

# THE ROLE OF SUFFIXATION IN ENCODING HIGHEST/LOWEST INTENSITY IN ROMANIAN AND SPANISH

Violeta BUTISEACĂ  
“Ovidius” University of Constanța  
dulce\_vio@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Any theoretical analysis of a fragment of reality is carried out by means of abstract models and aims to capture the specificity of a phenomenon. Theorising may nevertheless prove insufficient if its descriptive analysis is not doubled by the establishment of regularities, so that the current state of the phenomenon and its subsequent evolution may be explained. This general framework also includes linguistic intensification, which reveals one’s permanent need to evaluate everything that enters one’s sphere of perception: objects, beings, states, processes etc. The means of expressing “intensity” are most diverse and, implicitly, sensitive to any type of nuancing of the speaker, because it uncloses the shape its mental representation socially takes.

This paper aims to highlight a certain aspect in the complex act of evaluation, namely expressing highest/lowest intensity by means of suffixes. The study relies on the analysis of two modern related languages, Romanian and Spanish, and the corpus has been essentially selected from the most modern form of human communication, the computer-mediated one.

## Keywords

Electronic communication, blog, intensity, suffixation, diminutive, augmentative.

## 1. Electronic communication

In today’s society, marked by strong technological progress and sociological changes, more and more researchers signal the existence of a new type of communication, namely ‘*electronically-mediated communication*’<sup>1</sup>. The new communication pattern seems to meet (post)modern man’s need to

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<sup>1</sup> David Crystal, 2010, p. 415.

selectively express ideas, by creating a mixed discourse that identifies with “*neither oral nor written discourse*”.<sup>2</sup>

In the article “Aspecte fatice în comunicarea mediată de computer”, Raluca Amza mentions the existence of two communication types favoured by the internet: *online* and *offline*.<sup>3</sup> In terms of the form of interaction, Ionuț Pomian distinguishes between “dialogic” electronic communication and “monologic” one (blogs, electronic publications).<sup>4</sup> In this paper, we shall mainly refer to monologic (*offline*) communication via blogs.

Although it generally takes a long time for a means of communication to spread to every corner of the world, blogs seem to have defied this rule and they have expanded in just a few years. In this regard, the researcher Dorina Guțu states that, in less than seven years, the term *blog* “*has become a dictionary entry worldwide*”.<sup>5</sup> Initially, there was the term *weblog*, coined by Jorn Barger in 1997, by associating the words “web” and “log”. Later, Peter Merholz shortened the phrase “we blog” and that is how “blog” emerged.<sup>6</sup>

As regards the definition of the term, David Crystal states:

*“A blog (a shortened form of weblog) is a personalized web page where the owner can post messages at intervals and can receive comments from readers. Many blogs are personal diaries, ranging in length from brief notes to extended essays; many are on topics of general interest or concern, such as a hobby or political issue”*.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to mention that at the moment there is no theme or field that is not a source of inspiration for blog creators. Mihaela Moraru Stancu points out the increasing desire of contemporary people to confess, to debate topics of public interest, to promote themselves, their daily life or their own business.<sup>8</sup> They are both personal and group in nature. A special category is that of corporate blogs belonging to firms, companies or organisations. The

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<sup>2</sup> David Crystal, 2010, p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> Raluca Amza, 2009, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> Ionuț Pomian, 2009, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup> Dorina Guțu, 2007, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> David Crystal, 2010, p. 415.

<sup>8</sup> Mihaela Moraru Stancu, 2018, p. 135.

examples we have selected are from all types of blogs, mainly the personal ones, which are strongly marked emotionally.

## **2. Suffixation**

According to Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim in *Vocabularul limbii române actuale*, suffixation ranks first among the internal means of vocabulary enrichment:

“Affixation is characterised by maintaining suffixation in top position – in terms of quantitative and qualitative importance – and by strongly increasing prefix derivatives.”<sup>9</sup>

The researcher claims that the wealth and diversity of suffixal formations “brings Romanian closer, structurally speaking, to contemporary French”.<sup>10</sup> We can widen the scope of applicability, as the same suffixal “wealth” is also present in contemporary Spanish. However, not all suffixes can capture intensity differences.

