5 Semantics

The development of the meaning of words is an important part of the history of a language, and it can be argued that of all the elements of language, meaning is least resistant to change. Yet the semantic history of Spanish words has received relatively little attention from scholars. An important source of information is Corominas and Pascual (1980–91), but etymological dictionaries such as this do not give systematic and consistent detail on the developing meaning of the words of the language, let alone of the causes of change. In the absence of a full-scale historical dictionary of Spanish (the Spanish Academy’s Diccionario histórico de la lengua española (Real Academia Española 1972–)) has not yet reached the letter B–), any discussion of its semantic development is inevitably incomplete and is likely to be at least partially inaccurate.

Existing historical grammars of Spanish lack chapters dealing exclusively or predominantly with semantic development and what follows is an (admittedly provisional) attempt to fill this identifiable gap. It should also be made clear that there are no ‘rules’ of semantic development which might be comparable with statements of, say, phonological development; examples of semantic change remain just that: examples. The structure of the discussion follows Ullmann’s (1962) account of meaning-change, distinguishing between its causes, its nature and its consequences.

5.1 Causes of semantic change

Since the appearance of Ogden and Richards’s now classic treatment of meaning (1923), it has been accepted that there is no direct relationship between the words (or symbols) of language and the things and events of the ‘real world’. This relationship is indirect and mediated by the mental constructs (or concepts) by which we represent the world to ourselves. It is the interrelationship between symbol and concept (wherein lies the essence of ‘meaning’) that falls within the domain of linguistics and any change in this relationship constitutes an instance of semantic change. The relationship between symbol and concept is possibly more unstable than other aspects of language and its disruption may be caused by any of a number of factors, of which Ullmann (1962) distinguishes the following six.

5.1.1 Linguistic causes

Changes of meaning may be occasioned by the frequent collocation of two or more words. That is, if words frequently occur together in the same speech-context, (part of) the meaning of one may be transferred to the other, and eventually this transferred sense may come to belong to the ‘receiving’ word even in the absence of the ‘donating’ word. It is well known that many of the negative words of Romance were originally positive in sense but acquired their negative value by frequent collocation with the negative particle NON and its descendants. In the Latin of Spain and some other areas, the phrase HOMINE NĀTU, literally ‘a man born’, first acquired the sense ‘anyone (at all)’; in combination with NON, it therefore meant ‘no one (at all)’, and this sense eventually prevailed even in the absence of NON. Early Old Spanish shows examples of omne nado in the sense ‘no one’, but through the noun of ellipse (5.2.4) nado alone is then found with this meaning. Subsequent modification of the form of nado (see 3.5.5) produces OSp. and MSp. nadie.

More widely in spoken Latin, a parallel phrase rem nāta (for the persistence of final -m here, see 2.5.4) meant at first ‘anything (at all)’. At first only in conjunction with NON, but eventually even in the absence of NON, it meant ‘nothing (at all)’, and from this new negative phrase descend the various Old Spanish words with this meaning: ellipsis of rem produces OSp. and MSp. nada, but the alternative ellipsis of nāta produces ren in the Navarro-Aragonese region. In general, Lat. res (acc. rem) ‘thing’ was replaced in spoken Latin by causa, and this replacement intermittently included the phrase rem nāta, producing *causa nāta, whence OSp. cosa (nada), with the same transfer of negative sense as in the case of (rem) nāta > nada. In recent Spanish, the phrase en absoluto has undergone similar negative development, so that its most frequent meaning is now ‘not at all’.

5.1.2 Historical causes

Any change of a concept which is not accompanied by a corresponding change of symbol constitutes a semantic change. Since all concepts (whether they refer to things, institutions, abstract notions, etc.) are subject to at least gradual change, and since the symbols (or words) which reflect these concepts are slower to be replaced (or may not be replaced at all), it follows that any (non-linguistic) historical development is likely to provoke a semantic change. Many examples of this kind of shift are trivial or well known (thus, the symbol coche continued to be used (at least in Spain) even though the concept it represented evolved from
‘horse-drawn vehicle’ to ‘(motor-propelled) car’), but others may be less easy to reconstruct, often because of the remoteness in time of the change concerned. Examples of semantic change motivated by evolution of the concepts concerned (and ultimately by the evolution of their referents, the things and events of the ‘real world’ to which the concepts correspond) include the following:

- Latin created the form *calcea* (derived from calceus ‘shoe’) to indicate ‘stockings’, newly adopted from the Germanic north. During the Middle Ages, the garment became longer and longer until it stretched from feet to waist; the descendant of Lat. *calcea* (OSp. calça) now therefore meant approximately ‘tights’, and this sense can be seen in PMC 3085–6: calças de paño en sus camas metió, / sobr’ ellos unos çapatos que a grant huébar son. Later development of the garment, its sixteenth-century division into two parts, did necessitate certain changes of name; the lower portion, from thighs to feet (approximately ‘hose’) was specified as medias calças, later abbreviated to medias, a label which continues to be applied to ‘stockings’, although now only to a women’s garment; meanwhile the upper part, from waist to thighs, continued to be labelled by means of the term which once indicated the undivided garment, although the term now meant ‘breeches’ and had a more specific equivalent (calçones). For these changes in the sense of calças, see Jaberg (1926).

