

Spanish Loanwords in Catalan Neology

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Different processes are followed in Catalan in order to incorporate new words into its system:

- Prefixation
- Suffixation
- **Loanwords**
- Compounding
- ...

Loanwords are borrowed from a donor language and directly incorporated into the recipient language, thus expanding its lexicon.

SPANISH LOANWORDS are one of the most frequent sources of new words in Catalan (32% of all loanwords; 9.2% of all neologisms)

Aims of the study

Exploring the usage of Spanish loanwords in written Catalan in different Catalan-speaking regions from a quantitative perspective, at the same time describing their grammatical and semantic behaviour.

Method

NEOXOC: Network of Neology Observatories of the Catalan Language:

Since 2008 eight observatories located in different Catalan-speaking regions (Alacant, Andorra, Barcelona, Illes Balears, Girona, Lleida, Perpinyà and Tarragona) work together to build a database that accounts for neology in the different varieties of Catalan.

DATA COLLECTION

SOURCES: Each observatory documents neologisms from regional news publications that have a digital version.

AUTOMATIC EXTRACTION: An ad-hoc software (*BuscaNeo*) periodically identifies all the candidates to be considered as neologisms and shows the context where they appear. The researchers then accept or reject each unit and add complementary information, such as grammatical category or type of neologism.

MANUAL EXTRACTION: As the software cannot detect some kinds of units, such as semantic neologisms (*porexpan*) or syntagmatic neologisms (*cap de cartell*), researchers periodically carry out a manual extraction from the same sources.