Although attaching a suffix to a base word is a widespread phenomenon, suffixes rarely acquire a superlative value in Romanian. In principle, suffix derivation is extremely rich in Romance languages, because the mechanism of suffixation used to be highly productive in both cultivated and popular Latin. But, in the case of diminutives and augmentatives, the issues are different due to the particular logico-semantic meaning and to the special forms – intensity is rendered less by suffixes and more by infixes (-l; -k-): *homunculus*, *grandiculus*.<sup>11</sup>

Some means specialise only in encoding linguistic intensity (e.g. Rom. suffix *isim*/Sp. *-ísimo*), while others may also acquire additional, connotative nuances, such as depreciative (e.g. Sp. *ricachón*, Rom. “bogătan” ‘filthy rich’).

Unlike Romanian, Spanish is characterised by a frequent use of suffixation with a view to rendering the highest intensity. Thus, there are suffixes such as *-ísimo* (prototypical) or various forms taken from among

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<sup>9</sup> Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2007, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> As regards popular Latin, the referential study of F. T. Cooper, 1895/1997, *Word Formation in the Roman Sermo Plebeius*, New York: 1895, is still valid.

diminutives or augmentatives: *-azo/-aza, -ada, -ito* etc., which many linguists refer to as “appreciative”. José Alberto Miranda also uses the terms *affective* or *expressive* to describe this type of suffixes and, in defining them, points out the strong implications they have in terms of the meaning of the base: “*alteran de modo fundamental (y no marginal) el significado de la forma básica a la que se añaden*”.<sup>12</sup> The semantic input is what differentiates them from the so-called “non-appreciative” suffixes.

In Spanish, suffixation with superlative value is reflected at the level of all four basic grammatical classes sensitive to the phenomenon of intensification: the adjective, the verb, the adverb, but mainly the noun:

*“En este sentido, debemos recordar que la sufijación apreciativa actúa fundamentalmente sobre bases nominales.”*<sup>13</sup>

Noun: *casa > casona; golpe > golpazo* etc.

Adjective: *cobarde > cobardón; Bueno > buenazo* etc.

Verb: *bailar > bailotear; apretar > apretujar* etc.

Adverb: *abajo > abajote; cerca > cerquita* etc.

The idea is enforced in the *GDLE*, according to which:

*“En español, como en las demás lenguas románicas, la segunda caracterización vale de modo general para la lengua como sistema de posibilidades; pero, de hecho, tales lenguas rentabilizan mucho más la sufijación homogénea en la derivación nominal que en la verbal (tanto en el número de sufijos disponibles como en el grado de productividad de los mismos) y, dentro de la nominal, más en la derivación sobre sustantivos que sobre adjetivos.”*<sup>14</sup>

What also draws one’s attention when it comes to this type of suffixes is that they are the only ones which cannot change the grammatical class of the base: Sp. adv. *cerca* (“aproape” ‘close’) > adv. *cerquita* (“foarte aproape” ‘very close’), as it also happens in Romanian with most diminutives and augmentatives.

Another important aspect that should be discussed is the fact that “appreciative” suffixes often develop, in parallel, additional nuances. Thus,

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<sup>12</sup> José Alberto Miranda, 1994. p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> José Alberto Miranda, 1994. p. 113.

<sup>14</sup> *GDLE*, tomo 3, p. 4334.

they may give positive or negative connotations to the base but may also function as intensifiers. With nominals, they often influence the size (*casona/casita*), and with adjectives they function as attenuators or intensifiers of a feature (*grandezuelo/grandón, grandote*). Repercussions also occur in the case of verb bases, as they may nuance iterative, frequentative or intensive actions: *pisotear* = *pisar* + iterative action + intensity.

Manuel Seco distinguishes between *sufijos significativos* ('significant'/ 'with higher semantic contribution') and *sufijos apreciativos* ('appreciative').<sup>15</sup> The difference is inductively signalled by the researcher, starting from an actual situation. The examples suggested are the words *cantante* (*cantar* + suff. *-ante*) and *jardincito* (*Jardin* + suff. *-cito*). *Cantante* designates the agent ("the person who performs the action denoted by the verb base"), "*una noción que se añade a la noción expuesta en la raíz*". In the second case (*jardincito*), the suffix *-cito* points to the size of the garden ("a smaller garden"). It illustrates some quantitative information and, at the same time, the speaker's emotional involvement.<sup>16</sup>

According to the cited scholar, the semantic contribution is much higher in the first case than it is in the second, when the speaker's need for expressiveness also arises. Furthermore, the linguist points out that "significant" suffixes change the grammatical class of the base, unlike the "appreciative" ones:

*"Los primeros convierten una palabra en otra distinta, incluso en una palabra de distinta clase; con los segundos la palabra sigue siendo la misma, y el empleo de ellos obedece a la voluntad libre del que habla en ese momento."*<sup>17</sup>

In this paper, we shall focus on the second type of suffixes, namely the "appreciative", because they are the most sensitive to intensity changes.

