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The OPC in Spanish and Polish Monolingual Speakers

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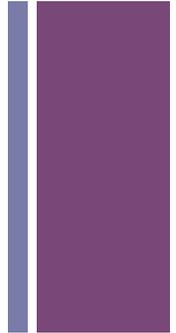
The OPC in Spanish and Polish Monolingual Speakers

The University of Western Ontario

Ewelina Barski

+ Introduction

- Montalbetti's (1984) Overt Pronoun Constraint (OPC) is presumed to be a universal principle of grammar instantiated into null-subject grammars.
- The OPC has been looked at from the point of view of second language acquisition, but it has not been studied experimentally looking at how *monolinguals* treat the structure.
- The objective of this study is to provide empirical data that confirms Montalbetti's work.



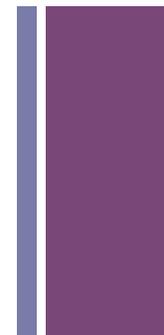
+ Introduction

- According to the OPC, unlike the null pronoun, the overt pronoun can never refer back to a quantified expression (1) or a WH-word antecedent (2): The overt pronoun needs to refer to a third person within the discourse.

Overt (1a)	Nadie _i 'No one _i	cree	que	él _{j/*i} he _j	va a ganar will win.'
Null (1b)	Nadie _i 'No one _i	cree	que	Ø _{i/j} he _{i/j}	va a ganar will win.'
Overt (2a)	¿Quién _i 'Who _i	cree	que	él _{j/*i} he _{j/*i}	va a ganar? will win?'
Null (2b)	¿Quién _i 'Who _i	cree	que	Ø _{i/j} he _{i/j}	va a ganar? will win?'

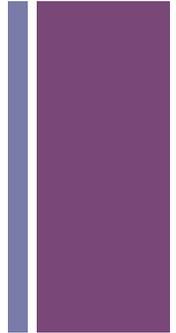
+ Research Questions

1. Do monolinguals (of Spanish and Polish) have clear-cut intuitions that reflect the restrictions that the OPC proposes?
2. Will these monolinguals treat quantified antecedents differently from WH-word antecedents, within the OPC?
3. Will both monolingual groups treat the given antecedents similarly across languages?



+ Hypothesis

1. If Spanish and Polish monolinguals do not have clear-cut intuitions that reflect the restrictions, as proposed by the OPC, then present gradient judgments are due to the syntax-pragmatics interface.
2. If Spanish and Polish monolinguals treat quantified antecedents differently from WH-word antecedents within the OPC, then the two types of antecedents vary in distribution.
3. If both monolingual groups treat the given antecedents similarly across languages, then the data presented highlight the universality of the OPC, since it is treated similarly across languages.



+ Methodology

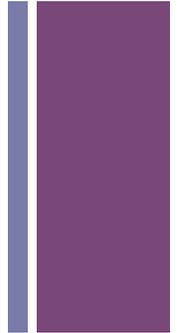
- Participant Groups:

Group A: Spanish monolinguals $N=20$

- Spain

Group B: Polish monolinguals $N=20$

- Poland



+ Task 1: Sentence Selection Task

- The sentence selection task tests the interpretation of a target bound reading with quantified, WH-word, and referential antecedents.
- This task included the following types of antecedents:

nadie/nikt 'no one' ($k = 4$)

la mayoría de/większość 'most of' ($k = 4$)

muchos/wiele 'many' ($k = 4$)

todos/wszyscy 'everyone' ($k = 4$)

quién/kto 'who' SG. ($k = 4$)

quiénes/którzy 'who' PL. ($k = 4$)

referential antecedents ($k = 8$)

+ Task 1: Sentence Selection Task

- Participants read a context in Spanish/Polish and are asked to choose an appropriate concluding sentence between (a) and (b), or (c) to choose both (a) and (b).
- In this task they were choosing between a null and overt subordinate subject.

+ Example: Sentence Selection Task

Un grupo de amigos siempre sale a bailar los fines de semana. Toman por lo menos 5 cervezas.

*A group of friends always goes out dancing over the weekend.
(They) drink at least 5 beers.*

a) Nadie cree que él toma demasiado.

No one believes that he drinks too much.

