Article

Ghosting, Breadcrumbing, Catfishing: A Corpus Analysis of English Borrowings in the Spanish Speaking World

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Abstract: The study aims to contribute to our understanding of the situation of languages in contact and the phenomenon of linguistic borrowings in the modern online world. The current study investigates the use of English terms borrowed to describe romantic relationships in Spanish. We use a list of terms presented in GQ Spain, a men's culture, fashion and style magazine, as popular terms in 2020 to describe (a lack of) love in romantic relationships. In order to analyze the actual use of these borrowings in Spanish, we collected data from the Corpus del Español NOW (2012–2019), focusing on the number of occurrences of each English borrowing, level of morphological adaptation, co-occurrence of translations or explanations, date of first use and location of use. Overall, 11 of the 20 terms, such as ghosting, gaslighting or benching, appeared in the corpus. We note the presence of quotation marks, parentheses or uppercase letters in some cases, but it was observed that most examples keep their English form. However, many terms appeared with an explanation or translation, reflecting the novelty of the borrowing. Data regarding dates and countries were collected in order to set the year they were integrated with the new meaning (2013–2019). The country with the highest number of cases was Argentina, and there were a substantial number of cases in other Spanish-speaking countries. Overall, these findings show an increase in the incorporation of these borrowings over the years in the Spanish lexicon.

Keywords: borrowings; corpus linguistics; dating terms; languages in contact; Spanish; English

1. Introduction

Nowadays, social media and online content allow constant and immediate interaction between communities, facilitating change and evolution in the language system. This present study offers a detailed analysis of the inclusion and level of adaptation of a group of English borrowings regarding romantic relationships in the Spanish linguistic system. As a starting point, we investigated 20 English borrowings retrieved from the article "Pocketing, fleabagging, ghosting: qué significan las nuevas palabras que se usan para describir las relaciones" 'Pocketing, fleabagging, ghosting: what do these new words that are used to describe relationships mean' by Belén Alfonso, published on the 6 February 2020 by GQ España online. GQ España is one of the 21 editions around the world of GQ (originally Gentlemen's Quarterly), which is an American men's culture, fashion and style magazine. This study aims to contribute to our understanding of the situation of languages in contact and the phenomenon of linguistic borrowing with regards to describing romantic relationships in 2020. The innovative nature of these romantic terms and their meanings are highly influenced by social networks, making them an interesting object of study.

Through the use of Corpus del Español NOW (2012–2019), we can identify the usage of these lexical borrowings in online media, enabling the analysis of these words' linguistic adaptation to the Spanish language. This study also contributes to the debate surrounding the preference for the use of English linguistic borrowings in Spanish as a consequence of languages being in virtual contact and the influence of social networks in communication.

This global system of interconnected networks is an infinite information resource as, as Giammatteo et al. (2018) state, as well as an excellent resource and essential tool for studying communication. There is a variety of approaches to studying borrowings, including integration (Poplack and Dion 2012), adaptation (Levendis and Calude 2019) and expression of self (Haspelmath 2009). In the present study, we look at unchanged borrowings as well as possible morphological adaptation (see Sánchez 1995) to see how incorporated these dating terms are in the Spanish language. We found that, similar to Morin (2006), some borrowings are undergoing integration into the Spanish language, while others are not. Additionally, we looked at clues regarding integration, including graphic representations (such as quotations, italics and bold print) and the use of definitions and translations, following De la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2009) and Sanou (2018), who used data collected from Facebook to examine the frequency of the use of borrowings as well as their level of adaptation. Using previous research as a model, we use the terms lexical borrowings and loanwords interchangeably throughout this paper.

This article focuses on the issue of borrowings from the origin language and how it manifests in the recipient linguistic system through language contact. In this case, the languages under investigation are English and its influence on Spanish. The article offers an analysis of the possible influence of the English borrowings on modern (2012–2019) written Spanish by providing data regarding the number of occurrences, their graphic representation and the presence of explanations or translations of the terms. In summary, the research questions for this study were:

1. According to the number of occurrences of the borrowings, to what extent are these loanwords used in the Spanish language?
2. In terms of their graphic representation, how assimilated and adapted are these words?
3. When did these words (with their new romantic meaning) first appear in the Corpus NOW?
4. How often are these terms implemented in each of the 21 Spanish-speaking countries?

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 1 consists of the literature review, which contains the key concepts in this study. Section 2 is the research methodology. Section 3 shows the data collected and the discussion of the results. Section 4 includes the conclusions obtained from the analysis of the results.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. English as a Universal Language and Language Contact

Contact between languages is a phenomenon that occurs when two (or more) languages are spoken in one space (Weinreich 1968), which allows for the introduction, assimilation and creation of new terms that enrich the vocabulary of the recipient language. This exchange generates a flow of concepts and expressions that travel from one language to another, which, according to Zimmermann (1995), requires a reorganization and simplification of elements with the goal of facilitating the transmission and reception of a message. Nowadays, technology enables simultaneous contact between speakers, which allows language to evolve at a quicker pace. In this sense, English stands out as a primary language of dissemination and communication. According to Garrido (2010), globalization affects forms of communication as well as interaction between speakers at the word level and through a combination of words to form text, which is motivated by different aspects of culture, politics, economy and power. Similarly, Sanou (2018) states that it is in fact power that is the primary cause of English's role as the international language of communication, especially with regard to the economic and cultural power that the United States has acquired over the 20th century. Lee (2016) highlights how speakers use English to communicate on the internet in certain situations depending on the context and the image that the individual wants to put forward. This not only reflects the power of the use of an international language such as English, but it also demonstrates how speakers can use language to create certain identities in a given context. In addition to the perceived

prestige of the English language, the ease of adoption of English lexemes contributes to the frequency of borrowings. The dynamic nature of the English language can be seen through the ease of the creation of new terms through morphology, simplicity and the large quantity of monosyllabic words. In her study, Bordelois (2011) claims that the greater number of short words in English contributes to higher rates of information exchange, whereas, in Spanish, the words are usually formed by three or four syllables, which offers more clarity in speech.

