

# Phonetic Distinctions Among Dialects of Spanish in the Americas

## Frequently Occurring Features

/s/ is frequently dropped or aspirated (especially in final position)	/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)
Many dialects do not distinguish between /j/ and /ʎ/	/x/ → [χ]
Assibilation of /r/ is common, resulting in a sound that is similar to the English /s/	-ado → [aðo] or [ao] frequently

Dialect	Phonological Features
Argentina	<p>/s/ in syllable final position → [h], [ʃ] or deleted</p> <p>Some regions distinguish between /j/ and /ʎ/ as either [ʒ] and [j] or as [ʒ] and [ʃ]</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>/l/ and /r/ are frequently leveled, resulting in an acoustically similar profile for both sounds</p>
Bolivia	<p>/s/ → [h], [ø], or [s̺]</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>-ado → [aðo] or [ao]</p> <p>CVC → CC</p>
Chile	<p>/s/ → [h]</p> <p>/x/ / before /e/, /i/ → [ç]</p> <p>/f/ → [ϕ]</p> <p>/tʃ/ → [ts] or [ʃ]</p> <p>/r/ tends to be produced as assibilated</p> <p>-ado → [ao]</p>
Colombia	<p>/s/ → [h], [ø], [s̺], or [s]</p> <p>/r/ (infinitive) is deleted</p> <p>/d/ → [r]</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>/b/, /d/, and /g/ are occlusive after a consonant</p> <p>/x/ → [h]</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p> <p>/n/ → [m]</p> <p>Some regions distinguish between /j/ and /ʎ/</p> <p>-ado → [aðo]</p>
Costa Rica	<p>/s/ → [h]</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>/j/ and /ʎ/ → [j]</p> <p>/x/ → [h]</p> <p>-ado → [ao]</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p>
Cuba	<p>/s/ → [h] or [ø]</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p> <p>/r/ → [l] or assimilated to C ([pwel̺ta] or [pwetta])</p> <p>/tʃ/ → [ʃ]</p> <p>/r/ → [r̺] (devoiced, especially among female speakers)</p>
Dominican Republic	<p>/x/ → [χ]</p> <p>/s/ → [h] or [ø]</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p> <p>/r/ → V or C (can be produced as a vowel or cons)</p> <p>/r/ → [l], [r̺], [r]</p>
Ecuador	<p>/s/ → [h] or [ø]</p> <p>/s/ → [z] before vowels ([laz agwas])</p> <p>CVC → CC</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>Leveling of /l/ and /r/</p> <p>Some regions distinguish between /j/ and /ʎ/ as either [j] and [ʎ] or as [ʒ] and [j]</p>
El Salvador	<p>/b/, /d/, and /g/ are occlusive after a consonant or semivowel</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p> <p>No distinction between: /j/ and /ʎ/ → [j] or [i]</p> <p>ia → [ija]</p> <p>/s/ → [s], [h], or [ø] ([z] or [h] before voiced consonants)</p> <p>/x/ → [h]</p> <p>/f/ → [ϕ] or [f]</p>
Guatemala	<p>/s/ → [s̺]</p> <p>/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated</p> <p>-ado → [aðo]</p> <p>No distinction between: /j/ and /ʎ/ → [j] or [i]</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p>
Honduras	<p>/b/, /d/, and /g/ are occlusive after a consonant or semivowel</p> <p>/s/ → [s], [h], or [ø]</p> <p>/s/ → [z] or [h] before voiced consonant</p> <p>/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)</p> <p>/x/ → [h]</p> <p>/f/ → [ϕ] or [f]</p> <p>/d/ → [ð] or [θ]</p> <p>No distinction between: /j/ and /ʎ/ → [j] or [i]</p> <p>-ia → [ija] (dia → [dija]) hypercorrection</p>

Mexico	[j] has the tendency to vocalize (mayo [majo], capilla [kapija]) /s/ → [h] or dropped -ado → [ao] /r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated	/x/ → [h] Vowel reduction in unstressed syllable (coches [kotʃs]) /j/ → [ɟ] sporadically /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)	
Nicaragua	/b/, /d/, and /g/ are occlusive after a consonant or semivowel /s/ → [s], [h] /s/ → [h] syllable final -ado → [ao]	Intervocalic /j/ tends to vocalize (bella [beja]) -ia → [ija] (dia → [dija]) hypercorrection /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel) /f/ → [ɸ]	
Panama	/x/ → [h] /s/ → [h] syllable final /tʃ/ → [ʃ] (youth under 25 years old) /d/ → [t] word final /f/ → [ɸ]	-ado → [ao] (rural) /l/ and /r/ are acoustically equivalent /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel or simply nasalization of the preceding vowel)	
Paraguay	Distinction between /j/ and /j̃/ → /j/ and /j̃/ Intervocalic /j/ → [j]	/s/ → [h] or [x] in syllable final position /r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated	
Peru	<i>Sierra Region:</i> Reduction of vowels in unstressed syllables (bloques para apuntes [bloks para apunts]) Distinction between /j/ and /j̃/ → /j/ and /j̃/ -ado → [aɔ̃o] /r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated	<i>Lima and Northern East Coast:</i> No distinction between: /j/ and /j̃/ → [j] /s/ → [h] syllable final position -ado → [ao]	
Puerto Rico	/tʃ/ → [tʃ], [tʃ̃] or [ʃ] depending on region /x/ → [h] /s/ syllable final → [h] or deleted /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)	leveling of /l/ and /r/ → [r], [l] or mixed sound (some regions distinguish between these two phonemes) /r/ → /xr/, [R] or [R̥] /s/ → [s̺]	
US New Mexico	New Mexico/Colorado Spanish resembles that of Guatemala or Costa Rica more so than Mexican Spanish intervocalic /j/ is vocalized or deleted (capilla [kapija])	/r/ may be produced as [r] or assibilated /x/ → [h] /s/ is aspirated in the syllable final position	
US California Border	No aspiration of /s/ in syllable final position /x/ → [ç] with a tendency toward [h]		
US Tampa	Type 1: Similar to Northern Spain Distinction between: /j/ and /j̃/ Distinction between: /s/ and /θ/ /x/ → [χ]	Type 2: Cuban Spanish & English Influence /θ/ similar to English (more volume, less air) /s/ is no longer apicoalveolar /s/ → [h]	Type 3: Similar to Havana Spanish /s/ → [h] syllable final /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel)
US Miami	Lax consonantal articulation /n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel or simply nasalization of the preceding vowel)	/s/ → [h] in syllable final position /r/ is often devoiced [r̥]	
Uruguay	/s/ → [h] or [x] /x/ → [x]	No distinction between /j/ and /j̃/ → [ɟ]	
Venezuela	/n/ → [ŋ] (word final before pause or vowel) /x/ → [h] Some regions distinguish between /l/ and /r/	Some regions have leveling of /l/ and /r/ → [r], [l] or mixed sound (some regions distinguish between these two phonemes) In some cases /r/ is not heard, but rather the following consonant is doubled (carne [kanne])	