



Spain ambassador to Tanzania, Félix Costales.

Embassy: Spanish on the way to become a global universal language

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Dar es Salaam. Language can simply be defined as a method of human communication, either through spoken or written word. Language consists of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. Among other things, language can be measured in parameters such as its development, acquisition, maintenance and use of complex systems of communication. All these depends on human ability to do so.

Language can have scores of characteristics but the following are the most important ones: language is arbitrary, productive, creative, systematic, vocalic, social, non-instinctive and conventional. It is these characteristics of language which distinguish human language from animal communication.

While human beings largely use spoken word and expressions (language) as a medium of communication, animals have their own designated means of communicating which may not meet the criteria of a language.

Estimates of the number of human languages in the world is between 5,000 and 7,000. However, any precise estimate depends on a partly arbitrary distinction between languages and dialects.

Haya, Makonde, Hehe,

Igbo and Zulu, to list but a few, are the common human languages, but for them to be recognized as international languages they need to record large speaking population across the world as English, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, French do.

English and Chinese are the giant languages. They have earned a characteristic of being life-changing media of communication transforming people's lives. On the other hand, Spanish is a surprise package, increasingly growing in Europe, Asia, America and now Africa.

Spanish language

"Today, 23rd of April is the World Book Day, organized by UNESCO since 1995. William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra died on this same day back in 1616. In a tribute to the latter, author of "Don Quixote" and one of the greatest Spanish authors of all times, the 23rd of April was also chosen to celebrate the "Spanish Language Day".

Spain's most universal assets are its language and culture. Today, more than 570 million people around the world speak Spanish; it is the language with the second-largest number of native speakers in the world, and the second language of international communication. Furthermore, it is the world's second most studied language (after English), with more than 40 million

students in 90 countries.

It is the official or quasi-official language in 21 countries. Its vitality and strength are becoming clearer day by day, as the number of Spanish speakers is constantly increasing. According to Britannica World Data, by 2030 Spanish-speakers will comprise 7.5% of the world's population, far ahead of Russian (2.2%), French (1.4%) and German (1.2%). If current trends is maintained steady, within three or four generations, 10% of the planet's inhabitants will be communicating in Spanish.

The estimates also show that by 2050, the United States will be the number-one Spanish-speaking country in the world. US Census Bureau estimates indicate that there will be 132.8 million Hispanics in the US in 2050, nearly triple the current 50 million population. This would total 30% of the population, meaning that nearly one in three residents of the United States will be a Spanish speaker.

Already Spanish has a high profile on the internet—being the third most-used language (7.8% of the total)—and in scientific circles.

Spanish culture is, undoubtedly, one of the richest in the world. There is a long list of internationally renowned Spaniards from the fields of literature, fine arts, music and cinema, as well as from the many countries where the language is

the main means of expression. Spanish-speaking culture travels the globe, spreading its mixture of the traditional and the avant-grade, highlighting the genius and creativity of Spanish artists and authors.

In Spain, the rich heritage of the Spanish language is united with those of three other locally co-official languages: Catalan, Basque and Galician.

Instituto Cervantes

Created in 1991, Instituto Cervantes is a public cultural institution which today is present in more than 87 cities in 44 countries on six continents. Its mandate include promoting Spanish and Spain's locally co-official languages and to disseminate the culture of all Spanish-speaking countries. It maintains a reference portal on the Spanish language and culture in Spanish called the Cervantes Virtual Centre and offers Spanish courses

through its AVE Virtual Classroom.

The DELE is an official diploma accrediting the level of competence and proficiency in the Spanish language. It is internationally recognized and valid indefinitely.

Spanish in Sub-Saharan Africa

Number of people who study Spanish language in Sub-Saharan Africa is on the rise with 1.5 million students in 27 countries in the region. This represents 6.5% of the total number of Spanish students in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa is the third region in the world in terms of number of Spanish students. Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Cameroon and Gabon lead the pack. Spain is fully committed to supporting the study of Spanish across the continent.



MORE INFO: NUMBERS

570

Million people speak Spanish around the world.

2nd

Largest number of native speakers worldwide.

21

Countries in which Spanish is an official language.

1st

Country in the world in number of Spanish speakers: Mexico.

3rd

Country in number of Spanish speakers: United States.

1st

Language in terms of projected growth.

2nd

Most studied language in the world.

3rd

Most used language on the internet.