

Discuss the lexical relations between spanish and catalan



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The study of language is an accumulative process, ever increasing in depth and complexity. Lexical change is constantly occurring, yet it is a step by step process; pronunciation, grammar, morphological influences, phonological influences and loan words all have an effect on the lexicon. 1

Subsequently there are thousands of languages across the globe, each having developed from particular origins. For Ralph Penny languages are "the universal symbolic activity by which human convey meanings from the mind of one person to another." There is a common misapprehension that languages can be sub-grouped into dialects: Catalan being deemed a dialect of Spanish in this instance. Instead, languages have their origins in a dialect, that is to say a specific local or social variation which is selected for non linguistic reasons<sup>3</sup>, and there is nothing to define when a certain language begun in comparison to another. If we look to medieval Spain we can look to the literature and other documentation in order to see the koinē<sup>1/2</sup><sup>4</sup> that was used at the time. It was distinct from Castilian in many features but Catalan displays more similarities. This again makes one realise that Catalan is not a descendent of Castilian but rather that the two languages grew together. The koinē<sup>1/2</sup> was never fully established as it was never standardised by a literary tradition and thus never could become a language, 5 as representation comes from the written form. 6 This problem of representation, is a factor for the low level of lexical relations between Spanish and Catalan. Catalan, alike to Castilian, developed from Vulgar Latin, and was subsequently subjected to invasions from the Visigoths (414AD)<sup>7</sup> the Arabs (711AD)<sup>8</sup>, yet these languages had little impact on Catalan.

Influences of French can be seen in Catalan literature, the dialect of poetry was lemosī<sup>1/2</sup>, taken from Provenī<sup>1/2</sup>al. 9 However there has been a <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-lexical-relations-between-spanish-and-catalan/>

continuous presence of Catalan in Spain, alongside Aragonese, exemplified in the zone of gentle transition in Ribagorza. 10 The first documentation of Catalan is Homilies d'Organyà<sup>11</sup>, written near the end of the twelfth, or early thirteenth century coupled with the emergence of the first Catalan poet Ramon Llull (c. 1235-1316)<sup>12</sup>. It was after this period of literary success that the high point of geographical expansion occurred, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, conquering kingdoms of Valencia and Murcia. During this period, Catalonia had the necessary and sufficient conditions to instate themselves as a political power. 13 These conditions allows for the incorporation of Catalan words into Castilian. For instance, advanced Valencian artists coined *bosquejar*<sup>14</sup>, meaning to sketch out or outline, and this word was incorporated into Castilian. However, the sixteenth century sees the period of *decaïència* for Catalan, juxtaposed with " el Siglo de Oro" which was attributed with the Castilian language. 15 This was due to the union of the Castilian and Aragon crowns as Ferran III of Aragon and Isabelle of Castile married in 1469. 16 Similarly, following the war of Spanish Succession from 1705-1715<sup>17</sup>, Philip V implemented Spanish law in Catalonia, abolishing all their government institutions. Catalan was prohibited, and this repression began with the *Decretos de Nueva Planta* in 1716. 18 A second wave of repression occurred again under the dictatorships of General Francisco Franco (1939-1975), and General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1929). 19 In terms of Spanish, the language considered is Castilian. The Castilian language saw its great expansion during the Reconquest, with its speakers moving further south. From the start of the sixteenth century Castilian became the language of writing and religion for the most part of the Peninsula. In " Essays in honour of Josep M. Solià<sup>12</sup>-  
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Solís (1972) the relation between Spanish and Castilian is described by the image of "two families who live in the same apartment house".<sup>20</sup> This relates to the fact that in the bigger downs bilingual populations came about. For instance the Castilian polite address *usted* gives Catalan *vostre*.<sup>21</sup>

However, alike to two neighbouring families, the Catalans and the Castilians were constantly struggling for dominance over one another, creating issues in terms of the lexicon of both languages. The impact of Catalan on Castilian can be seen in maritime vocabulary. As old Castile was enclosed by land, with no contact to ports it did not need expressions associated with the sea. Thus, with the development of the Castilian empire and its eventual necessity for overseas trade, there came a requirement for maritime vocabulary. It borrowed terms from Catalan, seen in the table below.