Linguistic purism – is Spanish being "tarnished"? The problematic nature of Spanglish.

University of Nottingham

Department of Modern Languages and Cultures

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INTRODUCTION:

According to the 2018 census there are approximately 60 million Hispanics in the United States, rendering the Hispanic community the largest minority in the US. As this community continues to grow, a unique situation of contact is emerging between two languages and cultures: Spanish and English. The result has been the birth of a linguistic phenomenon known as Spanglish.

For many people, this cultural and linguistic encounter acts as a vehicle of communication for a specific community. Whilst for others, it is a linguistic aberration, causing the deterioration of the Spanish language. This criticism of Spanglish has become a fear, fuelling the idea that Spanglish is "tarnishing" standard Spanish. I will discuss how this negative perception of Spanglish stems from the concept of linguistic purism, as it is with this belief of purity, that Spanglish is deemed impure and thus, undesirable.

Subsequently, one cannot discuss purism without considering language planning and standardisation. Many linguists claim that the development of linguistic purism comes hand in hand with the process of language standardisation. More specifically, standardisation may even facilitate linguistic purism through the promotion of one linguistic variety above all others. Likewise, the standard is seen as essential for creating a group identity which, I will argue, places language at the heart of any speech community. It is therefore difficult to escape notions of purism in any kind of language use, particularly where the standard isn't being used. This use of other linguistic varieties is met with fierce opposition, so much so that constructs are developed which attempt to devalue other varieties. These constructs are,

however, false. Linguistically speaking, all varieties are valid and equal in their intrinsic linguistic value. However, the way in which these varieties are used operates on a hierarchy of social ideas. Consequently, this develops inequality and discrimination based on the views of the society, but not on the linguistic qualities themselves.

Furthermore, I will discuss the role of language for establishing identity before I come to analyse Spanglish. This is in order to legitimise the use of Spanglish as the "language" of a specific speech community in the US. In simple terms, from Joseph's definition of language, if it serves the function of communication and is rule governed, it is a language.[1] This leads me to the matter of defining Spanglish. What is Spanglish? Who uses it? Why do they use it? How do they use it, and where do they use it?

This analysis will examine the different variations of Spanglish seen in the US, as they each play a role in establishing a dual-identity for the Hispanic community. With this linguistic variation of Spanglish, I will discuss what the future of Spanglish is, as this variation may hinder any chances of standardising Spanglish itself. The ultimate question, however, is whether the goal is actually to standardise Spanglish?

I will explain this linguistic phenomenon, exemplifying how Spanglish is a controversial topic, loaded with criticism, but that its mere existence as an identity marker is enough to justify its usage without the status of being a "standard" language.

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[1] John E Joseph, *Language and Identity*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15.

1. Defining Purism

Firstly, it is necessary to highlight that purism is a mental construct, meaning that there is no such thing as a "pure language". The concept of linguistic purism is discussed in relation to language planning as a form of protecting the language from "undesirable" elements. Consequently, the mental construct of purism is assigned a physical manifestation in language planning, giving rise to the general belief that purism and a "pure language" are real. This justification of purism is partly due to linguistic ideologies; these ideologies are often loaded with political and social intentions and therefore become subjective. Language planning ideology thus tends to manifest as the resistance to elements which are deemed "foreign". Silverstein defines linguistic ideologies as, "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use"[2]. As a result, the ideas and beliefs surrounding language often promote the notion that one form of language is better, or that a certain language variety is superior to another. Linguistically, this is not true, therefore, any preference of one variety over another is strictly subjective. It is with this subjectivity that purism thrives.

As I define purism, particularly in a relevant context to discuss Spanglish, let us recognise the various definitions that have been proposed. Some linguists view purism as negative attitudes towards foreign elements, others interpret purism more generally as a denial of any linguistic variation, be it the threat from the foreign, or from internal variation within the language. For example, Trask defines purity as the belief that "words and other linguistic features of foreign

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[2] M. Silverstein, *Language structure and linguistic ideology* (In Clyne, Hanks & Hofbauer, 1979), 193.

origin are a kind of contamination sullying the purity of the language."[3] Lodge takes it a step further in defining purism as "a desire to protect the traditional standard from contaminations from *any* source be they foreign loan-words or internally generated variation and change."[4] In this way, it is clear that purism can be interpreted at different levels.