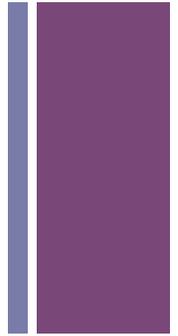
b) Nadie cree que toma demasiado.

No one believes that \emptyset drinks too much.

c) (a) y (b)



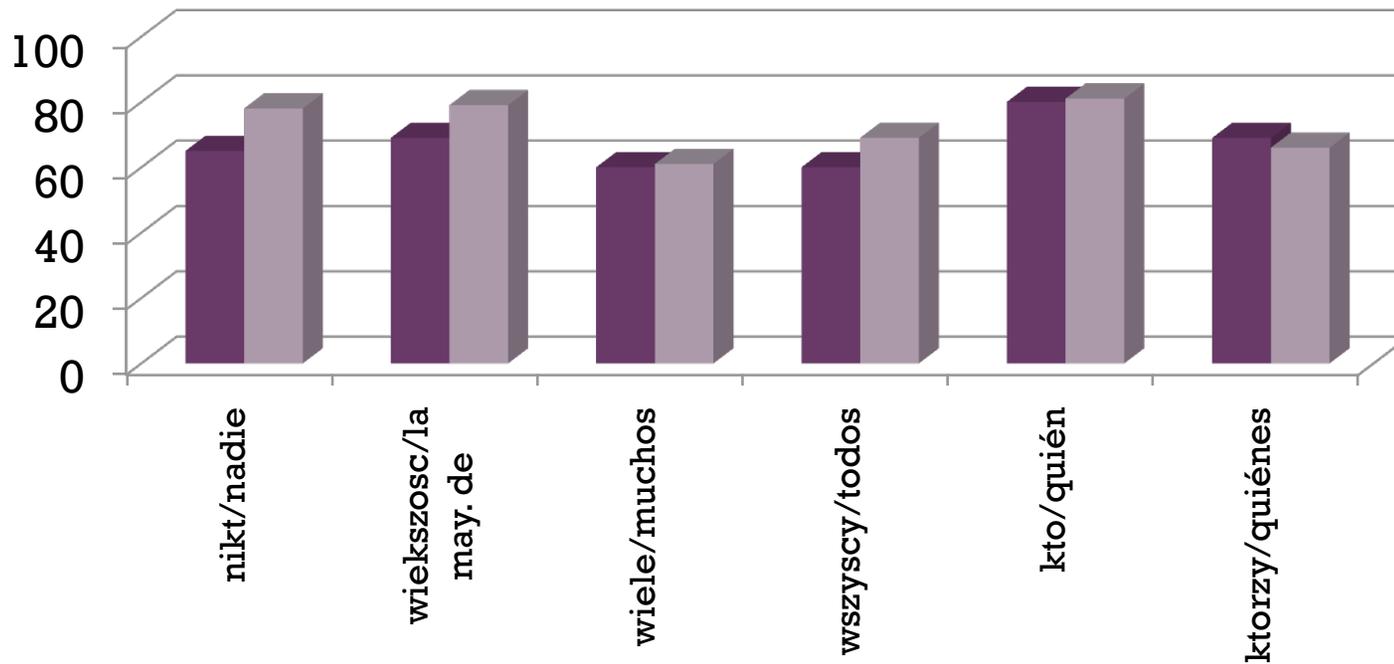
Results: Sentence Selection Task



Response in a forced bound interpretation

Polish

Spanish



+ Results: Sentence Selection Task

- Three antecedents are treated similarly by both Spanish and Polish monolinguals:
 - muchos (61%) /wiele (60%) '*many*'
 - quién (81%) /kto (80%) '*who*' SG.
 - quiénes (66%) /którzy (69%) '*who*' PL.

