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Semantic derogation in animal metaphor: a contrastive-cognitive analysis of two male/female examples in English and Spanish

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Abstract

In this paper we present a contrastive cognitive analysis of metaphorical usages of the word pairs *fox/vixen* and *bull/cow*, together with their Spanish counterparts *zorro/zorra* and *toro/vaca*. We have four specific aims. Firstly, we wish to find out whether these examples of Animal Metaphor are equally conceptualized in English and Spanish. Secondly, we investigate whether the two paired examples within each language are used in semantic derogation, understood as the use of a word to convey negative connotations and stereotypes, here interpreted specifically with respect to the two sexes. Thirdly, if there is indeed semantic derogation, we wish to ascertain whether it applies equally to male and female terms. Finally, we would like to know whether the same degree and kind of semantic derogation is observed in the two languages, on the bases of the examples analyzed. Our analysis shows that first, the words in these particular animal pairs are indeed metaphorically applied to persons in both English and Spanish, though we noted subtle but remarkable differences between the two languages; second, some kind of semantic derogation appears in both languages; third, overall it is observed that the main metaphorical meanings of the female terms connote worse qualities than those connoted by the metaphors of the male terms; and fourth, there are differences in the degree and kind of semantic derogation found in the two languages.

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Keywords: Semantic derogation; Gender representation; Sexist language; Animal Metaphor; Contrastive analysis; Cognitive analysis; Dictionary based analysis

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1. Introduction

Language is a web of interrelated words in our mind. The term ‘semantic derogation’ implies both pejoration and polarization. All of these terms involve change of meaning but of a very specific kind: the replacement of a neutral sense by a negative or pejorative one. Placed in the context of gender and language, they conjure up other terms such as loaded language and sexist language. All these terms bring to the mind connotations of linguistic discrimination towards human beings.¹

In addition, semantic derogation, semantic pejoration and sexist language are related to androcentrism which, in turn, is connected to gender. In our view, restricted to a social category, gender can be understood as a metaphor by means of which we express things in terms of something else. Gender is usually defined as a set of socially acquired attributes and patterns of behavior allotted to each of the members of the biological category of male and female.² What these attributes and patterns of behavior mean varies according to societies and eras, nevertheless they always convey norms to be fulfilled as well as models to be followed by their members. And these norms are reflected in language. As western society has been (and still is) mostly governed by men, the patterns and norms of behavior have been dictated by them. As a consequence, the attributes assigned to each of the sexes in the gender metaphor are highly androcentric since men are taken as the norm of reference.

Androcentrism is present in gender and language. It is related to a gender imbalance and to the issue of sexism in language, which has been defined as vocabulary, statements, structures or discourses that encourage “an unfair or irrelevant or impertinent distinction between the sexes” (Vetterling-Braggin, 1981);³ “irrelevant and derogatory reference to gender” (Mills, 1995: 211); or as “positive and negative stereotypes of both sexes” (Holmes, 1992: 336). Although sexism in language can apply to both sexes, in practice, as most scholars have noted, it refers to the negative connotations and negative stereotypes conveyed by words or statements referring to women.

The ways sexism is manifested in language are manifold. The most frequently mentioned, both in feminist surveys and in the sociolinguistic literature in English and Spanish, have to do mainly with grammatical morphemes and vocabulary such as: generic pronouns, generic nouns, marked/and unmarked forms, semantic

¹ There is no space here to comment in depth on the origin and shades of meaning in all these terms. We will limit ourselves to pointing out that in the feminist literature, the term ‘semantic derogation’ is documented in Schulz (1975) to refer to “the tendency for words relating to women to acquire negative overtones” (quoted in Gibbon, 1999: 177). ‘Semantic polarization’ is used in a similar fashion in Miller and Swift (1976) in their discussion of the relationship of words and culture. Finally, ‘semantic pejoration’ has been used to refer to any word “used to refer to someone or something unfavourably” (Matthews, 1997). Of course, we are aware of the fact that the term semantic derogation is not always and necessarily attached to sex-related entities, however, since in this paper we are making use of two animal pairs in which the sexes of their members are metaphorically linked to the sexes of persons, the term semantic derogation is used with this particular sense here.

² For example, in Pearson et al. (1985), Montgomery (1986).

³ Quoted in Mills (1995: 83).

Table 1
The two paired animal terms selected for the analysis

English		Spanish	
Male	Female	Male	Female
Fox	Vixen	Zorro	Zorra
Bull	Cow	Toro	Vaca

derogation, endearments and diminutives, euphemism and taboos, lexical gaps, and metaphors.⁴

Regarding metaphors, in the English language it has been pointed out that a higher number of derogatory images is used in metaphors for describing women in comparison to those used for describing men (Holmes, 1992), and that a sexist bias is frequently found in the English categorization of a wide range of disciplines and professions by means of metaphors (Gibbon, 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to report a contrastive cognitive analysis applied to two paired animal terms in English and Spanish, as Table 1 shows.

We aim to investigate four aspects of the metaphorical usage of these words. First, we wish to ascertain to what extent they are conventionalized in two languages of different origin, (English, a Germanic language, versus Spanish, of the Romance family) and two cultures (Anglo-Saxon versus Mediterranean culture). Second, we aim to discover whether semantic derogation appears in the two paired examples in each language. Third, if this is so, we aim to find out whether it works in the same way for the male and for the female terms. And fourth, we wish to compare the results for the two languages, to see if the same degree and kind of semantic derogation is observed in them or not.

Although semantic derogation is technically defined as a change of meaning, in practice the term is taken in a restricted sense to refer to words that convey negative, demeaning or sexual connotations. This is the sense adopted in our analysis.

2. A cognitive analysis of Animal Metaphor

Our investigation is based mainly on two theoretical sources. On the one hand, it links to gender studies, particularly those related to the analysis of semantic derogation and sexism in language; on the other hand, it takes its inspiration from the cognitive view on metaphor held by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989) and Kövecses (1995). Lakoff and Johnson define the term metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” or as a mapping or set of correspondences between two conceptual domains to which they refer as the source and target domains.

⁴ For English see, for instance, Gibbon (1999), Holmes (1992), Mills (1995); Pearson et al. (1985) and Wardhaugh (1986). References to sexism in the Spanish language can be found in García Meseguer (1994) and Calero (1999).

According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), the mechanism upon which the Animal Metaphor is based is the Great Chain Metaphor; this is understood as a kind of cultural model which locates the different forms of being (human, animals, plants, complex objects, and natural physical things) in a hierarchy built upon the attributes and behaviors of each form.

The following features characterize this metaphor. First, it is systematic, since in each and all of its possible instantiations we identify an identical type of structure made up of a mapping of correspondences between a source (animals) and target domain (people). Second, it is grounded in our experience with people and animals, and, as a result, with our understanding of the nature of things and its relation to behavior. Third, it is based on the Generic is Specific Metaphor which allows the mapping of generic information from the source domain to a specific instantiation in the target domain. Fourth, it implies a vertical hierarchical organization of beings. As we will see in our cognitive analysis, by applying this cognitive model to the Animal Metaphor we may understand human beings (higher order forms of being) in terms of animals (lower order forms of being), and also we may understand animals in terms of humans since we attribute human character traits to them. Thus, this model links two levels in the hierarchy of beings to the extent that one is understood in terms of the other, and it works in two directions: bottom to top and top to bottom.