Much like Lodge, Thomas defines purism as:

> The manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects and styles of the same language). Above all, purism is an aspect of the codification, cultivation and planning of standard languages.[5]

From Thomas's definition one can deduce two conclusions. Firstly, that purism is part of the process of language standardisation, and with this claim, purism is always present and relevant for the standard language. Whether this is the case for Spanish and thus Spanglish, is to be determined. The second conclusion is that it is not only foreign elements that are undesirable, but even variations of the same language. Some linguists believe that this second view can be problematic as it is in contrast with the belief that purism simply operates on the rejection of the foreign. Brunstad argues that with Thomas's definition, "purism becomes a broad ideological discourse covering almost all notions of language correctness…in that case, the concept loses some of its

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[3] R.L. Trask, *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 254.
[4] R.A. Lodge, *French: From Dialect to Standard*, (London: Routledge, 1993), 3.
[5] George Thomas, *Linguistic Purism*, (London: Longman, 199), 2.

analytic utility."[6] I argue that this analytic utility depends on the context in which one is discussing purism, as Walsh maintains, "a broader definition enables a more thorough study of the different attitudes towards language that may exist."[7]

Taking these views into consideration, I believe that in the context of Spanglish it is important to view purism in both senses. Firstly, in the traditional sense, as the resistance to impure or "foreign" elements, as seen in the approach of Trask, as Brunstad defends. But also, in the second sense that Lodge proposes, and which Thomas expands upon. In the context of Spanglish, Thomas's claim that purism can also operate within variations of the same language is relevant as we come to discuss whether Spanglish is a variation of Spanish, or a language in its own right.

My approach is therefore justified when discussing Spanglish, as it will allow me to refer to purism as a broad concept of resistance to any foreignness which may also be applied to internal linguistic variation, without any limits on my analysis.

2. Where does the conceptualisation for being "pure" or "impure" come from?

2a): Language at an abstract level

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[6] Endre Brunstad, *Standard language and linguistic purism*, (Sociolinguistica, 2003), 53.
[7] Olivia Walsh, *Linguistic Purism: Language Attitudes in France and Quebec*, (John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2016), 8.

In order to understand what could give rise to the notion of "tarnishing" a language, we must understand where these notions come from. According to Brunstad, the conceptualisation of "language" and "purity" is based on metaphors. He explains that the use of metaphors can be physically oriented: language as an artefact (physical object, building), an animate object (garden, plant), or as a territory (state, landscape). Likewise, language may also be considered as a bond (to a culture, the idea of membership). Brunstad is demonstrating that purism is inherently connected to language through these concepts. If language is understood as a garden, a garden must be clean, when it is a body, a body must be healthy; "clean" and "healthy" are synonymous with this notion of purity. Therefore, through these various metaphors it can be deduced that there are many ways to understand linguistic purism.[8]

Similarly, Brunstad highlights that language purity may be viewed within "sociological and social psychological opposites such as: us vs them, inside vs outside, correct vs incorrect."[9] These concepts enable the sociolinguistic functions of unification and separation: unification implies a sense of belonging, commonality, and unity, whereas separation signifies what doesn't belong, in this case, impurities.

Furthermore, if we take Douglas's definition of purity as "matter in its right place"[10], we can infer that "matter out of place" is considered as impure. Brunstad explains this definition through the example of a woman's hair – when it is on a woman's head, it is pure as it is in the "right place", conversely when it is in soup, it is impure as it is in the wrong place.[11] This transcends into

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[8] Brunstad, *Standard language*, 56.
[9] Brunstad, *Standard language*, 57.
[10] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 36-37.
[11] Brunstad, *Standard language,* 57.

linguistics, for example, a morpheme itself is not impure, but when it is used outside its domain or in another language, it can be considered a "contamination". This concept is particularly relevant to Spanglish – if purity is defined as being "matter in the *right* place", then any borrowing or indeed mixing of a language is deemed impure by this logic. For instance, the English "yard*"*, in Spanish "*patio",* both in their own domains are "correct" (or "pure"), but the Spanglish equivalent being a Spanish word with different semantics, "*yarda"*[12], may be considered a "contamination" of Spanish. This does not mean that *"*yard*"* in English is impure, but moreover that the use of English semantics in Spanglish could be considered impure due to its placement. This idea is relevant if we are to consider that the entire domain of Spanglish is indeed considered as "matter out of place" with relation to Spanish. However, if Spanglish is considered a language in its own right, then surely terms like "*yarda"* are actually "matter in the right place" and are not impurities. This paradox is particularly unique to Spanglish and is ultimately dependant on what domain Spanglish itself is considered as.

