This study primarily focuses on the Spanish derivatives in -dor and -nte suffixes. Combined with verbs, both suffixes form nouns and adjectives and the derivatives are semantically highly similar – they are considered to be active. The derivative nouns correspond to the subjects of base verbs – fumador ‘smoker’ corresponds to the subject of the verb smoke. The derivatives with both suffixes are also considered to be active modifying nouns that denote entities corresponding to the subject of the base verb like: hombre fumador ‘smoking man’. First, I will attempt to describe how each suffix affects the derivatives’ semantics, essentially, clarifying the semantic value of each suffix. Second, taking into account the semantic value of each suffix, I will examine the following three questions:

1. Polysemy question: why are they polysemous? How is the “range” of the polysemy? For example, the word secador, comprising the verb secar ‘to dry’, denoting what or who dries, can denote drying machines but cannot represent blotting papers, drying oil, etc. Why is this? Is it possible to explain this kind of meaning distribution of derived nouns?
2. Acceptability question: why is matador acceptable but not sobrevidor?
3. Multiple suffix question: why do both suffixes still maintain their productivity despite being highly similar semantically and morphologically in Spanish?

The organization of this study is described below.

In chapter 0, presenting the basic characteristics of -dor and -nte suffixes, I will state the purpose and questions of this research. Chapter 1 contains a literature review of previous studies on both suffixes. In this chapter, I will indicate what is already explained and the existing gaps in research that I intend to examine. The body of this study consists of chapter 2-6. Here, I will consider the semantic contents contained in each suffix by analyzing various types of derivatives. Initially, in chapter 2, I will compare and analyze the deverbal nouns with each suffix and indicate that each type of derivative denotes unique entities. Concretely, only the -dor nouns can denote “causative agent and instrument” but this type of derivative cannot denote entities that lack agentivity. Conversely, the type of entities that nouns with the -nte suffix denote frequently, are classified as “cause” in the sense of semantic role like chemical materials. Unlike -dor nouns, the -nte nouns cannot denote less agentive entities. For example, this suffix can be combined with stative and unaccusative verbs. This contrast, of -dor being more agentive than -nte, is observed in the other class of derivatives that I will examine in the following chapters. Hence, these properties are considered to be essential.

In chapter 3, I will analyze neological nominal derivatives with -dor and -nte suffixes referring to the current productivity of derivations with each suffix. The analysis aims to examine the hypothesis presented in chapter 2. It is considered that the meaning of neological derivatives is determined purely by the semantic contents of base words and suffixes. The subsequent chapter includes a comparative analysis on the derivative adjectives with both suffixes. The focus is on type “N + A” collocations especially nouns that are frequent and uniquely modified by each type of adjective. This analysis confirms the contrast between the two suffixes again.

In chapters 5 and 6, I will analyze the relational derivative adjectives with the two suffixes. This
relational use of the derived adjectives is rather recent and not much attention has been paid to them. In chapter 5, I will explain the relational use and demonstrate its origin and spontaneity by reviewing Rainer y Wolbolska-Lauter (2012) and my paper (2015 a, b).

The following chapter deals with the semantic similarity and difference between -dor and -nte relational adjectives. There are pairs of relational adjectives with both suffixes and a noun (e.g., Efecto relajador/relajante) and these kinds of noun phrases are analyzed in this chapter. The analysis confirms that the phrases themselves are highly synonymous but differ in the selection of semantic subjects. In the noun phrases analyzed in this chapter, the nouns do not denote entities corresponding to the subject of the base verbs. For example, the noun habilidad ‘ability’ in habilidad lectora ‘reading ability’ is not the subject of the base verb leer ‘to read’ (*habilidad lee ‘ability reads’). Subsequently, the nouns that denote entities corresponding to the subjects appear around such phrases: habilidad lectora de los estudiantes ‘reading ability of the students’. I call these kinds of nouns – semantic subjects. The relational -dor adjectives select more agentive nouns than -nte adjectives and only -nte adjectives select little agentive nouns according to the analysis and questionnaires to native speakers. This contrast parallels what has been observed throughout this research.

The final chapter summarizes the analysis conducted in chapters 2-6 and discusses the three research questions stated in the first chapter. In the first place, the derivatives are polysemous because the verbs take various types of subjects and the suffixes “incorporate” them. The two suffixes incorporate subjects of base verbs following their proper constraints and their meaning distribution can be explained by the constraints. The acceptability of the derivation can also be explained by this rule. It is confirmed that the acceptability highly depends on the semantics of base verbs and -dor y -nte. Finally, the multiple suffix question. According to the analysis, the two suffixes are similar but semantically different. This difference enables to express different grade of agentivity of the derivatives. This is why the both suffixes still keep their productivity.