ADJECTIVAL *CUCO / CUQUI* AS "CUTE" AND "ASTUTE"[*]

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ABSTRACT. In this squib, we present an analysis of the nowadays commonly used adjective *cuco*/*cuqui* in Spanish. We hypothesize that its two adjectival meanings, as "cute" and as "astute", are metonymically derived from the meanings of *cuco* as "carrycot" and "bird/card game", respectively. Blending theory accounts for how these emergent meanings are combined with new referents in speech. This analysis can be extended to other frequently used colloquial adjectives in Spanish like *panoli* and *choni*.

Keywords. *cuco*, adjective, appreciative, metonymy, blending theory, semantic change, *panoli, choni*, FrameNet

RESUMEN. En este breve artículo, presentamos un análisis del adjetivo *cuco*/*cuqui* tal y como se usa comúnmente en castellano. Proponemos que sus dos significados, de "mono" y de "astuto", como adjetivo derivan metonímicamente de los significados de *cuco* de "canasto de bebé" y "pájaro/juego de cartas", respectivamente. La teoría de la integración conceptual explica a su vez cómo estos dos significados se combinan con nuevos referentes del discurso. Este análisis se puede aplicar a otros adjetivos coloquiales muy frecuentemente usados en castellano, como son *panoli* y *choni*.

Palabras clave. *cuco*, adjetivo, apreciativo, metonimia, integración conceptual, cambio semántico, *panoli, choni*, FrameNet

1. Definition in the *DLE*

The overall semantic network of the word *cuco* is given in the 23rd edition of the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (*DLE* henceforth) compiled by the Real Academia Española (RAE henceforth). This tripartite entry is reproduced here.

cuco[1]. m. **coco** (‖ fantasma con que se mete miedo).

cuco[2], ca. (De or. onomat.; cf. lat. tardío *cucus* y gr. *κόκκυξ kókkyx*). adj. **1.** coloq. Pulido, mono. ‖ **2.** coloq. Taimado y astuto, que ante todo mira por su metro y comodidad. U. t. c. s.·m. **3.** Oruga or larva de cierta mariposa nocturna. Tiene de tres a cuatro centímetros de largo, los costados vellosos y con pintas blancas, tres articulaciones amarillentas junto a la cabeza, y las demás pardas, con una faja más clara y rojiza en el lomo. ‖ **4. cuclillo** (‖ ave). ‖ **5.** coloq. **tahúr**. ■ **~ moñón**, o **cuco real.** m. Ave trepadora semejante al cuclillo, que suele poner sus huevos en los nidos de las urracas. Es frecuente en

el centro de España. ➤ **reloj de cuco.**

cuco³. (De or. Desc.). m. coloq. **moisés.**

[RAE 2014: 684]

The dictionary entry is organized in three main blocks. Our focus is on some of the meanings included in the second and third entry. The former encompasses, among others, the adjectival meanings of cute (CUTE meaning) and astute (ASTUTE meaning) as well as the bird with that name (BIRD meaning, see example 1 from CORPES XXI). The latter encompasses a sense referring to a baby's portable crib (CARRYCOT meaning, see example 2 from CORPES XXI). Another sense, derived from *tahúr*, is omitted as part of the senses in *cuco²* in the online version of the *DLE*. The material accessible online has not been yet updated to the 23rd edition of the dictionary and thus still shows the entries of the 22nd edition published in 2001. In this case, *tahúr*, which describes an addicted player to card games (CARD PLAYER meaning, see example 3), also designates a game of cards named *malcontento* 'the unhappy one' (CARD GAME meaning, see example 4). It consists of "trocar los jugadores entre sí las cartas con que están descontentos, perdiendo quien se queda con la inferior" (RAE 2014: 1383). The explanation for this metonymic extension is given in section 3.2.

(1)   Unos pájaros reconocen a los polluelos invasores de **cuco** y abandonan el nido.
        'Some birds recognize the invading baby birds of the **cuckoo** and abandon the nest'
(2)   Las últimas opciones, con forma de **cuco**, de canastilla o de carrito de bebé, son muy indicadas para regalar con motivo de un nacimiento.
        'The latest options, in the shape of a **carrycot**, a layette, or a baby stroller, are highly recommended as a present to a newly born baby.'
(3)   El **cuco** tenía que apostar todo para ganar, pero no lo hizo y perdió la partida.
        'The **player** had to bet all his money to win, but he didn't and lost the game.'
(4)   Estábamos jugando al **cuco** cuando apareció su esposa y tuvimos que largarnos de su cocina.
        'We were playing the **cuco** when his wife showed up and we had to leave the kitchen.'

