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THE CULTURAL LINGUISTIC IMAGE OF THE DOG IN SPANISH LEXICOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The aim of the current article is to present the history of the Spanish lexeme *perro* ‘dog’ in Spanish lexicography. We will begin with an overview of the discussion of the etymology of the word itself and information about its earliest attestations. Subsequently, we will trace both the presence and the content of the dictionary entries for this lexeme from the beginnings of Spanish lexicography. The final part of the article considers contemporary lexicography, and thus we will address the rich phraseology associated with the lexeme *perro*, which may serve as a basis for further language and culture-related research. The article contributes to the field of cultural linguistics, but due to the examined corpus, it also includes observations of a lexicographic nature.

1. Introduction¹

Given our civilizational experiences, it might seem that the word denoting the domesticated animal viewed as being the closest to humans could hold no mysteries. However, while the term *perro* itself is recognizable and widespread, its history is far from straightforward and unambiguous. The purpose of this article is to examine the presence of the Spanish lexeme *perro* ‘dog’ in Spanish lexicography, starting from its earliest attestations and finishing with the most important contemporary

¹ Throughout the text, all the definitions accompanying lexemes derived from Spanish dictionaries are translations of the author’s paraphrases of the Spanish-language definitions provided in those dictionaries.

monolingual dictionaries. We assume that the name of an animal long associated with humans constitutes a component of the linguistic image of the world of the Spanish-speaking community, with the linguistic image of the world defined as “the interpretation of reality encoded in language, variously verbalized, which can be captured in the form a set of judgments about the world”² (Bartmiński 2006: 11). Due to space limitations, the study does not include derivatives or synonyms of this lexeme, but instead focuses on dictionary definitions and word combinations of a phraseological nature (i.e. expressions, phrases, idioms, and proverbs with the component *perro*). Additionally, the research corpus has been limited to lexicographic material not only due to the article’s length, but also based on the assumption that dictionaries can be considered cultural texts or specific repositories of the collective experience of a given community (cf. Rudnicka 2016).

The current study is, therefore, a contribution to the field of cultural linguistics, defined as a discipline that investigates the connections between language and culture, and specifically, the interactions between language, culture, the individual (society), and reality (Anusiewicz 1995: 10). Our aim is not to theorize about the linguistic image of the world itself (cf. Grzegorzczkowska 1990; Tokarski 1993; Bartmiński 2006), or to include critical perspectives (cf. Bobrowski 2010; Słapek 2013), but rather to demonstrate that the status of a specific word in a language can contribute to the portrayal of the status of the referent in the extralinguistic reality. Language itself, of course, “always represents an incomplete, selective view of reality; the content accumulated in it carries a certain interpretation of reality; it encapsulates an objectified emotional attitude of a given society towards that reality, and the content captured in it is subject to evaluation and axiological interpretation” (Anusiewicz 1995: 9).

Numerous works focusing on animals can be found in Polish linguistics, with studies addressing animals such as the ox (Baranowski 1967), the horse (Bartmiński 1980; Anusiewicz 1992; Mosiołek-Kłosińska 1998), the cat (Anusiewicz 1990; Mosiołek 1993), the stork (Lewandowski and Radkiewicz 1991), the frog (Dąbrowska 2000), the goat (Kielak 2014), and the crayfish (Rak 2017).³ Similarly, our focal point, the dog, has been the subject of a large number of studies (cf. Mosiołek 1992; Raszevska-Żurek 2010; Kolberová 2014; Kęпка 2017). In Spanish linguistics, the dog appears in publications concerning zoonyms (cf. Pamies et al. 1998), mainly from a contrastive perspective (cf. Gwiazdowska 2008; Kekič 2008; de Santos Paião and Aparecida Marques 2010; Szyndler 2014; Kobeshavidze and Chrikishvili 2018; Mochková 2019). This study expands the scope of previous research by incorporating a historical aspect and, through focusing exclusively on a single lexical item, constitutes a novel approach in this type of investigation.

² The paper, including the quotations and paraphrases, has been rendered into English by a professional translator (Mateusz Urban) under a POB Heritage grant from the Jagiellonian University to *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Jagellonicae Cracoviensis*.

³ Not to mention more comprehensive studies such as the monograph by Rak (2007) or the collection edited by Dąbrowska (2003).

2. Etymology

“Since the time of Diez (*Wörterbruch* 476), the origin of the word *perro* has deservedly gained a reputation as one of the desperate problems of Romance etymology” write the authors of the etymological dictionary *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico Castellano e Hispánico* (DCECH) in their entry for the word *perro* (DCECH IV 499). It is worth noting in this connection that while most entries in that dictionary occupy less than a single column, the entry for *perro* spans five pages (DCECH IV 498–502), whereas the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy,⁴ which usually provides etymological information at the beginning of an entry, offers only an abbreviation *or. inc.*, that is, “origin uncertain”.