3. Studies on Animal Metaphor

Research on this type of metaphor is scarce, anglocentric, and mainly represented by work on the compilation of metaphors and animal names in dictionaries such as, for example, Lyman (1983), Ammer (1989) and Palmatier (1995). We also find a small number of studies that range from the identification of the concept of self in terms of Animal Metaphor (Craddick and Miller, 1970), through the analysis of the assumptions about male-female relationships in our culture as revealed by the *women are animals* metaphor (Whaley and Antonelly, 1983), to the descriptions of the most common and productive figurative meanings assigned to animal names and Animal Metaphor in different languages (O'Donnell, 1990; Nesi, 1995).

In the context of gender studies as well as in sociolinguistics, we find references to metaphors as being an area where sexism in language is more clearly revealed; for instance, Holmes (1992: 332) devotes a section to the analysis of sexism in language and gives an example of the chicken metaphor to prove how “animal imagery is one example where the images of women seem considerably less positive than those for men”.

However, studies in which this hypothesis is verified are scarce, and frequently related to the analysis of slang, as is the investigation carried out by Sutton (1995), in which strong connections are made between *women are animals* metaphors and discrimination towards females.

In these studies, animal names and Animal Metaphor are analyzed neither under the umbrella of the cognitive model nor within the perspective of cross-linguistic comparison of several languages.

4. Our study

The number of examples of Animal Metaphor in English and Spanish is very large. A detailed qualitative analysis of each possible example is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we have limited the analysis to *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra* and *bull/cow-toro/vaca*, mainly for two reasons; the first is that these two pairs are usually cited as typical examples of semantic derogation, and the second is that the male terms in the two pairs, *fox/zorro* and *bull/toro* as well as the female term *cow/vaca* are rich in symbolic connotations in many languages and cultures. In Christian folk traditions, the fox stands for evil artfulness; the bull is a mythical creature in Mediterranean cultures where it symbolizes strength and virility Cooper (1978) remarks, the bull represents nature's male principle, the sun's regenerative strength and the male's procreating power; likewise, the cow is a sacred animal in India where it symbolizes abundance and fertility. Finally, since ancient times, these animals have been a source of inspiration for countless tales, fables and proverbs. Restricting our focus to English and Spanish, and to the terms *fox* and *bull*, we observe that these are important animals in the cultural history of these two languages. Both are the focus of national sports associated with culture and social class; for instance, the practice of fox-hunting is regarded in England as a token of belonging to the gentry, large landowners and gentlemen farmers. For its part, bullfighting forms part of Spanish folk tradition and is full of symbolical connotations such as the supremacy of man's rational power over the animal's undomesticated force.

Fox/vixen-zorro/zorra and *bull/cow-toro/vaca* are mentioned in most introductions to sexism on English and Spanish languages, but to our knowledge, no cross-linguistic analysis has been applied to them.

5. Method and instruments for the analysis

In our survey of the examples we will apply a contrastive analysis as well as a cognitive one. The adoption of the former allows us to organize and compare the superficial differences and also the similarities found in these examples of Animal Metaphor in English and Spanish. The 'tertium comparationis' is the instantiations of this metaphor in the form of *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra* and *bull/cow-toro/vaca*, and other derivations and idioms out of these words. By completing this analysis by means of a cognitive one, we can go beyond the surface and draw deeper connections of the paired terms in the two languages. It provides us with a subtler methodological tool as well as a theoretical model for the interpretation of the examples.

As instruments for gathering the data on the pairs of words, a wide variety of dictionaries have been used, a list of which is included as an appendix. In order to maximize their representativeness, care was taken to choose a large sample of different types of reference works; thus, monolingual, bilingual, colloquial, slang, and metaphor dictionaries for both English and Spanish were included. The reasons for using dictionaries for data gathering instead of other sources as for instance, computerized language corpora, had to do with practical considerations such as the

availability of the former in libraries, book shops, and institutions, their user-friendly accessibility and their balance in providing equal coverage of British and American English as well as Spanish vocabulary and phrases. The reasons had also to do with the great potential of dictionaries as recorders of meaning, repositories of actual instances of language use, providers of information on grammar, idiomatic and colloquial use, and transmitters of a view on language and culture. In addition, a number of widely used dictionaries claim to have been compiled from contemporary speech and writing; as a consequence, the words, meanings, definitions and instances provided in dictionaries are supposed to reveal not only their actually occurring use in different contexts but also the view that a certain language and a society project onto those words. A final consideration was the objectiveness of dictionaries as a data gathering instrument: they do not demand the reader/researcher's interpretation of meaning and use but already provide it, which, in the end, has the additional advantage of an easy replication of the study by other researchers.

6. Analysis

This section is divided into two parts. In the first one, we give a brief descriptive account of the different metaphorical meanings *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra* and *bull/cow-toro/vaca* elicited from the entries of our corpus of dictionaries. This account focuses on describing the similarities and differences of the metaphorical meanings that can be observed in these two paired examples. Then, in the second part, we broaden this level of description by means of providing a cognitive analysis of the contrasted meanings.

6.1. Description of metaphorical meanings

In this description, we include the words *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra* and *bull/cow-toro/vaca* as well as other derivations and idioms containing these words, provided that

Table 2
Metaphorical meanings of the animal pair *fox/vixen* applied to people

Man		Woman		
Craftiness	Attractiveness	Craftiness	Attractiveness	Spitefulness, shrewishness, ill-temper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>fox</i> • <i>foxy</i> • <i>clever as a fox</i> • <i>sly as a fox</i> • <i>cunning as a fox</i> • <i>smart as a fox</i> • <i>(sly) old fox</i> • <i>crazy like a fox</i> • <i>to outfox</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>fox</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>fox</i> • <i>foxy</i> • <i>clever as a fox</i> • <i>sly as a fox</i> • <i>cunning as a fox</i> • <i>smart as a fox</i> • <i>(sly) old fox</i> • <i>crazy like a fox</i> • <i>to outfox</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>fox</i> • <i>foxy lady</i> • <i>stone fox</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vixen</i>

Table 3
Metaphorical meanings of the animal pair *zorro/zorra* applied to people

Hombre		Mujer		
Craftiness	Idleness	Craftiness	Idleness	Prostitution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>zorro</i> • <i>zorrocloco</i> • <i>zorrón</i> • <i>zorrastrón</i> • <i>zorrero</i> • <i>zorro viejo</i> • <i>zorrear</i> • <i>ser muy zorro</i> • <i>hacerse el zorro</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>zorra</i> • <i>zorronglón</i> • <i>zorrongo</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>zorra</i> • <i>zorrastrona</i> • <i>zorreira</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>zorronglona</i> • <i>zorronga</i> • <i>zorro</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>zorra</i> • <i>zorrear</i> • <i>zorrón</i> • <i>zorrupia</i> • <i>no tener ni zorra (idea)</i>

they are metaphorically applied to people. We will arrange them according to the physical and psychological attributes, as well as the behavioral features that they connote when applied to men and women.⁵

6.1.1. Fox/vixen-zorro/zorra

Let us begin with the English pair *fox/vixen*. As Table 2 illustrates, for this pair, the metaphorical meanings are arranged into three categories: craftiness, attractiveness, and spitefulness (also for this category: shrewishness, and ill-temper).

According to our corpus of dictionaries, the word *fox* and most of the expressions derived from it are applied to both sexes to mean craftiness and attractiveness. However, in practice, the word *fox* used with the sense of attractive is less frequently ascribed to men than to women. In the case of the word *fox* applied to men, it can be said that the meaning of craftiness eclipses the meaning of attractiveness. As for the word *vixen*, its use is restricted to the female to connote ill-temper or shrewishness.