Cuqui is not found in the *DLE*, probably due to its nature as an expressive derivation of *cuco*. The appreciative suffix *-i* may be considered part of what Varela-Villafranca defines as "una *-i* coloquial, familiar, argótica, expresiva, afectiva, popular o como quiera etiquetarse" (2012: 447). This is, however, somewhat irrelevant for the semantic evolution of *cuco/cuqui* as presented here. If the dictionary had an entry for the *cuqui*, it should at least contain three meanings. Those would refer to something cute (in the form of an appreciative derived from *cuco*), to the user credentials' data in a website, and to an American biscuit (Bills & Vigil 2008: 183, as reported in Norrby & Hajek 2011: 135). These two latter meanings are anglicisms in that they have been borrowed from English, whether adapted (e.g. *cuqui*) or unadapted (e.g. *cookie*) to the Spanish orthography.

> **cuqui[1]**. adj. Del dim. de *cuco*. Dicho de un objeto: Mono, bonito, delicado, vistoso, elaborado.
>
> **cuqui[2]**. f. *Inform*. (Del ingl. *cookie*). [u. en pl]. Paquete de datos enviado por un servidor a un navegador para identificar al usuario que accede a la página web.
>
> **cuqui[3]**. f (Del ingl. *cookie*). Galleta redonda y plana, típica de Estados Unidos, Canadá y otros países anglófonos, que suele llevar pepitas de chocolate u otro tipo de decoración dulce en su superficie.

Our research addresses, from the cognitive linguistic point of view, how the presently used meanings of *cuco/cuqui* as CUTE and ASTUTE arose, as well as those of other adjectives that follow a similar pattern. Regarding that, we hypothesize that those meanings are diachronically derived through metonymy, and integrated with nominal referents through conceptual blends. In section 2, real examples from different sources illustrate the use of these two meanings of *cuco*. In section 3, we illustrate the above hypothesis by using metonymy and blending in the nominal expression *caja cuca* 'cute box'. Other parallel examples are *panoli* and *choni*, where a characteristic of their more common meaning can be metonymically delimited and applied to new referents.

2. Real use

To illustrate the use of *cuco/cuqui* in Spanish, we present tokens extracted from a corpus, from two poems, and from online websites. They confirm the frequent adjectival meanings of CUTE and ASTUTE for *cuco* as applied to people and objects. We could not retrieve any instance of *cuqui* from the corpus or works of literature.

The "CORPES XXI" is a corpus of contemporary Spanish recently launched by the RAE. It covers the Spanish spoken in Latin America, Spain, the Philippines, and Equatorial Guinea from 2001 to 2012. In our search in the corpus, only 5 out of 469 instances of *cuco* illustrate the adjectival use (see Appendix). As a proper noun, *Cuco* (with *Cucco, Cuquejo, Cuquín, Cuquito*, and *Kuca* as variants in Latin America) very commonly makes reference to a person's name. *Cuqui* can similarly be a direct translation of the English name *Cookie*, especially in English-Spanish bilingual zones like the US states bordering with Mexico, including Texas, New Mexico, California, and Arizona. *Cuco* is, however, not listed as a name in the *Diccionario de Nombres de Personas* (Albaiges i Olivart 1984). The surprising fact is that we can find tokens where, though classified as an adjective, it acts as a proper noun. The capitalization of its first letter is another clue that points to its non-adjectival, referential use. As expected, this use is not reflected in the *DLE* since the main focus is on only general and educated language, as stated in the dictionary's prologue.

In its adjectival use, *cuco* appears most prominently in three constructional schemas, all preceded by adverbs of degree functioning as quantifiers or intensifiers. Those schemas are *qué* "how" in "how + ADJ", *muy* "very" in "very + ADJ", and *tan* "so" in "so + ADJ". The status of *cuco* as an adjective is clear from three facts: one, it is pre-modified by adverbs, as in (4-8); two, it can be inflected for the comparative and superlative grades, as in (6) and (8); three, other adjectives can take its place in the sentence, as in (5) and (7).