Indeed, the etymology of the word remains a mystery. Corominas (2010: 427) describes the term as “exclusivo del castellano” (i.e. exclusive to Spanish) and adds that in the Middle Ages, it was used only as a pejorative and vulgar term, in contrast to the traditional word *can* ‘dog’, which was considered refined. He describes the origin itself as “unclear” and suggests a possible onomatopoeic etymon, such as the *prrr* or *brrr* herdsmen use to encourage dogs to herd animals and which he himself often heard during his travels along the Pyrenean trails. At the same time, he rejects a Celtic origin, since if this were the case, one would expect the same term for a dog to have been adopted in former Celtic-speaking territories such as present-day Portugal, which nonetheless continues to use the traditional Romance term *cão*. He furthermore dismisses a pre-Roman origin due to the relatively late attestation of the word. Corominas suggests the word is first attested in the 12th century, and more specifically in the name of a locality, *Monte de Perra*, lit. ‘Hill of the Bitch’, which is attested in a document from the province of León dating back to 1136. The historical corpus (*Corpus Diacrónico Español*, CORDE) confirms the information found in the etymological dictionary: the earliest attestation of the lexeme *perro* dates back to the mid-12th century, more specifically to a collection of administrative documents from medieval Madrid known as the *Fuero de Madrid* (1141–1235).

Initially, both *can* (from the Lat. *can*, *canis*) and *perro* are found in Spanish, with the latter being considered colloquial and also pejorative, while *can* refers to a dog as a friend of humans or a purebred dog. Corominas explains the gradual replacement of *can* with *perro* by the fact that the older word could not form a feminine noun (*cana*?) or diminutives (*canito*?, *canillo*?), and provides *perra* ‘female dog’ and *perriello*, *perrillo* ‘puppy’ as alternatives. In our opinion, the difficulty lies not so much in the morphological structure of the word but in the presence of the polysemous lexical unit *cana* (1. ‘gray hair’, 2. ‘Catalan unit of length’, 3. ‘policeman, prison’ – in some American dialects).⁵ Indeed, the diminutive *canito* is not recorded in the

⁴ *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*; all editions of this dictionary are henceforth abbreviated as DLE followed by the date of publication.

⁵ The definition from the latest edition of the DLE [available at: <https://dle.rae.es/cana#71nnvCA>, last accessed: 21 September 2022].

CORDE, whereas while *canillo* does appear once, in 1589, it is a derivative of *cano* ‘gray-haired’. Thus, we are dealing with a commonly used word whose etymology remains unexplained to this day.

3. The lexeme *perro* in early Spanish lexicography

In Spanish lexicography, the lexeme is first recorded in Nebrija’s 1495 dictionary *Vocabulario español-latino*:⁶ *perro o perra* ‘canis canis’. Below that, Nebrija notes one derivative: *perruno* ‘cosa de perro caninus, -a, -um’ (‘canine’).

In later bilingual dictionaries (de Alcalá’s 1505 Spanish-Arabic dictionary, de la Casas’ 1570 Spanish-Italian dictionary, Percival’s 1591 Spanish-English dictionary, and Oudin’s 1607 Spanish-French dictionary), only equivalents in the respective languages are listed and it is not until 1611, in the first monolingual Spanish dictionary by de Covarrubias, that we find, as is customary with this author, extensive information about the lexeme in question. According to de Covarrubias, *perro* is a term for a ‘well-known animal, symbol of loyalty and gratitude for the crumbs of bread thrown by its master’ (p. 1170). He refers etymologically to Gr. *πυρ* ‘fire’ in view of the nature of dogs being “hot and dry”, and then proceeds to describe various types of dogs and provide an impressive collection of phraseological units, proverbs, and derivatives. Firstly, he distinguishes between *perrito de falda* ‘lap dog’, *perro de caza* ‘hunting dog’, and *perro de ganado* ‘herding dog’, although he acknowledges the existence of many breeds. This is followed by a series of proverbs:

- *A perro viejo nunca tus tus* – (lit. ‘an old dog never [responds to] *tus tus*’), where *tus tus* is an onomatopoeia used to call a dog when it is their feeding time, and the proverb metaphorically signifies that it is difficult to deceive an older and experienced person;
- *Por dinero baila el perro* – (lit. ‘for money, [even] a dog dances’) which illustrates the power of money;
- *El perro del hortelano, que ni come las berças, ni las deja comer a otro* – an equivalent of ‘a dog in the manger’ (which in Spanish neither eats the cabbage nor lets others eat it);
- *Perro ladrador, nunca buen caçador* – (lit. ‘a barking dog is never a good hunter’), equivalent to the Eng. *all bark and no bite*;
- *El perro del Herrero que duerme a las martilladas y despierta a las dentelladas* – (lit. ‘the blacksmith’s dog that sleeps through hammer strikes and wakes up when bitten’), refers to someone who only becomes active when there is personal gain involved.

⁶ The editions of all the dictionaries cited in this paragraph have been taken from the online resources of the Royal Spanish Academy entitled *Nuevo Tesoro Lexicográfico de la Lengua Española* NTTLLE [available at: <https://www.rae.es/obras-academicas/diccionarios/nuevo-tesoro-lexicografico-o>; accessed: 8 July 2022).

Also included are the following idioms:

- *A otro perro con este hueso* – (lit. ‘to another dog with this bone’) is used as a response to those who attempt to deceive someone or manipulate a situation in their favour based on false arguments;
- *Ni padre, ni madre, ni perro que ladre* – (lit. ‘neither father, nor mother, nor a barking dog’) is a reference to someone who is extremely lonely;
- *Perrillo de muchas bodas* – (lit. ‘a little dog at many weddings’) is used with reference to someone who appears at many events or gatherings;
- *Los perros de Zurita* – a reference to the dogs of the mayor of Zurita, which, with no other enemies, fought among themselves; describing a situation where internal fights occur instead of united action against a common enemy.

As is evident, even though the aforementioned definition refers to loyalty and gratitude, the multiword expressions cited above unequivocally highlight a negative perception of dogs.

