

Globalization and Language Change in Chile

(A Look at the -ish Languages and More)

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Resumen

Este artículo analiza los cambios históricos y recientes en los idiomas en Chile, desde el aymara y el mapudungun y español de los españoles conquistadores a las más recientes influencias de otras lenguas, incluidos los idiomas asiáticos. Chile es un lugar de la inmigración, la colonización y la influencia de los medios de comunicación. Todos estos factores contribuyen al cambio lingüístico como resultado de la globalización, que tiene como objetivo acercar a las personas, culturas y naciones más juntas hacia un entendimiento global y para fomentar los procesos globales en cualquier área (por ejemplo, negocios, religión, política, ciencia, etc.) El documento concluye que el español de Chile, así como otros "-ish" lenguas en Chile (Spanglish, Inglés, Chinglish) comparten no sólo léxica, pero las influencias fonológicas provocada por una zona de contacto lingüístico que se amplifica por la inmigración, el comercio y la política, y por las nuevas tecnologías de comunicación electrónica.

Key Words: Chile, Chinglish, comunicación, Inglés, globalización, cambios del lenguaje, zonas lingüísticas de contacto, influencia del lenguaje, lenguajes nativos, Español.

Abstract:

This paper examines the historic and recent changes in languages in Chile, from the native Aymara and Mapudungun to the Spanish of the Conquistadores to more recent influences from other languages, including Asiatic languages. Chile is a place of immigration, colonization and media influence; all these factors contribute to language change as a result of globalization, which aims to bring people, cultures, and nations closer together toward a global understanding and to foster global processes in any area (e.g., business, religion, politics, science, etc.). The paper concludes that Chilean Spanish as well as other "-ish" languages in Chile (Spanglish, English, Chinglish) share not only lexical but phonological influences brought about by a linguistic contact zone that is amplified by immigration, commerce and politics, and by the new electronic communication technologies.

Key Words: Chile, Chinglish, communication, English, globalization, language change, linguistic contact zones, language influence, native languages, Spanish.

Definitions:

Globalization: any effort to bring people, cultures, or nations closer together to form a global understanding and to foster global processes in any area (e.g., business, religion, politics, science, etc.)

"ish" languages: languages in which influence from English plays a role in language change or use. NOTE: English itself is such a language, as it is the language that developed from global encounters in linguistic contact zones from Latin (via the French), from Germanic Languages (especially Saxon), and from the Anglo (Celtic) languages. Spanglish and Chinglish are contemporary examples of linguistically changed languages resulting from contact between Spanish, Chinese and English.

Chilean Spanish: derived from languages including, but not limited to: Castilian Spanish, the native languages of Mapudungun, Aymara, Quechua, and others, plus all other languages with which it comes into contact and from which it borrows terms wholly or partially, from which it creates "dichos" or idiomatic expressions, or otherwise uses. Chilean Spanish is highly creative and forgiving, and it is recognized a dialect, from Castilian, which is the root of Spanish in Chile (1500s).

GLOBALIZATION AND LANGUAGE CHANGE IN CHILE
(Contact Zones, the "-ish" Languages, and More)

Introduction

Language changes in the Spanish of Chile can be attributed to historical influences from native languages, such as, but not limited to, Mapudungun, spoken by the Mapuche in southern Chile, and the Quechua and Aymara languages spoken by the native peoples of the altiplano in northern Chile, southern Peru and western Bolivia. Immigration languages have also influenced the language in Chile. These include: British, American and other Englishes; French, German and other western European languages; Czech and

other eastern European languages; and several Asian languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, and more recently, Hindi and others. In addition, ongoing influences from neighboring languages, such as Argentinean Spanish, move freely back and forth over national borders. Language has no borders, only contact zones and changes in the languages that exist within those zones, where the speakers encounter one another and gain influences from other languages—these influences can be found wherever globalization occurs.

Furthermore, more recent influences, since the eighteenth century, have come by way of various media, which include spoken messages, personally written messages, hardcopy publications of one form or another, and more recently, by electronic media such as telephone, telegraph, television, computer and the new portable communication system and its thousands of apps (applications): mobile cellular phones. Chile prides herself on being the "most connected" country in Latin America; this connection to the world plays out in the language used throughout the nation, and abroad. And, the globalizing influences of these media affect the politics, market, social situation and, importantly, the language(s) of Chile.