Command of the English language is believed to be increasing through the evolution and advancements of new technology such as social media, including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. This type of tool permits instant communication, primarily between younger speakers, and social networks have contributed to the development of communications since they enable interaction between their users regardless of the time-space barrier (Sanou 2018). This evolution in the way we communicate with each other has influenced the new generations in such a way that, nowadays, people do not conceive of a world without the Internet. The Internet offers multiple ways of interaction between users, allowing synchronous and asynchronous communication. In this paper, we examine the borrowing of English through written communication. In the following section, we will describe the types of borrowings studied in the current research.

2.2. Linguistic Borrowings

As speakers share space, one result of language contact is linguistic borrowings, or the adoption of an element from one language into another language. When this element is a word (or short phrase), this is referred to as a loanword or lexical borrowing. Defining linguistic borrowing has been a topic of conversation for decades. At its most basic, we follow Lewandowski (1982, p. 271) and define borrowings as the enrichment of a language, dialect, or idiolect through borrowing from another. There are similar concepts such as foreignism, lexical/semantic calque and neologism that describe several processes that involve incorporation of new vocabulary into the recipient language inventory, but as Mrak (2011, p. 3) notes, English loans enter Spanish constantly, whereas, generally speaking, calques and semantic extensions are a result of language contact. Further distinguishing the terminology, Otheguy et al. (1989, p. 43) observe that the terms calque, semantic loan, semantic extension, loan shift and loan translation are used to discuss similar phenomena. We acknowledge that the borrowings analyzed in the present study are an example of the capacity that the Spanish language has to increase its vocabulary over time with the goal of communicating new realities.

As Carballo (2006) points out, the concept of a borrowing is evidence of the importance that language contact has on speakers, their culture and their society. A borrowed lexical item can show evidence of phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic/pragmatic adaptations. Within phonology, adaptation can be observed when a borrowing presents sounds that are atypical in the host language. For example, borrowings from English allows for the phoneme/b/to be word final, such as in pub or club (Costa 2009). In cases like these, the phonological adaptation is reflected in the drop of the final consonant/b/, for example clu instead of club. The loss of the final consonant is one of the principal features of the Southern dialects in Spain (see Breva-Claramonte 1999), and therefore the borrowing reflects the phonology of the adopting language. Within morphology, the process of incorporation starts with the derivation, inflection and rules of accentuation, among others (Sánchez 1995), and there is a certain level of adaptation through which the borrowing is no longer considered a foreign element (Alba 2007). This can be seen with the use of a light verb, such as hacer, or with verbal suffixes such as -ear, which each reflect different levels of adoption into the language. Syntactically, borrowings start with the structure of their origin language and eventually change to be adapted to the receiving language (Rodríguez Medina 2002). In semantics, borrowed words take on a new meaning that the source language provides to the receiving language (Alba 2007).

When looking at borrowings in monolingual and bilingual speech research, there are many possible frameworks or research questions to be answered. For example, Callahan (2004), Jonsson (2010) and Montes-Alcalá (2015) have explored literary codeswitching and concluded that it is used for a variety of socio-pragmatic and stylistic purposes similar to those found in bilingual speech. Other researchers have discussed the level of integration of borrowings (e.g., Poplack and Dion 2012), how borrowings are collectively adopted into an L2 (e.g., Levendis and Calude 2019) and borrowings as an expression of self in the speaker's native language (e.g., Haspelmath 2009). For the purposes of the current research, we focus exclusively on loanwords that are used in a monolingual text. In Spanish-English Codeswitching in written corpora, González Cruz (2017) finds that many of the texts used for the project contain texts that can be described as monolingual texts with some L2 words "thrown in for flavor", as Lipski (1982, p. 195) states. However, the use of English borrowings in monolingual Spanish usually reflects high levels of adoption of lexical items. Field and Comrie (2002, p. 4) distinguish between speech borrowings, such as mopear 'to mop' or hacer buenos grados 'to make good grades', from language borrowings, such as parking, which have been adopted at higher rates into monolingual Spanish.

Many previous accounts of borrowings, such as Valdés- Fallis (1976), note parenthetical uses, emphasis, exclamations, repetitions, symmetric alternation, linguistic routines and anticipation of borrowings. This trend can be seen in internet data today. Stewart et al. (2021) found that it was more common to see integrated forms of loanwords and native words in newspapers than in social media, which they conclude is due to the formality of the domain. However, both newspapers and social media show a preference for integrated forms over the use of the light verb hacer (e.g., 'ghostear' vs. 'hacer ghosting'). Morin (2006) notes morphosyntactic integration of computer and Internet-related borrowings, stating that the level of integration is in flux; some borrowings are undergoing phonological and orthographic integration into the Spanish language while others are not.