Thus, let us move directly to the subsequent editions of the DLE, including, if warranted, information from other chronologically listed dictionaries. In the first edition (DLE 1737: 232), the dog is defined as a ‘domestic and family animal, with many varieties, all barking; some used for guarding households and livestock, others for hunting; they have different names according to their characteristics and size’. It is furthermore said that, metaphorically, *perro* can refer to Jews and Moors, and the etymological information is derived from de Covarrubias’ dictionary. The lexeme *perro* can also describe ‘deceit or harm in making contracts’: *dar perro* (lit. ‘to give a dog’) ‘to deceive’, *perro muerto* (lit. ‘a dead dog’) ‘deceit’. The DLE records the names of various breeds and varieties: *perro de aguas* ‘hunting dog that dives into water after prey’, *perro de muestra* ‘dog that points towards the game’, *perro de presa* ‘molossus’; the expressions: *como perro con vexiga* (lit. ‘like a dog with a bladder’), of someone who sneaks away unnoticed, *ponerse como un perro* (lit. ‘to behave like a dog’) ‘to get angry’, *perro alcucero nunca buen conejero* (lit. ‘a greedy dog is never a good hare hunter’) as a critique of laziness and greed, as well as *el perro con rabia a su amo muerde* (lit. ‘a dog with rabies bites its owner’), advice not to trust someone who is angry; and the proverb *las llaves en la cinta y el perro en la cocina* (lit. ‘the keys on the ribbon and the dog in the kitchen’) referring to someone who takes the easy way out. Phrases known from de Covarrubias’s dictionary are also included, such as *perro de todas bodas*, *perro ladrador nunca buen mordedor*, *a otro perro con este hueso*, *a perro viejo ni tus tus*, *el perro del Herrero*, *el perro del Hortelano*, and *los perros de Zurita*.

DLE (1780: 715) essentially repeats the same information, as do the editions from 1783 (p. 728), 1791 (p. 650) and 1803 (p. 647).

Meanwhile, the dictionary published by the Jesuit de Terreros y Pando (1788: 107) contains the definition ‘domestic, quadruped animal that barks, with many varieties’, together with the information that broth made from dog stock is very good for treating diarrhoea, as well as a list of the previously mentioned varieties of dog: *perro*

de aguas; *perro de caza*, in this instance described as ‘emaciated and fierce’ but also used with reference to a star constellation; *perro hambriento* (lit. ‘hungry dog’) ‘bold in hunting’; *perro marino*, lit. ‘marine dog’, referring to various types of sea creatures; *perro de muestra* as a synonym for *perro perdiguero*, and *perro de presa* ‘hunting dog’. Furthermore, *perro* can be a synonym for ‘heretic’ and ‘deceit’, the name of a constellation *perro celeste* (lit. ‘heavenly dog’), and the name of a small wheel in a velvet weaving machine. Finally, the proverb *al perro flaco todo es pulgas* (lit. ‘to a skinny dog, everything is fleas’) is included, which is equivalent to the Eng. *when it rains, it pours*, the phrase *al perro viejo ni tus tus* that is discussed above, the plant names *compañón de perro*, *lengua de perro*, and *perro loco* (lit. ‘crazy dog’), the latter of which refers to a medicinal plant with Chinese origins, as well as the name of a medieval religious order *orden del perro*, where the dog symbolizes loyalty.

In DLE (1817: 664), a modification is made to the definition, which now reads ‘quadruped animal, only found domesticated or born from domesticated breeds, since times immemorial so that its original form is unknown; common characteristic: a tail; characterized by a gentle and keen sense of smell, docility, a prodigious instinct, loyalty; it feeds on meat and vegetables and is capable of transmitting rabies.’

In addition to the expressions cited above, new ones appear: *perro cimarrón* ‘wild dog’;⁷ *perro chino* ‘Chinese crested dog’; *perro cruzado* ‘cross-bred dog’; *perro de casta* ‘purebred dog’; *perro de encarro* ‘quail-hunting dog’; *perro de lanas* also known as *perro de aguas* ‘water dog’;⁸ or *perro de punta y vuelta* ‘type of pointer’; *dogo* ‘mastiff-type dog’; *galgo* ‘greyhound’; the breeds *gozque* ‘mixed-breed’ and *lebrél* ‘variety of grey’; *pachón* and *perdiguero*, both referring to types of pointer; *podenco* and *rasposero*, both denoting hunting dogs. We also find phrases: *como perros y gatos*, that is, ‘like cats and dogs’; *darse a perros* (lit. ‘to give oneself to the dogs’) and *echarse a perro* (lit. ‘to throw oneself at a dog’), both with the meaning ‘to become very agitated’; *en dando que el perro rabia ha de rabiar* (lit. ‘insisting that a rabid dog must be rabid’), used as a reproach towards a stubborn and biased individual; *echeme a dormir y espulgóme el perro no la cabeza sino el esquero*, referring to someone who neglects their own interests;⁹ *ládreme el perro, y no muerda* (lit. ‘let the dog bark, but not bite’), used to describe threats that are of no concern; *no atar los perros con longaniza* (lit. ‘not to tie the dogs with sausages’), which expresses poverty; *todo junto como al perro los palos* (lit. ‘all together like sticks to a dog’) signifying an overwhelming sense of difficulty and hardship; and *tratar a uno como a un perro* ‘to treat someone like a dog’, which indicates mistreatment. Elsewhere in the same edition (DLE 1817: 917), the term *perro albañariego* or *albarraniego* ‘herding dog’ is also included.

