Stylistic aspects of names given to pets in English: Interrelated phonological and semantic characteristics

Aspectos estilísticos de los nombres de mascotas en inglés: Interrelación de características fonológicas y semánticas

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Recibido el 26/06/2017.
Aprobado el 20/07/2017.

Abstract
This paper reports a study on interrelated phonological and semantic features in names given to pets in England. Studies conducted on forenames in general terms and, in particular, names given to pets have been limited (Valentine, Brennen & Brédart, 1996; Abel & Kruger, 2007; Arboleda, 2016). Likewise, the interrelationship between phonological and semantic features lacks research (Hinton, Nichols & Ohala, 2003). The participants in this study were 15 native speakers of English living in England and being owners of pets. The instrument used was a questionnaire. The data were statistically analysed by means of SPSS 19.0. Our results revealed that many examples of onomatopoeias, sound symbolism and hypocorisms can be traced among names given to pets. A larger sample of pets is suggested for further research.

Keywords: names, pets, interrelated phonological + semantic features, England.

Resumen
Este artículo presenta un estudio de interrelación de rasgos fonológicos y semánticos en los nombres dados a mascotas en Inglaterra. Los estudios llevados a cabo sobre los nombres en términos generales y, en particular, en los nombres dados a mascotas son limitados (Valentine, Brennen & Brédart, 1996; Abel & Kruger, 2007; Arboleda, 2016). De igual modo, es necesario profundizar en la investigación de la interrelación entre los rasgos fonológicos y semánticos (Hinton, Nichols & Ohala, 2003). Los participantes de este estudio fueron 15 hablantes nativos de inglés que vivían en Inglaterra y eran dueños de mascotas. El instrumento utilizado fue un cuestionario. Los datos fueron analizados por medio de SPSS 19.0. Nuestros resultados revelaron que existen muchos ejemplos de onomatopeyas, simbolismo fonético e hipocorísticos en los nombres dados a mascotas. Se sugiere una muestra más amplia de mascotas para posteriores investigaciones.

Palabras clave: nombres, mascotas, interrelación de rasgos fonológicos + semánticos, Inglaterra
1. INTRODUCTION

According to P.H. Fernández (1972, p. 3), “stylistics can be defined as the science of style” (our own translation). Bally, the founder of modern stylistics, underlines the idea that stylistics explores the expression of emotions by language and the effect that language exerts on emotions (Bally, 1921). The aim of stylistics is to explore the individual in the colloquial, familiar or creative sphere, that is, “to go deeper into the intimate sphere, the affective fact, the aesthetic fact (…)” (Castagnino, 1961, p. 15-16, our own translation). In any case, for stylistics, in correspondence with literary criticism, the aesthetic is not the only value found in a piece of work since the historical, cultural, social, ideological and moral values also have a major importance. As Buffon (1753) put forward, “the style is the man himself” (as cited in Muñoz-Cortés, 1999, our own translation). A person’s speech depends on the situational and socio-cultural context, the tone of the message, time, social class, permanent individual features, internal factors resulting from emotional states, etc. Ullmann (1978) insists on the idea that style can change and can adapt to the circumstances in question. When referring to style, not only must we pay attention to the speaker but also to the listener or reader. As emphasised by Monroy (2001, p. 108), “the stylistic choices are made by the interactants as noticed and interpreted by the listener/reader”. Style is a dynamic process and interpretation can vary depending on the listener or reader’s interest or knowledge. Stylistic significance is acquired “the moment it is actualised by the addressee’s reaction” (Monroy, 2001, p. 93).

Rhethoric began in ancient Greece but in the 18th century it underwent a decline because there was a change of mentality in society which gave rise to Romanticism: the value of “the individual experience versus the established rules (a world of universal and stable values)” (P.H. Fernández, 1972, p. 6, our own translation). Nonetheless, in the 19th century Rhethoric enjoyed a rebirth which marked the beginnings of Stylistics. The wizened side of Rhethoric, which established rules and set artificial labels, disappeared but the essence of Rhethoric, i.e. the need for a rigorous approach to a literary expression, remained. Rhetoric was ornament (Léon, 1993). Bally (1921, 1952) was the first linguist who departed from the concept of stylistics as a literature ornament. His starting point was spoken language.
The very first thing children write is their name and the name of the people they love (Tsirópulos, 1987). Names are necessary to keep things in order (Lyford, 1655). Withycombe (1971) explains that names are a reflection of religious beliefs, memories from the family, fashion, family traditions, etc. As claimed by Morgan, O’Neill and Harré (1979, p. 10), names are not just “a label (...) but rich in content and [have] many kinds of association”. Nonetheless, they have been in need of research for many years (Valentine et al, 1996).

