



## Towards a Corpus-Based Analysis of Anglicisms in Spanish: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show some of the advantages of and the need for using corpora for exploring and assessing Anglicisms in contemporary Spanish. In order to do this a case study is presented: the adverb *dramáticamente*, as it is taking on the new sense ‘espectacularmente’ under the influence of English *dramatically*. The presence of this adverb with this new sense in contemporary Spanish is explored and supported with the data found in CORDE and CREA, the two corpora of the Royal Spanish Academy. Since the paper also seeks to show in what ways the Spanish lexicon is being influenced by English, evidence from two major English corpora, the BNC and the COCA, will be used.

**KEYWORDS:** CORDE, CREA, BNC, COCA, Anglicisms, dramatically, dramáticamente.

### RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende mostrar las ventajas y la necesidad del uso de corpus electrónicos para explorar y evaluar la presencia de anglicismos en español contemporáneo. Para ello se analiza el caso del adverbio *dramáticamente*, que está desarrollando un nuevo sentido por influencia del inglés *dramatically*. La presencia de *dramáticamente* usado con este nuevo sentido en español contemporáneo se explora, apoya y documenta con los datos obtenidos del CORDE y el CREA, los corpus de la Real Academia Española. Puesto que el fin del trabajo es en última instancia demostrar de manera empírica la influencia del inglés en el léxico español, se utilizan también dos corpus de inglés, el BNC y el COCA.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** CORDE, CREA, BNC, COCA, Anglicismos, dramatically, dramáticamente.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Today, the influence of English on the languages spoken in the world is an undeniable fact; and Spanish, of course, is no exception. As Pratt (1980) demonstrates in a pioneering study on Anglicisms in contemporary Peninsular Spanish, the presence of English is felt at all the levels of the system: orthographic, lexical, semantic, morphological and even syntactic (Pratt, 1980: 229). However, it is at the level of lexis that this phenomenon is greater and most noticeable. Indeed, more and more English loanwords enter Spanish every day, sometimes even in their native form, like the so-called ‘patent’ Anglicisms (Rodríguez and Lillo, 1997), e.g., *airbag*, *byte*, *lifting*. Together with these, Spanish also borrows other English words which are far less common and noticeable. The latter, also known as semantic or content Anglicisms (Rodríguez, 2004), occur when Spanish receives from English not words but part of the meaning of a cognate form in that language. This type of borrowing often involves an extension of the denotational range of the target language term. A case in point is *ignorar* (=‘not to know’)<sup>1</sup>, a verb that has recently extended its meaning to include an additional sense ‘not to pay attention to sb/sthg’<sup>2</sup> as a result of the influence of English *ignore*. These Anglicisms, which include many a ‘false friend’ (Prado, 2001), often bring about changes in the collocation and colligation patterns of the Spanish host forms and even change their semantic or discourse prosody<sup>3</sup>. Thus, Sp. *ignorar*, for instance, can now take a human object, like En. *ignore*. Similarly, Sp. *versátil*, an adjective with negative connotations a few years ago, has recently lost them to become positively loaded, like En. *versatile*.

As such a pervasive phenomenon, the study of Anglicisms in Spanish has given rise to a number of studies. Worth mentioning are, among others, Pratt (1980), Lorenzo (1996) and Rodríguez and Lillo (1997), for they are all key contributions to this area of research. Besides, their merit is even greater if we take into account that their authors could not enjoy the advantages of large generic corpora of Spanish, unavailable at the time these works were published<sup>4</sup>. Fortunately, the situation has changed in the last few years. The recent advent of large electronic corpora of Spanish can now help linguists and lexicographers explore aspects of Anglicisms which have traditionally remained unnoticed, neglected or vaguely dealt with, and this makes it possible for them to draw conclusions about some aspects of a kind of lexicon difficult, if not impossible, to confirm before. For instance, corpus data allows us to reliably assess whether Latin American Spanish really is more receptive to and abundant in Anglicisms than European or Peninsular Spanish, as has often been suggested (Gimeno y Gimeno 2003); or if the media, especially the press and TV, are the main vehicle for their spread. In short, digitized corpora, as Rodríguez (2003: 574) puts it and Lorenzo (1996: 30) foresaw more than a decade ago, have become an indispensable tool for research on English loanwords and their compilation.

## II. AIMS OF THIS PAPER

In this paper, a case study is presented using the empirical data provided by the CORDE and the CREA, the historical and contemporary corpora, respectively, of the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE)<sup>5</sup>. Since the aim is to show in what ways the Spanish lexicon is being influenced by English, evidence from two major English corpora will be used, namely the British National Corpus (BNC)<sup>6</sup> and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)<sup>7</sup>. The reason for using two English corpora is mainly one of chronological coverage: these two corpora together span more or less the same period as CREA (1975-2004); BNC 1980-1993; COCA 1990-2008. Besides, even though the purpose of this study is not to identify differences in British and American use of *dramatically*, the data obtained from these corpora may offer some interesting insights in this respect. The example under scrutiny is the adjective *dramático/a*, and its derivative adverb *dramáticamente*.

The complexity of the meaning changes undergone by these words makes them paradigmatic examples of semantic Anglicisms, especially by *dramáticamente*, on which the paper focuses. Exploring these words through the data in the CORDE and the CREA sheds new light on how the study of English loanwords can benefit from the use of corpora. For instance, the possibility of comparing the data concerning *dramátic(a)/mente* provided by the historical corpus with those in the contemporary one allows us to verify on the grounds of their frequency whether occurrences of *dramático/a* and *dramáticamente* used in the English sense are really Anglicisms and not simply odd instances of careless translations. Moreover, since the corpora permit different search parameters (geographical, thematic, etc.), valuable information can be obtained about their distribution across themes, text-types and registers, about the ratio of occurrences in Peninsular and Latin American Spanish, or the degree of entrenchment of these forms. Finally, because the two corpora give access to the co-text of the forms searched for, they also allow us to explore to what extent English is affecting the Spanish language. This is especially useful in the case of semantic Anglicisms like the ones selected here, given the impact they may have on the collocations and colligation patterns in which they are involved.