Manuel Seco includes diminutival and augmentative suffixes in the category of "appreciative". In general, when attached to a nominal, they influence size (e.g. Sp. *pedrita* = "piedra pequeña"), and next to an adjective or adverb they point out differences in intensity (e.g. Sp. *poquito* = "bastante

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<sup>15</sup> Manuel Seco, 1996, p. 318.

<sup>16</sup> Manuel Seco, 1996, p. 319.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

poco”). These values are influenced by the speaker’s emotional involvement, often materialised in empathy or antipathy. Thus, as Manuel Seco says, *mi hermanito* may mean both “my younger brother” and “my dear brother/that I care about”, and sometimes this nuance may dominate<sup>18</sup>. In Romanian, diminutival suffixes may also have additional connotative values, in the hypocoristic sense, and depreciative ones, in proportions that are hard to quantify. *Doctoraş* ‘small doctor’, *ingineraş* ‘small engineer’, *profesoraş* ‘small teacher’ may mean “a nice young person who has that respective profession” but also “inexperienced” or “of low social value”. Similarly, augmentatives may induce not only the idea of “size” but also that of “disproportionate”, “inadequate” etc.: *căsoaie* ‘big house’, *muieroi* ‘big woman’.<sup>19</sup>

In other situations, the diminutive functions as intensifier. The structure *me levanté tempranito* (adverb + diminutival suff. *-ito*) is equivalent to *me levanté bien temprano* (‘I woke up very early’).<sup>20</sup>

The idea is also supported by the *NGLE*, which points out that diminutives function as intensifiers when they combine with adjectives, adverbs or adverbial phrases, but with different nuances. While *calentito* is equivalent to “muy caliente” (‘very hot’), the meaning proposed for *grandecito* is “relativamente grande” (‘relatively large’). Instead, the adverb *cerquita* and the adverbial phrase *de mañana* render the highest intensity: *cerquita* = “very close”, *de mañana* = “very early”.<sup>21</sup>

Augmentatives are the second class of suffixes sensitive to differences in intensity. Manuel Seco associates this category with the pejoratives (*despectivos*) due to the nuances attributed to them. However, one cannot equate the two, since some diminutives also have negative values (as in the case of *abogadillo*, an example proposed by the researcher himself)<sup>22</sup>. As regards the augmentatives, the *NGLE* refers to “positive connotations”, as is the case of such nouns as *notición*, *peliculón*, as well as to “negative

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<sup>18</sup> Manuel Seco, 1996, p. 319.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. P. Gh. Bârlea, 2013, p. 228.

<sup>20</sup> Manuel Seco, 1996, p. 320.

<sup>21</sup> *NGLE*, p. 169.

<sup>22</sup> Manuel Seco, 1996, p. 320.

connotations”, for example, augmentatives used to denote parts of the body: *barrigón*, *narizón* etc. Thus, the noun *novelón* may designate an extraordinary novel, which is very well written, and also an extensive, large, very complicated work. In the former situation, its augmentative value is pushed into the background.<sup>23</sup>

Further below, we shall investigate the behaviour of the main suffixes used to encode the highest/lowest intensity in Romanian and Spanish.

❖ **Suffixes common to both languages:**

• **Rom. -ISIM; Sp. -ÍSIMO**

A suffix ‘borrowed’ from cultivated Latin, following the model of the other Romance languages, not typical of our traditional grammatical system, is *-isim*, added to an adjective/adverb (e.g. *rarisim* ‘very/extremely rare’, *importantisim* ‘very/extremely important’).<sup>24</sup> Georgeta Ciompec details the status of the suffix and includes it in the category of intensifiers with emphatic values, specific, however, to cultivated language only<sup>25</sup>. The researcher also mentions that it usually accompanies adjectives, but, due to their frequent adverbialization, “*it passed on to (modal) adverbs as well*”<sup>26</sup>. We have found it used only once in the Romanian corpus, in a blog of a cultural magazine, which confirms its special status:

(1) Rom. “*Cu Brâncuși inexistent în licitațiile românești (și, oricum, tranzacționat pe piața internațională cu zeci de milioane de dolari, mult peste lichiditatea totală existentă pe piața de artă de la București), cu Ghenie aflat la primii pași pe piața internă, cu Brauner rarisim și reprezentat doar cu lucrări de tinerețe, licitațiile românești sunt, încă, dominate de clasicii școlii*

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<sup>23</sup> NGLE, p. 170.