Every speaker has an intuitive notion of what a proper name is and they know there are beings and objects more capable of receiving a proper name (Bajo, 2008). In the distant past when an animal did not have a proper name, it was always known in relation to others, e.g. "el caballo blanco de Santiago" ("Santiago’s white horse"). However, nowadays there are an increasing number of animals which are known by a name (Albaigés, 1996). Slovenko (1983) emphasises the fact that animals are considered to be more than companions: they are family members. When the animal becomes a member of the family it has a recognised personality and it has a name identity (Méchin, 2004). As emphasised by Abel and Kruger (2007, p. 53), “pets are considered as part of the family in many households”. Such a love for animals is not only perceived in choosing names but also in engraving their names on gravestones. In 1898, a law, which seems to have started in France, allowed for names given to pets to appear on gravestones. During the nineteenth century, there is the idea that the dog is a faithful animal which is seen as a guard of the tomb of its master in the afterlife (Gaillemín, 2009). Thus, dog proper names are quite naturally imposed (Albaigés 1996). Actually, France is the country in which a larger amount of research on names given to pets has been conducted. Such an interest or love for pets is not only seen in nematological issues, but also in the power of societies for the adoption of pets such as APDA (Agir pour le droit animal) (R, 2012).

The arbitrary and motivated nature of language and the importance of meaning in language are some of the oldest debates in linguistic theory. Depending on the prevailing theoretical trend of the moment, the idea of language motivation nor non-motivation has predominated over the other, and all the authors who have defended either of them have tried to gather enough evidence so as to overcome the arguments proposed by their opponents. Nonetheless, despite this theoretical and empirical effort, many questions remain unanswered (Hinton et al., 2003). In reference to English, by
means of questionnaires, Arboleda (2016) collects data on aspects related to sound, meaning and their interrelationship in people’s liking and preferences over names. The present study, in which data are also collected by means of questionnaires, deals with the connection between phonological and semantic features in names but with a different approach and focus: names given to pets. There is not much research into names given to pets and it has mainly been limited to dog names (Abel & Kruger, 2007).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: INTERRELATED PHONOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC RATIONALE

As Mompeán-Guillamón (2011) suggests, the discussion on the linguistic sign, and whether it is arbitrary or non-arbitrary, has been a topic of great controversy for many centuries. The concept of relating sound to meaning can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy. Plato, in the dialogue of Cratylus, claims that names are given by nature since they have their own proper and permanent essence. In contrast, Socrate argues that they are conventional. Within modern linguistics Saussure (1949) considers language as a series of conventions which are necessary. Alarcos-Llorach (1966) highlights the arbitrary relationship between the sound of a word and its meaning. This is the traditional view (Christiansen & Kirby, 2003). Most of the present-day linguists also consider that the morpheme, which has a meaning, consists of phonemes lacking a meaning: if sound and meaning were connected, meaning should always be expressed by the same sounds and sounds would always express the same meaning but this is not the case. As exemplified by Ullmann (1962), the fact that the word agua in Spanish or eau in French are employed to refer to the same thing suggests that there is “no intrinsic necessity why this particular substance should be denoted by this particular sequence of sounds” (p. 13). In contrast, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain that in all parts of language there are many cases of non-arbitrary relations between form and meaning. Sound symbolism is a phonetic alternative hypothesis to the traditional view and defends the idea that phonemes convey meaning in certain contexts. As defined by Taylor (1990, p. 210), phonetic symbolism is when a sound “intrinsically suggests or expresses (…) for natural reasons”. Stenzel (1934, as cited in Hörmann, 1967, p. 293, our own translation) claims that “in the sound of the word the meaning already exists”. Actually, von der Gabelentz (1891) writes about the “sound symbolic feeling” and Jespersen (1922) believes that languages in the course of time grow richer and richer in
symbolic words and develop progressively “towards a greater number of easy and adequate expressions — expressions in which sound and sense are united in a marriage-union closer than was ever known to our remote ancestors” (p. 12). Magnus (2001) holds the view that human beings show a tendency (that she calls Semantic Association) to assume that words and morphemes are meaning-bearing and subconsciously this tendency is also affecting the phoneme. There are studies which support the idea that sound symbolism exists.