(5)   El carrito del bebé es muy ***cuco***/***cuqui***/*mono*/*lindo*/*bonito* (CUTE).
        'The baby stroller is very ***nice***.'
(6)   El carrito del bebé es *más **cuqui** que* su cuna (CUTE).
        'The baby stroller is ***nicer*** than his craddle.'
(7)   El bebé es tan ***cuco***/*despierto*/*listo*/*inteligente* que … (ASTUTE).
        'The baby is so ***bright***/*alert*/*clever*/*intelligent* that ...'
(8)   El bebé es *el más **cuco** de* toda la guardería (ASTUTE).
        'The baby is the **bright**est of all the nursery school.'

The referents which it can modify are semantically restricted to entities that can be attributed the features of cuteness and astuteness, respectively. This means that there should be compatibility in the semantic features of the noun and the adjective since they make reference to the same entity. As shown below, people, animals, and particular objects can appear in one of the above schemas. Other objects which violate the semantic requirements of the referent can't establish that relationship with *cuco*.

(9)   *El niño pequeño*/*el osito de peluche*/**el vertedero*/**la casa incendiada* es muy **cuco/a** (CUTE).
        'The young boy/the teddy bear/*the dumping site/*the house on fire is very **nice**.'
(10)   *El policia*/*el perro*/**el alumnado poco intelectual*/**mi madre, durmiendo,* es tan **cuco/a** que … (ASTUTE)
        'The police officer/the dog/*the intellectually poor students/* my sleepy mother is so **bright** that ...'

In (9), both humans like *el niño pequeño* "the small child" and cute objects like *el osito de peluche* "the teddy bear" can be the referent of *cuco*. A dumping site or a burnt house, however, can't be their referent because of their intrinsic qualities as aesthetically unpleasing entities. For the ASTUTE sense of *cuco*, only sentient beings with features of alertness and cleverness can act as referents, for example, *el policia* "the police officer" and *el perro* "the dog". The modifier *poco intelectual* "not very intellectual" in (10) oppose the requirements of *cuco* as astute, and so does the referent of a mother who is asleep and thus incapable of intellectual activity.

As for instances of *cuco* in literature, they follow the same pattern of reference and modification as above. In (11), the Spanish playwright Fernández de Moratín makes reference to a box, which is described as solid, well-hung, and nice. In (12) the Mexican modernist writer Gutiérrez-Nájera, in using the adjective *cuca*, describes his lover as a gentle and successful woman who likes to gamble.

(11)   La caja es cosa digna de un rey, ¡qué bien colgada! ¡qué solidez! Otra más **cuca** no la veréis (CUTE).
        'The box is worth a king, so well-hung and solid! You won't see a **nice**r one.'

                                        [Ferrer de Orga 1830: 163-164]

(12)   Agil, nerviosa, blanca, delgada, media de seda bien restirada, gola de encaje, corsé de ¡crac!, nariz pequeña, garbosa, **cuca**, y palpitantes sobre la nuca rizos tan rubios como el coñac (ASTUTE).
        'Agile, nervous, white, thin, stretched silk stockings, embroidered lace around her neck, a crack! corset, small, graceful, **nice** nose, and

intense cognac-like blonde curls around the nape of her neck.'

[Picon-Garfield and Schulman 1991: 248-249]

As early as the XIXth century, *cuco* was already used in both its CUTE and ASTUTE sense in referring to both objects, like a *caja*, and people, like the lover.

The richest source of tokens of the adjective *cuco*/*cuqui* by far is the Internet. The search of these adjectives in the Spanish version of Google provided numerous examples of all the meanings listed in the entry of the *DLE* (see Section 1). To narrow down the search, we used constraints for the search term. Those constraints are the collocational schemas found in the corpus search, namely when the adjective is pre-modified by quantifiers and intensifiers. Though difficult to find out which ones are the adjectival use of *cuco*, there were above 300,000 results in all three collocational schemas, and above 500,000 in two of them. In regard to topic and genre, the meaning CUTE is widespread in blogs of decoration (e.g. *Que Cuco* shop), toys (e.g. the blog *Nenuco ... ¡qué cuco!*), and fashion (e.g. the blog *Mira que cuco*), and even phone applications (e.g. the *Cuco* app). The one for ASTUTE appears commonly associated with stories in blogs about people doing things very smartly, like when Santa Claus climbs up a block of houses to get into all of them, or when someone creates a script for his post in the blog before writing the entry.