- In accordance with its etymon (Ar. qāḍī), Sp. alcalde when first borrowed meant ‘judge (according to Islamic law)’. The functions of the post were subsequently broadened to include administrative activities, so that in Golden Age Spanish the term alcalde indicates an official who is both magistrate and mayor. Since that time, the judicial functions of the post have been lost and the term now means exclusively ‘mayor’.


- barbero (a late medieval derivative of barba ‘beard’), like corresponding words elsewhere in Europe, indicates a ‘barber/surgeon/dentist’ until at least the eighteenth century, later becoming limited to the sense ‘barber’.

5.1 Causes of semantic change

Ordinari* ‘to organize’ came to be restricted to farming language and its sense was restricted (via ‘organizing the chores of the cow-shed’?) to that of ‘to milk’. Similarly, afeitar (a borrowing from Latin affectare ‘to devote oneself’) was restricted first to the Old Spanish sense ‘to adorn, beautify’, then to the Golden Age sense ‘to beautify with makeup; to shave’, and later to the latter sense only. Botar, a medieval borrowing from Old French, at first has the general sense ‘to throw’, which the verb retains in some varieties of Spanish (including most American varieties); however, Peninsular Spanish has seen its restriction to the meaning ‘to launch’, no doubt as the word ceased to be part of the common vocabulary and became limited to that of boat-builders. However, some other (metaphorical) senses of botar also survive, as well as intransitive ‘to bounce’.

The reverse process, by which a word broadens its meaning as it passes from the language of a social subgroup into that of the whole community, is also widely attested. From the language of gaming, where Sp. azar (< Ar. zahr ‘dice’) meant at first an ‘unfortunate throw of the dice’, the word has passed into more general use, widening its sense to that of ‘misfortune’ or ‘chance (lucky or unlucky)’. Armario, when first borrowed from Latin in the Middle Ages, maintained its connection with arma and meant ‘armoury’; its sense was soon widened to its current value of ‘cupboard’.

5.1.4 Psychological causes

Changes of meaning which spring from the mental state of particular speakers, who have creatively extended the sense of words by using them metaphorically, are manifold in language and this process will be considered in more detail in 5.2.1. However, there is a specific psychological cause of semantic change which is particularly powerful (and which has been studied in detail): taboo. ‘Taboo’ is a term which indicates a prohibition on the mention of a particular word, for a variety of reasons which vary from culture to culture but which show some inter-cultural constants (see, for example, Meillet 1921). Since the concept related to a tabooed word nevertheless has to be referred to in some fashion, a frequent solution is to resort to a euphemism, that is, to a word or expression which for some reason can replace the tabooed item. It follows that a word used euphemistically undergoes semantic change in the form of an addition to its earlier sense or senses, but it is also probably the case that once a word’s ‘euphemistic’ sense comes to be widely used, this fact prevents (or at least militates against) the word’s use in its earlier sense, since speakers are likely to be unwilling to risk their non-euphemistic intention being interpreted in a euphemistic way. In other words, an expression which has acquired a new, euphemistic, sense is likely to rapidly lose its earlier, non-euphemistic, sense or senses.
Examples of euphemism are frequently due to one or other of three types of taboo: fear taboo (5.1.4.1), delicacy taboo (5.1.4.2), or decency taboo (5.1.4.3).

5.1.4.1 Fear taboo
The fear which forbids use of certain words in a particular culture (and which brings about a change of sense in their euphemistic replacements) is often of a religious or superstitious kind. It is well known that the prohibition placed upon the Jews against the use of the name of God led to the use of euphemisms such as that translated into English as ‘Lord’, or into Spanish as ‘Señor’. But it is not solely the names of supernatural beings which are subject to taboo; the names of perfectly ‘worldly’ concepts may be similarly tabooed if there is an association in speakers’ minds between some ‘worldly’ referent and some feared supernatural referent. The classic case is that of the weasel, which in some cultures, including many Western European ones, is seen as endowed with certain supernatural forces, mostly evil. In most of the Romance-speaking world, the Latin name of the weasel, *mustela*, has been replaced by euphemisms, which have consequently undergone dramatic meaning-change. Within the Peninsula (see Menéndez Pidal 1964a: 396–405), *mustela* remains in Catalan and in one area of southern Galicia, together with (originally) affectionate derivatives of the same base in northern Leon and western Santander (*mostolilla*). Elsewhere, we find similarly propitiating terms: affectionate derivatives of *domina* ‘lady’ in the west (Pig. *dominha*, Gal. *don(o)cina*, *doniça*, *doniça*, *leonec doniça*, etc.), *paniquesa* (no doubt referring to the animal’s colouring) in the northeast (NE Castile, Navarre, Aragon), *comadreja* (an originally affectionate derivative of *comadre* ‘neighbour’) in most of Castile, Murcia and Andalusia (whence its introduction to Spanish America), together with many other forms in Asturias and Santander.

