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Features of Folk Etymology in the Spanish Language in the Framework of Word Formation

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***Abstract:** As in any language, this lexical base is constantly updated, replenished with new units. The process of enriching the lexical fund is commonly called word formation, or word production. This process is inextricably linked with etymology, as with the science that studies the origin of a particular unit. Since the replenishment of the lexical fund is a continuous process, we can talk about the relevance of a given topic.*
***Keywords:** word-forming aspect, folk etymology, associative etymology, toponym, hypercorrection.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Spanish, like any other language, has its own lexical fund. The lexical fund is understood as "the lexical base of the language, the most stable layer of its vocabulary, which includes, first of all, the primitive, the most important and necessary, firmly established in the life of the people and commonly used names of objects, phenomena, processes related to real reality" [Gomez].
One way or another, in the word-forming aspect, folk etymology is inextricably linked with certain changes at various levels: semantic, phonological, morphological and others. Depending on where these changes occur and what motivates them, we can talk about the classification of the corresponding mechanisms of the emergence of a new lexical unit.
Although in many cases the root cause of the change remains unclear, one can speak of the predominance of one or another source that provoked the subsequent change [Ullmann, 1967: 22].

Scientist Stephen Ullmann identifies 4 types of changes that can occur under the influence of folk etymology:
1) Changing the content, but not the form (signified, but not signifying);
2) Change of form, but not of meaning (signifying, but not signified);
3) Change of form and meaning (signifying and signified);
4) The change is spelling, but not phonetic.

At the same time, all these changes are the result of one of the factors that we will consider below. Often, as already mentioned, it is impossible to determine which of the factors caused this change. Nevertheless, it can be argued that in the case of a change in form only, phonetic distortion is such a factor. In the case of a change in one content − the loss of the primary meaning of the lexical unit.

At the same time, any of the types of changes presented by S. Ulman, arising as a consequence of folk etymology, indicates possible levels of occurrence of the latter:
a) The message of the addressee does not correspond to the norm in its form (e.g.: the use of *tapar* in the meaning of *tapiar*);
b) The message of the addressee does not correspond to the norm in terms of content (e.g.: the use of *prisión* in the meaning of *presión*);
c) The message of the addressee does not correspond to the norm in form and content (for example: the use of *departamento* in the meaning of *apartamento*);
d) Distortion of the form when the recipient perceives the message;
e) Distortion of the content when the recipient perceives the message;
f) Distortion of the form and content when the recipient perceives the message.

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One of the main sources of replenishment of the lexical fund of the Spanish language are also borrowings that occurred in the history of the formation of the language itself and did not escape the influence of folk etymology. This concerns, first of all, the substrates of the Iberian Peninsula, the Latin language and, in particular, the Latin cultural superstrate.

First, it should be noted phonetic distortion, which can be caused by various factors that cause the loss of primary motivation, which leads to a new interpretation of the lexical unit: *pression > prisión; tapar > tapiar; desnucar > desnuncar; vacante > vagante.*

Undoubtedly, in these examples, it is the change in meaning that plays a key role, but we can talk about phonetic distortion as a prerequisite for the subsequent partial or complete loss of meaning. The conditions created by articulation specific to each language provide similar phonetic changes.

However, there are also such examples, when analyzing which it is difficult to assume a phonetic change: *helicóptero > alicóptero; zanahoria > cenahoria; girasol > mirasol; sandalias > andalias*.

Here it would be more correct to assume the loss of the primary motivation of the lexical unit as a prerequisite for the distortion of the word form, which justifies the term "associative etymology".

In Spanish, folk etymology is also manifested at the level of phraseological units, which contain non-existent proper names and toponyms formed from similar meanings of lexical units, or vice versa; toponyms are used in a new meaning, which also indicates the expansion of the lexical stock of the language.

New proper names appear or acquire new meanings due to similarity with known realities. In other words, some proper names (more often, the names of saints) acquire secondary motivation and dual content through changes at the morphological level.

Más vale Santo Tomás que San Donato: a similar form of proper names is played with the verbs *tomar* (to take) and *donar* (to give).

Ser como San Babilés: the presence of two consecutive b's creates an association with the well-known expression *ser bobo* (to be a fool).

Hoy es San Acá y San Allá: adverbs acá and allá (here and there, lit. here and there) become proper names, which makes the meaning of the phrase *mucho ir y venir de las gentes* more figurative.