Within sound symbolism, research has been carried out into different dimensions of meaning such as size, shape or texture. If we focus on size sound symbolism (sound symbolism in relation to size; also known as magnitude sound symbolism), in a landmark study with English speakers, Sapir (1929) asked listeners to associate two different nonsense words mil and mal (either [ɪ] or [a]) with a small and a big object. The result was that most of the subjects identified mal with the large object and mil with the small one. Newman (1933) extended the results of Sapir (1929) to demonstrate that the relationship between sound and size is progressive — the more back a vowel is, the larger the object it denotes is judged to be. For instance, /o/ (/ɒ/ or /ɔː/) is frequently related to large objects because we leave an open space in our mouth to pronounce it (see Table 1). Abelin (2010) also agrees with these results. Likewise, Coulter and Coulter (2010, p. 315) point at the fact that “certain vowel and consonant sounds (or phonemes) can be associated with perceptions of large and small size”. In particular, front vowels and fricative consonants are expected to be associated with perceptions of smallness, whilst back vowels and stop consonants and are expected to be associated with perceptions of largeness. Iseli, Shue and Alwan (2006) conducted an experiment for vowel types, in which they showed that the effect size is greater for females than for males and that vowel dependencies are more protuberant for female talkers, suggesting a greater vocal tract-source interaction.
Table 1: /ɪ/ or /iː/ vs. /ɒ/ or /ɔː/ (Valenzuela, 2012-2013, p. 11)

The association between shape and sound is often referred to as geometric symbolism. Köhler (1947) conducted an experiment in which some German and North American participants had to relate the pseudowords takete and maluma (also known by other names, although similar, by different scholars) to a rounded or a hard-edged drawing. Most participants agreed that the hard-edged drawing was takete and the rounded drawing was Maluma (see Figure 1). Through these results, Köhler (1947) explained the interpersonal agreement as an evidence to demonstrate that speech sounds convey meaning. Davis (1961) extended the results to other languages such as Tanganyka. We naturally feel that a jagged shape is more connected to sharp sounds, /t/ and /k/ plus /a/ and /e/. The roundish shape, however, would be connected to the softer /l/, /m/, /u/ and /oo/. Other examples of geometric symbolism are found in Magnus (1999), who indicates that words beginning in str- normally mean linearity (strip, string, etc.) and those ending in -ap mean flat (cap, map, etc.).

![Maluma and Takete](image_url)

**Figure 1:** Maluma and Takete (Craig-Martin, 2007)
Texture sound symbolism is reflected in Abelin (2010), who claims that words containing the clusters *cr-* and *scr-* are favoured to imply roughness, as can be seen in ruffle, crumple, rumple, rugged, etc. Similarly, there are some words which denote smoothness with the isolated contribution of *l*: plane, level, polish, velvety, glassy, gloss, roll, silk, etc.

As another illustration of the relationship between sound and meaning, onomatopoeia is considered. Onomatopoeia is “roughly, the linguistic mimicking of non-linguistic sounds, such as the barking of a dog bow-wow” (Valenzuela, 2012-2013, p. 11), in other words, it imitates or recreates the sound of the thing or the action named. There is onomatopoeia in all languages -Japanese being very rich in this phenomenon- but generally differ from each other, sometimes radically. An example of onomatopoeia is a very famous word nowadays: “twitter”. In Spain the sound of a bird is read as "peep, peep"; in England it is "tweet, tweet" or "beep, beep" in Italy (see Table 2 for examples of onomatopoeias in English). Nuckolls (2010) discovers that 31 out of 131 birds have names which imitate the sounds they make.