The research conducted by De la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2009) analyzes the graphic representation of borrowings used in touristic texts. In this regard, it examines the presence of quotation marks and the use of bold type or italics as a way of indicating the foreign origin of the word. Additionally, the authors study the presence of explanations, definitions or Spanish equivalents in their analysis. They concluded that the practice of marking borrowings with quotes, fonts or additional information was a frequent practice, and they note that there was no homogeneity regarding the use of graphic marks or the inclusion of definitions or explanations when introducing the term in the text. Similarly, Fadic (2002) uses the DRAE corpus to study the level of adaptation of lexical borrowings from a foreign language into the Spanish language. In this project, seven categories were established according to the level of adaptation shown in the borrowings: (1) borrowings without any orthographical or morphological adaptation, such as bar; (2) words that keep their original form or have experienced some phonological adaptations, such as clip; (3) phonological adaptation based on assimilation, suppression, addition and metathesis, such as desodorante; (4) phonological adaptation based on writing, such as cúter; (5) orthographic adaptation, such as bóxer (6); Simple morphological adaptation, such as disruptivo and (7) morphological adaptation through partial semantic calque, such as boxear (493).

2.3. Borrowings in Online Resources

The internet offers a rich database of texts to study many trends in multilingualism, including borrowings. In her study of Spanish language newspapers, Mrak (2011) compares bilingual and monolingual use of borrowings (i.e., loanwords in isolation rather than phrase length codeswitch) and finds that of the 60,846 monolingual tokens, there are 55 borrowings (or 0.09%), while there are only 37 borrowings in the collection of 45,110 bilingual tokens (or 0.08%). This study indicates that these lexical items are used in both bilingual and monolingual language at similar rates, an idea that contradicts many previous ideas of bilingual speech. In their investigation of English loanwords in newspapers shared in Brazilian and Spanish social media, Ortego-Antón and Pimentel (2019) identified several

strategies for borrowings from English, finding 77 cases of borrowings. The main strategy for social media terms was the use of Spanish equivalents, accounting for 45% of the social media terms, including datos for data, dispositivo for device and seguir for follow (Ortego-Antón and Pimentel 2019, p. 123). Loans accounted for 30% of the data (e.g., CEO, hashtag, online), while semantic loans (amigo used for both known and unknown individuals) accounted for 16% and calques (e.g., red social for social network and muro for wall) accounted for 9%. There were no cases of paraphrasing in their corpus.

In an attempt to examine the frequency of the use of borrowings as well as their level of adaptation, Sanou (2018) used data collected from Facebook. First, there was a notable presence of anglicisms in the message analyzed in the project. Specifically, there were several patterns observed: 70% of borrowings were nouns, 35% were monosyllabic and 75% were 'unnecessary or superfluous' because there was an existing Spanish equivalent (Sanou 2018, p. 189). Lastly, Sanou (2018, p. 188) found that more young people and women were observed using these borrowings than men and older Facebook users. In terms of linguistic adaptation, Sanou (2018, p. 183) argues that most borrowings use original English orthography (with the exception of plural markings such as 'babys' and 'laidys'). There were additional cases of adaptation of Spanish prefixes (e.g., intensifier re- as in 're fashion'), suffixes (e.g., un 'lookete'), diminutives (e.g., 'showcito) and verbal morphology (e.g., cliquear) (Sanou 2018, p. 185). In the current study, we focus on verbal borrowings.

2.4. Corpus Linguistics

A corpus is an extensive compilation of examples of natural language from a variety of text types. A collection of natural language allows for the completion of empirical studies given the real nature of the data, and it allows for both quantitative and qualitative analyses of language (Friginal and Hardy 2014). One essential aspect of corpora is the fact that the data is extensive and detailed, which allows a better understanding of data in investigations through frequency of use, context and social factors. As Friginal and Hardy (2014) point out, a linguistic corpus is an excellent tool for empirical investigation that looks at variation in a language from the perspective of the diversity and richness that languages possess. This language use can be studied from a variety of frameworks, and, as McEnery and Hardie (2012) state, corpus linguistics is a methodology that looks at the analysis from a variety of procedures and methods. The study of corpus linguistics allows the possibility of the creation of connections between the speakers and other factors, such as sociolinguistic factors. Specialized corpora are designed to represent a certain register, domain or variety of a language, which is of particular use when discussing one phenomenon in a specific language situation. In the case of general corpora, they are designed to represent the language as a whole, making comparisons between different phenomena or social groups possible. Gathering text for written corpora is easier than for oral corpora, but oral corpora contain data that represent informal, often nonstandard speech (Friginal and Hardy 2014). Contrastingly, in written corpora, speakers (or writers) pay more attention to the content or way that they communicate (see for example the work by Silva-Corvalán 2001). Corpus linguistics allows a detailed and realistic analysis of the influence of borrowing on a lexicon, given that it allows for a wide sample of texts. In this sense, Amador and de Oñate (2016) point out that the type of corpus is important when considering the desired outcomes of the study. In the current study, we use a written corpus, which we anticipate will reflect a more formal language and therefore more advanced levels of adoption of lexical borrowings.

3. Methodology

3.1. The Data

In order to examine current borrowings from English to Spanish, we started with a list of terms from the article "Pocketing, fleabagging, ghosting: qué significan las nuevas palabras que se usan para describir las relaciones" 'Pocketing, fleabagging, ghosting: what do these new words that are used to describe relationships mean' by Belén Alfonso,

published on the 6th of February, 2020 by GQ España online. This article presents 20 elements present in different dating apps that are used to describe personal relationships nowadays. In the article, the novelty of these terms is highlighted, and we see the adoption of these terms into the Spanish language. Below, we present the 20 terms with their definitions provided by the article. The translations and additional background information have been added by the current authors.