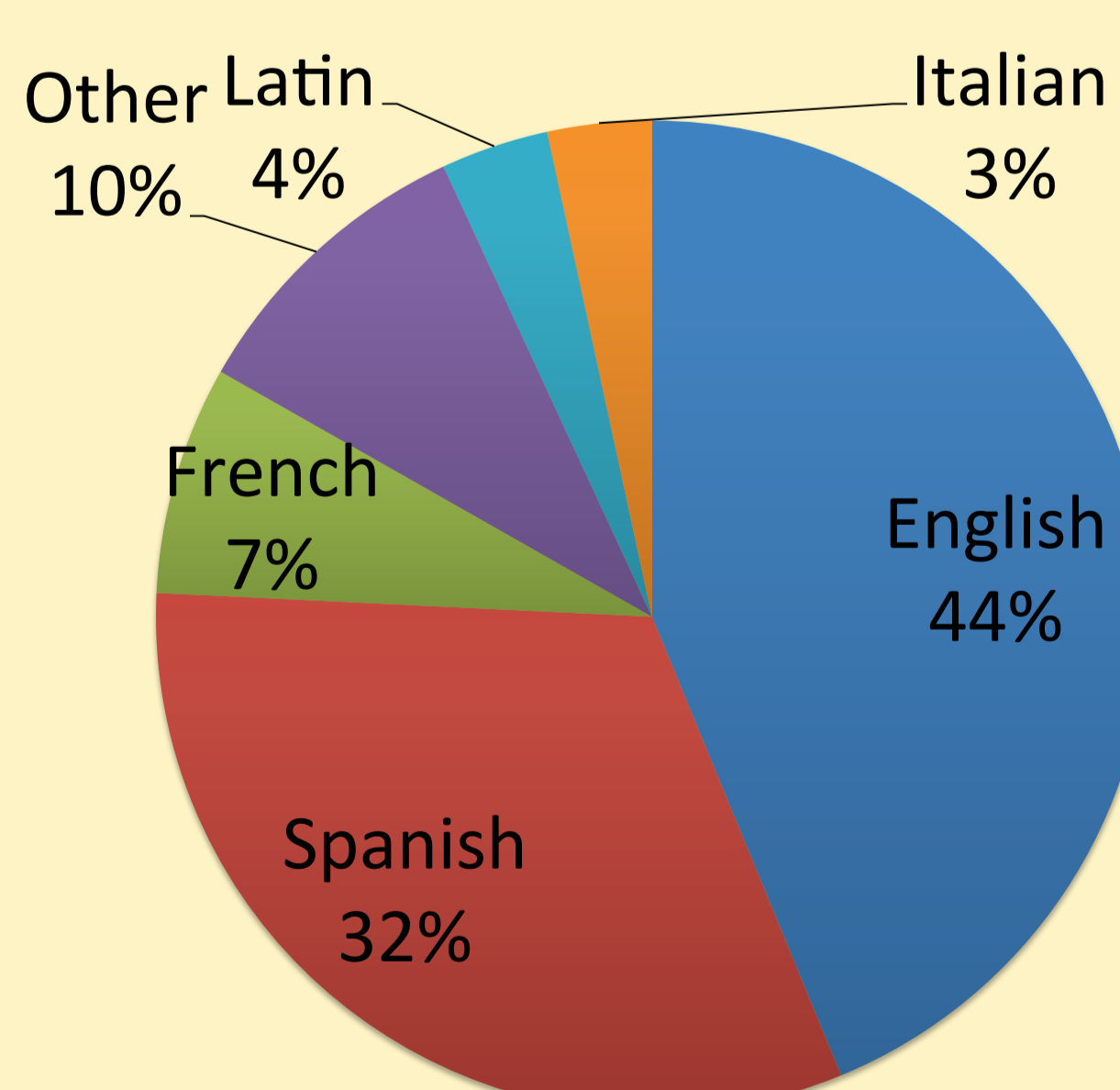
LEXICOGRAPHICAL CRITERION

At the NEOXOC network every word that does not appear in the Catalan lexicographical works of reference [*Diccionari de la llengua catalana* (Institut d'Estudis Catalans) and *Gran Diccionari de la llengua catalana* (Enciclopèdia Catalana)] is considered a neologism.

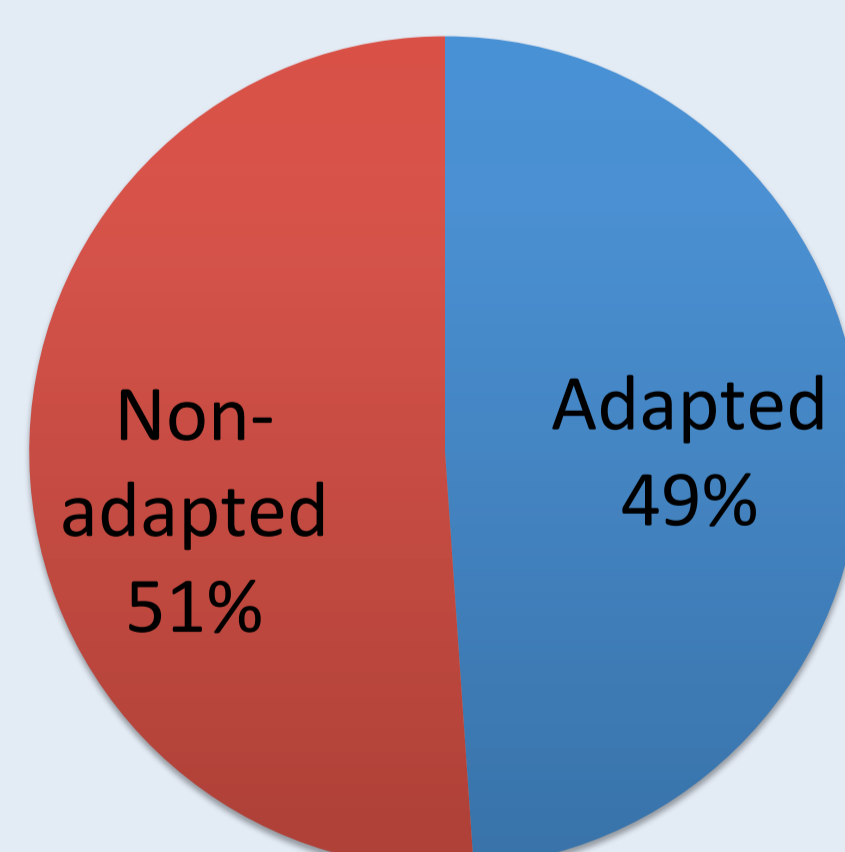
Results

Data sample 12,016 neologisms, out of which:
3,445 → loanwords
1,102 → Spanish loanwords