+ Results: Sentence Selection Task

- In Polish, it appears as though the following antecedents are accepted more:
 - kto (80%), którzy (69%), większość (69%)
- In Spanish, the following antecedents are accepted more:
 - Quién (81%), la mayoría de (79%), nadie (78%), todos (69%)

+ Task 2: Picture Matching Task

- The picture matching task tests the interpretation of bound and unbound readings with quantified, WH-word, and referential antecedents with the presence of both null and overt pronouns in the subordinate subject position.
- This task included the following types of antecedents:

nadie/nikt 'no one' ($k = 8$)

la mayoría de/większość 'most of' ($k = 8$)

muchos/wiele 'many' ($k = 8$)

todos/wszyscy 'everyone' ($k = 8$)

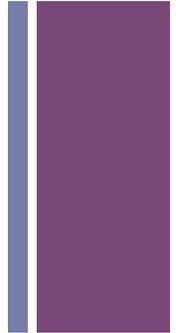
quién/kto 'who' SG. ($k = 8$)

quiénes/którzy 'who' PL. ($k = 8$)

referential antecedents ($k = 16$)

+ Task 2: Picture Matching Task

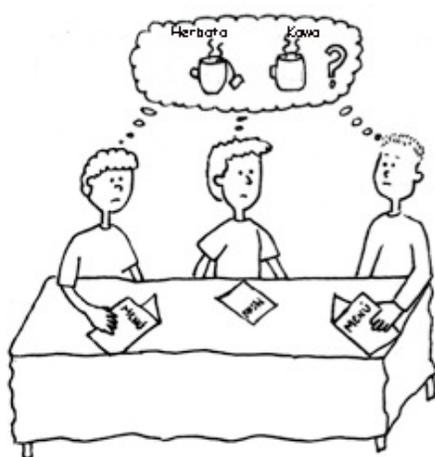
- Participants read a context in Spanish followed by a set of 2 pictures and a concluding sentence.
- Based on the concluding sentence the participants are asked to choose a picture (A or B) as the correct depiction.



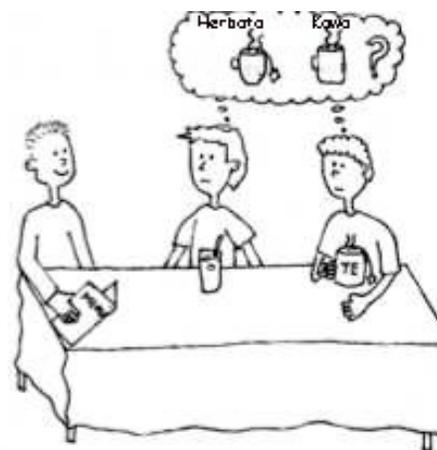
+ Example: Picture Matching Task

Kuzyni są w restauracji. Już zjedli obiad.

The cousins are in the restaurant. They have already eaten dinner.



A



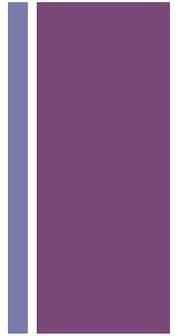
B

Nikt nie wie czy on woli herbatę czy kawę.