Taboos on animal names are not infrequent. Lat. *vulpes* ‘fox’ scarcely survives; in Spain it is replaced by a derivative *vulpíca*, originally affectionate and no doubt propitiatory, but soon lexicalized and surviving as *gülpeja* until the fourteenth century. Its first euphemistic replacement (*raposa*–*rabosa*), referring to the animal’s bushy tail, was itself largely displaced by *zorra*, possibly a nominalization of a borrowing from Basque meaning ‘lazy’. In Andalusia we find euphemistic use of personal names, such as *juanica*, *maría*, *maría garcía*, *mariquita*.

Other fear taboos include avoidance of the words meaning ‘left’, owing to the popular association between this concept and evil or the Devil. Of the Latin terms for ‘left’, *laevus*, *scaevus*, *sinister*, only the latter survives, partially, in Romance; in Old Spanish it appears as *sinistro* (with *iz* under the influence of its antonym *dierstro*). Thereafter, it is retained only in the sense ‘sinister’, reflecting the association just mentioned, and in the sense ‘left’ is replaced by another borrowing from Basque, namely *izquierdo*. It will be noted that foreign borrowings may serve the same purpose as euphemisms in providing replacements for tabooed words.

5.1.4.2 Delicacy taboo
The tendency to avoid words referring to concepts considered disagreeable may also lead to the use of euphemisms. The concepts concerned include those associated with disease, death, mental or physical infirmity, crime, etc. Examples of Spanish words which have acquired their current sense through the effects of delicacy taboo include the following:

- *cretino* ‘cretin’ is a borrowing from French and originates in a dialectal form of Fr. *crétin* ‘Christian’, used euphemistically.
- *tullido* ‘crippled’ is the only surviving Modern Spanish part of the Old Spanish verb *tollar*—*tullir* ‘to take away, deprive’.
- *matar* ‘to kill’ may owe its origin to the euphemistic use of a verb whose original meaning was different. Late Lat. *mattus* ‘stupid, stupefied’ may have served as the base of a derived verb *mattare* ‘to stun, stupefy’, which then underwent meaning-change through its euphemistic use. Modern Spanish has a host of expressions which may be used euphemistically to express the notion ‘to kill’: *cargarse a uno, dar el pasaporte, dar el paseo, liquidar, eliminar*, some of which may be calques of similar English euphemisms. Similarly, we find many terms used as euphemisms for ‘to steal, rob’: *coger, pillar, apañar, olivar, trabajar, raspar*. Expressions which in the same way may mean ‘to die’ include *reventar, estirar la pata*, etc. For these euphemisms, see Beinhauer (1968).

5.1.4.3 Decency taboo
The motive for semantic change in this case is the avoidance of mention of words related to sex, and to certain parts of the body and their functions. The following cases illustrate the semantic consequences of this kind of taboo:

- *manceba* and *barragana* ‘concubine’ originally mean ‘young woman’, as can be seen by reference to their masculine counterparts *mancebo* ‘youth’ and OSP. *barragán* ‘id.’
- *fulana* ‘lover, concubine, prostitute’ (cf. *fulano* ‘so-and-so’).
- *ramera* ‘prostitute’ probably earlier meant ‘inn-keeper’s wife; (female) innkeeper’.
- *buscona* ‘prostitute’ and *bucscón* ‘thief’ are probably euphemistic derivatives of *buscar* ‘to seek’ whose original sense was ‘seeker’.
- *amiga* and *querida* ‘mistress’.
- *parir* ‘to give birth’ is increasingly avoided, when reference is to humans, in favour of euphemistic *dar a luz, alumbrar*.
- *embarazada* originally ‘encumbered’ or *en estado* (a reduction of *en estado interesante*) often replace *preñada* ‘pregnant’.
5.1 Causes of semantic change

- *infante* (< *infante* 'child') 'son of the king', until the thirteenth century also meant 'son of a nobleman'; cf. *Ar. walad* 'child; son of the king'. In this case, after the semantic extension, the original sense ('child') was entirely lost.
- *plata* 'silver' (< *platta* 'flat') may have acquired its sense by semantic loan from *Ar. luğayn* or *wárqa*, both 'lamina (i.e. a thin plate); silver'. The later, American-Spanish, development of the sense of this word to 'money' is a more 'normal' case of semantic development, through association of ideas.
- OSP. *poridat* 'secrecy, intimacy' (< *pūritāte* 'purity') perhaps acquired this sense by loan from derivatives of *Ar. ḥalasa* 'to be pure'.

