

# ‘Learnèd morphology’

**Chris Pountain**

**School of Languages, Linguistics and Film**

**Queen Mary University of London /**

**King’s College London**

**c.j.pountain@qmul.ac.uk**

**<http://cjpountain.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/>**



## The Language Acts and Worldmaking project



### Loaded Meanings

New worlds for old words

<https://languageacts.org>

'Learnèd' (cultured) borrowings are taken directly from Latin, or from Greek via Latin as a result of close contact, even diglossia, between Latin and the Romance languages over many centuries.

Cultured borrowings

- fail to undergo regular sound changes: Lat. *genus/generis* > Sp. *verno* 'son-in-law' (regular, inherited) AND *género* 'gender; genre' (minimal adaptation, borrowed)
- appear for the first time some time into the Romance textual record in authors known for their deliberate use of Latinisms

Main interest to date has been to establish date of first attestation.

- (1) **EXISTIR**, tomado del lat. *existĕre* 'salir', 'nacer', 'aparecer', derivado de *sistĕre* 'colocar', 'sentar', 'detener', 'tenerse'. *1.<sup>a</sup> doc.:* 1607, Oudin.  
Falta en Nebr., APal. y Covarr., y es ajeno al léxico de la *Celestina*, del *Quijote* y en general a los clásicos; *Aut.* no cita ejs. anteriores a 1700 (M. Ibáñez, I. de Ayala).

Corominas & Pascual (1980–91, II, 824)

Our approach begins with the most commonly occurring cultured borrowings in the present day and seeks to investigate the nature of their impact on the host language.

- How did they become so frequent, and why?
- How were the notions they represent (often apparently basic) previously rendered?

See

Pountain, Christopher J., Bozena Wislocka Breit, Rocío Díaz-Bravo and Isabel García Ortiz. 2022. “How old words become new (and then old again)”. In Catherine Boyle and Debra Kelly (eds), *Language Acts and Worldmaking, How and Why the Languages We Use Shape Our World and Lives*, pp. 166-209. London: John Murray Learning.

The conclusions to date:

- Date of first attestation  $\neq$  date of embedding
- The commonest words typically begin their upward trajectory in the 18th century and continue that momentum into the 21st century

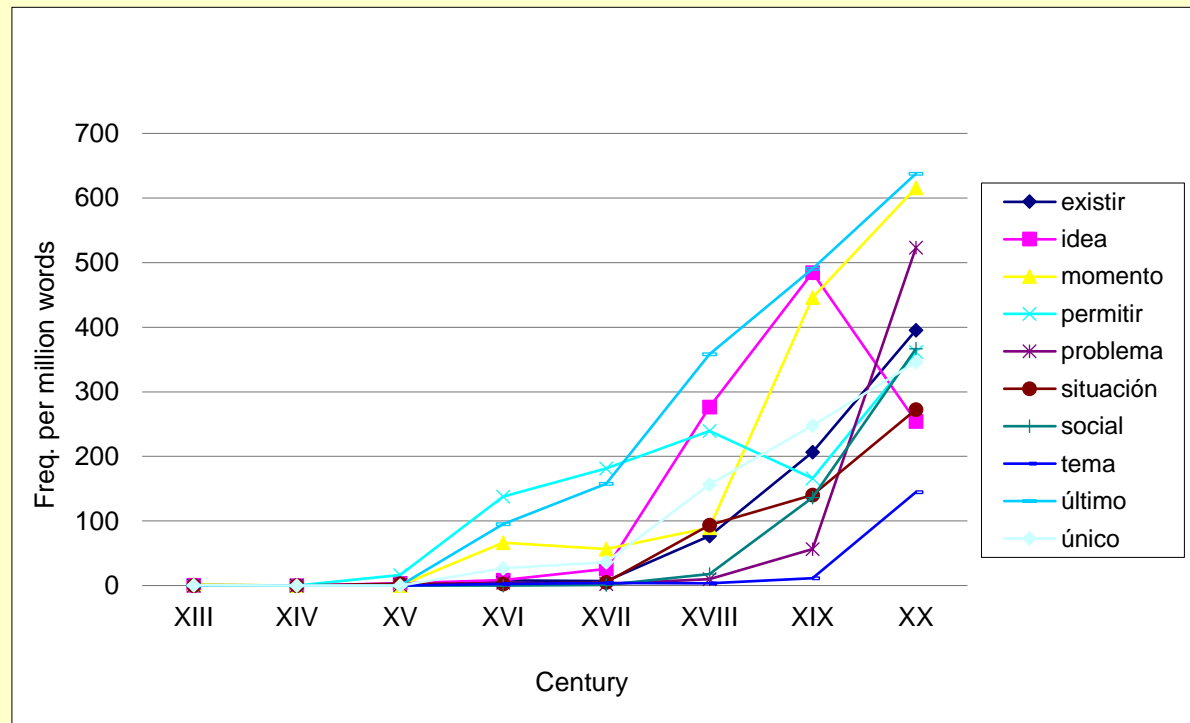


Figure A: Growth in frequency of ten of the commonest cultured borrowings (CDEGH)

The conclusions to date:

- Date of first attestation ≠ date of embedding
- The commonest words typically begin their upward trajectory in the 18th century and continue that momentum into the 21st century
- In their growth in frequency, translingual factors can often be seen to intervene (e.g. calquing), and most cultured borrowings are common to the standard Romance languages of western Europe and English
- The integration of cultured borrowings is a process of 'downward migration'
- 'Successful' cultured borrowings show progressive widening of meaning and are often part of a related morphological set (e.g. *social* → *sociedad*, *socio*, *sociabilidad*, *sociológico*, *socioeconómico*, *socialdemócrata*, ...)

Generally construed as dependent on lexical borrowing.

A number of individual cultured lexical borrowings containing a regular sequence suggest essentially the same morphological analysis as would apply in the donor language; this sequence is then used independently to form new words and may even eventually become totally productive, though this may occur long after the first lexical borrowings.

The vast majority of Spanish prefixes are cultured borrowings.