2b): Linguistic purism and Standardisation

Standardisation is a social and linguistic process that can be seen to nurture linguistic purism. I will use Haugen's model for language planning to define how a standard language is developed.[13]

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[12] Alfredo Ardila, *Spanglish: An Anglicized Spanish Dialect,* (Sage publications, 2005), 61-74.
[13] E Haugen, *Language Conflict and Language Planning. The Case of Modern Norwegian*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966)

	Form	Function
Society	1.Selection	3.Acceptance
Language	2.Codification	4.Elaboration

The stages are split up into social and formal processes. Firstly, for the social processes, stage 1 is the selection of one dialect, which is chosen for privileged use in a political and economic sphere. It is generally the dialect of the dominant part of society. Stage 3 is acceptance of this variety, as it has to be diffused throughout the relevant population, with the goal of becoming a symbol of identity.

Likewise, the formal processes include stage 2, codification, which involves laying out the rules in grammars and fixing vocabulary in dictionaries, aiming to suppress language variability. Codification is a socio-political phenomenon, and one of particular relevance when it comes to attitudes of linguistic purity. It brings about questions such as: what form of the language is codified as "the language", whose form of the language is codified, who makes these decisions and why, what ideologies or beliefs inform these choices? Finally, stage 4 is elaboration which is the development of the linguistic tools to perform an extended range of functions (government, law, literature, science etc), the development of a written form, and broadening the lexicon.

Milroy and Milroy state that standardisation is the "suppression of optional variability"[14], and through Haugen's four processes, this goal of promoting a one and only standard thus results in the suppression and discrimination of other linguistic varieties. However, from a linguistic point of view, the standard

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[14] J. Milroy & L. Milroy, *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*, (London: Routledge, 1999), 30-33.

is simply one language variety among other varieties which are all equal. Much like other varieties, the standard has specific features such as lexis, syntax, morphology. However, to quote Joseph, "as the standard emerges, the myth arises that it is the one, true, original form of the language – the language proper. All other dialects, formerly on a par with it, are now taken to be variants of the standard, regional ways of using it, or decadent misuses." [15] This myth leads to the idea that the standard is the one legitimate form of language, giving rise to the notion of prescriptivism; the idea that there are correct and incorrect ways to use languages. The mere existence of the belief that there is a "correct" form of language incites discrimination – facilitating generalisations such as Spanglish is "tarnishing" Spanish. This line of thought therefore develops into linguistic purity; if the standard is seen as "superior", this leads to the belief that it is "purer" and that it is in danger of contamination by elements that do not belong to the standard (either foreign elements, or simply any variation).

Given this explicit connection between standardisation and the development of purist attitudes and beliefs, Walsh maintains that "linguistic purism arguably cannot develop without standardisation having first taken place: before the standard language exists, there is no superior language to defend." [16] With this claim, standardisation is seen to nurture a particular way of viewing language, and thus, facilitate purist attitudes. In this case, Spanish is the standard, and Spanglish is viewed as the contaminated variant which threatens the standard.

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[15] John E. Joseph, *Language and Politics*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 29.
[16] Walsh, *Linguistic purism*, 8.

With Walsh's argument that standardisation must occur at some level in order for purist attitudes to come about, I propose that in the context of Spanglish this may be disputed. Furthermore, with no formal attempts at standardising Spanglish, it would be assumed with this line of argument that there would be no purist activity within those who speak Spanglish. I argue that there are many varieties of Spanglish, within which ideologies of purism may exist. For example, speakers of "Tex-Mex", may have their own loyalty and beliefs of their variant being the "best" variety of Spanglish, therefore other varieties are seen as "incorrect" to this specific community. Therefore, with this example we must recognise that standardisation and linguistic purism are concepts that can be separate, and that purism does not solely depend upon standardisation to exist in some form. Some linguists for example, Brincat et al. examine purism in non-standardised languages (regional varieties, endangered languages): "purism can occur in societies where literacy is rare and institutions which could organise purist movements are largely missing."[17] Therefore, I argue that for all that standardisation certainly develops notions and ideas of linguistic purism, this purism can also arise through views of language at an abstract level, and may also exist where language variation exists.

3. Institutions for language planning

Language planning institutions play a big role in promoting the standard, in particular, language academies. For Spanish, the elite-oriented academy the

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[17] Brincat, Joseph, Winfried Boeder & Thomas Stolz, *Purism in minor languages, endangered languages, regional languages,* (In Brincat eds, 2003), Preface.

