

The perception of connotations in lexical innovations¹

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1. Introduction

In any living language new words are created to refer to new realities, but new words are also formed to express realities that are already known or new perspectives of these realities (Guilbert 1975, Cabré 1989). In this sense, it is considered that the new words or neologisms are created within the heart of a linguistic community in order to meet the needs of a specific community. This paper is the result of an exhaustive revision of the dichotomy *denominative neology* and *stylistic neology*, which is broadly used in neology, a field of study devoted to neologisms, which are characterized by the newness, in the sense that they are recent words, scarcely used, unknown or surprising (Freixa 2010, Llopart-Saumell 2016). Regarding these antonymous categories, we try to answer the following questions: why did this word appear? What is its aim? This traditional dichotomy considers that there are two underlying motivations to create new words. Generally speaking, neologisms considered as denominative have a referential or denotative function, since they designate new concepts or objects of reality and the form they adopt designates the referent without causing ambiguity. These words are the result of productive processes of word-formation rules. Besides, this type of neologisms is considered to have a medium, high frequency of use, and may stabilize in their use and become part of the lexical wealth of the speakers of a linguistic community. Regarding stylistic neologisms, they have opposite characteristics. On the one hand, it is indicated that this type of neologisms serve an expressive or connotative function, since they provide a new nuance of an already known referent. Since they aim at capturing the attention of recipients, they use word formation processes that are little productive, since their aim is playing with words and being original. As a result, this type of neologisms shows a low frequency and they tend to be ephemeral (Guilbert 1975, Cabré 1989, Guerrero 2005).²

Certainly, in some cases, our linguistic intuition allows us to tell denominative neologisms from stylistic ones (Llopart-Saumell 2019). As, for instance, if it is a new concept of reality we have to name in order to be able to refer to it in an accurate way in a communicative situation. On the other hand, we can also analyze the word in order to

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² In Llopart-Saumell i Freixa (2014) a detailed and complete description is offered of these two categories, known as *denominative neologisms and stylistic neologisms*. This article has a bibliographical review in which this traditional dichotomy has been described, used, and criticized; other functions and motivations of neologisms have been also taken into account.

check if the aforementioned characteristics are complied with, as for instance the fact that the form adapts to the referent or that it has a remarkable frequency of use, but it doesn't show any kind of aesthetic or emotional aim. In this last case, the neologism can be considered as denominative, whereas, those lexical innovations that show a subjective view of an entity or are perceived as odd or surprising can be classified as stylistic. Nevertheless, some neologisms do not show prototypic characteristics of any of these two categories or they show features of both types. Although in some cases referents are tangible objects, we cannot assert if it is necessary to designate an element of reality in a more specific way and, therefore, justify the creation of some new lexical units. This fact, among others, proves that the description of the properties of denominative and stylistic neologisms can be applied to a limited number of cases, but it does not enable us to classify a whole set of neologisms between these two categories, because the description is not enough, and the limits are vague and subjective. For this reason, the classification of neologisms depends finally of the linguistic intuition of each one of the speakers and it is not done according to a systematic model or a set of more detailed properties.

All in all, although this dichotomy is related to speakers' linguistic intuition for the classification of neologisms as denominative or stylistic, it only works to a certain extent. In this sense, it can be regarded as a theoretical construction without a reflection in the practice (Llopart-Saumell 2016). Besides this, from a theoretical approach all neologisms seem to have a referential function, but some of them show formal motivations and features: they can show referential, expressive or pragmatic innovation; have a specific style, subjectivity or ideology; and the linguistic form may deviate from the norm. Regarding practice, an empirical study (Llopart-Saumell 2019) proves that neologisms with prototypical functional, sociolinguistic, and discursive³ features of stylistic function are usually perceived with a greater coincidence among participants (96.5 %) than denominative function prototypical neologisms (79.9 %)⁴. For this reason, if we focus on the study of neologisms with prototypical features of a stylistic function, we can see that the existing bibliography identifies those characteristics that are more often related to these lexical innovations. In spite thereof, from a practical point of view, without a detailed analysis of the different factors, it is not possible to determine in a systematic and coherent way what neologisms have these characteristics.

In this paper, we aim at analyzing a set of lexical innovations according to speakers' perception. In this sense, we think that this intuitive assessment entails the analysis of the neologism's linguistic characteristics: such as morphological, semantic, and discursive features. One of the linguistic elements we believe must be analyzed more thoroughly is those connotations associated to the lexical innovation in question, since it is believed that this fact is closely related to all aforementioned linguistic features. The general aim of this paper is studying the characteristics of neologisms regarding their communicative function. The specific aims are analyzing the connotations of neologisms according to the

³ After a thorough review of the literature devoted to the communicative function of neologisms and, more specifically, to denominative neologisms and stylistic ones, Llopart-Saumell (2016) studies in detail the concepts and general notions underlying this dichotomy. This thorough theoretical analysis provides us with the clues to identify a set of factors closely involved in the study of this dichotomy. Finally, it designs a methodology made up by a set of criteria that should be applied to a corpus of neologisms in order to identify prototypical characteristics of these two categories in an objective and way.

⁴ It must be borne in mind that the minimal and random percentage of probability of coincidence among participants is 50 %, since the classification just consists of categories.

speaker's perception. The specific goals consist in analyzing the connotations of neologisms according to speakers' perception, assessing the degree of coincidence among participants and, finally, relating the results of the linguistic questionnaire to criteria used in order to study communicative functions of neologisms. The research question on which this study is based is the following: connotations vary according to individual experience, and so how do individuals perceive if neologisms are connotative or rather not? To answer this question we relate the perception of participants and linguistic characteristics of neologisms and their context of use. In this sense, connotations are associated to linguistic features such as morphological, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive elements that may be considered as stylistic.