Semantic influence of English on Spanish is widely attested (see Pratt 1980: 160–76), and often condemned by purists. It is particularly evident in the case of paronyms (pairs of words, one belonging to each of the two languages, which are obviously related in form but which have different meanings), the 'false friends' of the unwaried translator. In this case, semantic loan can be said to turn 'false friends' into 'true friends' or at least 'truer friends'. The following instances of semantic loan due to paronymy (not all equally frequent, but most now well established) are among the many that have been identified. Where there is a traditional term, with which the new form has entered into competition, it is given in square brackets: *administración* [gobierno] 'administration, government', *agenda* [orden del día] 'agenda', *apartamento* [piso] 'flat, apartment', *arruinado* [dahar, estroprear] 'to ruin', *ataque* 'attack (e.g. heart)', *base* ['military'] 'base', *cereales* ['cereals (as generic)', *círculo* [sector, ambiente] 'circle', *complejo* ['complex (in the psychological and industrial sense)', *congelado* 'to freeze' (e.g. prices or salaries), *crucial* [crítico] 'crucial', *duplicar* [copiar] 'to duplicate', *editor* [redactor] 'newspaper' editor, *estudio* ['film or TV studio'], *factoría* [fábrica] 'factory', *fatiga* ['metal fatigue'], *firma* [empresa] 'firm', *flota* ['fleet (of cars)', *honesto* [honrado] 'honest', *humor* [gracia] 'humour', *ignorar* [pasar por alto] 'to ignore', *incidente* ['success'] 'incident', *liberar* [libertar] 'to liberate', literally [al pie de la letra] 'literally', *nativo* [natural] 'native', *permiso* ['permissive'], *planta* ['industrial'] plant, the noun *plásico* 'plastic', *proceso* [procedimiento] 'process', *satélite* ['satellite (with reference to space technology, politics, or town planning)', *simple* [sencillo] 'simple', *soda* [seltz] 'soda(water)', *tanque* ['military'] tank', *torpedo* ['naval'] torpedo, *verificar* [comprobar] 'to verify'.

However, semantic loan from English is also evident in cases where no paronym is involved, e.g. *cadena* ['chain (of shops)', *canal* ['TV channel'], *cumbre* 'summit (meeting)', *escoba* 'sweeper (in football)', *estrella* ['film, etc.] star', *mariposa* ['butterfly (in swimming)', *muestra* ['statistical'] sample, *ventilar* 'to air (an issue)'.

Semantic loan from English may also take the form of *loan translation* (or *calque*), in which the separate words of an English expression are individually translated, giving rise to new compounds, some of which have already been
considered in 4.14.3, since it is possible in some cases that an English model is not involved. Such loan translations include compounds consisting of:

nouns + noun: *buque escuela* 'training ship', *perro guardián* 'guard dog', *ciudad dormitorio* 'dormitory town, bedroom community', *encuentro [en la] cumbre* 'summit meeting', *hombre rana* 'frogman', *horas punta* 'rush hour', *madre patria* 'motherland', *cine club* 'cinema club', *misión rescate* 'rescue mission', *año luz* 'light year', *hora cero* 'zero hour', *tiempo récord* 'record time', *tren miniatura* 'miniature train'

verb + noun: *calientaplatos* 'plate warmer', *cortacésped* 'lawnmower', *limpiaparabrisas* 'windscreen-wiper(s)', *portaaérondas* 'aircraft carrier', *rompehielos* 'icebreaker'

noun + adjective: *caja fuerte* 'strongbox', *elefante blanco* 'white elephant', *guerra fría* 'cold war', *mesa redonda* 'round table', *perro caliente* 'hot-dog'

adjective + noun: *próximo oriente* 'Near East', *tercer mundo* 'Third World', *tercer programa* 'Third Programme'

Such loans may also include more complex structures, such as noun + de + noun: *beso de la vida* 'kiss of life', *cruce de cebra* 'zebra crossing', *fuera de juego* 'offside', *máquina de coser* 'sewing machine', *tubo de ensayo* 'test tube'.