Real Academia Española monitors the language. Its motto "*Limpia, fija y da esplendor*" (clarity, purity, and glorifying) demonstrates how the role of these bodies is to act as a norm agent through the process of standardisation whilst promoting the ideologies of the state. As Brunstad explains, "in general, language academies have been norm conservative and have promoted an elite oriented and archaizing purism."[18] Furthermore, as language academies impose their beliefs on the development of the language, these beliefs tend to be prescriptive and subjective, thus leading to elitist attitudes which ultimately facilitate linguistic purism. It is no surprise, therefore, that the powers that oversee language use perceive a threat from a linguistic phenomenon such as Spanglish.

Similarly, other influential bodies include text producers and manufacturers: publishing houses, newspapers, the media, etc. Their selection of which variety of the language to use facilitates the discrimination of other varieties and thus promotes alongside language planning institutions the intentions and beliefs of the state.

Furthermore, purism was established with the expansion of standard languages in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. European standardisation became an important part of the general historical development alongside the development of the state, capitalism, communication needs, and documentation. Consequently, it became necessary for a nation to have their own standard language to fulfil their communication needs during this time.

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[18] Brunstad, *Standard language*, 60.

This leads me to the role and the importance of language standardisation in creating an identity for a nation or speech community.

4. Language as a marker for identity

Language is a crucial element for establishing and maintaining a sense of identity for its speakers, particularly due to a desire for commonality and belonging to a group, community or nation. As Gordon states, "[national identity] implies a nationality, and this in turn exists usually where there is a sense of commonality because of a common language."[19] With regards to commonality, standardisation is key in creating the identity of a nation or group, as "the 'sign' tends to be become the 'identity itself'."[20]

This link between language and identity can consequently produce language attitudes. For instance, through establishing the language, it creates the "us and them" narrative; those who speak the language, and those who don't. This helps to determine a group identity as "there is a connotation of implicit approval of those covered by 'we' and disapproval of the 'non-we', which may have disturbing overtones."[21] These disturbing overtones may be the excessive desire to protect the language and the group it represents, hence leading to prescriptive ideologies and linguistic discrimination.

In the context of Spanglish, I argue that the role of standardisation for creating a "national identity" is not relevant, as Spanglish does not belong to a nation as such, but rather a specific group of people in specific locations in the US.

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[19] David C. Gordon, *The French language and national identity,* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), 15.
[20] Gordon, *French language and national identity*, 15.
[21] P, Rastell, *What Do We Mean by We?* (English Today, 2003), 50-53.

Therefore, the importance in creating an identity for its speakers is different to that of an established nation as Spanglish is not existing on a nationalist agenda. Furthermore, Spanglish has a more fluid existence without the demands for standardisation with regards to the desire to create a "national identity". Spanglish is moreover seeking to be an identity marker for those that use it, a concept which does not rely on the process of standardisation.

5. What is Spanglish?

After establishing a basis of linguistic purism and standardisation, I will discuss the linguistic phenomenon of Spanglish itself.

Before defining Spanglish, it is important to highlight that, linguistically speaking, Spanglish is no better or worse than the two languages from which it is derived. As Rothman and Rell state, "judgments pertaining to [Spanglish's] status, however tangible and defendable, are merely opinions."[22] Nevertheless, the mere existence of Spanglish is seen as problematic, and as such, Spanglish tends to be defined and described as a "hybrid", "mixture", "*mestizaje*", or "fusion". These terms attempt to summarise this complex linguistic phenomenon which I argue is much more than a "mixing" of two different, fully functioning, standard languages. Describing Spanglish with this terminology is to reduce the linguistic and cultural significance of the phenomenon and so, I maintain that the issue of attempting to define Spanglish will always be "emotionally charged"[23].

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[22] Jason Rothman & Amy Beth Rell, *A linguistic analysis of Spanglish: relating language to identity*, (Linguistics and the Human Sciences, 2007), 516.

[23] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 516.

Stavans defines Spanglish as, "the verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations"[24], highlighting that Spanglish has come about as a result of contact between two communities. This situation of contact began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to the huge influx of Latin American and Spanish immigrants to the United States. This influx increased throughout the 20th century, with Puerto Ricans during the 1950s and 1960s; Cubans during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s; Central Americans during the 1980s; Colombians and Venezuelans during the 1990s; and Mexicans, a group which has continually migrated to the United States throughout these decades.[25]

This migration led to language contact between these Spanish speakers and the language of their host country, English. Due to this migration, Spanglish is observed in many areas of the US, meaning that there are variations of Spanglish spoken across the country: Chicano spoken in California, the variant spoken by Cuban natives in Miami, Tex-Mex which is spoken along the Mexican border, Pachuco, Dominicanish, among others.[26] This linguistic variation is significant as Spanglish is not a standardised language, nor is it a unified one, meaning that there is no uniformity or control over the different variants that are spoken in the US. This variation is difficult to monitor, and this lack of uniformity is a reason why Spanglish may never become a standardised language and, indeed, a reason why it may never actually want to be one.