2. Theoretical aspects

2.1. *Lexical innovation and motivation*

Neology is, therefore, an aspect that is inherent in a language that may be considered a living language, that is to say, used by a community of speakers to express themselves in different communicative situations. For this reason, it is not made up by a static set of words, but rather some words are less and less used and they end up disappearing, others are created that did not exist in a previous stage of that particular language.

Aquesta capacitat [de crear paraules noves] no és gratuïta sinó plenament funcional: en la mesura que es produeixen canvis socials, la llengua s'adapta a aquests canvis i genera noves unitats per denominar-los. Les llengües mortes no tenen parlants als quals calgui expressar novetats referencials, i doncs la neologia i els neologismes no tenen sentit en les llengües mortes. (Cabré 2004: 18)

In this sense, the introduction of new words in the lexis of a language reflects human capacity, both biological and social, to communicate. To start with, we must bear in mind that the world around us is also not static, but rather new concepts appear we have the need to name in order to refer to these elements in a communication act. Neologisms that appear in a specific period of time are the reflex of the society of that particular moment and, overtime, that is to say, from a diachronic point of view, they provide a “panoramic view” of a temporal space⁵. In addition to this, there are also creations that show a particular view or a specific nuance of a concept that was already known, they express feelings or emotions, or they simply play with words.

In this way, neology can be conceived as the result of the lexical creativity of language and, more specifically, of the capacity of speakers to create new words. In this sense, speakers know a more or less wide set of units of their language and they also know the rules to generate new words. This way, from the bases already known to them, the

⁵ In this sense, for instance, Boussidan, Lupone, and Ploux (2011) study the appearance of the term *malbouffe* ‘junk food’ in a fragment of the periodicals library of the French newspaper *Le Monde* (between 1997 and 2001), which was documented for the first time in this corpus in September 1999 and from this first documentation onwards it continues appearing in this newspaper with a high degree of occurrences. In this line, we also observe how during the studied period this term appears with a set of co-occurrences, as *Bové* by José Bové (who uses this term in his discourse), *mondialisation*, *lutte*, *paysan*, *McDo*, among others. This way, in addition to being able to examine the semantic network of the unit, we can also observe the cultural and political context around the appearance of this term.

guidelines regulating the combination of these bases with other bases and other elements of the language, and with the change in meaning, grammar or use, they can formulate lexical innovations.

One of the research questions posed by several scholars interested in neology, understood as the study of new words, is the reasons that push speakers of a language into creating words that were inexistent up to that point. The most widely used classification to tell neologisms apart according to their motivation refers to the concepts of denominative neology and stylistic neology, which are based on the communicative function of neologisms. According to the contributions of researchers who have broadly described these categories (Cabr  1989, Guerrero Ramos 1995, Guilbert, 1975), generally speaking we may state that a neologism is denominative if it designates a new concept, belonging to the reality surrounding us we have the need to name, whereas neologisms that express a subjective view of an already known entity can be classified as stylistic. These points prove that the description of features of denominative and stylistic neologisms that has been done up to date can be correctly applied to a certain number of cases, but it does not enable us to classify a whole set of neologisms between these two categories in a systematic way. For this reason, the classification of units would depend on linguistic intuition of each one of the speakers who carried out the classification and it would not develop according to a specific model or more detailed properties. In this sense, this classification has been object of criticism for different reasons, one of the main ones denies the fact that they are dichotomic concepts (Estornell 2009, Faura, 1998, Isla 2006). In addition to this, other researchers have used different functions and perspectives to explain the communicative function of neologisms (Mounin 1990, Sablayrolles 1993, 2000). For this reason, the study of the perception of connotations allows us to observe other aspects related to the motivation of neologisms and the effects in the recipient.

2.2. *The study of connotations*

Regarding the notions of *denotation and connotation*, as it is the case with neologisms with denominative and stylistic values, they have also been associated with specific language functions. From the semantic point of view, Guti rrez Ord n ez (1989: 59) states that the referential meaning⁶ is carried out by the denotative function of language, whereas connotation is within the frame of the expressive function. In spite of this first assertion on denotative and connotative value of language, it is worth highlighting, according to Espi o (1984: 121), that connotation is a vague and innacurate term in philosophical studies on language (Gary-Prieur 1971, Molino 1971, Todorov 1966), since it is used to refer to different concepts. Yet still, if according to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1977: 12) we just focus on the definition of a linguistic nature and leave aside that used in the field of logic we have a more specific definition. In this sense, the author describes denotation as a set of differentiating characteristics with a denominative function that enables us to tell one concept from the other, whereas connotation includes the additional semantical values.

⁶ Guti rrez Ord n ez (1989: 59) uses the term referential meaning instead of denotation to refer to the same concept they deal with in this chapter.

Based on this definition we can observe that the denominative value is characterized by the fact of it being a more delimited notion, but, contrary to this, the connotative value adopts a broader sense. The same thing happens in the opposition between denominative neology and stylistic one. Mortureux (1984: 97) asserts that, at least, regarding linguistic structure, denominative neology is easier to describe. Regarding stylistic neology, Faura (1998: 173) declares that the opposition between both types is inaccurate, especially with stylistic neology. For his part, García Platero (1996: 1) asserts that subjective neologic words are more complex.

In order to delimit the scope of the notion *connotation*, Bloomfield (1933/1984) was the first one to distinguish among the different classes of connotation⁷. In this same line, Espiño (1985), in accordance with Molino (1971), also distinguishes three connotation concepts, but with some modifications in relation with Bloomfield (1933/1984). In this sense, the proposal of Espiño (1984) and Molino (1971) takes into consideration a broadest range of clarifications than the ones mentioned by the former, which we shall specify below:

1. Stylistic connotation: in relation with the language, with stylistic and use variation
2. Subjective connotation: of a subjective or emotional nature, that is to say, that it does not have a social nature, but rather an individual one
3. Ideological connotation: with cultural or ideological content

As a conclusion, Espiño (1984: 131-132) states that denotative aspects are normally associated to the definition or identification of a *concept* and, therefore, to the referential function, whereas connotative aspects are associated to an unnecessary or secondary meaning as for instance *code* (stylistic connotation) or emotional or valuation attitude of the *user* (subjective and ideological connotation). Anyway, he points out that the meaning of a word can show both ways, because the denotative and connotative values it is associated with have a same referent. This clarification makes evident that, in addition to the linguistic competence, for speakers to understand each other a cultural competence, arising from their knowledge of the world, is also needed. As Garrido (1979: 19) states, connotations do not define the referent, but they rather embrace emotional and subjective values. Therefore, they are considered to be of a pragmatic or stylistic type, and must be analyzed within the discourse they are embedded in (Mounin 1971).

