Phillies	WPHT	WPWQ
Pittsburgh Pirates	KDKA	
San Diego Padres	XPRS	XEMO
San Francisco Giants	KNBR	KLOK
Seattle Mariners	KOMO	KXLY
St. Louis Cardinals	KTRS	
Tampa Bay Rays	WHNZ	WAMA
Texas Rangers	KRLD	KFLC
Toronto Blue Jays	FAN	
Washington Nationals	WTOP	

Table 12. Radio stations

### Borrowings

A natural consequence of Spanish Americans playing baseball in the United States and in Spanish America is the inevitable contact that it produces between English and Spanish. Given that the vocabulary connected with this sport was invented in English, it goes without saying that a considerable number of Anglicisms has entered the Spanish language, which naturally lacked them until baseball became known in the Spanish-speaking world. In many cases, these are words borrowed in their entirety, retaining in Spanish the form and meaning of the original English (*hit, bleacher, pitcher, strike*); others are calques arising from the fact that they resemble in form and meaning already existing Spanish words (*base for base, doble for double, triple for triple*); yet others are translations which, though more or less accurate, do not resemble at all the form of the English original (*carrera for run, jardinero central or centrocampista for center fielder*).

Otheguy y García (1988) distinguishes two classes of words imported by one language from another: loanwords and calques, the latter being subdivided into lexical calques and phrasal calques. Lexical calques may be further subdivided into two types: those in which the borrowing language fuses the borrowing with an already existing word that has an almost identical phonological shape and those which are completely different in both languages in so far as their phonological shape is concerned.

In the case of loanwords, the whole word (form and content) is borrowed. For example, the phonological structure of the word *strike* is completely English, although it is pronounced in Spanish in a variety of ways that adapt it to a greater or lesser extent to the phonology of Spanish: [estráik], [estrái], [ehtrái], [etrái]. But it is also clear that it retains the original English meaning of *good pitch, delivered in line with the rules of the game, which the batter is unable to hit*. In Spanish, this meaning does not correspond to any existing native phonological sequence. Before the sport was known, the concept associated with ‘strike’ clearly did not exist in the minds of Spanish speakers.

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The following, which are examples of loanwords relating to baseball, are listed in descending order according to their index of lexical availability:<sup>7</sup>

<i>bate:</i>	bat.
<i>home run:</i>	home run.
<i>pítcher:</i>	pitcher.
<i>out:</i>	out.
<i>cácther:</i>	catcher.
<i>hit:</i>	hit.
<i>foul:</i>	foul.
<i>safe:</i>	safe.
<i>umpire:</i>	umpire.
<i>home:</i>	home.

<sup>7</sup> The data presented here are drawn from a research project carried out by the author of this article on the relation between baseball and the Spanish used to talk about this topic in the Dominican Republic: *Lengua y béisbol en la República Dominicana*, 2006.

<i>center field:</i>	center field.
<i>left field:</i>	left field.
<i>right field:</i>	right field.
<i>short stop:</i>	short stop.
<i>inning:</i>	inning.
<i>dugout:</i>	dugout.
<i>bleacher:</i>	bleacher.
<i>fly:</i>	fly.
<i>dead ball:</i>	dead ball.
<i>rolling:</i>	rolling.
<i>bullpen:</i>	bullpen.
<i>slider:</i>	slider.
<i>swing:</i>	swing.
<i>wild pitch:</i>	wild pitch.
<i>play off:</i>	play off.
<i>back stop:</i>	back stop.
<i>infield hit:</i>	infield hit.
<i>bound:</i>	bound.
<i>line up:</i>	line up.
<i>slump:</i>	slump.

When all that is transmitted is a new meaning, clothed in an already existing Spanish phonetic form, Anglicisms manifest themselves in very different ways. This is the case with *base* and *carrera*, as mentioned above. Both words exist in Spanish with their corresponding meanings. However, until baseball became known in the Spanish-speaking world, neither meant what it now means in the context of baseball. In several countries where Spanish is spoken but baseball is not played, many speakers do not know that one of the meanings of the term *base* is “the four points of the baseball diamond (first through third bases and home plate) that must be touched by a runner in order to score a run.” In such cases, the borrowing is known as a *calque*.