Let us now describe the metaphorical meanings of the Spanish pair *zorro/zorra*, which according to the information contained in the dictionaries are: craftiness, idleness and prostitution expressed by means of the terms grouped in the following table:

As Table 3 illustrates, the feature of craftiness is ascribed to both sexes; *zorro/zorra* and all their derivatives and idioms are applied to both men and women, who are clever, crafty and cunning. Likewise, both sexes share the less frequent metaphorical meaning of idleness.

In contrast to the above shared meanings, the sense of prostitution or licentious sexual behavior is used exclusively about women. *Zorra*, as well as its derivatives *zorrear*, *zorrón* and *zorrupia*, refer only to females and are equivalent to prostitute in English. When applied to men, these terms do not connote prostitution but craftiness.

⁵ In this arrangement we have not paid attention to further differences among features belonging to a category, e.g. the differences of use according to context, the connotations of each single word or idiom, or if they expand the meaning under which they are located.

In the same vein, whereas the Spanish verb *zorrear* means being crafty when attached to men, when associated to women it means engaging in promiscuous sexual intercourse for money.

6.1.2. *Bull/cow-toro/vaca*

As we did with the above pairs, in the analysis of *bull/cow-toro/vaca*, we will describe first the metaphorical meanings of the English terms and then those of the Spanish terms. According to our sources, the metaphorical features highlighted by the English pair are: size/strength, aggressiveness, clumsiness, insensitiveness for bulls, and respect, unattractiveness, large size, untidiness, coarseness, and prostitution for cows. Following, Table 4 illustrates these features:

As far as the use of these metaphorical meanings is concerned, most of the consulted dictionaries observe that the metaphors with the word *bull* are applied to both men and women, but in practice, the word *bull* and the expressions derived from it are used more often about men than about women. We also find differences depending on the sex of the person being referred to by this metaphor. One of these differences is the variation observed in the connotations of the word *bull* when is metaphorically applied to human beings; for instance, when a man is called a bull this is clearly positive for him since, in some way, the feature of strength is culturally associated to men’s virility; in contrast, when a woman is called a *bull*, it acquires a negative connotation due to the fact that strength is not prototypically a feminine characteristic.

Regarding the word *cow*, it can be applied to both sexes to connote respect by means of the expression *sacred cow*. In contrast, the word *cow*, according to our sources, is applied to women with the sense of unattractiveness, untidiness, coarseness, or even prostitution.

Table 4
Metaphorical meanings of the animal pair *bull/cow* applied to people

Man				Woman		
Large size/ strength	Aggressiveness	Clumsiness, insensitiveness	Respect	Large size/ strength	Aggressiveness	Clumsiness, insensitiveness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bull</i> • <i>bulldozer</i> • <i>to bulldoze</i> 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bull</i> • <i>bulldozer</i> • <i>to bulldoze</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bull</i> • <i>strong as a bull</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>raging bull</i> • <i>roar like a bull</i> • <i>bullheaded</i> • <i>bullish</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(like) a bull in a China shop</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>sacred cow</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>bull</i> • <i>strong as a bull</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>raging bull</i> • <i>roar like a bull</i> • <i>bullheaded</i> • <i>bullish</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(like) a bull in a China shop</i>
				Respect	Unattractiveness, large size, untidiness, coarseness	Prostitution
				• <i>sacred cow</i>	• <i>cow</i>	• <i>cow</i>

Having described the metaphorical meanings of the English pair *bull/cow*, we will now concentrate on their Spanish counterparts *toro/vaca*. In Spanish, the word *toro* is used with a wide range of metaphorical meanings. To a great extent, this is explained by the Spanish bullfighting tradition. Among the metaphors referring to people it must be pointed out that for men, at least, six features are depicted: physical strength, intelligence, anger, fatness, respect, and entertainment. In contrast, when referred to by the term *cow*, women are described as fat, entertaining, respected, and also prostitutes. Both the metaphorical meanings for *toro* and *vaca* are displayed in Table 5:

Regarding the metaphors with the word *toro*, some dictionaries explain that they can be applied to people regardless of their sex. Nevertheless, most of them specify that these metaphors are more often ascribed to men. The opposite holds true for *vaca* since we are informed that although can be also applied to men, in practice, this metaphor is more frequently used to refer to women than to men.

6.2. Cognitive analysis

Now that the metaphorical meanings have been described, in this section we aim to give a coherent interpretation for their occurrence. The instrument we have chosen for this task is Cognitive Linguistics. First we will present a cognitive contrastive analysis of those meanings which are common to the Spanish and English terms of the pair *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*, and then continue with two separate analyses, one for the English pair *bull/cow* and another for the Spanish pair *toro/vaca*. The reason for adopting two different procedures in the analysis of the two pairs of animals is clarity of expression. Thus, whereas we have found great coincidences in the cognitive analysis of the English pair, *fox/vixen* and its Spanish counterpart, *zorro/zorra*,

Table 5
Metaphorical meanings of the animal pair *toro/vaca* applied to people

Hombre			Mujer			
Physical strength	Intelligence	Anger	Fatness	Respect	Entertainment	Prostitution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>toro</i> • <i>estar hecho un toro</i> • <i>como un toro</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>toro corrido</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>como un toro mohino</i> • <i>estar hecho un toro de fuego</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca</i> • <i>estar hecha una vaca</i> • <i>estar como una vaca</i> • <i>vaquillona</i> • <i>vacaburra</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca sagrada</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca de la boda</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca</i>
Fatness	Respect	Entertainment				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>estar hecha una vaca</i> • <i>estar como una vaca</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca sagrada</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>vaca de la boda</i> 				

(which allows us to describe them in one single section), there is not such coincidence regarding the other pair, *bull/cow and toro/vaca*, in the two languages, and therefore, we decided to devote two different sections to the analysis of the members of these pairs according to their language.

6.2.1. *Fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*

In Animal Metaphor, two facts related to the already mentioned Great Chain Metaphor must be taken into account. The first of them has to do with our understanding of the non-human in terms of the human. In the case of animals we know that they have instinctual attributes and behavior, and they lack other higher-order attributes and behavior owned by humans, such as the capacity for reasoning or moral judgment. However, human beings metaphorically attach human features to animals in order to better understand their behavior. Second, it is popularly believed that entities have special properties which are the most salient or prototypical ones when describing them. This is what Lakoff and Turner (1989: 196) call the quintessential property. With regard to foxes and vixens, we tend to attribute to these animals the characteristic of craftiness, which is their quintessential property metaphorically given to them by humans. This common knowledge of foxes and vixens defers to a cognitive model that is not necessarily based on scientific knowledge. In fact, in the case of these animals, a great deal of their supposed crafty behavior has been engendered in fables and tales. Be that as it may, the point is that by means of another metaphor, craftiness, as the quintessential property of foxes and vixens, comes back to human beings. The process would be as follows:

Step 1. Animals (*fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*) are People (*man/woman-hombre/mujer*): in our understanding of animal behavior in terms of human behavior, we apply the human characteristic of craftiness to the *fox/zorro* as well as to the *vixen/zorra*, regardless of sex differences. In this case, from a cognitive perspective, we would have two conceptual domains: a source domain and a target domain. The source domain would correspond to the human beings, i.e. *man/woman-hombre/mujer*, and the target domain to the animals, i.e. *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*. The human feature of craftiness would be located in the source domain, and mapped onto the same feature in the target domain.