In relation with the concepts of *denotation and connotation*, we can see how the previous assertion coincides with that of Cohen (1970: 201) (also that of Faura 1998: 173), who points out that the fact that they have the same referent, but they are opposed on a psychological level, because denotation designates a cognitive response and connotation an emotional one⁸. Besides, we must bear in mind that in accordance with cognitive

⁷ Bloomfield (1933/1984) understands the concept of connotation with a semantic additional value and he differentiates three types: 1. In relation with language: regional forms, loanwords or archaic forms; 2. Taboos: cultural reasons or negative assessment; 3. Degrees of intensity: interjections, onomatopoeia, hypocoristic, children language, etc.

⁸ The terms *cognitive response* and *emotional response* have been used in the field of neuroscience. For instance in that of Cacioppo, Petty and Snyder (1979) on the reactions of brain hemispheres to specific communicative stimuli. We also would like to highlight an experiment by Bartel (1992) focused on the field of music, which studies the types of responses to musical stimuli. As parameters to assess the responses he uses a description of opposed terms: on the one hand, he uses a description from an emotional point of view or with expressive features and, on the other, some structural or textual characteristics. Subsequently, in accordance with the obtained results he indicates that the cognitive response is formal, syntactical, and intellectual, whereas the emotional is within an expressive dimension.

linguistics *denotation* and connotation do not constitute a dichotomy (Cuenca i Hilferty, 1999: 19):

Es, por tanto, importante insistir en la naturaleza inherentemente enciclopédica de la semántica, lo que nos lleva a no disociar los aspectos denotativos (estrictamente léxicos) de los connotativos (tradicionalmente considerados como atribuibles al contexto, a lo pragmático). (Cuenca and Hilferty 1999: 70)

In this sense, thus, aspects used to describe the concepts of *denotation* and *connotation* are also related to denominative and stylistic neologisms, respectively. As we have seen, in the action of communicating, there is not only the will to transmit information and, more specifically, new data:

[...] la transmisión de información nueva es solo una más de las finalidades de la comunicación humana, pero no la única y, seguramente, a veces ni siquiera la más importante. Además de la transmisión de información nueva y objetiva, la comunicación permite influir también en realizar actividades específicas, como saludar, pedir, agradecer, sugerir, insultar... Un modelo adecuado de la comunicación debe dar cabida, por tanto, a todos estos diferentes objetivos comunicativos. (Escandell-Vidal 2014: 25)

Likewise, in connection with stylistic or expressive neologisms language functions focus on the speaker and the message. Therefore, if the semantic content is related to connotation, and consequently, to a particular style, subjective or ideological, we have elements to identify this type of relation. To sum up, from these ideas we can conclude that according to what the speaker wants to communicate to the recipient, for instance describing reality or sharing his/her emotions or opinions, etc., he/she shall use different strategies. This statement can be applied to neology, and so, if a speaker must create or use a word to communicate an external reality or his/her internal reality he/she shall opt for different morphosemantic, pragmatic and discursive strategies and this fact shall have as a consequence more or less predictable sociolinguistic results.

3. Methodology

Regarding the methodology used in the perception study, we shall in the following lines explain the participants, materials, and procedure.

3.1. Participants

83 persons participated in the survey. Below we shall set out the data of these participants according to gender, age, mother tongue, and studies and profession.

| Gender | N. | % |
|--------|----|------|
| male | 20 | 24.1 |
| female | 63 | 75.9 |

Table 1. Gender of participants

Regarding sex, three quarters were female (75.9 %), that is to say, 63 informants. 20 men participated (24.1 %).

| Age | N. | % |
|-------|----|-------|
| 18-25 | 22 | 26.51 |
| 26-35 | 30 | 36.14 |
| 36-45 | 10 | 12.05 |
| 46-55 | 16 | 19.28 |
| 56-65 | 5 | 6.03 |

Table 2. Age of participants

Regarding age, although there were informants between 18 and 65 years of age, the group between 26 and 35 stands out, with 30 individuals, followed by the group between 18 and 25, with 22 informants. The oldest group, between 56 and 65, is the smallest in number, with just 5 informants, followed by that between 36 and 45, with 10 users. Finally, the group between 46 and 55 is in the middle with 16 participants.

| Mother tongue | N. | % |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| Catalan | 59 | 71.08 |
| Catalan and Spanish | 20 | 24.1 |
| Spanish | 3 | 3.62 |
| Another language | 1 | 1.21 |

Table 3. Participants' mother tongue

Regarding the mother tongue of the persons participating in the survey, 59 said it was Catalan; 20, Catalan and Spanish; 3, Spanish; and 1, another language.

| Studies | N. | % |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| PhD | 14 | 16.87 |
| Master | 34 | 40.96 |
| University Degree | 30 | 36.14 |
| Vocational Degree | 2 | 2.41 |
| Secondary education | 3 | 3.62 |

Table 4. Studies completed by participants

In relations with the studies of participants, it is worth highlighting that 93.98 %, that is to say, 78 of the persons taking part in the survey, have studies at university level. In descendent order, 34 have a Master's Degree; 30, a university degree; and 14, a PhD. The rest 6.02 % have completed a professional degree, with 2 participants, or secondary school, with 3 informants.

| Studies and professional field | N. | % |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| language | 60 | 72.29 |
| Another field | 23 | 27.71 |

Table 5. Studies and professional field of participants

Finally, regarding the studies completed, as well as the exercised profession, 60 participants (72.29 %) asserted they worked in the field of language, either translation, linguistics, or philology and 23 studied or worked in a field different from language.