It is evident that *cuco* is very frequently used as an adjective from as early as the XIXth century and in varied genres and media. The question now is where its meanings arose from. Metonymy provides an answer for semantic developments of this type, and blending theory does so for the compositionality of NPs in which they partake.

3. Metonymy and Blending as Meaning Extension

Once the CUTE and ASTUTE senses of *cuco* have been described, we can rightfully ask how these meanings came to be used as they are today. As in other cases of metonymic extension in polysemy (cf. Kitis 2009; Paradis 2005, 2011; Traugott and Dasher 2001), mappings between tightly correlated concepts arise from shifts in focus and construal of the word's senses. Speakers need to interact in the most efficient way. This efficiency subsumes the minimization of cognitive activity following general principles of economy and efficiency. These are in turn achieved through metonymy-based tightly packed semantic representations. Mental spaces (Fauconnier 1994) and conceptual integration networks (Fauconnier and Turner 1998) explain the integration of the new meanings of CUTE and ASTUTE with certain speech referent. The desired compressed meaning is thus produced.

3.1. *Cuco as "cute" and "astute"*

Metonymy has been, together with metaphor, among the most studied cognitive phenomena in the last decades. It has been argued to explain phenomena as varied as conversational pragmatic inferencing (cf. Falkum 2011, Panther and Radden 1999, Papafragou 1996), polysemy and meaning extension (cf. Brdar-Szabó and Brdar 2004, and works cited above), morphology and syntax (cf. Gutiérrez-Rubio 2014, Janda 2011, Jódar-Sánchez 2014, Sweep 2012, Yoon 2013, Ziegeler 2007), and the linguistic system in general (Bierwiaczonek 2013). The crucial difference between metaphor and metonymy is the domain boundaries crossed by the mappings. Metaphor establishes a link between a source and a target in different domains whereas metonymy does so within the same domain.

The meanings of CARRYCOT as a thing and BIRD as a living entity were in use first. As processes of semantic change show, metonymization effects a semantic change of focus and profiling of the target (Paradis 2011). Thus metonymy motivates not only the traditionally referred synchronic changes in online speech production, but also diachronic changes in words' meanings. Both modalities involve more complex entities being referred by a conceptually contiguous part of it, following a PART-WHOLE schema. This makes it more likely that the diachronic change developed from the fully-fledged entities "carrycot" and "bird" to their characterizing features. This move in the lexeme *cuco* is captured by the ENTITY FOR TYPICAL PROPERTY metonymic pattern (derived from CATEGORY FOR DEFINING PROPERTY in Kövecses and Radden 1998: 53). Alternatively, the diachronic change can be characterized as a semantic change from "thing" to "relation". Paradis (2005, 2011) uses *key* as an example for the diachronic development of this word from the physical realm, where it names an object, to the mental one, where by metonymy it comes to focus on the telic role of the object. By narrowing the meaning of *cuco* to just the qualities of "cute" and "smart", the speaker is focusing on a central, typical feature of the metonymic sources. And it is the relation of the adjectival meaning that will be used by speakers to characterize new referents. These referential acts naming objects with the prototypical qualities of *cuco* as a carrycot and a bird can be considered as a case of enallage based on metonymy (Arata 2005: 63). Other non-central, non-characterizing features of the cuckoo, like the fact that is has wings and a beak, would most likely not trigger the development of *cuco* as meaning that "it has wings and a beak". The thing-to-relation or entity-for-property semantic change becomes gradually conventionalized in the socio-cognitive space shared by speakers through its application to other referents distinct from the carrycot and the cuckoo. It is through blending processes and the manipulation of mental spaces that the change is diachronically developed and its outcome entrenched.