Step 2. People (*man/woman-hombre/mujer*) are Animals (*fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*): in this step we are already taking into account all of the features shown in Tables 2 and 3. If we take a look at them, we can make a distinction between the quintessential feature of craftiness and those related to it, such as spitefulness, ill-temper, shrewishness, idleness, and other features which do not have a clear correlate to the quintessential property, such as prostitution and attractiveness. We will explore this idea further in what follows.

Let us begin with the cognitive analysis for craftiness and the related features, i.e. spitefulness, ill-temper, shrewishness, and idleness. In the first step we have a conceptual mapping in which the quintessential property of craftiness is mapped from the source domain of *man/woman-hombre/mujer* onto the target domain of *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*. From this mapping, we make explicit the following instances of the People are Animals metaphor:

Craftiness:

- Man is a *fox, foxy, clever as a fox, sly as a fox, smart as a fox, sly old fox, crazy like a fox; outfoxes*.
- Woman is a *fox, foxy, clever as a fox, sly as a fox, smart as a fox, sly old fox, crazy like a fox; outfoxes*.
- El hombre es un *zorro, zorrocloco, zorrón, zorrastrón, zorrero, zorro viejo, es muy zorro; zorrea; se hace el zorro*.
- La mujer es una *zorra, zorrastrona, zorrera*.

Spitefulness, shrewishness, ill-temper:

- Woman is a *vixen*.

Idleness:

- El hombre es un *zorro, zorronglón, zorrongo*.
- La mujer es una *zorra, zorronglona, zorronga*.

Prostitution (one possible interpretation):

- La mujer es una *zorra, zorrón, zorrupia; zorrea*.

Those metaphors meaning craftiness are explained in the following way: for each of these instances we devise a conceptual mapping in which the quintessential property of craftiness is mapped from a source domain, in which the animal is placed, onto the feature of craftiness in the target domain, in which human beings are located. This type of metaphor is consistent with the first step in which the same feature, i.e. craftiness, is highlighted.

We would place the instance *woman is a vixen* within this group, proving consistency with the first step described above. When we say that a woman is a vixen, we mean that she is spiteful, shrewish, and ill-tempered. Obviously, being crafty and being spiteful, shrewish, and ill-tempered are not all exactly the same, though we may feel that these characteristics share some features that match them in some way. Moreover, in our dictionary search, we can observe how the connection among them is clearly made. Hence, according to Palmatier (1995: 402), ill-temper and shrewishness are at the same level in the given definition: “Vixen: an ill-tempered or shrewish woman”. With regard to craftiness, we may agree that depending on the circumstances, this characteristic may be either a positive or a negative feature. For instance, a crafty person will show a better response to dangerous or difficult situations, which proves to be positive. On the other hand, being too crafty is negative.

If we take into account this negative side of craftiness, we could say that a person who is too crafty can be often considered spiteful, shrewish, and ill-tempered. Traditionally in a patriarchal society, women are associated with passivity, whereas men are associated with action. Hence, when a woman acquires an active role in something, she is breaking the traditional pattern and therefore society considers her behavior as negative. In the *woman is a vixen* metaphor, women’s behavior is closely connected to a vixen’s craftiness, and if we think of craftiness as a feature implying action, independence and autonomy of thought, women who are vixens are going

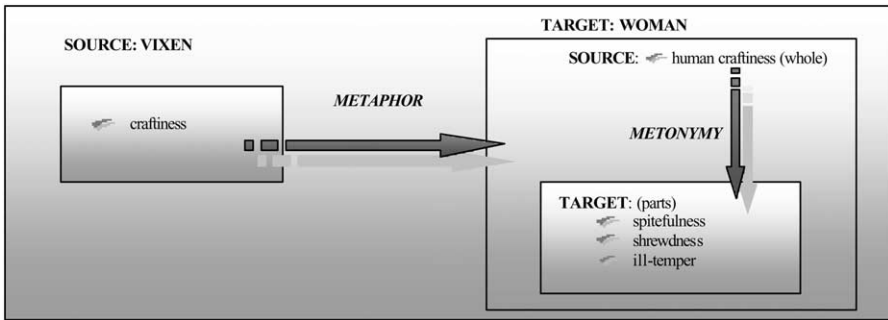


Fig. 1. Hypothesis on the mapping for *woman is a vixen* metaphor (spitefulness, shrewdness, and ill-temper).

against their traditionally established passive role and, therefore, they are socially considered spiteful, shrewish, and ill-tempered.⁶ In this sense, we could explain the metaphor *woman is a vixen* as a conceptual mapping in which the source domain (*vixen*) contains the quintessential property of craftiness. This feature of the animal is first metaphorically mapped onto the feature of craftiness located in the target domain (*woman*). Then, within this target domain a metonymy occurs, i.e. the feature of woman's craftiness, located in a source domain, is metonymically mapped onto the features of spitefulness, shrewishness, and ill-temper in a target domain, since, as we have already said, when a woman is called a *vixen* some of the negative features of being crafty are highlighted. In other words, in this case, spitefulness, shrewishness, and ill-temper can be viewed as potential parts of craftiness. Fig. 1 diagrams this situation.

As in the case of the *woman is a vixen* metaphor, implying that women are spiteful, shrewish, and so on, in those instances that stress the feature of idleness, there exists a clear correlate between the features stressed in men or women and the features of craftiness. A crafty person is clever enough to avoid performing some laborious actions and doing just nothing. According to this idea we understand the metaphor consisting of a source domain (*zorro/zorra*) from which the quintessential property of craftiness is metaphorically mapped onto craftiness in the target domain (*hombre, mujer*). As in the previous metaphor, a metonymy is involved in the process. Thus, the feature of craftiness located in the target domain (*hombre, mujer*) becomes the source domain in a metonymy by means of which the feature is mapped onto idleness, located in the target domain. Most idle persons are crafty and therefore, craftiness is

⁶ This link between craftiness and other features relating to shrewishness is also made if we look at the etymology of the adjectives *shrewish* and *shrewd*. On the one hand, *shrewish* is derived from the noun *shrew*, meaning an animal, and also an ill-tempered scolding woman. *Shrew* has its origin in the Middle English word *shrewe*, which means evil or scolding person. On the other hand, *shrewd* is derived from the same Middle English word *shrewe* to which it was added *-ed*. Thus, one of the meanings –although obsolete– of the adjective *shrewd* is *shrewish*. Therefore, if we consider this common root for both terms, and take into account the fact that one of the synonyms for the word *shrewd* is *astute* or *crafty*, then we realise that features such as shrewishness and craftiness are not so distant in meaning. (Longman Dictionary of English Language, 1994, see Appendix).

mostly required in order to be idle. This is described in Fig. 2. Note that although in Spanish the word *zorro* connoting idleness is applied to people in general, when it is specifically applied to women called *zorras*, its meaning becomes eclipsed by the meaning of prostitution that the word *zorra* also conveys.

Finally, we could explain the instances of the metaphor highlighting prostitution in women in two possible ways. One of them is that in which the quintessential property of craftiness in the source domain (*zorra*) is firstly mapped onto craftiness in the target domain (*mujer*), and then, within this same target domain, prostitution is metonymically mapped onto the latter craftiness, located in a target domain within the previous target domain. This mapping would explain why prostitutes are usually understood as crafty persons. Observe that in this mapping, prostitution is the whole and craftiness is just a part of it, a part which metonymically describes it. In Fig. 3 we diagram this process.