3.2. Materials and study design

If we focus now on materials and study design, the survey is made up of 20 lexicographical neologisms in Catalan documented in the bank of neologisms of the Neology Observatory (BOBNEO) of the University Pompeu Fabra. These 20 lexical units were selected in accordance with the results of a previous study of neologisms (Llopart Saumell, 2016). This way among selected words there are prototypically denominative neologisms, and others with stylistic features, a third group with both features of prototypical denotative neologisms and stylistic ones and finally, neologisms with features that do not match any of these two functions.

| Denominative function | Stylistic function | Both functions | None of these two functions |
|---|--|--|--|
| <i>catalanofòbia</i> <i>ecoparc</i> <i>mitja punta</i> <i>prova pilot</i> <i>redimensionament</i> | <i>autoretallada</i> <i>avi cangur</i> <i>cretinitzador</i> <i>bonrotllisme</i> <i>rastaflauta</i> | <i>caçavots</i> <i>claqueter</i> <i>claquetera</i> <i>onze de garanties</i> <i>pseudoecologista</i> <i>saxofònic -a</i> <i>seminacionalitzar</i> | <i>cleptòcrata</i> <i>méteo</i> <i>sou base</i> <i>webisodi</i> |

Table 6. Communicative function of the 20 neologisms of this study

These neologisms were presented to the informants with the relevant use context, which was randomly selected from the several occurrences documented in BOBNEO. This original context was reviewed and simplified to facilitate the reading task.

Regarding the labels with which participants had to assess the 20 neologisms in context, there are 4 groups of couplets that represent opposing options and which were isolated in accordance with the type of connotations detailed by Espiño (1984). At the beginning of the survey a brief explanation was given of each one of the categories for the different informants to bear in mind a same definition of the labels to carry out the perception study. The couplets of opposed options are the following:

1. Informal register: a familiar, spontaneous context is used
2. Formal register: a high or neutral register is used

3. Personal nature: the word shows a particular style
2. General nature: no specific style is observed

3. Subjective opinion: it expresses a personal view or emotions
3. Objective opinion: it does not include subjective elements

4. Ideological load: it shows a negative political-social background (politically (in) correct) or a positive one (prestige)
4. Neutral load: it does not show this kind of background

Participants had to choose the option they considered the most appropriate in each one of the four groups in accordance with the features transmitted by the relevant word.

3.3. Procedure

The survey was carried out online by means of the program Google Forms. At the beginning of the questionnaire users found the instructions, together with a description of the categories, which was displayed again for each one of the 20 neologisms that made up the survey as a reminder. These 20 neologisms are displayed in a random order for the different participants. As far as the procedure is concerned, the answers to the questionnaire are structured in a Likert scale of 5 points, and so informants need to select one of the boxes from 1 to 5, where option A is one of the couplets of opposed options and option B the other option of the couplet:

- *Option A*: (1) I agree / (2) I quite agree / (3) I neither agree nor disagree
- *Option B*: (3) I neither agree nor disagree / (4) I quite disagree / (5) I agree

Boxes 1 and 2 are used to indicate that the participant *agrees* or *quite agrees* with option A whereas boxes 5 and 4 are to be marked in case that the informant agrees or quite agrees with the other option, *B*. If he/she neither *agrees nor disagrees* with none of the two options, he/she can mark box 3. Following we include an example:

Només alguns il·lustres antipàtics s'atreveixen a saltar-se la regla del *bonrotllisme* a l'escenari.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| registre informal | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | registre formal |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| caràcter personal | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | caràcter general |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| opinió valorativa | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | opinió objectiva |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| càrrega ideològica | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | càrrega neutra |

Illustration 1. Example of the preception study.

At the end, we also gathered sociolinguistic information about the participants.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Coincidence among participants and classification

In the first place, we present the results considering the degree of coincidence among participants when it comes to classifying neologisms in accordance with the four categories with opposed options proposed for this study on the perception of connotations. Each one of these tables includes the neologisms that have obtained a coincidence equal or exceeding 50 %. We believe that this is representative because in these data the results of the boxes *I neither agree nor disagree* (3) are not included, but rather only *I agree* (1/5) and *I quite agree* (2/4).

| Coincidence % | Informal register (1-2) | | Formal register (4-5) | |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| | N. | Neologisms | N. | Neologisms |
| 100 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 99-90 | 2 | <i>rastaflauta</i> <i>bonrotllisme</i> | 0 | - |
| 89-80 | 1 | <i>avi cangur</i> | 0 | - |
| 79-70 | 1 | <i>çaçavots</i> | 3 | <i>prova pilot</i> <i>ecoparc</i> <i>redimensionament</i> |
| 69-60 | 1 | <i>méteo</i> | 0 | - |
| 59-50 | 1 | <i>cretinitzador</i> | 2 | <i>sou base</i> <i>cleptòcrata</i> |
| | 6 (30 %) | | 5 (25 %) | |

Table 7. Results of the categories *informal register* and *formal register*

Regarding table 7, it shows the results of the categories *informal register* / *formal register*. With this couple of adjectives, we obtain 30 % of neologisms classified as informal and 25% as formal. That means that there is a considerable number of units that have been classified neither as *informal* nor *formal*. That is 45 % of the cases. Therefore, it seems that when it comes to classifying neologisms in one of these categories informants have had doubts. The type of neologisms that present the highest degree of coincidence are those considered as belonging to an informal register, because there are 3 units with a coincidence equal or higher than 80 %: *rastaflauta* and *bonrotllisme*, with a coincidence between 90 and 99 % of the total, and *avi cangur*, with 80-89 %. On the contrary, with the adjective *formal*, the coincidence in all 5 cases does not reach this percentage. They are *prova pilot*, *ecoparc* and *redimensionament*, with a coincidence between 70 and 79 %, and *sou base* and *cleptòcrata*, between 50 and el 59 %.