Metonymy plays an important role in processes of meaning construction. A prominent theory in semantics is that of mental spaces and blending (Fauconnier 1994, Fauconnier and Turner 1998). Mental spaces are chunks of reality as perceived, mediated, remembered and, represented by speakers and stored in memory. These spaces are similar to domains in that they contain entities (beings and objects) and their relations. Sometimes representations include two mental spaces, with the same element being represented differently in each space. In *Seana thinks the statue is hideous, but Todd thinks that it's just wonderful* (Coulson and Oakley 2003: 52), two mental spaces are set up, each of which contains a reference to the statue (i.e. *the statue* and *it*). A mapping, conveying identity, is established to connect the two representations of the same entity in the mental spaces. A step ahead in the theory is what Fauconnier and Turner (1998) call conceptual integration networks. These devices serve the purpose of combining projections of partial cognitive material from two mental spaces into the blended space. The networks include a generic space with common structure and an emerging blended space, as well as the two original mental spaces. In Coulson and Oakley's analysis of Schreckengost's sculpture *Apocalypse 42'* (*ibid*), the spaces of the Apocalypse, Death and the Second World War Axis bring about features of their own to create a complex representation of a historical moment: a horse with four riders, in parallelism with the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. These riders are the three great dictators of the Axis countries in the conflict (Mussolini, Hitler and emperor Hirohito), with Death as the fourth rider, metonymically represented with a skull but wearing a German military uniform. This example also shows that blending is a pervasive cognitive device to organize mental

representations, not only in linguistic materials, but also in artistic and gestural communication.

Once the CUTE and ASTUTE senses of *cuco* are entrenched in speaker's linguistic repertoire, a set up of mental spaces is used every time they want to apply those features to other referents. Morphosyntactically we are talking about a NP formation. We thus use blending theory to explain how referents are assigned unusual properties, achieving maximal integration and manipulability. We will focus here in the meaning of CUTE, but a similar explanation applies to ASTUTE as derived from BIRD, and to the adjectives *panoli* and *choni* (see below). In (11), for example, the usual properties of a box are that it is made of carton, a solid material made from trees, that it has a cover to close it, and that it is used to house objects of any type. To assign unusual properties to the box, Fernández de Moratín fuses the BOX mental space with the CARRYCOT space. These spaces correspond to the CONTAINERS and VEHICLE frames in *FrameNet* (2015). Bearing in mind the metonymically-based diachronic development of the meaning of CARRYCOT into CUTE, only the property of "cute" is mapped to the blended space. The representation of this conceptual network, as presented below, thus contains the BOX and CARRYCOT mental spaces and the blended space where the meaning of "cute box" arises.
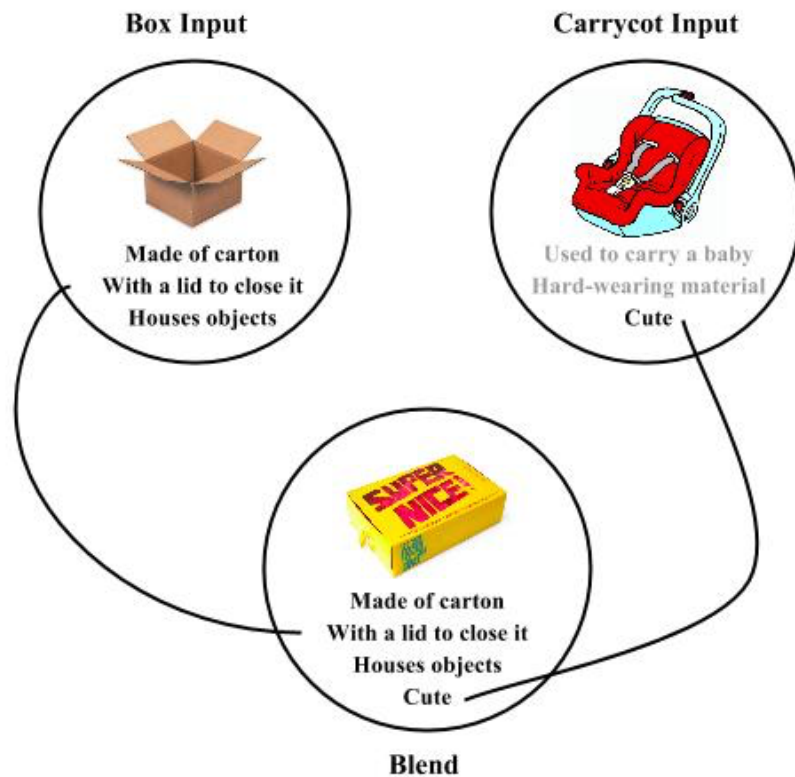

