SHAPE METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH: SYMMETRY, TOTAL ASYMMETRY AND PARTIAL SYMMETRY

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Abstract: The objective of this article is to measure the symmetry between Spanish and English in the application of technical metaphors of shape. The reason for this is double: they have not received too much attention and Forceville (2007, 2008, 2012) recommends studying how they interact with cultural/linguistic factors. The method has measured percentage of symmetry / asymmetry in different metaphors. Research shows that symmetry between English/Spanish metaphors rises to 60%, whereas partial metaphoric asymmetry is caused by excessive metaphorization (30%) or by metonymy (10%) as a relation of cause-effect between two concepts.

Keywords: Shape metaphor, lexicography, translation, overmetaphorization, metonymy.

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es medir la simetría entre el español y el inglés en la aplicación de metáforas de forma del vocabulario técnico, por no haber recibido demasiada atención y porque Forceville (2007, 2008, 2012) recomienda estudiar como interactúan con factores culturales o lingüísticos. Como método se ha medido el porcentaje simetría/asimetría en distintas metáforas. La investigación muestra que la simetría entre metáforas del inglés y del español se eleva al 60%, mientras que la asimetría metafórica parcial es originada por un exceso de metaforización (30%) o por metonimia (10%) como muestra de causa-efecto entre dos conceptos.

Palabras clave: Metáfora de forma, lexicografía, traducción, metaforización excesiva, metonimia.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Fauconnier (1999), language is only a small part of an immense cognitive iceberg because ideas may be represented in many different ways. Moura (2006:82-85) says that both conceptual and linguistic factors appear in metaphors, but the latter are the verbal

expression of the previous and more important conceptual mapping. Metaphors are symbolic representations of something else, so, they are a representative part of communication used in everyday language and special languages (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Nuñez 2000). Technical metaphors depart from a primitive meaning that comes from natural languages. Blockley (2005: p. vii) claims that engineers imagine their projects in their minds before putting them into words. This explains the importance of metaphors and what came first, the concept or the word. The concept came first. That is why a name cannot be anything without a concept since this is the spirit of the word.

Technical languages represent a linguistic subsystem which uses specific terms and other linguistic resources to provide accuracy and eliminate ambiguity from the communication in a concrete field. As these languages constitute a subsystem they belong to the linguistic general system and to a specific epistemic community that shares knowledge. But this shared knowledge departs from the reality around us, so we take advantage of it. This implies we get the concept and, in consequence, also the denomination by means of a recycling resource of language. This method gives new and related meanings, based upon a common semantic trait, to already existing words. This way metaphors are a source of polysemy.

Nobody may doubt about the conceptual and rethorical force of metaphors and that the mind is shaped by the body. The latter makes humans categorize some phenomena and understand them better than the ones which cannot be categorized so easily (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009:20). This implies metaphors are a kind of decoding of reality based upon some similarity with a related object. There are also more forms of deviated expressions, also with symbolic value (Dirven and Ruiz de Mendoza 2015) than pure metaphors, such as metonymies which will also be dealt in relation to metaphors in this paper.

Although perception may be different among nations and persons, what is evident is that metaphors mean the evolution of a morphology, which has implications in the lexicography of the different languages. Forceville (2007, 2008, 2012) recommends more research on the way cultural and national factors may potentiate or obstacle response to metaphors. This shows language is a show of cultural aspects linked to the different nationalities. Different languages perceive different realities because the translation process shows that, for example, Spanish and English do not behave always in the same way, as we will see in the following lines. In consequence, what is a metaphor in one language is not necessarily another one in the other language. Metaphors may change across languages. This means a language may pay attention to some factors that the other neglects. This behaviour shows different cultural mentalities, and, in consequence, distinct linguistic uses. The previous behaviour implies a certain language, any language, puts the stress or pays more attention to some aspects that, for another, are secondary.

Metaphors resemble pictures which may be looked at and processed from different points of view. This is obvious in the case of shape metaphors, those related to the quality of expressing form: for example, a same expression, in a first stage, before being dealt as a metaphor, may be defined by using the compound endings *-type* and *-shape*. It may also be defined by using shape adjectives, such as *trapeizodal*, *curve*, *tubular*, *conical*, etc. In a second stage, shapes are defined by using metaphors which express approximations to the previously mentioned terms. From our point of view, metaphors are used because they do not match a perfectly geometrical form: geometry, in this case, is a sheer simplification of

the shapes involved in some mechanisms, and, the consequent use of the metaphor is an approximation to a more complex reality.

