

# COGNITION, STEREOTYPE, IMAGINATION AND FANTASY IN THE PROCESS OF APPREHENDING THE NEW REALITY THROUGH THE CASTELLAN LEXICON: THE TESTIMONIES OF *CRONISTAS DE INDIAS*<sup>1</sup>

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- **ABSTRACT:** The *Crônicas de Indias* is a miscellaneous world with information about America colonization: letters, autobiographies, natural histories, which invite us to revisit the philology, where language, literature, history, anthropology fit equally. The works developed so far reached divergent conclusions. We have proposed to unite language, literature and, also, history and anthropology. All these texts are useful to refer their content to the penetration of the indigenous lexicon into the Castilian language -and vice versa-, with identity, cultural exchanges and understanding-representation-cognition of the world. We will systematize -from its heterogeneity- the data coming from the Chronicles marking six phases in the adaptation process, according to the lexicographical theory, which will culminate with the incorporation of the indigenous word into the Spanish lexicon (semasiological, onomasiological and cognitive fields). These testimonies show the very essence of linguistic cognition. It is noted that, first, each language is adapted to represent its environment reality. When a new reality appears, previously unknown, the problems begin: language is insufficient to apprehend it. Until reaching the specific autochthonous word, there will be multiple search attempts to adapt cognition and language, which will culminate with the incorporation of the borrowed word with the cognitive load that it possesses.
- **KEYWORDS:** *Crônicas de Indias*. History of Spanish lexicon. Cognition. Stereotype and semantic prototype. Imagination/fiction/fantasy. Languages in contact.

## Introduction

The *Chronicles of the Indies* is a miscellaneous world in which many things merge, because in them we find abundant information of all kinds about the colonization of America, in the broadest sense of the term (letters, autobiographies, natural histories,

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apologies, catechisms, dictionaries), which invites us to revisit the philology, within which they join and have a place for the same language, literature, history and anthropology, because “everything goes together because nothing was born with witnesses and milestones.”<sup>2</sup> (ALVAR, 1982, p. 249, our translation).

The varied works that have been raised about the Chronicles, not always from the same perspective and objectives, have led to divergent conclusions. By way of example, what is most interesting is the very conception of the American and the autochthonous, determining the origins of “Latin American” literature, only after the arrival of Columbus; What would be, then, the place that pre-Columbian culture would occupy? Even in literary theory, how does one navigate through topics such as fiction / reality; commitment / identity or aesthetic will? (CORDIVIOLA, 2009, 2005, 2003). The testimony of Linguistics is essential to understand all this. Because language is a faithful projection of culture, and those chroniclers who narrated a new reality had to apprehend it with the word: “the information of the *Chronicles* (*Crónicas*) will be conditioning and conditioned by the mirror of language.”<sup>3</sup> (ALVAR, 1982, p. 249, our translation).

But, until now, almost no one has ever tried to combine the plural aspects to which these testimonies lead. The intention here is to propose something else: to do philology, “to unite language, literature and, at the same time, history and anthropology.”<sup>4</sup> (MIRANDA POZA, 2010, p 116, our translation). Letters and autobiographies, natural or moral histories, apologies and relationships, catechisms and dictionaries, “[...] all these texts, whose theme is the discovery and conquest of America, and which are inscribed under the heading of *Chronicles of the Indies* (*Crónicas de Indias*).”<sup>5</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 54-55, our translation), turn out to be useful for our purpose: to refer the contents of this multiplicity of studies to the penetration of the indigenous lexicon in the Castilian language -and vice versa-, with the consequent changes that took place in the identity, culture and the understanding / representation / cognition of the world of those who spoke the language. Some time ago, Lope Blanch (1968, p.58, our translation) affirmed that “the most researched field of Spanish-American linguistics is the lexicographical one”<sup>6</sup>. This affirmation, several decades later, was reinforced by Moreno de Alba (1995, p.196), who gave news of the work of Solé (1990), who analyzed more than 3500 titles of which “[...] most has to do with lexicography, semantics or related areas: archaisms, neologisms, etymologies, indigenisms, etc.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Original: “todo anda junto porque nada nació con testigos y mojonos ahitados.” (ALVAR, 1982, p. 249).

<sup>3</sup> Original: “la información de las Crónicas estará condicionando y condicionada por el espejo de la lengua.” (ALVAR, 1982, p. 249).

<sup>4</sup> Original: “unir lengua, literatura y, al mismo tiempo, historia y antropología.” (MIRANDA POZA, 2010, p. 116)

<sup>5</sup> Original: “[...] todos estos textos, cuyo tema es el descubrimiento y conquista de América, y que se inscriben bajo el epígrafe de Crónicas de Indias.” (SERNA, 2003, p. 54-55)

<sup>6</sup> Original: “el campo más investigado de la lingüística hispanoamericana es el lexicográfico.” (LOPE BLANCH, 1968, p.58)

<sup>7</sup> Original: “[...] la mayor parte tiene que ver con lexicografía, semántica o áreas afines: arcaísmos, neologismos, etimologías, indigenismos, etc.” (MORENO DE ALBA, 1995, p.196).

## The texts: their nature and dimension

According to Castillo Durán (2004, p.9), the *Chronicles* are a reflection of what can be called “democratization of the narrative fact”<sup>8</sup>. In the middle of the Renaissance, we are no longer faced with courtly discourse, but with that of men without merit of nobility: a modest narrator, a soldier, a friar, an indian. In fact, when Díaz del Castillo (1992, p. 39) writes his *True Story* (*Historia Verdadera*), in these terms he refers to another similar one that is about the same subject: “I saw a story of good style [...]”<sup>9</sup>, a statement that, far from the apparent praise, contains a criticism of the written works by López de Gómara, educated man, attentive to the mandatory Latin, rhetorical and, therefore, a “liar” and not “truthful”. Bernal takes the side of the topic that developed in his time that could be summarized as: I write badly because I think well and I am not affected by any style that hides the truth. The same perspective that Teresa de Ávila will adopt: to keep the style and not to abide by formality as a guarantee of essentiality, of truthfulness, of authenticity —although, in the latter case, given her condition as a woman (LÁZARO CARRETER, 1981).

But, beyond observations concerning style and the true/false opposition to the representation of reality, it is worth remembering what was said by Oesterreicher (2013, p. 736, our translation) about the discursive traditions of the time and, more specifically, the concept of textual processing in the immediacy and distance axes. The first would represent a type of discourse close to orality, while the second would be characterized by a greater degree of elaboration, following the most classic textual traditions: “[...] we can trace in certain types of text [among which those that include fragments of the *Chronicles*] the appearance, on the one hand [...], of universal features of what is spoken, ‘prescribed’ by the forms of the scripturality, and on the other of the diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic variants [...] unusual in the field of scripturality”<sup>10</sup>. Suffice it to point out, as a proof of pure orality, the fragment of the *True History* by Díaz del Castillo (apud CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 77, our translation): “I remember that they said:” oh, oh, oh *cuilones!*”<sup>11</sup>, which means: “Oh, fuck! you are still alive, the tiacahuanes have not died yet?”<sup>12</sup>

Truthfulness, authenticity, reality, fiction. Faced with the historiographical description of our time, when studying the ancients and the Renaissance contemporaries we find ourselves in the prehistory of historiography. For Frankl (1963) the historical

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<sup>8</sup> Original: “democratización del hecho narrativo” (CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p.9).

<sup>9</sup> Original: “vi una historia de buen estilo...” (DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO, 1992, p.39).

<sup>10</sup> Original: “[...] podemos rastrear en ciertos tipos de texto [entre los que incluye fragmentos de las Crónicas] la aparición, por un lado, [...] de rasgos universales de lo hablado, ‘proscritos’ por las formas de la escrituralidad, y por otro de las variantes diatópicas, diastráticas y diafásicas [...] poco usuales en el ámbito de la escrituralidad.” (OESTERREICHER, 2013, p. 736).

<sup>11</sup> Original: Acuérdomme que nos decían: “¡oh, oh, oh cuilones! (DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO apud CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 77).

<sup>12</sup> Original: ¡Oh, putos!, ¿aún aquí quedáis vivos, que aún no os han muerto los tiacahuanes? (DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO apud CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 77).

thought was linked to the legendary conceptions of the past, “[...] the historical truth had much to do with the memory, with the evocation, with a spiritual reality hidden from the eyes of vulgar men, but accessible to the endowed with a poetic *visión*.”<sup>13</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 15, our translation). In Columbus *Diario* there begins the description of a world that little resembled the reality contemplated by him, through which we get in touch with, according to Pastor (1983, p. 47, our translation), the “distorting fictionalization of the reality of the New World”<sup>14</sup>, or with what Alvar (1976) called Columbus’ unfolded image, in short, “the transposition of the mental schemes with which European things were thought, to those of the New World.”<sup>15</sup> (MARAVALL, 1986, p. 439, our translation).