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[24] Ilan Stavans, *The Making of a New American Language*, (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2003), 5.
[25] Ardila, *Spanglish*, 62-63.
[26] Ardila, *Spanglish*, 63.

In order to explain how this encounter between these two cultures and languages has led to the creation of Spanglish, I will discuss borrowing and code-switching.

5a) Borrowing

In the context of Spanglish, language contact between Spanish and English leads to the adaptation of lexical items and the manipulation of already existing ones. An example of this in action is the process of borrowing; the rules governing borrowing are not fully defined, for example, why is a particular word borrowed and another not. For the sake of argument, I will explain borrowing in the context of Spanglish; particularly, this involves the process of each loan-word undergoing phonetical and morphological adaptations in order to fit within the paradigms of the other language. [27]

As for the phonological shift, each language has its own phonological system: the set of rules for making its own sounds and combining sounds into words that are deemed "pronounceable" in that specific language. When loan words enter another language, they often take on the phonological qualities of the language they are entering. Or, conversely, pronunciation of the donor language is retained, "producing as a result something that is conspicuously foreign."[28] In the case of Spanglish, this adaptation happens to and from each language, with the anglicising of loan words from Spanish, and the hispanisation of English loan words.

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[27] Robert McColl Millar & Larry Trask, *Trask's historical linguistics*, (Routledge, 2015), 20-21.
[28] Millar & Trask, *Historical linguistics*, 21.

Regarding morphology, there are complications that are presented with borrowed words: issues of number, gender, conjugation etc.[29] For example: English verbs being adapted with the morphology of Spanish verbs, more precisely with Spanish infinitive verb endings. Therefore, the apparition of new verbs into the lexicon of Spanglish are often derived from Spanish *-ar* verbs: *lunchear*, *telephonear* etc.[30] Within morphological variation there is semantic transposition when "words are lexically and phonologically close, although have different meanings. In Spanglish, the word loses the Spanish meaning in favour of the English one."[31] For example: the Spanish *"pretender"* meaning to intend to do something, or to want to be, takes on the meaning of the English "to pretend", losing its original Spanish meaning.

As well as the adaptation on a phonological, morphological or even morphophonological level, Rothman and Rell propose the adaptation of phrasal constituents: *"tener un buen tiempo"* instead of *"pasarla bien".*[32] These lexical elements being borrowed may also vary between different regions, or in the context of Spanglish, between situations of language contact of different Spanish speakers. Consequently, there are many linguistic variations of Spanglish, as Stavans argues, "there isn't one Spanglish but many, the lingo spoken by Cuban Americans is different from the so-called Dominicanish."[33] Without the constraints of being standardised, Spanglish is malleable to the desires of its speakers in each of their unique linguistic situations, a concept which borrowing enables.

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[29] Millar & Trask, *Historical linguistics*, 22-24.
[30] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 522.
[31] Ardila, *Spanglish*, 69.
[32] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 522.
[33] Ilan Stavans, *My love affair with Spanglish*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 136.

5b) Code-switching

The phenomenon of code-switching is controversial among experts and, consequently, the use of code-switching in Spanglish is often met with criticism. Code-switching can be quite simply defined as "the accessing of multiple languages"[34], a common practice in bilingual communities. In this sense, code-switching involves the speaker switching between languages whether it be in one sentence, or across several, when convenient and appropriate. A common misconception is that it is a "haphazard, unstructured phenomenon,"[35] that occurs when a speaker is unable to express themselves fully in either language, thus feeding into the narrative that Spanglish is unruly, random and grammatically unjust. Designating Spanglish in this way is to try and invalidate it due to a perceived threat. However, I argue that these critiques simply reinforce the notion that Spanglish is thriving from a supposed "lack of structure".

Nevertheless, I contend that code-switching occurring in instances where the speaker lacks a knowledge of either Spanish or English is far from "random", as code-switching in this context "provides a continuity in speech rather than presenting an interference in language."[36] Just because the speaker chooses to switch due to a lack of knowledge is not to diminish their linguistic capabilities. Similarly, I argue that the speaker's ability to use their intuition when switching between languages implies that code-switching is not haphazard nor random

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[34] C. Myers-Scotton, *Dueling Languages: grammatical structure in codeswitching*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5.