The theory of Wieggers, Song and Vergeest (2010: 481-488) says most metaphors express shape using the qualities of other objects. In relation to the shape described in the samples of figurative language, we see how most cases relate to global ideas (Wiegerst et al. 2010) such as lengthened or rounded shapes.

However, not all geometrical forms are metaphors. Shape metaphors are the object of this article but we can mention some examples of shape references which do not have any relation with metaphors. They belong to the non-deviated uses of languages. For example, in electronics, an *arco de ruptura* (*interruption arc*), or, in construction, an *arrufo* (arching) describe the continuous curve that joins two points, a segment of a circle. The same happens with the compound *ball-valve* (*válvula de bola*). The FD (*Free Dictionary*) says it consists of “a valve regulated by the position of a free-floating ball that moves in response to fluid or mechanical pressure”. So, in this case both languages use a symmetrical form to refer to the same concept, a simple and real ball, not something that resembles one. Also, in technology an *air cushion* (*cojín de aire*) refers to a real air damper.

2 METHOD

The objective of this article is to measure the contrastive percentage between Spanish and English in the application of shape metaphors in technical vocabulary. The analysis includes single and, mainly, compound terms which appear very often in different branches of engineering. The frequency of use confers them a high level of importance in technical vocabulary and, also, a certain degree of polysemy. The sources are the Internet, mainly lexical searches with Google, and paper (*Diccionario Politécnico de las Lenguas Española e Inglesa*, *Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* and *Diccionario de Uso del Español*) and online dictionaries (*Collins Dictionary*, *Diccionario Ferroviario*, *Dictionary Reference*, *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, *Free Dictionary*, *Word Reference*, and *Your Dictionary*).

The terms are the following: *en abanico* / *fan-shaped*; *almenada*, *encastillada*, *alveolar* / *castellated*; *castillete de extracción* / *gallows frame*; *balancín para dos caballos* / *double tree*; *balonet* / *ballonet*; *de bocina* / *horn*; *talón de aguja* / *heel chair*; *moldeo en concha* / *shell casting*; *moldeo en coquille* / *coquille casting*; *obturador de cortinas* / *curtains shutter*.

The method consisted of measuring the percentage of symmetrical, asymmetrical and partially symmetrical metaphors in English and Spanish. Other aims have been to discover if the metaphorical references always focus the same field when applied to the same concept and, also, to find out if there is some type of semantic divergence in the approach of any of the languages when they use a same shape metaphor. With these aims in mind, lexicography is shown as a helpful tool to try to study the correspondence between the two languages in the field of shape metaphors. At the same time, the relation with metonymy is also measured, the same as the degrees of synonymic equivalences in the same language or in the contrast between English and Spanish.

3 RESULTS

3.1 *En abanico/Fan-Shaped*

In both languages it is an easily recognizable simile. The Spanish preposition *en* (*in*) represents a shortening and an elision of the group *in the shape of*. The DUE (*Diccionario de Uso del Español*) says the morphology *en abanico* is a deviated use of language that denotes shape and mentions the example of the tail of the peacock, with a fan-shaped morphology. This compound could be represented by the synonyms: *triangular* or *semicircular* in both languages. However these two terms are not absolute synonyms between themselves or with respect to the metaphoric link between Spanish and English (*triangular/semicircular/fan-shaped*). Partial synonymy is a reality across languages (Stefanowtsch and Gries 2006: 98).

These morphologies represent non-deviated uses of language, but Spanish and English have chosen the metaphorical form. The compound *fan-shaped* also shows literary references, as we can see in Eliot's work, "The Mill on the Floss": "Tulliver was speaking to his wife, a blond comely woman in a *fan-shaped* cap (I am afraid to think how long it is since *fan-shaped* caps were worn, they must be so near coming in again.)"

However, there is a difference between the words *abanico* and *fan* in Spanish and English: whereas in the former it always refers to a device not linked with technology, made to provide air with the simple movement of a hand, in English it conveys two distinct meanings: the one already mentioned and the one which relates to a technical device: a device for producing a current of air by the revolving movement of one or more blades (WR: Word Reference). So, this implies the English language has recycled the morphology for the technical device making use of the old meaning: an apparatus that supplies air by hand baptizes the more recent and technical device that has the same purpose. In contrast, in Spanish, this second meaning appears under the morphology *ventilador* (ventilator), which makes it possible to distinguish the two meanings that in English appear under an only morphology.