## III. CASE STUDY: *dramatic/dramatically* ≠ *dramático(a)/dramáticamente*

As has just been said, the pair *dramática(o)/mente* / *dramatic/ally* is a paradigmatic example of the type of semantic Anglicism generally known as false friend (Prado, 2001), since it is the superficial similarity of the two forms that may lead to misuse in Spanish. Seco's (1998) *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de la lengua española* and the Academy's (2005) recently published *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* warn us against the 'incorrect' use of this adjective and its derivative adverb. Seco's (1998) entry for *dramático* reads as follows:

**dramático.** Este nombre significa ‘del drama’ (*los personajes dramáticos*), o ‘de las obras de teatro’ (*literatura dramática*); también ‘que tiene caracteres de drama’ (*Nos encontramos en una situación dramática*). El uso de dramático en textos como *Se ha registrado un crecimiento dramático en las exportaciones* –debido a un sentido que tiene la voz *dramatic* en inglés– es inadecuado; corresponde al español *espectacular*. Del mismo modo, el adverbio *dramáticamente* (“*Se reduce dramáticamente [en el televisor] la tasa de reflexión se consigue un 33% más de contraste*”, País, Supl., 22.9.1985) es en español *espectacularmente*.

And in the *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* we find the following gloss: “**dramático** –ca. En español significa ‘del drama (género literario)’ y ‘que tiene caracteres de drama’. No debe usarse con el sentido de ‘drástico o espectacular’, como se hace a veces por influjo del inglés *dramatic* [...] Lo mismo cabe decir del adverbio *dramáticamente*, que no debe usarse con el sentido que corresponde a las voces españolas *drásticamente* o *espectacularmente*”.

As these two dictionaries explain, the meaning of *dramático/a* largely derives from, and is strongly connected to, the primary senses of its nominal base *drama*, namely, ‘1. Obra literaria escrita para ser representada’ and ‘2. Obra teatral de tono serio’ (Seco et al 1999). Thus, *dramático/a* is most properly used in Spanish as a classifier<sup>8</sup>: ‘poesía/arte dramático’, ‘autor/actor dramático’, etc. Moreover, out of these senses *drama* developed a third one between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, ‘3. Suceso o situación lamentable’ (Seco et al 1999), whose negative connotations turned the adjective into an equally negatively loaded form<sup>9</sup>. Used in this sense, the derivative adjective functions as a descriptor, as in the following two examples, where *dramática* and *dramáticamente* mean ‘sad(ly)’ or ‘tragic(ally)’: ‘Hace unas horas llegaba la dramática noticia de diez muertos más, ahogados en el Estrecho al hundirse una patera’ (CREA, 2001, Prensa); ‘La violencia contra la mujer está dramáticamente presente en nuestro días’ (CREA, 2002, C. Alborch, *Malas*). In cases like the latter, the adverb adds an element of evaluation that permit its classification as a stance adverbial also<sup>10</sup>.

English *dramatic(ally)*, on the other hand, is quite different from its Spanish paronym, especially as far as its semantic relation with the noun *drama* and its connotations are concerned. To begin with, in its primary sense of ‘sudden’ or ‘marked’, it is far removed from its noun base and consequently it is most frequently used as a descriptor (source COBUILD):

**Dramatic.** 1 A **dramatic** change or event happens suddenly ADJ QUALIT  
and is very noticeable and surprising. EG *I expect to see* ↑ sudden  
*dramatic improvements.* ◇ **dramatically.** EG *The way in* = marked  
*which information is transmitted has changed dramatically.* ◇ ADV  
= radically

Then, since English *drama* is not evaluatively loaded, the derived adjective does not convey any evaluative meaning, modifying a wide variety of nouns that can carry either positive, negative or neutral prosody, such as *improvement*, *increase*, *fall* or *change*; and the same

applies to the adverb, which has among its most frequent collocates the corresponding verbs (*improve, increase, fall, etc.*).

Apart from this primary sense of *dramatic*, this English adjective, like its Spanish paronym, also has the sense directly derived from its base form *drama*, i.e., something connected with the theatre or written in the form of a play. Used in this sense, *dramatic* also functions as a classifier. But except for this partial overlapping of meaning, the semantic profiles of the Spanish adjective and adverb differ substantially from their English paronyms, due to the negative evaluative sense developed by the Spanish forms, which is lacking in English.

It is clear then that *dramática(o)/mente* and *dramatic/ally* are false friends, that is, cognate forms with different meanings that may also have very different semantic prosodies. These two paronyms are as disparate in sense as English *impressive* and Italian *impressionante*, or English *incite* and Italian *incitare*, to give two examples provided by Partington (1998: 7). This is the reason why translators and even proficient users of EFL should be alert, because it is precisely in translation or in any other process in which the two languages interact that false friends proliferate.

In reference to the problems that such prosodic differences may pose, especially in adjectives –the most tricky type of false friends–, Prado (2001: 11) gives some interesting examples of the processes of pejoration and amelioration undergone by some English forms in comparison with their Spanish counterparts, and viceversa:

Sin duda los adjetivos son los falsos amigos más traicioneros debido a que muchos degradan la denotación original en una lengua, pero no en la otra; por ejemplo, **jesuit**, que traduce *intrigante, maquinador*, en vez de *jesuita*. Otros adjetivos ennoblecen el sentido etimológico de una lengua, causando discrepancias notables con la otra; y en esta categoría hay una serie de vocablos que han pasado al mundo comercial en inglés con versión muy positiva, como **versatile**, que traduce *talentoso, flexible*, frente a *versátil*, que es bastante negativo como **fickle / flaky** (*voluble*).