In this sense, Columbus did not dedicate himself to seeing and knowing the reality that was presented to his eyes, but to select what was appropriate and identified with the model that had been formed and that he was destined to find: “imagination and perception are thus, different and complementary forms of a *visión*.”<sup>16</sup> (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 174, our translation). Columbus, like others, uses elements of the troubadour landscape, a *locus amoenus*, the trees of which are permanently green, the air is soft and sweet, and the water, which also springs from troubadour sources, is fresh, clear and crystalline:

The continent seems to be a cornucopia: the trees are always green, endless waters, mild climate, the chance of finding gold and species is always good, the naked native people, healthy and needy of religion or sect, they are easy going and shall be converted to the Christian faith in no time. (CORDIVIOLA, 2009, p. 74, our translation)<sup>17</sup>.

The chroniclers must transmit the found world so that it is known by the people that were in the other border. The European man was once again in the Garden of Paradise: the propitious nature, the naked human beings “they walk all naked as their mother bore them, and also the women”<sup>18</sup> (COLÓN, 1991 *apud* CAMPOS FERNANDEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 3-4, our translation); “What we knew about their lives and customs was that all go naked, men and women, without covering any shame, just as they came

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<sup>13</sup> Original: “[...] la verdad histórica tenía mucho que ver con el recuerdo, con la evocación, con una realidad espiritual oculta a los ojos de los hombres vulgares, pero accesible a los dotados de una *visión* poética.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 15).

<sup>14</sup> Original: “ficcionalización distorsionadora de la realidad del Nuevo Mundo.” (PASTOR, 1983, p. 47).

<sup>15</sup> Original: “la transposición de los esquemas mentales con que se pensaban las cosas europeas, a las del Nuevo Mundo.” (MARAVALL, 1986, p. 439).

<sup>16</sup> Original: “imaginación y percepción son así formas distintas y complementarias de una *visión*.” (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 174)

<sup>17</sup> Original: “O continente aparece como uma cornucópia: as árvores são sempre verdes, as águas são infinitas, o clima é ameno, a possibilidade de achar ouro e espécies é sempre grande, os indígenas nus, saudáveis e carentes de toda religião ou “seita” são mansos e haverão de se converter ao Cristianismo em pouco tempo.” (CORDIVIOLA, 2009, p. 74).

<sup>18</sup> Original: “ellos andan todos desnudos como su madre los parió, y también las mujeres.” (COLÓN, 1991 *apud* CAMPOS FERNANDEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 34).

from the womb of their mothers.”<sup>19</sup> (VESPUCCI, 1986 *apud* CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 37, our translation). It is the allegorical vision of Paradise, of a wide literary tradition, that rests in the imaginary of these people.<sup>20</sup>

Idyllic view, typical of Paradise, although, now, made reality in the eyes of the colonizers, who will find its counterpoint in their own reality, as told in the *Letter to Luis de Santángel* (*Carta a Luis de Santángel*), where mention is made of cannibalism or *cola* attributed to the inhabitants of the island of Avam, which allows us to obtain the two sides of the same coin as virtualities, that the conquests of Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru will extend almost to infinity: the indigenous people practice devilish rituals, like the human sacrifices mentioned by Cortés in *Tenochtitlán*, nature, far from the idyllic vision, can be the path of perdition and death trap - a question that will be taken up literarily in the early twentieth century in the novels of those lands. However, classic myths are revalidated: “Less irrelevant than being an arbiter of slips (and of other accusations) is to try to understand the peculiar symbiosis between the ways of seeing the real and the ways of interpreting the real that are dictated by the descriptions of Columbus.”<sup>21</sup> (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 174, our translation).

Indeed, Pigafetta travels because he has the expectation of telling about the wonderful things that there are in America: “[...] I knew that while sailing through the ocean they saw wonderful things and I was determined to assure myself by my own eyes of the truthfulness of everything that was told, so as to tell others about my trip.”<sup>22</sup> (PIGAFETTA, 1963 *apud* CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p. 145, our translation). Your mind does not travel alone, it is populated by the books you have read and from them you plan to give a true account, checking and certifying what you have read. It is an intellectual journey within the framework of knowledge obtained through the readings: *Imago mundi*, by Pierre D’Ailly, Marco Polo and, above all, *The Book of Wonders* (*El libro de las maravillas*), by Jean de Mandeville. Because, when we speak of interpretation, we must admit that the texts of the narrators of the Indies are an inexhaustible source of very rich material, material seen, in addition, from virgin eyes that are the first to be amazed “to extreme”<sup>23</sup> (CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 24, our translation) for everything that his hand is capturing: the novelty is absolute.

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<sup>19</sup> Original: “Lo que de su vida y costumbres conocimos fue que todos van desnudos, así los hombres como las mujeres, sin cubrir vergüenza ninguna, tal como salieron del vientre de sus madres.” (VESPUCCI, 1986 *apud* CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 37).

<sup>20</sup> With regard to such imaginary, it is worth remembering what we refer elsewhere about the role of medieval allegory in Berceo (MIRANDA POZA, 2014b) and to what extent that vision was a divine use of all the traditional elements of the erotic garden (BLANCO AGUINAGA; RODRIGUEZ PUÉRTOLAS; ZAVALA, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Original: “Menos irrelevante que ser árbitro de deslices (y de otras acusaciones) es intentar comprender las peculiares simbiosis entre los modos de ver lo real y los modos de interpretar lo real que pautan las descripciones de Colón.” (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 174).

<sup>22</sup> Original: “[...] supe que navegando por el Océano veían cosas maravillosas y me determiné a asegurarme por mis propios ojos de la veracidad de todo lo que se contaba, para a mi vez contar a otros mi viaje.” (PIGAFETTA, 1963 *apud* CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p. 145).

<sup>23</sup> Original: “hasta el extremo” (CAMPOS FERNADEZ FÍGARES, 2004, p. 24).

## Language: cognition, representation, meaning, identity.

With the brief antecedents shown, let us place ourselves in the place of those first adventurers who before them find a new world, a new reality. The conquerors did not discover “the other” as postcolonial studies say (TODOROV, 1987), but “the new”. “The other”, for the peninsular daily life, were in any case the Moriscos, the Jews and the rest of “forbidden people” to go to the Indies. Thus, it is pertinent to mention the use of the term mosque (*mezquita*) to refer to the cult building of the natives, a reference closest to another religiosity known as Muslim religious building, along with combinations such as *house of idols or house of their gods (casa de idolos o casa de sus dioses)* (ROSSI, 1992). The conquerors, however, found something similarly different, something similar to their peninsular everyday life: the tributary or semi-slavery mode of production of the Moctezuma Empire offered many similarities with Spanish feudalism. “This Aztec tributary semislavery was what made Cortés Machiavellianism achieve immense indigenous support.”<sup>24</sup> (RODRÍGUEZ, 2004, p. 16, our translation). Campos Fernandez Figares (2004, p. 24, our translation) concludes: “Here there is no ‘other’, because it lacked previous existence even in the European imagination.”<sup>25</sup>

The first task and, along with it, the first uneasiness, from the Admiral to the rest of the chroniclers is to identify what they see, what their senses apprehend. And here lies the problem. The language of Castile is not prepared to give an exact account of things that did not previously exist as references in the environment of origin. The novel creation is there. Whoever discovers it brings it closer to us so that it enters the readers’ minds. The senses apprehend what can not yet be named, because it is only possible to identify a thing when it is given (or known) the name that makes it be it. Before the *nova realia*, “Columbus (and the rest of the chroniclers) lives something that does not fit in the imagination, that flees from his cognition, and looks for the expressive resources in what is already known.”<sup>26</sup> (ALVAR, 1982, p. 257, our translation). We will have to wait a while for linguistic normalization, which implies the development of a process -not necessarily linear and much less immediate-: “[...] only at the end of the process, initiated by fascination, will the indigenous word be captured, when eyes and ears are trained to see and hear, when they have been able to acquire a new cognition.”<sup>27</sup> (MIRANDA POZA, 2007, p. 70, our translation). From the first trip of Columbus, “language had to adapt to the new reality”<sup>28</sup> (ALVAR, 1996, p. 95, our translation).

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<sup>24</sup> Original: “Tal semiesclavismo tributario azteca fue lo que hizo posible el maquiavelismo de Cortés y su logro del inmenso apoyo indígena.” (RODRÍGUEZ, 2004, p. 16).

<sup>25</sup> Original: “Aquí no hay “otro”, porque carecía de existencia previa incluso en la imaginación europea.” (Campos Fernandez Figares, 2004, p. 24).

<sup>26</sup> Original: “Colón (y el resto de cronistas) vive algo que no cabe en la imaginación, que huye de su cognición, y busca los recursos expresivos en lo ya consabido.” (ALVAR, 1982, p. 257).

<sup>27</sup> Original: “[...] solo al final del proceso -iniciado por la fascinación-, se captará la palabra del indígena, cuando ojos y oídos estén capacitados para ver y oír, cuando se ha sido capaz de adquirir una nueva cognición.” (MIRANDA POZA, 2007, p. 70)

<sup>28</sup> Original: “la lengua tuvo que adaptarse a la nueva realidad” (ALVAR, 1996, p. 95).