In other words, the meaning of a word in the source language is copied or borrowed in the borrowing language. Many linguists call it a *semantic borrowing* or *semantic transfer*. This descriptor, taken from H. Lüdtke (1974), is used by González Gómez in his study of Anglicisms in baseball in Costa Rica (1998:91-99). These examples show that some calques have similar forms in both

languages, which makes it relatively easy for the type of fusion or copy already mentioned to occur. The following belong to this type of borrowing: *base* (from *base*), *bola* (from *ball*), *doble* (from *double*), *plato* (from *plate*). The phonetic similarity between both words in each pair is clear to see.

Other calques are the result of a sort of literal translation that selects a word different in form, but equivalent in meaning, to that of the word to be borrowed from the source language. Typical of this group are: *carrera* (from *run*), *lanzador* (from *pítkher*), *receptor* (from *cátcher*). For instance, *lanzador* exists in Spanish, but only in the general sense of “one who throws.” However, in the context of baseball it acquires the specific sense of ‘pitcher’ or “the fielder designated to pitch the ball to the batter in such a way that the batter cannot hit it.” A key feature of this type of calque is that the two words are completely different phonetically. *Carrera*, for example, bears no phonetic relationship to *run*. Similarly, *receptor* is not related to *cátcher*. The Spanish word that receives the semantic transfer shares the basic meaning of the corresponding English word, but the signifiers are markedly different.

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Another category is needed for those cases in which a new word is derived by adding a Spanish suffix to an originally English lexical base: *batazo* (from *bat* > *bate*), *flaicito* (from *fly*), *jonronero* (from *home run*), *pitcheo* (from *pitch*), *esprintada* (from *sprint*). In these derived words, the form of the borrowing is almost perfectly adapted to the phonetic and morphological structures of Spanish.

Table 13 offers a sample of Anglicisms associated with baseball used in Spanish that are categorized according to the criteria specified above.

<u>Loanwords</u>	<u>Loanwords with Spanish suffix</u>	<u>Phonetically related calques</u>	<u>Calques not phonetically related</u>
bleacher	batear	base	carrera
cácher	fildeador	bola	corredor
foul	flaicito	curva	cuenta
hit	jonronero	doble	elevado
home	pitcheo	línea	fuera
home run	piconazo	plato	lanzador
out	ponchado	sacrificio	receptor
pítcher	roletazo	triple	robo

Table 13. Classification of some baseball Anglicisms

### *Phonetic adaptation of Anglicisms*

As one would expect, the pronunciation of borrowings is not uniform but varies considerably. In other words, not all speakers pronounce them in exactly the same way nor, in fact, does the same individual pronounce them the same in all circumstances. This occurs with all aspects of language whether syntactic, lexical or phonetic, and is why, for example, standard Spanish pronounces the French word ‘élite’ as *élite* or *elíte*. Borrowings from English show the same kind of variation, with well-known borrowings like *club* y *sándwich* being pronounced throughout the Spanish-speaking world respectively as [klub], [klob] or [klu] and [sáɲdwič], [sáɲdwi] or [sáɲgwiče].

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In general, however, there is an observable sociolinguistic tendency: speakers belonging to the lowest social group tend to adapt Anglicisms almost perfectly to the structures of their own language; speakers belonging to the higher social groups, on the other hand, tend to replicate as best they can the pronunciation of the loanword in the source language, especially in formal styles, which is the case when baseball commentators commentate a game. In such broadcasts, it is not unusual to hear pronunciations like [hit] (‘hit’), [seɪf] (‘safe’), [hom] (‘home’), which retain the final consonants /t/, /f/ y /m/. These same words, which appear in lower-class speech completely assimilated to the structures of Spanish, are

pronounced without final /t/ or final /f/ and with final /n/ being replaced by /m/: [hi] ('hit'), [sej] ('safe'), [hoŋ] ('home'). In other words, the degree to which borrowings are assimilated to native structures correlates closely with social factors. As the use of a particular borrowing gains frequency and spreads, the word increasingly adopts the phonetic and phonological structures of the borrowing language.