5.1.6 The need to name a new concept

As new concepts become current in a linguistic community, there simultaneously arises an evident requirement for a means of expressing the new concept. The solution may be to borrow a word from another language (sections 4.2–13 are primarily concerned with this solution), to create a new term through word-formation (see 4.14.1, 4.14.2.1, 4.14.3), or to extend the sense of an existing word. In the case of Spanish (as with many languages), it is often difficult to distinguish between the latter process and semantic loan, that is, to know whether an extension of sense occurred spontaneously in Spanish or whether it is due to imitation of an extension of sense which took place in another language. The only firm guide here is the date of first attestation of the extended sense in the language concerned. Thus it is likely that *platillo volante* is a loan translation of Eng. *flying saucer*, rather than an independent creation within Spanish. By contrast, it is clear that the developments *león* 'lion' > *puma*, *piña* 'pinecone' > 'pineapple', *tigre* 'tiger' > 'jaguar' are not due to foreign models (see 4.9).

5.2 Types of semantic change

Ullmann (1962, based on Roudet 1921) classifies semantic changes according to two criteria; on the one hand, a distinction is made between those changes which originate in an association of meanings and those which originate in an association between word-forms; on the other hand, a contrast is drawn between those changes which are motivated by similarity (either of meaning or form) and those which stem from contiguity (either of meaning or form), where 'contiguity' indicates 'juxtaposition' in a broad sense, as when the meanings concerned refer to things which appear together in the real world or when the words concerned are frequently collocated. This classification may be stated (now adding labels to each of the four types of semantic change involved) as in table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change based on:</th>
<th>Association of meanings</th>
<th>Association of word forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>popular etymology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contiguity</td>
<td>metonymy</td>
<td>ellipsis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.1 Metaphor

Many words have acquired their current sense (or one or more of their current senses) by having been used at one time or another as metaphors. The metaphor is fundamentally a comparison, in which one concept (the one which the speaker essentially has in mind) is compared with another (which the speaker sees as having some similarity with the first). If the name of the second concept, as a result of this metaphorical process, is used to replace the name of the first concept and the metaphor gains acceptance in the linguistic community concerned, it follows that a new sense has come to be associated with an existing word.

While the literal (or traditional) sense of a word continues to be present alongside the metaphorical sense, the metaphor concerned may be regarded as a 'living metaphor', unless the two senses come to be regarded as unrelated, in which case one is simply faced with an instance of polysemy (more than one sense attached to a single word). By contrast, where the traditional sense is abandoned and only the metaphorical sense survives, the metaphor is best described as 'dead' and is only recognizable as a metaphor in the light of historical information not normally available to the speaker. Thus, it is likely that the sense 'mountain-range' which belongs to *sierra* is the result of metaphorical use of *sierra* 'saw' (< *serra* 'id.'), But whether native speakers regard *sierra* 'mountain range' as a (living) metaphor, rather than a case of polysemy, is open to dispute.

Many types of metaphor have been recognized, of which the most frequent will be exemplified here. 'Anthropomorphic' metaphors transfer names of parts of the body to inanimate objects: *boca* 'mouth (of river)', *entrañas* 'bowels
5.2 Types of semantic change

Synechocche, the application of the name of part of a larger concept to the whole of that concept, or vice versa, can be regarded as a kind of metonymy: almirar 'haystack' (< (PERTICA) MEDIÄLE 'central pole', around which haystacks in Spain are commonly built), boda 'wedding' (< *'marriage vows' < VOTA 'vows'), césped 'lawn' (< CAESPITE 'piece of turf'), cimientos 'foundations' (< CAEMENTÓS 'building stones'), puerto 'harbour' (< PORTU 'harbour entrance').

Other types of metonymy include the use of a name of a substance to indicate something made from that substance (alambre 'wire' < *'bronze wire' < AERÄMEN 'bronze(work)'), the use of proper nouns to indicate an associated product (jerez, montilla, champán, coñac, etc.), and the use of abstract terms to indicate some associated concrete notion (cuenta 'account, bill', cura 'priest', encuadernación 'binding (of a book)', guardia 'policeman').

5.2.3 Popular etymology

This process, which essentially changes the form of 'unmotivated' (i.e. structurally isolated) words in order to make them conform to pre-existing families of words to which they do not historically belong, may also result in some change of meaning, usually quite subtle. A well-known case is that of vagabundo 'tramp', which through popular etymology often appears in colloquial speech as vagamundo, thereby specifying its sense as 'one who wanders the world'. Similarly, when OSp. berrojo 'boll' (< VERRUCULUM) was modified to cerrojo, by attraction to cerrar 'to close', its meaning was no doubt also modified, associating it exclusively with the closing of doors, etc. Other examples include tinieblas 'darkness' (< OSp. tiniebras), where association with niebla 'fog' has not only changed the form of the word but has also added the notion of 'fogginess' to that of 'darkness' in tinieblas, and pulgar 'thumb' (< OSp. polgar), where it may be that, as the form of the word became more like that of pulga 'flea', speakers have come to associate the meaning 'flea' with pulgar (perhaps envisaging the thumb as a suitable weapon for killing fleas).