(2)

**a-** (*acéfalo, amoral, atemporal*)

**a-** (*acallar*)

**an-** (*anarquía, anaeróbico*)

**ana-** (*anacronismo*)

**ante-** (*anteanoche, antebrazo*)

**anti-** (*antiaéreo*)

**archi-** (*archiconocido*)

**auto-** (*autocrítica*)

**bi-** (*bisexual*)

**bien-** (*bienhablado*)

**circun-** (*circunferencia*)

**co-** (*cofundar*)

**con-** (*convivir*)

**contra-** (*contrataque*)

**cuasi-** (*cuasidelito*)

**cuatri-** (*cuatrimotor*)

**des-** (*desenchufar, desencuadernar, deshacer, desobedecer, desoir*)

**dia-** (*diacrónico*)

**dis-** (*disconforme*)

**endo-** (*endovenoso*)

**entre-** (*entreatbrir, entreacto, entrepiso, entreplanta*)

**ex** (*ex ministro*)

**exo-** (*exoesqueleto*)

**extra-** (*extracorpóreo, extrasuave*)

**hiper-** (*hiperactivo*)

**in-** (*imposible, ineficaz*)

**infra-** (*infradotar, infravalorar, infraescrito, infrahumano*)

**inter-** (*interdental, interdiario*)

**intra-** (*intramuscular*)

**mal-** (*maleducado*)

**medio-** (*medio derruido*)

**mili-** (*milímetro*)

**mini-** (*minibar*)

**mono-** (*monoplaza*)

**multi-** (*multitarea*)

**neo-** (*neogótico*)

**paleo-** (*paleocristiano*)

**per-** (*perdurar*)

**peri-** (*pericardio*)

**pluri-** (*pluriempleado*)

**poli-** (*polifacético*)

**pos(t)-** (*posmoderno, posparto, posindustrial*)

**pre-** (*predemocrático*)

**pro-** / **pro** (*proamericano, pronuclear, pro derechos humanos*)

**pseudo-** (*pseudociencia*)

**re-** (*rebotica, rebuscar, refluir, reintentar, reinterpretar, resituar*)

**requete-** (*requetebién*)

**retro-** (*retrovisor*)

**semi-** (*semicírculo, semiculto*)

**sobre-** (*sobrealimentar, sobrecargar, sobrevolar*)

**sub-** (*subalimentar, subdesarrollo, subestima, subcutáneo, subsuelo, subteniente*)

**super-** (*superatractivo, superpoblación, superponer*)

**tele-** (*telecomunicación*)

**tetra-** (*tetralogía*)

**tra(n)s-** (*trascurrir, transferir*)

**tras-** (*trastienda*)

**tri-** (*trifásico*)

**ultra-** (*ultraizquierda, ultracorrección, ultraligero, ultratumba*)

**vice-** (*vicealmirante*)



The vast majority of Spanish prefixes are cultured borrowings.

Not all are equally productive or frequent, but a number of prefixes which are based on cultured borrowings have become extremely productive in modern Spanish.

The case of the intensifying prefixes *super-*, *hiper-* and *ultra-*

(Pountain, Christopher J. 2022. ‘Los cultismos de cada día (2): los prefijos cultos de intensificación’. Paper presented at XII Congreso Internacional de Historia de la Lengua Española, León (España), 16-19 de mayo 2022.)

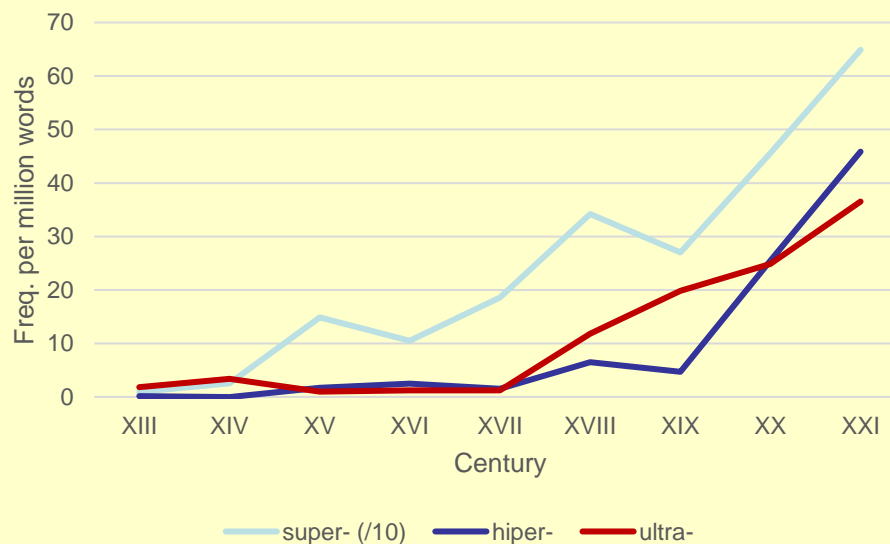


Figure B: *super-*, *hiper-* and *ultra-* in CDEGH and CDEWD

*Super-* has achieved the highest degree of embedding in Spanish.

🕒 (Early history: note possible ongoing awareness of Lat. preposition *super*)

🕒 The 18th century:

Entries in the *Diccionario de autoridades* (1739):

(3)

*superar, superable, superante, superado, superabundante, superabundancia, superabundantissimo, superabundantemente, superabundar, superadito, superano, superavit, superbo, superbissimo, superchería, superchero, supererogación, superfetación, superficie, superficial, superficialmente, superfluo, superfluamente, superfluidad, superhumeral, superintendente, superintendencia, superior, superiorato, superioridad, superiormente, superlativo, superno, supernumerario, superpaciente, superparticular, supersólido, superstición, supersticiosamente, supersticioso, supersubstancial, supervenir, superveniente, supervención.*

All the basic words and those with no listed derivatives can be considered borrowings from (Classical or Medieval) Latin.

🕒 First suggestion of productive use is in the 19th and 20th centuries.

*Super-* has a separate entry as a prefix from the 1884 *DRAE*.

19th-century words recovered from CDEGH not included in *DRAE*:

*superangelical, superarcaico, supercirujano, supercomprensión, superdesarrollado, superexcitado, superfosfato, superhombre, superhumano, supernaturalidad, supernutrir, superplanetario, superpoblación, supertono, supervisión*

Creative (productive) use associated with individual authors.

🕒 In the 20th century many neologisms in *super-* are morphological calques, most obviously from English

*supermercado* ‘supermarket’, *superbombartero* ‘superbomber’, *supermodelo* ‘supermodel’

or ‘international’ technical terms

*superfosfato*, *superconductividad*, *superdominante*

*Super-* also calques Eng. *over-*

*superpoblado* ‘over-populated’

🕒 By the 21st century *super-* has become highly productive as an intensifying prefix leading to its grammaticalisation as an adjective modifier equivalent to *muy* or *-ísimo*.

