The Influence of Language Ideologies on Lexical Borrowing:
Russian and Spanish-Speaking Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This paper, reviewing the founding literatures of language ideologies and borrowing, puts them into conversation to examine the relationship between language ideologies and lexical borrowing. Specifically analyzing them together to explore how these ideological frameworks affect the likelihood of a community adopting foreign words. Additionally, this paper draws on case studies of English borrowings into Russian throughout history as well as English borrowings into both Castilian and Mexican Spanish. These cases illustrate how language ideologies, such as purism and standardization, have influenced borrowing practices. In addition, the analysis examines how the ideological processes of erasure, iconization, and fractal recursivity shape the way languages incorporate or resist foreign elements. Finally, it considers how key characteristics of language ideologies, such as positionality, multiplicity, and speaker awareness, further inform these borrowing patterns.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not stagnant, but rather constantly changing and evolving along with the world. Throughout history, the globalization and industrialization of countries has brought them together both physically and socially. Advancements in technology, such as airplanes and the development of the internet has made it much easier for people to connect, both in person and online. There has not only been the integration of people, food, and culture, but also the integration of linguistic features. While one might not see it as visibly as a plate of food or a piece of clothing, the incorporation of foreign words into another community's language, also known as borrowing, is a noteworthy outcome of this contact.

Although seemingly just a small change, the integration of a foreign word has great societal and ideological implications. This borrowing, or lack of borrowing, reflects much more than a linguistic change, it reflects the attitudes and beliefs from one community of language users to another. Language ideologies, the "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use, which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states" form the basis of these opinions (Kroskrity, 2010, as cited in Kroskrity, 2015). These ideologies can either encourage or discourage borrowing. For example, if a community were involved with trade or in an alliance with another community, they could think of the other community's language as "trustworthy" or

"reliable," positive traits that would therefore increase the possibility of them taking a word from it. On the other hand, if a community was at war or had problems with another community, they could see their language as "dangerous" or "inferior," discouraging them from borrowing.

While there has been significant research on both language ideologies (Irvine & Gal, 2000) and borrowing (Winford, 2010) as separate topics over the years, I will put those two ideas into contact. Specifically, these two concepts will be put together to answer the question: How do language ideologies affect the possibility of a community borrowing a foreign word? To answer this question, this paper presents the historical borrowings from the English language by Russian. Additionally, I will compare English language borrowings into Castilian Spanish with Mexican Spanish, looking for similarities and differences.

This paper argues that language ideologies and linguistic borrowing are not independent phenomena but rather they are deeply interconnected. Specifically that language ideologies, the beliefs and attitudes about what a language should represent, are aspects that actively shape the directions communities take when adopting or resisting foreign lexical items. Rather than merely synthesizing existing scholarship, this study demonstrates how ideological forces such as purism, prestige, and standardization influence the social meanings of borrowing. In doing so, it advances our understanding of borrowing not only as a linguistic process but also as a reflection of broader cultural, political, and identity-based dynamics. By uniting these theoretical perspectives that have rarely been put together, this paper offers a framework for how linguistic ideological pressures and dispositions shape the fate of lexical changes.

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, BORROWING, & STANDARDIZATION

Language ideologies are not simple, but multi-dimensional, encompassing processes such as iconization, erasure, and fractal recursivity. Irvine and Gal (2000) redefined language ideologies as more than just beliefs of a language, framing them instead as active semiotic processes that produce and sustain linguistic and social boundaries. Irvine and Gal (2000) identify three key semiotic processes: iconization, where a linguistic feature comes to symbolize and represent the character of its speakers; erasure, where linguistic features or practices that do not fit the dominant narrative are ignored or dismissed; and fractal recursivity, where ideological oppositions in one context are projected onto other levels of society. They reached these conclusions using comparative historical and ethnographic analyses of different communities. For example, the boundary between standard Hungarian and minority languages was constructed through iconization, where linguistic features like vocabulary and pronunciation came to be seen as representations of cultural or moral differences between the speakers. In colonial Africa, European accounts relied on erasure, ignoring or reducing the significance of multilingualism and linguistic variation in order to present colonized groups as homogenous and bounded "tribes". They also illustrate fractal recursivity in oppositions such as "civilized vs. primitive," where the colonized language was labeled as "primitive" while the language of the colonizers was "civilized".