### Table 2: Examples of onomatopoeias in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cat</th>
<th>mew/meow</th>
<th>cow</th>
<th>moo/low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>horse</td>
<td>neigh/whinny</td>
<td>dog</td>
<td>bark/woof/bow-wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig</td>
<td>oink</td>
<td>lion</td>
<td>roar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bird</td>
<td>tweet</td>
<td>hen</td>
<td>cluck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chick</td>
<td>peep</td>
<td>rooster</td>
<td>cock-a-doodle-doo/crow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Humboldt (1836) makes a contrast between the imitation of the sound, that is, the onomatopoeia, and sound symbolism. That is why they are often studied separately in spite of being related phenomena or, to be more precise, in spite of the fact that onomatopoeia has its roots in sound symbolism. Nonetheless, in many cases a more general sound symbolism has been referred to as onomatopoeia by authors such as Grammont (1901). Indeed, in controversial cases, “where onomatopoeia ends and [sound symbolism] starts is hard to define” (Taylor, 1976, p. 329). As stated by Abelin (2010), onomatopoeia is a special case of sound symbolism. However, several fanciful speculations resulting from the study of onomatopoeias led to the dishonour in this field. Thus, although studied since ancient times, the issue of sound symbolism has been seen as irrelevant within linguistic topics. Actually, onomatopoeic and sound symbolic
words “are more often confused for nonsense words than are the arbitrary words” (Abelin, 2010, p. 153). On the other hand, sound symbolism is a controversial and confusing term. A symbol is “a sign without either similarity or contiguity, but with only a conventional link between its signifier and its denotata” (Sebeok, 1994, p. 33). However, for the existence of sound symbolism a non-arbitrary relationship is implied between sound and meaning, so the word “symbol” may seem confusing (Deacon, 1998).

Hypocorisms are certain diminutive forms and deformations of proper or common names for familiarity and affection, e.g. bici from bicicleta or Paco from Francisco. They imply affection, so when trying to treat someone with severity the forename is normally employed (Morera, 1991). There is a very strong pressure in English to form pet versions of names (Cutler, McQueen & Robinson, 1999, p. 478). Baring-Gould (1910, p. 44) explains that “almost all personal names have gone through sad corruption”. Hypocorisms derived from the forename are Maggie from Margaret, May from Mary, Betty or Lizzie from Elizabeth, Kate from Catherine, Bill from William, Hal from Harry, Ned for Edward, Bob from Robert or Dick from Richard. There are occasions on which letters which make the word more complex are omitted, for instance, the omission of <h> in Tom, from Thomas.

Already in the thirteenth century names with –y endings were occasionally found in formal records and they were in colloquial use. It is not known exactly when the –y ending was added to names. Sometimes it is difficult to trace the name to which the hypocorism refers to: Betty could be Elizabeth or Beatrice. Patty is said to be the hypocorism of Martha as it was independent before Patricia became popular (Redmonds, 2004). As explained by the National Archives (2002), in England hypocorisms were allowed as full proper names at the beginning of the 20th century. This was partly owed to the early spread of globalisation by interchanging products with other cultures and advances in transportation. English traditional names have always had pet forms almost having independent status from the beginning, e.g. Marion, Janet, Emmot, etc, already found in the lists of 1538-1700. Nevertheless, in Spain acceptance in certain cases was more difficult. Estévez (2005) refers to the controversy around the acceptance of certain hypocorisms as forenames in the Civil Registry, for example, the Catalan Laia for Eulàlia. An increasing number of people makes applications of this kind. Allowance “depends on the judge” (Estévez, 2005, p. 48). Despite having certain suffixes on many occasions, names are still short in most cases: William-Will-Bill-Billy.
2. Objectives

Our main purpose in this research is to study interrelated phonological and semantic features in names given to pets in England. A complementary or holistic design (a mixed methods research), which implies adopting a research design enriched by including aspects from both the quantitative or neopositivist and the qualitative or interpretative methodological approaches, has been followed in our current research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 15 female and male informants whose ranges of age were between 15 and 50. A requirement for a person to be chosen as an informant was that he/she was a native speaker of English and he/she had a pet. The respondents were residents in the Midlands and North-East areas of England, which ensured homogeneity. They did not have any friendship or acquaintance with the researcher.

3.2 Instruments

The questionnaire, designed by the own researcher, was semi-structured in that it combined closed-ended and open-ended questions. The structure of the questionnaire consisted of 1) a questionnaire introduction, which was aimed to inform about the objectives of the research and the results obtained as well as the authorship. The goal of the introduction was also to motivate the possible informant with an assurance of anonymity and minimum disruption 2) body of socio-demographic questions, and 3) a central body of questions, that is, relevant questions around the research problem (see Appendix 1).