We are describing a problem that the then incipient dialectology had already addressed at the end of the 19th century. Regional variations and compromise solutions, as well as lexical borrowings, have a lot to do with the concept of language as a *representation of reality*. It was then proved that, in the borrowings from one language to another, not only was the *form* of the word exported, but also the *thing* represented by it. We recall here the principle known as *Wörter und Sachen* (Words and Things), released by Meringer and Schuchardt (LEWANDOWSKI, 1986), which postulates the need to simultaneously study the words and realities represented by them in order to obtain a clear picture of the evolution of a language and its situation at a given moment.

But, it's not just about facing words and things in a lax way. The chroniclers hear the indians speak, and within those voices they hear and transcribe there is a cultural world that must be explained, and that is how it is done most of the time. Díaz del Castillo hears the Nahuatl word *jiquipil*, which he says means 'eight thousand', which is true, no matter how precisely its real meaning is 'bag' (*bolsa*) or '*talega*', because in the numeral system of the Nahuas, eight thousand was represented by a bag that was supposed to withhold within it eight thousand cocoa beans, which was used as currency: "To know the language of the indigenous people is to seize their culture and own a culture is to make it a matter of speculation and study."<sup>29</sup> (ALVAR, 1982, p. 273, our translation).

However, it is necessary to recognize that there were authors (Sahagún, Las Casas, Landa) who sought the indigenous term because it gave precision to the "thing", not because it was a herd of emotions or had any local flavor. They did what today we would call *anthropology*: they tried to find the ontological identification of words and things, not thinking about the possibilities of understanding others, but about the very identity of what they named and their way of naming it. There are even those who affirm that there is not always the need to explain a new reality which obliges the chronicler to include the indigenous term (MORENO DE ALBA, 1995). In this sense, Zamora (1982, p. 166-167) states that a percentage of Taíno loans in the sixteenth century really showed the "experience" and the veteran status of the conqueror in Mexico and Peru: "One reason, only recently discussed, is the special type of 'prestige' which it enjoyed for several decades: the prestige of experience loanwords were not only signs, but also symbols." No matter how much other chroniclers such as Fernández de Oviedo in his *General and natural histories of the Indies* (*General y natural historias de las Indias*) (1535) apologize, appealing to the style of language used, for including an expressive number of indigenous words.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Original: "Conocer la lengua de los indios es apoderarse de su cultura y poseer una cultura es convertirla en materia de especulación y de estudio." (ALVAR, 1982, p. 273).

<sup>30</sup> "If some strange and barbarous words are found here, the cause is their novelty, and do not put to account my romance [Spanish language] [...] and what comes in this volume that does not match with it, they will be names or words used in order to make things understood as the Indians want them to mean." (*apud* MORENO DE ALBA, 1995, p. 59).

As every road has two ways, those who approached the languages of the indigenous people, such as Fray Bernardo de Lugo in his *Fly Grammar* (*Gramática mosca*), they were equipped with the cultural background of which Spain participated. “Nothing comes out of nowhere, and we can not demand from a 16th or 17th century scholar what we still do not know how to do.”<sup>31</sup> (ALVAR, 1982, p. 278, our translation). They established themselves in the best tradition: that of Latin grammars. Because of the fact that today we know this is not what should be done does not mean that it should not be done. There were no foundations to describe what had never been described and they resorted to Latin, which served both as a model and as a reference: “[...] it is understood that the comparison [Latin / Chibcha] is purely didactic, it does not intend to establish nexus, kinship or filiation between the two languages of any kind.”<sup>32</sup> (RIVAS SACCONI, 1949, p.77, our translation).

The process of adapting the language to the new American reality was long. The Spanish “in America” — as sees fit, among others, Moreno de Alba (1995) — follows its own history and the language keeps moving according to the knowledge of reality: “[...] the system formed in Europe did not work and the words *ranch* (*rancho*), *hacienda*, *platicar*, *tortilla* kept being filled with new content or the thousand new things had to be adapted to continue being the language of communication: *corn* (*maíz*), *cocoa* (*cacao*), *potato* (*papa*), *poncho*.”<sup>33</sup> (ALVAR, 2000b, p. 14, our translation). Language is mixed because in the linguistic interaction the valid old and the accepted new are joined together equally. Because language is a living body that accepts what it needs and eliminates the superfluous. America provided a new geographic and mental space for a language still in formation, “an inseparable fact of its historical evolution in its unity and in its productive diversity.”<sup>34</sup> (RIVAROLA, 2001, p. 59, our translation). The culmination of this whole process is identified with the statement of Alvar (2000a, p. 20, our translation): “the Spaniards finally allowed their language to mingle.”<sup>35</sup> Spanish mingled because language and men agreed to one another, as Díaz del Castillo recounts when Gonzalo Guerrero refuses to return with his companions: “Brother Aguilar, I am married, I have three children, and they have me as chief and captain when there are wars; You are with God [...]”<sup>36</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 348, our translation).

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<sup>31</sup> Original: “Nada sale de la nada, y no podemos exigir a un tratadista del siglo XVI o del XVII lo que aún hoy no sabemos hacer.” (ALVAR, 1982, p. 278).

<sup>32</sup> Original: “[...] se comprende que la comparación [latín / chibcha] es puramente didáctica, no pretende establecer entre las dos lenguas nexos, parentesco o filiación de ninguna clase.” (RIVAS SACCONI, 1949, p. 77).

<sup>33</sup> Original: “[...] el sistema formado en Europa no valía y los cascarones rancho, hacienda, platicar, tortilla se llenaban de contenidos nuevos o las mil cosas nuevas tenían que adaptarse para continuar siendo la lengua instrumento de comunicación: maíz, cacao, papa, poncho.” (ALVAR, 2000b, p. 14).

<sup>34</sup> Original: “hecho inseparable de su evolución histórica en su unidad y en su productiva diversidad.” (RIVAROLA, 2001, p. 59).

<sup>35</sup> Original: “los españoles aindieron definitivamente su lengua” (ALVAR, 2000a, p. 20).

<sup>36</sup> Original: “Hermano Aguilar, yo soy casado, tengo tres hijos, y tiénneme por cacique y capitán cuando hay guerras; íos vos con Dios [...]” (SERNA, 2013, p. 348).



## The process of adaptation of language: lexicon, dictionary and cognition.

It should be remembered, first of all, that the field of lexicography, the technique or practice of developing dictionaries, had its origins in the Western world in the works of the first apprentices of philologists, who were the commentators and fixers of Homeric texts, *oi glossográphoi*, when they were faced with the need to prepare lists of words that contained an explanation about words that, due to their belonging to other varieties of language (diachronic or diatopic), seemed confusing or difficult to understand (MIRANDA POZA, 2017) . For three centuries (from 600 BC to 300 BC), the Homeric poems were studied and presented, for the Greeks, problems of understanding in certain plots of the lexicon. For school reasons, lexicons or glossaries began to emerge to understand those types of expression (SERRANO AYBAR, 1977). In large part, the legacy left to us by the chroniclers represents the fruit of a task very similar to that of the Greek lexicographer apprentices, but enlarged: the latter took the written texts as their basis and referred to their own language; the former, worked in the field of orality with unknown languages and had to apprehend a reality completely alien to the one that until then conformed their cognition (and, by extension, that of their readers).

The novel creation is there, but whoever discovers it has to resort to the procedures that have always been used by those who see things for the first time: approaching them with what we know so that they enter our conceptual parameters. First, the comparison, so as to penetrate the description of the new reality and only in the end capture the indigenous word. It is pertinent here to evoke the Theory of Significant Learning (TAS), elaborated by Ausubel (1978) and developed by himself in other works (AUSUBEL, 2002).<sup>37</sup> In it there emerges a fundamental idea that we can perceive clearly in the process of interaction between what the chronicler already knows and the new information to which he is being presented; it is about the concept of subsuming or subsumptioning. This idea can be understood as something specific, relevant (concept, idea, proposition), already existing in the cognitive structure of the learner, which serves as anchor for new information: “[...] meaningful learning occurs when new information” is anchored “in concepts relevant (subsuming) preexisting in the cognitive structure.”<sup>38</sup> (MOREIRA, 2006, p. 15, our translation). The process of mingling that we are going to describe further below is theoretically justified from cognitive presuppositions.

For Alvar (1982), despite the evident heterogeneity of the testimonies, three processes take place constantly: adaptation of the Spanish language; adoption of Americanisms or Hispanisms, depending on the point of view; new creations. This

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<sup>37</sup> Knowledge is meaningful by definition. It is the significant product of a cognitive psychological process (“knowing”) that involves the interaction between “logically” (culturally) meaningful ideas, background (“anchor”) ideas relevant to the cognitive structure (or the structure of the knowledge) of the specific person who learns and the mental “attitude” of this person in relation to meaningful learning or the acquisition and retention of knowledge. (AUSUBEL, 2002, p. 9).