*superfácil* = *muy fácil* / *facilísimo*

*supercontento* = *muy contento* / *contentísimo*

In the written language *super-* is often represented as an independent word (*súper*).

Words from CDEWD which have a total occurrence <100 but >30:

(4)

Adjectives: *super/súper* +

*acondicionado, aficionado, agresivo, alegre, amable, amplio, apetecible, atractivo, bien pensado, bonito, chulo, conectado, contento, coo(oo)l, difícil, divertido, emocionadísimo, emocionado, enamorado, encantado, especial, estricto, excepcional, femenino, fome(eee), frío, fuerte, grande, guay, hidratante, importante, ingenioso, intensísimo, interesante, lujoso, malo, mañoso, minoritario, necesario, normal, oído, original, plural, poderoso, precoz, preocupado, real, recomendable, rizado, sedoso, slim, sorpresivo, tirante, top, útil*

Nouns: *super/súper* +

*agente, armadura, cosa, enhorabuena, equipo, fan, héroe, lanzamiento, películón, poder, profesional*

🕒 By the 21st century *super-* has become highly productive as an intensifying prefix leading to its grammaticalisation as an adjective modifier equivalent to *muy* or *-ísimo*.

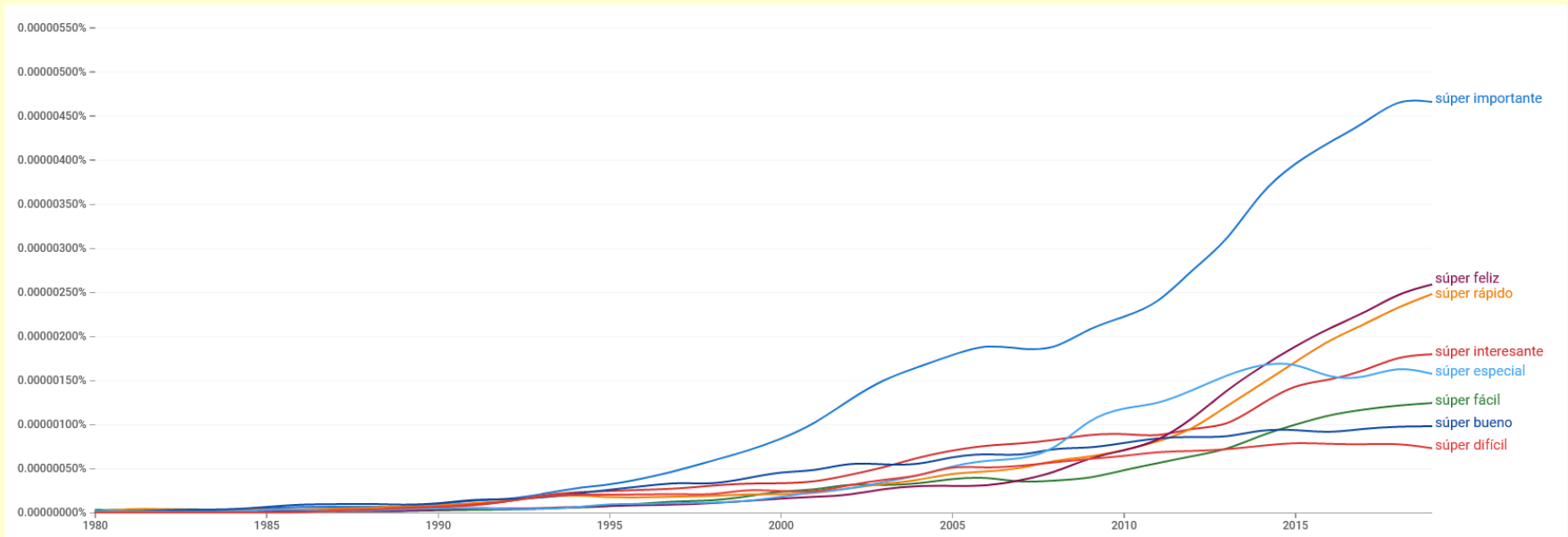


Figure C: Growth in the frequency of *súper* + ADJ, 1980-2019 (Google n-gram viewer)

🕒 By the 21st century *super-* has become highly productive as an intensifying prefix leading to its grammaticalisation as an adjective modifier equivalent to *muy* or *-ísimo*.

FRANTEXT similarly shows usage of *super* with a following adjective from only the 1960s onwards, with a huge recent gain in momentum.

🕒 Rare before second half of 19th century and generally morphologically opaque (e.g. *hiperbólico*).

(Are words in *hiper-* and *ultra-* cultured borrowings at all?)

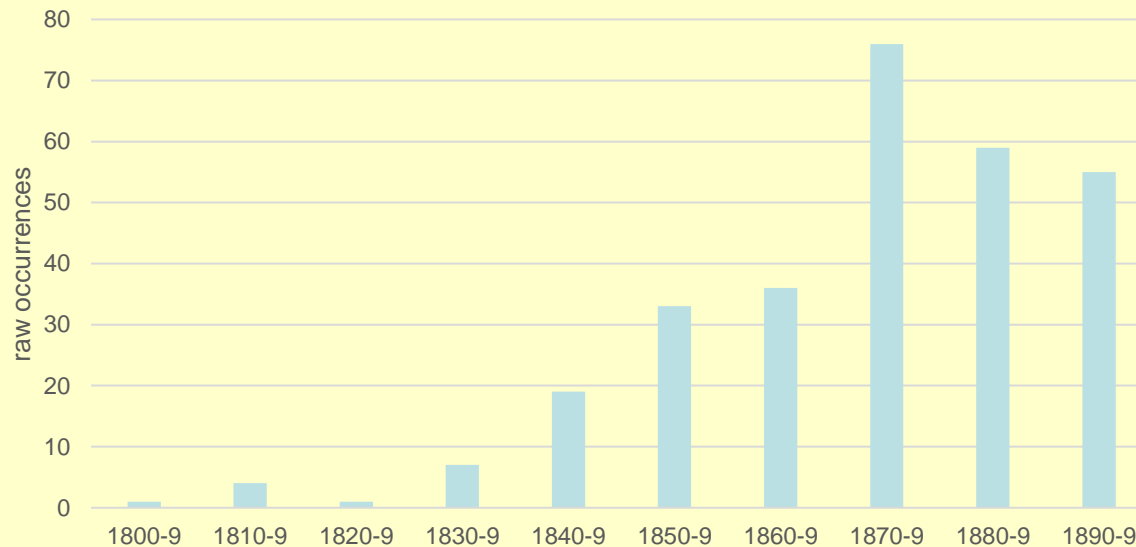


Figure D: Words in *hiper-* by decade, 19th century (CORDE)