Even though it is quite true that formal similarities like the ones mentioned by Prado may mislead both translators and EFL users alike, it is no less true that on some occasions false friends may also become very good friends; and even in the case of pairs with different semantic prosodies, like the ones commented on above, the pressing influence of English may alter the semantic profile of the Spanish host word which may eventually have its meaning extended into a new sense with a different prosody. Thus, *versátil*, for example, has been a negatively loaded adjective in Spanish for a long time, as Prado (2001) rightly pointed out above –‘2. De carácter voluble e inconstante’ (DRAE 1992, 21<sup>st</sup> ed.)–, but very recently it has had its meaning extended with the English positive sense included in a later edition of the Academy’s dictionary as sense 2, replacing the negative one: ‘**versátil** 2. Capaz de adaptarse con rapidez y facilidad a diversas funciones’ (DRAE 2001, 22<sup>nd</sup> ed.)<sup>11</sup>.

A similar semantic change is taking place today in the use of *dramático/a* and *dramáticamente*. These Spanish forms are losing their negative evaluative load to become more neutral, closer to their English counterparts. In fact, Seco et al's (1999) corpus-based dictionary gives 'espectacular' as sense 6 of 'dramático -ca'. Surprisingly, the dictionary does not extend this new sense of the adjective to the adverb: '**dramáticamente** adv De manera dramática [1, 2 y 3]<sup>12</sup>.

In order to trace the source of the changes undergone by *dramáticamente*, a careful look at the meaning and prosody of *dramatically* is imperative. This will permit us, for example, to show some of the shifts presently taking place in the Spanish form. In other words, a corpus-based analysis of the English adverb will give us the information required for a proper and full explanation of the shift of meaning undergone by this Spanish adverb. In the next section, the collocational profile and the meaning of the English adverb is established on the grounds of the information provided by the BNC and the COCA. *Dramatically* is explored in its most frequent position, *i.e.*, immediately before or after the verb it modifies (L1 [verb] R1)<sup>13</sup>. Then, in section III.2, the CORDE and the CREA are used to see the evolution of *dramáticamente* in Spanish. Since it is only recently that this adverb started to shift its meaning, the three decades covered by the CREA will be split into two equal periods and compared so that the changes can be best appreciated.

### III.1. Collocational profile of *dramatically*

In order to see how 'dramatically' functions as a verb modifier, an initial search for the sequences 'verb.LEX + dramatically' and 'dramatically + verb.LEX' was carried out, first using the BNC. The search yielded the following 20 most frequent collocates for the two patterns:

	verb.LEX+dramatically		P/mil	dramatically+verb.LEX		P/mil
1	INCREASED	84	0.84	REDUCED	35	0.35
2	CHANGED	73	0.73	INCREASED	16	0.16
3	IMPROVED	37	0.37	CHANGED	15	0.15
4	DROPPED	25	0.25	IMPROVED	14	0.14
5	RISEN	24	0.24	IMPROVE	13	0.13
6	CHANGE	23	0.23	REDUCE	11	0.11
7	FALLEN	22	0.22	CHANGE	10	0.1
8	FELL	19	0.19	INCREASE	7	0.07
9	INCREASE	17	0.17	BROUGHT	5	0.05
10	RISE	15	0.15	AFFECT	5	0.05
11	DECLINED	14	0.14	ALTERED	5	0.05
12	ROSE	14	0.14	HIGHLIGHTED	5	0.05
13	IMPROVE	12	0.12	CUT	5	0.05
14	GROWN	11	0.11	REDUCING	5	0.05
15	ALTERED	10	0.1	ILLUSTRATED	4	0.04
16	FALL	10	0.1	OPPOSED	4	0.04
17	PAUSED	10	0.1	REDUCES	4	0.04

18	EXPANDED	9	0.09	INCREASES	3	0.03
19	INCREASES	9	0.09	FOLLOWING	3	0.03
20	REDUCED	8	0.09	EXPANDED	3	0.03

Table 1: 20 most frequent verbal forms collocating with *dramatically* L1 and R1 (BNC)

After this, the forms in the table were filtered to obtain a list of the different verbal lemmas. Then, each verbal lemma was searched for as a collocate L1 and/or R1 of the adverb. Table 2 below shows the results:

	Verb*+dramatically		P/mil	dramatically+verb*		P/mil
1	INCREASE	121	1.21	REDUCE	55	0.55
2	CHANGE	105	1.05	INCREASE	37	0.37
3	RISE	63	0.63	IMPROVE	30	0.30
4	IMPROVE	54	0.54	CHANGE	26	0.26
5	FALL	42	0.42	ALTER	9	0.09
6	DROP	31	0.31	AFFECT	8	0.08
7	GROW	23	0.23	EXPAND	7	0.07
8	ALTER	17	0.17	HIGHLIGHT	6	0.06
9	DECLINE	16	0.16	CUT	6	0.06
10	EXPAND	13	0.13	BRING	5	0.05
11	REDUCE	13	0.13	ILLUSTRATE	5	0.05
12	PAUSE	10	0.13	OPPOSE	4	0.04
13				FOLLOW	3	0.03

Table 2: most frequent verbal lemmas collocating with *dramatically* L1 and R1 (BNC)

Finally, both lists were fused to obtain the most frequent collocates of *dramatically* L1 and R1 together. The twelve verbs that appear in the BNC with a minimum frequency of 10 are shown in table 3:

		Total	P/mil
1	INCREASE	158	1.58
2	CHANGE	131	1.31
3	IMPROVE	84	0.84
4	REDUCE	68	0.68
5	RISE	63	0.63
6	FALL	42	0.42
7	DROP	31	0.31
8	ALTER	25	0.25
9	GROW	23	0.23
10	EXPAND	20	0.20
11	DECLINE	16	0.16
12	PAUSE	10	0.10

Table 3: 12 most frequent verbs collocating with *dramatically* (BNC)

The same search for 'verb.LEX + dramatically' and 'dramatically + verb.LEX' was carried out in the COCA for the collocational profile of the adverb in American English:

	verb.LEX+dramatically		P/mil	dramatically+verb.LEX		P/mil
1	CHANGED	493	1.28	INCREASED	146	0.37
2	INCREASED	367	0.95	CHANGED	136	0.35
3	IMPROVED	154	0.4	REDUCE	135	0.35
4	DROPPED	142	0.36	REDUCED	122	0.31
5	CHANGE	138	0.35	INCREASE	119	0.3
6	INCREASE	100	0.25	IMPROVED	89	0.23
7	RISEN	84	0.21	CHANGE	79	0.2
8	VARY	69	0.17	IMPROVE	75	0.19
9	GROWN	68	0.17	ALTERED	57	0.14
10	DECLINED	65	0.16	ALTER	47	0.12
11	RISE	55	0.14	CUT	41	0.1
12	ROSE	51	0.13	AFFECT	37	0.09
13	FALLEN	42	0.1	AFFECTED	33	0.08
14	DECREASED	39	0.1	INCREASING	33	0.08
15	INCREASES	39	0.1	INCREASES	31	0.08
16	SHIFTED	38	0.09	REDUCING	31	0.08
17	IMPROVE	36	0.09	CHANGING	27	0.07
18	EXPANDED	35	0.09	REDUCES	26	0.06
19	DIFFER	29	0.07	EXPAND	22	0.05
20	DROPPED	29	0.07	ILLUSTRATED	20	0.05

Table 4: 20 most frequent verbal forms collocating with *dramatically* L1 and R1 (COCA)

Here is the table showing the verbs after filtering:

	Verb*+dramatically		P/mil	dramatically+verb*		P/mil
1	CHANGE	709	1.84	INCREASE	378	0.98
2	INCREASE	545	1.41	CHANGE	259	0.67
3	RISE	230	0.59	REDUCE	314	0.81
4	IMPROVE	206	0.53	IMPROVE	213	0.55
5	DROP	200	0.51	ALTER	124	0.32
6	GROW	133	0.34	AFFECT	81	0.21
7	DECLINE	95	0.24	EXPAND	58	0.15
8	VARY	94	0.24	CUT	48	0.12
9	FALL	92	0.23	ILLUSTRATE	40	0.1
10	DIFFER	67	0.17	DECREASE	30	0.07
11	SHIFT	60	0.15	BOOST	24	0.06
12	DECREASE	46	0.11	DEMONSTRATE	23	0.05
13	EXPAND	44	0.11	ENHANCE	23	0.05
14	SLOW	41	0.1	TRANFORM	23	0.05
15	PAUSE	36	0.09	LOWER	22	0.05
16	REDUCE	34	0.08	SHIFT	22	0.05
17	SHRINK	26	0.06	INFLUENCE	17	0.04
18	SAY	22	0.05	SLOW	17	0.04
19	ESCALATE	19	0.04	REVERSE	14	0.03
20	ALTER	16	0.04	RISE	12	0.03

Table 5: most frequent verbal lemmas collocating with *dramatically* L1 and R1 (COCA)

And finally, these are the twelve most frequent collocates of *dramatically* (L1 and R1) in American English:



	Total	P/mil
CHANGE	968	2.51
INCREASE	923	2.39
IMPROVE	391	1.01
REDUCE	348	0.08
RISE	242	0.62
DROP	203	0.52
GROW	135	0.35
ALTER	131	0.34
DECLINE	108	0.27
EXPAND	97	0.25
FALL	96	0.24
VARY	95	0.24

Table 6: 12 most frequent verbs collocating with *dramatically* (COCA)

As can be seen in the previous tables, the collocational profile of the adverb looks almost identical in British and American English. Although there seem to be some small differences –e.g., a preference for *increase* over *change* in British English or a higher frequency of occurrences in American English–, the verbs that this adverb collocates with are practically the same. Besides, they seem to be semantically related. Indeed, *dramatically* tends to be selected most frequently by verbs denoting an indefinite change of state, known as gradual completion verbs (Bertinetto & Squartini, 1995)<sup>14</sup>. When it modifies these verbs, *dramatically* normally functions as a circumstance adverbial of manner which, as often happens with other manner adverbials like *radically*, may also include a meaning of degree<sup>15</sup>.

Be that as it may, whether we classify *dramatically* as an adverb of manner or degree, what makes it different from *dramáticamente* is its lack of any negative connotations or prosody. Besides, none of the verbs that *dramatically* collocates with seems to be positively or negatively loaded, with the sole exception of *improve*. Thus, the positive or negative connotations that propositions containing these verbs may convey will ultimately depend on the participant that changes or is caused to change (or increase, rise, etc). So, among the positive things that can change or increase dramatically in English we find sales, life expectancy or number of employees; and among the negative ones, food prices, death or mortgage rates.

Other verbs that *dramatically* collocates with and that appear further down in the frequency list are those that have to do with the ‘theatrical’ sense of *dramatic*, such as *pause*, *point*, *say* or *gesture*. Used in this sense, the adverb functions as a typical manner adverb describing the way in which the process is carried out, e.g., “‘My trust has been betrayed’, she said dramatically” (BNC-EVG); “He released the quivering vixen and gestured dramatically” (COCA 2003 FIC).