Kroskrity (2015) identifies three attributes of language ideologies: positionality, multiplicity, and speaker awareness. Positionality is the idea that one's place in society affects how they view language. In other words, whether a community believes a language to be "prestigious" or "corrupt" depends on their

political and economic standing. Multiplicity is the fact that a community can have differing language ideologies. This builds on positionality because if people in the same community can have differing political and economic standings, they can have differing views on a language in the same community. Speaker awareness is the degree to which individuals are conscious of their own ideological positions. Some ideologies and opinions are publicly stated and argued, while others are buried so deep they seem like common sense and second nature Taken together, these points, along with Irvine and Gal's (2000) semiotic processes illustrate that language ideologies develop both at the individual and institutional level, revealing that attitudes toward language are far more layered and complex than they might initially appear.

Borrowing in language contact refers broadly to the incorporation of elements from one language into another. However, this definition has changed and developed largely over time. Borrowing went from including primarily only vocabulary and later expanded to any linguistic feature and grammatical structures (Sankoff, 2001; Winford, 2010). A major shift came with Van Coetsem's (1988, 2000, as discussed in Winford, 2010) framework, which emphasizes the role of linguistic dominance, distinguishing between borrowing, in which speakers primarily proficient in a recipient language incorporate elements from another, and imposition, in which features from a speaker's dominant source language are transferred into a less proficient language, often influencing its pronunciation or structure. Across these perspectives, sociocultural forces such as prestige, need, and dominance are acknowledged as shaping borrowing, but definitional debates generally prioritize linguistic and psycholinguistic criteria over detailed sociopolitical case studies (Sankoff, 2001; Winford, 2010). While both Winford (2010) and Sankoff (2001) acknowledge the role of sociocultural forces, such as prestige, need, and social dominance, in the shaping of borrowing, their chapters emphasize theoretical and definitional debates rather than detailed sociopolitical case studies.

These borrowings vary on what the community wants to do with the language. Standardization involves elevating one version of a language as the "norm," however this does not naturally happen, rather one is deliberately chosen as the "norm" (Milroy, 2001). In order to keep the one as unified, it often erases alternative forms or dismisses them as illegitimate (Irvine & Gal, 2000). In this sense, borrowing and standardization become connected, while communities may adopt foreign words to enrich or modernize their language, others could often attempt to regulate or erase those same borrowings to protect an imagined "pure" standard. This intersection is central to my paper, as it shows how ideologies, whether encouraging openness to borrowing or enforcing purity through erasure, determine which forms survive and become part of a community's linguistic identity.

Now that these concepts have been clearly defined, I have picked case studies that best exemplify their relationship in different ways: Russia, Spain, and Mexico. The complex history between Russia and the US shows how political and global events can change linguistic attitudes and therefore borrowing. Spain exemplifies how having an established institution designated to maintaining a common language affects borrowing. Mexico reflects how a trade and economic linkage between the two languages affects the rate of word borrowing. Together, these cases are examples of how different borrowing patterns develop based on the language ideologies that are shaped by the social, economic, and historic contexts.

ENGLISH BORROWINGS INTO RUSSIAN

The changing of English borrowings into Russian throughout history reflect a series of changing language ideologies shaped by political, cultural, and social developments. English borrowings in Russian shifted from markers of prestige and modernization under Peter the Great to markers of suspicion and danger during the periods of linguistic purism and Cold War ideology. Later, after the Soviet Union's collapse, English borrowings returned in unprecedented numbers, becoming icons of cosmopolitanism and youth culture.

In the early period of contact ruled by Peter the Great, "the attitude toward loans at that time was quite positive; they were considered proper and necessary since it was natural to name new foreign concepts using loan terms," with Peter the Great appointing "British engineers, mathematicians, and shipbuilders to Russian offices and departments" (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005). With these appointments, Peter the Great tied English people themselves to these specialists which embody the progress, prestige, and modernization of the west. As a result, the English words introduced alongside them were not perceived as neutral labels but became linked to that same modernity, iconized as linguistic symbols of progress. During the second half of the 18th century, Catherine the Great's favor to English culture further facilitated English borrowings (Styblo, 2007). During this time, while English was getting integrated into Russian, it was still second to French, however this changed by the end of the 19th century (Styblo, 2007). Before it became less popular, French was seen as a language of the educated and nobility, but as more people gained education as time passed, its sense of prestige decreased as more people learned it, decreasing the borrowings along with it.

