

## Title: “On the apparent synonymy between two Spanish agentive suffixes: *-dor* and *-nte*”

Category: **Poster** or **Oral**

The goal of this poster is the study of the apparent synonymy between two Spanish deverbal suffixes: *-nte* and *-dor*. These suffixes have been studied in the literature (Laca 1993; Rifón 1996; Rainer 1999) as agent suffixes which derive adjectives (*tranquilizante* ‘tranquilizing’, *tranquilizador* ‘tranquilizing/tranquilizer’) and nouns (*gobernante* ‘governor’, *gobernador* ‘governor’). In particular, much attention has been paid to the difference in the argument-semantic interpretation of such formations. That is, the *-nte* suffix encodes or lexicalizes the cause, while *-dor* suffix lexicalizes the agent.

However, if we check the Spanish Dictionary (DRAE), it seems that the majority of minimal pairs containing *-nte* and *-dor* suffixes have a redundant semantic content, since the basic meaning that both derivatives have received is “that V”. Instead, the language (by economic principles) is not redundant, so that the Spanish Lexicon has these doublets or minimal pairs because there may be semantic and contextual differences between them.

First, from a conceptual-semantic viewpoint, we can find cases where the *-nte* derivative takes for the derivation one verbal sense, and *-dor* takes another different. This point is illustrated in (1):

- (1) a. victoria aplastante  
    ‘overwhelming/landslide victory’ (feeling; abstract sense)
- b. molino aplastador de cosas  
    ‘mill that crushes/mashes something’ (“to crush, mash”, eventive and AS)

It is possible to find also minimal pairs where the *-nte* nominal is specialized to denote a product, while the *-dor* nominal denotes the instrument, like in (2):

- (2) a. diluyente  
    ‘solvent’ (“fluid to dilute or to dissolve”)
- b. diluidor  
    ‘instrument/machine to dilute or to dissolve’

Another difference that we can find is related to the [ $\pm$ animate] feature. For instance, a *-nte* derivative can modify to  $\pm$ animate noun, while *-dor* is constrained to denote only +animate nouns; so *-nte* is less restrictive in this case. An example in (3):

- (3) a. Juan/el plomo es un contaminante.  
    ‘John/the lead is a pollutant/contaminant’
- b. Juan/#el plomo es un contaminador.  
    ‘John/#the lead is a pollutant/contaminant’

On the other hand, from an aspectual viewpoint, the difference among minimal pairs is accounted for by the episodic or dispositional nature of the suffixes. That is, it could be thought that *-nte* selects an episodic reading (4) and *-dor* selects a dispositional reading (5):

- (4) el asaltante del banco  
    ‘the robber of the bank’
- (5) asaltador de bancos  
    ‘a bank robbers’

In this case, *-dor* seems to be specialized to refer activities or professions. In (6) another example of this idea is presented:

(6) a. Juan fue el acompañante de María en la fiesta de anoche.

‘John was Maria’s companion in the party last night’.

b. Juan es acompañador de grupos. Ese es su trabajo.

‘John is a group companion. This is his job’.

If we consider now the Argument Structure of the verbal base, we find cases where the *-nte* takes the inchoative version (7a), while *-dor* takes the causative version (7b):

(7) a. agua hirviente

‘boiling water’ (the water is boiling now)

b. aparato hervidor de algo

‘machine that boils something’

Finally, if we consider the category, we also find differences. In fact, there are cases where the *-nte* derivative is exclusively an adjective (8a), while the *-dor* derivative is exclusively a noun (8b):

(8) a. cortante

‘cutting’

b. cortador

‘cutter’

We expect with this study to unveil the differences between these deverbal suffixes and to show that there is not any synonymy and the suffixes are semantically and aspectually specified. We adopt a syntactic approach in order to explain the data. That is, derivatives associated with verbal predicates contain functional projections: AspP, VoiceP, vP, etc. (Marantz 1997, Alexiadou 2001, Borer 2005). In this sense, we expect to show that the different semantic-aspectual interpretations may be determined by the presence of different functional projections.

#### References:

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