Figure 1. Blend of caja cuca *'cute box'*

The role of metonymy in blending is thus twofold. On the one hand, it allows the focusing of attention within spaces, that is, the move from CARRYCOT to CUTE within the CARRYCOT mental space. A series of optimality principles for blending theory are explained in Fauconnier and Turner (1998), some of which apply in the blend in Figure 1. The principle of metonymic tightening is at play in the ENTITY

FOR TYPICAL PROPERTY mapping so that when projected to the blend, the maximum state of compression is achieved. This metonymization, in Paradis' sense (2011), violates, however, the principle of topology. The expected structural correspondences in the CARRYCOT and BOX mental spaces are unfulfilled in the blend: the box is not mapped onto the carrycot, the material of the former (i.e. carton) is not mapped onto the materials of the latter (i.e. hard-wearing material), and so on. One way of accounting for the violation of the topology principle is to posit that after the ENTITY FOR TYPICAL PROPERTY metonymic mapping, the rest of the material in the CARRYCOT space is backgrounded by the speakers in benefit of the correct integration of material in the blending process. This material is shown in grey in the blend. In parallelism with long-term processes of semantic bleaching, this backgrounding of everything except the "cute" sense is an *ad hoc*, temporary semantic bleaching. In fact, Fauconnier and Turner (2003: 90) admit that bleaching, analogy, and other processes are a product of conceptual blending, even though the domain of application of the blends seems far removed from their original meanings of elements in the inputs.

On the other hand, metonymy allows the interlocutor to correctly reconstruct the mappings and original sources of the entities in the blended space. This last function obeys the principles of integration of blending theory. The integration principle postulates that the blend must be easily manipulated as a single entity. This is the case with the representation of a box with its usual attributes plus the (at least diachronically) emerging meaning of "cute". It is not hard for speakers to conceptualize a box as cute, solid, and well-hung, as in (11). Note that blending theory does not account for the integration of entities with their usual properties, since those properties are already included in the same mental space. No mappings or blends are thus needed if, for example, a box is to be characterized as an object made of carton (see Figure 1).

This pattern of semantic extension can explain the formation of other recent colloquial Spanish adjectives including *panoli* and *choni*. The former comes from the expression *pa en oli* "bread in oil" in Valencian, a variety of Catalan. Out of the 30 examples of *panoli* in the "Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual", the earlier ones date from the 1980s. Some others in the "CORPES XXI" date from the 2000s up to now. The adjective coordinated with *panoli* in (13) shows that its meaning is approximate to something like "distracted, scatterbrained", as the copula signals a relation of quasi-synonymy or complementarity. In (14), the prepositional expression *en apuros* "in trouble" shows that the subject referred to as *panoli* must be troublesome, clumsy, naive, and as the definition of the *DLE* tells us, "simple y fácil de engañar". Finally, we are reassured that *panoli* bears a negative connotation in (15) through the use of the delocutive verb *insultar* "to insult".

(13) [...] con todo lo que parezca ahora de **panoli** y de despistao [...].
    '[...] and now he looks like a distracted **idiot** [...]'
                                                                [CREA]

(14) [...] imaginamos que para auxiliar a cualquier otro **panoli** en apuros.
    '[...] we imagine that was to assist any other **idiot** in trouble.'
                                                                [CREA]

(15) "**Panoli**…", insultó Pepito, no sé si al novato o a mí [...].
  "Idiot...!" Pepito said, insulting either me or the novice.'

