

***UN PROBLEMITA: EXAMINING AND MEASURING
DIMINUTIVE SUFFIX PRODUCTIVITY ACROSS
VARIETIES OF SPANISH***

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INTRODUCTION

GOALS OF THE PROJECT

- The problem: diminutives have received abundant attention in the literature, but representative cross-dialectal studies are still scarce, as are implementations of statistical measures of productivity.
- Goals:
 - (1) Examine the evidence provided in prior research to summarize potential restrictions on the formation of diminutives in Spanish.
 - (2) Explore the cross-dialectal distribution of competing diminutive suffixes in a representative, cross-dialectal corpus.
 - (3) Apply statistical measures of productivity to the data.

MOTIVATION

- Recent research has examined the effect of both system-internal and system-external factors on productivity (Albright & Hayes, 2003; Bybee, 2006; Hay & Baayen, 2005).
- Diminutivization is a structure that lends itself well to such an analysis.
- Statistical measures of productivity (Baayen, 2009) can provide quantitative evidence for the claims made in descriptive work about the prevalence of a given suffix.

THE MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERN

- The present study: a cross-dialectal analysis of the relationship between restrictions on word-formation rules (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010) and statistical measures of morphological productivity using the competing Spanish diminutive suffixes *-ito* and *-illo* as a test case.
- Function: form a complex word denoting a smaller version of the base (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010).

a. *un hombre-cito*
a man-DIM.SG
“A little man.”

c. *com-iend-ito*
eat-PROG-DIM
“Eating.”

b. *muy chiqu-ito*
very small-DIM
“Very small.”

d. *ahor-ita*.
now-DIM
“Now.”



El principito
“The little prince”

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