1. Ghosting: Ignoring the person until they become aware that things have ended
2. Haunting: Disappearing like ghosting, but still watching activity on social media
3. Caspering: Rejecting someone politely (the friendly form of ghosting)
4. Zombieing: Someone who has ghosted you and then suddenly returns to your life through social media.
5. Gaslighting: Making a person doubt their own sanity in order to control them.
6. Catfishing: Creating a completely new identity (often referring to online environments) to start a relationship.
7. Kittenfishing: Emphasizing the good and understating the bad to start a relationship
8. Cockfishing: Sending a photo of a penis that is not yours, altering it in Photoshop or taking a photo that does not accurately portray reality, (derivative of Catfishing)
9. Cookie-jarring: Going out with a person only because you are bored
10. Cuffing: Going out with someone because it is Winter, and you miss having someone to curl up and watch Netflix with or someone to ease the stress of Christmas dinner with Grandma
11. Fielding: Analyzing the field to see who the best players are, or playing the field (opposite of cuffing)
12. Pocketing: Your partner is good to you when you are alone, but they keep you hidden away from friends or family.
13. Fleabagging: Going out with people who are not good for you over and over again. This comes from the show *Fleabag* (2016), where the main character repeatedly makes bad relationship choices.
14. Orbiting: Dedicating yourself to giving likes to all of someone's posts and seeing all of their stories without ever talking directly to them.
15. Curving: Veering away from romantic interest and advances (similar to ghosting)
16. Breadcrumbing: Sending messages and flirting with someone but without the intention of developing anything.
17. Benching: Maintaining interest of someone knowing that you will never end up together
18. Cushioning: Entertaining options with other people when you have a partner with the idea that once your relationship ends you can cushion the fall.
19. Paperclipping: Your ex returns to your life without the intention of anything happening, only to let you know that they are there. This concept is based on the animated icon from Word, "Clippy", who appears at certain times to communicate a message from the program.
20. Situationship: When you find yourself with the feeling of being in a relationship, but it is not official.

These 20 borrowings are the focus of the present analysis. The purpose of this study is to find the frequency of these borrowings in modern (2012–2019) written Spanish.

3.2. Instrument and Procedure

The data presented in this study come from the Corpus del Español NOW (News on the Web), the newest addition to the Corpus del Español (Davies 2002). The novelty of these selected terms was a deciding factor in the selection of the Corpus del Español NOW. This corpus consists of a collection of 5.5 billion terms from text from newspapers and magazines online from a period of 7 years (2012–2019). This written corpus presents publications from 21 Spanish-speaking countries, including the United States. In addition

to a concordance, the corpus presents additional information, including the date, country and source.

After identifying the terms to be analyzed, we searched for each term in the NOW Corpus del Español in its original form and any equivalents in Spanish as provided by the article. Additionally, we looked for other morphological forms (i.e., ghostear, hauntear, casperear). There were three cases of ghostear, but this was the only example of morphological adaptation.

> (1) Aunque por convenio social se sobreentiende que lo de ghostear solo se le puede hacer a alguien con quien nunca tuviste una relación sin compromiso. (Playground Magazine 23 January 2018)

'Although through social convention it goes without saying that ghosting is only done to a person with whom you've never had a relationship without commitment'

Therefore, we focus on the borrowed -ing form (i.e., ghosting, haunting, caspering), since -ed or infinitive forms were not found in the corpus. After retrieving all occurrences of the 20 terms from the corpus, we excluded all terms that did not reference romantic relationships. Following De la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2009), the terms were then coded for remaining variables, including whether the term was presented in uppercase, a different font or between quotation marks. Additionally, we recorded whether the term was presented in italics, between parentheses or preceded by a translation, equivalent or explication of the term. Lastly, we recorded the date and country of publication to establish the year and place of the incorporation of the new meaning into the corpus data.

4. Results

With the purpose of examining the influence of the English borrowings in the Spanish language, we collected data regarding their frequency within the corpus. Then, we classified them in order from the highest to lowest number of occurrences, and we found that 11 of the 20 borrowings were present in the corpus, with a total of 3668 tokens. There was an unusually high use of fielding and haunting, but these referred to a last name and movie, respectively, not a romantic relationship. After reviewing each occurrence and removing all cases with contexts that did not refer to romantic relationships, we were left with 546 cases in total. Table 1 contains information regarding frequency in the corpus, the number of occurrences extracted in the analysis (which is different from the one indicated in the corpus) and the final frequency that resulted from selecting the cases in which the words are used with their romantic meaning:

Table 1. Classification of the borrowings that occur in the corpus in order from the highest to lowest frequency.