3.2 *Viga almenada o encastillada o alveolar/Castellated Beam*

A castellated beam is an I-beam with a longitudinal cut along its web following a specific pattern with indentations that resemble the battlements in a castle. From this we see that the compound *I-beam* is a hypernym in relation to the hyponym *castellated beam*. As Snow et al (2004) point out "A noun X is a hyponym of a noun Y if X is a subtype or instance of Y." This implies that the first metaphor, which shows an i-shaped section, originates a second metaphor that includes the form of the first and adds some new features such as discontinuous longitudinal cuts which resemble the upper part of a castle.

Both Spanish and English use the same metaphoric morphology related to the shape of the upper part of castles. The YD (*Your Dictionary*) indicates *castellated*, as an adjective means "Furnished with turrets and battlements in the style of a castle.", but the castellated beam itself does simply resemble the form of battlements, not the form of turrets. From this point of view, the Spanish form *almenada* is more exact since it only deals with battlements.

The Spanish form *encastillada* resembles a loan translation from the English language since nobody in Spain uses the adjective *encastillado* to refer to the technical concept but its correspondent proper form *almenado*. In any case, the adjective to describe the shape of a string of indentations should be *acastillado* with the form a- (related to morphology) and not with the form en- (related to place). In contrast, the adjective *encastillado*, according to the DRAE (*Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*), is only used with the meaning of *arrogant*, another metaphor related to the state of occupying the upper location of castles. Linguee.com offers the translation *viga alveolar* for the compound *castellated beam*. The use of this metaphorical translation is also logical, since the word *alveolo* refers to cavities or hollow spaces, for example the ones where teeth lie.

In summary, the Spanish translation for the English compound *castellated* leads to a set of synonyms – *almenada*, *encastillada*, *alveolar* – in which the second one does not seem to fit in the group since it is a loan translation from English. The meaning of *encastillada* does not relate to shape, because of the prefix *en-*, but only to a proud and stubborn attitude. Furthermore, the meaning of *almenada* is closer to the shape of the beam than the one related to *castellated*. In order to have a total equivalence among languages the word *almenada* should correspond to the English expression *with battlements*, *crenellated*, or, simply, *indented*.

3.3 *Castillete de extracción*

In mining, according to the DR (*Dictionary Reference*) *gallows frame* or *head frame* is “a structure supporting the hoisting sheaves at the top of a mine shaft”. In contrast, in Spanish it is called *castillete de extracción* (*extraction castle*) because of its prominent shape. English also refers to the prominent shape and place where the gallows is situated, but the connotation of the word is gloomy. Both languages use metaphors but apply to different contexts: building and extreme punishment.

3.4 *Balancín para dos caballos/Double Tree*

According to the Webster, a *double tree* is “an equalizing bar for use with a two-horse team”. This implies it is a type of harness used for a couple of animals. In contrast, we also find the compound *single tree*, for an only horse. The WR says it is “a plant having a permanently woody trunk and branches”, without mentioning the reference to harnessing. From the definition, we can see the relation with horses, because a double tree has a trunk, made of wood or metal, and two partitions, one for each animal. In contrast, the Spanish form avoids the reference to trees, with a diagram structure, with continuous partitions, and uses a denomination equivalent to see-saw, also composed of two or more seats. As the CD (Collins Dictionary) indicates the word also means a continuous change in situations, emotions, etc.

As both terms, the Spanish and the English, address a plurality the addition of the reference to a duality is necessary: *dos* (two) and *double* to pinpoint the number of users of the mechanism. However, the contrast lies in that, whereas the Spanish word *balancín* (seesaw) addresses motion and lack of equilibrium in a tandem, English relates with a

dividing structure. Both languages use metaphors but from different perspectives (motion/division) and different fields (playground/nature).

3.5 *Balonet/Ballonet*

Ballonet, according to the FD is One of several small auxiliary gasbags placed inside a balloon or a non-rigid airship that can be inflated or deflated during flight to control and maintain shape and buoyancy.” The translation into Spanish is *balonet* (DPLEI: *Diccionario Politécnico de las Lenguas Española e Inglesa*), an obvious loan from the English language in which it represents another loan from French. Anyhow, the word relates us to a rounded form, as the one of a *ball/balón*, instrument which, as the DRAE indicates may also mean a container for gases. Both languages use, as can be seen from the morphological appearance, the same metaphor to describe the same concept referred to a rounded form.

