

Free-association norms for the Spanish names of the Snodgrass and Vanderwart pictures

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The most frequent names in Spanish corresponding to a set of 247 pictures in the Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980) norms were used as stimuli in a discrete free-association task. A sample of 525 Spanish-speaking participants provided the first word that came to mind for each of the verbal stimuli. Responses were organized according to frequency of production in order to prepare word-association norms for the set of stimuli.

The questions addressed in cognitive psychology experiments often require the selection of linguistic and pictorial materials with specific objectively or subjectively determined characteristics. One way in which material selection can be adequately accomplished is by using indices empirically obtained in normative studies.

Free-association norms are among the most frequently used normative data in cognitive research. The production frequency of a particular word as a free-association response to another word used as a stimulus is usually taken as an indication of the strength of the connection between the representations of the two words in memory (see Nelson, McEvoy, & Dennis, 2000, for a discussion on how to interpret free-association indices). Manipulations of the strength of these connections using the values provided in free-association norms have been proven to reliably affect semantic facilitation in priming studies (Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971), level of performance in free recall (Deese, 1959) and in cued recall (Nelson, McKinney, Gee, & Janczura, 1998), and false recall and false recognition of unstudied words (Roediger & McDermott, 1995), to name a few examples.

Free-association norms for English words have been available for several decades, starting with the widely used

norms for 100 words published by Russell and Jenkins (1954). Normative studies of this kind have continued to be regularly published (see Proctor & Vu, 1999, for a comprehensive listing), and currently there is an electronic database that provides norms for more than 5,000 words (Nelson, McEvoy, & Schreiber, in press). With regard to the Spanish language, the availability of this type of normative data is highly restricted. In the only published study, Macizo, Gómez-Ariza, and Bajo (2000) recently provided associative data for 52 words, but their sample included only children between 8 and 13 years of age. Free-association norms for adults were compiled by Algarabel, Sanmartín, García, and Espert (1986), but their database, although used by some researchers, has never been formally published or widely distributed.

Given the scarcity of associative indices for words in Spanish, the main goal of the present study was to construct a free-association normative database based on the responses of a relatively large sample of Spanish-speaking adults to a set of words, which could be of interest to a variety of cognitive researches in our linguistic community.

A set of materials for which there already exist data on a number of defining characteristics in Spanish consists of the pictorial stimuli originally normed by Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980) for English speakers. Following this influential study, the pictures have been standardized in the basic dimensions of name agreement, image agreement, familiarity, and visual complexity in independent studies with adult samples in Spain (Sanfeliu & Fernandez, 1996), Mexico (Aveleyra, Gómez, Ostrosky, & Rigalt, 1996), and Cuba (Manzano, Piñeiro, & Reigosa, 1997). Other studies using Spanish-speaking subjects have provided additional normative data on this set of stimuli, such as word identification thresholds for fragmented

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names of the pictures (Reales, Ballesteros, & García, 2002) and their naming times and ages of acquisition (Cuetos, Ellis, & Alvarez, 1999).

Taking into account the wide use of these pictorial materials and the availability of normative data for some of their important dimensions, in this study we decided to use the words that named them as the stimuli in a free-association task, with the aim of obtaining associative norms that could add to a more complete characterization of the materials in Spanish as well as provide corresponding norms for a sizable set of common words.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 525 undergraduate students at the University of Salamanca and the University of La Laguna, both located in Spain, participated in the experiment in exchange for academic credit. All of them were native speakers of Spanish.

Materials

The verbal materials used as stimuli in the free-association task were a set of words that, according to Sanfeliu and Fernandez (1996), corresponded to the most frequent denominations in Spanish of the Snodgrass–Vanderwart standardized pictures. Although the norms collected by Sanfeliu and Fernandez include the most frequent names for a total of 254 pictures, a few of these names are actually repeated, because the majority of participants in their study used them to name two different pictures (e.g., the word *reloj* was the most frequent name assigned to both Picture 60 [clock] and Picture 250 [watch]). For this reason, the final set of stimuli was reduced to 247 different terms, of which 238 were one-word names and 9 were compound names. Table A1 includes a listing of these stimuli, with their corresponding picture numbers and English names from the original norms of Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980) to facilitate identification.

