

Aviva Palencia

Brian Dillon

Junior Year Writing

15 October 2021

Why Haven't I Heard of Voseo

00:00:00-00:00:05

[Two elderly men seated outside of a cafe in deep conversation with each other]

00:00:05-00:00:18

[Speech bubbles appear sequentially from left to right, top to bottom: “hola”, “adios”, “chocolate”, “bicecleta”, “¡Hasta la vista, baby!”, and “¿Dónde está la biblioteca?”]

00:00:18-00:00:22

[Chart with Spanish pronouns and conjugations of “hablar” against black background]

00:00:23-00:00:25

[Red arrow points at row for 2nd person singular (informal)]

00:00:26-00:00:32

[Red arrow points at row for 2nd person singular (formal)]

00:00:33-00:00:40

[Flamenco dancer with speech bubble “Vosotros habláis”]

00:00:41-00:00:43

[White question mark against silhouette of a person's head with speech bubble “¿¿Vos??”]

00:00:44-00:00:48

[Black background]

00:00:49-00:00:58

[Finger pointing towards viewer with “YOU” in white text”]

00:00:59-00:01:01

[Picture of a young kid with “(juniors)” in white text]

00:01:02-00:01:15

[Picture of two friends with “(friends)” in white text]

00:01:16-00:01:26

[Map of Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America; Central America and the River Plate basin in South America are encircled]

00:01:27-00:01:31

[Yellow star appears where Argentina is on the map inside circle]

00:01:32-00:01:39

[Yellow star appears where Costa Rica is on the map inside circle]

00:01:40-00:01:43

[White question mark against silhouette of a person’s head with speech bubble “¿¿Vos??”]

00:01:44-00:01:48

[Black background]

00:01:49-00:02:05

[Painting of a Don Quixote (a medieval knight) and a squire riding a horse and a donkey, and set against a rural countryside with speech bubbles: “Will you please stop pretending to be a medieval knight?”, “Have some respect, Sancho :(”, and “Will you (formal) please stop pretending to be a medieval knight?”]

00:02:06-00:02:14

[Painting of a knight in black and red armor with speech bubble “I am going to make you

(informal) part of my crew”]

00:02:15-00:02:22

[Map of Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America]

00:02:23-00:02:26

[Yellow stars appear where Mexico and Peru are on the map]

00:02:27-00:02:36

[Yellow stars appear where Cuba and Puerto Rico are on the map]

00:02:37-00:02:53

[Red Xs appear where Central America and the River Plate basin are on the map]

00:02:54-00:02:58

[Stars are replaced with “tú” and Xs are replaced with “vos”]

00:02:59-00:03:37

[Picture of person with text “Schools, broadcast television, government, social stigma” covering their face and is wearing boxing gloves with text “Lack of institutional support” pretending to punch another person with text “voseo” covering their face]

00:03:38-00:03:43

[“In the United States” in white text and blue circle with text “Salvadoran voseo speakers” against black background]

00:03:44-00:03:50

[Red arrow appears from the left with text “Pressure to fit into majority Hispanic group from Hispanics” points to blue circle]

00:03:51-00:04:37

[Red arrow appears from the right with text “Pressure to fit into majority Hispanic group from

non-Hispanics” points to blue circle]

00:04:38-00:04:45

[Black background]

00:04:46-00:04:54

[“extra” in white text appears momentarily then back to black background] 00:04:55-

[Reference list in white text against black background:

“Photo by Kazuo ota on Unsplash;

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“Mapa de América del Sur, mapa da América do Sul, South America map.” by thejourney1972

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Cameron, R.D. (2018). Study abroad, immigration, and voseo in the twentyfirst-century classroom. *Hispania*, 100(5):67–73.;

Martinez Barahona, S.Y. (2020). The usage of voseo in social media: Hondurans and salvadorans in the united states. *The Macksey Journal*, 1(1):126.;

Sorenson, T. (2013). Voseo to tuteo accommodation among salvadorans in the united states. *Hispania*, 96(4):763–781.”]