Thus, when considering language change in Chile, we must look at the multiple influences of globalization. Chile is, or would like to be, a member of the "industrialized nations" of the world. For this reason, and others, the Ministry of Education spends a lot of money on such programs as "Programa Ingles Abre Puertas"--the "open doors" English program--and the Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica (National Commission of Scientific and Technological Research or CONICYT) graduate scholarship program, among others, and it offers many exchange scholarships and sponsors visits to English-speaking countries (www.Mineduc.cl) for students, faculty, and administrators. Why all this interest in English? Because it has been accepted as

the official language of the World Trade Organization, and perhaps because China's 1.4 billion people are learning English—with children as young as two or three years studying English in nursery school, and all college graduates required to pass the CET English exam if they want to earn their diplomas, and also because India's 1.4 billion people learn English in the schools (left over from British colonialism). The joint population of India and China is nearly half the human population on earth, and those people are learning or already using at least basic English. The four most widely spoken languages on the planet are Mandarin, English, Castilian Spanish, and Hindi-Urdu, all of which are found in pure form as well as in changed form in Chile (www.krysstal.com/spoken.html).

These four languages are deeply involved in the globalization that affects business, economy, science, politics, education and everything else about life in Chile, except for those who live in total or near-total isolation. Contact through globalization has led to the influences of one language upon another, so that in Chile one now finds Spanglish, Chinglish, English and “-ish” variations of other languages present in the country. In addition, Chileans use uncountable colloquial expressions, or *dichos*, that show influences from common habits and usage as well as borrowing from other languages. Although these “-ish” language forms often follow the vocabulary and linear structure of English, when spoken they may also tend to become wild varieties of English in which the first languages often predominate in pronunciation and accents, and speakers may also hold onto the first language diction and syntax when spoken. Conversely, the “-ish” variations may also be predominately Spanish or Chinese with heavy influence of English vocabulary, especially slang (www.spanglishexchange.com).

We should bear in mind that apart from these variations and lingual exchanges, purely linguistic influences also play very important roles in language

change in Chile, but more about that later in this paper.

Native Language Influence

First, let's take a look at the native languages and the ways in which they have influenced Chilean Spanish. When the first Spanish came over the Andes into Chile in the area near Copiapo in the central Atacama Desert, in what was, though not historically documented as such at the time, an early effort in globalizing the world (to expand controlled area, gain resources, establish trade, colonize, and do all the things that globalization does), they brought with them the sixteenth century Castilian language. The military men in the early expeditions, and in later groups of immigrants, usually spoke the standard Castilian Spanish of the time, and as is typical in a situation where the conquerors determine the rules for the conquered people, the locals had to learn to communicate in their language. But, as these men bedded the local women and learned about local culture and the areas in which they settled, they also learned native languages. These included, as we know, the Quechua and Aymara languages in the north and later, Mapudungun in the southern part of the country, as well as other less influential native languages, such as the Kolla, a stem language from Quechua (Adelaar), spoken by the native group who migrated from Argentina into the high desert precordillera valleys of north central Chile. These native languages contain words that have entered entirely or in altered form into the speech of Chileans, no matter their ethnic or earlier national heritage, as Chileans in general are a mixed racial and ethnic group. Words for common human activities include such terms as “corral” from Mapudungun *korral*, which we know as a place to hold animals. These native terms also included traditional names for areas or places that still exist in Chile. For example, an M8.8 earthquake in 2010 noisily shook Talca; this city name is a distorted form of the Mapudungun word

tralka, which means “thunder” in English (Glosario: Espanol-Mapudungun).

Chileans also use native names for family—how about gua-gua, the Aymara word for “baby”, but which Chileans use as one of the famous dichos to mean anything alive that is small and dear, like a cute “perrito” or little puppy. Names for things (especially food), also come from native languages. “Manzana” originally came from Mapudungun manshana and means “apple” (Glosario: Espanol-Mapudungun); manzana is used throughout Spanish speaking countries to mean apple. And Chileans and visitors very much enjoy palta from the Aymara phalta, or avocate (Joelson 2005), which is the term in Spanish everywhere other than in Chile, or, in English, an avocado. Or how about “mani”, which is really a cacahuete, or peanut? “Mani” is the Hindi word meaning jewel (www.dictionary.tamilcube.com/hindi-dictionary.aspx?term=Jewel). How did Chileans obtain that word? From the Hindi, or from “mano” because hands are “manos” in Spanish, and hands hold the peanuts? In any case, the creative Chilean language embodies many such different terms and treats them as its own.