3.3 Procedure

The study was conducted for a period of four months, from February 2013 to June 2013. A non-probability sampling strategy was used. In particular, there was a quota sample, that is, by freely selecting the subjects, the researcher met the quotas she had already prescribed on the basis of relevant parameters (whose distribution was calculated beforehand) from the point of view of the research (Corbetta, 2003; Donyei, 2007). The questionnaire was sent via Facebook and ICQ Chat Rooms. After looking at the data provided by Facebook profiles regarding usual place of residence, we sent fifty private messages in which we asked whether the people in question were native speakers of English and whether they had a/several pet/s or not. Those answering
positively to these questions and willing to participate in the study, in particular, five people, were given a questionnaire to be filled in. Likewise, in ICQ Chat Rooms, after sorting by country, United Kingdom, we sent private messages as well as messages in group conversations (the latter on three occasions) in which we asked whether the people were native speakers of English and whether they had a pet or not. Those answering positively to those questions and willing to participate in the study, in particular, ten people, provided us with their e-mail addresses and they were later sent the questionnaire attached to an e-mail. The time given to send the questionnaires back for both Facebook and ICQ chatroom potential respondents was 2 weeks at the most. After four weeks, 15 people had sent their questionnaires back to us. From those informants, one person acknowledged having 5 pets, 5 people stated they had 2 pets and 11 respondents had 1 pet each.

4. Data Analysis

Once all the information was collected, it was analysed by means of the statistical software 19.0 for Windows (SPSS, Inc., an IBM Company 1989, 2010) (see Appendix 2A for a detailed account of the variables and 2B for a descriptive analysis of the variables). Univariate (percentage/frequency counts in pie charts) and bivariate analysis techniques (contingency tables) were employed. Likewise, association analysis techniques, in particular, Pearson’s chi-square, were used (Ato & López, 1996; Field, 2009). This test determined whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables involved or not. A 95% confidence interval was assumed (α=0.05). If statistically significant associations were found at the alpha level above, symmetric (V of Cramer) and asymmetric or directional (Uncertainty coefficient) measures of association would be calculated. A qualitative analysis of certain data was also performed in order to enrich the results from the quantitative analyses. Graphical representations (conceptual maps, diagrams, networks, etc.), which assembled and organised the information, were carried out in those cases.

5. Results and Discussion

If we firstly pay attention to the ending of names borne by dogs, whether it is a vowel or a consonant, Table 3 reflects that the tendency towards vocalic ending is only somewhat higher (8.3%) for those who are small (see Figure 2 for the list of names
borne by big and small dogs). Pearson’s chi-square test does not point at statistically significant differences at an alpha value of 0.05 (Chi2=0.141; df=1 p=0.707).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the dog big or small?</th>
<th>Final sound in the name</th>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Is the dog big or small?</td>
<td>83,3%</td>
<td>16,7%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Is the dog big or small?</td>
<td>75,0%</td>
<td>25,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Is the dog big or small?</td>
<td>78,6%</td>
<td>21,4%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**: Vowels and consonants as final sounds in names for dogs in terms of size

![Diagram of dog names](image)

**Figure 2**: Names borne by big and small dogs

Although Table 3 revealed there was no significant association between whether the final sound of the name was a consonant or a vowel and the dog size, these vowels...
and consonants, in particular, tongue height and tongue location for vowels and manner as well as place of articulation in the case of consonants must be looked at more deeply.