<sup>38</sup> Original: “[...] el aprendizaje significativo se produce cuando la nueva información ‘se ancla’ en conceptos relevantes (subsumidores) preexistentes en la estructura cognitiva.” (MOREIRA, 2006, p. 15).

same tripartite process is shared by Rossi (1992, p. 4, our translation), when he speaks of three progressive solutions “before the intoxication of ‘things’ and ‘names’ of such an unexpected world”<sup>39</sup>: 1) clinging to the stock of images and denominations of his own world — old name for the new thing, exposed above: mosque (*mezquita*); 2) Necessity borrowing, that is, autochthonous denomination (of the chronicler), to which a comparative similarity is added: sheep (*oveja*) by *llama*, although the novel reference does not belong to the ovines, the similarity is established in the measure that it is an animal from which we get milk, meat, wool, leather; the differential with the peninsular: it is also a pack animal; 3) borrowing as foreignerism, before the familiarity of everyday life, which produces the inclusion of the term as a lexical repertoire of the newcomers: *cacique*, from the term *kaisic ’reyezuelo*, phonetically adapted and transliterated into Spanish.

The complexity of this process of penetration of the indigenous terms, in short, was due to what was the result of the clash of two very different worlds (from the cultural point of view and from the nature of the physical world) as well as its virulent condition for Europeans and Americans, since “[...] both lived without the slightest suspicion of the existence of the other, without the slightest glimpse of what the other’s world could be.”<sup>40</sup> (MORÍNIGO, 1964, p. 217, our translation).

Our proposal consists in the systematization - within the evident heterogeneity - of the data coming from the texts that make up the *Chronicles* and in the establishment of six phases in the process of adaptation, along the lexicographical theory, which will culminate with the incorporation of the indigenous word to the lexicon of Spanish, comprising the semasiological, onomasiological and cognitive aspects (cultural and identity as well).

### **The difficulty in finding the precise expression: language as a problem**

Reality is named after its own name and is inalienable for an accurate understanding of things. This is what Columbus understands when he recognizes that he does not know the language of the native people, and that he understands them by understanding one thing for another: “Every day we understand these indians more, since they have often understood one by another.”<sup>41</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 147, our translation). At times, an imperfect, defective, imprecise style, full of periphrastic reiterations at the time of describing what is seen, becomes patent. Beyond remembering in passing the warnings of Menéndez Pidal (1942, p. 11, our translation) about the Genoese and non-Spanish origin of Columbus, echoing the comments of other chroniclers, such as Las Casas,

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<sup>39</sup> Original: “ante la embriaguez de ‘cosas’ y ‘nombres’ de un mundo tan inesperado” (ROSSI, 1992, p. 4).

<sup>40</sup> Original: “[...] ambos vivían sin la menor sospecha de la existencia del otro, sin el menor vislumbre de lo que el mundo del otro podría ser” (MORÍNIGO, 1964, p. 217).

<sup>41</sup> Original: “Cada día entendemos más a estos indios, puesto que muchas veces hayan entendido uno por otro.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 147)

which reveal the incompetence of his Castellan : “[Columbus is] natural of another language, because he does not fully penetrate the meaning of the words of the Castilian language or the way of speaking it.”<sup>42</sup>, it is worth emphasizing, once again, that we must differentiate between what Columbus contemplates and what he says he contemplates; what you see and what you want or need to see: empirical reality versus ideology.

Be that as it may, other chroniclers participated of this first phase, characterized by the difficulty in finding the precise expression, or the testimony of the lack of communication with the indigenous people. Thus, Hernán Cortés, in the *Second Letter of Relationship* (*Segunda Carta de Relación*) (1519-1526), writes: “When the prisoners arrived, I spoke to them with the languages that I have, and having put all diligence to know the truth, it seemed that the captain had not understood them well.”<sup>43</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 311, our translation). Or also: “[...] and how could it be best understood with that language of ours.”<sup>44</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 349, our translation).

Some time later, the Inca Garcilaso in his *Royal Commentaries* (*Comentarios Reales*) (1609), insists on the subject of language as a problem: the lack of understanding in both directions: “[...] that my intention is not to contradict [the Spanish historians], but to serve them [...] as an interpreter of many indigenous words, who as foreigners in that language, interpret improperly”<sup>45</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 448, our translation). Or else, “[...] for the indian did not understand [the Spanish] delivered to him or for not understanding each other, due to the difficulty of the language.”<sup>46</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 478, our translation).

There are also reports of the recognition of the real impossibility of expressing and completely describing the reality that is contemplated, precisely because words are lacking. Columbus asserts: “And after all, there are trees in a thousand ways and they all give fruit in their own way, and everyone acknowledges that it is wonderful, that I am the most unfortunate in the world for not knowing them [...]”<sup>47</sup>. (SERNA, 2013, p. 131-132, our translation). He does not “know” them, because the apprehension is partial: the name is missing, which would close the ontological circle (meaning, word and thing), language fails as an instrument of communication. In addition to what has been said, no longer the difficulty of mutual understanding, but the lack of the word in the description is testified by Cortés: “in those markets one can buy anything found

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<sup>42</sup> Original: “[Colón es] natural de otra lengua, porque no penetra del todo la significación de los vocablos de la lengua castellana ni del modo de hablar de ella.” (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, 1942, p. 11).

<sup>43</sup> Original: “Llegados los presos, les hablé con las lenguas que yo tengo, y habiendo puesto toda diligencia para saber la verdad, pareció que no los había el capitán bien entendido.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 311).

<sup>44</sup> Original: “[...] y como mejor se pudo dársele a entender con aquella nuestra lengua.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 349).

<sup>45</sup> Original: “[...] que mi intención no es contradecirles [a los historiadores españoles], sino servirles (...) de intérprete en muchos vocablos indios, que como extranjeros en aquella lengua, interpretan fuera de la propiedad.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 448).

<sup>46</sup> Original: “[...] por no entender [el español] al indio que se la daba o por no entenderse el uno al otro, por la dificultad del lenguaje.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 478).

<sup>47</sup> Original: “Y después, hay árboles de mil maneras y todos dan de su manera fruto, y todos huelen que es maravilla, que yo estoy el más apenado del mundo de no conocerlos [...]” (SERNA, 2013, p. 131-132).

in those lands, which [...] are so many and of so many qualities, that for the prolixity [...] and even for not knowing how to name them, I do not express them.”<sup>48</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 266, our translation).

This expressive impossibility has a stylistic consequence: the reiteration of periphrasis, by way of imprecise explanation, in which the terms are usual, either in isolation, or in free combination: “way (s)”, “diverse (s)”, “Different (s) “and, above all, the projection of the imagination: “wonder”, “wonderful”, and consequently” admiration”, “admirable”. Mounin (1971, p. 94, our translation) warned long ago that “[...] every language contains an analysis of the external world of its own, and that differs from other languages or from other stages of the same language.”<sup>49</sup> When we talk about the world in two different languages, we are not talking about the same world, “[...] from which a certain theoretical impossibility of moving from one language to another is derived when this linguistic step involves another step that goes from one world of experience to another.”<sup>50</sup> (MIRANDA POZA, 2014a, p. 36, our translation). For this reason, Columbus [Colón] (1976, p. 87, our translation) writes in his diary: “On the ground they saw very green trees and a lot of water and fruits in different ways.”<sup>51</sup>, or in the *Letter to Luis de Santángel*: “There are plants of six or eight ways, which causes admiration to see them for the beautiful deformity.”<sup>52</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p.119, our translation). Neither escapes Cortes, in the *Second Letter of Relationship*: “They had inside the city their houses of lodging, such and so wonderful, that it seemed almost impossible to express the goodness and greatness of them, more than in Spain there is no such thing.”<sup>53</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 272, our translation).

### **From the imprecision to the comparison: the conception of the own and the foreign**

In the last of the quotes we find another key. Spontaneously partial solutions are found to try to escape descriptive imperfections by comparison: “how much diversity is there from one way to the other”<sup>54</sup> (*Diarios apud* ALVAR, 1982, p. 257, our translation). The toponym, or rather, the concept of Castilla (or Spain) became an

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<sup>48</sup> Original: “[...] en los dichos mercados se venden todas cuantas cosas se hallan en toda la tierra, que [...] son tantas y de tantas cualidades, que por la prolijidad [...] y aun por no saber poner los nombres, no las expreso.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 266).

<sup>49</sup> Original: “[...] toda lengua encierra una análisis del mundo exterior que le es propio, y que se diferencia de otras lenguas u otras etapas de la misma lengua.” (MOUNIN, 1971, p. 94).

<sup>50</sup> Original: “[...] de donde se deriva una cierta imposibilidad teórica de pasar de una lengua a otra cuando este paso lingüístico conlleva otro paso que va de un mundo de la experiencia a otro distinto.” (MIRANDA POZA, 2014a, p. 36).

<sup>51</sup> Original: “Puestos en tierra vieron árboles muy verdes y aguas muchas y frutas de diversas maneras.” (COLÓN, 1976, p. 87)

<sup>52</sup> Original: “Hay plantas de seis u ocho maneras, que es admiración verlas por la deformidad hermosa de ellas.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 119).