3.6 *Antena de bocina/Antenna-Horn*

In the first entry, the CD says a horn is “either of a pair of permanent outgrowths on the heads of cattle, antelopes, sheep, etc, consisting of a central bony core covered with layers of keratin”. Apart from this, and among many other related meanings, in the seventh entry, it adds, a *horn* is “an object or part resembling a horn in shape, such as the points at either end of a crescent, the point of an anvil, the pommel of a saddle, or a cornucopia”. However, these two definitions are not quite clear if we want to discern what an antenna-horn may look like. It is not until we read the seventeenth entry, related to geology, that the shape of an antenna has a clear-cut explanation. It says it is like a pyramid peak, and, perhaps, we should add the adjective *inverted* since the projection of a *horn* increases for example, to expand sound. However, and although both Spanish and English have chosen the same form, a *horn* may be translated as either *cuerno* or *bocina*. The former relates to the upper outgrowths of some animals, which is always something hard and conical. So, here, the reference is a certain cone shape. Instead, the word *bocina* relates to a whistle. So, in this point, the reference is sound. The relation between a cone shape and sound lies in that, in ancient times, horns (outgrowth), because of their projected shape, were used as instrumentations to provide sound. This implies a relation of metonymy because, according to (Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009) metaphor and metonymy interact, although the study of this interaction is not a goal of this article. Moreno says that the metonymy (2005:100) pertains to an only domain. In other technical fields, the word *horn* is also used with a similar meaning. According to the Webster, it is “a fishing tool consisting of a cone which seizes broken rods or tools in bored wells”. In Spanish, the same instrument is called *campana de pescar* (*fishing bell*), which refers to a conical shape but from a different point of view. This slightly asymmetric translation contrasts what comes from nature (*horn*) with what is man-made (*bell*). From this we see the Spanish tendency to link the word *horn* with sound, either that of a bell or a whistle. And, undoubtedly, in all the cases the link between the horn and the sound comes from the projection of a hollow shape, a part of some animals, which was used to produce sound.

3.7 *Talón de aguja/Heel Chair*

In the railway terminology, *heel chair* is translated as *talón de aguja* (*needle heel*). The translation in both languages differs because, whereas Spanish refers to *needles*, English mentions *chairs*. The DF (*Diccionario Ferroviario*) also shows the examples of *contraneedles* and *hearts* appearing in conjunction with the word *talón* (*heel*) in railway vocabulary: *talon de la contraaguja*, *talon del corazón*. In these cases, the word *talón* refers to the last part of a device, but we could consider that English uses the word *chair* because it sees it from a similar perspective: the part where another piece *seats* because it is inserted there. The OD (*Oxford Dictionary*) says it is “a thing resembling a heel in form or position, in particular”. In consequence, the use of the word *resembling* leads to the consideration, on one hand, of a high index of metaphorization of the meanings associated to *heel*. On the other, the remark about the position a heel occupies makes us link the meaning with that of something which is in an end or extreme position.

3.8 *Moldeo en concha o en coquilla/Shell or Coquille Casting*

Die casting is a casting process that forces molten metal under high pressure into a mould cavity. There are several types of casting, among them, for example, we can consider the shell casting. Custompart.net says the following of shell mould casting:

A metal casting process similar to sand casting, in that molten metal is poured into an expendable mould. However, in shell mould casting, the mould is a thin-walled shell created from applying a sand-resin mixture around a pattern. The pattern, a metal piece in the shape of the desired part, is reused to form multiple shell moulds. A reusable pattern allows for higher production rates, while the disposable moulds enable complex geometries to be cast.

Another type of die casting is the one that uses coquilles. According to the Wikipedia (2000):

It is a re-usable form for permanent mould casting of metals and alloys. When used for casting, coquilles are used specifically for casting using gravity. This means that the mould is preheated and molten metal is poured into it, so that the metal may solidify into the negative shape of the mould.

In English the hypernym *die casting* from which the two aforementioned terms depart *shell casting* and *coquille casting*, is a non-deviated one, but the respective hyponyms are clear metaphors that define a process with the name of the resemblance of the mould they use. The hypernym is the superordinate word and, in consequence, the hyponym is the included term and extensive term in a set of lexical relations (Murphy 2006: 393). Habitually hypernymy is classified as a denominator to rank words, or under an is-a relation (Prince and Lafourcade 2006). However, although both terms are hyponyms of *die casting*, this does not make them cohyponyms, since, according to the CD, the term *coquille* is considered a hyponym of the hypernym *shell*, since, in the second definition, it says it is “a scallop shell, or dish resembling a shell”. This definition considers a coquille as a specific and concrete type of shell. So, in consequence we find a graded relation in the three words (1. *die casting* – 2. *shell casting* – 3. *coquille casting*) which makes type 3 (*coquille casting*) a much more

specific term than type 1 (die casting). Nevertheless type 3 could be defined in relation to type 1, by saying that type 3 is type 1 or that is included in type 1.