⁷ This presumably refers to a dog of the molossus breed. The word *cimarrón* (from *cima* ‘hill’) is used in America to describe a dog that was previously domesticated but has since returned to the wild, becoming feral.

⁸ Appropriately: the Spanish water dog with a curly wool-like coat; hence the synonymous term *perro de lanas*, lit. ‘woolen dog’.

⁹ Literally referring to someone who fell asleep while the dog removed fleas not from their head, but from their pocket (thus robbing them).

The same information is repeated in DLE (1822: 570) as well as in Núñez de Taboada's dictionary (1825), and it is only in DLE (1832: 570) that an almost encyclopaedic definition is provided, namely, 'viviparous, carnivorous quadruped, which has five digits on its forelimbs and four on its hind limbs, a soft tongue, a curved tail, agility, strength and a keen sense of smell; capable of being trained and very faithful to humans', although all the linguistic information is repeated from previous editions. The same definition appears in DLE (1843: 554), in Salvá's dictionary (1846: 832), and in DLE (1852: 531). Domínguez (1853: 1347) adds the adjectives 'bad, unworthy' and the name of a fish, *perro marino* (lit. 'marine dog'), while the rest of the information corresponds to that given in DLE 1832. Another edition of that dictionary (DLE 1869: 597) contains no changes, whereas Domínguez (1869: 255) includes the names of types of dog, such as *perro careador* 'herding dog', *alano* 'alaunt', and the expressions: *a trágala perro* (lit. 'similar to how a dog swallows') 'forcibly, violently'; *dar perro* or *perro muerto* 'to deceive'; *muerto el perro, muerta la rabia* (lit. 'dead the dog, dead the rabies'), suggesting that one should remove the source of a problem. The editions of the DLE that followed (1884: 819; 1895: 1688) duplicate the entry, and it is only DLE (1899: 769) that provides a hypothetical Latin etymon, *petro* 'butcher', and defines the dog as a 'domesticated carnivorous mammal, with various breeds; the tail always coiled to the left and shorter than the hind legs, one of which the male raises when urinating; a keen sense of smell; faithful to humans'. This edition repeats the names of breeds, including the former term for a lap dog, *perro blanchete* (lit. 'whitish dog'), but it also adds the following expressions: *perro viejo* 'old dog', describing someone experienced; *morir como un perro*, lit. 'to die like a dog', that is, 'to die without remorse', *no querer perro con cencerro*, lit. 'not to want a dog with a bell', referring to things that cause more harm than benefit.

De Toro y Gómez (1901: 648) defines the dog as a 'carnivorous quadruped, highly useful', and a metaphorical term for a non-believer, deceit, but also a person firm in their judgments. DLE (1914: 790) reproduces de Toro y Gómez's definition without any changes, but introduces plant names *berza, cabeza, compañero, diente, lengua, perejil, vejiga de perro* (lit. 'dog's cabbage, head, companion, tooth, tongue, parsley, bladder'), alongside the expressions *vida de perros* 'a dog's life' and *pan de perro* (lit. 'dog's bread') 'injustice'.

Alemany (1917: 1303) replicates the DLE 1899 definition, while another edition of the DLE features a drawing labelled *perro perdiguero* 'variety of pointer' (DLE 1927: 1496), which marks the first occurrence of an ostensive definition. DLE (1936: 979) defines the dog as a 'carnivorous mammal, domesticated, varying in size, shape, and fur according to breeds, but always with a tail shorter than the hind limbs, one of which the male raises when urinating; characterized by a keen sense of smell, intelligence, and loyalty'. This definition is subsequently repeated (DLE 1939: 979; DLE 1947: 979), whereas DLE (1950: 1173) introduces the term *perro chico* 'small coin (0.05 peseta)', along with an illustration, this time representing a *perro dogo*, that is, a mastiff. In the following editions, the dictionary defines the dog as a 'domestic mammal of the canid family, varying in size, shape, fur, and breeds, with a tail shorter than the hind legs, possessing a keen sense of smell, intelligent, and loyal'

(DLE 1956: 1013), with similar definitions reappearing in DLE (1970: 110), DLE (1984: 1048), and DLE (1985: 1676). The 1989 edition (p. 1205) removes the information about the tail, and a similar definition is also found in the 1992 edition (p. 1121).

4. The lexeme *perro* in contemporary Spanish lexicography

The current edition of the DLE records 13 senses of *perro/a*:

1. 'domestic mammal of the family of canids, with varying sizes, shapes, and fur types according to the breeds; characterized by a keen sense of smell, intelligence, and remarkable loyalty towards its owner';
2. colloq. 'despicable person'; also used as an insult;
3. 'harm or injustice caused to someone by deceiving them in an agreement or a contract';
4. obs. 'tenacious person, firm and steadfast in a given opinion or undertaking';
5. Chile: 'token or small stone used in the game of *león* (lion)';
6. 'prostitute';
7. colloq. 'child's tantrum';
8. colloq. 'obsession (fixed idea)';
9. colloq. 'money, wealth' (*tener perras* 'to have money');
10. colloq. 'intoxication, drunkenness';
11. Honduras: 'light and spicy anecdote, a witty little story, or a phrase with ambiguous and humorous meaning';
12. adj. colloq. of a thing: 'very bad or unworthy' (*vida perra* 'a dog's life');
13. adj. El Salvador: of a person: 'angry or ill-tempered'.