Immigrant Language Influence

Following the early Spanish, within a century or so, other immigrants began to arrive in Chile with additional early globalization efforts, and other languages began to influence the Chilean Spanish. In the late eighteenth century, the British arrived in force in northern Chile, even though they had already made themselves at home in ports such as Valparaiso, where today we find Chilean sailors using English terms for navigation, but in their local Spanglish, in which the pronunciation may follow Spanish, but the word is basically taken from the English. Look at barco, for example, which is a British bark, which originated earlier in English from the French barque, a three to five masted ship (Shakespeare’s Words).

In the north, the British came for minerals, principally nitrates for fertilizer.

Their miners were altiplano people, speaking Aymara and Quechua. And, British babies in the far north of Chile were no longer babies in the language of the “nanas” or maids and child care givers, who cared for gua-guas, which the local British began to use in their English/Spanglish as well. The term “nana” was first used ancient Greece or Italy, and though suspected of stemming from baby talk, referred to grandmothers (nanna/nonna), who traditionally cared for their grandchildren (collinsdictionary.com). The term easily transferred to household helpers. (Although “nana” has nearly the same meaning throughout Latin America, in certain parts of Mexico, a gua-gua is a bus? How did that happen?) It is important to remember that languages change constantly, and Spanglish took hold in northern Chile as the Brits learned Spanish and Chileans learned English, including their borrowing from the native languages in that contact zone.

And, Darwin and other British scientists and explorers brought scientific and other very different terminology to Chile, just as they took things home with them to Europe. Experts believe that Darwin, for one, took home Chagas Disease and died from it (Bernstein; Salwen); that disease results from the bite of the insect called a “vinchuca” in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay, but known by other names in other Latin American countries. Along with language, the Europeans also introduced many communicable diseases, such as measles and poxes that decimated the native population, just as they took home Syphilis and other diseases that had been unknown in Europe. Thus, not only do the globalizing influences of humans share a linguistic contact zone, but also a contact zone of health, which brings about changes in medicine, too. And with these contacts, the beginning of recognized globalization and the influence of politics, commerce, trade, science, medicine and other endeavors took hold in Chile.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Chile encouraged immigrants

from Europe to open southern Chile by offering land and assistance in settling the wild forests of the Lakes, Bio-Bio and Patagonian areas. In this colonization/globalization effort, Germans came in force, as did French, Swiss, Czechs, and other hard working Europeans seeking a new life (Tock; Sutter and Sunkel). With them came new language influences, and when they contacted Mapudungun and Spanish, many changes in languages occurred so that in many parts of Chile, especially in southern Chile, we now have *kuchen* and *beer*, not *torta* and *cerveza*. Yet, in the north, in the Arica area where many Arab-speaking people have settled, and in other parts of Chile where where settled Spanish from the Alhambra, which the Arabs controlled for 700 years, the linguistic contact zone enabled various elements of Arabic to enter the Chilean Spanish. Thus, non-Arab Chileans use the word *keke* for cake (from Arabic *kaka*) and *pastel* for various types of pie (www.arabic-language.org/arabic/dictionary.asp). *Pastel* is a common word used today in the Magreb, the northern Arabic-speaking area of Africa, for example, in Morocco, as the name of various types of vegetable or somewhat sweet meat pies e.g., chicken with fruit, cinnamon, and sugar). And of course, with not often considered language borrowing and adaptation, the Chileans now make and eat their famous “*pastel de choclo*”—it’s not *keke de maiz!* Or even *keke de choclo*...and certainly not corn pie! It is absolutely pure Chilean food made from local starchy corn or *choclo* paste cooked over meat and onions, but the name for the dish is certainly influenced by the language contact with *pastel* influenced from Arabic, and *choclo* from an unknown native language. *Choclo* is not a Spanish word, and neither is *maiz*, which is also from a Latin American indigenous language (Introductions).