Following we do the same for the categories *personal nature* / *general nature*:

| Coincidence % | Personal nature (1-2) | | General nature (4-5) | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------|------------|
| | N. | Neologisms | N. | Neologisms |
| 100 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 99-90 | 2 | - | 0 | - |
| 89-80 | 1 | <i>cretinitzador</i> <i>rastaflauta</i> | 0 | - |

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---|----------|---|
| 79-70 | 1 | <i>çaçavots</i> <i>bonrotllisme</i> <i>avi cangur</i> | 2 | <i>prova pilot</i> <i>sou base</i> |
| 69-60 | 1 | <i>pseudoecologista</i> <i>pseudoretallada</i> <i>cleptòcrata</i> | 2 | <i>ecoparc</i> <i>redimensionament</i> |
| 59-50 | 1 | - | 2 | <i>mitja punta</i> <i>claqueter</i> |
| 8 (40 %) | | | 6 (30 %) | |

Table 8. Results of the categories *personal nature* and *general nature*

In comparison with Table 7, the coincidence data are slightly higher: 40 % in the case of *personal nature*, which matches 8 cases, and 30 % for *general nature*, with 6 cases. Once more, neologisms considered to have a personal nature show a higher degree of coincidence than those with a *general nature*. There are 3 neologisms with a coincidence between 80 and 89 %: *cretinitzador -a*, *rastaflauta* and *çaçavots*. In the case of general neologisms, the number decreases up to 70-79 % of coincidence, with *prova pilot* and *sou base*. Besides, there are also units with a coincidence between 50 and 59 %: *mitja punta* and *claqueter claquetera*.

Table 9 contains the data about *subjective opinion* and *objective opinion*:

| Coincidence % | Subjective opinion (1-2) | | Objective opinion (4-5) | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| | N. | Neologisms | N. | Neologisms |
| 100 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 99-90 | 2 | <i>rastaflauta</i> <i>cretinitzador</i> | 0 | - |
| 89-80 | 5 | <i>pseudoecologista</i> <i>cleptòcrata</i> <i>çaçavots</i> <i>bonrotllisme</i> <i>avi cangur</i> | 1 | <i>prova pilot</i> |
| 79-70 | 2 | <i>autoretallada</i> <i>catalanofòbia</i> | 1 | <i>sou base</i> |
| 69-60 | 0 | - | 7 | <i>ecoparc</i> <i>redimensionament</i> <i>mitja punta</i> <i>claqueter</i> <i>webisodi</i> <i>méteo</i> |
| 59-50 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 9 (45 %) | | | 9 (45 %) | |

Table 9. Results of the categories *subjective opinion* and *objective opinion*

In this case, the number of registered words increases up to 45 % for the two categories. And in spite of this, it can be observed that the degree of coincidence is higher in the case of neologisms classified as belonging to a *subjective opinion*, since all units are in a position equal or exceeding 70 %. On the contrary, in the case of *objective opinion*, this

only happens in 2 of the 9 cases. Those are *prova pilot*, with 80-89 % coincidence, and *sou base*, with 70-79 %.

Finally, we show the results for the category *ideological load* and *neutral load*.

| Coincidence % | Ideological load (1-2) | | Neutral load (4-5) | |
|---------------|------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| | N. | Neologisms | N. | Neologisms |
| 100 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| 99-90 | 1 | <i>rastaflauta</i> | 0 | - |
| 89-80 | 4 | <i>catalanofòbia</i> <i>cretinitzador</i> <i>pseudoecologista</i> <i>çaçavots</i> | 1 | <i>prova pilot</i> |
| 79-70 | 2 | <i>cleptòcrata</i> <i>autoretallada</i> | 6 | <i>webisodi</i> <i>claqueter</i> <i>mitja punta</i> <i>méteo</i> <i>saxofònic</i> <i>sou base</i> |
| 69-60 | 1 | <i>seminacionalitzar</i> | 0 | - |
| 59-50 | 0 | - | 2 | <i>ecoparc</i> <i>redimensionament</i> |
| | 8 (40 %) | | 9 (45 %) | |

Table 10. Results of the categories *ideological load* and *neutral load*

The results of Table 10 are similar to the previous ones. The only difference is that in this case the number of neologisms is bigger, but just by one unit, in the case of the category with a *neutral load*. Nevertheless, it follows the same trend, since among neologisms classified as subjective there are more units registered with a coincidence equal or exceeding 80 %. Whereas in the category *ideological load* there are 5 cases (*rastaflauta*, *catalanofòbia*, *cretinitzador*, *pseudoecologista* i *çaçavots*), in that of *neutral load* there is only 1 (*prova pilot*). Besides, among neologisms considered as neutral there are 2 with a coincidence between 50 and 59 % (*ecoparc* and *redimensionament*).

In Table 11 we present a summary of the degree of coincidence of the perception study carried out. Once again, we show the classification results of the 20 neologisms for each one of the four categories (*informal / formal*, *personal / general*, *subjective / objective*, *ideological / neutral*).

| Coincidence % | With connotation | | Without connotation | |
|---------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| | N. | % | N. | % |
| 100 | - | - | - | - |
| 99-90 | 5 | 16.13 | - | - |
| 89-80 | 13 | 41.94 | 2 | 6.09 |
| 79-70 | 7 | 22.58 | 12 | 41.38 |
| 69-60 | 5 | 16.13 | 9 | 31.03 |
| 59-50 | 1 | 3.23 | 6 | 20.69 |
| | 31 | | 29 | |

Table 11. Degree of coincidence in connection with the connotated and non-connotated categories