During the late 1860s-70s, there was a rise in Russian linguistic purism, leading to English-Russian contacts decreasing and worsening their relations (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005). The English language was seen as hostile as opposed to before as it clashed with new revolutionary ideas. English borrowings re-emerged in the 1930s as the Soviet Union industrialized and had an alliance with the United States (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005). Here, positionality shaped borrowing. English terms were adopted in technical and scientific fields as the USSR strove to modernize rapidly and compete globally. As Proshina and Ettkin (2005) note, English borrowings in the 1930s were concentrated in technical and scientific fields, with terms like bulldozer and grader entering Russian in the context of industrialization. This suggests that those in the science and technical fields had more of a push and were more exposed to these borrowings than those with lives outside the industrial and military circles. For specialists in these fields, such borrowings were treated as functional tools accompanying Western innovations, filling lexical and conceptual gaps necessary for industrial and military advancement (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005; Styblo, 2007).

However, later during World War II and the Cold War, borrowings took on sharply negative connotations. The purist campaigns of the 1940s–50s, spurred by an ideological struggle against "cosmopolitanism," sought to eliminate foreign elements from the language (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005). This was a period that reflected strong standardization, with Soviet Russian promoted as a self-sufficient linguistic system.

Consequently, English was no longer viewed as a neutral symbol of modernity but was rebranded as politically dangerous, indexing a capitalist threat. Specific borrowings were not treated as mere linguistic necessities but as signals of ideological alignment with the West. In fact popular non-fiction often used Americanisms in a negative light (Styblo, 2007). Additionally, erasure of the foreign words was also in play, where if you used them, they were not only seen as "threatening," but as suspicion of the soviet ideology.

This climate shifted once again with Khrushchev's Thaw in the 1960s, where borrowing from English expanded dramatically. Mass media, pop culture, and science pushed for new words, and the range of domains for English borrowings broadened significantly (Proshina & Ettkin, 2005). This illustrates yet another shift in the ideological framing of English. From being cast as a threat to national identity, to indexes of youth, cosmopolitanism, and generational identity.

The 1970s–80s marked a return to suspicion of foreign words, as the perception of loanwords once again grew negative. Overuse of English could even serve as a subtle marker of dissent (Styblo, 2007). However, this resistance fell along with the Soviet Union, allowing English borrowings to enter Russian in unprecedented numbers. With the rise of the Internet, English became iconized as the embodiment of cosmopolitanism, business, and youth culture. As Proshina and Ettkin (2005) note, Russian youth slang became "particularly receptive to English borrowings… about 20 percent of Russian youth slang words are of English origin," making borrowed words themselves symbolic markers of modern identity. These slang words, as representations of the language of youth, also reflect positionality. In which the modern youth, used to digital technologies and easy connection with others all their lives, are more eager and open to pick up on these English slangs, seeing them as a way to connect with others, than those who are older. At the same time, some conservative voices continue to express concerns about the impact of excessive borrowing, reflecting ongoing beliefs about linguistic purity.

Overall, the shifts of English borrowings in Russian illustrate how erasure, standardization, iconization, and positionality shifted in response to broader social and political contexts. Under Peter the Great, the appointment of British engineers and shipbuilders tied English words to the prestige of modernization, iconizing them as symbols of progress. By contrast, during the Cold War, borrowings and Americanisms were stigmatized as ideological threats, reflecting standardization and erasure campaigns seeking to protect Soviet identity. After the fall of the Soviet Union, resistance collapsed and English borrowings, especially in youth slang, became icons of a young generational identity. These patterns show that borrowings in Russian were never simply linguistic, but intertwined with shifting notions of ideology caused by social and political changes.

ENGLISH BORROWINGS INTO SPANISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

While with the Russian case we can see the interconnectedness of language ideologies and lexical borrowing through the extensive history between Russia and the United States, the Spanish case highlights this relationship through La Real Academia Española (Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, or RAE), an institution of Spain. When the institution was established in 1713, nearing the end

of the War of the Spanish Succession, the Castilian language was seen as a language of prestige in Spain, so the protection and guarding of its purity was its main objective (Deeney, 2021). The founding of this institution was because of the large number of French loanwords making its way into the Spanish language in the 18th century after the Bourbons, a French royal house, assumed the Spanish throne and the concern about language purity that came with it (González, 1999). From the start, this academy sets the standard of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary of the Castilian Spanish language. When foreign words enter the usage of people, the RAE is the one to assess whether it should or should not be accepted into the official language (Deeney, 2021).

Additionally, English borrowings were also emerging over time: the industrial revolution and its industrial developments intensified borrowing, the Spanish Civil War and Franco's early dictatorship caused political and linguistic isolation, decreasing the amount of borrowings, and the aftermath of WWII reopened Spain to the "American way of life" (González, 1999). However, along with these borrowings surfaced purist and nationalistic attitudes (González, 1999). Critics of lexical borrowing felt that not only is the constant borrowing of words unnecessary, but was like betrayal toward their own language when they use foreign words (Deeney, 2021). This shows how language policy is much more than just words on paper, but about the value of national identity. As the number of borrowings continues to grow among the general public, those in the academy feel the integrity of the Spanish language and culture slipping out of their hands. The academy sees it as a problem that needs to be solved, and the solution to that problem would be resistance towards foreign influence.