🕒 In the 20th century the number and frequency of words in *hiper-* increases markedly with meaning of 'to a degree above normal'

Technical words:

*hipertenso, hiperactivo, hiperventilación, hipertexto, hiperinflacionario*

But also with stems which do not belong to technical contexts (and are not admitted as lexicalisations by *DLE*):

*hipercomplejo, hiperfamoso, hipermediocre, hiperromántico hiperconsciente, hiperagudo, hiperblando, hiperclaro, hiperconocido, hiperdelgado, hiperdulce, hiperlargo, hipersencillo*

Some calquing of Eng. *over-*

*hiperlargo* = Eng. *over-long*, *hipersencillo* = Eng. *over-simple*

Some which are unlikely to be calques have a purely intensifying meaning:

*hipercool, hipertaquillero, hipergenial*

🕒 Words in *ultra-* are rare before the 19th century.

🕒 Today the majority are technical terms in which the etymological Latin sense of ‘to an extreme degree, above normal’ is preserved.

*ultrafrío* refers specifically to very low temperatures obtained by chemical processes

With more common stems:

Politics: *ultraderecha, ultraizquierda*

- (5) a. un caballero vestido de negro, *ultradelgado* y sobrelampíño, paseó por entre los cien millonarios (CDEGH: José Martí (1853-1895), *Nuestra América*, 1874).
- b. Hoy en día el desarrollo de baterías más pequeñas y fiables ha posibilitado que los móviles sean *ultrafinos*, *ultralivianos*, *ultrarrápidos* y ya ni sabemos cuántas cosas más. (CORPESXXI: Enrique Pérez Vergara, Pablo Ibáñez Pérez, *Los experimentos de Flipy “el científico loco”*. Madrid: Aguilar, 2009)

Evidence from the corpora is difficult to obtain and inconclusive.

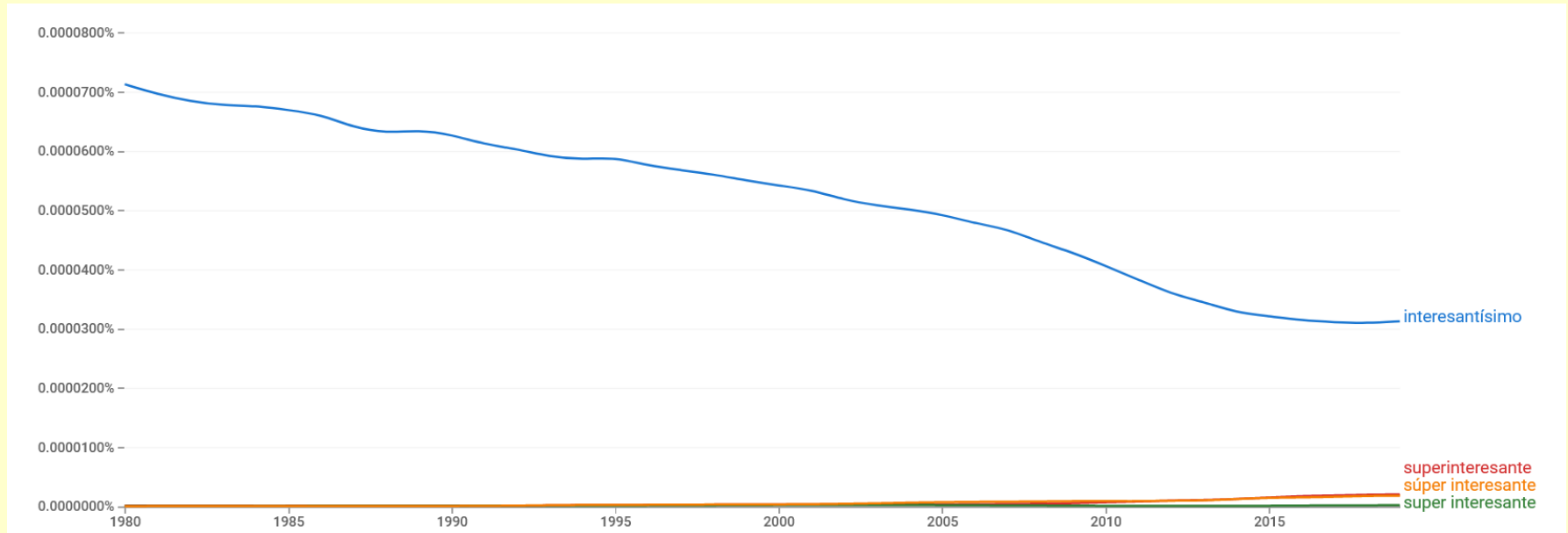


Figure E: *-ísimo* and *super-* with *interesante*, 1980-2019 (Google n-gram viewer)

Evidence from the corpora is difficult to obtain and inconclusive.