<sup>53</sup> Original: “Tenían dentro de la ciudad sus casas de aposentamiento, tales y tan maravillosas, que me parecía casi imposible decir la bondad y grandeza de ellas, más que en España no hay semejante.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 272).

<sup>54</sup> Original: “cuánta es la diversidad de la una manera a la otra” (*Diarios apud* ALVAR, 1982, p. 257).

index of valuation, of first reference or known term, a point in which to support the explanation in comparison with the unknown until then. In the same way that land was taken over in the name of Castile, the family stayed in Castile, men came from Castile and their language was Castellan (ALVAR, 2000a). Thus, before the Spaniards learned the languages of the indigenous people and the denomination of things, it was that which came from the land or the Indies that surprised their eyes; on the other hand, the things which were brought over there or those that simply nested in their minds, in their memory, were from Spain or from Castile: “[...] the other trees in other ways were so many that there is no one who could describe them or make them resemble other trees in Castile.”<sup>55</sup> (*Diarios apud* ALVAR, 1982, p. 261, our translation). It is a further step in the way of capturing the word, seeking to make the European aware of the discrepancies: systematic opposition in perfect cognitive dialogism of plants, animals, objects from the land or the Indies to those who come from overseas: from Spain, from Castile, from Alcarria ... Such references show a diverse and comprehensive geographic richness: Castile, Spain, Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Burgos, Barcelona, Salamanca, Valencia, Tenerife and, by extension, ours (*lo nuestro*), ours (*las nuestras*), christians (*los cristianos*), canaries (see Chart 1).

**Chart 1** – The understanding of the new reality from Castile

Reference term	Text	Author / Chronicle	
Castilla	...huertas de árboles, las más hermosas que yo vi, e tan verdes y con sus hojas <b>como las de Castilla...</b> (14 de octubre)	Columbus / <i>Diaries</i>	
	...pescaron muchos pescados <b>como los de Castilla...</b> (p. 147)		
	Vuestra Majestad podría estar tan bien <b>como en una de las más cumplidas casas de Castilla.</b> (p. 195)	Fernández de Oviedo / <i>Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias</i>	
Spain	...que los vi tan verdes [los árboles] y tan hermosos <b>como son por mayo en España...</b> (p. 119)	Columbus	<i>Carta a Luis de Santángel</i>
	Halló caracoles grandes, sin sabor, <b>no como los de España.</b> (p. 136)		<i>Diarios</i>
	...que piden a los ricos por las calles y por las casas y mercados, <b>como hacen los pobres en España...</b> (p. 237)	Cortés / <i>Segunda Carta de Relación</i>	
	Hay mucha loza de maneras y muy buena y <b>tal como la mejor de España.</b> (p. 229)		

<sup>55</sup> Original: “[...] los otros árboles de otras maneras eran tantos que no hay persona que lo pueda decir ni asemejar a otros de Castilla.” (*Diarios apud* ALVAR, 1982, p. 261).

Reference term	Text	Author / Chronicle
Sevilla	<i>Los aires muy dulces como en abril en Sevilla, qué placer estar a ellos, tan olorosos son. (Lunes, 8 de octubre)</i>	Columbus / Diarios
	<i>Hay bien cuarenta torres muy altas; la más principal es tan alta que la torre de la iglesia de Sevilla. (p. 268)</i>	
Sevilla / Córdoba	<i>Es tan grande la ciudad [Tenochtitlán] como Sevilla y Córdoba. (p. 265)</i>	
Granada	<i>La cual ciudad [Tizatlán] es tan grande y de tanta admiración que dirè creo que es casi increíble porque es muy mayor que Granada y de muy mucha más gente que Granada. (p. 229)</i>	Cortés / Segunda Carta de Relación
Burgos	<i>Me dijeron que habían visto una casa de aposentamiento y fortaleza que es mayor y más fuerte y mejor edificada que el castillo de Burgos. (p. 254)</i>	
Barcelona	<i>Porque todas las casas de Santo Domingo son de piedra como las de Barcelona, por la mayor parte, o de tan hermosas tapias y tan fuertes que es muy singular argamasa, y el asiento muy mejor que el de Barcelona. (p. 194)</i>	Fernández de Oviedo / Sumario de la Natural Historia de las Indias
	<i>... y no más lejos de la boca por donde el río entra en la mar, de lo que hay de Monjuich al monasterio de San Francisco o a la lonja de Barcelona... (p. 195)</i>	
Salamanca	<i>[Tenochtitlán] Tiene otra plaza tan grande como dos veces la ciudad de Salamanca, toda cercada de portales alrededor. (p. 265)</i>	Cortés / Segunda Carta de Relación
Valencia	<i>Árboles muy verdes y tan hermosos como en abril en las huertas de Valencia. (p. 167)</i>	Columbus/ Diarios
Tenerife	<i>... y en ella hay muchas sierras y montañas altísimas, sin comparación con la isla de Tenerife... (p. 119)</i>	Columbus / Carta a Luis de Santángel
Lo nuestro	<i>... y aves y pajaritos de tantas maneras y tan diversas de las nuestras que es maravilla... (p. 132)</i>	Columbus / Diaries
	<i>... y tienen faxones y habas muy diversas de las nuestras... (p. 138)</i>	
Los cristianos	<i>En ella [La Española] hay muchos puertos en la costa de la mar, sin comparación de otros que yo sepa de cristianos. (p. 119)</i>	Columbus / Carta a Luis de Santángel
Los canarios	<i>De ellos [hombres] se pintan de prieto, y ellos son de la color de los canarios, ni negros ni blancos. (p. 130)</i>	Columbus / Diaries

Source: Author's elaboration. The references of the texts have been taken from the edition of the *Crónicas de Serna* (2013).

The comparison also occurs in the other direction, not lacking testimonies concerning what is *theirs*. Thus, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, in his aforementioned *True History ...* describes the landscape he contemplates in these terms: “[...] platforms full of roses and flowers and many fruit trees and roses of the land.”<sup>56</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 367, our translation). The same goes for Cortés in the *Second Letter of Relationship*: “This city [Huaquechula] has a very large site, because within it there are many orchards and fruits and to their custom smells.”<sup>57</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 315, our translation).

This situation of comparison even extends to the generality of European cognition, since it reaches, finally, other extrapeninsular European territories: it is the verification of the Old World cosmovision (now represented by the whole of Europe in the Castilian minds) and the New World (the West Indies), Europe versus America, or if you prefer, America conceived from Europe: “The order that has been reached so far by its people to govern itself, is almost like the lordships of Venice, Genoa or Pisa, because there is not a general ruler of all.”<sup>58</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 268, our translation).

### **Substitution of imprecise periphrasis by the nearest Castilian term**

The next phase of the process of adapting the language to the new reality is the gradual abandonment of comparative periphrastic resources: the very different, in different ways, very diverse, like those from Castile, different from those from here, etc. it moves on to the inclusion of a Castilian term, logically inaccurate, and from there, from its semantic stereotype, and depending on its characterizing traces, to establish the differences of nuance to conceive the new reality. It is the postulate by the lexematic Model when it spoke of the existence of features of meaning that semantically characterize the lexemes (COSERIU, 1991; SALVADOR, 1985; JUSTO GIL, 1990) that, later, cognitive psychology came to confirm through semantics of prototypes, which works in the field of cognitive perception of the speaker in relation to the features of meaning that necessarily make up the concept represented by the word. We offer two fragments that allude to this fact, belonging to the *Diaries of Columbus*: “[...] women and men with a brand in hand, and herbs to take the incense that they use.”<sup>59</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 139, our translation). That *brand* that men and women carry in their hands is nothing but tobacco. In case we still have some doubt, Díaz del Castillo, in his *True Story ...* clarifies it definitively, contributing the indigenous term that was missing in the description of Columbus: “They also put three *cañutos* on the table [...] and

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<sup>56</sup> Original: “[...] andenes llenos de rosas y flores y muchos frutales y rosales de la tierra.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 367).

<sup>57</sup> Original: “Esta ciudad [Huaquechula] tiene muy gran sitio, porque dentro de ella hay muchas huertas y frutas y olores a su costumbre.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 315).

<sup>58</sup> Original: “La orden que hasta ahora se ha alcanzado de la gente de ella en gobernarse, es casi como las señorías de Venecia, Génova o Pisa, porque no hay señor general de todos.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 268).

<sup>59</sup> Original: “[...] mujeres y hombres con un tizón en la mano, e hierbas para tomar sus sahumeros que acostumbran.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 139).

inside they brought liquidambar stirred with some herbs called tobacco.”<sup>60</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 381, our translation).