Prior to the 1879-1893 War of the Pacific (Library of Congress), Chinese had come to Peru and Chile as miners and railroad builders, and more than a thousand Chinese sided with Chile during that conflict (Chou 2004). When they

joined with Chileans, their language, mostly Mandarin Chinese (rather than Cantonese), entered the language contact zone and introduced many words that Chileans have adopted wholesale, albeit with spelling, pronunciation and accentuation differences. For example, in Chinese, *chi fan* means “eat food” and today, village people in rural China greet each other with those two words meaning: “Hello, did you eat/have breakfast”—and if so, that means you have enough to eat, and the day will be a good one (Chinesetools.en). But in Chile there are numerous Chinese restaurants that are named or commonly called “*chifun*” or “*chifa*”. In addition, Chileans are growing to enjoy eating *chushi* or Japanese *sushi*, using the Spanish “ch” sound rather than the “ts” sound of the Japanese or the “sh” of English. And to go with that good Spanglish/Chinglish/“SpangChing” *cho sue* (chop suey), one might drink a “Fanta” (Fanta), which in Chilean *dichos*, is not an orange colored soft drink; it’s a red-headed person (Joelson). Truly, Chilean language is affected by English, Chinese and a host of other languages—and cultures—and adapts them to serve its purposes for communication. Where else in the world can people say that the women selling watermelons (English) has *grandes sandias* and NOT mean that her edible watermelons are huge?

Neighborly Language Influence

Of course, the language contact zones in our globalizing world also include the “neighborhood languages” such as Argentinean Spanish, Peruvian Spanish, Mexican Spanish and others in addition to the various Chilean Spanish dialects such as *Chilote*, from Chiloe Island. Many *dichos*, or popular terms, also stem from the code languages used in prisons or among mobs, *coa* terminology, for example. And, even the commonly used “*onces*” comes from the Prohibition era when the workmen, wanting a little nip of alcohol after work, used the code of “*elevens*” to ask for *aguardiente* (or tooth water), the strong alcohol whose name

has eleven letters. Or, for tea, they asked for “te rojo”, meaning red wine. Tea, of course, is not a Spanish or Chilean word, or an English word, either; it’s from the Malay the, from the Mandarin t’h by way of cha (pronounced cha or chai) from the Portuguese—but who knows who said it first? Thus, code terms, as well as common terms derived from other languages spread about by globalizing efforts, have immense influence on language change as they enter the everyday speech of Chileans and others.

So, geography, types and times of immigration, other efforts in globalization, including trade in minerals and other products, and many other factors continue to influence Chilean language. The Central Valley “huaso” speaks a very different language from Chiloe’s “chilote”; yet, these Chileans can understand one another because they have a base in Castilian Spanish. Plus, they share the media, in which spoken, written, and electronic materials and programs (including the language spoken or written) are shared among everyone. Chileans also seem to share a generous tolerance for linguistic differences, and errors. Classes in “correct” Spanish language are taught in schools and institutes, but people read newspapers including El Mercurio, the oldest Spanish language newspaper on the planet, watch TV, and communicate in “text messaging”—and in all of these communication media, dichos and –ishes can be found as part of the common everyday language use.

Media Language Use Influence

Perhaps the greatest modern influence on Chilean language comes from electronic sources: television, computer, mobile phones, and other mobile devices. It’s not for nothing that Chile is the most connected nation in South America. Her citizens feel the effects of globalization with its focus on business, economy, science, politics, education and language. In 2010 there was an argument in the media about the terms terremoto and maremoto when the international

reporters talked about the terrific central Chilean M8.8 earthquake and ten meter tsunami, with Chileans asking why the world was calling the terremoto an earthquake or the maremoto a tsunami. In 2011, Chileans heard about the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and they are discussing the earthquake and tsunami--not the terremoto and maremoto. Let’s see how much longer it takes for earthquake and tsunami to become Chileans’ favored linguistic terms for those two natural events that can wreak so much damage, with the possible disappearance of terremoto and maremoto, at least in the media.

Other Globalizing Influences

In addition to the media, globalized trade in minerals, timber products, agricultural products, oceanic products, and human resources have attracted outside investment in Chile, while at the same time, Chile invests externally. People make these transactions, and they do so in shared language—which is more and more in English or Spanglish. One hears people say “voy al bank” instead of “voy al banco” and everyone goes to the “supermercado” or supermarket. And, which Chilean doesn’t say “super”, with a beautiful Spanish pronunciation and the lengthy “u” accentuated?