The following are some examples of baseball borrowings in Spanish, along with the different ways in which they are typically pronounced by educated and less educated speakers.

<i>back stop:</i>	[bakestóp - bakestó - bakehtó - baketó];
<i>bleacher:</i>	[blíčer - blícel - blíče];
<i>catcher:</i>	[káčer - kéčer - kéče];
<i>center field:</i>	[seŋterfíl - seŋterfí];
<i>coach:</i>	[kóač - kóč - kó];
<i>dead ball:</i>	[déðból - deβól];
<i>dugout:</i>	[doɣáut - doɣáo];
<i>field:</i>	[fíl - fí];
<i>fly:</i>	[flái];
<i>foul:</i>	[fául - fáo];
<i>hit:</i>	[hít - hí];
<i>home:</i>	[hóm - hóŋ];
<i>home run:</i>	[honfóŋ];
<i>infield:</i>	[infíl - infí];
<i>infield hit:</i>	[infilhít - infilhí - infihí];
<i>inning:</i>	[ínĩŋ];
<i>left field:</i>	[lefíl - lefí];
<i>line up:</i>	[laĩnóp - laĩnó];
<i>manager:</i>	[mánayer - máneyer - mániye];
<i>out:</i>	[áut - áo];
<i>pitcher:</i>	[píčer - píče];
<i>playoff:</i>	[pleiō - pleyō];
<i>safe:</i>	[séj - séi];
<i>score:</i>	[eskór - ehkór - ekór];
<i>short stop:</i>	[šorestóp - siorehtó - sioretó];
<i>slider:</i>	[eslájðer - ehlájðer - ehlájðe];
<i>standing:</i>	[estáŋdiŋ - ehtáŋdiŋ - etáŋdiŋ];
<i>strike:</i>	[estrájk - ehtrájk - estrái - ehtrái - etrái];
<i>swing:</i>	[swíŋ];
<i>team:</i>	[tím - tíŋ].

A superficial analysis of the pronunciation of the words listed above reveals the various levels of assimilation to the phonetic structure of Spanish they have undergone. Several factors contribute to such diversity, with two of these being especially closely linked: frequency of use or degree of spread of the loanword; the socio-educational background of the speaker.

The significance of frequency of use for the phonetic development of words has long been understood by numerous linguists. The German scholar Schuchardt emphasizes this point towards the end of the 19th century. The Polish scholar Mańczak (1969) does the same, as does the French scholar Martinet, in the 20th century. Finally, Torreblanca (1986) returns to the topic, adducing data from Spanish, in a brief article entitled “La frecuencia de los morfemas y su evolución fonética.”

Alongside these factors are others like the phonological structure of the word and, though perhaps less important, the risk of creating a homonymic clash with an already existing word. The term *coach* illustrates the effect of such factors. While the final palatal consonant /č/ tends to be retained in educated speech thereby preserving its English shape ([kóač], [kóč]), in less educated and in spontaneous speech the final consonant is dropped so that the result conforms perfectly to the phonology of Spanish ([kó]).

Now, it may seem strange that, instead of dropping final /č/, speakers do not add a final /e/, as is the case with other Anglicisms of the same type. For example, *switch* and *clutch* are transformed, in the popular speech of several countries, into [swiče] and [klóče] respectively. However, if the same were to occur with *coach*, the result would be [kóče] and a homonymic clash with the noun ‘coche’. The desire to avoid such a clash should not be discounted as a possible factor conditioning the solution adopted by the Spanish-speaking community.