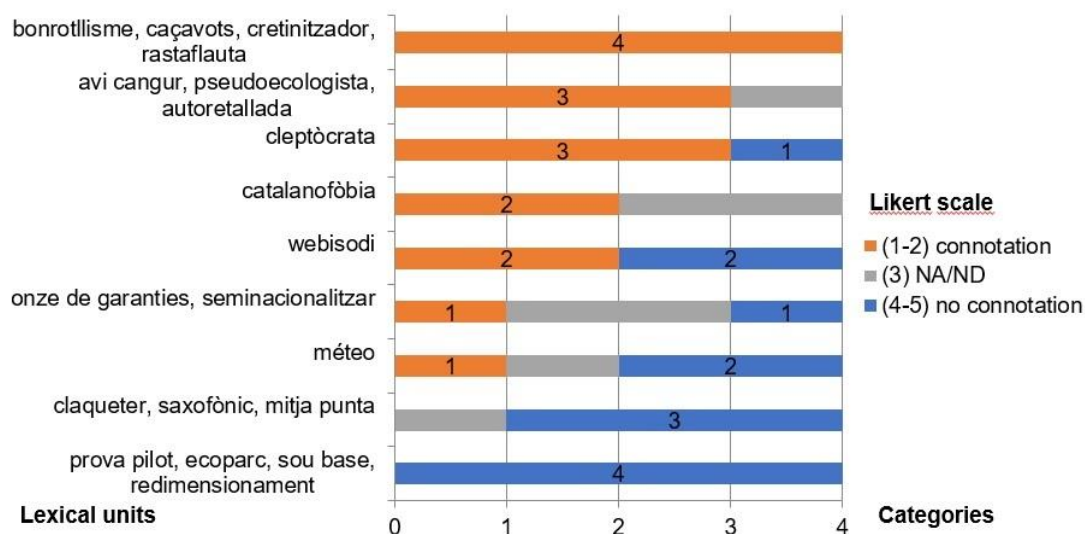
Whereas among connoted categories (*informal, personal, subjective and ideological*) there are 18 neologisms with a coincidence equal or exceeding 80 %, among the non-connoted categories there are two documented, which represent 6.09 % of cases compared to 58.07 % of neologisms considered as connoted.

| Coincidence | With connotation | | Without connotation | |
|-------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| | N. | % | N. | % |
| 100-75 | 24 | 77.42 | 11 | 37.93 |
| 74-50 | 7 | 22.58 | 18 | 62.07 |

Table 12. Summary of the degree of coincidence regarding connoted and non-connoted categories.

If we set the limit in 75 %, this difference is even bigger: neologisms classified in connoted categories amount to 77.42 % of the cases, with 24 units, whereas in non-connoted categories this figure represents 37.93 %, with 11 cases. It is thus observed that in connoted categories the coincidence among participants is higher than in non-connoted categories. From these results we can draw the conclusion that connotations are easier to verify than non-marked or neutral features. In this sense, marked or connoted elements can be identified within the neologism itself or in its context of use. To the contrary, non-marked or non-connoted features do not stand out and are, therefore, more difficult to identify with certainty, as it can be observed in these general results, but also in the analysis of each one of the categories used in the study.

Following, we present how the 20 neologisms of the study have been classified in accordance with the 4 opposed categories applicable. Let me remind you that connoted categories in boxes 1 and 2 of the scale of Likert, are *informal register, personal nature, subjective opinion, and ideological load*. Non-connoted categories, boxes 4 and 5, on the contrary are *formal register, general nature, objective opinion, and neutral load*. In order to build the Graph we have taken into account the answers to each one of the 4 categories with a coincidence exceeding 50 % among participants. In case that this degree of coincidence is not reached due to a dispersion of results, it has been represented in the graph as well in gray. And there are no cases in which the answer “I neither agree nor disagree”, in box 3, reaches 50 % of coincidence among participants.



Graph 1. Classification of neologisms according to the perception of speakers

As we may observe, 10 neologisms present two or more connoted categories whereas 8 units present two or more non-connoted categories, and, finally, the 2 neologisms left have one feature of each. On the one end we find *bonrotllisme*, *caçavots*, *cretinitzador* - *a* and *rastaflauta*. And, on the other *prova pilot*, *ecoparc*, *sou base* and *redimensionament*. In the middle we find *webisodi*, with two cases each, and *onze de garanties* and *seminacionalitzar*, with a case each. Neologisms that have been classified with connotative features, have linguistic aspects within the neologism itself that motivate their identification with informal, personal, subjective and ideological features. They are morphological, semantic, and pragmatic aspects. In addition to this, the context they are embedded in also has marked elements, as explained in the following section (4.2). On the contrary, neologisms classified with non-connoted features, do not usually have these marked features neither within the neologism itself nor in the context of use. Finally, there are units that have features of both types, as pointed out by Wijnands (1985)⁹. In this proposal, the author bears in mind that some words designate a new referent, but in addition to this they show some connotations. This is the case, for instance, of *webisodi*, that designates an episode (of a series) broadcasted in Internet; that is why the word *web* is part of this acronym (understood as *blend*, in English).

4.2. Perception and linguistic aspects

In Table 13 we show the results of applying the communicative function criteria by Llopart-Saumell (2016), which enables us to classify neologisms in prototypical of the *denominative function* (D) and prototypical of the *stylistic function* (E) in accordance with linguistic and extralinguistic features presented by neologisms. Following, we can see whether the neologisms defined with connoted or marked categories are more common among the prototypically stylistic neologisms or not. And, on the contrary, whether or not neologisms defined with non-connoted or non-marked categories are prototypically

⁹ Wijnands (1985) classifies neodenominations in two groups: with neological connotation and without neological connotation.

referential. We also take into account neologisms that were not classified in one of the two categories, because they were classified with answer 3 ('I neither agree nor disagree').