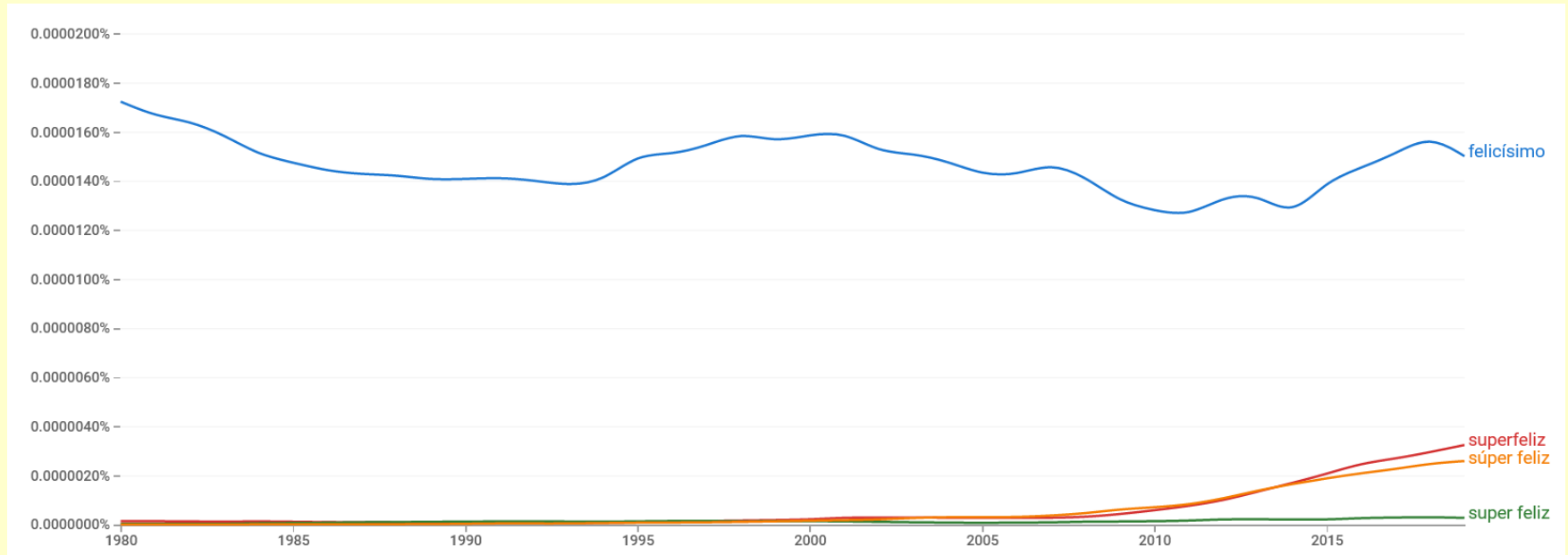


Figure F: *-ísimo* and *super-* with *feliz*, 1980-2019 (Google n-gram viewer)

Evidence from the corpora is difficult to obtain and inconclusive.

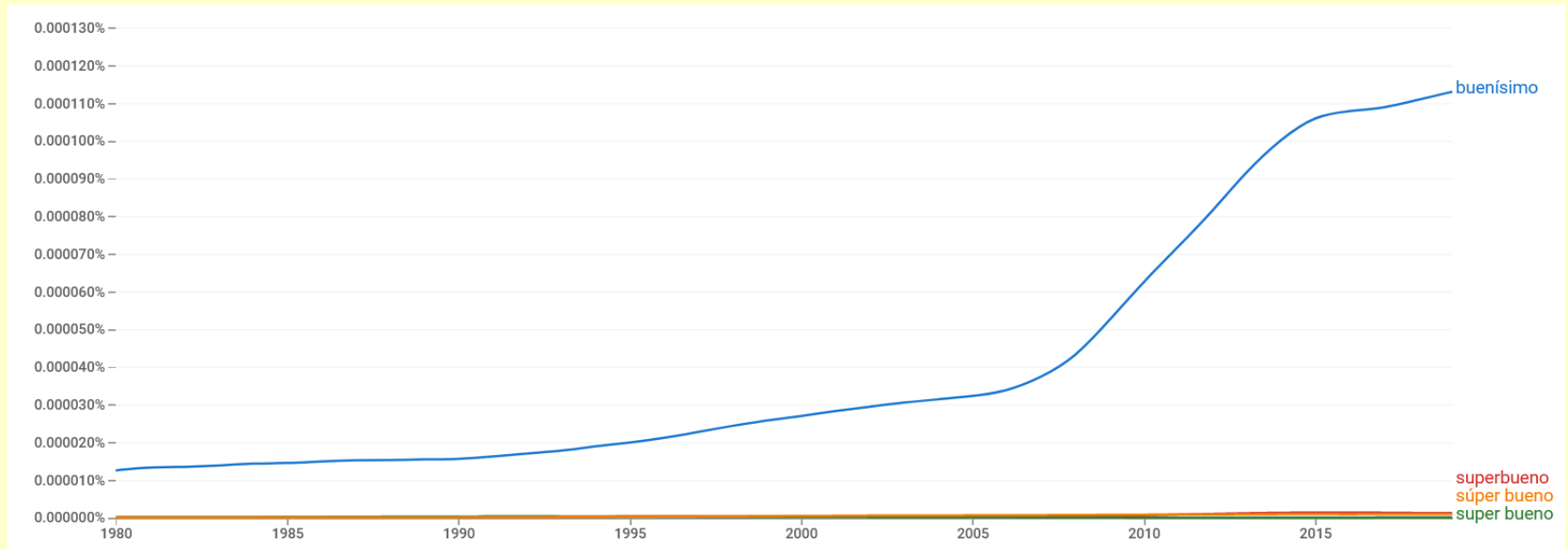


Figure G: *-ísimo* and *super-* with *bueno*, 1980-2019 (Google n-gram viewer)

Evidence that *super-*, *hiper-* and *ultra-* as intensifiers are thought of as equivalent:

- (6) a. ese señor **superinteligente**, **ultrapoderoso** y millonario (CDEWD: lamula.pe)  
b. La profesion de arquitecto en Espanha [sic] es **superprofesional** y está **hiperregulada** y controlada por mil organismos (CDEWD: marcvidal.net)  
c. Craven soltó este bofetón **ultraviolento** e **hipersucio** (CDEWD: labutaca.net)

Use of all three prefixes in the same noun-adjective collocation:

(7) a. estas bandas de agresivos barbudos amenazaron con cuchillos y **armas supermodernas** entregadas por la OTAN a los habitantes cristianos (CDEWD: resistencialibia.info)

b. la ametralladora se vio superada por los fusiles de asalto, **armas ultramodernas** de alta precisión (CDEWD: auladecastellano.com)

c. las **armas hipermodernas** que desarrollan China y Rusia para compensar los conocidos afanes bélicos de Estados Unidos (<https://ajedreznoticias.com/2020/05/09/un-canon-de-rayos-x/>)

(8) a. yo tengo la **piel supersensible** y con una especie de alergia (CDEWD: raquel-del-rosario.blogs.elle.es)

b. el agua termal hidrata y calma la **piel hipersensible** (CDEWD: pielypincel.com)

c. Es cierto que yo tengo la **piel ultrasensible** y tengo que estar usando productos de farmacia (CDEWD: ilovecocolulu.blogspot.com)

But also cases of semantic discrimination:

**ultrasónico** 'ultrasonic' refers to imperceptible sound characteristic of an application used in medical investigations

**supersónico** 'supersonic' denotes a speed in excess of the speed of sound (Mach 1)

**hipersónico** 'hypersonic' speeds above Mach 5

(the prefix cannot have an intensifying sense since *sónico* is not a gradable adjective)

**ultraligero** refers to materials, especially metals, to aircraft and computers

**superligero** corresponds to Eng. 'super lightweight' as a weight category in boxing



- Development of the intensifying value of these prefixes is very recent and still in progress.
- It may be ephemeral.
- We cannot tell whether *super-* will continue to be predominant, nor whether these three prefixes will continue to coexist.
- We have been able to identify the main stages of reanalysis involved in the isolation of these prefixes, the beginnings of their productivity and their grammaticalisation as intensifiers. All of these are independent of their cultured origins.
- The most recent phase has more to do with the influence of other western European languages, most obviously English.