A five-page booklet was used to collect the responses. On each page, the stimuli were printed in uppercase letters and arranged in two columns, and space was provided to the right of each stimulus for the participants to write their responses. To control for order effects, 10 different versions of the booklet were constructed for later random distribution, each of them with a different randomly determined order of stimuli. A cover sheet in the booklet presented the instructions for the task, as is described below.

Procedure

The participants performed the task in groups of 20–40 people. They went through the booklets at their own pace, with completion times ranging from 20 to 40 min.

At the beginning of the session, the participants read the printed instructions on the cover sheet of the booklet. In these instructions, they were asked to read, one by one, each of the terms printed on the pages of the booklet and to write, for each name, another word in the corresponding blank space. More specifically, they were instructed to write “the first word that you think of when reading the preprinted term . . . the first word that comes to your mind.” They were also instructed to work as fast as possible, to go through the stimulus series in order, to write only one word for each stimulus, and to respond to all of them. It was made explicit that there were no correct or incorrect answers. Two examples, in which filler stimuli and responses were used, were presented to further clarify the task.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A computerized procedure was used to type and literally record each of the individual responses given by the

participants. The total number of blank responses was 62, an insignificant quantity given that the number of required responses totaled 129,675 (247 responses \times 525 booklets). In a few cases (less than 1% overall), the handwritten responses were not readily interpretable by any of four independent judges (the authors) and were therefore coded as illegible. Words with unambiguous spelling errors were recoded in their orthographically correct form. Misspelled responses for which more than one valid orthographic correction was possible were coded as illegible.

As is shown by the data included in Table A1, there was a noticeable variability in the number of independent responses evoked by each of the 247 stimuli, which ranged from 39 for the word *barril* to 163 for the word *burro*, with a mean of 96.62. Each stimulus evoked a large number of idiosyncratic responses (i.e., those provided by only 1 participant), a reasonable result given the nature of the task and the large number of participants in the study. However, there was also evidence of remarkable agreement and consistency. Each stimulus evoked a limited set of responses that occurred very frequently, as is shown by the fact that, on average, the five most frequent free associates of each stimulus accounted for 50% of the participants' responses.

Free-association norms for the 247 verbal stimuli are provided in an appendix (see the Archived Materials section). For each stimulus, the norms include a complete listing of the different responses given by the participants, and the proportion of participants who gave each response is stated. These relative frequency values reflect the probability that the response will be produced as an associate when the stimulus is processed and, as was noted in the introduction, they can be taken as stable indicators of the strength of the preexisting connection between the memory representation of the stimulus and that of the response.

Because free-association norms can be significantly determined by linguistic peculiarities and cultural usages, caution should be used in generalizing our results, obtained in Spain, to other Spanish-speaking populations. Nonetheless, taking into consideration this and other generalizability limitations that may impose restrictions when dealing with norms of this kind, the present data set is likely to be useful for the selection, control, and manipulation of verbal materials in psychological experiments with Spanish-speaking participants, especially those that address questions in the areas of memory, language, and related fields. Furthermore, the provided normative data can be used in conjunction with data about other objective and subjective dimensions of the stimuli that are already available. For example, printed frequency information for 95% of the stimulus words can be found in the frequency dictionary of Alameda and Cuetos (1995); 34% of the stimuli have empirically obtained indices of concreteness, imageability, familiarity, and pleasantness (Algarabel, 1996); and over 80% of the stimuli are included as exemplars in the categorical norms of Soto, Sebastián, García, and del Amo (1994). Finally, the free-association norms collected in this study contribute to a

more complete characterization of the verbal stimuli corresponding to the widely used set of pictorial stimuli first developed and standardized by Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980).