Figure 2 hints at an agreement between our results and those of Sapir (1929), who supported the existence of magnitude sound symbolism by suggesting that the sounds of certain vowels and consonants can be linked to perceptions of a small or a large size. In particular, he claimed that [a] was linked to large objects and [i] to small ones. Actually, in our study, with a focus on vowels, the name Tom incorporates an open back vowel, /ɒ/, and Buster, for example, comprises an open mid back vowel, /ʌ/, at the beginning and a close-mid central vowel, /ə/, at the end. They are used for big animals and they are pronounced with a big mouth cavity and a depressed tongue. Likewise, it is remarkable to find that all small dogs have names in which the /ɪ/ vowel (with different spellings: <y> and <ie>) is present—the more front a vowel, the smaller the object (Sapir, 1929)—and this vowel is usually in final position. We may infer this may be due to the fact that the last position is the most distinctive one. However, as qualified by Coulter and Coulter (2010), not only are vowels involved in perceptions of size and sound associations but also consonants. The voiced bilabial, alveolar and velar plosives: /b/, /d/ and /g/, respectively, appear in dogs of a big size, e.g. Sheeba, Buster, Angel and Lady. However, as can be seen, in other cases of big dogs fricatives, which Couter and Coulter (2010) associate to smallness, are involved (e.g. the initial /ʃ/ in Sheeba or mid /s/ in Lassie). This makes us suggest that consonants do not play such a significant role as vowels and they are more varied both for big and small animals. In any case, maybe it is more certain to say that, despite usual regularities such as those related to vowels, it is the sound of the name as a whole, either “sounding big” or “sounding small”, which is more prompt to be given to big or small animals, respectively. Some exceptions are found, of course, because Lassie may sound small to us but people usually associate it to a big dog such as the one in the film and the power exerted by this association to the film may be stronger than the sound in this particular example, or Snowy may sound rather small but the white colour of the animal—it physical appearance—may be stronger an influence, no matter its size.

Regarding texture sound symbolism, Crush, one of the animals in our research (see Appendix 2b), is a snake and, as most snakes, its skin is rough and is covered in scales which are granular to better move on the ground and trees. This is in concordance with Abelin (2010), who studies words containing the clusters cr- and scr- and the r-
consonant and they usually imply roughness, as can be seen in examples such as ruffle, crumple, rumple, rugged, scraggly, scraggy, craggy or cragged. Similarly, Goldy, an aquarium fish in our study, may suggest smoothness given that the skin of goldfishes is usually soft and smooth. This is also in agreement with Abelin (2010), who claims smoothness can be attached to –l, e.g. plane, level, polish, velvety, glassy, gloss, roller, roll, oily, silken or silky.

What we may know as appearance sound symbolism can be found as well in this study. As shown in Figure 3, one of the few names containing more than two syllables is the name of a tarantula, Boudicea. This name, in its Roman version, is the longest name in terms of spelling and also pronunciation because it has 4 syllables (Boudicca, the Celtic version, is a bit shorter but also long). The length and complexity in terms of sounds of names given to tarantulas may be linked to their exotic and enigmatic image: they have large as well as hairy bodies and legs and they are not usual pets.

**Figure 3:** Names containing more than two syllables

We can also point at onomatopoeias among the pets in our study. Animals may be named after the sound or movement they make (Berlin, 2006). One of the two onomatopoeias found represent the sound a bird or, in this case, a parrot, can produce: Buzz. It must be taken into account that, according to Nuckolls (2010), there is a special relationship between birds and human beings. Another onomatopoeia can be traced in a
snake being named Crush. The act of crushing implies that an existential matter creases or squeezes as a snake would do with its locomotion to move on slippery environments. Similarly, fricative sounds are more often given to certain pets. The name Ruffles, borne by the guinea pig, also hides an onomatopoeia. It must be considered that this animal is a rodent and the verb to ruffle implies the noisy movement of twitching or fluttering. Figures 5 and 6 exhibit that names for cats contain more fricatives if compared to names for dogs. Actually, the ratio of dog names containing fricatives is almost 36% whereas the percentage of cat names with fricatives is significantly higher, in particular, 60% (see Figure 4). The most common place of articulation for fricatives included in both a dog and a cat name is alveolar (Spice and Sampson in cats; Buster, Lassie, Louis and Snowy for dogs), followed by post-alveolar (Shadow in cats; Sheeba in dogs). In fact, the voiceless alveolar sibilant /s/ stands out amongst the most widely recognised sounds cross-phonetically. If a language has fricatives, fricatives will most likely be /s/ (Berlin, 2006). Maybe the high percentage of fricatives among cat names is due to this animal’s discreet and stealth movement. Not only is /s/ or /ʃ/ frequently used for cat names but it is also used to try to draw these animals’ attention. For instance, Spanish speakers call their cats by using an interjection, "biss, biss" or "miss, miss". English people use “puss, puss”. Interestingly, so as to draw a cat’s attention, most languages make use of an interjection which comprises an alveolar or post-alveolar fricative or any other close sound (see Table 4).