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In cases like *play off* and *wild pitch* a similar phenomenon is observable. Both words reflect a lower level of linguistic integration than is evident, for instance, in the words *bate* (bat) and *jonrón* (home run). Once more the reason has to do with the phonological structure and frequency of use of these words, the latter pair being not just much more common than the former pair but also providing the base for the following derived forms: *batazo*, *bateador*, *batear*; *jonronazo*, *jonronero*, *jonronear*.

The phonetic adaptation of loanwords involves adjustments that vary, in each case, according to specific needs and characteristics. There are two common changes. One is the addition of prosthetic /e/ as in [eskór - ehkór] from *score*; [esláĩðer - ehláĩðer] from *slider*; [eslón - ehlón] from *slump*. The other is apocope of a final sound or sounds: [fáo] from *foul*; [fí] from *field*; [áo] from *out*. Some words require the application of both processes: [etráĩ] from *strike* [stráĩk] and [ehláĩðe - eláĩðe] from *slider* [sláĩðər].

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The pronunciation of the Anglicism in Spanish naturally respects the articulatory norms and habits of Spanish. Consequently, the sounds /t/ and /d/, which appear in initial position in *team* and *dugout*, are given a dental articulation rather than the alveolar articulation with its higher tongue position, which is required in English. Similarly, the initial /r/ of *right field* and *rolling* is adapted to the Spanish sound system and produced as a multiple vibrant (*erre*), the simple vibrant (*ere*) being unable to appear in this position in Spanish. Other cases reveal adjustment to the Antilles dialectal variety of Spanish. *Home run* and *bullpen*, for instance, are transformed phonetically into [honrón] and [bulpén], with velarized final /n/. In the less educated speech of the northern part of the Dominican Republic, the latter of these two examples is even pronounced [buipén], with typical vocalization of syllable-final /l/.

### *Morphological Integration of Anglicisms*

Many Anglicisms have adjusted not just to the sound system of Spanish but also to its morphological system. In this way, they have become a source for new words that are created by the addition of Spanish suffixes. This has led to the emergence of hybrid forms made up of an English root and a Spanish ending. One of the most obvious examples of this phenomenon in the domain of baseball is *bate* (bat), from which are derived *batear*, *bateador*, *batazo*, *batería*. Other examples are:

<i>base ball:</i>	béisbol (beisbol), beisbolero, beisbolista;
<i>cácther:</i>	quécher, quechar (quechar), quechecito;
<i>field:</i>	fil, fildear, fildeador, fildeo;
<i>fly:</i>	flay, flaicito, aflaizado;
<i>hit:</i>	jit, jiteador, jitear;
<i>home run:</i>	jonrón, jonronazo, jonronero, jonronear;
<i>pítcher:</i>	pícher, pichear-pichar, pichecito, picheo;
<i>punch out:</i>	ponchado, ponchador, ponchar, ponche.
<i>rolling:</i>	rolin, rolata, roletazo, roletear;
<i>sprint:</i>	esprintada;
<i>umpire:</i>	ampaya, ampayar.

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In almost all cases, the derivations spring from a noun from which we get another noun (*field-fildeo*, *béisbol-beisbolista*, *jonrón-jonronero*, *pítcher-picheo*). In other cases, we get a verb (*quécher-quechar*, *hit-hitear*) or an adjective (*fly-aflaizado*).

The process of morphological integration is clear evidence that the loanword has ceased to be, and is no longer felt by speakers to be, something foreign. In fact, it has become naturalized, having been completely assimilated to the structures of the borrowing language.

### *Assignment of gender to loanwords*

The fact that nouns in English have no grammatical gender naturally poses a problem when it comes to assigning gender to English nouns borrowed by Spanish. The reason for this is that in Spanish every noun necessarily has a specific gender: masculine or feminine.