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ARCHIVED MATERIALS

The following materials associated with this article may be accessed through the Psychonomic Society's Norms, Stimuli, and Data archive, <http://www.psychonomic.org/archive/>.

To access these files, search the archive for this article using the journal (*Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*), the first author's name (Fernandez), and the publication year (2004).

FILE: Fernandez-BRMIC-2004.zip.

DESCRIPTION: The compressed archive file contains two files:

fernandez2004AppendixA.pdf, containing an alphabetical list of stimuli and summary descriptive information for the responses in a 496-page .pdf document.

fernandez2004norms.xls, containing the norms as a 1,960K Microsoft Excel file. Each row represents one of 23,776 free-association responses. There are three columns: word (the stimulus used in the free-association task), response (a verbal response elicited by the stimulus), and proportion (proportion of participants who gave the specific response).

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APPENDIX

Table A1
Stimuli and Summary of Descriptive Information for the Responses

Spanish Stimulus	Picture		Number of Responses			
	No.	English Name	Independent	Idiosyncratic	Blank	Illegible
ABEJA	23	BEE	63	31	0	2
ABRIGO	64	COAT	72	52	1	3
ACELGAS	51	CELERY	94	56	0	0
ACORDEÓN	1	ACCORDION	126	87	0	4
ÁGUILA	82	EAGLE	132	78	0	5
AGUJA	154	NEEDLE	76	56	0	0
ALCACHOFA	9	ARTICHOKE	141	90	1	5
ALICATES	176	PLIERS	130	75	1	6
ANCLA	4	ANCHOR	57	38	0	3
ANILLO	187	RING	57	34	0	1
ARAÑA	212	SPIDER	137	97	3	13
ÁRBOL	241	TREE	108	58	0	2
ARDILLA	216	SQUIRREL	111	64	0	1
ARPA	117	HARP	111	69	0	6
AUTOBÚS	39	BUS	135	84	0	5

APPENDIX (Continued)

Spanish Stimulus	Picture No.	English Name	Number of Responses			
			Independent	Idiosyncratic	Blank	Illegible
AVESTRUZ	159	OSTRICH	123	73	1	3
AVIÓN	2	AIRPLANE	104	66	0	1
BALÓN DE RUGBY	95	FOOTBALL	116	70	1	8
BANDERA	90	FLAG	94	57	0	1
BARCO	193	SAILBOAT	92	59	0	5
BARRIL	18	BARREL	39	24	0	0
BATE	19	BASEBALL BAT	58	37	2	4
BICICLETA	27	BICYCLE	123	73	0	4
BOLÍGRAFO	167	PEN	54	27	0	4
BOLSO	178	POCKETBOOK	140	82	2	4
BOMBILLA	138	LIGHT BULB	44	27	0	0
BOTA	31	BOOT	105	60	0	4
BOTELLA	32	BOTTLE	75	40	0	1
BOTÓN	41	BUTTON	94	58	0	9
BRAZO	7	ARM	109	64	0	3
BÚHO	160	OWL	70	46	0	2
BURRO	75	DONKEY	163	116	0	5
CABALLITO DE MAR	200	SEA HORSE	161	99	0	1
CABALLO	121	HORSE	153	88	0	4
CABRA	107	GOAT	83	51	0	3
CACAHUETE	165	PEANUT	106	60	0	2
CADENA	52	CHAIN	137	83	0	3
CAJA	35	BOX	135	81	0	3
CALABAZA	181	PUMPKIN	99	57	0	8
CALCETÍN	211	SOCK	103	62	0	1
CAMA	22	BED	79	47	0	1
CAMELLO	43	CAMEL	72	42	0	1
CAMIÓN	242	TRUCK	140	91	0	8
CAMISA	203	SHIRT	122	59	0	2
CAMPANA	26	BELL	94	56	0	6
CANDADO	143	LOCK	78	50	0	1
CANGREJO	142	LOBSTER	107	73	0	8
CANGURO	126	KANGAROO	69	44	0	5
CARACOL	208	SNAIL	108	64	0	5
CARRITO	249	WAGON	59	32	0	3
CASA	122	HOUSE	127	74	0	3
CASCO	96	FOOTBALL HELMET	84	50	0	3
CAZO	179	POT	87	50	1	2
CEBOLLA	157	ONION	76	44	0	4
CENICERO	10	ASHTRAY	61	42	1	1
CEPILLO	38	BRUSH	59	40	0	0
CEPILLO DE DIENTES	237	TOOTHBRUSH	79	46	0	0
CERDO	172	PIG	117	74	0	7
CEREZA	54	CHERRY	119	70	1	3
CESTA	20	BASKET	84	51	0	1
CIERVO	71	DEER	123	82	0	6
CIGARRO	59	CIGARETTE	87	53	0	0
CINTURÓN	25	BELT	80	45	0	1
CISNE	223	SWAN	85	52	0	4
CLAVO	151	NAIL	91	57	0	3
COCINA	219	STOVE	120	69	0	6
COCODRILO	3	ALLIGATOR	104	58	0	2
COCHE	47	CAR	148	76	0	5
COCHECITO	13	BABY CARRIAGE	68	47	0	1
COLUMPIO	225	SWING	85	49	0	4
COLLAR	153	NECKLACE	73	40	0	3
COMETA	129	KITE	100	60	0	1
CÓMODA	79	DRESSER	148	83	0	0
CONEJO	182	RABBIT	150	85	1	10
COPA	258	WINEGLASS	92	51	0	0
CORAZÓN	119	HEART	114	71	0	3
CORBATA	232	TIE	131	91	0	9
CORONA	69	CROWN	66	42	0	2
CUBO DE BASURA	102	GARBAGE CAN	96	54	0	3
CUCHARA	24	BETTER	128	82	0	3
CUCHARA	215	SPOON	64	33	2	3