(The suffix *-nte*)

Based on

Pountain, Christopher J., in press. ‘The Spanish “present participle”: lexical elaboration of a morphosyntactic gap?’, *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*.

- More complex data which spans the whole of the history of Castilian.
- Overall a failed or incomplete change, since full productivity has not been achieved.

*-nte* characteristic of the Latin present participle, which did not survive in Romance apart from (arguably) French (Bauer 1993).

*French:*

- Fully productive
- Verbal syntactic properties

(9) a. Fr. Je cherche un étudiant **sachant** parler chinois (Kabatek and Pusch 2011, 91–2)

I seek a student know<sub>PRES PART</sub> speak<sub>INF</sub> Chinese  
'I am looking for a student who knows Chinese'

cf.

b. Sp. Necesito persona **sabiendo** cocina  
need<sub>1 P.SG.</sub> person know<sub>GER</sub> cooking  
'I need a person who knows how to cook'

No basis for maintaining that Spanish has such a grammatical category.

*-nte*

- cannot take verbal arguments
- is very far from being totally productive
- does not have a constant syntactic function (adjectives: *diferente*, *importante*; nouns: *accidente*, *ingrediente*; prepositions *durante* and *mediante*; discourse markers *no obstante*, *por consiguiente*)
- has no constant semantic relation with the corresponding verb (cf. *pariente* / *parir*)

*-nte* forms in Modern Spanish

- constitute 116 of the 5,000 most frequent words (Davies and Davies 2017)
- in their immense majority are cultured borrowings
- their corresponding verbs are often also cultured borrowings (*participante* / *participar*)

Of the others

36 have no corresponding verb (e.g. *agente*). There are 17 in which correspondence with a verb is partial or very distant, either for formal reasons (e.g. *paciente* / *padecer*, where the etymological relation to Lat. *pātiens* / *pātior* 'to suffer' has become obscured), or for reasons of semantic evolution (e.g. *instante* 'moment' is now not obviously related semantically to *instar* 'to urge').

But 64 do show both formal and semantic correspondence between *-nte* form and verb (e.g. *habitante* / *habitar*)

🕒 Castilian, in common with other Romance languages, may have inherited sufficient forms in *-nte* derived from Latin present participles to suggest the possibility of a derivational relationship with a corresponding verb (clear examples are *durar/durante*, *seguir/siguiente*, *correr/corriente*, *semejar/semejante*, *crecer/creciente*, *parir/pariente*, *pender/pendiente*, *creer/creyente*, *volar/volante*, *oír/oyente*)

🕒 These may have been reinforced by

- cultured borrowings (e.g. *presidir/presidente*, *existir/existente*, *estimular/estimulante*, *participar/participante*)
- internal derivations:
  - verb → *-nte*: note *sonriente*, first attested 19th century:

(10) un sarcasmo que os llevará a mirar [...] la muerte como una *sonriente* amiga (CORDE: Fernán Caballero (Cecilia Böhl de Faber), *La gaviota*, 1849)  
'a sarcasm which will lead you to view ... death as a smiling friend'

- *-nte* → verb, e.g. *urgente* (15th century) / *urgir* (17th century)

(11) [...] en tiempo de dolencia o neçesitat otra *urgente* [...] (CORDE: Enrique de Villena, *Arte cistoria*, 1423)  
'... in time of pain or other urgent necessity...'

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
- Why have the *-nte* forms had such success in embedding as lexical items, yet failing to achieve complete grammaticalisation?

Early experiments in creating a present participle function for *-nte*:

- (12)
- a. Biblia Vulgata:  
Dominus patiens et multae misericordiae *auferens* iniquitatem
  - b. BM: Escorial I.i.4 (E4), Números 14:18, 1400–1430  
el sennor es de luenga esperança | & de mucha merçet *perdonante* el peca|do
  - c. BM: Arragel, Números 14:18, 1422–1430  
adonay es luengo [paçiente] | de yra & grande de merçed *que perdo|na* los pecados  
'The Lord is slow to anger and of great mercy, pardoning sin'

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Early experiments in creating a present participle function for *-nte*:

- (13) Ya passava el agradable  
mayo, *mostrante* las flores  
(CORDE: Marqués de Santillana (Íñigo López de Mendoza), *Triumphete de amor*, c 1430)  
'Pleasant May was already passing, showing the flowers'

and aspirations of later prescriptive grammarians:

'Bien sé, y es grande lástima, que no hemos de recuperar el verdadero participio con su régimen verbal' [I know very well, and it is a great pity, that we will not recover the true participle with its verbal constructions] (Casares, cit Lorenzo 1998: 58)

Salvá (1867: 66–7) maintained that only the Spanish *-nte* form, being adjectival, should be used in contexts where today the gerund is increasingly tending to be used.

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
- Why have the *-nte* forms had such success in embedding as lexical items, yet failing to achieve complete grammaticalisation?

But forms in *-nte* do fill a morphological gap, as an agentive noun/adjective corresponding to a verb, which the gerund, an essentially adverbial form, cannot supply:

*dirigente* = el que dirige

*estudiante* = el que estudia

This often corresponds to the function of Eng. *-ing*:

Sp.	Eng.
día siguiente	following day
juez presidente	presiding judge
vínculos existentes	existing links
población creciente	growing population
profesor visitante	visiting professor
personal docente	teaching staff
temas pendientes	pending issues
agua corriente	running water
bebida refrescante	refreshing drink
libro interesante	interesting book
cuestión candente	burning question
experiencia fascinante	fascinating experience
saldo restante	remaining balance

Figure H: Adjectival correspondences between Sp. *-nte* and Eng. *-ing*



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But there are other ways of expressing agentivity in Spanish, most obviously by nouns/adjectives in *-dor(a)*.

Sp.	Eng.
día siguiente	following day
juez presidente	presiding judge
vínculos existentes	existing links
población creciente	growing population
profesor visitante	visiting professor
personal docente	teaching staff
temas pendientes	pending issues
agua corriente	running water
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The relation between *-nte* and *-dor(a)* is aspectually based: *-dor(a)* has dynamic value while *-nte* does not.