Spanish loanwords vs other languages

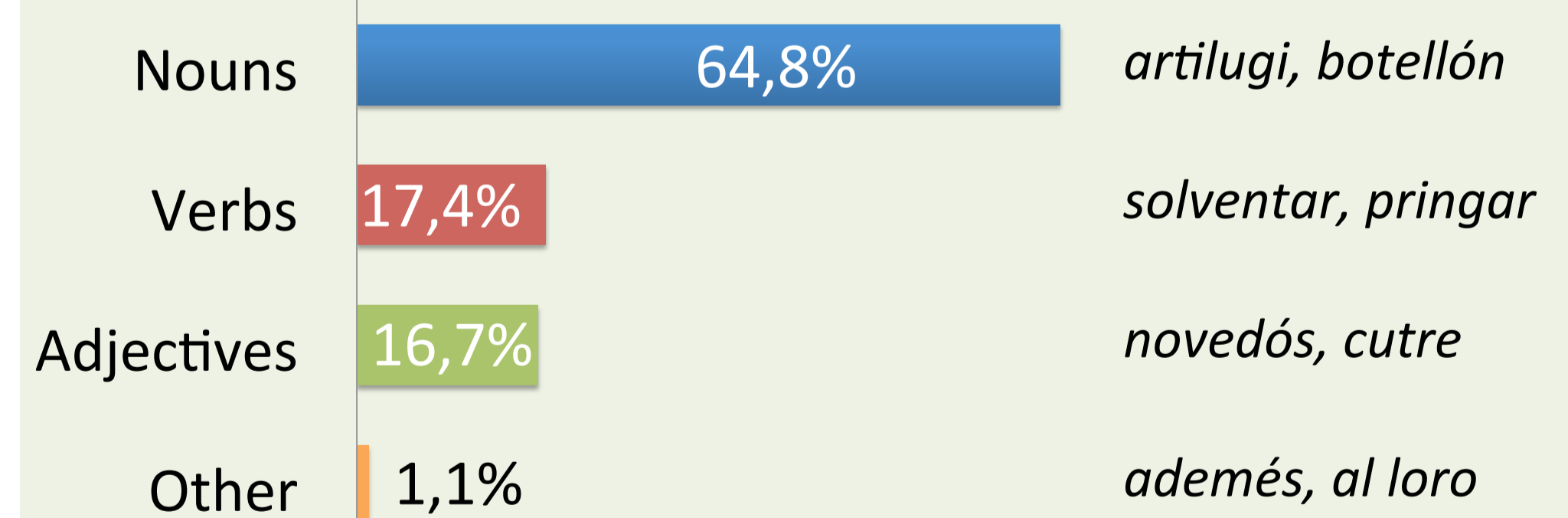


Proportion of (graphically) adapted neologisms



The high proportion of adapted loanwords reflects the degree of assimilation of certain lexical units to the Catalan orthographic system. As a result of the typological proximity and the contact between both languages, speakers use words in Catalan that they do not perceive as loanwords from a psychological perspective. This phenomenon is known as interference.

Grammatical categories



Semantic aspects

Derogatory nouns and adjectives
cantamanyanes, barriobajero, capullo

Spanish and Latin-American culture
culebrón, bailaora, pescaíto frito

Social phenomena
narcotiendita, enchufisme, patera

The most outstanding feature is the vast number of derogatory nouns and adjectives, used mostly as personal qualifiers.

Conclusions

- The analysis of Spanish loanwords shows that, due mostly to cultural proximity and typological similarity, Spanish loanwords are one of the most productive processes in the incorporation of new words into written Catalan. English is the most frequent loan language in written Catalan, followed by Spanish, whereas other languages are less present in our data.
- One of the most outstanding features is the high percentage of lexical units that show some degree of adaptation to Catalan spelling and derivation rules.
- The expansion of the database should help us observe, from a diachronic perspective, which of these loanwords remain ingrained in the Catalan language and which are left behind in favour of other words, the latter generated by means of processes of lexical creation typical of the Catalan language.