APPENDIX (Continued)

Spanish Stimulus	Picture No.	English Name	Number of Responses			
			Independent	Idiosyncratic	Blank	Illegible
CUCHILLO	130	KNIFE	85	47	0	3
CUENCO	34	BOWL	121	77	0	5
CHALECO	247	VEST	135	85	1	5
CHAQUETA	125	JACKET	112	62	1	3
DEDAL	230	THIMBLE	57	36	0	1
DEDO	88	FINGER	78	48	0	2
DESTORNILLADOR	199	SCREWDRIVER	101	57	0	2
ELEFANTE	84	ELEPHANT	90	51	0	3
ENCHUFE	177	PLUG	82	49	0	3
ESCALERA	131	LADDER	109	69	0	4
ESCOBA	37	BROOM	51	24	0	0
ESCRITORIO	72	DESK	87	50	0	0
ESPÁRRAGO	11	ASPARAGUS	132	85	1	5
ESTRELLA	217	STAR	87	52	0	3
FALDA	205	SKIRT	98	53	1	2
FLAUTA	92	FLUTE	100	54	0	1
FLECHA	8	ARROW	95	60	0	1
FLOR	91	FLOWER	105	58	0	3
FOCA	201	SEAL	116	63	0	4
FRESA	220	STRAWBERRY	113	63	1	1
FRIGORÍFICO	185	REFRIGERATOR	71	45	0	2
GAFAS	105	GLASSES	87	57	0	3
GALLINA	55	CHICKEN	63	37	0	1
GALLO	191	ROOSTER	84	48	0	4
GATO	49	CAT	140	84	2	5
GLOBO	15	BALLOON	100	54	0	2
GORILA	108	GORILLA	98	59	0	9
GORRA	46	CAP	98	66	0	5
GUANTE	106	GLOVE	98	61	0	6
GUIARRA	111	GUITAR	120	76	0	6
GUSANO	50	CATERPILLAR	117	74	1	7
HACHA	12	AXE	92	54	0	1
HELICÓPTERO	120	HELICOPTER	93	51	2	5
HILO	214	SPOOL OF THREAD	77	41	0	2
HOJA	133	LEAF	83	55	0	1
HORMIGA	5	ANT	128	75	2	1
IGLESIA	57	CHURCH	128	86	0	5
INTERRUPTOR	139	LIGHT SWITCH	51	34	0	3
JARRA	175	PITCHER	54	33	0	4
JARRÓN	246	VASE	70	52	0	2
JERSEY	224	SWEATER	95	63	0	4
JIRafa	103	GIRAFFE	71	46	1	2
LABIOS	141	LIPS	76	43	0	1
LÁMPARA	132	LAMP	72	43	0	0
LÁPIZ	168	PENCIL	91	44	0	2
LAZO	33	BOW	104	58	1	4
LECHUGA	137	LETTUCE	79	51	0	3
LEÓN	140	LION	114	70	0	4
LEOPARDO	136	LEOPARD	109	57	0	4
LIBRO	30	BOOK	134	83	0	3
LIMA	152	NAIL FILE	78	51	0	1
LIMÓN	135	LEMON	76	49	0	5
LUNA	146	MOON	101	66	0	0
LLAVE	128	KEY	60	43	0	0
LLAVE INGLESA	259	WRENCH	129	79	0	4
MAIZ	66	CORN	104	68	0	4
MALETA	221	SUITCASE	68	44	0	0
MANO	115	HAND	124	74	0	4
MANOPLA	144	MITTEN	95	56	0	2
MANZANA	6	APPLE	102	57	0	2
MAPACHE	183	RACCOON	109	62	2	3
MARIPOSA	40	BUTTERFLY	111	68	0	2
MARTILLO	114	HAMMER	89	53	0	5
MECEDORA	188	ROCKING CHAIR	113	65	0	4
MELOCOTÓN	164	PEACH	91	43	0	3
MESA	226	TABLE	89	56	0	2