| Connoted | Answers 1-2 | | Answers 3 | | Answers 4-5 | | Non-connoted |
|-------------|-------------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|---|
| | D | E | D | E | D | E | |
| informal | 14 | 72,3 | 26,3 | 15,2 | 59,8 | 12,5 | formal general objective neutral |
| personal | 18,3 | 79 | 14,7 | 9,4 | 67 | 11,6 | |
| subjective | 25,5 | 87 | 15,7 | 4,8 | 58,8 | 8,2 | |
| ideological | 30,4 | 71,1 | 13,4 | 10,8 | 56,1 | 18,1 | |
| | 22,1 | 77,3 | 17,5 | 10,1 | 60,4 | 12,6 | |

Table 13. Correlation between the perception and the function of neologisms

Indeed, on the one hand, 77.3 % of neologisms defined with a connoted category are prototypically stylistic regarding the applied criteria and filter. In the case of neologisms classified in non-connoted categories, this correlation can also be observed with the neologisms prototypical of a stylistic nature but in a lower number, 60.4 %. Finally, in those neologisms that do not show a coincidence equal or exceeding 50 % in relation with connoted or non-connoted categories, there are more neologisms with mainly referential features (17.1 % compared to 10.1 %). The highest value of neologisms with connotations is 87 %, in the case of neologisms expressing subjective opinion. In the case of neologisms without connotations, word classified with a general nature are worth highlighting, with 67 %. In accordance with the criteria applied to study the communicative function of neologisms, it can be observed that they are closely related with the function of neologisms.

On the other hand, we have analyzed the 20 neologisms of the study together with their context of use to see whether they have stylistic or marked features. More specifically, we have analyzed morphologic, semantic, pragmatic, and discursive aspects, because we believed, that when carrying out this task, speakers bear in mind different linguistic features of the word and its context of use. For this reason, we correlate the results of the survey and the analysis of their linguistic features. Following we show these results in groups according to the classification of neologisms of Table 14 to observe the relation between the perception of connotations in neologism and stylistic or marked elements observed.

| Features | Connoted neologisms | | Intermediate neologisms | | Non-connoted neologisms | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|------|
| | N. | % | N. | % | N. | % |
| morphological | 5 | 55,56 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| semantic | 3 | 33,33 | 0 | - | 0 | - |
| pragmatic | 6 | 66,67 | 0 | - | 1 | 12,5 |
| discursive | 5 | 55,56 | 0 | - | 1 | 12,5 |

Table 14. Correlation between the perception and the connotation of neologisms

As can be inferred from Table 14, neologisms classified as connotative show different marked linguistic features, that is to say, stylistic elements, related to the connotations,

whereas the other neologisms do not show the same pattern. Whereas connoted neologisms show stylistic aspects of the different types, in the case of connoted neologisms we only observe two of the features, with each one of them: the pragmatic and discursive aspects, which amount to 12.5 %. On the contrary, connoted neologisms have at least three cases for each feature, that is to say, at least 33.33 % of the total, in the case of semantic aspects, but in the rest of the features, at least half of the neologisms one of this features. The two neologisms, which according to the speakers' perception have been classified with connoted and non-connoted aspects, do not show any of the four studied stylistic features.

More specifically, 9 connoted words have, at least, one of the studied aspects (morphological, semantic, pragmatic, or discursive). One shows four; it is *cretinitzador -a*. Three words have three features: *bonrotllisme*, *rastaflauta* and *pseudoecologista*. *In turn*, *avi-cangur* has two of the aforementioned linguistic features and *autoretallada*, *caçavots*, *catalanofòbia* and *cleptòcrata*, only one of the features. The 2 neologisms that show features of both types, do not have any of the detailed features. And, among the 8 non-connoted neologisms, there are 2 that have one of the features: *ecoparc* and *méteo*.

Next, we illustrate these results with some examples¹⁰. Regarding morphological features, we bear in mind transgressions of word formation rules. In *bonrotllisme*, for instance, the base is the syntagmatic word *bon rotllo*, to which we attach the suffix *-isme*, which forms words that designate a 'theory, doctrine or artistic trend', such as *optimism*, *buddhism* or *communism* (GDLC). In this sense, thus, it shows a non-canonic use in accordance with the derivation rules since the base must be a preexisting unit, that is to say, that it works as a lexicalized unit (Cabré, Freixa, and Solé 1997/2002: 126). On the one hand, the authors illustrate with the following examples some documented cases in OBNEO which do not follow this principle: *menfotisme* and *entotsolament*, which come from *(se) me'n fot* and *tot sol*, respectively. Generally speaking, they indicate that it is a process with a foreseeable result in accordance with some specific (phonological, morphological, synthetic and semantic) conditions, but whenever there is a breach of this foreseeability, then the recipient or the speaker perceives an element he/she considers odd (Cabré, Freixa, and Solé 1997/2002: 127). As far as *cretinitzador -a* is concerned, the base *cretinitzar* is not documented. On the other hand, the neologism *avi cangur* is considered a word-block. Based on Corbeil (1971), it is a type of patrimonial compound, but it has been created by means of juxtaposition, which is used to create neologisms of the stylistic type since they convey more briefly the expression of the moment, but then they disappear. More specifically, they are described as the most reduced form of a linguistic structure (a simple statement or a relative sentence) with the following transformation: *assurance-feu* 'insurance fire' ('assurance contre le feu') or *chauffe-assiettes* 'chafing dishes' ('instrument qui chauffe les assiettes') (Corbeil, 1971: 128). We also find a false learned form of the neologism *cleptòcrata*, because *clepto-* is not considered a compound element, but rather an abbreviation of *cleptomania* / *cleptòman* (Oxford English Dictionary). Finally, in relation with the analysis of subjective features of units formed with *pseudo-*, as in *pseudoecologista*, López *et al.* (2002) state that in isolation these elements do not have a pejorative value, but they point out that speakers may

¹⁰ To identify these features, we have based on the criteria suggested by Llopart-Saumell (2016) to study neologisms with a stylistic function.

reinterpret the meanings because “they lack some element in order to have all requireable features” and “‘it is not quite X’ or also because it is also related to ‘deception’, ‘no genuine’”. To tackle this type of analysis beyond speakers’ subjectivity and intuition, we suggest observing some linguistic elements of the context, since the pejorative will can be detected with the use of irony, sarcasm and other pejorative elements from the semantic or pragmatic point of view, that is to say, it is a disqualification. Besides, they add that it is not an easy task and one must observe if there are contrapositions, comparisons, definitions *ad hoc* and other pragmatic aspects (cultural knowledge, etc.) (López *et al.* 2002: 258-259).