As for the conceptual mappings for those features that do not have to do with the quintessential property, the following instances of the *People are Animals* metaphor can be found:

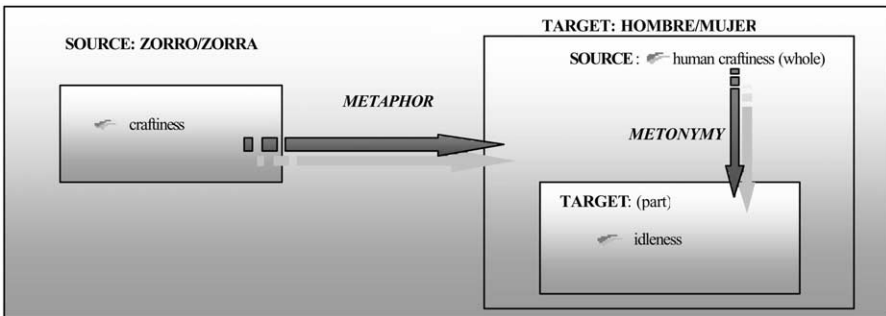


Fig. 2. Hypothesis on the mapping for *el hombre es un zorro/la mujer es una zorra* metaphor (idleness).

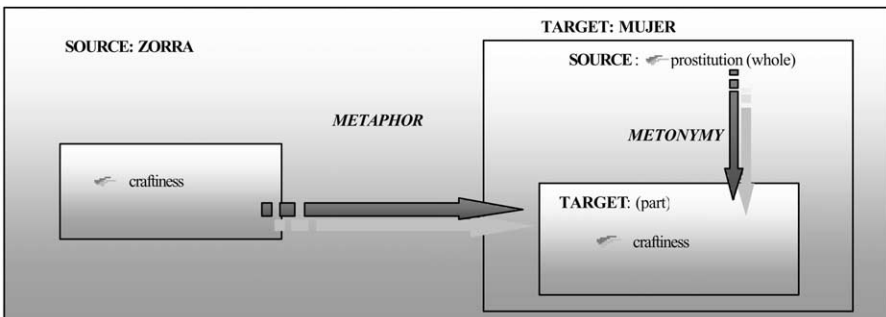


Fig. 3. One possible hypothesis on the mapping for *la mujer es una zorra* metaphor (prostitution) out of the quintessential property (craftiness).

Attractiveness:

- Woman is a *fox*, *foxy lady*, *stone fox*.
- Man is a *fox*.

Prostitution (another possible interpretation):

- La mujer es una *zorra*, *zorrón*, *zorrupia*; *zorrea*.

First, the metaphors that allude to the feature of attractiveness obey a conceptual mapping in which the source domain is filled with the characteristics that make foxes beautiful and attractive animals, i.e. fur and movement, among others. These characteristics are mapped onto the target domain to stress the attractiveness of women, and even men; however, we should add that *women are foxes*, meaning that women are attractive, is a much more widespread metaphor than *men are foxes*, meaning that men are attractive. In the case of the metaphor as used to refer to women, Palmatier (1995: 155–156) explains that “the metaphor is based either on the beautiful appearance of the animal in the wild or the fact that classy ladies often wore fox stoles in the 1960s”.

Secondly, another possible interpretation for the instances of the metaphor referring to prostitution is the following: to human eyes, it seems that vixens have a promiscuous sexual behavior since they copulate with different males in the mating season. In this metaphor, we point out the sexual behavior of the *zorra* in the source domain and map it onto the sexual behavior (prostitution) of the *mujer*. Morally, human beings interpret the sexual behavior of vixens as something similar to prostitution in women. Nonetheless, the vixen itself is not a prostitute, because prostitution as we understand it, i.e. a pay for sex relationship, does not exist in the animal world. This is the reason why for this metaphor no previous step exists in which we apply the property of prostitution, as a quintessential property, to the *zorra*. This metaphor hides the meaning of *la mujer es una zorra* metaphor, implying women are crafty persons. This sexual connotation of the metaphor also takes place in metaphors with other animals such as the female of the dog (*bitch/perra*) or the female of the wolf (*bitch/loba*).

6.2.2. Bull/cow

The following metaphorical instances containing the word *bull* have been gathered:

Large size/strength:

- Man is a *bull*.
- Woman is a *bull*.
- Man is *strong as a bull*.
- Woman is *strong as a bull*.

Aggressiveness:

- Man is a *bull*, a *bulldozer*, *bulldozes*, a *raging bull*, *roars like a bull*, *bullheaded*, *bullish*.
- Woman is a *bull*, a *bulldozer*, *bulldozes*, a *raging bull*, *roars like a bull*, *bull-headed*, *bullish*.

Clumsiness, insensitiveness:

- Man is (*like*) a bull in a china shop.
- Woman is (*like*) a bull in a china shop.

We have defined main metaphors as those portraying features innate in the animal. On the other hand, secondary metaphors are those whose highlighted feature acquires its meaning from a particular situation. If we follow this idea in the present case, the metaphor *man/woman is (like) a bull in a china shop*,⁷ meaning, on the one hand, a clumsy man or woman, and, on the other hand, according to Palmatier (1995: 49–50), a man or woman who has no regard for the feelings or property of others, is of a secondary type, since we are making reference to some specific situations out of which the meanings of the metaphor are developed, not to a salient or quintessential property of bulls.

With regard to the main metaphors here, we are thinking of those making reference to the features of large size and strength, and also aggressiveness. To a great extent, all of them define bulls in a proper way. In our previous analysis of metaphorical uses of the word *toro*, we concluded that strength, together with bravery, were two of the quintessential properties of this animal. Now, we could also complete this list of quintessential properties for bulls with those of large size and aggressiveness, related in some way to strength and bravery.

Following a cognitive analysis of metaphors, in the case of large size and strength there is a source domain (*bull*) out of which these features are mapped onto the same features in the target domain (*man*, and to a lesser extent, *woman*). For obvious reasons, already pointed out, in this metaphor we do not need a previous step to explain how bulls have the features of large size and strength.

In contrast, the metaphors implying aggressiveness are the result of two steps: in a first step, the character trait of aggressiveness is metaphorically applied from *humans* (source domain) to the behavior of *bulls* (target domain). This step takes place because animals lack this feature, as we understand it. We understand bulls' aggressiveness as if it were human aggressiveness. As Lakoff and Turner (1989: 194) explain, "we understand their (animals') attributes in terms of human character traits. We think of them, react to them, and treat them as we would a person with such traits. Animals act instinctively, and different kinds of animals have different kinds of instinctive behavior. We comprehend their behavior in terms of human behavior, and we use the language of human character traits to describe such behavior". In our opinion, human aggressiveness is mostly followed by an awareness of one's behavior as well as of the consequences this behavior has for others. In a second step, the already received feature of aggressiveness by bulls comes back to men and women in a new metaphor. As the reader may figure out, in the new metaphor

⁷ In this paper, we consider the expression (*like*) a bull in a china shop as a metaphor. Space precludes a deep analysis of this issue, debate on which goes back to Aristotle's time. See, for instance, Searle (1981: 248–285). Either as a simile or a metaphor, the expression basically depicts a big and even clumsy animal surrounded by fragile objects, which can be easily mapped onto a person who is clumsy at a specific moment or insensitive when s/he is figuratively immersed in a difficult situation. Because of the connection between bull and person we have included this instance in our corpus of examples.

these features are mapped from a source domain (*bull*) onto a target domain (*man*, and to a lesser extent, *woman*). Now, the following metaphors are configured out of the word *cow*:

Unattractiveness, large size, untidiness, coarseness:

- Woman is a *cow*.