<div align="right">[CORPES XXI]</div>

The same procedure as developed for the CUTE sense of *cuco* applies here. In a nutshell, the "simple" feature of *pa en oli* is metonymized, that is, highlighted within its domain. The simplicity of Catalan bread and oil is, as that of "cute" in *cuco*, a defining feature. Next, speakers blend it with new referents like the people referred to by (13-15) to characterize them as "simple, troublesome, distracted". These two latter senses are, however, more difficult to justify than the former. Another such example is that of *choni*. People in the Canary Islands often call foreign people "chonis"[1]. The word is phonetically adapted into Spanish. It arose diachronically through the same process: the feature of "foreignness" of the Scottish whisky brand Johnnie Walker was metonymized, and then blended with new referents. Note again that Scottish whisky is well-known, among other things, for being produced in Scotland. In this case, the new referents in discourse are foreign people, whose foreignness is strengthened. What is not clear is how this other meaning of *choni* in (16) developed.

(16) También le podría servir una gogó de discoteca o una camarera muy
  choni que tuviera un pearcing en el ombligo [...].
  'He could also do with a go-go dancer from a club or a **chav** server
  with a piercing on her belly button [...].'

It is commonly known, at least in Spain, that a *choni* is a young uneducated person, usually with piercings and tattoos that wears tracksuits and abundant fake jewelry. Their idiolect is very peculiar and different from standard Spanish. It is possible that the idea Canary islanders had of those incoming foreign people, mostly British, was similar to the description of a *choni* in Spanish nowadays. However, generalizing in this case can lead us to the wrong conclusion on the origin of that use of the word.

3.2. Cuco as "card player" and as "astute"

Metonymy and blending theory can also explain the extension of the CARD GAME sense of *cuco*[2]. The more contentful meaning of *cuco* as a "card game" was probably in use first. Since language users establish a strong pragmatic link between a player and the game he is playing in their conceptualization of real events, the sense of CARD PLAYER could have derived from his role in the event of card playing. This case follows Barcelona's (2011) definition of metonymy, which highlights the pragmatic link between source and target. The functional domain of *cuco* as CARD GAME and its metonymic extension CARD PLAYER are given by the frame COMPETITION in *FrameNet* (2015). This frame contains the role of `Competition`, instantiated by the CARD GAME sense of *cuco*, and the role of `Participants`, instantiated by the CARD PLAYER metonymic extension. The fact that they are both included in the same frame corroborates the intra-domain semantic extension through metonymy. A systematic way of documenting metonymic links for particular languages would be to include them in the frames in *FrameNet* (Jódar-Sánchez 2015), thus becoming useful for analysis like ours. The pragmatic, that is, experience-based relation between the game and the player is shown in the

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[1] This meaning is accounted for at http://www.libertaddigital.com/opinion/amando-de-miguel/el-origen-de-algunas-palabras-y-frases-61109/.
[2] This meaning only appears in the 22nd edition of the *DLE*.

metonymic pattern in which this semantic extension is based, namely that of EVENT FOR PERSON INVOLVED IN THE EVENT. This pattern is, in turn, a specification of the pattern WHOLE FOR PART (Kövecses & Radden 1998), since the card player is an important and characterizing element in the overall event of a card game.

The blend occurs when speakers apply the ASTUTE sense of *cuco* to referents in the discourse, which morphosyntactically translates as the formation of a NP. What is unclear is whether this sense developed from the BIRD meaning (see Section 3.1) or from the CARD PLAYER meaning (this section). The former possibility is supported in the *Enimal* blog[3]. The latter possibility finds justification in the metonymization of the CARD GAME sense, as explained above. After that, the backgrounding of unnecessary information in the CARD PLAYER mental space makes it possible for its most prominent feature, that of being an alert and clever player in exchanging her worst cards, to map onto a referent from the other mental space. This metonymic extension shows crosslinguistic variation. *Cuckoo*, the cognate of *cuco* in English, designates the bird and, by extension, a mad person, according to the *Oxford Dictionary* online. *Cuckoo* thus highlights the madness of the bird, and blends it with a new referent. In Hungarian, *kakkuk* 'cuckoo' makes reference to the bird and a to a dead person, thus highlighting the consequence of the cuckoo's action on the baby birds of the nest he is invading. In Spanish, however, the cleverness of the bird is highlighted and blended. The optimality principles of blending of the example in Figure 1 apply here as well, restricting the blend to a metonymically tight configuration, manageable as a single unit, and characterized by the most central, prominent feature of the card player in the *malcontento*.