As far as semantic features are concerned, *cretinitzador* has the adjective *cretí -ina* as a base, which is a word labeled as colloquial and which means ‘stupid’ (GDLC). The compound *rastaflauta* shows semantic incompatibility, since it is not a predictable form since the two elements making up the compound are not from the same conceptual field, as it is often the case in coordinated compounds (Bernal 2012: 17) and, in addition to this, this incompatibility is perceived because the resulting form causes surprise (Cabré, Freixa & Solé 1997/2002: 128). In spite of it being an exocentric compound, the union of two elements that do not belong to the same semantic field but which are used to describe the type of person they refer to is worth highlighting. As asserted by Fundéu in the case of the equivalent in Spanish *perroflauta*, it is used for:

Referir-se a un tipus de persona, habitualment jove i amb aspecte descuidat, que es pot veure com un hippy en la seva accepció més moderna. Se’ls anomena així perquè solen portar gossos i tocar la flauta, encara que el terme ha transcendit el seu significat original i s'utilitza en moltes ocasions de forma despectiva per referir-se a qualsevol jove amb aspecte descurat.

And, lastly, in the neologism *autoretallada*, the learned element *auto-* is considered redundant:

(1) S’ha passat de la ratlla quan ha volgut condicionar el rescat econòmic a una **autoretallada** de les institucions. [Ara, 28/07/2012]

If we focus on pragmatic aspects, there are words that may be considered informal, such as *caçavots* and *méteo* in relation with *meteorologia*, since they are abbreviations. This type of formation is characterized because it conveys the same concept than the non-abbreviated form, but in a brief way, therefore, it is due to linguistic economy. Besides, the abbreviation is related to the informality of this kind of words that are considered colloquial units (Payrató 1988/1996). In the case of *bonrotllisme*, the base (*bon*) *rotllo* is recorded as colloquial in the GDLC. Finally, some words have a pejorative value due to the base from which they have been formed: *cretí* in *cretinitzador*, *pseudo-* in *pseudoecologista* and *-fòbia* in *catalanofòbia*. *Rastaflauta*, on the other hand, has also this negative value.

In relation with discursive aspects, it must be borne in mind that these contexts have been taken from newspapers of a general nature. In this sense, newspapers have a style guide for the drafting of the texts. In spite thereof, we find cases in which canonic or predictable

forms are not followed because there is an ornamental adjective (example 2) or because it is written in the first person (examples 3-7):

- (2) Només alguns il·lustres antipàtics s'atreveixen a saltar-se la regla del **bonrotllisme** a l'escenari. [*El Periódico*, 3/7/2011]

In this case, the adjective does not occupy the prototypical position after the noun, that is to say, as a qualifying adjective, but rather it is situated before because it carries out an explicative function or due to a literary purpose.

- (3) Estic contemplant, amb estupor, la deriva **cretinitzadora** de la nostra cultura. [*Avui*, 23/2/2010]
(4) Els **ecoparcs** no han funcionat, ja que ens portaria a construir noves plantes incineradores. [*Avui*, 9/2/2011]
(5) No s'ofendran els okupants si ens hi referim com a **rastaflautes**. [*La Vanguardia*, 23/06/2011]
(6) El que inc clar és que no vull anar a un casal ni tampoc vull fer d'**avi cangur**. [*Ara*, 19/3/2012]
(7) Jo també vaig tenir una revelació semblant quan em vaig empassar aquella faula **pseudoecologista**. [*El Periódico*, 02/03/2010]

To finish up, we take into account the great presence of the author in the text. According to the classification of journalistic genres of El País (2014) it must be borne in mind that there are genres that are prototypically characterized by a higher or lower presence of the journalist. In this line, it indicates that information contents facts prevail; in those of interpretation, the framework within which these facts take place; and, in those of opinion, the assessment of these facts¹¹. To detect the presence of the editor we observe if the text is written in the first person singular.

All in all, the communicative goal with which a neologism is used, especially if its motivation goes beyond the referential function, uses linguistic strategies of different types that are present in the neologism within its context of use, in accordance with the morphological, semantic, pragmatic and discursive aspects studied in this analysis.

5. Conclusions

In this study on the perception of connotations we have observed that, although more than half of the neologisms show a dispersion in results in accordance with the classification of participants, there is a higher coincidence among participants in the identification of neologisms with connotations. Indeed, connoted neologisms are usually related to a motivation that goes beyond the referential one and so an expressive or esthetical function prevails. In this sense, among neologisms classified with connotative (informal, personal, subjective, and ideological) features coincidence is 77.42 %, whereas in the case of non-connotative features (formal, general, objective, and neutral) the coincidence is lower: 37.93 %. On the other hand, we have also been able to verify that, although most probably participants are not familiarized with some of the neologisms of the study, the linguistic features of the lexical unit and its context of use guide their interpretation. Therefore, it seems that the linguistic strategies followed by speakers do provide relevant data about the communicative intention of the speaker for the subsequent interpretation of the act of speech regardless of whether the words used are new or little known for the recipient.

¹¹ En la classificació d'*El País* (2014: 45-46) els continguts s'agrupen de la següent manera segons la presència del redactor de menor a major: informació (notícia, documentació, entrevista de declaracions i reportatge informatiu); interpretació (crònica, entrevista perfil, entrevista de suplement, reportatge interpretatiu i anàlisi); i, opinió (crítica, cartes al director i comentaris, article, columna, tribuna, blog i editorial).

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