Among the factors held to influence the assignment of gender to loanwords are the following (Poplack, Pousada y Sankoff. 1982):

- a. The sex of the referent (in the case of animate nouns).
- b. Phonetic similarity between the ending of the loanword and the ending of a noun in the borrowing language that is usually associated with a particular gender.
- c. Association with the gender of a word that sounds the same (homophone) in the borrowing language.
- d. A tendency in the borrowing language to adopt the unmarked gender.

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The first of these factors applies only to a small number of borrowings. However, its power is absolute in that it allows no exceptions. Several studies on this topic show that no word referring to a masculine animate noun is ever assigned the feminine gender. The converse is also true. When a loanword designates an animate noun, the grammatical gender assigned to it in the borrowing language is invariably the one that corresponds to the sex of the referent. Thus it is that in baseball Spanish we find: *un* *cácther*, *el* *coach*, *el* *mánager*, *un* *pítcher derecho*, *un* *rookie*, *el* *utility*. The masculine gender is given to these Anglicisms because all normally refer to a member of the male sex. The same occurs with words like *inicialista*, *intermedista*, *antesalista* that are deemed masculine despite their ending in -a.

Regarding the second factor, it is important to recall that Spanish words that end in unstressed -a, in -d, in -z, and in certain suffixes (-ción, -sión, -umbre, -tis) are,

with few exceptions, feminine. On the other hand, words ending in other sounds, as well as those that are compound words are masculine. This means that the following are quite naturally assigned the masculine gender: *béisbol*, *bleacher*, *bound*, *box*, *bullpen*, *club*, *dead ball*, *double play*, *dugout*, *escore*, *field*, *forfeit*, *foul*, *foul tip*, *handicap*, *hit*, *home*, *home run*, *infield*, *inning*, *líder*, *line up*, *out*, *pick up*, *play*, *play off*, *ponche*, *rally*, *record*, *rolling*. Consequently, Spanish speakers say “*los bleachers*,” “*un bound alto*,” “*un doble play*,” “*el dugout*,” “*quinto inning*,” “*rolin lento*.” It is perhaps worth pointing out that *bound*, *field* and *record* might have been assigned the feminine gender given the Spanish tendency to consider words ending in -d to be feminine. However, this final consonant is present only in writing. In normal speech, it is elided with the result that the final consonant of these loanwords becomes respectively -n, -l, -r, which are typically masculine endings in Spanish.

Although the relevant examples are few in number, association with the gender of a word that sounds the same (homophone) in the borrowing language is also a factor. For instance, it seems likely that this is one reason why *base* (from *base*) is feminine. In other cases, homophony can work alongside another factor, namely the phonetic similarity between the ending of the loanword and the ending of a noun in the borrowing language usually associated with a particular gender, to determine the gender of the loanword. These two factors may well explain why *bola* (from *ball*), *curva* (from *curve*), *línea* (from *line*) and *rotación* (from *rotation*) are feminine. All four words are not just phonetically similar to their English sources. They also have feminine endings in Spanish, the first three ending in -a, and the fourth in -ción. The same may be said of the masculine words *doble* (from *double*), *plato* (from *plate*) and *sacrificio* (from *sacrifice*).

Finally, several scholars argue that there is a tendency, in the borrowing language, to adopt the “unmarked” gender, which, in Spanish, is masculine. Apparently, the influence of this factor has been very considerable in the lexical

domain of baseball. For instance, a careful look at the data reveals that more than 90% of borrowings are indeed masculine. The following substantial sample, which contains just seven feminine nouns, will serve as an illustration:

average, back stop, balk, *base*, bate, batazo, bateador, bateo, *batería*, béisbol, bleacher, *bola*, bound, box, box score, bullpen, *cácher*, center field, club, coach, *curva*, dead ball, double play, draft, dugout, *esprintada*, field, fildeo, fly, force out, forfeit, foul, foul tip, handicap, hit, hit and run, home, home run, infield, inning, jacket, left field, líder, *línea*, line up, *mánager*, out, out field, pick up, *pítcher*, play, play off, ponche, rally, record, right field, rolling, rookie, roster, *rotación*, score, short stop, sinker, slider, slump, spikes, staff, standing, strike, swing, team, ticket, time, umpire, utility, wild pitch, wind up.