### III.2. Collocational profile of *dramáticamente* in the CORDE and the CREA<sup>16</sup>

#### III.2.1 *Dramáticamente* in the CORDE

The search for *dramáticamente* in the section of the CORDE corresponding to the 20<sup>th</sup> c. (1900-1975) yields 64 hits (1.09 p/mil)<sup>17</sup>. Since neither CORDE nor CREA permits the type of search by parts of speech available in the BNC and the COCA, all the occurrences of *dramáticamente* were explored manually. In twenty cases the adverb modifies an adjective (e.g., *dramáticamente largo*, ... *actual*, ... *realista*, etc). In practically all the other occurrences<sup>18</sup>, *dramáticamente* functions as a verb modifier, normally appearing in preverbal position, most often in L1:

	Total	P/mil		Total	P/mil
ACERCARSE	1	0.01	GIRAR	1	0.01
AFRENTAR	1	0.01	ILUMINAR	1	0.01
AMENIZAR	1	0.01	INTERRUMPIR	1	0.01
APARECER	1	0.01	MIRAR	1	0.01
APRETAR	1	0.01	NARRAR	1	0.01
ARRANCAR	1	0.01	OPONER	1	0.01
AVECINARSE	1	0.01	PROCLAMAR	1	0.01
BATALLAR	1	0.01	PROYECTAR	1	0.01
CALLARSE	1	0.01	QUEDAR	1	0.01
CANTAR	1	0.01	REACCIONAR	1	0.01
CONFIRMAR	1	0.01	RECORRER	1	0.01
CONTAR	1	0.01	REGISTRAR	1	0.01
CONTORSIONARSE	1	0.01	REPETIR	1	0.01
DESPLOMARSE	1	0.01	REVELAR	1	0.01
DECIR	3	0.05	SENTIR	1	0.01
EXCLAMAR	2	0.03	SALTAR	1	0.01
EXPRESAR	2	0.03	TAPAR	1	0.01
FERTILIZAR	1	0.01	TOMAR	1	0.01
HABLAR	1	0.01	VIVIR	2	0.03

Table 7: Collocates of *dramáticamente* L1 (CORDE 1900-1974)

As the table shows, up to 1974 the Spanish adverb collocates with a wide variety of verbs, but there is no trace of the type of gradual completion verbs that English *dramatically* modifies. A large group of them include verbs related to the theatrical sense that both languages share, such as *contar* (*tell*), *exclamar* (*exclaim*), *expresar* (*express*), *hablar* (*speak*), *interrumpir* (*interrupt*), *proclamar* (*proclaim*) or *narrar* (*narrate*). As a modifier of these verbs, the Spanish adverb functions as a circumstance adverbial commenting on the manner of conveying the message: e.g. ‘mientras arrancaban los caballos, exclamé *dramáticamente* levantando los brazos al cielo - ¡Mira...’ (1924, Teresa de la Parra, *Ifigenia*). When it modifies other verbs, *dramáticamente* may contain an element of negative evaluation thus conveying very often the speaker’s attitude towards the proposition<sup>19</sup>: ‘Una semana después, un rumor sin origen [...] confirmó *dramáticamente* el presagio. El Coronel Aureliano Buendía había sido condenado a muerte’ (1967, Gabriel García Márquez, *Cien años de soledad*).

### III.2.2 *Dramáticamente* in the CREA

Things look quite different in contemporary Spanish. To begin with, the number of occurrences is much higher, with a total of 410 hits (2.66 p/mil). In view of this larger number and the difficulties of processing the data manually, an automatic search was done. The text of the concordance generated by the search engine of CREA was processed by means of WordSmith Tools 4.0<sup>20</sup>. Since the manual search had shown that the adverb normally collocates in position L1, a search was made for words appearing in this position. After obtaining the list of collocates, the ten most frequent ones were selected and then searched again in the text of the concordance to find them in other positions. The table below shows these top ten verbs arranged by frequency<sup>21</sup>:

	Total	P/mil
CAMBIAR ( <i>CHANGE</i> )	33	0.21
AUMENTAR ( <i>INCREASE</i> )	11	0.07
CAER ( <i>DROP/FALL</i> )	11	0.07
REDUCIR ( <i>REDUCE/DECREASE</i> )	11	0.07
BAJAR ( <i>DECREASE</i> )	8	0.05
EXPRESAR ( <i>EXPRESS</i> )	7	0.04
MEJORAR ( <i>IMPROVE</i> )	7	0.04
QUEDAR ( <i>REMAIN</i> )	7	0.04
INCREMENTAR ( <i>INCREASE</i> )	6	0.04
DISMINUIR ( <i>DECREASE</i> )	5	0.03

Tabla 8: Ten top collocates of *dramáticamente* (CREA 1975-2004)

As can be observed, the most striking feature that the corpus reveals is that in contemporary Spanish the adverb collocates with several gradual completion verbs such as *cambiar* (*change*), *augmentar* (*increase*), *bajar* (*decrease*), *caer* (*drop/fall*), *reducir* and *disminuir* (*reduce/decrease*), *incrementar* (*increase*) and even *mejorar* (*improve*), as happens in English. The presence of this latter verb in the corpus is especially significant. In fact, due to the negative prosody of the Spanish adverb, the collocation ‘*mejorar dramáticamente*’ (‘improve dramatically’) could be regarded by many speakers of Spanish as a ‘collocative clash’ (Louw, 1993: 157)<sup>22</sup>.

