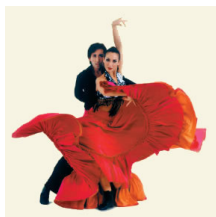


11 August 2007

By: Stefan Anitei, Science Editor



By 2030, Spanish Will Be the World's Second Most Widely Spoken Language After Chinese

Outclassing English

Tired of English? Start learning Spanish, because in less than 25 years, English will be anyway outstripped, as this language of Latin origin is set to go up from the fourth place to the second, behind Chinese. Finally, a soft and musical Romance language instead of a harsh Germanic one. EFE news agency has reported that Spanish will be the second most-spoken language in the world by the year 2030. The eminent academic Humberto López Morales (who has Cuban roots, lived for a long time in Puerto Rico and received Spanish citizenship) stated at the opening of a seminar organized in Buenos Aires, the Argentinian capital, by the Spanish Embassy - and coinciding with the visit of Spain's Deputy Prime Minister, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega - that the number of people speaking Spanish as their mother tongue will increase from 5.7% (as it is now) to 7.5% by 2030, and will be surpassed just by the Chinese. Spanish is now the fourth most widely spoken language in the world, being the only official language in 17 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela), and co-official in Equatorial Guinea, Paraguay, Peru and Puerto Rico, but large percentages of Spanish speakers are found in Andorra, Belize, Gibraltar, and the US. At the moment, 322 million people across the globe speak Spanish as mother tongue and up to 500 million are fluent in Spanish. In the Western educational system, it closely follows English amongst the taught languages. "Some 32 million people in the United States are Spanish-speakers, which means this country is on the fifth place worldwide." Lopez said. By 2050, the US will be the country with the largest number of Spanish speakers. "Till 2050, in the US, 2,5 Hispano-Americans will be born per minute, 3.700 per day and more than 100.000 per month", sustained Lopez. For example, the number of Latinos living in Minnesota is expected to nearly triple between 2000 and 2030, growing from 143,000 to over 405,000, as proven by data from the Minnesota State Demographic Center. Many counties in the southwestern US are mainly inhabited by Spanish speakers and by 2040, Bay Area county except San Francisco will be populated mostly by Hispanics (60 %), according to recently released numbers from the California Department of Finance.