Respect:

- Woman is a *sacred cow*.
- Man is a *sacred cow*.

Prostitution:

- Woman is a *cow*.

In English, when a woman is called a *cow*, we are mainly thinking of her unattractiveness, big size, untidiness or even coarseness. Therefore, among the instances pointed out above, we will mainly focus on the metaphor that conveys these features, i.e. *woman is a cow*, since we consider it has got the central and most widespread meaning.

If we take a look at these features, we can establish some kind of affinity in meaning among them, since they are all physical or behavioral: Often, a large sized woman may seem unattractive, untidy or even coarse to others' eyes. Obviously, these associations do not have a scientific basis, yet they are deeply rooted in our society and culture. For this reason, our hypothesis on the formation of this metaphor would be as follows: all of the features mentioned above would be located in the target domain (*woman*). They are mapped out of a feature that we consider the root of all of them, i.e. a cow's fatness, which would be placed in the source domain (*cow*).

On the other hand, with regard to the meaning of prostitute or prostitute-like behavior implied by the *woman is a cow* metaphor, the interpretation is not clear at all. In our view, this metaphor could have been engendered in the cow's sexual behavior, which, according to Mariño (1996: 487), is quite active. This possibility of matching between the animal and woman's behavior is not odd at all in languages. Thus, the feature of sexual behavior would be mapped from the source domain (*cow*) onto the target domain (*woman*).

Moreover, regarding the *man/woman is a sacred cow* metaphor, it is considered secondary because its meaning arises from a concrete situation, i.e. from the fact that, according to the Hindu religion, cows are a gift from God.⁸

6.2.3. *Toro/vaca*

Regarding the word *toro* the following instances of the *People are Animals* metaphor will be considered in our analysis:

⁸ Apart from being applied to people, according to our sources, the expression *sacred cow* can be applied to institutions, ideas, or beliefs, among others. This is also the case for the Spanish *vaca sagrada*.

Physical strength:

- El hombre es un *toro*, *está hecho un toro*, *es como un toro*.

Intelligence:

- El hombre es un *toro corrido*.

Anger:

- El hombre es un *toro mohíno*.
- El hombre *está hecho un toro de fuego*.

These instances can be arranged into two groups, the first of which contains the most usual metaphors in Spanish. We will label them as the main metaphors. Within this group we would find those metaphors referring to physical strength and bravery, which are usually considered as two of the quintessential properties of bulls. In the second group we would locate metaphors that are less used in Spanish, usually to depict the metaphorical meanings of intelligence and anger. We will refer to this group as secondary metaphors.

In cognitive terms, physical strength and bravery differ to a great extent. Differently from the craftiness of foxes and vixens, with regard to bull's physical strength we do not need to postulate a step in which human beings endow the bull with this feature, since bulls are already strong by nature. In other words, physical strength is a physical feature that most, if not all, bulls possess. On the contrary, bravery is a behavioral characteristic that needs something that bulls do not have by nature, i.e. the capability of measuring and becoming aware of any danger, withstanding it without fear. Bulls are not able to measure the danger they have in a bullfight, they simply defend themselves from aggression by charging everything around them with their two impressive horns and their strength. This means that human beings associate this behavior of bulls with human bravery. Hence, concerning bravery we are talking of an initial step in which *human beings* (source domain) give this feature to *bulls* (target domain).

Now, we need to explain how the metaphors related to men's physical strength occur. We have already stated that there is no need for a step in which this feature is given to bulls by men. In this case, we are thinking of a metaphor in which the feature is simply mapped from the source domain to which *toro* belongs onto the target domain of *hombre* (and even *mujer*, although this is less frequent). Thus, in Spanish, a man's strength is like a bull's strength. The correlate is clearly established.

Although the rest of the Spanish metaphors using the word *toro* are part of our corpus, i.e. those implying intelligence and anger, we have not considered them, for two main reasons: first, in these uses, the meaning of the metaphorical word *toro* acquires connotations it would not have if it appeared alone, without the presence of the parts *corrido* and *de fuego*; second, these metaphors do not often occur in Spanish.

We now move on to describe the development of metaphors from the word *vaca*. The following are the instances found in our dictionary search:

Fatness:

- La mujer es *una vaca*, *está hecha una vaca*, *está como una vaca*, *es una vaquilona*, *es una vacaburra*.
- El hombre *está hecho una vaca*, *está como una vaca*.

Respect:

- La mujer es *una vaca sagrada*.
- El hombre es *una vaca sagrada*.

Entertainment:

- La mujer es *la vaca de la boda*.
- El hombre es *la vaca de la boda*.

Prostitution:

- La mujer es *una vaca*.

As with the metaphors with *toro*, we will organize these metaphors into two groups: first, main metaphor, and second, secondary metaphors. The conceptual mapping for the different instances of the main metaphor consists of a source domain containing the feature of fatness in the *vaca*. This feature is mapped onto the fatness contained in the target domain (typically, *mujer*, and occasionally, *hombre*). Also, as in the case of *toro*, there is not a previous step here in which the *vaca* takes the feature of fatness from human beings. The reason is that, as with strength, fatness is a physical characteristic owned by the adult animal. Fatness is a universal or innate characteristic of cows. In fact, we could say this is cows' quintessential property, or at least one of their most salient features.

In contrast, most of the secondary metaphors with *vaca* do not highlight a universal characteristic of cows, but other features resultant from a specific situation in people's lives. This is the case of *vaca de la boda* and *vaca sagrada*. As an example, the metaphor *La mujer/el hombre es la vaca de la boda*, meaning s/he is the one who provides entertainment for guests, comes from the fact that, usually in the past, in Spain, cows were animals that entertained people in festivals. On the other hand, we must point out that, as it happened with the English *cow*, one of the meanings of the metaphor *la mujer es una vaca*, which is slang exclusively used in Latin America, as Tello (1992: 373) indicates, is prostitution; therefore, the cognitive explanation for this meaning could be the same as in the English case.

Finally, we should conclude that, although the main metaphors found for *toro* and *vaca* both refer to physical characteristics, the one highlighted by the female member of the pair, fatness, is clearly negative in contrast to that of the male member of the pair, strength.

7. Conclusions

By means of a contrastive cognitive analysis of the pairs *fox/vixen*, *bull/cow* and their counterparts in Spanish *zorro/zorra*, *toro/vaca*, we set out to answer four

research questions in this paper. Our first question was whether these examples of Animal Metaphor were equally conceptualized in English and Spanish. We saw that this metaphor is present in both languages, and that regarding its conceptualization there are similarities, but also subtle but remarkable differences. As most of these differences have to do with the issue of semantic derogation posed in the rest of our research questions, we will devote this section to an exposition of two types of conclusions: an intralinguistic conclusion, in which we will show how semantic derogation, where it exists, works in each pair within a given language, and an interlinguistic conclusion, which will determine the degree of semantic derogation existing in English and Spanish according to each pair of animals.