<sup>24</sup> In *Structura morfologică a limbii române contemporane*, the authors claim that “*the language of educated people is acquainted with a few superlatives (with an absolute meaning) built in a different manner than our linguistic system requires*”. As we can see, *-isim* is regarded as an isolated phenomenon, which does not capture a specific trait of Romanian. Cf. Iorgu Iordan, Valeria Guțu Romalo, Alexandru Niculescu, 1967, *Structura morfologică a limbii române*, București: Editura Științifică, p. 114.

<sup>25</sup> Georgeta Ciompec, 1985, p. 184.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

românești de pictură: Nicolae Grigorescu, Nicolae Tonitza, Theodor Aman, Ștefan Luchian.” (‘As Brâncuși is non-existent in Romanian auctions (and, anyway, traded on the international market with tens of millions of dollars, far above the total liquidity existing on the art market in Bucharest), Ghenie is taking the first steps on the internal market and Brauner is an **extremely rare presence** and is only represented by his early works, Romanian auctions are still dominated by the classics of the Romanian school of painting: Nicolae Grigorescu, Nicolae Tonitza, Theodor Aman, Ștefan Luchian.’) (<https://blog.revistacultura.ro/2017/01/23/2016-pe-piata-de-arta-din-romania-de-nicu-ilie/>)

In Spanish, the equivalent suffix, though specialised as a marker of the highest intensity, is *-ísimo* (e.g. *guapísimo*). The inflectional superlative in Latin disappeared during the transition to Romance languages and was replaced by periphrastic forms. Later, it was reintroduced via scholarly channels in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Emilio Alarcos Llorach refers to a widespread use of the suffix starting with the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

*“Se ha generalizado desde el siglo XVI una formación equivalente del latín, cuyo uso es hoy muy vivo.”*<sup>27</sup>

In Spanish, the expressive power of the suffix *-ísimo* is clearly greater than the prototypical analytical construction with *muy*. *Una mujer muy hermosa* allows a value judgement with a degree of subjectivity that is lower than in *una mujer hermosísima*.<sup>28</sup> According to Manuel Seco, *-ísimo* is an “appreciative” suffix “*que expresa intensidad*”.<sup>29</sup> The *NGLE* includes it in the category of suffixes indicating “*grado extremo*”, alongside of *-errímo/-erríma*.<sup>30</sup> In this regard, the *NGLE* explains that synthetic constructions cannot be associated with the other superlative forms, as they behave differently:

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<sup>27</sup> Emilio Alarcos Llorach, 2000, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> Ana Serradilla Castaño, 2005, p. 362.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> *NGLE*, p. 137.



“ [...] *no presentan en el español actual las propiedades que caracterizan sintácticamente a los demás superlativos, sino que se comportan como adjetivos de grado extremo o elativos.*”<sup>31</sup>

It is important to study the suffix *-ísimo* in such forms as *primero* (*primerísimo*) or *mismo* (*mismísimo*) as well. In Romanian, they are incompatible with degree markers (*\*foarte primul* ‘very first’, *\*foarte chiar/același* ‘very the same’). We have selected a relevant example in Spanish from our corpus:

(2) Sp. “*El mismísimo John Malkovich en persona*”

(<https://www.davidbarbero.com/2010/05/19/el-mismisimo-john-malkovich-en-persona/>)

In the case of adverbs ending in *-mente*, the suffix is added to the adjective base in the feminine (*facilísimamente*),<sup>32</sup> as we can see below:

(3) Sp. “*Se pone el ojo como un oso panda, pero con un algodón mojado (yo lo mojo en agua del grifo), se retira el producto **facilísimamente.***”

(<http://eldiariodemarian75.blogspot.com/2013/05/favoritos-mayo.html>)

The situations in which *-ísimo* is attached to a noun base are much rarer. In this case, it may point to the extreme degree (*campeonísimo*) or may acquire “*connotaciones burlescas*”.<sup>33</sup> We have identified such a case in our corpus, with the nominal placed between inverted commas in order to attenuate the ironic, burlesque nuance:

(4) Sp. “*El año pasado os enseñaba (aquí y aquí) el regalo que preparé a mi ‘**maridísimo**’ por su cumpleaños.*”

(<http://milcosasmaravillosas.blogspot.com/2013/03/un-regalo-muy-molon.html?m=1>)

We should keep in mind that it is usually attached to an adjectival or adverbial base:

- Adjectival base:

(5) Sp. “*En Almería hay productos de **altísima** calidad, y cuenta con muchas recetas propias que harán las delicias de todo el que las pruebe.*”

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>32</sup> NGLE, p. 137.