A careful reading of the data also reveals a steady increase in the frequency of the adverb throughout the thirty years covered by the CREA. So, in order to assess the entrenchment of this Anglicism, the span was split into two fifteen-year periods: 1975-1989 /1990-2004<sup>23</sup>. The results show that even though the two halves present a balanced distribution of the adverb –116 hits for the first half (2.54 p/mil), 266 (2.46 p/mil) for the second–, the gradual completion verbs that *dramáticamente* begins to collocate with in contemporary Spanish are far more frequent in the second period. Thus, in the first half of the span, only *cambiar* (*change*) and *caer* (*drop/fall*) begin to emerge as verbs in this new pattern, accompanied by *incrementar* (*increase*), *disminuir* (*decrease*) and *reducir* (*reduce*), with the striking presence of the first occurrence of *mejorar*<sup>24</sup>:

	Total	P/mil
CAMBIAR ( <i>CHANGE</i> )	5	0.10
CAER ( <i>DROP/FALL</i> )	4	0.08
INCREMENTAR ( <i>INCREASE</i> )	3	0.06
QUEDAR ( <i>REMAIN</i> )	3	0.06
EXPRESAR ( <i>EXPRESS</i> )	2	0.04
DISMINUIR ( <i>DECREASE</i> )	1	0.02
MEJORAR ( <i>IMPROVE</i> )	1	0.02
REDUCIR ( <i>REDUCE/DECREASE</i> )	1	0.02

Table 9: Collocates of *dramáticamente* 1975-1989

Processing of the second half of the span reveals not only that the number of gradual completion verbs rises steeply but also that two new ones appear, namely, *aumentar* (*increase*) and *bajar* (*drop/fall*):

	Total	P/mil
CAMBIAR ( <i>CHANGE</i> )	28	0.25
AUMENTAR ( <i>INCREASE</i> )	11	0.10
REDUCIR ( <i>REDUCE/DECREASE</i> )	10	0.09
BAJAR ( <i>DECREASE</i> )	8	0.07
CAER ( <i>DROP/FALL</i> )	7	0.06
MEJORAR ( <i>IMPROVE</i> )	6	0.05
EXPRESAR ( <i>EXPRESS</i> )	5	0.04
DISMINUIR ( <i>DECREASE</i> )	4	0.03
QUEDAR ( <i>REMAIN</i> )	4	0.03
INCREMENTAR ( <i>INCREASE</i> )	3	0.02

Tabla 10: Collocates of *dramáticamente* 1990-2004

In fact, as can be observed, the list of verbs for the span 1990-2004 is beginning to look very much like the ones for *dramatically* from the BNC and the COCA shown above (Tables 3 and 6, respectively).

The unexpected presence of a positively loaded verb like *mejorar* (*improve*) is surely the clearest sign of the influence of English on Spanish. And that influence comes very often through translation, an important gate of access for Anglicisms, as the corpus shows. For instance, we find the phrase ‘mejora dramática’ in what seems to be the translated speech of an English-speaking person: “‘En términos absolutos’, aseguró McNamar, ‘se ha producido una **mejora dramática** de la economía norteamericana durante los pasados años y frente a la japonesa y especialmente la europea’. ‘Mi conclusión es clara’, terminó McNamar, ‘y es que los inversores piensan hoy que la economía norteamericana es la más atractiva del mundo’ (1985, PRENSA, *El País*, España).

Now in contemporary Spanish things can also ‘improve dramatically’, as the results from the search of the sequence ‘mejor\* dramáticamente’ show:

1 nuestro entorno cotidiano **mejoró dramáticamente**, y así pudimos  
 2 desventaja económica han **mejorado dramáticamente** sus vidas a  
 3 chances de los demócratas **mejorarían dramáticamente**.  
 4 as. El receptor guayanés “**mejoró dramáticamente** de sus dolencias

5 la tecnología de Internet **mejoren dramáticamente** en el proceso  
6 do dos meses: La creatina **mejora dramáticamente** la recuperación del

Used in this sense, the adverb is closer in meaning to ‘radically’ rather than to ‘sadly’/‘tragically’. Something similar happens with *aumentar* and *bajar*. Here are the texts of the eleven occurrences of ‘aument\* dramáticamente’:

171 nflación y la recesión, **aumentaron dramáticamente** el número de pe  
216 tas y homosexuales "han **aumentado dramáticamente**" en 1995. Entre e  
268 je de cumplimiento va a **aumentar dramáticamente**", dijo Soderberg,  
270 anticipa que el número **aumente dramáticamente**. El 30 de julio el  
295 eriales, pero la cifra **aumentaba dramáticamente** con el correr de  
305 e la tasa de desempleo **aumentó dramáticamente**, y lo mismo puede  
317 fermedad cardiovascular **aumenta dramáticamente** con un IMC mayor de  
321 mejora. La decisión de **aumentar dramáticamente** la ayuda militar a  
342 Datastream nos permitirá **aumentar dramáticamente** la capacidad de  
350 o. La diabetes tipo 2 ha **aumentado dramáticamente** en la población  
395 morrágica del dengue ha **aumentado dramáticamente**, primero en Asia

Hits 268, 270, 321 and 342 show positive increase. In the rest of the occurrences the adverb conveys degree and negative evaluation, sometimes both simultaneously, e.g., ‘La tase de desempleo aumentó dramáticamente’, or ‘La diabetes tipo 2 ha aumentado dramáticamente’. And the same happens with ‘baj\* dramáticamente’; out of the following seven occurrences, three (236, 356 and 359) are definitely positive ‘dramatic drops/falls’; while the others show again degree and evaluation:

236 hacer muchas acciones y **bajar dramáticamente** los casos de cólera  
292 8 por ciento, cifra que **bajó dramáticamente** esta vez a un 17,94  
331 o doméstico. Las ventas **bajaron dramáticamente** y en 1923 Columbia  
356 ice de pobreza del país **bajó dramáticamente**, de 59% a 48%.En esos  
359 productos de WLANs han **bajado dramáticamente**, por ejemplo: las t  
373 e, porque la fecundidad **bajó dramáticamente** y la población hoy jo  
378 cada y luego empezará a **bajar dramáticamente**. El problema de los

So now *dramáticamente* is used both in its native Spanish sense of ‘sadly’/‘tragically’ and in its English sense ‘drastically’.