3.3. Onomatopoeic "cuco"

The other possibility is that of considering *cuco* and *cuqui* as onomatopoeias (so-called "symbolic onomatopoeias" in Alvar-Ezquerra 1993: 15, if representing perceptions and sensations). The relation between a particular phenomenon, often metonymically conveyed by its sound, and the semantic nuance attributed to it, conform a non-arbitrary unit, as opposed to the predominant arbitrariness of most linguistic forms. The words *cuco* and *cuqui* are, in Peircean semiotics, icons of the actual sound. A group of these units is associated under the name of ideophones, especially in African and Asian linguistics, in the style of semantic fields. A well-known set of ideophones in English is, for instance, that conformed by words starting with *gl-* as *glare*, *glance*, and *glimmer*, which indicate vision. Looking back at the meanings of *cuco* (see Section 1), two meanings, namely CARRYCOT, metonymically evoking the baby lying on it, and GHOST, the first sense in the entry, can be explained through a relation of sound symbolism. Since the words *coco* and *cuco* can be used to scare someone if appropriately pronounced, and also to entertain a baby in a clownish imitation, an iconic relation between the sounds produced in these contexts of interaction and the meanings CARRYCOT and GHOST, may have developed and anchored through time in Spanish speaker's lexicon. A conspicuous proof of the onomatopoeic meaning of *cuco* in these senses is what the entry of the *DLE* in its 14th edition states: "expresión de que usa, en el juego del cuco o malcontento, el que tiene el rey, para no trocar" (1914: 303).

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[3] The entry of the blog "El origen de la expresión ¡qué cuco eres!" can be found at http://www.enimal.org/el-origen-de-la-expresion-que-cuco-eres/.

4. Conclusion

Our brief analysis has shown that *cuco* and its derived form *cuqui* have two main adjectival meanings, those of "cute" and "astute". According to our proposal, these meanings evolved diachronically from a metonymic process which went from focusing only on the carrycot and bird/card game referred by *cuco* to focusing also on their typical, defining properties. This entity-for-property change, alternatively labeled as a thing-to-relation one, became entrenched in speaker's usage and involved in blending processes. In table 1 we present a summary of the metonymic mappings accounted for in the diachronic evolution of *cuco*/*cuqui*, *panoli*, and *choni*.

Lexeme	Metonymic Source	Metonymic Target
cuco	CARRYCOT	CUTE
cuco	CARD GAME/ CARD PLAYER	ASTUTE
cuco	BIRD	ASTUTE
panoli	BREAD AND OIL	SIMPLE
choni	WHISKY (brand)	FOREIGN

Table 1. Summary of Metonymic Mappings in the Formation of Adjectival cuco, panoli*, and* choni

This explains how speakers are able to describe new referents as "cute" and "astute" through the adjective *cuco* in forming NPs. As well as that, metonymy also explains the evolution of the meaning of *cuco* as "card game" into "card player", and later into "astute". Metonymy can also account for the semantic extensions which gave rise to the colloquial adjectival use of words like *panoli* and *choni* in contemporary Spanish.

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APPENDIX
INSTANCES OF *CUCO*

[E]l duplicado de las tarjetas-llave de la consultoría en donde debía estar, en el compartimento de un mueblecito muy **cuco** de madera junto a muchas otras. (Mexico, 2004).

El muy **cuco** cobraba dos dólares de entrada para asegurar avituallamiento y derecho de admisión, pero yo estaba seguro de que después [...] (Spain, 2004).

[E]speré a ver si se decidía a colaborar... y lo hizo, pero manteniendo, el muy **cuco**, sus pantalones puestos (Spain, 2010).

¿Sabría también lo de esos calzoncillos tan **cucos** con diminutos rinocerontes amarillos sobre fondo azul que me regaló una de mis novias unos meses atrás? (Spain, 2003).

Hay que ser muy fino para llegar a percibirlo, así que cuando vayas a un restorán y el chef te dedique unos minutos, míralo con atención a las pestañas y sorpréndelo (¡ojo!, son **cucos**, sabrán esquivarte la mirada despistando con guarniciones vaporosas, verborrea, apetitosos trozos de carne, burbujas o ríos de salsa para que no levantes los ojos del plato y los pilles in fraganti) (Spain, 2003).