## hablador, ra

1. **adj.** Que habla mucho, con impertinencia y molestia de quien lo oye. U. t. c. s.
2. **adj.** Que por imprudencia o malicia cuenta todo lo que ve y oye. U. t. c. s.

## hablante

De *hablar* y *-nte*.

1. **adj.** Que habla. U. t. c. s.

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
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This kind of contrast is long established:

- (14) a. Quando vino la noche del sabado ixient,  
por velar al sepulcro vino ý mucha yent;  
tovieron sus clamores todos de buena mient,  
que la ficiesse Dios **fablante** e udient.  
(CORDE: Gonzalo de Berceo, *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*, c 1236)  
'When night came at the end of Saturday, many people came there to keep watch over  
the tomb; they all piously made their cry that God would make her speak and hear [again]'
- b. Priegot Sennor, que non so omne **fablador** por fablar ante rey ni ante pueblo ca grief  
boca e de hablar (CORDE: Almerich, *La fazienda de Ultra Mar*, c 1200)  
'I pray you, Lord [to pardon me], I am not an eloquent man who can speak in front of the  
king or the people, for I am slow of speech'

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
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⌚ However, there is some evidence that *-nte* is being increasingly preferred.

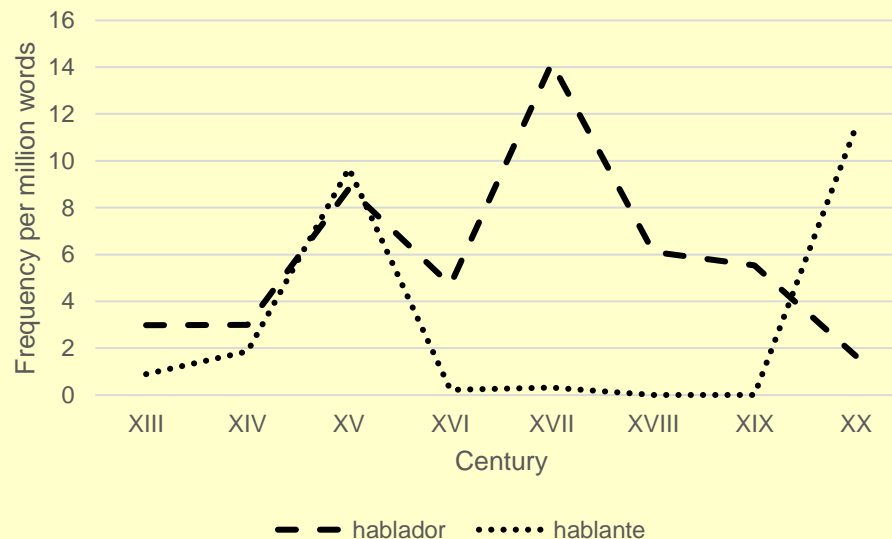


Figure I: *Hablador* and *hablante* in CDEGH

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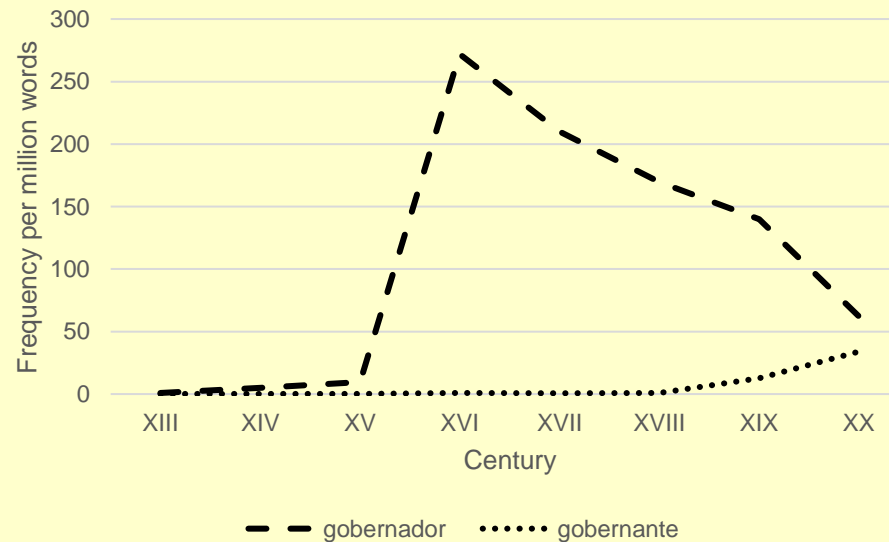


Figure J: *Governador* and *governante* in CDEGH

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
- Why have the *-nte* forms had such success in embedding as lexical items, yet failing to achieve complete grammaticalisation?

🕒 *-nte* comes to be associated by default with the labelling of occupations or functions when a condition or position, rather than an individual office-holder, is in mind. Examples:

(17)

amante	docente	pariente
asistente	estudiante	participante
aspirante	fabricante	presidente, vicepresidente
ayudante	gerente	representante
cantante	gobernante	residente
comerciante	habitante	teniente
creyente	inmigrante	visitante
descendiente	militante	
dirigente	oyente	

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
- Why have the *-nte* forms had such success in embedding as lexical items, yet failing to achieve complete grammaticalisation?

🕒 Extension to functions of inanimate objects, based on an extended corpus of contemporary Spanish:

(18)	altoparlante 'loudspeaker'	edulcorante 'sweetening'
	anticoagulante 'anticoagulant'	estimulante 'stimulant'
	anticongelante 'antifreeze'	inhalante 'inhalant'
	bajante 'downpipe; flush; chute'	laxante 'laxative'
	carburante 'fuel'	lubricante 'lubricant'
	colorante 'colouring'	oxidante, antioxidante 'antioxidant'
	comprobante 'proof, receipt'	pescante 'coachman's seat; davit; hoist'
	condicionante 'determining'	preservante 'preservative'
	conservante 'preservative'	refrescante 'refreshing'
	contaminante 'pollutant, contaminant'	refrigerante 'refrigerant'
	desinfectante 'disinfectant'	secante 'blotting paper; secant'
	desodorante 'deodorant'	suavizante 'conditioner; conditioning'
	detonante, antidetonante 'antiknock agent'	

### 3 'Present participles'

#### 3.2 Functional motivation for *-nte*

- How did Spanish etc. manage without a present participle?
- Why have the *-nte* forms had such success in embedding as lexical items, yet failing to achieve complete grammaticalisation?