Borrowing	Total Occurrences	Filtered Results	Percentage of Total Tokens
Ghosting	398	314	57.5%
Gaslighting	74	65	11.9%
Benching	45	45	8.2%
Catfishing	30	29	5.3%
Breadcrumbing	28	28	5.1%
Orbiting	44	20	3.7%
Cushioning	19	15	2.7%
Zombieing/ Zombing	14	14	2.6%
Kittenfishing	14	14	2.6%
Curving	4	1	0.2%
Cuffing	1	1	0.2%

Table 1. *Cont.*

Borrowing	Total Occurrences	Filtered Results	Percentage of Total Tokens
Fielding	2563	0	0
Haunting	434	0	0
Caspering	0	0	0
Cockfishing	0	0	0
Cookie-jarring	0	0	0
Pocketing	0	0	0
Fleabagging	0	0	0
Paperclipping	0	0	0
Situationship	0	0	0

From the 20 initial terms, 13 words occur in the corpus, but only 11 show cases in which they are used with their romantic meaning. The borrowings caspering, cockfishing, cookie-jarring, pocketing, fleabagging, paperclipping, and situationship do not occur in the corpus. This classification shows that the word with the highest representation is ghosting (314 tokens), then gaslighting (65 tokens), with the third term being benching (45 tokens). Examples of each are shown below:

(1) *El ghosting no es más que una manera cobarde de salir de una relación . . .*

(De10, México, 2017)

'Ghosting is just a cowardly way of breaking up . . . '

(2) *Es frecuente encontrar situaciones de gaslighting en relaciones tóxicas . . .*

(Wapa, Perú, 2019)

'Gaslighting is a frequent practice in toxic relationships . . . '

(3) *El punto de partida de el benching es el egoísmo, pues quien textea . . .*

(El Periódico Digital, Bolivia, 2018)

'Benching is based on selfishness, since the one who texts . . . '

The search for the word zombieing did not show any occurrences initially; however, while we were collecting data regarding the rest of the words, we found cases in which the word zombing was used, and we suspect that this vowel deletion is an effect of adaptation. Then, we searched for the term zombing, and the corpus showed 14 occurrences.

(4) *Términos como "ghosting" o "zombing" remiten a nuevas estrategias . . .*

(La Prensa, Argentina, 2017)

'Terms like "ghosting" or "zombing" refer to new strategies . . . '

Overall, the frequencies indicate that some of these loanwords are more common than others. The terms ghosting, gaslighting and benching show higher frequencies, while 7 of the 20 initial words did not occur in the corpus. These findings suggest that some of the borrowings have greater levels of incorporation in the Spanish language than others.

Next, we examined the graphic representation of the analyzed words in the Corpus NOW. Following De la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2009) and Fadic (2002), this information was collected in order to observe the adaptation and assimilation that these terms present in Spanish. We examined the presence of uppercase letters, quotation marks, the combination of uppercase letters and quotation marks, parentheses and italics, as well as the absence of these. The frequencies are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Data regarding the graphic representation of the analyzed words in the Corpus NOW.

Borrowing	Uppercase	Quotation Marks	Upper Letter & Quotation Mark	Parenthesis	No Change
Ghosting N = 314	9 2.9%	83 26.4%	18 5.7%	1 0.3%	203 64.7%
Gaslighting N = 65	11 16.9%	17 26.2%	3 4.6%	0	34 52.3%
Benching N = 45	1 2.2%	13 28.9%	4 8.9%	0	27 60%
Catfishing N = 29	1 3.5%	15 51.7%	0	0	13 44.8%
Breadcrumbing N = 28	1 3.6%	4 14.3%	0	1 3.6%	22 78.5%
Orbiting N = 20	0	7 35%	0	0	13 65%
Cushioning N = 15	0	9 60%	0	0	6 40%
Zombing N = 14	0	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	0	9 64.3%
Kittenfishing N = 14	1 7.2%	3 21.4%	0	0	10 71.4%
Curving N = 1	0	0	0	0	1 100%
Cuffing N = 1	0	0	1 100%	0	0
Total Frequency	25 4.4%	155 28.4%	27 5%	2 0.2%	338 62%

Overall, it is evident that the use of the borrowing without any graphic marks occurs most frequently (62%). The most common graphic marking is the use of quotation marks (as in 5 below) which obtains a frequency percentage of 28.4%.

(5) *"Orbiting", la nueva tendencia de relaciones en la red* . . .

(Meganoticias, Chile, 2018)

'Orbiting, the new online love trend . . . '

The examples in which the word contains initial uppercase letters obtains a percentage of 4.4%, while the group of words that combines initial uppercase letters and quotation marks (as in 6) constitutes 5%.

(6) *Los mensajes desaparecen y las llamadas sólo quedan en recuerdos, el "Ghosting" es conocido como una de las peores maneras de terminar una relación.*

(La Tribuna, Honduras, 2018)

'Messages or calls are past memories, "ghosting" is known as one of the worst ways of ending a relationship.'

Regarding the presence of parentheses, this was only found in one case that involved two of the analyzed borrowings: *ghosting* and *breadcrumbing*. However, in this case, parentheses were not used to indicate the foreign origin of these words. Rather, they were used to enclose examples.

(7) . . . *estos comportamientos cobardes (el ghosting) y sádicos (el breadcrumbing)* . . .

(El Confidencial, España, 2017)

' . . . these cowardly (ghosting) and sadistic (breadcrumbing) behaviors . . . '
In the data analyzed, there is no overwhelming use of graphic marks such as uppercase letters, quotation marks or parentheses. Regarding the use of italics, there is no representation in Table 2, since we did not find any case. However, of these markers, there is a preference for the use of quotation marks as indicators of the foreign origin of these words.

Next, we analyzed the presence of explanations or translations of the borrowings in the analyzed texts. The data in Table 3 show the number of cases and percentages.

Table 3. Data regarding the presence of explanations or translations of the borrowings in the analyzed texts.