An aspect that the reader must take into account is the difficulty of characterizing each feature as positive or negative or of determining what scale should be used in order to rate a feature as more or less positive or negative than another. We should pay attention to many aspects in order to range the selected features as positive or negative, e.g. the use of each word in different contexts and the user's interpretation, among others. As an example, a friend can call another friend who is extraordinarily slim a *cow*. In Gricean terms, the maxim of quality has been broken and an implicature has been generated: the former friend is not referring to the fatness of the latter, but to her slimness. Therefore, the metaphorical meaning of *cow* in a specific context with specific users may be just the opposite to that explained in the dictionaries.

Bearing these limitations in mind, we still attempt to establish a continuum ranging from positive to negative features. Thus, since this analysis is based on dictionaries, we firstly propose to follow the main metaphorical meaning that dictionaries give for each word, e.g. calling someone a *vaca* mainly and mostly implies calling her/him fat, and today fatness is regarded as a pejorative feature or at least a non-positive one. In the same way, anger, spitefulness, aggressiveness, or untidiness are negative features, whereas attractiveness or respect have clear positive connotations. Second, in order to determine the degree of semantic derogation, we should determine which feature is the most positive or most negative in a group of positive and negative features, respectively. To answer this question, we propose to distinguish between behavioral and physical features. When comparing a positive behavioral feature and a positive physical one, we will consider the former more positive than the latter, e.g. intelligence will be considered more positive than physical strength. When comparing a negative behavioral feature and a negative physical feature, the former will be considered more negative than the latter, e.g. anger will be more negative than fatness. Moreover, the distinction is harder to make between features belonging to the same category, i.e. behavioral or physical. For example, among physical features, if we consider strength and fatness negative features in women, it is almost impossible to determine which is the most negative. Maybe fatness has worse connotations than strength, but this categorization is very subjective. With regard to strictly behavioral features, the task is also difficult, but we can assert that, among negative behavioral features, some of the worst are considered to be those referring to promiscuous sexual behavior.

7.1. Intralinguistic conclusions

7.1.1. English pair: fox/vixen

According to the meanings collected for this animal pair, in English, men can be crafty and attractive. On the other hand, women can be crafty, attractive, shrewish, spiteful or ill-tempered. Excepting attractiveness, which is positive, and craftiness, which has a double perspective, the rest of the features are negative. These characteristics are applied mainly to women. Therefore, in this case, we must also talk of certain kind of semantic derogation. Observe here that metaphors implying craftiness and attractiveness in women, i.e. *foxy lady*, *clever as a fox*, among others, are made out of the male member of the animal pair, *fox*.

7.1.2. Spanish pair: zorro/zorra

According to the metaphorical uses of this Spanish pair, men can be crafty and idle, and women can be crafty, idle and prostitutes. With the exception of craftiness, the rest of the meanings are clearly negative. However, in a continuum, prostitution will be regarded as worse than idleness. Craftiness, on the other hand, may have a double interpretation: in certain situations it can be a characteristic, beneficial to the one who owns it; e.g. to perform a difficult and risky task, a certain amount of craftiness is required. On the other hand, being crafty when the situation does not require it or being too crafty is usually regarded as negative.

Bearing these aspects in mind, we could conclude that in metaphors relating to this pair of animals, in Spanish, there is some kind of semantic derogation due to several reasons. First, whereas there are words such as *zorra*, *zorrear*, *zorrón*, and *zorrupia* referring to prostitution in women, this meaning is not used about men. Second, some of these words have their male counterparts, e.g. *zorro*, *zorrear*, *zorrón*; however, they allude to the feature of craftiness. Finally, we must add that although in our dictionary search, we found some words that apply the characteristics of craftiness and idleness to men and women, in practice, the meaning of prostitution hides these meanings for women.

7.1.3. English pair: bull/cow

As we have already seen, according to this pair, in English, men can mostly be strong, big, aggressive, clumsy and insensitive. Much less frequently they can be respected. On their part, to a lesser extent, women can be strong, aggressive, clumsy, insensitive, respected, and prostitutes, and most usually they can be unattractive, untidy, coarse and big.

With respect to men, the most usual features implied by the metaphors with *bull* are those of large size, strength and aggressiveness. Except for aggressiveness, the rest are positive features in men. Regarding women, the most usual metaphorical meanings of the word *cow* clearly depict negative features such as unattractiveness, untidiness, coarseness, and even large size, which, in our opinion, is usually considered a negative feature in women or, at least, it is not associated to femininity. Consequently, the main and most usual metaphors made with this animal pair suggest that women receive more negative features than men, whose most negative

feature is aggressiveness. This fact proves that there is a kind of semantic derogation in metaphors applied to women.

However, we must pay attention to the following aspect: there are several metaphors referring to a given sex, men or women, which are formed out of the word corresponding to the opposite animal member, bull or cow. That is to say, metaphors connoting strength, large size, aggressiveness, clumsiness, and insensitiveness in women have been derived from the word *bull*. On the contrary, the metaphor connoting respect in men has its origin in the word *cow*. Moreover, as we have seen, each of these metaphors already exists for its corresponding sex, i.e. strength, large size and aggressiveness are the resulting features of some metaphors with *bull* applied to men, and respect is the resulting feature of some metaphors with the word *cow* applied to women. This means that with regard to this type of metaphor, there is no semantic derogation inasmuch as the same features are highlighted for each sex by the same metaphors.

To sum up, regarding the most frequent metaphors, the metaphorical applications of this animal pair to people bring about semantic derogation for women. On the whole, whenever secondary or less used metaphors are considered, this phenomenon either is not observed or is not so evident.

7.1.4. Spanish pair: *toro/vaca*

In the case of this animal pair, there is a wide variety of features highlighted by the selected metaphors. Thus, we have discovered that men can be strong, intelligent, angry, fat, respected and they can also entertain people. Women, on the other hand, can be fat, they can be respected, like men, and entertain people, but they can be prostitutes as well.

If we take into account the main metaphors in both members of this pair, the highlighted features would be related in some way, i.e. strength in men, and fatness in women. Both are characteristics that match the physical appearance of animals to people. Nevertheless, whereas strength in men is a positive feature, fatness in men and women is negative. We must also remember that calling a man a *vaca* (*cow*) is much less frequent than using this expression to a woman.

Moreover, we observe that the female term of this animal pair, i.e. *vaca*, may give rise to metaphors used about men, i.e. those alluding to their fatness, respect and ability to entertain. Apart from the already explained metaphor of fatness, the other two are positive, not only for men but also for women.

Finally, regarding men and women's features, we must add that for men, there exists both a positive metaphor and a negative one; the first one refers to men's intelligence whereas, the second alludes to men's anger. In the case of women, there is one meaning of *cow* which is rather negative, since it labels them as prostitutes. However, we must also bear in mind that this is slang used in Latin America and in Spain it is not used at all.

In view of the different features attached to both sexes, it is difficult to decide whether, overall, the metaphors with this animal pair trigger any kind of semantic derogation in women. However, if we take into account the most widely used metaphors in both cases, i.e. those alluding to strength in men, and those alluding to fatness in women, we clearly observe semantic derogation for women.

7.2. Interlinguistic conclusions

7.2.1. Fox/vixen-zorro/zorra

Apart from the coincidences found in some of the features in both languages, e.g. craftiness, we could conclude that concerning this pair of animals, the degree of semantic derogation of women is higher in Spanish than in English, in view of the fact that only in the former do some metaphorical meanings allude to women's promiscuous sexual behavior.