[35] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 523.

[36] Richard Skiba, *Code-switching as a Countenance of Language Interference*, (The Internet TESL Journal, 1997), 2.

as the understanding of when to switch languages "implies a mental grammar which may be neither strictly English nor Spanish, but a sophisticated combination of the two."[37] This reinstates the idea that code-switching in Spanglish is not necessarily due to not knowing the word in one language, but instead a conscious decision for linguistic effect whether the speaker possesses a thorough understanding of the language or not. The speaker is thus able to navigate Spanglish freely in whatever way their capabilities allow them, making a case for the fluidity of Spanglish.

Moreover, there are many motives for code-switching to take place, some practical and some social; sometimes English is borrowed for efficiency, since Spanish is multisyllabic, and some speakers even switch language to convey attitudes or to change register. Furthermore, code-switching facilitates a sense of dual-identity; it provides a way of communicating which empowers the speaker as it belongs to a specific community. Therefore, Spanglish is more than just a tool for communication, but an identity marker which thrives from the freedom that comes with the concepts of borrowing and codeswitching.

6. Spanglish and Identity

The importance of language to express identity is undeniable, be it the identity of a nation, or of a speech community, as with Spanglish. Likewise, if "identity is language"[38], then the identity of this specific community where two different cultures have met, is being represented by the product of their two languages,

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[37] Alberto Cañas, *Spanglish: The Third Way*, (Bulletin of Hokuriku University, 2021), 5.
[38] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 525.

English and Spanish. Therefore, speakers use a non-standard Spanglish because it responds to the unrestricted needs of the community and is a marker for their unique identity.

This identity presents a sense of unity for people who find themselves struggling to belong as they are stuck between two cultures and languages. Therefore, Spanglish acts as a solution to the previous inflexible notions of inclusion and exclusion for Spanish and English speakers. A specific example is the first-generation immigrant to the US; through the process of integration, a new dual-identity crisis begins to emerge. They are confronted with the desire to retain their heritage and aspects of their home culture, but also the need to assimilate to the culture of the country that they have joined. "What results is a 'mishmash' [of] what Latino identity is about [and] the verbal *mestizaje* that results from a transient people."[39] Spanglish is thus a way to represent their Hispanic identity, whilst recognising their new linguistic situation.

For second-generation immigrants, identity is also a complicated topic. They are born in America and are American, but they also recognise their Hispanic heritage. Subsequently, they experience the dichotomy of not feeling as American as Caucasian Americans, or not as Hispanic as their first-generation parents. This is where the notion of Spanglish identity becomes relevant. Identity labels such as "Tex-Mex" and "Chicano", represent the complexity of this dual-identity and are perhaps more inclusive and appropriate than being "American" or "Hispanic" for some members of this community.

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[39] Stavans, *New American language,* 54.

Furthermore, some choose to speak Spanglish not out of necessity or out of a lack of education, but moreover, they opt for this non-standard variety as a deliberate choice as it facilitates integration into this community. Spanglish is a way of communicating without having to comply to formal language rules. This is a natural process in bilingual communities and Spanglish is not an isolated phenomenon. For example, *franglais*, which is spoken in Quebec as a result of English and French being in contact with each other.

Ultimately, for these speakers, Spanglish is more than an identity marker in the simplest sense, as it also represents a solution for those who feel like they do not belong. Therefore, it is no surprise that speakers of Spanglish feel a certain pride in the "language" that represents their community, even despite criticism: "we are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestizaje*, the subject of your *burla*. Because we speak with tongues of fire, we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally, and linguistically, *somos huérfanos*—we speak an orphan tongue."[40] This quote is particularly powerful with its emotive language, revealing the anger, pain and resistance to criticism, highlighting how fiercely people are willing to defend Spanglish. This demonstrates the pride that speakers of this community feel about how they use Spanglish, a linguistic option that isn't restricted much like the two standard languages it is derived from.

Given the importance of Spanglish for these speakers, Rothman and Rell carried out interviews with Mexican-Americans discussing in which contexts they use Spanglish. In general, Spanglish is spoken in this bilingual environment, in relationships with family and friends and other fellow native

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[40] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands-La Frontera. The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 58.