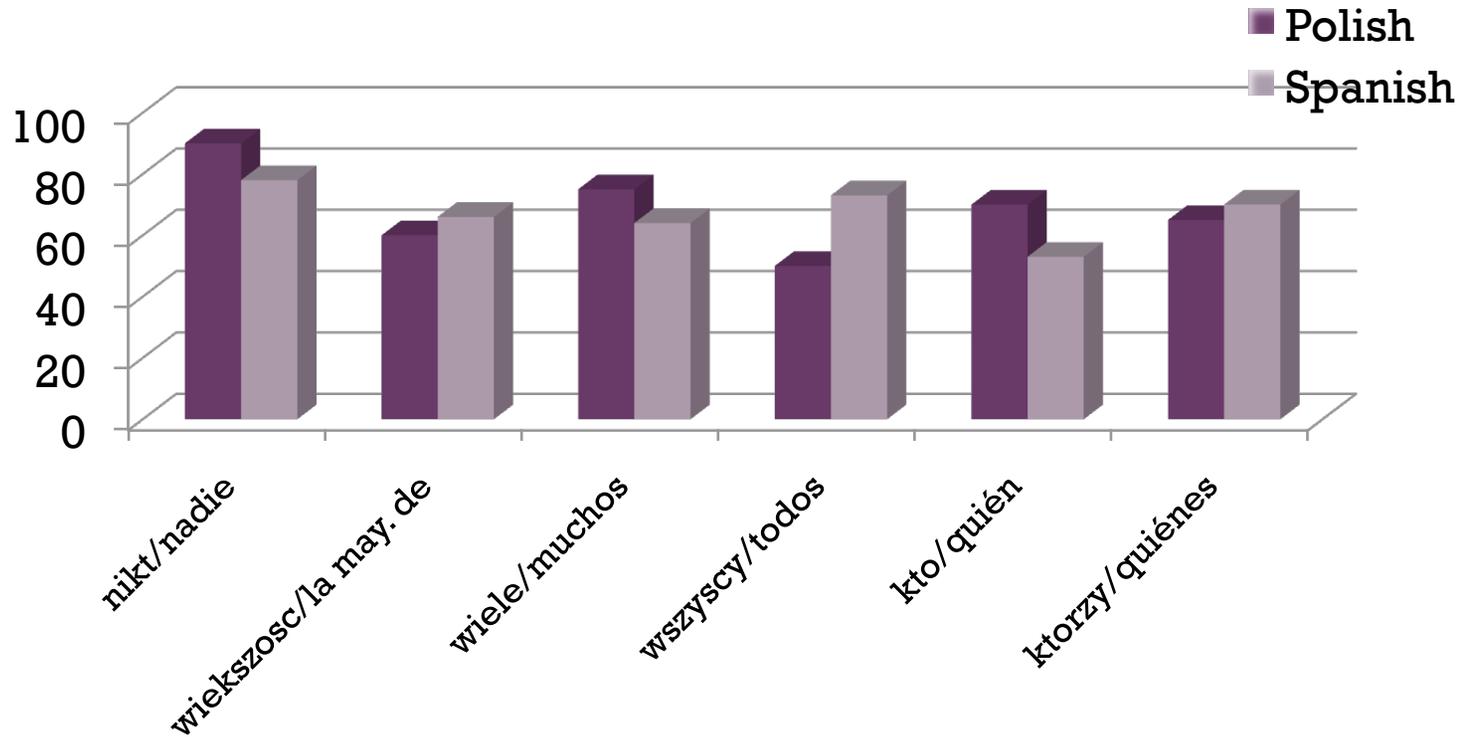
No one knows whether he wants tea or coffee.



Results: Picture Matching Task

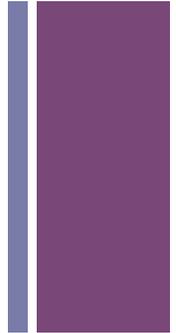


Correctly choosing the bound interpretation



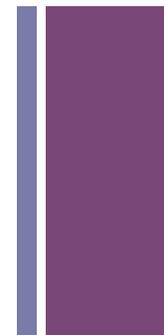
+ Results: Picture Matching Task

- When expecting a correct unbound interpretation, the Spanish monolinguals are more accurate with *nadie*, *la mayoría de*, *quién*, and *quiénes*.
- The Polish monolinguals are much stronger with *wszyscy*.
- Both language groups treat *wiele/muchos* equally.