The academy's efforts to keep outside influences out of their language reflect ideas discussed earlier in the paper. For example, as a way to keep English loanwords away from common speech, the academy rushed to come up with Spanish alternatives for English words making their way through the general public and the media (Deeney, 2021). The way that they are trying to replace English words with Spanish alternatives reflects their attempts of erasure, as they are trying to get rid of certain types of words that do not fall in line with their official language. Through this erasure, it also supports the language ideology of language purism, in which the academy sees their language as something to be protected from these "corrupt" foreign words. Another responsibility of the RAE is to compile a dictionary of Spanish words, purifying anything that did not fit its rules or came from outside (Deeney, 2021). The academy's creation of the dictionary further reflects language standardization, promoting one unified, single language that does not include many foreign elements. The standard language they are promoting is based on these purist ideals.

Within Spanish society itself, the coexistence of differing attitudes towards English borrowings represents the concept of multiplicity as stated by Kroskrity (2015). The academy sees these English lexical items as a form of corruption, something that is undermining the integrity of the Spanish language. On the other hand, the ordinary speakers and the media adopt them casually, seeing them as useful, modern, or simply unremarkable parts of everyday speech. Positionality can also be seen playing a role in these attitudes. The academy is composed of "scientists, politicians, religious and aristocrats" (Deeney, 2021). They are people of relatively higher class whose roles align with maintaining linguistic purity and tradition. By contrast, those who are younger are more likely to use the loanwords (González, 1999). The younger generation, along with the modern media are not as concerned with the importance of keeping something

pure. Shaped by globalization and technological advancements connecting them, valuing openness and modernity over tradition.

The ideological differences between the public and the academy makes Spain an interesting case. The general citizens and public of Spain itself do not see these loanwords as a problem, differing from the pursuit ideals of the academy (Deeney, 2021). Because they do not buy into this idea of language purity that the academy is interested in, they create an ideological divide. This can be understood through fractal recursivity: the broader opposition between "pure" and "contaminated" Spanish at the national level is projected onto a more localized level, such as national institution versus the general public. On one hand, the academy deliberately promotes Spanish alternatives to foreign borrowings, seeking to impose its standard to all its citizens on a national level. On the other hand, media outlets normalize English loanwords in everyday language, reproducing the same purity/contamination divide at the level of general public usage. In this way, the ideological opposition is not confined to one scale but recurs across multiple levels of Spanish society, mirroring the larger struggle over what the Spanish language should represent.

The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language (RAE), founded in 1713 to protect Castilian from French influence, embodies Spain's tradition of linguistic purism. The increase of English borrowings, intensified by industrialization and globalization, put a spotlight on the contrast between the academy's efforts at erasure and standardization and the public's casual adoption of new terms. These opposing attitudes reflect Kroskrity's (2015) concepts of multiplicity and positionality, as elites defend purity while younger generations and the media embrace openness. The resulting divide, reproduced across different social levels through fractal recursivity, highlights how borrowing debates mirror broader struggles over Spanish identity.

In Mexican Spanish, we also see language ideologies in play in borrowing. Similar to the Russian case, historic tensions between the two countries and their resulting attitudes were what initially controlled borrowing. However, uniquely to Mexico, we see how their later formed economic ties with America change borrowing patterns because of shifted perspectives. From 1846-1849 they fought the Mexican-American War, which resulted in Mexico ceding about half of its land to the US and subsequently becoming "unresponsive to many US political and commercial overtures" (Baumgardner, 1997). These attitudes changed after the North American Free Trade Agreement was signed in 1993, signaling the "opening" of the Mexican economy, leading to a greater flow of goods and services, including lexical items (Baumgardner, 1997). This change in trade policy reflects a change in borrowing patterns, which in turn reflect a change in ideological opinions. In the aftermath of the Mexican American war, political and economic association with the US was avoided, marked with resentment of losing the war, making it very plausible that the English language itself would be attached to feelings of resentment and anger. By contrast, the NAFTA agreement sparked a new wave of English borrowings with its new consumer culture, being seen as a new economic opportunity and modernity. English began permeating advertising and commerce in Monterrey through product names like six-pack and light, hybrid formations such as Mexicatessen or Pepsilindro, and even orthographic shifts like Kesos y Kosas and Martin's Restaurante (Baumgardner, 1997). These practices exemplify iconization, where English is not just a linguistic code but becomes an emblem of modernity, prestige, and cosmopolitan identity. In fact, Baumgardner (1997) states, "New objects and concepts need names. Northern Mexican businessmen will

no doubt continue to utilize English in product naming and advertising, since this often represents to Mexican consumers the modern, the prestigious, the chic".