Spanish speakers. In this way, Spanglish is a tool for inclusion, but it is also used to exclude other speakers. More specifically, exclusion of non-Hispanic people; Rothman and Rell note that speakers avoid using Spanglish with non-Hispanic people as Spanglish is seen as being culture specific, therefore a non-Hispanic person wouldn't fully understand, nor would they identify with Spanglish in the same way as a Hispanic-American would. Similarly, speakers tend to avoid speaking Spanglish with people who despise the improper use of Spanish, for example: with family in their country of origin, they would simply use standard Spanish.[41]

From this research, one can gather that Hispanics in the US have been able to re-construct their new dual nationality and are channelling it through Spanglish. Furthermore, if Spanglish is a representation of a certain community, then should it not be able to flourish and exist in a multi-cultural society? Surely it would be problematic to diminish Spanglish in any way as it would silence a specific community. The presence of Spanglish reflects the reality that is happening and will continue to happen as long as the Hispanic community exists in the US.

7. Spanglish: fears and threats

Most criticism of Spanglish tends to arise from a feeling of insecurity and fear on behalf of the speakers of the languages it is derived from. Particularly, people perceive Spanglish as a linguistic threat due to the fear that it may overcome standard Spanish.

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[41] Rothman & Rell *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 527.

As the Hispanic population in the US continues to grow, there are more people who account for Spanish as their first language, thus presenting a barrier as they attempt to integrate into an English-speaking society. For less educated Hispanics therefore, Spanglish may be a transition to the mainstream due to their lack of education in English. As Yule states, "nonstandard varieties are felt to be the province of the less educated"[42] and thus Spanglish may act as a stepping stone for Spanish speakers to achieve linguistic competency in standard English. However, this concept of being a stepping stone can be particularly problematic as it establishes a clear pathway through which English can infiltrate into the Spanish language via Spanglish. Therefore, people perceive Spanglish as a threat to Spanish because it acts as a "Trojan horse", allowing English to intrude on the Spanish language. This perceived threat, and thus Spanglish itself, is seen as enough to "tarnish" the integrity of Spanish.

For all that the perception of this threat is valid, it may nurture discrimination. If an individual uses Spanglish as this "dreaded" stepping stone due to a lack of education, then their use of Spanglish is to overcome their educational challenges. Discrimination in this way is problematic, but it may not always come from negative origins. For example, discrimination based on register is useful to identify what type of language is appropriate in a specific setting with specific speakers. Therefore, discriminating against using Spanglish in this way may come with the same intentions, but given that some speakers may use Spanglish because they have no other choice, this discrimination can be harmful. Nevertheless, there will always be the potential that language use in this way poses a perceived threat to the standard, in this case Spanish.

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[42] G. Yule, "Language and Variation", *The study of language*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.

Similarly, linguists claim that Spanglish threatens the standard by merely existing as it acts as a viable alternative, thus threatening the integrity of standard Spanish. Arado argues that Spanglish "should not be accepted as an alternative to formal Spanish", because it is a mix of English roots with Spanish morphemes. He even adds that by using Spanglish "it's getting to the point where we're murdering our language"[43]. Consequently, the worry is that particularly second and third generation Hispanics in the US may grow up not knowing standard Spanish properly, due to Spanglish being used with English as a "word to fill the gap"[44]. Therefore, this amalgamation of the two languages may act as a replacement for learning standard Spanish.

Notably, out of the two languages that have met in order to create Spanglish, linguists perceive the most threat for Spanish from this linguistic phenomenon. I argue that this demonstrates a particular insecurity, perhaps due to the context in which Spanglish is being spoken. There is no viable perceived threat for English, as linguists see no reason for English to be threatened by language contact with Spanish as it possesses the security of working as the national language of the US. However, Spanish is spoken in a precarious social situation due to mass immigration, which in itself is unstable. Therefore, with the appearance of a new linguistic option, there are fears that what had already been established as the linguistic *raison d'être* for Spanish in the US is now under threat from a more accessible, malleable and socially appealing alternative.

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[43] M. Arado, "Spanglish in the suburbs People are split on a trendy, slangy blend of Spanish and English." Chicago Daily Herald, 2004, accessed 13th January 2021 https://www.questia. com/article/1G1-124099482/spanglish-in-the-suburbs-people-are-split-on-a-trendy
[44] Lizette Alvarez, "It's the Talk of Nueva York: The Hybrid Called Spanglish." The New York Times, 1997, accessed 12th March 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/25/nyregion/it-s-the-talk-of-nueva-york-the-hybrid-called-spanglish.html

