Spelling and phonetic information determine the outcome in loan adaptation. Mira Oh\textsuperscript{1} & Donca Steriade\textsuperscript{2} \textsuperscript{1}Chonnam National Univ., Korea, \textsuperscript{2}Department of Linguistics MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA.

When contact between literate populations results in loanwords, the source of the phonological information encoded in borrowed forms is frequently unclear: are they based on letter-to-sound mappings or on strictly spoken forms? Here we show that both spelling and phonetic information play a systematic but distinct role in determining the phonological form of Korean borrowings from English. We demonstrate that the spelling difference between <l> and <ll> - e.g. <melon> vs. <cello> - affects the Korean pronunciation of corresponding borrowed words. English words containing <ll> are borrowed into Korean with [ll]; English single <l> words fluctuate between Korean pronunciations with [ll] and [r]. But English <r> and <rr> - e.g. <Mary> vs. <merry> - are never kept distinct: both become [r]. A comparable asymmetry obtains for other consonants: the English double spelling determines the Korean pronunciation of English nasals and s, but is ignored in the adaptation of all English stops and affricates.

Our data come from two surveys that compare Korean words with comparable text frequency but different spelling in the English source. After controlling for frequency effects, we observed highly significant correlations between the spelling of English [l], [s] and nasals and the pronunciation of Korean loanwords. English double spelling had no effect on the Korean adaptation of other consonants. We explain these findings in the context of a model of loan adaptation in which spelling is used to break the tie between two equally viable mappings of the English phonetic representations to the Korean lexical representation.