<sup>33</sup> NGLE, p. 138.

(<https://www.mochileandoporelmundo.com/donde-comer-en-almeria-tapas/>)

- Adverbial base:

(6) Sp. „¡Feliz Navidad! Espero que estéis pasando unos días estupendos con vuestros seres queridos y que disfrutéis **muchísimo** de estas fiestas.”

(<http://www.allthatsheiwantsblog.com/search?updated-max=2019-01-08T08:30:00%2B01:00&max-results=3&start=6&by-date=false>)

As regards the suffix *-érrimo/-érrima*, it is attached to adjectives which include the consonant *r* in the last syllable: *misérrimo* (*miseró*), *celebérrimo* (*célebre*), taken directly from Latin.<sup>34</sup> Some adjectives also allow the suffix *-ísimo* (*negrísimo*, *pobrísimó* etc.), which competes with *-érrimo*, increasingly poorly represented “*igualmente válidos y aceptados en la norma culta*”.<sup>35</sup> Things are not the same in the case of forms such as *misérrimo* or *libérrimo* which do not allow substitution (*\*miserísimo*; *\*librísimo*), according to the *DPD*.<sup>36</sup>

The use of the suffix is limited and strictly regards the cultivated register, which has been pointed out by Emilio Alarcos Llorach: “*Son muy cultos los superlativos que adoptan el sufijo /érrimo/*”.<sup>37</sup> This is probably the reason why we have not found it in our corpus.

### ❖ Suffixes specific to the Spanish language

#### • Sp. -ÓN, -ONA

It is a suffix used in contemporary Spanish both with an augmentative value and to connote various nominals negatively or positively. In this regard, the *NGLE* specifies that when it does not contextually entail a particular nuance, the resulting derivative shows intensity, even abundance or excess:

“*En general, cuando el adjetivo de la base no está orientado hacia alguna valoración particular, el derivado obtenido denota intensificación, y a menudo también abundancia o exceso.*”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *DPD*, s.v. *-érrimo -ma*; In cultivated Latin, the 1<sup>st</sup> group adjectives in *-er* had a problem with the presence/absence of *-e* during case inflection: *pulcher*, *-chra*, *-chrum* “*frumos*, *-oasã*, *-os*” (‘beautiful’) vs *tener*, *-a*, *-um* “*tânãr*, *fraged*, *-ã*” (‘young/gentle’). Therefore, in late and popular Latin, not only did these subtypes unify by simplification, but they also started to compete with the usual forms in Romance languages; cf. N. I. Barbu; Toma Vasilescu, 1958, p. 37.

<sup>35</sup> *DPD*, s.v. *-érrimo -ma*.

<sup>36</sup> *DPD*, s.v. *-érrimo -ma*.

<sup>37</sup> Emilio Alarcos Llorach, 2000, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> *NGLE*, p. 170.

The *NGLE* also draws attention to the lexicalised noun forms, which do not actually fall into the class of augmentatives, because they acquire a different meaning. Examples such as *cinturón* (*cintura* + *-ón*) or *jarrón* (*jarro* + *-ón*) are put forth. Thus, by attaching the suffix to the noun *cintura*, which means ‘waist’, it comes to designate the object around the waist, ‘the belt’, and is lexicalised as such. *Jarrón* means ‘vase’ and here we may speak about a semantic restraint, ‘a certain type of jug’ (*jarra* = ‘jug’). Although, generally, they are no longer perceived as augmentatives, the *DLE* acknowledges this nuance in some of them (e.g. *jarrón*).<sup>39</sup>

We have made these clarifications because, in our Spanish corpus, we have encountered at least one similar example in which a lexicalised noun, which originally has an augmentative suffix attached to it, suggests the highest intensity:

(7) Sp. “*Nada me impide, después de la comilona, terminar de buena gana tomando un gintonic en el Café Belén. Bien preparado como mandan los cánones.*”

(<https://www.elmundo.es/blogs/elmundo/atodanoche/2010/02/08/los-arbitros-como-el-gastromaquia-de.html>)

*Comilona* is a noun marked [+ colloquial] and denotes “comida muy abundante y variada”.<sup>40</sup> It may be translated into Romanian as “o masă foarte îmbelșugată” ‘a very plentiful meal’.