Another part of the entry mostly includes names of breeds or varieties of dog:

- colloq. *perra chica* 'coin worth 0.05 pesetas';
- colloq. *perra gorda* or *perra grande* 'coin worth 0.10 pesetas';
- *perro/a alano/a* 'alaunt';
- *perro albarraniego* 'type of herding dog';
- *perro alforjero* 'type of guard dog';
- *perro ardero* 'dog that hunts squirrels';
- *perro/a braco*, *ca* 1. 'Burgos pointer', 2. 'small, delicate dog';
- *perro buceo* 'variety of scent hound with a black muzzle';
- *perro caliente* or *perrito caliente* 'hot dog';
- *perro/a caniche* 'poodle';
- colloq. *perro chico*, synonymous with *perra chica*;
- *perro/a chihuahua* 'Chihuahua';
- *perro/a chino/a* 'Chinese crested dog';
- *perro/a cobrador/a* 'retriever';
- *perro/a danés/a* 'Great Dane';

- *perro de agua* 1. Mexico ‘nutria’, 2. Mexico ‘ferret’;
- *perro/a de aguas* ‘Spanish water dog’;
- *perro/a de ajeo* ‘type of hunting dog that hunts quail’;
- *perro/a de ayuda* ‘guide dog’;
- *perro/a de busca* hunting term ‘dog used for tracking game’;
- *perro/a de casta* ‘purebred dog’;
- *perro de engarro* ‘small dog used for hunting quail’;
- *perro/a de lanas* 1. ‘Spanish water dog’, 2. synonymous with *perro faldero*;
- *perro/a de muestra* ‘pointer’;
- *perro/a de postura* synonymous with *perro de muestra*;
- *perro/a de presa* ‘hunting dog’ (referring to breeds used to hunt large animals);
- *perro/a de punta y vuelta* ‘among hunters: a dog that points at the game and then turns around to face it’;
- *perro/a de Terranova* ‘Newfoundland dog’;
- *perro del mal* Mexico: ‘rabid dog’;
- *perro/a dogo/a* ‘mastiff’;
- *perro/a faldero/a* ‘lap dog, toy dog’;
- colloq. *perro faldero* ‘servile, submissive person’;
- *perro/a galgo/a* ‘greyhound’;
- *perro/a gozque* ‘small, alert dog that barks a lot’;
- *perro grande* synonymous with *perra gorda*;
- *perro guion* ‘lead dog in a pack’;
- *perro jateo*, also *perro raposero*, ‘dog used in fox hunting, foxhound’;
- *perro/a labrador/a* ‘Labrador retriever’;
- *perro/a lebrél* ‘dog used in hunting hares’ (Sp. *liebre* ‘hare’ – hence the name);
- *perro/a lebrero/a* synonymous with *perro/a lebrél*;
- *perro/a lucharniego/a* ‘dog trained for night hunting’;
- *perro/a lulu’* ‘spitz’;
- *perro marino* ‘dogfish, type of shark’;
- *perro/a mastín/a* ‘mastiff’;
- *perro mudo*, also *mapache* ‘raccoon’;
- *perro/a pachón/a* ‘Old Spanish pointer’;
- *perro/a pastor/a alemán/a* ‘German shepherd’;
- *perro/a pekinés/a* ‘Pekingese’;
- *perro/a perdiguero/a* ‘Spanish pointer’;
- *perro/a podenco/a* ‘podenco, warren hound’;
- *perro/a policía* ‘police dog’;
- *perro/a quitador/a* ‘dog that retrieves game, retriever’;
- *perro/a raposero/a* ‘dog used in fox hunting, foxhound’;
- *perro rastrero* ‘tracking dog’;
- *perro/a sabueso/a* ‘Spanish Hound’;
- *perro/a terrier* ‘terrier’;
- *perro tomador* ‘dog that retrieves game well’;
- *perro/a ventor/a* ‘tracking dog’;

- colloq. *perro/a viejola* ‘prudent, experienced person’;
- *perro/a zarcerola* ‘type of hunting dog’;
- *perro/a zorrero/a* ‘dog used in fox hunting, foxhound’.

Also included are other multiword combinations that contain *perro* or *perra*:

- colloq. *a espeta perros* synonymous with *a espeta perros* (lit. ‘stabbing dogs’) ‘suddenly, with great haste’;
- colloq. *a otro perro con ese hueso* (lit. ‘to another dog with that bone’), used to reject a proposal or idea, or to express of disbelief;
- colloq. *atar los perros con longaniza* (lit. ‘tying dogs with a sausage’), used to praise wealth or splendour ironically;
- colloq. *como el perro y el gato* or *como perros y gatos* ‘[to fight] like cat and dog’;
- colloq. *como perro con cencerro, con cuerno, con maza, o con vejiga* (lit. ‘like a dog with a bell, horn, mace, or bladder’) ‘leave with one’s tail between one’s legs’;
- colloq. *dar perro a alguien* or *dar perro muerto* (lit. ‘to give sb a (dead) dog’) ‘to harm, offend, or disappoint someone’;
- colloq. *darse alguien a perros* ‘to become extremely angry’;
- *de perros* 1. with reference to the weather: ‘awful’; 2. ‘bad, painful’;
- colloq. *echar a perros algo* (lit. ‘to throw something to the dogs’) ‘to misuse or squander something’;
- *echar* or *soltar los perros a alguien* (lit. ‘to unleash the dogs on someone’) ‘to scold or reprimand somebody, to come down on somebody’;
- colloq. *estar como los perros en misa* (lit. ‘to be like dogs at Mass’) ‘to be out of place, to be in the way’;
- colloq. *hinchar el perro* (lit. ‘to inflate the dog’) ‘to exaggerate’;
- colloq. *irle a alguien como a los perros en misa* (lit. ‘to go for someone like dogs at Mass’) ‘to experience setbacks and misfortunes’;
- colloq. *la perra le parirá lechones* (lit. ‘the female dog will give birth to piglets’), used to describe someone who is very lucky or successful;
- *meadola por los perros* (lit. ‘pissed on by dogs’) Cuba and Uruguay: someone who is unlucky;
- *morir alguien como un perro* (lit. ‘to die like a dog’) 1. ‘to die without remorse’; 2. ‘to die alone’;
- colloq. *no quiero perro con cencerro* (lit. ‘I do not want a dog with a bell’) used to explain that someone does not want things that bring more trouble than benefit;
- *no ser alguien perro que sigue a su amo* (lit. ‘not to be a dog that follows its master’) Cuba: ‘to be ungrateful’;
- *soltar alguien la perra* (lit. ‘to release the female dog’) ‘to brag about something before achieving it’;
- *todo junto, como al perro los palos* (lit. ‘all together like sticks to a dog’), misfortunes that have happened simultaneously to someone, or to say that the day will come when someone will have to pay for all the damage they have done;
- colloq. *tratar a alguien como a un perro* (lit. ‘to treat like a dog’) ‘to mistreat’.