Another interesting aspect that the data reveals is the distribution of Anglicisms across registers and on both sides of the Atlantic. We find that all the six occurrences of ‘mejor\* dramáticamente’ come from Latin American Spanish, as shown below in column two and four respectively:

1	PRENSA	El Nuevo Herald, 28/04/1997	EE. UU.
2	PRENSA	El Nacional, 26/07/2000	VENEZ.
3	PRENSA	Diario de las Américas, 09/04/1997	EE. UU
4	PRENSA	Excélsior, 17/09/2001	MÉXICO
5	PRENSA	Caretas, 18/12/1997	PERÚ
6	Palavecino	Norberto Edgardo	ARGEN.

And the same happens with ‘aument\* dramáticamente’ and ‘baj\* dramáticamente’; in the former, the occurrences of ‘dramatically’ = ‘radically’ come from American Spanish; in the latter, all the instances of the collocation come from that variety of Spanish (Mexico 2, Chile 2, Cuba 1, Puerto Rico 1, Costa Rica 1).

It seems then that the pressing influence of English is contributing to the extension of *dramáticamente* into a different type of adverb, playing down the negative connotations and imbuing it with the degree meaning of its English counterpart. Now, in contemporary Spanish, not all the things that ‘change dramatically’ are necessarily negative. The adverb is progressively losing its evaluative meaning, like its English paronym, and the positive or negative sign of the piece of discourse in which *dramáticamente* is found depends more and more, also like in English, on the ‘things’ that change, rather than on the adverb. A close reading of the thirty three texts that contain the sequence ‘cambi\* dramátic\*’ in the CREA shows that some of those instances are indeed changes for the better. Here is an example: “Estas teorías pueden cambiar dramáticamente la forma en que la medicina actual utiliza vacunas, terapias anti-sida, medicamentos para prevenir rechazos de trasplantes y el tratamiento de enfermedades como la esclerosis múltiple o la artritis reumatoide”. (1996, PRENSA, *ABC Cultural*, España).

The evidence found in the corpus reveals again the important role of translation in the diffusion of Anglicisms. Thus, *Diario de Yucatán* (1996, México) translates an extract from a Pentagon report on terrorism: “Luego de señalar que ‘no existían grupos terroristas o insurgentes significativos en el país’, agrega que esta situación ‘**cambió dramáticamente**’ en enero de ese año”. Notice also the metalinguistic comment in the first occurrence of ‘camb\* dramáticamente’ in the CREA: “El país ha cambiado dramáticamente, como dirían los anglosajones” (1976, Joaquín Garrigues Walker, *Una política para España*, ESPAÑA).

As for register and geographical distribution, the corpus provides valuable information again. Most of the thirty three examples come from the press (64 %) and from Latin American Spanish (74 %). These figures demonstrate empirically not only the importance of the press in the spread of Anglicisms –for this one, at least– but also a far greater presence of them in American Spanish in comparison with Peninsular Spanish. Moreover, since 50 percent of the data in the CREA comes from Spain –the other half is ‘shared’ by twenty American countries and the Phillipines–, in absolute terms the figures for Anglicisms in the latter countries are higher (the population of Spain represents approximately 10 percent of the Spanish-speaking community in the world).

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This case study has used corpus evidence to support some of the suggestions made in the major studies on Anglicisms, and also to show how the influence of an English word can contribute to changes in the meaning of a cognate form in Spanish. Needless to say, the observations made in this paper apply only to this particular Anglicism; for not all the

English words that enter the Spanish lexicon are necessarily more abundant in American Spanish or in the press. Intuition would also suggest that translation is a very frequent gate of access for Anglicisms, and, although not fully explored in this study, there appear to be indications in the corpus that this is so.

Reasons of space have limited the number of case studies to just one, but it seems very likely that the analysis of any of the many Anglicisms found in Spanish today would have proved as illustrative for the purpose of the paper. I hope this example has been sufficient to show that corpus data can give us a better informed view of Anglicisms in contemporary Spanish; and also that lexicographers interested in this area of research should, as Rodríguez (2003: 574) strongly recommends, make use of this tool if they want to explore these or other linguistic phenomena more objectively.

The analysis has also revealed some of the limitations of the two corpora used. Obviously, the better the design of a corpus, the more useful it will be for scholars with an interest in this or other related areas of research. In this sense, even though the CORDE and the CREA may not be as user friendly as other corpora of English, they are the largest corpora available for Spanish so far and also the main source of information and tool for the making of the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* —or so the Spanish Royal Academy claims. Thus, they constitute indispensable tools for linguists and lexicographers alike.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *'Ignorar. 1. tr. No saber algo, o no tener noticia de ello'* (*Diccionario de la lengua española* [1991], 21<sup>st</sup> ed., henceforth *DRAE*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ignorar* in *DRAE* (2001, 22<sup>nd</sup> ed.): **1. tr.** No saber algo, o no tener noticia de ello. **2. tr.** No hacer caso de algo o de alguien'.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of semantic prosody I am drawing on is the one proposed and explained by Sinclair (1991), Louw (1993) or Stubbs (1996; 2001), among others, and more specifically as used by Channell (2000) for the analysis of evaluative lexis. For a recent critique of the concept see Whitsitt (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Large generic corpora of Spanish have not been available until very recently (Davies and Face, 2006: 133). The CORDE and the CREA, the largest corpora of Spanish to date, were made available to public use only a few years ago, c. 1997. There are other generic corpora of Spanish, if smaller, very useful for this type of research. Worth mentioning for its pioneering nature is the one developed by Sánchez *et al.* (1995) at the University of Murcia. Likewise, there are some corpus-based studies of Anglicisms in Spanish (see, e.g., Gimeno & Gimeno 2003), but the corpora they use are normally smaller and specific.