Scientific discoveries and shared research in such areas as astronomy, gastronomy, and human and other animal biology also lead to new terms and changes in the language. Americans know what guavas are, and Chileans know what blueberries are. The rush to plant arandanos began about five years ago, and no one in Chile knew what those were, and especially, no one recognized the fruit as a blueberry. Today, however, everyone seems to know what a blueberry is, and we even see supermarket ads for blueberries, not arandanos. Cranberries are another new export crop being raised in the south of Chile, and as of 2012 were just entering the Chilean market. Still,

very few people have heard of or tasted a fresh or dried cranberry. But, to the contrary, many Chileans now know what peanut butter is, since the LIDER (LEADER in English)) supermarkets sell it at half the price it cost three years ago, and kids love it. Even the label calls it "pasta de mani" with a subtitle of "peanut butter", but the product name includes that Hindi jewel, the mani, in the Chilean Spanish. And, even the Chilean scientists have entered the linguistic contact zone: all the astronomers discuss stars and planets, not *estrellas* and *planetas*.

In Chile, a lot of international activities are going on, with visits from government officials, religious officials, tourists and students. All of this global movement means more contact in cultural and linguistic zones, in which Chileans, with their many linguistic and cultural differences, encounter each other, adapt what's useful, and make changes. Language change in Chile is an important result of these activities, as people attempt to communicate with and comprehend each other.

Linguistic Influences

Earlier, it was mentioned that apart from the immigration, trade, and so on of globalization, and the culture and language sharing, there are purely linguistic influences that also affect language change in Chile. For example, the stage of acquisition of second language learners is important (Nahkola and Saanilahti 2004), and Chilean children are typically receiving some sort of English class beginning in the fifth grade of elementary school. English has overtaken the popular French as the second language to acquire in Chile, after native Spanish, and it appears that Chilean education and individuals are developing a "critical language awareness" (Ferias) that is influencing teaching and learning of foreign languages. But, the linguistic environment and the communicative redundancy are factors of strong influence on the skills and speed of acquisition (Young 1988). For example, an

individual who has little exposure to English apart from a formal class once or twice a week will generally be slower in acquiring skills and will not gain the fluency of a person who takes that same class but has friends or family who speak English on a frequent or daily basis and with whom he or she can practice. And, we know that children are like little sponges, soaking up anything they hear and trying to use it, including foreign terms, English language from school classes, family and others, and the media. People also tend to mimic language used by those around them; so, they learn their pronunciation, vocabulary, and errors, which they tend to fossilize or make permanent as part of their own speech if not corrected early in the acquisition process. A woman, who speaks lovely Castilian Spanish a la Costa Rica listened to this writer speak Spanish and told her, "You sound like a Chilean...super fast, no "s" and no "d" and a lot of weird words!" Her Spanish is slower and more carefully pronounced but perhaps not so much fun (Nicita)!

The more communicative redundancy, that is, the more repetition of sounds, vocabulary, syntax, and so forth that a person hears or uses, the easier and faster it is to acquire the second language. In classes, teachers and students learn and use formal rules for acquiring language, and the grammar that contains the do's and don'ts of the formal language. Those rules usually don't apply when the "correct" form of a language is altered (Young 1988). For example, when Eubonics, the dialect of English or English-based language (there is discussion about whether Eubonics is a language or a dialect) that is used in urban black neighborhoods in the U.S. is examined, we find that Eubonics has its own rules (Rickford). The agreement of the verb with the second or third person is typically the same as for the first person. And the infinitive often takes the place of a present tense verb, for example, I be, you be, he be, we be, you be, and they be are correct forms in the grammar in Eubonics. In Chilean Spanish, the second person plural

“vosotros” is not used, but that is incorrect usage in Castilian Spanish. Perhaps grammar rules are easily broken in linguistic contact zones when communication takes priority.