Borrowing	Explanation or Translation	Frequency
Ghosting N = 314	107	34.1%
Gaslighting N = 65	38	73.8%
Benching N = 45	20	44.4%
Catfishing N = 29	25	86.2%
Breadcrumbing N = 28	15	53.6%
Orbiting N = 20	9	45%
Cushioning N = 15	6	40%
Zombing N = 14	3	21.4%
Kittenfishing N = 14	6	42.9%
Curving N = 1	0	0
Cuffing N = 1	1	100%
TOTAL 546	230	42.1%

The only example in the corpus of cuffing also includes a translation of the term. In this case, the expression used in the text is "cuffing season", which is translated as "temporada de las esposas":

(8) *También conocido como "Cuffing Season" (temporada de las esposas)* . . .

(El Nuevo Diario, Nicaragua, 2017)

'Also known as "Cuffing Season" (the season of handcuffs) . . . '

Catfishing occurs with an explanation in 86.2% of occurrences, and *gaslighting* is translated 73.8% of the time. Lastly, the use of *breadcrumbing* occurs with a translation in 53.6% of overall cases. Examples of each follow:

(9) . . . *el catfishing, que básicamente es crear perfiles falsos en redes sociales para enamorar* . . .

(BioBioChile, Chile, 2018)

' . . . catfishing, which is basically creating fake profiles on social media to make someone fall in love with you . . . '

(10) . . . *y 'gaslighting' (volver loco a alguien).*

(Noticia al Día, Venezuela, 2018)

' . . . and "gaslighting" (drive somebody crazy).'

(11) . . . *el breadcrumbing es un método de mantener el interés de el otro sin avanzartanto.*

(El Observador, Uruguay, 2019)

' . . . and breadcrumbing is the strategy of keeping someone's interest without taking any further steps.'

These results show that the inclusion of explanations or translations is a common tool used in the publications contained in the Corpus NOW (News on the Web), given that a translation is presented in 42% of tokens overall. Table 4 shows the Spanish equivalents included in the publications of the Corpus NOW.

Table 4. Spanish equivalents included in the publications of the Corpus NOW (News on the Web).

Borrowing	Translation
Ghosting	"marcharse" (España, 2013), "desaparición" (Colombia, 2015) "fantasmeo" (México, 2015) "hacerse el fantasma" (Costa Rica, 2015) "desaparecer" (Argentina, 2017) "fantasmear" (Chile, 2017)
Gaslighting	"manipular" (Chile, 2018) "volver loco" (Venezuela, 2018) "hacer creer" (Chile, 2019) "hacer luz de gas" (Perú, 2018)
Benching	"plan B" (España, 2017) "mantener en el banquillo" (España, 2017) "banqueando" (Chile, 2017) "hacer banco" (Argentina, 2017) "tener como reserva" (Perú, 2018) "dar falsas ilusiones" (Paraguay, 2018) "peor es nada" (Bolivia, 2018)
Catfishing	"robo de identidad" (Estados Unidos, 2017) "fingir" (México, 2019) "usurpar" (Hondura, 2019) "perfil falso" (Estados Unidos, 2019)
Breadcrumbing	"migajas de pan" (España, 2017) "submarinear" (Chile, 2017) "mantener el interés" (Uruguay, 2019)
Orbiting	"mantener en la órbita" (Argentina, 2019) "monitorear" (Argentina, 2019)
Cushioning	"acolchar" (Chile, 2017)
Zombing	-
Kittenfishing	"engañar" (Chile, 2017)
Curving	-
Cuffing	"temporada de las esposas" (Nicaragua, 2017).

We found that there is a wide variety in terms of offering equivalents in Spanish for these English borrowings. It is important to note that these additional terms (such as fantasmear) co occurred with the English translation. There were frequent uses of infinitives such as "desvanecerse", "manipular "or "mentir". It was often common to include a translation of the English root in the explanation, such as "mantener en la órbita" for orbiting or "mantener en el banquillo" for benching.

There were also explanations that did not connect directly to the English root, such as "volver loco" for catfishing or "mantener el interés" for breadcrumbing. Ghosting presents an interesting case in that several of the translations/explanations include multiple morphological forms: there are full verb equivalents (marcharse, desaparecer), light verb constructions with hacer (hacerse el fantasma) and full adaptations in which the root ghost has been translated to fantasma and the Spanish suffix -ear is used in accordance with the morphological rules of the Spanish language (fantasmear). This indicates a high level of adaptation into the language. Overall, the high rate of the inclusion of translations or definitions suggests that these lexical borrowings do not hold a firm place in the Spanish lexicon just yet. The newness of these terms can also be noted in English-only texts, which is made clear by the Google search that suggests Urban Dictionary definitions and similar things. In order to better understand the use of these lexical borrowings in Spanish, we extracted data regarding the year in which these words were used with their romantic meaning. Table 4 contains information regarding the date according to the NOW Corpus:

The data show that the word that was first used with its romantic meaning was ghosting, since the first time it was included in a publication was 2013. In 2015, gaslighting first appeared in the corpus. The borrowings benching, catfishing and zombing were first included in 2016, and breadcrumbing, cushioning, kittenfishing and cuffing were first used with their romantic meaning in 2017. In 2017, cuffing first appears, and the word that was last included with its romantic meaning is curving, in 2019. There appears to be a connection between the date of first appearance and frequency: the cases of ghosting, gaslighting and benching obtain the highest percentages of representation in the NOW Corpus, and these terms also have the least recent dates of appearance: 2013, 2015 and 2016, respectively.

As the lexicon varies geographically, the countries of the publications were also examined in order to determine which ones had the highest frequency of use in the corpus. Table 5 contains data regarding the country of the publication:

Table 5. Year of first appearance in corpus.