Additionally, the dictionary records the following lexicalized phrases with the prepositional phrase *de perro* 'dog's, of dog, canine, dog-like' as the complement:

- *alma de perro* (lit. 'dog's soul') Honduras: 'species of bird';
- *bemba de perro* (lit. 'dog's mouth', *bemba* 'big mouth') Cuba, Venezuela: offensive term to describe a person;
- *berza de perro* or *berza perruna* (lit. 'dog's cabbage') 'dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), a plant with a camphor-like scent';
- *cabeza de perro* (lit. 'dog's head') 'lesser celandine, poisonous herb';
- colloq. *cara de perro* (lit. 'dog face'), offensive term to describe a person;
- *compañón de perro* (lit. 'dog's companion') 'bee orchid';
- *diente de perro* (lit. 'dog's tooth'), 1. 'type of carving chisel', 2. 'type of needlework with holes on both sides of the stitch', 3. colloq. 'careless stitch', 4. 'type of ornament used in ancient buildings composed of a series of triangular prisms', 5. Murcia: 'variety of pomegranate with elongated seeds', 6. Cuba, Dominican Republic: 'stone with pointy protrusions';
- *humor de perros* (lit. 'dog's mood') 'ill temper';
- *lengua de perro* 'dog's tongue, a plant with long leaves covered in whitish fuzz';
- *pan de perro* (lit. 'dog's bread') formerly used in the sense of 'harm, punishment';
- colloq. *pata de perro* (lit. 'dog's paw') Bolivia, Mexico, Panama, Peru: 'person who spends a lot of time outside';
- *perejil de perro* (lit. 'dog's parsley') 'hemlock';
- *uva de perro* (lit. 'dog's grape') 'white stonecrop';
- *vejiga de perro* (lit. 'dog's bladder', with reference to fruits wrapped in a calyx resembling a bladder) 'bladder cherry'.

Moliner (1991 II: 73) in her *Diccionario de uso del español* defines the dog as a domesticated carnivorous mammal belonging to the family Canidae, which encompasses a wide variety of breeds that she proceeds to enumerate (including varieties such as a guide dog). In addition to the compilation of expressions, which largely overlap with those cited in the DLE, she includes well-known proverbs and idioms:

- *Muerto el perro, se acabó la rabia* (lit. 'the dog is dead, the rabies is over'), used to describe an event that eliminates the source of a problem;
- *¡Para ti la perra gorda!* (lit. 'for you the fat bitch!'), used to abruptly end a discussion, where *perra gorda* denotes a small coin with a value of 0.10 pesetas;
- *Quien da pan a perro ajeno pierde el pan y pierde el perro* (lit. 'he who gives bread to someone else's dog loses the bread and loses the dog'), used to describe wastefulness;
- *hacer tanta falta como los perros en misa* (lit. 'to be as necessary as dogs at Mass') 'to be completely unnecessary, superfluous';
- *sin padre ni madre ni perro que le ladre* (lit. 'without a father or a mother or a dog to bark at them'), describes somebody who is lonely.

Furthermore, Moliner extends the meaning of the expression *morir como un perro* lit. 'dying like a dog', to refer to dying without the last rites.

A dictionary edited by Seco, Ramos and Andrés (1999 II: 3496–7), in addition to an encyclopaedic definition, records *perro* as the name of an edible sea fish, a colloquial expression for a fit of rage, as well as colloquial expressions for mania or stubbornness, a pitiful person, and a lazy person, and also includes the vulgar expression *que se mea/caga la perra* ‘so that the bitch pees/shits’ used to describe the intensity of an action.