All of the above loanwords whose phonetic form and meaning have been borrowed from English unchanged (e.g. *dugout*, *fly*, *pítcher*) are masculine in Spanish. Of the seven that are feminine, 6 are calques based on phonological forms that in Spanish typically signal this gender (*base*, *batería*, *bola*, *curva*, *línea* y *rotación*) and one is a borrowing ending in -a: *esprintada*.

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Now, although the data presented here seem to confirm the importance and relevance of the so-called tendency to assign to nouns the unmarked gender, the reality is that almost every word examined has an ending associated in Spanish with the masculine gender: they do not end in -a, nor in -ción, -sión, -umbre, etc. This factor alone, then, could explain why they are masculine in Spanish.

## Final thoughts

The following observations are worth repeating:

1. The Spanish-American contribution to Major League baseball is impressive both quantitatively and qualitatively. Not only do they represent more than 20% of the total number of players but many of these stand out for their extraordinarily skillful performances in different positions, for which they have won numerous trophies and received the highest honors.
2. The outstanding performance of Spanish-American baseball players has, or can have, an enormous impact on the immigrant community in the United States by raising considerably its self-esteem and making it proud to be Hispanic.
3. The two Spanish-American countries that are most represented in Major League baseball are the Dominican Republic, which fields more than 40% of the players of Hispanic origin, and Venezuela, which fields roughly 30% of the total.
4. The other two Caribbean islands, Cuba and Puerto Rico, which traditionally provided the greatest number of players of foreign origin, have seen their participation drop in recent years to below 10% of the total.
5. In the sphere of language, baseball has provided Spanish with loanwords and calques borrowed from English. The reason is clear: these words and their concepts did not previously exist in Spanish. Accordingly, the borrowing of words like *strike* (estráik - estrái) and *home run* (jonnón), as well as the expansion of the meaning of some words

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already existing in Spanish, like *bola* o *carrera*, should be understood as a kind of linguistic enrichment that has been achieved economically in the sense that no new signifier has needed to be created or memorized. Furthermore, in addition to the fact that the borrowing language often lacks words for particular concepts, the use of loanwords can make life easier for speakers since they are often shorter and thus more economical than their Spanish alternatives. Typical examples are *hit* y *jonrón*. The Spanish equivalents of *hit* (*sencillo*, *indiscutible*, *intrapable*) are clearly much longer and the same may be said of *cuadrangular* o *vuelacerca* as opposed to *jonrón*.

6. An analysis of lexical availability performed with data from the Dominican Republic reveals that when there are alternative lexical forms (one of English origin and the other Spanish) to express the same meaning, the word most available to speakers is the loanword acquired orally in childhood. The Spanish equivalent, which is used fairly regularly in formal radio and television broadcasts, appears much later. In other words, the average speaker does not become familiar with the Spanish form until after he has acquired and used for many years the original English word. For this reason, the loanword is more readily available than its Spanish equivalent, which scarcely forms part of the passive vocabulary of the speaker. To illustrate this, listed below are a few pairs of words, synonymous in meaning, drawn from the study of lexical availability. The number to the right of each word indicates its position in the lists, according to its index of availability. The lower the number, the greater the availability:

home run	4	—	cuadrangular	55
pícher	6	—	lanzador	40
cátcher	8	—	receptor	96
mánager	18	—	dirigente	175
inning	53	—	entrada	84

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7. Finally, the incorporation of Anglicisms into the vocabulary of baseball produces no changes in Spanish. The data analyzed show that the phonological and morphological structures of the language are remarkably stable and resistant. Instead of changing the system, gradually, as their use becomes more widespread, loanwords are assimilated by Spanish. In the end, they are fully integrated, being molded in such a way that they become subject to the same processes and restrictions as the rest of the vocabulary.

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