8. The future of Spanglish

This controversy calls into question what the future of Spanglish will be. There have been attempts to promote the validity of this linguistic phenomenon, most notably by Stavans. As an admirer of Spanglish, his book, *Spanglish: The Making of A New American Language,* may be interpreted as an attempt at standardisation. Stavans claims that Spanglish is the birth of a new language. He proposed a Spanglish-English dictionary, and even went as far as "translating" the first chapter of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* into Spanglish, which in his defence, is his attempt at qualifying Spanglish as a true language, thus legitimising its usage. [45]

Despite his attempt, the process of standardisation is much more specific and so far, there have been no complete nor successful attempts at standardising Spanglish. According to Lipski, Spanglish has no stable core, thus making any attempts at standardisation extremely difficult; "while there are lexical Anglicisms and calques such as *para atras* that are used by nearly all bilingual Latino speakers, spontaneous creations are more common, thus undermining the notion of a stable Spanglish core."[46] Similarly, due to the many existing varieties of Spanglish (Cubonics, Tex-Mex, Pachuco, Dominicanish, etc), where each of these varieties differ, they have their own individual speech community. Subsequently, one could even go as far to say that each variety could be a language in its own right, if we are going to argue for one variety, why not all?

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[45] Stavans, *New American Language*.

[46] John M. Lipski, *Is "Spanglish" the third language of the South? truth and fantasy about US Spanish*, (The Pennsylvania State University, 2004), 4.

Therefore, it is difficult to justify the standardisation of Spanglish given these obstacles, but we must ask ourselves: is standardisation indeed the goal? It may be argued that standardising Spanglish would justify and signal that it is beyond being a "hybrid" of two other established languages, and a language in its own right. However, let us view this lack of standardisation as a valid quality of Spanglish. Without the restrictions, rules, and strict structure that come with standardisation, Spanglish possesses a unique sense of freedom, a spontaneity, and an absence of rigidity, which then becomes intertwined with the notion of identity. Spanglish thrives from a lack of constructions and from this "unstable core" because it fulfils the needs of its speakers that they cannot access through their other languages.

When discussing standardisation, we must consider linguistic purism, which aims to encase the language and limit variation be it internal or external. When we look at purism in this way, it is easy to deduce that this pattern of thought is in conflict with what we just concluded about the fluidity of Spanglish. It is no surprise therefore that people fear Spanglish and see it as a threat. However, the very characteristics of Spanglish may limit these fears, as it is unlikely to become standardised for risk of jeopardising its freedom.

Nevertheless, linguists are keen to highlight that Spanglish will continue to exist, despite not undergoing standardisation. Ardila suggests that "Spanglish will continue growing as a non-recognised anglicised Spanish dialect."[47] Additionally Rothman and Rell propose that Spanglish will "continue to evolve in order to meet the needs of its speakers."[48] They go on to suggest

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[47] Ardila, *Spanglish*, 79.
[48] Rothman & Rell, *Linguistic analysis of Spanglish*, 533.

that with the ever growing Hispanic population in America it is unlikely that Spanglish will cease to be used in these speech communities, standardised or not.

CONCLUSION:

Through my analysis, I demonstrate the role of standardisation in establishing a group identity, which indeed nurtures linguistic purism. I maintain that Spanglish succeeds in establishing a group identity for its community without being standardised, but this is not to say that Spanglish is not affected by the notion of linguistic purism. Where purism exists, linguistic discrimination prospers, particularly towards linguistic varieties that are not the standard. In the case of Spanglish, critique stems from purity, which manifests as a perceived threat towards standard Spanish. However, as linguistic purism aims to protect a language, this is not necessarily a negative thing, as speakers openly enjoy their freedom when using Spanglish. Therefore, linguistic purism can touch Spanglish to a certain extent regarding its relationship with standard Spanish, and perhaps within its own linguistic variation, but not so much that it can delegitimise it, as speakers of Spanglish don't feel the need for it to be a "pure", "correct" or standard language.

I conclude that Spanglish is indeed problematic, but how far does this problematic nature reach? Fears of Spanish being tarnished by Spanglish are valid, although, there is no real evidence to support the claim that Spanglish will firstly, indeed become a standard language, and secondly, that it wants to. Therefore, any perceived fear of Spanglish is simply an interpretation.

Finally, as the future of Spanglish remains unknown, the simple acknowledgement of its existence is enough, and the recognition of its importance for a specific community of people is necessary, whether it is deemed a "language" or not. This specific speech community use and will continue to use this linguistic variety in an ungoverned and unrestricted way, as their pride in being "your linguistic nightmare"[49] is what ultimately defines Spanglish.

Final word count: 6989 [including footnotes, excluding title and contents page]

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[49] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands-La Frontera,* 58.

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