APPENDIX (Continued)

Spanish Stimulus	Picture No.	English Name	Number of Responses			
			Independent	Idiosyncratic	Blank	Illegible
MOFETA	206	SKUNK	81	52	1	11
MOLINO	256	WINDMILL	58	32	0	3
MONO	145	MONKEY	136	79	0	8
MONTAÑA	148	MOUNTAIN	134	68	3	9
MOSCA	93	FLY	112	60	0	4
MOTO	147	MOTORCYCLE	117	72	0	6
MUÑECA	74	DOLL	107	63	0	2
MUÑECO DE NIEVE	210	SNOWMAN	75	50	0	1
NARANJA	158	ORANGE	99	49	0	5
NARIZ	155	NOSE	101	58	0	4
NUBE	62	CLOUD	89	56	0	1
OJO	86	EYE	105	65	0	4
OREJA	83	EAR	109	76	0	4
OSO	21	BEAR	120	62	0	2
OVEJA	202	SHEEP	86	50	0	5
PÁJARO	28	BIRD	104	55	0	2
PAN DE MOLDE	36	BREAD	96	55	0	2
PANTALÓN	162	PANTS	119	73	0	3
PARAGUAS	245	UMBRELLA	45	32	0	1
PATATA	180	POTATO	107	62	1	2
PATÍN	189	ROLLER SKATE	121	68	0	7
PATO	81	DUCK	107	64	1	5
PAVO REAL	163	PEACOCK	121	76	0	4
PAYASO	63	CLOWN	87	50	0	2
PEINE	65	COMB	65	37	0	0
PELO	113	HAIR	113	63	0	2
PELOTA	14	BALL	77	48	0	2
PEONZA	238	TOP	116	71	6	4
PERA	166	PEAR	97	61	0	2
PERCHA	116	HANGER	52	36	0	0
PERRO	73	DOG	131	85	0	9
PEZ	89	FISH	77	46	0	2
PIANO	171	PIANO	110	65	0	3
PIE	94	FOOT	82	44	0	4
PIMIENTO	170	PEPPER	98	55	0	1
PINCEL	161	PAINTBRUSH	51	30	0	3
PINGÜINO	169	PENGUIN	83	51	0	5
PINZA	61	CLOTHESPIN	78	54	0	1
PIÑA	173	PINEAPPLE	116	66	3	4
PIPA	174	PIPE	98	62	0	2
PISTOLA	112	GUN	91	55	0	6
PLANCHA	123	IRON	96	62	0	1
PLÁTANO	16	BANANA	84	48	0	1
POMO	77	DOORKNOB	79	61	5	3
PUERTA	76	DOOR	83	49	0	5
PURO	58	CIGAR	118	77	0	4
RANA	100	FROG	74	43	0	0
RAQUETA	229	TENNIS RACKET	54	40	0	3
RATÓN	149	MOUSE	114	75	0	10
REGADERA	251	WATERING CAN	42	23	0	0
REGLA	192	RULER	112	63	0	4
RELOJ	250	WATCH	69	43	0	1
RINOCERONTE	186	RHINOCEROS	92	60	0	3
RODILLO	190	ROLLING PIN	100	60	0	1
RUEDA	254	WHEEL	83	50	0	5
SALERO	194	SALTSHAKER	93	55	0	2
SALTAMONTES	110	GRASSHOPPER	114	81	0	7
SANDÍA	252	WATERMELON	59	29	1	2
SANDWICH	195	SANDWICH	81	48	0	0
SARTÉN	101	FRYING PAN	59	28	0	1
SERPIENTE	209	SNAKE	140	87	0	5
SETA	150	MUSHROOM	93	56	0	2
SIERRA	196	SAW	101	63	0	1
SILBATO	255	WHISTLE	84	51	0	3
SILLA	53	CHAIR	80	43	0	2
SOBRE	85	ENVELOPE	44	26	0	6