5.2.4 Ellipsis

We have seen (5.1.1) that when two words are frequently collocated, the meaning of one may be added to that of the other. A further change is the deletion (or ellipsis) of one of the words, so that the other bears the whole semantic burden of the originally compound expression. A frequently observed effect of such change is that in a noun + adjective phrase the noun is deleted and the adjective thereby takes on the function and meaning of a noun: ábrego 'south wind' (< (VENTU) AFRICU 'African wind'), aguíjada 'goad' (< (PERTICA) *AQUILEÉTA (FOR AÇULEÉTA) 'sharpened pole'), albérchigo 'clinging peach' (< (MÂLU) PERSIÇU 'Persian fruit'), almirar 'haystack' (< (PERTICA) MEDIÄLE
5.3 Consequences of semantic change

Irrespective of the cause of a semantic change or the general type to which it belongs, if one examines the meanings of words before and after a change, one can observe two broad semantic effects. On the one hand, there may be modification of the range and complexity of meaning of the word concerned, while on the other, it may undergo a change in any affective nuances which it possesses.

5.3.1 Change of semantic range

One consequence of meaning-change is a movement from greater generality to greater specificity or the reverse. It should be noted that the first of these movements is accompanied by an increase in the 'amount' of meaning conveyed, while the change towards greater generality is accompanied by a decrease in the 'amount' of meaning. In this context, 'amount' refers to the number of separately identifiable components which make up the total meaning of the word. Thus, as Lat. secāre 'to cut' becomes more specific in sense and is restricted to the meaning 'to reap' (Sp. segar), additional components of meaning ('with a scythe, machine, etc.', 'appropriate to grass, corn, etc.') can be recognized in the word. By contrast, as stāre 'to stand' becomes more general in sense (Sp. estar), it loses such components of its meaning as 'in vertical position'. In the following examples of increase in specificity and complexity, it will be noted that where a Latin word has been transmitted to Spanish by more than one channel, the learned form concerned usually retains the unrestricted Latin meaning (see 2.2.4):

- adobar 'prepare (meat for sausage); to tan (leather)' < OSp. adobar 'to prepare, provide with'
- anegar 'to drown' < ENECĀRE 'to kill (especially by strangling or stifling)'
- ânsar 'wild goose' < OSp. ânsar 'goose' (cf. Juan Manuel: ânsares bravos) < V₁ ANSAR (CL ANSER) 'goose'
- OSp. arięnço 'a medieval coin/weight' < ARGENTEU 'made' of silver'
- bodá 'wedding' < *'marriage-vows' < VÒTA 'vows'
- bruma 'frost, haze' < OSp. bruma 'winter' < BRŪMA 'id.'
- cebó 'fodder; bait (for fishing)'< CIBU 'food'

- colgar 'to hang' < COLLOCĀRE 'to place' (cf. the unrestricted learned term colocar 'to place')
- comulgā 'to take communion' < COMMŪNICĀRE 'to communicate' (cf. the unrestricted learned term comunicar 'to communicate')
- cuero 'leather' < CORI 'skin (of people and animals)' (although some varieties of Spanish, especially American, retain the unrestricted sense)
- cuñado 'brother-in-law' < OSp. cuñado 'relation by marriage' < COGNĀTU 'blood-relation'
- dehesa 'open pasture' < DEFENSA 'forbidden land' (i.e. 'forbidden to huntsmen?')
- gusar 'to cook' (or, with even further specialized sense, 'to casserole') < OSp. gusar 'to prepare, arrange' (derived from gusa 'manner')
- ponzoña 'poison' < PÔTĪONē 'drink, potion'
- rezar 'to pray' < OSp. rezar 'to recite, say aloud' < RECĪTĀRE 'id.' (cf. the unrestricted learned term recitar 'to recite')
- siesta 'siesta' < OSp. siesta 'mid-day heat' < SEXTA (HÔRA) 'sixth (hour)'
- tañer 'to play (an instrument)' < OSp. tañer 'to touch; to play (a musical instrument)' < TANGERE 'to touch'

The reverse process, generalization of sense with loss of complexity, is probably rarer, but nevertheless provides frequent examples in the development of Spanish. Again, any learned correlates will normally retain the Latin sense, in this case a more specific sense:

- asir 'to grasp', as a derivative of asa 'handle', earlier meant 'to grasp by the handle'
- barro 'mud' until the Golden Age meant only 'potter's clay', a specific sense also still available in the word
- compaña 'companion' < OSp. compaño 'id.' < Late Lat. COMPĀNĪŌNE 'table-companion' (lit. 'one who eats bread with another')
- cosa 'thing' < CAUSA 'cause; matter, question' (cf. learned causa 'cause')
- dínero 'money' < DÉNĂRIU 'a (specific) coin'
- grande 'large in size, morally great, etc.' < GRANDE 'large in size'
- hallar 'to find' < AFFLĀRE 'to breathe out', perhaps via the meanings 'to follow the scent' and 'to find the prey', with reference originally to hunting-dogs
- lograr 'to succeed' < OSp. lograr 'to enjoy the fruits of', perhaps via 'to enjoy, possess' and 'to acquire' (e.g. lograr los deseos 'to achieve one's desires', whence lograr hacer, etc.)
- palabra 'word' < PARABOLA 'comparision, allegory', probably via 'phrase, sentence'
- parientes 'relatives' < OSp. parientes 'parents' (< PARENTES 'id.')