Phraseological dictionaries (Varela and Kubarth 1994: 213; Cantera Ortiz de Urbina and Gomis Blanco 2007: 305) add the following to the previously mentioned multiword expressions:

- *dar perro muerto* (lit. ‘to give a dead dog’) ‘to go overboard with jokes’;
- *darle el perro* (lit. ‘to give the dog’) ‘to make someone wait’;
- *el perro de Alcibiades* (lit. ‘Alcibiades’ dog’), used when trying to divert someone’s attention from something;
- *Nunca más perro al molino* (lit. ‘never again a dog to the mill’), used to describe a desire to avoid another unpleasant situation;
- *¡Si es un perro, te/os muerde!* (lit. ‘if it’s a dog, it will bite you!’), a person searching for something that is nearby;
- *el mismo perro con distinto collar* (lit. ‘the same dog with a different collar’) referring to something that only superficially differs from something familiar;
- *meter los perros en la danza* (lit. ‘to release the dogs into the dance’) ‘to fight, to seek trouble’;
- *Como el perro de Juan de Ateca que antes de que le den se queja* (lit. ‘like Juan de Ateca’s dog, which complains before it is given anything’) ‘malcontent’;
- *Como el perro de Olías* (lit. ‘like Olías’ dog’), referring to someone who has too many irons in the fire;¹⁰
- *Como perro por Carnestolendas* (lit. ‘a dog during Carnival’), used to describe someone who has been mistreated, alluding to the old Carnival tradition of tossing a dog on a blanket;
- *Costar más el collar que el perro* (lit. ‘the collar is worth more than the dog’), used when a transaction seems unprofitable;
- *Cuidado con el perro* – (lit. ‘beware of the dog’), used as a warning;
- *Echar (la mañana, la tarde, el día) a perros* (lit. ‘to throw (the morning, the afternoon, the day) to the dogs’) ‘to waste’;
- *noche de perros* (lit. ‘a dog’s night’) ‘sleepless night’;
- *por la puerta de los perros* (lit. ‘through a dog’s door’) ‘through the back door’;
- *Por un perro que maté me llamaron me pusieron «mataperros»* (lit. ‘because of one dog that I killed, they called me a “dog killer”’), referring to how sometimes one act determines someone’s bad reputation;
- *saber más que el perro de Caco* (lit. ‘to know more than Caco’s dog’), describing someone who is not very bright;
- *tornarse el sueño del perro* (lit. ‘to become the dog’s dream’), used when one fails to achieve a goal.

¹⁰ Such a meaning is found in Arora’s monograph (1977: 361).

5. Conclusions

As indicated by the presented material, despite several suggested etymologies (Greek, Latin, onomatopoeia), the etymon of this common lexeme remains unclear.

Regarding the evolution of the dictionary entries and definitions, de Covarrubias' dictionary proved to be a milestone in Spanish lexicography: many editions of the DLE dictionary draw upon his definitions and etymological theories. The Royal Spanish Academy itself, in successive editions of the DLE, replicates definitions and information from previous editions, although progress can be observed, both in the art of definition writing (the selection of information and the transition from encyclopaedic definitions to those that aim to provide an accurate description of the concept or referent that the word represents) and also in the ordering of expressions that contain the lexeme *perro* that are included over time. The key editions comprise those from 1737, 1817, 1832, 1899, 1956, and 1989, in which the dictionary entries can be considered to be professional. Undoubtedly the 1788 dictionary by de Terreros y Pando is worth noting: among all the 18th-century lexicographers this author alone offers the original compilation of the information he was able to collect, so that his entry for *perro* additionally includes the name of a constellation, the name of an element of a weaving machine, plant names, the name of a medicine, the name of a religious order, as well as multiword expressions not noted by his predecessors. While lexicography has largely been and still remains in a sense the art of plagiarism, as some provocatively suggest, this Spanish Jesuit serves as evidence that a lexicographer can be original and, at the very least, faithful to linguistic facts.

Interestingly, various kinds of information emerge from the cited definitions, or sometimes even descriptions, of dogs. These range from specialist names of breeds or varieties to specific details: each dog is a domesticated mammal, barks, has four legs, a soft tongue, sharp teeth, a tail, and a different number of digits on the hind and front legs, with the tail shorter than the hind legs and always curled to the left; the male dog raises its hind leg when urinating; dogs are capable of transmitting rabies, feed on meat (although according to some definitions, also vegetables and bread thrown by their owner), and a broth made from a dog is used to treat diarrhoea. The number of diverse expressions, phrases, and idioms, as well as the polysemous character of the analyzed lexeme is also surprising. In the latest edition of the DLE, there are 13 meanings of the word *perro* itself, 81 multiword expressions with the lexeme *perro*, and 14 noun phrases with the prepositional phrase *de perro* as the complement. All of this, together with the large number of colloquial uses, testifies to the remarkably enduring and abundant presence of dogs in culture and, consequently, in language. The lexeme *perro* may have neutral (mammal; thought; anecdote; token), positive (person with steadfast beliefs; wealth), or negative associations (insult; harm; prostitution; drunkenness; deceit; anger; a pitiful person; a lazy person). This lexeme has also become a component in the names of many plants, fish (e.g. *perro marino* 'dogfish'), and animals (e.g. *perro mudo* 'raccoon'), and in Mexican Spanish it denotes a ferret or a nutria.

The definitions presented above reveal a somewhat ambivalent image: the dog is a creature widely known, loyal, and devoted to humans, domesticated and family-

oriented, useful, intelligent, a quick learner with a remarkable sense of smell and a prodigious instinct. It provides humans with security, assists in hunting, and is a symbol of wealth, prudence, or experience, but it also connotes numerous negative traits, such as foolishness or envy, symbolizes non-believers or even heretics, as well as anger, irritation, harm, deceit, drunkenness, cowardice, agitation, prostitution, rage, vindictiveness, submissiveness, servility, and vanity.