Moreover, in both languages the metaphorical meanings of the masculine terms do not connote features as negative as those connoted by the feminine ones. Although craftiness in a person may be associated with the ability to deceive people, that ability may be also useful to achieve any goal in life. As a result, *fox* and *zorro* would be accepted as positive terms in many contexts. Even idleness, which is rather a negative term in Anglo-Saxon and North American circles, may be not so negative in some Mediterranean societies, where idleness can be associated with being so clever as to dislike work and enjoy life by just doing nothing.

Furthermore, with regard to this animal pair a common tendency has been observed in the two languages: whereas the quintessential property as applied to men does not acquire any extra connotation, it turns into negative properties when it appears in metaphors applied to women. Thus, one of the interpretations of the formation of *la mujer es una zorra* metaphor, meaning she is a prostitute, relates prostitution to the quintessential property of craftiness. In the same way, in English the quintessential property of craftiness in the metaphorical use of *vixen*, exclusively applied to women, develops into negative features such as spitefulness.

7.2.2. Bull/cow-toro/vaca

Concerning the most frequently used metaphorical meanings of this animal pair in both languages, we could conclude that to a great extent they coincide in the features highlighted by the male members of the pair, i.e. strength. With regard to the metaphors applied to women, we stated that they involved semantic derogation in each language. However, it is important to note here that the derogation is of a different kind in the two languages. Whereas in Spanish the physical aspect of fatness in women was considered, the English metaphors take into account not only this physical aspect but also other negative behavioral features such as coarseness. Hence, we conclude that derogation is higher in English due to the fact that we are talking of features which depict a negative behavior in women.

7.3. Common conclusions

On the basis of the results, we can conclude that at least with regard to the most widely used metaphors, i.e. the main metaphors, there exists semantic derogation for women in both languages. On the whole, the contrastive cognitive analysis applied here gives evidence in favor of what we could call the hypothesis of semantic imbalance in language [as pointed out by Robin Lakoff (1975), Gibbon (1999), Schulz (1975), Holmes (1992), Mills (1995)], since women regularly acquire the most negative meaning.

However, our analysis also reveals some aspects that impose limitations on this hypothesis which should be taken into account. First, we must recognize the existence of metaphors derived from particular animal terms which are applied to the opposite sex in human beings, e.g. *woman is a fox* (craftiness), *woman is a fox* (attractiveness), or *el hombre es una vaca sagrada* (respect), among others. Regarding this type of metaphor our analysis shows that in each case the meaning, either positive or negative, is kept the same when the animal word is applied to the opposite sex in humans. Second, we must also remember that there are differences of derogation between languages: with regard to the animal pair *fox/vixen-zorro/zorra*, Spanish is more derogatory to women than English in view of the fact that in Spanish, women are related to promiscuous sexual behavior, whereas this is not so in English. On the other hand, regarding the animal pair *bull/cow-toro/vaca*, English proves to be more derogatory since, among other things, in the main metaphor from *cow*, women are associated not only with negative physical aspects, i.e. unattractiveness or large size, but also with negative behavioral aspects such as coarseness.

Moreover, we should pay attention to some phenomena which are common to both animal pairs in both languages:

First, to a greater or lesser extent, women's sexual behavior is a constant in both animal pairs in both languages, as the following examples illustrate: one of the meanings of *zorra* was prostitute; *fox*, *foxy lady* and *stone fox* implied, among others, physical attraction, clearly linked to sexual attraction, while in Latin America, *vaca* means prostitute; and finally, one of the meanings of *cow* is prostitute, as well. Apart from the infrequent use of the word *fox* meaning attractive man, there are no other examples of words referring to men's sexual behavior. One possible reason for this trend would be that traditionally, in a patriarchal society, women have been closely connected with sex, i.e. they have been mostly relegated to reproduction functions as well as to giving sexual pleasure to men, as if they were mere sexual objects.

Second, some kind of systematicity has been found in the case of metaphors referring to women and developed from the quintessential property: In general, in the metaphors we collected, women are more negatively depicted than in the case of metaphors referring to men and developed from the quintessential property. This is illustrated by the following metaphors: *la mujer es una zorra*, *zorrón*, *zorrupia*, among others (prostitution); *woman is a vixen* (spitefulness, shrewishness, ill-temper); *woman is a cow* (unattractiveness, large size, untidy, coarse). Only in one case, *el hombre es un zorro*, *zorronglón*, *zorrongo* (idleness), are men attached to a negative feature developed out of the quintessential property.

This fact has significant implications for the interpretation of the examples analyzed here in which each member of the animal pair has its own quintessential property/ies. The metaphors derived from the quintessential property/ies are either positive or negative for men, e.g. *bull/toro* (physical strength, large size, aggressiveness). For women, they may be negative, e.g. *vaca* (fatness), or other metaphors of clearly negative value may be developed from the quintessential property, e.g. *cow* (unattractiveness, large size, untidiness, coarseness).

We may say that with some limitations, semantic derogation in the two pairs of animal words analyzed occurs more in terms referring to females than in those referring to males, and that this is true of both languages. It is interesting to speculate why this might be so.

From a cognitive perspective, the answer to this question would be the similar way in which the Great Chain Metaphor works in these two languages. That is to say, through these English and Spanish examples of *fox/zorro*, *vixen/zorra*, *bull/toro*, *cow/vaca*, the same cognitive and cultural model is revealed: on the one hand, animals are understood in terms of humans; and on the other hand, humans are not all equal since men are placed higher than women in a vertical hierarchical organization of beings, a factor which appears to be the most important in explaining the findings. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 167) already pointed out that higher and lower sub-levels are observed for each level of beings. Therefore, just as dogs are higher-order beings than insects, and trees than algae, in a patriarchal society men are clearly considered higher-order beings than women. As Lakoff and Turner (1989: 66), explain, science does not have anything to do with the acquisition of these cognitive models. On the contrary, they state that these models are acquired in two ways: by our own direct experience, and through our culture. Cognitive models acquired by culture are the most long-standing in our society.

The cognitive model that gives rise to the metaphors analyzed here has been acquired by culture or tradition, and most concretely, patriarchal tradition. As Scollon (1993) puts it, Animal Metaphor is very widespread due to the fact that its roots lie in traditional and rural society. Life in modern industrial cities may lead us to think that we have broken the chains of rural and patriarchal society and that men and women have equality, but we are still the inheritors of such a society, as language reveals through metaphors, sayings and proverbs.

Traditionally, the selected animal pairs have long been dealt with on feminist grounds as prototypical examples of semantic derogation; however, in this paper we aimed at a deeper analysis of their behavior in two different languages so as to test the validity of the semantic derogation hypothesis in these two specific cases. Although we must recognize some restrictions, the analysis of these two paired examples in English and Spanish gave us evidence of patterns of systematicity in semantic derogation towards the female terms of the chosen animal pairs in the two languages. However, given the small number of examples and languages analyzed, we cannot claim either its systematicity in Animal Metaphor as a whole or its universality in other languages, although our intuition leads us to believe that this systematicity will occur in other paired examples of animals, mainly mammals, e.g. *dog/bitch-perro/perra*, *wolf/bitch-lobo/loba*. To confirm or refute the hypothesis of semantic derogation for the female terms in this area of language, further studies are needed on a greater number of examples from different languages and cultures. Also, it would be useful to study the presence and variation of semantic derogation according to a number of variables, some concerned with the source of data gathering, such as dictionaries compared to large computerized databases and other sources, others related to the speakers of the languages involved, for instance, sex, age, educational and social background.

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