It is important to recognize that the users themselves also affect the language, as they want, above all else, to have the language function for them (Cox 2003). So, when a Chilean says that he wants to drive “vuelte la manzana”, other Chileans know that he wants to drive “around the block”, not really “around the apple”. Or, and consider this huaso dicho (a huaso is central Chilean Farmer, often considered backward, or in English slang, a “hick”), “Cama corta y muerte dulce” (Cox 2003). Since when is a short bed a sweet death? No, but people want the language to function to express their ideas, and in this case to say that if one spend less time in bed/being lazy, one’s life will be happier or sweeter. Not only the ideas, but also the linguistic influences of other languages spread fast and deep. When humans respond to others, they use minds and bodies, cognition and pragmatics, to communicate. Exposure to language comes in many ways and from many places, and the language changes and is used differently on account of those influences (Hickey 2003).

A Few Additional Linguistic Factors that Affect Chileans and Their Repeated sounds help us learn pronunciation (McMahon 2003), and Spanish and Chinese share the same vowel sounds, so that speakers of Spanglish and Chinglish must learn to pronounce a “short I” in it vs. the Spanglish/Chinglish eat (this vs. these, etc.) if they wish to speak English without that home language pronunciation influence. The sounds of “a” in English are much more plentiful than in the single sound of the “a” in Chinese and Spanish: apple vs. awful vs. senora vs. ma. The Chinese ma maintains the single sound of “a” but with four tones in Mandarin, to indicate the meaning—mother, horse, question marker (?), ant, grasshopper frog, toad, and many other words depending on which of the four tones is used, and on the calligraphic symbol

(Chinesetools.en). Missing the tone can lead to calling a mother a horse, etc. but the “a” maintains its single sound in all of the ma variations. Furthermore, repeated words, such as are heard daily in the media, especially on TV, such as blue jeans, which comes out in Spanglish as blujeans or Nike a Nik (neek) or Neekay in Chilean Spanglish. Phrases do the same: Go for it! (Go for eet) or See you later (see you laa-tearr with a nice roll at the end!). And it goes on and on; the more repetition and redundancy we hear around us, the more we change our own language--and the more the general usage changes, with the surviving form being the strongest or the one most able to accurately describe the users’ intentions (Ritt 2004).

Chileans often tell me that they speak lazy Spanish or bad Spanish. Sometimes they say that they don’t speak Spanish at all, except in formal situations; they say they speak Chilean, which is recognized as a dialect of Spanish and very different from Castilian Spanish. But, Chileans can communicate easily and rapidly, even with body gestures and an “-ish” language; they’re friendly, outgoing, happy, and not exactly introverts! They’re curious and want to understand the world even though most never travel far from home. And they are generous in so many ways, one of which is in language tolerance. Never has a polite, kind Chilean told this writer that she has “lousy Spanish”—oh, no, they say, “ah senora, se puede hablar bien”—and that’s better than telling her something like “Estar arriba del columpio” (You are high on the swing.) or “Ud es un cero a la izquierda!” (You are a zero to the left!), none of which really make much sense in literal translation but are commonly understood colloquial terms or dichos (Cox 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that language changes by the moment, and those changes are caused by contact between people and their communication during purposeful or accidental

globalization. We recognize that Chile is in the global world in so very many ways, through trade, political and economic situations, people exchange, media influence from outside, and so on. And, the Chilean language is globalizing. Chileans are creative, and their language pragmatically acts like a sponge within its own parameters, sucking up English, Chinese, and any other language, regional dialect, slang, or media-projected language with which Chileans come in contact. External and internal influences affect the language changes in Chile, as Chileans and foreigners learn about each other in the world at large and in various areas of this long long slender country full of many interesting cultures and language differences, si po...or is it si puu? Catchai? Formal and informal education affects language rapidly and for both long and short duration, and individuals and groups change all aspects of communication, frequently and with long-lasting effects. We also know that Chileans may not be understood by other Spanish speakers, not even by Chileans from other parts of the country—but that makes communication interesting, and challenging! Si no?

Chilean (Spanish) is unique, generous, and fun! The “-ish” languages found in Chile are the same, mainly because they are used by such generous people who are usually more interested in communication than correctness. Nosotros no tenemos una cabeza de pollo (We don't have a head of a chicken), Entonces espero que uds. no tengan un problema (so I hope you don't have any problem) de no entender ni a palo de este artículo (of not understanding a stick of this article). And with that, hasta la vista, bebe—or should I say, hasta la vista, **gua-gua?**

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