But this solution will come later, and will consist in the incorporation of the indigenous term. Let's continue with the Columbus' *Diarios*: “Walking thus near one of those lagoons, I saw a serpent, which we killed and I bring the leather to Your Highnesses.”<sup>61</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 122, our translation). Las Casas was the transmitter of this newsletter, a few years had passed and the knowledge of the indigenous languages and of the reality itself obliged the transcriber to write down marginally, on the subject of serpent, the exact term of the new reality: *iguana*. It was not a simple snake, but another peculiar and different creature unknown in Castile, for which there was no specific lexem to symbolize it. What Las Casas does in this reformulation of Castilian is similar to the episode of Silelos and Emilianenses Glosses (*Glosas silenses y emilianenses*). They responded to a European linguistic tradition to which they were opposed, in this case, a primitive romance to Latin (ALVAR, 2001). In Las Casas the indigenous term begins to be used, replacing the Castilian lexical reference only cognitively approximated to the new reality represented.

However, Las Casas does not always show that it knows the indigenous lexicon that designates the new reality and, like Columbus, mentions dry leaves (*hojas secas o tizón*) or *tabaco* blight, cotton nets (*redes de algodón*) by hammocks (*hamacas*), or, with combined resources, mice from India (*ratones de la India*) by *hútiás*, as Díaz del Castillo talks about shirts of the land (*camisas de la tierra*) by *huipiles*. The Jesuit does the same when he talks about flutes (*flautas*) for *quenas*, *atabales* for *marimbas* or lions (*leones*) for cougars (*pumas*). We are, in short, in constant transitions, even within the same author and the same chronicle, although the process will not stop. Thus, Fr. Diego de Landa in his *Relacion de las cosas de Yucatan* (1566), alongside a remarkable number of indigenisms such as *chu'pécari`*, *cox'pavo salvaje`*, *pay'ofeta`*, *colomché`* ‘type of dance’ -Recorded in detail by Alvar (1972) -, does not hesitate to resort to the opposing imaginary as a sign of differentiation: theirs and ours, because through the possessive “su” any expressive commitment is resolved: their chickens and roosters are, in fact, the *'pavos`*, alongside other similar explanations: *hens of the land that are different and greater than ours from Castile*; the same goes for *pepper* from the Indies for *'chile`* or the *'henequén`* which happens to be local land hemp. It is more, the *'pecari`*, which in certain passages is called through the term *chu*, in others it is alluded to through the comparative periphrasis *pigs of those of that land*.

We can conclude this section by pointing out that this cognitive resource consisting of using a significantly close Castilian term did not always turn out to be a felicitous choice. In this regard, Enguita Utrilla (1980-1981) and Rivarola (2013) have highlighted significant conceptual confusions in Fernández de Oviedo, when, for example, she

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<sup>60</sup> Original: “También le ponían en la mesa tres cañutos [...] y dentro traían liquidámbaar revuelto con unas yerbas que llaman tabaco.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 381).

<sup>61</sup> Original: “Andando así en cerco de una de esas lagunas, vi una sierpe, la cual matamos y traigo el cuero a Vuestras Altezas.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 132).



uses pears to designate ‘*aguacate*’ or makes equivalent the indigenous voices *cacao*, *cacaguat*, *coconut*. Also, the inadequacy of the selected word responds to what Castillo Durán (2004, p. 142, our translation) calls “comparison of urgency”<sup>62</sup>, so that the European reader can understand the similarity between the known and the unknown. In the *History of Juan Sebastián del Cano*, edited by Fernández de Navarrete in 1872, by Francisco de Albo, there is allusion to “*the body of the camel*” - Pigafetta, in another place, for the same purpose, speaks of “*camels without humps*” -, when the *guanaco*, a species of llama or vicuna from the south of the continent, only bears a remote resemblance to the African camel, whose characteristic feature is the hump: “His mantle, was made of very well sewn skins, of an animal that abounds in this country [...] This animal has a mule’s head and ears, a camel’s body [...]”<sup>63</sup> (ALBO, 1986 *apud* CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p. 142, our translation). Finally, one should not forget the imaginary and fictional projection of the marvelous known, which explains, in Columbus and in Albo himself, as well as in Pigafetta, that “sighting mermaids in those seas was perfectly possible”<sup>64</sup> (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 175, our translation). When Las Casas transcribes in its *History of the Indies* the episode of the mermaids, beyond its proximity with the manatee, of the species of the Sirenids, it is the projection which in that land of wonders the Admiral made of the known and the fantastic. That resource is not alien to the Castilian medieval chronicle in the descriptions of England. In the Victorial, a Castilian chronicle of the fifteenth century, it is said about the distant and, largely unknown, England: “And for these reasons that said, and many other wonders which in that land were and are, it is called the land of wonders Angliaterra. [...] I already told you about the reason why they called the island of Angliaterra Bretania [...] this name here, Angliaterra, means in another language ‘land of wonders’. And that was due to many wonderful things that it used to have”<sup>65</sup> (*apud* MIRANDA POZA, 1993, p. 60, our translation). The plot and the corresponding discourse tradition respond to the same cognition: the distant, the unknown, is wonderful and gives rise to release the imagination. As if this were not enough, we can trace at a time not far from the writing of the *Chronicles*, the *Viatge of Viscount Ramón de Perellós i de Roda al Purgatori nomenat de San Patricio* (1398), to which a later Castilian edition of Pérez de Montalbán in 1627, is coupled in which, based on the *motivo de la isla*, located in Ireland, the same topics that we find in the *Chronicles* are reproduced step by step. Compare what has been said with the fragments taken from the Diaries of Columbus: “He says that this island is the most beautiful one that eyes have seen”<sup>66</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 133, our

<sup>62</sup> Original: “comparación de urgencia” (CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p. 142).

<sup>63</sup> Original: “Su manto, estaba hecho de pieles muy bien cosidas, de un animal que abunda en este país (...) Este animal tiene cabeza y orejas de mula, cuerpo de camello [...]” (ALBO, 1986 *apud* CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p. 142).

<sup>64</sup> Original: “avistar sirenas en aquellos mares era perfectamente posible” (CORDIVIOLA, 2003, p. 175).

<sup>65</sup> Original: “E por estas razones que dichas he, e otras muchas maravillas que en aquella tierra fueron e son, es llamada tierra de maravillas Angliaterra. [...] Ya vos conté e dixé de suso por qual razón llamaron Bretania a la isla de Angliaterra [...] ca este nombre, Angliaterra, quiere dezir en otra lengua ‘tierra de las maravillas’. Esto por muchas cosas maravillosas que en ella solía aber.” (*apud* MIRANDA POZA, 1993, p. 60).

<sup>66</sup> Original: “Dice que es aquella isla la más hermosa que ojos han visto” (SERNA, 2013, p. 133).

translation); “[...] the tasty and sweet air of the whole night, neither cold nor hot [...]”<sup>67</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 135, our translation).

### **Inclusion of the indigenous term next to the usual term that refers a similar reality**

In the *Summary of the Natural History of the Indies* (1526), by Fernández de Oviedo (1950), the introduction of the indigenous word is documented next to another Castilian word that evokes an approximate American reality, as a cognitive explanation for the reader. It is not another question of not knowing the precise indigenous word and having to resort by conceptual proximity to a Castilian with different nuances, now the learned word is included, but the need to define it is revealed, even by proximity: “On this island [La Española] no four-foot animal existed, but two types of very small animals, which are called *hutia* and *cori*, which are almost like rabbits.”<sup>68</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 193, our translation). Díaz del Castillo in his *True Story ...* (1545) offers examples that belong to this phase of the process with the same lexical scheme: “covered their shame with some narrow blankets which among them they call *mastates*”<sup>69</sup>; “Those [Indians] from Cuba walked with their shame naked, except the women, who wore cotton clothes up to their thighs that they call *naguas*.”<sup>70</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 325, our translation).

In *True History ...*, Díaz del Castillo uses the comparison between the two words through a clear procedure: the American object (I) is similar to Castilian (1), although enriched by new features that mark the differential: (a), (b), (c) ...: “They are canoes (*canoas*) (I) made as troughs (*artesas*) (1) and they are large (a), thick and dug inside and hollow (b), and all are from a solid wood (c) and forty or fifty Indians (d) can stand on their feet”<sup>71</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 325, our translation). It is, in short, “[...] the first Americanism that was incorporated into Spanish: in 1493, Nebrija included it in his dictionary of Castilian.”<sup>72</sup> (ALVAR, 1975, p. 75, our translation). What is important here is to emphasize that this way of defining new words does nothing but confirm something to which we alluded above: the existence of significant features (*semas*) that constitute the semantics of the lexeme (COSERIU, 1991; SALVADOR, 1985; JUSTO GIL, 1990). This, in turn, has theoretical-empirical confirmation from cognitive psychology, which

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<sup>67</sup> Original: “[...] los aires sabrosos y dulces de toda la noche, ni frío ni caliente [...]” (SERNA, 2013, p. 135).

<sup>68</sup> Original: “En esta isla [La Española] ningún animal de cuatro pies había, sino dos maneras de animales muy pequeñitos, que se llaman *hutia* y *cori*, que son cuasi a manera de *conejos*. (SERNA, 2013, p. 193).