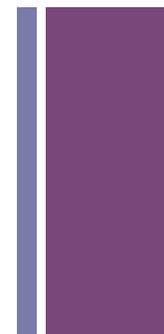


+ Results: Picture Matching Task

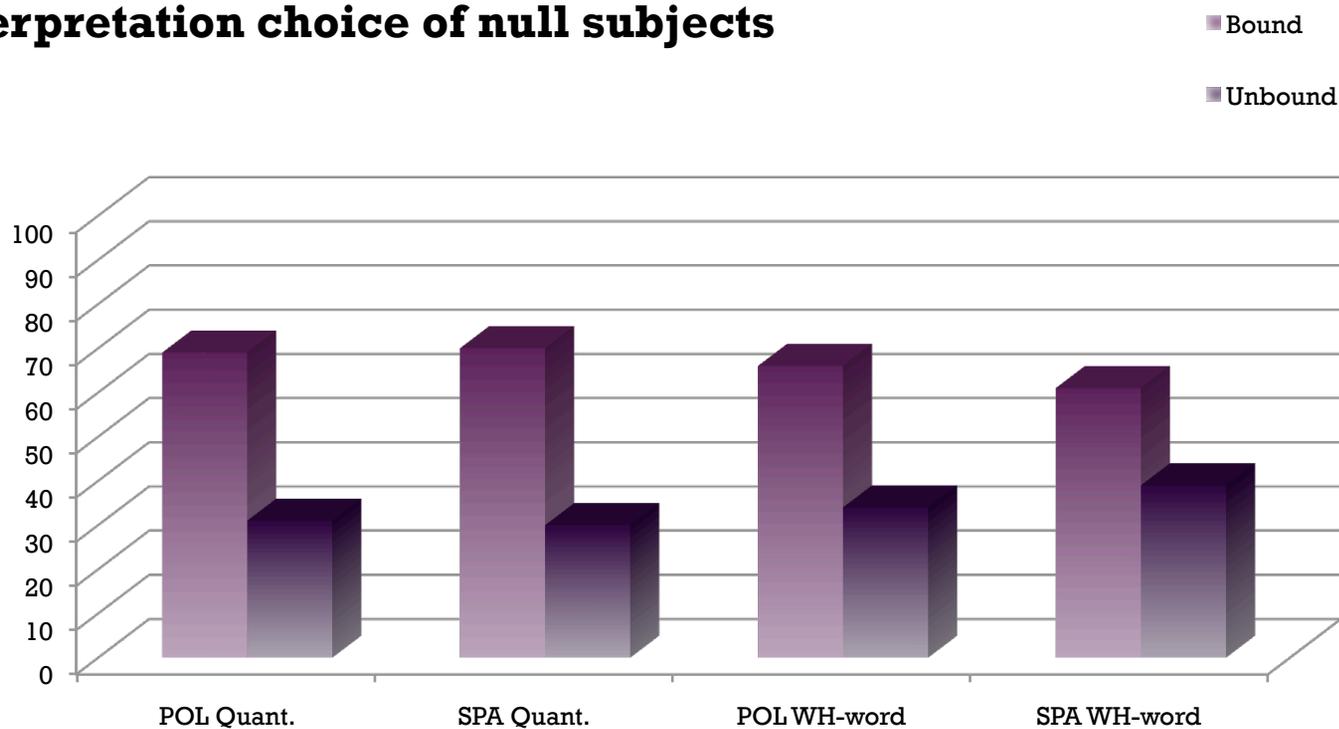
- When expecting a correct bound interpretation, the Polish group is a bit more accurate with *nikt, wiele, kto*.
- The Spanish group is more accurate with *la mayoría de, todos, quiénes*.



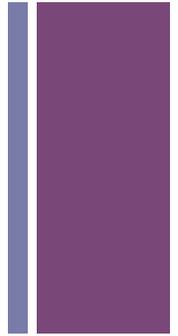
+ Results: Spanish & Polish Antecedent Types