Ir a Villavieja − envejecer (to grow old); *Estar (vivir) en Babia − ser un babieca o un bobalicón, estar distraido de lo que se trata* (to distract from the topic of conversation); *Ser el alcalde de Ronquillo − roncar* (to snore); *Ser una cosa de Valdivias o del Valdivieso − ser de balde* (be free).

Obviously, each toponym is semantically motivated. In other words, there is the same arbitrable relationship between the signifier and the signified of a toponym as there is between other elements of the language. Only the historical evolution of the language, or the change of the so-called "soil", can break the connection between the signifier and the signified, creating conditions for the toponym to become only an identification sign devoid of its own signified [Gómez, 529]. Due to the fact that folk etymology is an attempt to restore the connection of the signified with the signifier, we can talk about its direct influence on the formation of new toponyms.

For example, *Olmeda de las Fuentes*, a famous municipality in Spain in the province of Madrid, is the real name of a historical place, previously known as *Olmeda de la Cebolla*. In 1953, the process of changing the name began, at the end of which it acquired its present form.

Most likely, the name change was due to an incorrect etymological interpretation of the word *cebolla*. The toponym itself acquired this form through the adaptation of the Arabic diminutive with the meaning of mountain, *kabal*, thus, *kubaila* − hill, hill. At a certain historical period in the Middle Ages, following the Reconquista in the XI century, the inhabitants of the settlement, not knowing the meaning of *kubaila*, pronounced the toponym as *dzobella* or *chobella*. Then followed the search for a paronym, which became the unit *tsebolla*, and later *cebolla* [Marín]. From this we can conclude that the correct toponym should have been *Olmeda del Montecito*, devoid of incorrect associations and supported, among other things, by the peculiarities of the terrain (there is a hill near the settlement).

In the case of an Arabic toponym like *Guarromán in Jaen*, the name has nothing to do with *guarro (cerdo)* or pig farming. However, the correct etymological analysis lies on the surface: a similar root can be found in the place names *Guadalimar, Guadalquivir*, where *wad* means *río* (river). The second element can also be found in the toponym *Guadarromán* (river in Cordoba), where *arrumán* is a garnet [Corominas, 1987].

Also in Andalusia, the use of *Agualmedina* as a toponym of Guadalmedina is recorded, and *Agualporcún* in the place of *Guadalporcún*.

In this case, such a change can be called the opposite of the previous, incorrect interpretation − a hypercorrection that occurred due to academic pressure and the constant parallel between wad and river, water [Corominas, 1987].

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Having considered the etymological mechanisms of word formation, it can be concluded that the term "folk etymology" most often implies a kind of mixed type of mechanisms of change at various levels. Nevertheless, among the lexical units formed as a result of folk etymology, it is possible to distinguish words formed and fixed in the lexical dictionary, in connection with which some of the cases can be called productive.

The consequence of this change is the similarity of lexical units both at the phonetic and semantic level. An example of this phenomenon can be the units identified by Menendez Pidal and have already become classical in explaining the phenomenon of folk etymology: *cementerio, cerrojo* and *nigromantia* [Menéndez, 1985: 191]. The Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language notes that the word *cementerio* came into the language from Latin, which, in turn, borrowed it from Greek [DLE]. In the latter, *κοιμητήριον*, which means bedroom, bedchamber, has nothing to do with *cemento* (cement). Thus, it can be argued that the phoneme *-n*, which is absent in the root of the word, is a consequence of the analogy with *cemento*. This is proved by the fact that in the English language there is a lexical unit cemetery, where this analogy is not observed.

Seggojo (bolt) comes from the Latin *veruculum* (short spear). According to the established patterns of formation of lexical units of the Spanish language, it is logical to assume the formation of such a form as *verrojo*, under the influence of analogy with the verb *cerrar* (to close), which leads to a variant of the existing form of the lexical unit [Menéndez, 1985: 192].

Undoubtedly, these examples are not fully indicative, since they have existed in the lexical stock of the Spanish language for centuries. However, even at present, folk etymology continues to replenish the dictionary with new lexical units.