Borrowing	Date
Ghosting	2013
Gaslighting	2015
Benching	2016
Catfishing	2016
Breadcrumbing	2017
Orbiting	2018
Cushioning	2017
Zombing	2016
Kittenfishing	2017
Curving	2019
Cuffing	2017

Argentina has the highest overall contribution of loanwords to the corpus, with a total of 128, or 23.4% of our data set. This is a fairly representative sample, since no overwhelming number of Argentinian sources were found. Spain and the US both represent around 12% of our dataset, while Mexico, Chile, Peru and Uruguay represent under 10% each. Most notable is the absence of many Spanish- speaking countries from the data set in Table 6. From here, we wanted to know which country used each loanword the most in our dataset. That information is presented in the following table:

Table 6. Frequency of overall data per country.

Country	Total (546)	Frequency
Argentina	128	23.4%
Spain	67	12.27%
US	65	11.9%
Mexico	53	9.7%
Chile	50	9.1%
Peru	41	7.5%
Uruguay	29	5.3%

Table 7 indicates that Argentina is the country with the highest number of examples for ghosting, benching, orbiting and zombing, followed by Chile, which has the highest number of words for catfishing and kittenfishing. USA, Uruguay, Spain, Cuba and Nicaragua have the highest number of cases for gaslighting, breadcrumbing, cushioning, curving and cuffing, respectively.

Table 7. Frequency of use of the borrowings regarding the country of the publication.

Borrowing	Country	Percent of Total Tokens
Ghosting N = 314	Argentina	25.5%
Gaslighting N = 65	USA	24.6%
Benching N = 45	Argentina	24.4%
Catfishing N = 29	Chile	17.2%
Breadcrumbing N = 28	Uruguay	32.1%
Orbiting N = 20	Argentina	40%
Cushioning N = 15	Spain	60%
Zombing N = 14	Argentina	64.3%
Kittenfishing N = 14	Chile	78.6%
Curving N = 1	Cuba	100%
Cuffing N = 1	Nicaragua	100%

5. Discussion

The NOW Corpus showed evidence of 13 of the 20 initial words, but only 11 show cases in which they are used with their romantic meaning. The word with the highest representation is ghosting, followed by gaslighting and then benching, respectively. While Sanou (2018) found many cases of morphological adaptation within the corpus, only ghosting has taken on any morphological adaptation within this corpus. The higher level of the adaptation of ghosting, as described by Fadic (2002), suggests that ghosting is more stable in the Spanish lexicon than other borrowings in this study. The borrowings caspering,

cockfishing, cookie-jarring, pocketing, fleabagging, paperclipping and situationship do not occur in the corpus. It is important to note that the NOW Corpus consists of a collection of texts which have been published in online newspapers and magazines from 2012–2019, so current representation of these romantic terms is not available. However, it is important to note that many of these terms were in use far before the article's 2020 publication. The newness of these terms with their romantic meaning, as well as their appearance in the corpus, suggest that these words are in the early stages of becoming adapted to the Spanish linguistic system, or that they may not ever be adapted into the lexicon in a way similar to gaslighting or cuffing. This supports Morin's (2006) conclusion that many borrowings are in flux and vary in terms of adaptation.

In order to measure the level of adaptation, we studied the use of some types of graphic marks and found that the romantic borrowings were marked with either quotes or upper case only 38% of the time. Similarly, explanations or translations accompany the borrowing in 42% of the total cases. This finding supports the observations of De la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2009)'s work on borrowings that are marked to indicate novelty or communicate meaning. Both of these strategies are used to guarantee that the audience understands their meaning. It is evident that for all borrowings (with the exception of zombing and cushioning), there is a higher use of definitions/translations than the use of graphic markings. A notable example is the term ghosting, since, as previously stated, it is the borrowing with the highest number of cases in the corpus and is also one of the borrowings which obtains the lowest percentage regarding the presence of explanations or definitions.

With regards to when and where these data occur, the word that was first used with its romantic meaning was ghosting, since the first time it was included in a publication was 2013. On the other hand, we found that the most recently introduced word is *curving*, in 2019. The data indicate a relation between the frequency of use and the date these words were first used with their romantic meaning. The borrowings ghosting, gaslighting and benching obtain the highest percentages of representation in the NOW Corpus, and these terms also have the least recent dates of appearance: 2013, 2015 and 2016, respectively. We would hypothesize that the use of these three romantic borrowings would increase in frequency each year, but that is not necessarily the trend that we found. Below, in Figure 1, we present the frequency per year of the three most used borrowings, namely *ghosting*, *gaslighting* and *benching*:
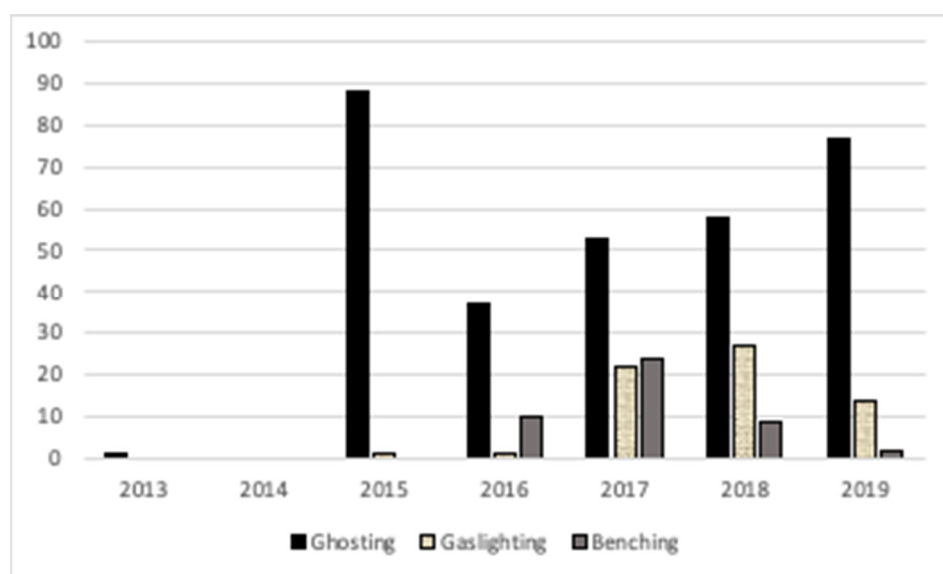