<sup>5</sup> These two corpora are freely available at the website of the RAE: <http://www.rae.es>.

<sup>6</sup> The BNC was used through the interface created by Mark Davies: BYU-BNC: The British National Corpus. Available at <http://www.corpus.byu.edu/bnc>.

<sup>7</sup> Davies, M. (2008-) The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 385 million words, 1990-present. Available online at <http://www.americancorpus.org>.

<sup>8</sup> The semantic categories for adjectives (descriptors and classifiers) and for adverbs (circumstance adverbials, stance adverbials and linking adverbials) are from Biber *et al.* (1999).

<sup>9</sup> According to the information contained in the *DRAE*, this negative sense of *drama* developed between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Up to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. *drama* was used to refer to the genre, irrespective of its more serious or comic tone: '**drama**. Composición poética en que se presenta una acción por las personas que el poeta introduce, sin que éste hable ó aparezca. Es nombre común a la comedia, la tragedia y á cualquiera otra fábula escénica, y modernamente se distingue también con el solo nombre de DRAMA el que participa del género cómico y el trágico' (*DRAE* 1869). Towards the end of that century, the word started to develop a negative sense: '**drama**. Poema dramático de asunto lastimoso...' (*DRAE* 1984). Together with this meaning shift, and related to it, a figurative sense developed at the same time, also registered in the same edition: '**drama** fig. suceso de la vida real, capaz de interesar y conmovir vivamente'. This definition has remained unaltered in the dictionary for more than a century, until very recently, when the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *DRAE*, available online at present to be published soon, has introduced the adjective 'infortunado' that reinforces the negative sense: '**drama** 3. suceso **infortunado** de la vida real, capaz de conmovir vivamente'.

<sup>10</sup> See note 15 below for the semantic overlapping of adverbs of manner and stance adverbials.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Tognini-Bonelli (2001, 33-9) for a view of synonyms as false friends, or Berber-Sardinha (2000) for a comparison of semantic prosodies in English and Portuguese.

<sup>12</sup> These are senses 1, 2 and 3 of **dramático** -ca in Seco *et al.* (1999): **1** De(l) drama [...] **2** Que tiene carácter de drama [3]. [...] **3** Que emociona o conmueve vivamente'.

<sup>13</sup> The prepositional phrase 'in a dramatic way' -registered in the BNC (5 hits) and in the COCA (20 hits)- has not been taken into consideration.

<sup>14</sup> These verbs are also called degree achievement verbs (Dowty, 1979) and atelic verbs of state (Levin & Rappaport, 1995). For a study comparing this type of verbs in English and Spanish see Bosque and Masullo (1999).

<sup>15</sup> As Biber *et al.* (1999: 782) point out, not all occurrences of circumstance adverbials fit clearly in only one of the seven major semantic categories they propose. Very often an adverbial may fit primarily into one category but have a secondary role that fit another semantic category. Manner adverbials, Biber *et al.* say, often include aspects of another semantic category; for example, a manner adverbial like *radically* can include a meaning of extent/degree: "The disease pattern has changed radically (ACAD)" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 782). In fact, *radically* is classified as a degree adverb in the *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* (1990: 293), while *dramatically* is included in the table of manner adverbs (*Collins Cobuild English Grammar*, 1990: 291).

<sup>16</sup> As with *dramatically*, the search was limited to the form *dramáticamente*, ignoring the periphrastic construction 'de forma/manera dramática'.

<sup>17</sup> CORDE = 236 mil words; CREA = 154 mil words. 90% of the occurrences of *dramáticamente* in CORDE come from 20<sup>th</sup> c. texts, so only data from CORDE 1900-1975 (58.686.214 words) were considered.

<sup>18</sup> There are three occurrences in which the adverb modifies a participial form in a passive construction: '*dramáticamente* escrita y dicha', '*dramáticamente* percibida' and '*dramáticamente* turbada'.

<sup>19</sup> As Biber *et al.* (1999) remind us, circumstance adverbial can imply some comment on the form or the style of a proposition. For instance, *drastically* 'can be interpreted as showing the speaker/writer's assessment of the

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situation: The disease pattern has **changed** radically (ACAD)' (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 853). Thus, *radically* can function not only as an adverb of manner *cum* degree, but also as a stance adverbial. The same could be said about *dramatically/dramáticamente*.

<sup>20</sup> Each concordance line includes about 10 words to the right and to the left of the node.

<sup>21</sup> Other verbs that *dramáticamente* collocates with are *descender*, *acortar*, *reflejar*, *terminar* (3 occurrences), *aparecer*, *crecer*, *detener*, *dividir*, *ilustrar*, *interrumpir*, *materializar*, *modificar*, *representar*, *transformar* or *variar* (2 occurrences).

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the presence of this collocation strikes us as extremely odd, since the evaluative load of the adverb, inherited from its adjectival base, seems to be incompatible with the positive denotation of the verb *mejorar*. This incompatibility has been pointed out by Rodríguez-Ramalle (2003) in her study on adverbs ending in *-mente* in Spanish: "Los adjetivos valorativos negativos poseen unos rasgos negativos que perviven en su lectura de grado y que parecen resultar incompatibles con nombres y verbos que expresan una acción o estado que pueden ser entendidos como positivos" (Rodríguez-Ramalle 2003: 104).

<sup>23</sup> The period 1975-1989 contains 45.674.229 words; 1990-2004 has 108.538.432 words.

<sup>24</sup> 'Iberia mejoró "dramáticamente" sus resultados en 1986' (1987, PRENSA, *El País*). Notice the author's awareness of the odd collocation, as signalled by scare quotes.