At the same time, mirroring the debates in Spain, Mexico established La Comisión para la Defensa del Idioma Español (The Commission for the Defense of the Spanish Language) in 1981 to "protect" Spanish against the encroachment of English, framing Anglicisms as a form of linguistic imperialism (Baumgardner, 1997). This stance illustrates positionality, as nationalists see English as a threat to cultural sovereignty, while others, such as entrepreneurs and consumers, reject the commission's prescriptivism and embrace English as a marker of opportunity and global belonging. The coexistence of these contrasting views illustrates multiplicity, with English simultaneously celebrated in fashion, technology, and media, while also being viewed as a symbol of cultural loss. In this way, the borrowing of English into Mexican Spanish is deeply ideological, shaped by historical conflict, institutional purism, and the semiotic processes that cast English as both progress and peril.

Both the Russian and Spanish cases reveal how institutions such as the government or government made institutions use their own ideological ideas to control and regulate their language. For example, in Russia, during events like World War II and the Cold War, the government took charge in determining whether English borrowings were celebrated as symbols of progress or condemned as threats to the national identity. In contrast, linguistic control in Spain was exercised by the royal academy, where they used their own purist and preservationalist beliefs to determine borrowings rather than political and relational changes. Despite this, both cases reveal that while borrowing is affected by the linguistic attitudes, it is often the attitudes of those in power that is mirrored in the borrowing. However, they also show how as time goes by and the world itself becomes more interconnected, the general public has started to just include English words into their language freely, showing how attitudes of the population affect borrowing. Similar to the Russian case study, Mexico's historical tension with the US initially discouraged borrowing. However, after their NAFTA trade agreement, borrowings started growing rapidly as the people started viewing English borrowings as a sign of economic prosperity. Likewise to Spain, Mexico also tried establishing an institution to control this new influx of words, however it was not very effective. All together, these three cases demonstrate three unique ways through which language ideologies affect borrowing: state, academy, and market.

LIMITATIONS
While this paper emphasizes ideology's role, other factors such as historical relations between nations, power shifts, technological innovations, media exposure, and migration can also significantly shape borrowing patterns. This review acknowledges that language ideology is only one of many factors that influence lexical borrowing. Rather than treating ideology as an isolated cause, this paper considers how language ideologies could have been changed because of these broader social, political, and economic forces, as seen in the case studies. As a result, these findings should portray language ideologies as one of the many other factors that could be used to decipher why lexical borrowings did or did not happen.

The study's scope is limited to two language contexts, Russian (English borrowings) and Spanish (Spain and Mexico). This selection, while exemplifications of different language ideologies with borrowings,

limits the generalizability of the findings to other linguistic and cultural settings. These examples cannot be considered accurate representations of all borrowing practices, as they do not compare to the large expanse of communities around the globe.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that language ideologies play a central role in shaping how communities think about foreign borrowings, but they themselves are neither fixed nor uniform. As seen in the Russian case study, attitudes toward English borrowings shifted repeatedly in response to political alliances, ideological shifts, and industrialization, illustrating signs of iconization, erasure, and shifting views. In Spain, one can see the tension between the Royal Academy's insistence on purism and standardization and the general public's open adoption of English words, exemplifying the multiplicity of ideologies. Similarly, in Mexico the signing of NAFTA brought a new wave of English borrowings tied to consumer culture and economic modernization, bringing with differing opinions to protect the language from English influence or embrace it fully.

Ultimately, studying the interplay between ideology and borrowing offers valuable insight into how languages evolve. Recognizing this complexity allows us to see borrowing not as a minor linguistic change, but as a reflection of how communities change, with every borrowed word reflecting the identity, judgements, and current state of a community. By recognizing how these two phenomena interact with each other, it expands the knowledge and studying of linguistic borrowing from more than just words on paper to something that is intertwined with cultural and ideological links. In a broader sense, this new understanding encourages scholars to consider linguistic borrowing from another angle. Specifically, they are able to see how these attitudes and beliefs, which come out of political, economic, and institutional pressures, shape the evolution of language, leading us to a more comprehensible and understandable view of language itself.

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