In Spanish, the same as in English, there are several words that correspond to the same meaning of the hypernym *die casting*: *fundición o moldeo a presión, presofusión, vaciado o fundido*. These terms also belong to non-deviated language, but the corresponding hyponym *moldeo en concha* (shell casting) implies a metaphorical use of language to refer to the use of a metallic mould where metal is poured. As we have seen above, there is a difference between the two processes, *shell* or *coquille casting* (*moldeo en coquille*). From this, we see how the technical languages of Spanish take loans from English by getting the exact translation of the original meanings.

3.9 *Obturador de cortinas/Curtains Shutter*

An *obturador de cortinas* in English is a *curtains shutter*. Both languages use a metaphor in which the word *curtain* works as a metaphor that very often refers to a metal and protective door (WR). As curtains may be moved from upside down or left/right, also these two movements are provided in a photographic camera, but these two motions differ somehow, since the first curtain is the one that opens and, the second, the one which closes. From this, we can see how photographic curtains have a more rigid, monodirectional movement. Also, we can see how what in a real curtain is made with an only piece, in the case of photography, needs two. In this field, shutter speed or exposure time is the length of time in which the film is exposed to light.

Shutter speed sets the speed in which the shutter curtains open and close, so this implies there is not only a slow shutter but also a fast one. Wide apertures imply more light and need faster shutter speeds –which take less time– to produce the same exposure (Meyer 2013). As opposed concepts convey opposed denominations, so antonymic metaphors make use of contrastive pairs of adjectives, in this case, *slow shutter* and/or *fast shutter*. Leaving aside the metaphor, we wonder why English has reduced the word *obturador* to practically the exclusive use of medicine. According to the Webster (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*), it refers to one “that closes or blocks up an opening”, which implies that the meaning is the same as in Spanish. According to the MK (*Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*), an obturator is “a disk or plate that closes an opening.” The OD clarifies the situation in the first entry by saying “Each of a pair of hinged panels fixed inside or outside a window that can be closed for security or privacy or to keep out the light”. From this we see how keeping out the light is a foremost function in relation to shutters. *The second entry, dealing exclusively with photography says it is* “A device that opens and closes to expose the film in a camera”. Logically, this second and more specific meaning departs from the first since the exposition to light is a central matter in photography although this point is not explicitly mentioned in the second definition.

4 DISCUSSION

The results of the survey appear in Table 1. The contrastive analysis on shape metaphors in technical terms shows whether the metaphorical references always focus on the same field

or not in the dual survey Spanish-English. It also shows if there is total semantic symmetry between the terms of the two languages object of study, and, if there is some divergence in Spanish or English when they make use of a same shape metaphor.

Spanish	English	Metaphoric Use	Equivalence between Languages
En abanico	Fan-shaped	Spanish/English	Yes
Almenada, encastillada, alveolar	Castellated	Spanish/English	No total semantic equivalence
Castillete de extracción	Gallows frame	Spanish/English	Different metaphorical reference
Balancín para dos caballos	Double tree	Spanish/English	Different metaphorical reference
Balonet	Ballonet	Spanish/English	Yes
De bocina	Horn	Spanish/English	Yes*(double focus of the metaphor)
Talón de aguja	Heel chair	Spanish/English	Different metaphorical reference
Moldeo en concha	Shell casting	Spanish/English	Yes
Moldeo en coquilla	Coquille casting	Spanish/English	Yes
Obturador de cortinas	Curtains shutter	Spanish/English	Yes

Table 1. Shape Metaphors

As we can see in table 1, from ten analysed terms all of them share metaphorical references both in English and Spanish. Such is the case of the metaphors: *en abanico* / *fan-shaped*; *almenada, encastillada* / *castellated*; *castillete de extracción* / *gallows frame*; *balancín para dos caballos* / *double tree*; *balonet* / *ballonet*; *de bocina* / *horn*; *bayoneta* / *bayonet*; *bazuca* / *bazooka*; *cañón* / *cannon*; *devanado en cesto* / *basket winding*; *talón de aguja* / *heel chair*; *moldeo en concha* / *shell casting*; *moldeo en coquilla* / *coquille casting*; *obturador de cortinas* / *curtains shutter*.