- **Sp. -AZO, -AZA**

Another means used to render the highest intensity is *-azo*, a polysemantic suffix, as presented by the *DLE*.<sup>41</sup> In today’s language, it is often used as an augmentative showing exaggeration, both qualitatively and quantitatively. If *-ón/ona* functions as intensifier mainly when added to adjectival bases, *-azo/-aza* frequently acquires this value when it accompanies a noun. Typically, it does not add pejorative values to the base, except when it “*expresa exceso o desmesura; en tales casos predomina la connotación peyorativa*”.<sup>42</sup> In the examples we have identified, it is in all situations associated with a nominal base, to which it attributes a positive superlative value:

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<sup>39</sup> *DLE*, s.v. *jarrón*.

<sup>40</sup> *DLE*, s.v. *comilona*.

<sup>41</sup> *DLE*, s.v. *-azo, za*.

<sup>42</sup> *NGLE*, p. 170.

(8) Sp. “*¡Una obra de arte! Otra vez Juanfer Quintero marcó un golazo imitando al que le hizo a Racing.*”

(<https://monimega.com/blog/2019/02/15/video-juanfer-tambien-esta-loco-quintero-metio-otro-golazo-para-river-en-rosario/>)

(9) Sp. “*Pero si una amiga te cuenta que tiene pelazo desde que cambió de champú, es probable que ese mismo día lo tengas en tu ducha.*”

(<https://www.maidertomasena.com/social-proof/>)

The first example refers to a goal scored during an excellent, unforgettable football match and its reference point is the qualitative level. In the second case, both quality and quantity may be referred to. *Pelazo* may denote strong, shiny hair and also thick hair.

It is also important to note that the suffix takes on the gender of the word to which it is attached. In the examples above, *-azo* is added to masculine nouns: *golazo*, *pelazo*. Things change with the noun *piernaza* (feminine in Spanish, masculine in Romanian: ‘picior’ ‘leg’), when *-azo* becomes *-aza*:

(10) “*La moda obliga a lucir piernaza para el minivestido*”

(<https://www.telva.com/2009/02/13/estarguapaespeciales/1234521695.html>)

- **Sp. -ITO, -ITA**

The linguist Albelda Marco includes some diminutives, among which the suffix *-ito* stands out, in the category of intensifiers.<sup>43</sup> Another researcher who identifies this nuance of the morpheme is González Calvo, in the example *ponte aquí, cerquita*.<sup>44</sup> As far as we are concerned, we have found a similar situation in our corpus:

(11) Sp. “*Hoy he pasado mi primera resaca en México tirado al sol en la playa de Akumal, otra de las magníficas playas de la Riviera Maya que está cerquita de Playa del Carmen.*” (<https://viajeronomada.com/resaca-en-la-playa-de-akumal/>)

In *Syntaxe de l'espagnol moderne*, the superlative value of *-ito* is attributed to its affective use in colloquial speech. The derivatives that include the suffix may be qualifying adjectives (in most cases) and other parts of speech, including adverbs like *lejitos*, *prontito*, *despacito*, *poquito* etc. Its use is however incompatible with adverbs of manner ending in *-mente*.<sup>45</sup> It is

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<sup>43</sup> Albelda Marco, 2005, p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> José Manuel González Calvo, 1984, p. 176.

<sup>45</sup> Vezi Jean Coste, Augustin Redondo, 1965, p. 14.

interesting to note that there are situations in which the suffix is attached to a base preceded by another intensifier. It is the case of *muy*, which is added to the adverb *cerquita* in the example below:

(12) Sp. “*La Navidad está muy cerquita ya, y me puse a pensar en una opción de regalo que sume el origami a la decoración del hogar.*”

(<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/232920611962349262/>)

In Romanian, the corpus has not revealed such situations, which allows us to say that this type of suffixation is not as productive.

### **3. Final observations**

“Intensity” is a heterogenous category, whose status is defined according to linguistic and extralinguistic (psychological, logical etc.) criteria. Psychologically, the concept implies a generally subjective evaluation. Although there are somewhat similar ways of rendering the highest and lowest intensity in Romance languages, suffixation is well represented only in Spanish. In Romanian, it is a non-specific device, hardly ever associated with the highest or lowest intensity. This is also determined by the fact that *-isim*, a prototypical suffix of encoding the highest value in Spanish, is very rarely chosen by the speaker, as it is perceived as a deviation from our linguistic system. Furthermore, augmentatives and diminutives, frequently used in both languages, do not render the absolute value in Romanian as they do in Spanish.

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