Still the notion of absence of dynamism in the *-nte* forms can be detected:

*carburador* 'carburettor: the car component where air and fuel are mixed'

*carburante* 'fuel, having the ability to participate in this process'

*secador* 'dryer'

*secante* 'blotting paper, having the property of absorbing liquid'



🕒 Steady increase in number of new attestations from 18th century onwards

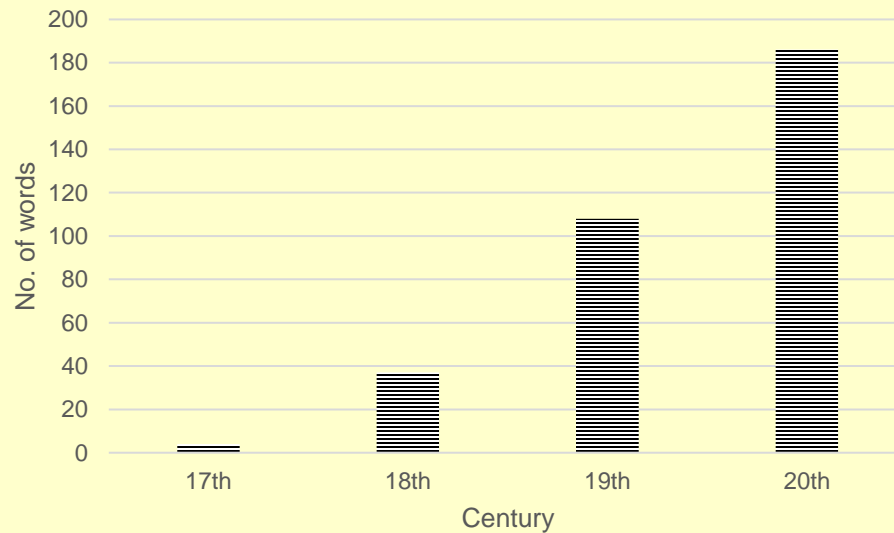


Figure K: Number of 'new' words in *-ante* in first 1,000 hits from CDEGH (3 words appearing in the 18th and 20th centuries but not the 19th and 2 words appearing in the 19th century only have not been included.)

⌚ Relative frequency of many already existing words in *-nte* increases in 19th and 20th centuries

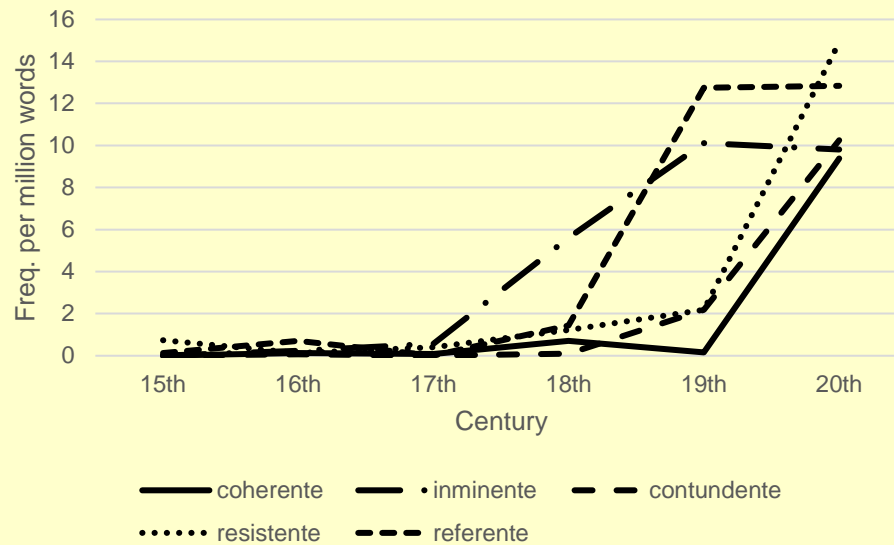


Figure L: Relative frequency profiles of some words in *-nte* (CDEGH)

- A variety of forces favour the significant gain in frequency that these words have undergone over the history of Spanish to date
- Cultured borrowing in the first place probably significantly enhances a productive association between *-nte* form and verb already available via inherited words, and evidence for the internal derivation which depends on that is much earlier than for the intensifying prefixes
- The recent rise in the number and frequency of such forms is once again in all probability due to interlingual influence and borrowing from English
- In terms of structural impact, we have been able to identify factors which would have inhibited *-nte* from achieving full productivity

### Involvement of cultured borrowings

- The two case studies involve cultured borrowing to different degrees:
  - The initial isolation of the *-nte* suffix may not be entirely due to early cultured borrowing, but it is likely that cultured borrowing reinforced and encouraged the process with productive internal analogical creations soon growing.
  - The *-nte* suffix essentially retains the Latin present participle's adjectival meaning, even though it fails to develop its verbal syntactic functions.
  - There is little evidence of isolation and consequent productivity for the intensifying prefixes until the 19th century.
  - Although their simple intensifying meaning is a natural hyperbolic extension of meanings such as 'to an extreme degree', 'beyond what is normal', this is not really their etymological value.
- What the two histories do have in common is that the remarkable recent growth in the number of words and their overall frequency is more likely due to immediate adstrate borrowing than a direct consequence of contact with Latin.

The notion of 'cultured morphology' hence requires significant nuancing, and the best that can be said is that these are complex developments caused by a number of factors, of which **cultured borrowing is only a part.**

## Embedding

- Structural
  - There are aspectually based constraints on the *-nte* suffix which leads to a principled coexistence with existing forms and prevent total productivity
  - It is too early to speculate on the possible competition among the prefixes themselves, but at the moment the longer-standing *super-* is the clear frontrunner
  - It may be that the great freedom the prefixes have developed is challenging other existing intensifying strategies, *-ísimo* in particular
- Social (tentative)
  - While neologisms involving the *-nte* suffix are primarily associated with technical usage and with formal registers, even though some have been adopted in everyday speech, use of the intensifying prefixes in their simple intensifying meaning is characteristic of colloquial usage

### Significance of the study of cultured borrowings

- Importance of the study of the development of cultured borrowings after their point of first attestation
- Assessment of the deeper impact of lexis on morphological structure
- Challenge to a simplistic view of how lexical and morphological borrowing actually takes place  
Provides opportunity to focus on very recent changes which are still in progress and for which data is readily available

More to discover...

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