If you live America, you probably recognize some Spanish. There's hola, adios; there's cognates like chocolate and bicicleta. And there's pop cultural phenomena over the decades like Hasta la vista baby and Donde esta la biblioteca?

[new image]

If you've taken some Spanish classes, you're probably familiar with the informal second person pronoun tu and the formal second person pronoun usted. You may have even heard smatterings of that pronoun from Spain [new image] the plural informal second person vosotros. But, unless you're Hispanic, you probably haven't heard of the other formal second person pronoun vos.

[new image]

Let me break that down a little. Vos is a second person pronoun [new image] like you in English or tu in standard dialects of Spanish. It's informal, which means it mostly refers to people who you have authority over [new image] like younger people, or people you're close to [new image] like friends. It's actually more complicated than that because norms change between countries. For example, some places prefer usted over tu or vos. But let's ignore that for the purposes of this video.

[new image map] Vos is commonly used in Central America [circle] and the River Basin Plate [circle] which includes Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. In fact, it's the dominate informal second person pronoun [star appears] in Argentina, meaning it functionally replaces tu. And it's also very common in Costa Rica [star appears]. These are two of the most popular tourist and study abroad destinations for Americans. [new image] So then why is vos virtually unheard of by non-Hispanics in the US?

[new screen] For historical perspective, let's look at the context according to Cameron (2018).

[Don Quixote image] Vos began as a formal second person pronoun in old Spanish, during the

Middle Ages. To give you an idea of the formality level, it's third person counter part was with *vuestra merced*. Which is something like your grace. [new image] During the conquistador era, *vos* became an informal or familiar pronoun and was a popular variant in Spanish speaking Latin America.

[Map image] Throughout the colonial period different regions of Latin America had different relationships to Spain. [stars] For example, Mexico and Peru were kept closely tied to Spain through local vice royalties. [more stars] Cuba and Puerto Rico remained under Spanish rule as late as 1889 because they were lucrative as slave colonies. On the other hand, Central America and the River Plate Basin (again Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay) [red X] were more isolated from Spain and thus more isolated from peninsular Spanish. So, when the next informal second person pronoun *tu* came into fashion in Spain during the late 18th century those isolated areas retained *vos*. [new image] Because *voseo*, which is the use of *vos*, [punching image] adhered less closely to linguistic trends from Spain it's seen as a less prestigious dialectal feature by most of Latin America. Although it is commonly used, most countries that use it also use *tu*, especially in upper socio-economic classes, urban areas, and academic spaces. *Voseo* is institutionally neglected in Latin America and even more so in the US, this is why you probably never learned about it in high school Spanish. This dialect hierarchy is so pronounced, that linguists have noticed that immigrants from El Salvador decrease their use of *voseo* upon arrival to the US. [new image] Martinez Barahona (2020) and Sorenson (2013) posit that these immigrants experience in-group discrimination [left arrow] from the dominant Mexican communities in the US that use *tu*. And at the same time [right arrow] they experience out-group discrimination from non-Hispanics for being an even more otherable variety of Spanish speaker. This leads to a significant loss of culture and sense of identity and furthers the cycle of lack of pressure to

represent voseo in Spanish media in the United States. Martinez Barahona and Sorenson elaborate on how the use of voseo can vary between genders, ages, relationships between speakers, and social contexts both in the US and in El Salvador. For example, men tend to use it more often because it is seen as more masculine. Whereas the academicness of tu has a more feminine or effeminate connotation. For more information on these nuances, feel free to check out the sources in my list of references.

[new screen] So if you're ever in a Spanish class and your teacher says "oh and also, Spain uses this extra pronoun vosotros" ask them if they know anything about the [flash extra] extra Latin American pronoun. It's a whole continent after all and there is no one standard variety.

[references]