Figure 1. Top three borrowings: Frequency and year.

The borrowing ghosting is most frequent in 2015, and then it increases from 2016–2019 incrementally. This is how we anticipated borrowing patterns. However, the fact that the other two borrowings—gaslighting and benching—appear to peak in 2018 and 2017, respectively, and decrease in their use each year after would suggest that these terms are decreasing in use today. Additional data for 2020 and 2021 would illuminate additional patterns.

The analysis of the countries of the publications shows that Argentina is the one that obtains the highest frequency of use in the case of the borrowings ghosting, benching, orbiting and zombing. This supports previous research that shows high rates of borrowing and the high value of loanwords in Argentine Spanish (see Bordelois 2011). Chile is the second country with the highest percentage of use in the cases of catfishing and kittenfishing. Many Spanish-speaking countries are also not represented in our dataset.

6. Conclusions

This present study offers a detailed analysis of the inclusion and level of adaptation of a group of English borrowings regarding romantic relationships in the Spanish linguistic system. This group of words containing 20 English borrowings was retrieved from the article "Pocketing, fleabagging, ghosting: qué significan las nuevas palabras que se usan para describir las relaciones" (Alfonso 2020), which was published in February 2020 by GQ España. This analysis of their presence in the NOW Corpus provides results that inform the frequency of use of these borrowings, as well as their linguistic adaptation to the Spanish language. The data collected show that of the 20 borrowings studied, 11 cases were present in the corpus, while 9 did not appear. Regarding their linguistic adaptation to the Spanish language, there is a preference for the use of quotation marks or the use of upper case as indicators of the foreign origin of these words. Moreover, with regard to the inclusion of explanations or translations, the results show that this is a common tool used in the publications contained in the NOW Corpus. Both explanations/translation and graphic markings indicate that these borrowings are in the initial stage in the process of being adapted to the Spanish linguistic system. This study aims to contribute to our understanding of the situation of languages in contact and shows an increase in the incorporation of these borrowings over the years in the Spanish lexicon. Moreover, the newness of them is shown by the use of quotation marks as well as attached definitions or explanations of the terms in the analyzed texts.

There were several limitations of this study regarding the measures used to collect data, time constraints and sample size. Firstly, this corpus consists of a collection of texts that have been published in online newspapers and magazines, which limits our study to provide results regarding the impact of the borrowings in the written language, which tends to be more formal. In addition, this corpus contains texts published from 2012 to 2019, which was a limitation in our study due to the fact that the analyzed borrowings were extracted from a 2020 article. In future studies, analyzing the impact of these borrowings in social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram will provide data in the informal context, making it possible to compare the formal and informal levels of the language. Examining the impact of these words in the spoken language would also allow the analysis of the social identity of the participant (i.e., age, gender and level of academic achievement), which would potentially link linguistic and social factors.

Borrowing words or short phrases from another language is not a new linguistic strategy, and, as shown in this research, there is no reason to question its durability. We wish to highlight several implications for the field. First, this study speaks to the global use and social value of English. These terms are used outside of the language of origin in a source with high social capital such as GQ España, as well as throughout the written corpus samples in Latin America, the US and Spain at fairly high rates considering the novelty of the borrowings. The current findings demonstrate that speakers are recognizing the social capital of English, as is evident in the adaptation of these borrowings into monolingual environments. The borrowings were extracted from online newspapers and magazines,

whose objective is to offer content to a general audience. This demonstrates that even if there are equivalents in Spanish for these borrowings, the use of their English form is preferred. It is also important to quickly highlight the role of technology in the spread of borrowings. The sources for all of these borrowings are written, which reflects a higher register and a more precisely executed form of the language. Therefore, this study demonstrates the role (and power) of English in the realm of discussing romance in the media.

Additionally, this data shows that not all borrowings are adapted and used equally. In focusing on the very specific topic of romantic borrowings, we have controlled for many factors, including speech type, possible speaker group, intended audience, etc. One variable that remained was the use in individual terms. For example, there is a notable difference in ghosting versus kittenfishing. Based on the current data, we suggest that, while borrowings are sometimes adopted to replace ideas that already exist in a language, necessity plays a significant role in how quickly and committedly a term is adopted. While a term such as kittenfishing is novel (and a notable play on words), there is significant overlap with the borrowing catfishing, making this borrowing less of a necessity than, for example, ghosting, a term that communicates an idea that lacks a single term concept in either English or Spanish. Therefore, even when a list of borrowings, such as the one presented in GQ España, is presented to a group of readers, it is important to note that not all borrowings are equal. Nevertheless, this paper demonstrates the novelty of language and the role of borrowings in communicating new ideas in romance today.

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