<sup>69</sup> Original: “cubiertas sus vergüenzas con unas mantas angostas que entre ellos llaman *mastates*” (SERNA, 2013, p. 325).

<sup>70</sup> Original: “Los [indios] de Cuba andaban con sus vergüenzas de fuera, excepto las mujeres, que traían hasta que les llegaban a los muslos, unas ropas de algodón que llaman *naguas*.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 325).

<sup>71</sup> Original: “Son canoas (I) hechas a manera de *artesas* (1) y son grandes (a), de maderos gruesos y cavadas por dentro y está hueco (b), y todas son de un madero macizo (c) y caben en pie cuarenta o cincuenta indios (d)” (SERNA, 2013, p. 325).

<sup>72</sup> Original: “[...] del primer americanismo que se incorporó al español: en 1493, Nebrija lo incluyó en su diccionario del castellano.” (ALVAR, 1975, p. 75).

worked in the field of cognitive perception of the human being already in its infancy with Koffka (1926) and its law of constancy of the figure, problematized years later when put into practice in the experiments with figures of Labov (1973), which led Rosch (1975) to propose that in every categorization / conceptualization there is a fixed nucleus or prototype - here, the cognition meaning represented by the Spanish word and its semantema-, and some properties or gradual features -here, the significant features that represent, characterizing it, the new reality until that unknown moment -, which can lead to a fuzzy or only approximate categorization (ALONSO-CORTÉS, 2015).

This same scheme is repeated everywhere in the *True History*, with a more or less detailed explanation but without even removing the Castilian word as a fixed cognitive-significant prototype,...: “And since we found ourselves with three ships and a food supply (*casta*) which is made of *cazabe* bread with roots that they call *yuccas* [...]”<sup>73</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 323, our translation). Finally, the growing trend to reduce explanations - due to the proximity and familiarity with the new term -, since the Castilian voice is always placed as the first reference, makes it possible to document, at the last moment of this phase as transition to the next, a term side by side, without greater precision or explanation. This is the case of the Inca Garcilaso in his Royal Commentaries: “The poetry of the Incas amautas, who are philosophers, and harauicus, who are poets”<sup>74</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 474, our translation). And so we come to testimonies of what we might call a bilingual dictionary, where only the equivalences between the American and European voices are offered. Alvar (2000b, p. 87) affirms that the process of adopting the new terms is, in this phase, “the same that was adopted at the time of Alfonso X: the lexical equivalence”<sup>75</sup>. Two examples that illustrate this statement, the first, in the *Summary of the Natural History of the Indies*, by Fernandez de Oviedo, shows the word canoe (*canoa*) again, without further explanation: “When you want to fish in it, take it to the sea in his canoe or boat.”<sup>76</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 198); the second, of *True History* ..., by Díaz del Castillo: “[...] and they were of good will, and spoke with the *principal* and *caciques* [...]”<sup>77</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 354).

## **Towards the monolingual Spanish dictionary: Indigenous features**

The circle is closing. If we consider these facts from the perspective of lexicographical theory, we are very close not only to the process of adopting new terms between languages that come into contact (lexical borrowing), but also to the creation of a new unified monolingual dictionary. The indigenous term already feels like the proper one

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<sup>73</sup> Original: “Y desdeque nos vimos con tres navíos y matalotaje de *pan cazabe*, que se hace de unas *raíces* que llaman *yucas* [...]” (SERNA, 2013, p. 323).

<sup>74</sup> Original: “La poesía de los incas amautas, que son filósofos, y harauicus, que son poetas.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 474).

<sup>75</sup> Original: “[...] el mismo que se adoptó en la época de Alfonso X: la equivalencia léxica.”

<sup>76</sup> Original: “Cuando quieren pescar en él, llévanle a la mar en su canoa o barca.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 198)

<sup>77</sup> Original: “[...] y fueron de buena voluntad, y hablaron con los principales y caciques [...]” (SERNA, 2013, p. 354).

and it is only necessary to explain its (lexicographical) definition, far from inaccurate approximations or comparisons from other words considered as proper, patrimonial or well-known: “The philologist — the chronicler — does lexicographical work from the moment in which before the text (written or oral) tries to understand what the words say.”<sup>78</sup> (ALVAR, 2001, p. 27, our translation).

In this sense, we find essays of true direct definitions of the new words spontaneously incorporated by means of their adoption into the Spanish lexicon. What Ahumada Lara (1989, p. 55, our translation) understands by lexicographical definition is the “[...] expression of the lexical meaning of an entry, where the lexical functioning of semantically charged units is given: names, adjectives, verbs, adverbs.”<sup>79</sup> This applies as much to Columbus, in his *Diario*: “They have sown *ajes*, which are some branches that they plant, and next to them roots grow which will serve [...] as bread and they will grate and knead them.”<sup>80</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 149, our translation), as for Cortés, in the *Second Letter of Relationship*: “And the great Moctezuma brought some shoes as *cotaras*, which is what they call them, the soles of gold and very precious stones in them.”<sup>81</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 370, our translation). Note that in these examples how there is no reference to any similar Spanish term by comparison. If there is, it appears in a secondary role, in between parentheses or commas, that is, the indigenous term becomes more important because, as a matter of fact, it is already considered a patrimonial voice, as in Cortés: “[...] and that if they were good, as they say, then we will do it, and if not, that will let go of those tepustles (*iron* is called in their language *tepuistle*).”<sup>82</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 315, our translation).

## On variation and diversity: comments on dialectology and linguistic geography

The word and the thing belonging to the new reality have become part of the lexicon of Spanish, at least in the imaginary and in the cognition of the chroniclers. The process, as we have seen, has not been easy and has been filled with many difficulties and inconsistencies. Now, once such terms have become part of the imaginary and cognition of the Spanish speaker, transmitted through a process of reflection (often intuitive) carried out by the chroniclers, that is when there begins to appear a new series of observations which we can qualify as dialectal. The new reality did not always

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<sup>78</sup> Original: “El filólogo –el cronista–, hace labor lexicográfica desde el momento en que ante el texto (escrito u oral) intenta entender lo que las palabras dicen” (ALVAR, 2001, p. 27).

<sup>79</sup> Original: “expresión del significado léxico de una entrada, donde se da cuenta del funcionamiento léxico de las unidades semánticamente cargadas: nombres, adjetivos, verbos, adverbios”

<sup>80</sup> Original: “Tienen sembrado en ella ajes, que son unos ramillos que plantan, y al pie de ellos crecen unas raíces [...] que sirven por pan y rallan y amasan.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 149).

<sup>81</sup> Original: “Y el gran Moctezuma traía calzados unos como cotaras, que así se dice lo que se calzan, las suelas de oro y muy preciosa pedrería en ellas.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 370).

<sup>82</sup> Original: “[...] y que si ellos fueron buenos, como dicen, que así lo haremos, y si no, que soltará de aquellos tepustles (al hierro le llaman en su lengua tepuistle).” (SERNA, 2013, p. 315).

receive / does not always receive the same name in the different pre-existing languages (and cultures) in the Indies. And so, once the new terms are accepted, some of the chroniclers explain no longer the meaning -which is taken for granted, by patrimonial-, but the geographical distribution of certain denominations of the same object: linguistic geography. Thus, Las Casas, in his *Very Brief Relationship*, testifies: “And among other parties that were held, it was in the afternoons that they would have them in all the neighborhoods and parks of the city the dances and dances that they got used to which they call *mitotes*, as in the Islands they call them *areítos*.”<sup>83</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 401). The same as the Inca Garcilaso: “That name *galpón* is not of the general language of Peru; it must be from the islands of Barlovento; the Spaniards have introduced it in their language [...] It means *big room*.”<sup>84</sup> (SERNA, 2013, p. 451, our translation).

### Final considerations

We have attempted to describe with a certain precision the processes of adaptation of new words coming from the indigenous languages into the lexicon of the Spanish language -which did not necessarily follow a progressive, precise and continuous chronology- through the testimony of the chroniclers of the Indies who, faced with the new reality of which they were witnesses, had to act not only as mere intermediaries who passively described what they contemplated, but as philologists and lexicographers who, probably without suspecting it, used their linguistic intuition, fine tuned to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the case. In the development of such processes, a good many linguistic principles came into play, which makes the testimonies especially precious, since they come to justify and become a clear proof of the concepts handled by linguistics with regard to the acquisition of language and, in turn, it also qualifies precisely other statements made by literary criticism about mimesis, representation of reality, fiction and fantasy: linguistics, history, literature backed up by the mantle of philology, in the broadest sense of the term.

We should note, however, that when we speak of lexical Americanism, it refers to “one of the most controversial concepts of Hispanic linguistics”<sup>85</sup> (VAQUERO DE RAMÍREZ, 1992, p. 40, our translation), at the same time that many of the lexical adaptations - taken, sometimes, as inaccuracies - disappeared later, although some are still alive in Latin America, for example, *estancia*, ‘farm dedicated to the cultivation of livestock. Beyond any specific quantitative intention -for our work is based on qualitative aspects-, it should be remembered that there is no shortage of scholars who call attention

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<sup>83</sup> Original: “Y entre otras fiestas que le hacían eran en las tardes hacer por todos los barrios y plazas de la ciudad los bailes y danzas que se acostumbran y que llaman ellos *mitotes*, como en las Islas llaman *areítos*.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 401).