When it comes to the depiction of dogs in phraseology, we once again encounter a contrast between positive and negative traits, although the latter tend to prevail. In general, dogs are associated with objects of little value: *perra chica* and *perra gorda* refer to coins with low denominations, and household wealth was symbolized by a piglet rather than a dog (*la perra le parirá leones*). Dogs embody anger (*perro del mal*), subservience (*perro faldero*; *ser perro que sigue a su amo*), ugliness, malice (*de perro*), and loneliness (*morirse como un perro*; *sin padre ni madre ni perro que le ladre*), as well as appearing in insults (*bemba de perro*; *cara de perro*). They are known to dislike cats (*llevarse como perro y gato*), have sharp teeth (*diente de perro*), spend a lot of time outside (*pata de perro*), and can be considered foolish (*los perros de Zurita*; *como el perro de Juan de Ateca*; *como el perro de Olías*; *saber más que el perro de Caco*). By changing the grammatical category, the adjective *perrolo* becomes synonymous with 'bad, miserable' (e.g. *vida perra* 'a dog's life').

Similarly, the prepositional phrase *de perro* 'dog's, of dog, canine, dog-like' conveys exclusively negative qualities (a bad mood, bad weather, a sleepless night), and the lack of worth associated with dogs is evidenced by the fact that plant names containing the lexeme *perro* generally refer to common plants (*berza de perro*; *cabeza de perro*; *compañón de perro*; *perejil de perro*; *uva de perro*) or alternatively those that resemble certain parts of the dog (*lengua de perro*; *vejiga de perro*).¹¹

The different dictionaries, however, record a variety of metaphorical senses. For example, *morir como un perro*, lit. 'to die like a dog, may indicate death without any signs of remorse' (DLE 1899), a solitary death (DLE online), or death without the last rites (Moliner 1991), and originally *perro faldero* referred to a small dog that could fit into the lap of a skirt (Sp. *falda* 'skirt'), but over time its meaning expanded to signify a 'servile person'. In a religious context, *perro* denotes a heretic, although de Terreros y Pando (1788) also mentions the religious 'order of the dog', where the animal symbolizes loyalty. Similarly, *perro de caza* refers in de Terreros y Pando's dictionary to constellations or a wicked and emaciated dog, while in de Covarrubias's dictionary (1611) and the DLE (online), it simply means a hunting dog, with the expression *dar perro* meaning 'to deceive' (DLE online) or 'to go overboard with jokes' (Varela and Kubarth 1994).

The evident prevalence of negative characteristics and connotations in the linguistic image of the dog can be attributed to our anthropocentric perspective of the animal world, and the observed dichotomy becomes more comprehensible if

¹¹ Interestingly, some studies (cf. de Santos Paião and Aparecida Marques 2010 or Mocková 2019) list exclusively negative connotations, whereas in Serbian, a contrast between positive traits (loyalty) and negative ones (danger, disdain) can be noted.

Mosiołek-Kłosińska's (1997) analysis of the anthropocentrism of "animal" vocabulary, which can be interpreted on two levels, is taken into consideration: the description of the animal world from a human standpoint and the description of the human world using "animal" vocabulary. The two aspects contribute to a dual metaphorization in which human-specific negative traits are ascribed to animals, allowing for a criticism of humans through phraseology based on animal names. Therefore, the evaluation of the dog is bipolar and ambivalent: dogs are seen as faithful companions, yet humans often evaluate them negatively. According to Mosiołek (1992: 301–302), two stereotypes of dogs can be identified, both based on the belief that dogs are inferior to humans, which results from an anthropocentric perception of the world. The positive stereotype is characterized by compassion, and centres around a dog's attitude towards humans (loyalty, obedience), while the negative stereotype, tinged with contempt, focuses on the human's attitude towards dogs. Additionally, as Rak (2007) observed, animal-related phraseology predominantly carries negative connotations, as it reflects a universal formula in anthropology and sociology, namely "the Self" vs. "the Other", where "the Other" is considered inferior or even wicked.

Similarly, Raszewska-Żurek (2010) states that the dog stereotype in Polish is dichotomous, inconsistent, or even internally contradictory, and comprises two opposing poles: one positively and the other negatively charged, sometimes to an extreme degree. The most significant shift in the linguistic image of the dog over the centuries is the emergence of their positive side, particularly with reference to canine loyalty, expressed through comparisons such as *wierny jak pies* 'as faithful as a dog'. Therefore, while environmental factors and historical conditions may account for the formal differences (such as breeds of dog not known in Poland or pejorative references to Jews and Moors), the perception of dogs does not differ significantly.

Without doubt the study of animals in language is a vast topic. Even this brief overview leaves a considerable sense of unfulfillment. The etymology of the word, an accurate description of the gradual replacement over time of the lexeme *can* with the lexeme *perro* in Spanish, the numerous derivatives of the word, as well as its rich phraseology, and indeed the word *perro* itself with its connotations and integration into the Spanish language – all these issues remain unresolved. A separate strand of research might focus on consulting contemporary sources to determine whether the anthropocentric (and thus negative) perception of the animal is undergoing any amelioration in light of societal changes and an increasingly "humane" view of dogs. This could be indicated, for example, by the contemporary use of the lexeme *mascota* 'mascot' in the sense of 'domestic animal'.¹² Subsequently, the scope of the research could be expanded to include the Spanish-speaking regions of the Americas, with the numerous derivatives of the lexeme *perro*, as well as the less common lexeme *can*, which is still present in the Spanish language (along with its derivatives) as a term for the dog, a term that is found across the entire Romance language area.

¹² Real Academia Española [available at: <https://dle.rae.es/mascota?m=form>, last accessed: 21 September 2022].

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