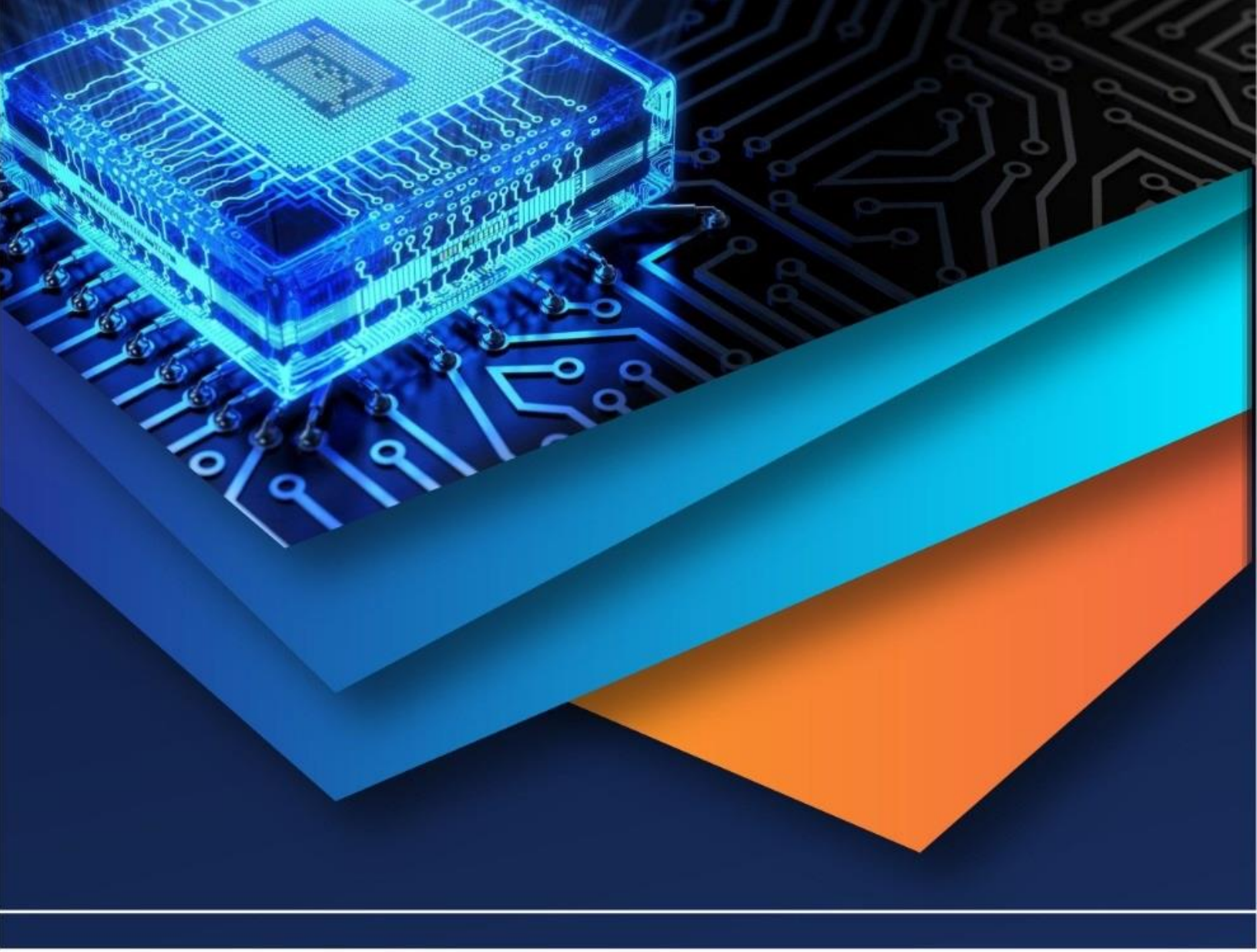
Menendez Pidal also refers to the mechanisms of word formation of folk etymology such a phenomenon as hypercorrection (ultracorrección) [Menéndez, 1985: 193]. He explains this phenomenon by the fact that the usual lexical stock may simultaneously contain the correct and "folk" form of the word (e.g.: *albóndigas* > *almóndigas*), which may cause certain difficulties for native speakers who do not have sufficient linguistic competence. For example, such units as *comido, comida, cansado, pasado* and so on exist on a par with the colloquial units *comío, comía, cansao, pasao* and so on.

In this case, wishing to appear literate, using colloquial units may make the mistake of separating the final vowels with a consonant [d] (for example, instead of the words *mío, tardío, correo, Bilbao,* say *mido, tardido, corredo, Bilbado*).

There are also cases of using folk etymology as the creation of a certain artistic image. Thus, in the novel by Miguel de Cervantes, folk etymology and its mechanisms become one of the key techniques of irony.

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