APPENDIX (Continued)

Spanish Stimulus	Picture No.	English Name	Number of Responses			
			Independent	Idiosyncratic	Blank	Illegible
SOFÁ	67	COUCH	65	31	0	4
SOL	222	SUN	76	46	0	3
SOMBRERO	118	HAT	129	83	1	5
TABLA DE PLANCHAR	124	IRONING BOARD	88	58	1	2
TABURETE	218	STOOL	86	45	0	4
TAMBOR	80	DRUM	131	77	0	2
TARTA	42	CAKE	72	42	0	2
TAZA	70	CUP	65	41	0	0
TELÉFONO	227	TELEPHONE	113	74	1	9
TELEVISIÓN	228	TELEVISION	141	80	2	5
TENEDOR	97	FORK	60	37	0	2
TETERA	127	KETTLE	81	52	0	0
TIGRE	233	TIGER	128	86	0	2
TIJERAS	197	SCISSORS	92	61	0	2
TOCADISCOS	184	RECORD PLAYER	69	41	1	3
TOMATE	236	TOMATO	91	58	0	1
TORNILLO	198	SCREW	97	51	0	4
TOSTADOR	234	TOASTER	77	49	0	1
TREN	240	TRAIN	122	74	0	3
TRINEO	207	SLED	55	36	0	4
TROMBÓN	99	FRENCH HORN	89	54	0	9
TROMPETA	243	TRUMPET	120	71	0	6
TUERCA	156	NUT	107	64	0	0
UVAS	109	GRAPES	87	48	1	7
VACA	68	COW	69	33	0	5
VALLA	87	FENCE	130	70	0	4
VASO	104	GLASS	52	27	0	2
VELA	44	CANDLE	94	52	0	4
VENTANA	257	WINDOW	93	51	0	3
VESTIDO	78	DRESS	101	52	0	1
VIOLÍN	248	VIOLIN	135	85	0	8
ZANAHORIA	48	CARROT	84	45	0	3
ZAPATO	204	SHOE	108	56	0	2
ZORRO	98	FOX	156	102	1	7

Note—*Picture No.* is the identification number of the picture corresponding to the stimulus in Snodgrass and Vanderwart (1980). *English name* is the most frequent denomination of the picture in English in Snodgrass and Vanderwart.

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