A particular subgroup of cases has acquired the status of a common noun.
Some examples are trivial and well-known (e.g. un donjuán, un quijote), but others require historical information for their elucidation. Thus, the nineteenth-century expression quevedos 'spectacles' owes its origin to portraits of Quevedo wearing spectacles, while asesino 'murderer' descends from Ar. ḥāṣāṣī, lit. 'hashish-drinkers', the name of an eleventh-century Muslim sect with the reputation for butchering opponents.

5.3.2 Change of affectivity

The emotive overtones which accompany many words (revealing an attitude, on the part of the speaker, of hostility, contempt, approval, fondness, etc., towards the concept concerned) are as subject to change as any other semantic component, and in broad terms may show development of either pejorative or favourable sense.

Development of pejorative meaning may be the result of various processes, including use of the word as a euphemism (see 5.1.4), association of ideas, prejudice, etc. For example:
- algarabía 'gibberish; uproar' < Ar. ārābiya 'the Arabic language'
- caativo (a semi-learned descendant of capitu 'captive') underwent a series of changes, in adjectival use, of increasingly pejorative tone: 'captive' > 'wretched' > 'wicked, evil' (its commonest Golden Age sense, perhaps reinforced by Italian cattivo 'bad'), although the meaning 'captive' has alone survived
- necio 'foolish' < nescius 'ignorant'
- simple 'simple, half-witted' (alongside other senses) < simplissimus 'simple'
- sinistro 'sinister' < Os. left' < sinistrum 'id.' (see 5.1.4.1)
- villano 'boorish' (derived from the descendant of villa 'farm') < 'rustic' < 'rural'

The opposite process, development of favourable sense, is again motivated by a wide range of factors, and can take the form of movement from unfavourable to less unfavourable meaning (usually through hyperbole, as in the case of terrible, horrible or in that of lamentar 'to regret' < 'to lament, grieve') or movement from derogatory to favourable meaning, as in the following cases:
- caballo 'horse' < caballu 'nag; workhorse'
- calle 'street' < calle 'cattle-path'
- casa 'house' < casa 'hut, cottage'
- condestable 'High Constable' < comite stabuli 'officer in charge of the stable'
- corte 'court'/Cortes 'Parliament' < cohorte 'enclosure, farmyard', via 'division of a Roman military camp' > 'body of troops (belonging to that division)' > 'Imperial guard' > 'palace'. The originally rural sense survives in dialectal corte 'cow-shed'
- ministro 'minister' < ministerius 'servant'

A particular case of appreciative sense development can be seen in the so-called voces medias, words whose tone is essentially neutral but which may take on favourable or unfavourable overtones in different contexts. Such words may eventually take on permanently pejorative or favourable sense. Many are concerned with the notion of 'luck':
- accidente 'accident' is now unfavourable despite its neutral origins (a borrowing of accidens, -onis 'occurring')
- fortuna 'fortune' (< fortuna 'id.' has acquired favourable overtones as can be seen more clearly in its derivative afortunado 'fortunate'
- sino 'fate' (< signum 'sign, constellation') is normally interpreted as having unfavourable associations
- suerte 'luck' (< sortes 'casting a lot') implies 'good luck' (e.g. in wishing someone ¡Mucha suerte!), as can also be seen by the necessity to add an adjective (e.g. mala suerte) to indicate 'bad luck'
6.3 Convergence and divergence

Will Spanish remain a single language or will it fragment into a number of mutually unintelligible languages? This issue was repeatedly raised in the twentieth century, with many scholars forecasting an outcome for Spanish that would be comparable with the fragmentation of Latin into the various Romance languages. On this prognosis, Mexican and Argentinian Spanish, say, would come to be separate codes from European Spanish, as different from the latter as French and Italian are from present-day Spanish.

However, from an early twenty-first-century perspective, this outcome seems much less likely. There are two broad reasons why the earlier pessimism now seems unfounded.