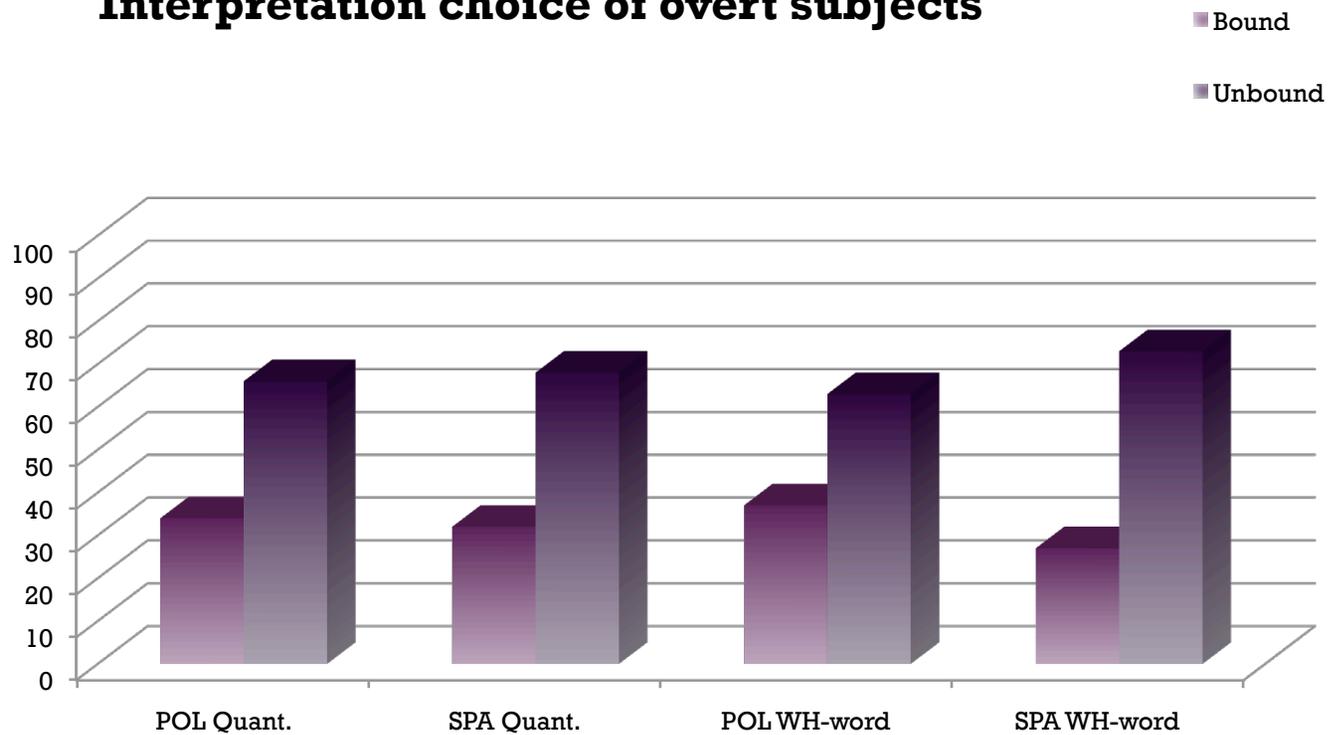
Interpretation choice of null subjects



+ Results: Spanish & Polish Antecedent Types



Interpretation choice of overt subjects



+ Results: Polish Antecedent Types

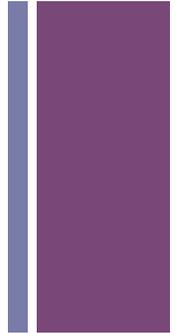
- When expecting a bound interpretation, Polish monolinguals show a strong preference for bound readings with null subjects, accepting it 69% of the time with the quantified antecedents and 66% of the time with the WH-word antecedents.
- When expecting an unbound interpretation, Polish monolinguals show a strong preference for the unbound readings with the overt subjects, accepting the quantified antecedents 66% of the time and the WH-word antecedents 63% of the time.

+ Results: Spanish Antecedent Types

- When expecting a bound interpretation, Spanish monolinguals show a strong preference for the bound readings with null subjects, accepting it 70% of the time with the quantified antecedents and 61% of the time with the WH-word antecedents.
- When expecting an unbound interpretation, Spanish monolinguals show a strong preference for the unbound readings with overt subjects, accepting the quantified antecedents 68% of the time and the WH-word antecedents 73% of the time.

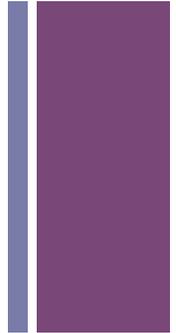
+ Conclusions

- Current results indicate that both monolingual groups prefer quantified antecedents over the WH-word antecedents with the bound interpretation (null subject pronoun).
- In general, Spanish monolinguals appear to outperform the Polish group in almost all of the antecedent types in the forced bound context (SST) and in the unbound context (PMT: overt subject pronoun).
- Both language groups performed well within the bound context (PMT: null subject pronoun), although with different antecedents. Some antecedents provided more accuracy than others.
- It appears as though both language groups obey the overt pronoun constraint but it is not as clear-cut as predicted.



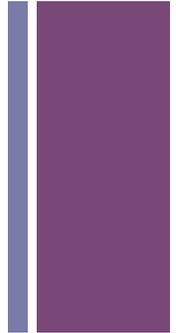
+ Conclusions

- When forced into a bound context reading both groups responded above par at 60% or higher, while the choice of interpretation produced less clear results, showing confusion with the *nikt* antecedent in an unbound context. Here, Polish monolinguals chose the unbound reading 50% of the time, suggesting an ambiguous reading.
- The Polish group displayed similar problems with the *wszyscy* antecedent in a bound context, where an ambiguous reading is acceptable. The Spanish group produced the same results with the *quién* antecedent.
- Experimental data contribute to capture intuitions in a more fine-grained way since they provide gradient differences between the types of variables.



+ What's Next...

- Further analysis of the antecedent types
- Statistically different?
- Spanish and Polish heritage speakers





Thank you!

¡Gracias!

Dziękuję!