

Narrative Differences Specific to Spanish and English Cultures

Spanish

English

	Spanish		English	
Goal of most narratives	Moral themes. Spanish-speaking children may use an event to demonstrate a sense of themselves in relation to their community.		Individualistic/child-centered themes. English narratives focus on what is happening internally and externally to the main character	
Reaction	A character's reaction to an event or element may be atypical.		A character's reaction to an event or atypical story element is predictive	
Story Elicitation	Mothers emphasize the conversational aspects of the narrative. Spanish-speaking children have a greater role in recalling the story as their mothers play a listening role in the conversation.		Mothers primarily focus on the organizational aspects of the narrative and English-speaking children may act as co-narrators with their parents.	
Grammar – meaning	Spanish relies on the inflection of morphemes.		English relies on manipulation of word order.	
Grammar – syntax	Spanish will employ verb forms not often used in English to show conditionality or actions that have continued from the past. Spanish also enjoys more flexibility in word order		English typically employs a rigid word order.	
Acting as a listener or a participant	Spanish-speaking cultures often have the role of speaker <i>or</i> listener and may not simultaneously engage.		English-speaking cultures may tell a story together, ask questions, or interject during a story.	