<sup>84</sup> Original: “Ese nombre *galpón* no es de la lengua general del Perú; debe ser de las islas de Barlovento; los españoles lo han introducido en su lenguaje [...] Quiere decir sala grande.” (SERNA, 2013, p. 451).

<sup>85</sup> Original: “uno de los conceptos más polémicos de la lingüística hispánica” (VAQUERO DE RAMÍREZ, 1992, p. 40).

to the fact that the number of voices that enriched the Spanish language was not as expressive as it might seem (MORENO DE ALBA, 1995), because “[...] they were limited in general to the flora, fauna, the configuration of the terrain, the clothing, the furnishings.”<sup>86</sup> (SANCHÍS GUARNER, 1960, p. 157, our translation). In this sense, some of the terms that appear in the Chronicles ended up not being part of the Spanish lexical heritage, an issue that does not have so much to do with the origin (indigenous) of the voices, as with the avatars of the lexicon of any origin throughout the history of the language. Suffice it to recall, here, the opposite: how the term *almadía*, of Arab origin, disappeared with the passage of time being completely replaced, among other lexemes, by the indigenous canoe (*canoas*), despite the conceptual differences between the Mozarabic term and the indigenous one described accurately by the chroniclers.

Be that as it may, what is reflected in the testimonies of the Chronicles is the very essence of linguistic cognition. First, it is clear that each language is adapted to express, representing itself, the reality that surrounds the community that speaks it. When a new reality appears, previously unknown, the problems begin, because the language, and the cognitive processes associated with it, are insufficient to apprehend it. Until the specific autochthonous word is known, it will be necessary to go through multiple consistent attempts in the search to adapt cognition and language -documented today, from the tests in cognitive psychology (experiment of the figures of Labov, 1973), in the semantics of prototypes (KLEIBER, 1990), which will only culminate with the incorporation of the borrowed word together with the cognitive load that every term has: This is the case of chickens of the land (*gallinas de la tierra*) for ‘*pavos*’ or other less felicitous names such as *camels without humps*, when the characteristic of this animal is the hump, going through the denomination of the different with the Castilian word that designated something only slightly similar: flute (*flauta*) for *queñas*, *atabales* for *marimbas* or lions (*leones*) for *pumas*, without forgetting the essays of lexicographical definition as a description of the significant senses that explain a new indigenous lexeme incorporated into the lexical field of Castilian: canoe (*canoas*) in relation to the Castilian words *almadía* or trough (*artesa*). Once the word has been adapted by the language - and by the users’ cognition - the diatopic precisions will arrive, which will reflect the spatial variations in America, yesterday and today.

But, also, especially in the first moments, when one is not able to grasp the word and the thing, one resorts to fantasy, also specific to each culture. The Castilian expeditionaries have, to a greater or lesser extent, a cultural background that is their own and that is transmitted at the time of writing their version (chronicle) of the events. There are cultural expectations that come into play in the description and, on the one hand, it is believed that the space where mermaids (*sirenas*) live is discovered when, in fact, there is a species that is found which is unknown in the European imagination, but which had already been described in the books of travels; and thus we come, in the

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<sup>86</sup> Original: “[...] se limitaron en general a la flora, la fauna, la configuración del terreno, la indumentaria, los enseres.” (SANCHÍS GUARNER, 1960, p. 157).

second place, to another question related to the first: the fantasy implied by distance -for the author and the recipient reader of the chronicle- leads to the cultural imaginary of both, recalling paradises -with a capital or a small p- to which they were already related in other allegorical texts since the Middle Ages and much earlier. The circle is closing: language, representation of immediate reality, cognition and historical-cultural imaginary.

But there is still more. If any doubt could fit what we are saying, that is, if the lexical-descriptive essays to which the chroniclers were led when describing the new reality represent an intuitive universal cognitive process, we can appeal to the other side of the coin. Let's do it through the studies that have been developed in Nahuatl, a language whose typology "remarkably polysynthetic"<sup>87</sup> (CASTILLO FERRERAS; DAKIN; MORENO DE LOS ARCOS, 1966, p. 187, our translation), or rather, "[...] agglutinating and polysynthetic language [in which] the words and meanings are united in a single word to form other more complex."<sup>88</sup> (PALMON ARCOS, 2012, p. 260, our translation), allows to explore how this reacted to the incorporation of words from Castilian, because the path derived from the contact of languages is always two-way. Obviously, the adaptation to the language of the Nahuas only occurred in what was a novelty, because "[...] in no way did all the Spanish modalities and objects qualify as something substantially different from their own."<sup>89</sup> (LOCKHART, 1999, p. 382, our translation). Thus, only by way of example, to the Castilian word vault (*bóveda*) corresponds a periphrastic description in náhuatl *tetlapachiuhqui calli*, literally 'structure with a stone roof'; at other times, a term is used metaphorically to describe / designate the 'firearms' from the term *tlequiquiztli*, literally 'trompeta', although here 'arma de fuego': cannon will be *huey tlequiquiztli*, literally 'great trumpet of fire' or *tomahuac tlequiquiztli* 'trumpet of fat and thick fire'. The same approximations to proper terms are found in the description of animals: *maçatl livenado* and its derivatives are used to denominate the Castilian 'horses' (*caballos*) and everything that has to do with them: *macacalli* 'house of the deer', for stable; *maçamachtia* "to teach the deer" (*venado*), to tame foals (*domar potros*), etc. Through, finally, morphological agglutination procedures are called the new objects that the Castilian designates with new words: *sierra* is equivalent in náhuatl to *tepozchichiquillateconi*, literally 'metal instrument to cut something scraping', with which we return, from the other side, to the lexicographical definitions of the chroniclers before and after the adoption of the indigenous term. The regulatory mechanisms of cognitive processes in human beings are manifested universally, beyond the linguistic typology that characterizes a language and independently of the reality to which it refers.

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<sup>87</sup> Original: "notablemente polisintética" (CASTILLO FERRERAS; DAKIN; MORENO DE LOS ARCOS, 1966, p. 187).

<sup>88</sup> Original: "[...] lengua aglutinante y polisintética [en la cual] las palabras y los significados se unen en una sola palabra para formar otras más complejas." (PALEMÓN ARCOS, 2012, p. 260).

<sup>89</sup> Original: "[...] de ninguna manera todas las modalidades y objetos españoles calificaban como algo sustancialmente diferente de los propios." (LOCKHART, 1999, p. 382).

It is now suitable, using the words of Castillo Durán (2004, p.9, our translation), to conclude: “We make the reader aware of the lion’s share, which is, to weigh the arguments and understand, without falling in the traps of the speech, if you do not want to.”<sup>90</sup>

MIRANDA POZA, J. A. Cognición, estereotipo, imaginario y fantasía en el proceso de aprehensión de la nueva realidad a través del léxico del castellano: los testimonios de los Cronistas de Indias. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v. 63, n.1, p.39-66, 2019.

- *RESUMEN: Las Crónicas de Indias son un mundo misceláneo con información sobre la colonización de América: cartas, autobiografías, historias naturales, que nos invitan a revisitar la filología, donde caben por igual lengua, literatura, historia, antropología. Los trabajos desarrollados hasta ahora llegaron a conclusiones divergentes. Aquí se propone unir lengua, literatura y, también, historia y antropología. Todos estos textos resultan útiles para referir su contenido a la penetración del léxico indígena en la lengua castellana –y viceversa–, con intercambios identitarios, culturales y comprensión-representación-cognición del mundo. Sistematizaremos –desde su heterogeneidad– los datos provenientes de las Crónicas marcando seis fases en el proceso de adaptación, según la teoría lexicográfica, que culminarán con la incorporación del vocablo indígena al léxico español (campos semasiológico, onomasiológico y cognitivo). Lo que muestran estos testimonios es la esencia misma de la cognición lingüística. Se constata que, primeramente, cada lengua está adaptada para representar la realidad de su entorno. Cuando aparece una nueva realidad, antes ignota, comienzan los problemas: la lengua se muestra insuficiente para aprehenderla. Hasta llegar a la palabra específica autóctona, habrá múltiples intentos de búsqueda para adaptar cognición y lengua, que culminarán con la incorporación de la palabra prestada con la carga cognoscitiva que posee.*
- *PALABRAS CLAVE: Crónicas de Indias. Historia del léxico español. Cognición. Estereotipo y prototipo semántico. Imaginación/ficción/fantasía. Lenguas en contacto.*

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<sup>90</sup> Original: “[...] dejamos al lector avisado la parte del león, esto es, sopesar los argumentos y, sin caer, si no se quiere, en las trampas del discurso, entender.” (CASTILLO DURÁN, 2004, p.9).



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