From this, sixty per cent of the cases show complete symmetry in the application of shape metaphors, which implies that either both languages share a same approach to technical realities or that the Spanish language imports the concept and the linguistic denomination from the Anglosaxon technicism.

The aspect we would like to underline is that metaphorical references do not always focus on the same field. This occurs in thirty per cent of the cases, which are examples of total asymmetry. For instance, the group *castillete de extracción* refers to a type of construction, a castle, whereas the compound *gallows frame* focuses on the apparatus for executions. The group *balancín para dos caballos* / *double tree* diverts into separate fields: *seesaws* as opposed to *saddles*. Finally, *talón de aguja* and *heel chair* point out *needles*, on the Spanish side, against *chairs*, on the English part. This shows that, although languages perceive realities from approximately the same point of view, there is not always a total coupling to denominate a same concept.

As a second point, and apart from different metaphorical references, sometimes there are examples of partial asymmetry caused by overmetaphorization. That is the case in ten per cent of the cases, as, for instance, the form *almenada* in contrast to *castellated*. The latter comprehends more concepts, so it is not a total synonym. The Spanish term simply conveys the meaning of battlements, whereas the second encompasses this concept and the one of turrets. This second concept does not apply to the real form of a castellated beam because it only has indentations and not a kind of prominent towers. In consequence, this is a case of excess metaphorization. In this case, *crenellated* is the word that best suits the real meaning of the technical term. The Spanish language shows a synonym such as *alveolar* which is a reasonable option to transmit the same meaning from a different perspective, that of *teeth*, and perfectly with the meaning of *indented*. The other synonym, *encastillada*, is nothing else than a mere loan from the English morphology *castellated*, which, in Spanish, has a different meaning related to pride and stubbornness. Metaphors, in consequence, give clues about the source and target domains to which they pertain (Forceville, 2009a & 2009b).

The third aspect is that, even inside the same semantic field, some metaphors show a dual and ambivalent perspective. They are examples of partial asymmetry caused by metonymy. This occurs only in one of the samples. That is the case of the terms *de bocina* and *horn*. The former refers to the noise or the sound produced by a horn, whereas the second points at the material and the projected form. It is precisely this form, and its consequent opening, which make it possible for the instrument to produce sound. So, sound and shape are sometimes linked by a relation of metonymy, as we can see in this example. It is precisely this sample, out of the 10 cases studied, the only one in which the Spanish language does not focus a hundred per cent on a shape metaphor.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The aspect that calls our attention is that none of the metaphors responds to an exact geometrical form, but to a more complex shape. For instance, a fan may be considered as a triangle, but this would be a simplification since it resembles more a peacock's tail. For this reason, the approach to the shape of the concept leads to the adoption of a pertaining denomination. Metaphorical references do not address the same field necessarily in both languages. This shows that, although languages perceive realities in a similar way, there is not always a total coupling for a same concept. Realities may be looked at from many different perspectives and what strikes the attention for both languages is different. The cases of partial asymmetry come from an excessive process of metaphorization in any

of the languages. But this overt metaphorization leads to a blurring of the real limits that the technical concept depicts. The last aspect shows that some metaphors have a dual and partially asymmetric perspective in English and Spanish. This comes from the cause-effect or metonymic relation between two concepts, as the case of shape and sound: a certain shape produces a specific sound. A lack of equilibrium arises when only one of the two languages tries to capture this reality.

The present study is a brief overview of the single and compound terms that form shape metaphors in English and Spanish. Nevertheless it opens the road to future contrastive studies to continue deepening in different aspects related to universality across metaphoric languages such as degrees of approximation to exact geometrical shapes, sharing of common semantic fields in both languages, incidence of overmetaphorization and metonymies on partial asymmetry, and using or avoiding total synonyms in the same language and across languages.

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7 ABBREVIATIONS

- CD (Collins Dictionary)
- DF (Diccionario Ferroviario)
- DPLEI (Diccionario Politécnico de las Lenguas Española e Inglesa)
- DR (Dictionary Reference)
- DRAE (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española)
- DUE (Diccionario de Uso del Español)
- FD (Free Dictionary)
- MK (Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health)
- WEBSTER, THE (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
- WR (Word Reference)
- YD (Your Dictionary)