Firstly, the pressures towards divergence which fragmented the descendants of Latin are unlikely to be repeated in coming centuries. Over the centuries that stretch from the late Roman period to the twelfth century, communications between different parts of the Romance-speaking world were distinctly weak, while a relatively small segment of the population (the literate minority) was subject to the unifying pressure exerted by the then single standard language, namely Latin. As a result, local changes were likely to have only local spread, leading to increasing diversification of speech. From the twelfth century onwards, different forms of Romance could be associated with different medieval states, and could be promoted as national languages in those states with the resources required to carry out such an enterprise. The creation of these separate standard languages, within a territory where up to that point there had been a single prestige language, is now seen to require the establishment of new and distinct traditions of spelling and grammar in different portions of the territory concerned (see Wright 1982). Such revolutions did indeed occur in
the Latin-speaking world of medieval Europe, usually resulting from the dedication of considerable resources to the project (as happened under Alfonso X, the Learned, king of Castile and Leon in the later thirteenth century; see 1.4), by contrast with what happened in the Chinese- or Arabic-speaking areas, where maintenance of a single written standard served to maintain the unity of those languages (despite considerable linguistic variation within the areas concerned). In the current Spanish-speaking world, there is no evidence of significant moves towards the adoption of separate spelling and grammatical codes in different countries. Nor is there evidence that any of the present-day states of the Spanish-speaking world (where, naturally, somewhat different forms of Spanish are in use) is motivated to promote its local variety as a national language distinct from the varieties used in other states.

Secondly, pressures towards convergence are today greater than in the past, especially the medieval past. Collaboration between the Academies (which exist in practically all Spanish-speaking countries) almost always ensures a single set of linguistic recommendations, enshrined in official publications, which are generally followed scrupulously by the press and publications media. Likewise, migration, travel and new types of communication between speakers of different varieties of Spanish provide unprecedented conditions for the face-to-face contact which promotes similarity of linguistic usage. This is not to deny the considerable variation (especially in lexis) which exists between one Spanish-speaking region and another, but speakers almost always handle this variation in such a way that it does not impede communication.

6.4 English and Spanish

These two languages are arguably the only two genuine world languages, in the sense that they are sponsored by a significant number of nation states in most continents, where they are the normal vehicle of education, administration and the media. The great difference between the two lies in the fact that English (but not Spanish) is used as a second language, by a very large numbers of non-native speakers, in an enormous range of countries. The future of English is consequently likely to be different from that of Spanish, since it is possible that the native English-speaking populations of the world, despite their size, may not be in a position to dominate the development of the language, with the result that variation within world English is likely to become more marked than variation within Spanish.

Currently it seems that English is ahead of Spanish in the competition, if that is what it is, to become the world’s first global language (a language used in some measure by a majority of the world’s population). This state of affairs is no doubt due to the overwhelming economic and political power of the core English-speaking countries, chiefly the United States. If there is room for a second global language (which some would say is unlikely), then Spanish is the main candidate to fill this role.

One way in which the balance between English and Spanish has shifted in the last half century is in the relationship between the two languages in the United States. We have noted (1.7) that some 10 per cent of the US population are native speakers of Spanish. Unlike other minority languages that have been and are used in the US, Spanish shows no sign there of failing to be passed on to the youngest generation in the communities concerned, and as a result the Spanish-speaking segment of the population continues to grow, even without the increase implied by constant immigration from Spanish-speaking countries. Rate of growth of the US Spanish-speaking community is notably greater than that of the English-speaking majority. Numbers alone do not confer high status, and up to the present Spanish in the US has been the language of a deprived and low-status sector of the nation. However, there are some signs of change in the appreciation accorded to Spanish; politicians no longer merely pay lip-service to Spanish speakers, with the purpose of gathering electoral support, but Spanish-speaking politicians are beginning to come to national prominence. Use of Spanish as a second language by native speakers of English has also increased markedly in recent decades, most notably in those areas with the greatest concentrations of native Spanish speakers: New York and some other northern cities, Florida, and the Southwest. The shift in the relationship between English and Spanish in the United States, if it continues in its present direction, is likely to enhance the use and status of Spanish in the rest of the world, assuming the continued power of the United States to influence the cultural patterns of the rest of the world.

Such an outcome would be paradoxical, in the light of the way in which contact between English and Spanish is generally viewed within the Spanish-speaking world. Although not as paranoid as speakers of some languages are about the ‘deleterious’ effects of English on their native language, some speakers of Spanish (typically those who see themselves as guardians of traditional culture) see the impact of English on Spanish as a highly undesirable process. We have noted the deep influence of English on the vocabulary of Spanish (4.10), and its lesser effect on the semantic value of Spanish words (5.1.5). But such influence rarely if ever is felt in the phonology, morphology or syntax of Spanish, and there is little evidence that the impact of English on Spanish is more than superficial.

The internal and external health of Spanish is reasonably assured for the foreseeable future.