Figure 4: Inclusion of fricatives among dogs and cats (percentages)
Also remarkable is the fact that many derivations can be traced among the names examined, a very typical phenomenon in English names according to Cutler et al. (1999). In this study these derivations seem to have the function of hypocorisms, for instance, in names which can also be employed for human beings, for example, Charlie (from Charles), Buzz (from Busby) and Rocky (from Rocco). In some way people who give names to their pets do it for colloquial reasons and to establish a closer link with
the pet, so the use of derivations is not only for grammar purposes, e.g. using the adjective snowy as a name in order to describe the animal in question. The name Snowy could be interpreted as the word snow, which indicates the white colour, followed by the -y suffix, also with the sense of hypocorism. It is curious to find that hypocorisms are also known as pet forms or pet names, which implies the use of the word “pet”, the beings studied in this paper. Possibly this is due to the affection and close link involved in the use of hypocorisms and having a pet. That is the reason why it makes sense that a pet is given a hypocorism as a name. On the basis of Arboleda’s classification (2016) for people’s names, three types of hypocorisms are found here: shortenings (e.g. Tom), lengthenings (Snowy, with the addition of the –y suffix, thus forming an adjective from a noun, or Ruffles, with the addition of the -s suffix, as happens in Wills, from the person's name William, for instance) and shortenings + lengthenings (Charlie, which may come from Charles, so Charl- shortening + ie suffix). There are occasions on which letters making the word more complex are omitted, for example, the omission of <h> in Tom, from Thomas (Redmonds, 2004). Despite having suffixes in certain cases, names are still short or they even become shorter by means of shortenings. Therefore, Albaigés' claim (1996) for short names for pets is still kept even by adding suffixes. It must be borne in mind that names such as Charlie, Buzz or Rocky may be considered as names in their own right, as explained by Baring-Gould (1910), and not hypocorisms. Actually, as explained by the National Archives (2002), hypocoris were allowed as full proper names at the beginning of the 20th century. This was partly due to the early spread of globalisation by interchanging products with other cultures and advances in transportation. Even in the lists of 1538-1700 English traditional names already had pet forms having independent status, e.g. Marion, Janet, Emmot, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

As suggested from the results in this study, there are many phonological + semantic features to highlight among names given to pets. There are cases of magnitude sound symbolism, thus supporting Sapir (1929), especially in terms of vowels, e.g. Crush or Buster, which comprise an open-mid back vowel /ʌ/, or the fact that the /ɪ/ vowel is present in all small dogs. Examples of texture sound symbolism can also be found, e.g. the snake Crush, in concordance with Abelin's claim (2010) for roughness in words containing -cr, -scr and –r (e.g. rugged) or in the name of the goldfish, Goldy, for smoothness in words containing –l (e.g. velvety). Similarly, there are several cases of
onomatopoeias, e.g. the imitation of the sound of a bird (Buzz, a parrot) or the discreet and stealth personality of cats suggested by a name including the fricative /s/ or /ʃ/, e.g. Shadow or Sampson (Berlin, 2006). Finally, there is also a high presence of hypocorisms, which hints at affection and a close relationship, for example, Charlie (with the -ie suffix) or Ruffles (with the -s suffix) (Arboleda, 2016).

5. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the fact that the results obtained in this paper have provided us with solid findings, our study has several limitations, especially the number of pets. Although the group of participants was rather homogeneous which, to a certain extent, contributed in terms of validity, the number of pets was limited. This was mainly due to the unwillingness of people to participate via computer. Perhaps it would be a good idea to travel to England, in this case, and try to interview people in public places. It would also be suggested that spontaneous comments provided by the participants are paid attention to so as to enrich results.
References


Bally, Ch. (1921 [1909]). *Traité de stylistique française* (Vol. 1). Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung.


APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a questionnaire for a research project on English names given to pets conducted at the University of Murcia, Spain.

Age (write): _______ years old

OR (select)

☐ between 10 and 20
☐ between 20 and 30
☐ between 30 and 40
☐ between 40 and 50
☐ between 50 and 60
☐ between 60 and 70
☐ more than 70

Usual place of residence (write): Region: ______________ Country: ______________

1) Which pet do you have? (write)________________

2) What is its name? (write)_______________

3) If it is a dog, is it small? YES / NO (choose)
### APPENDIX 2A: DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>TYPE OF VARIABLE</th>
<th>MEASURE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF QUESTION (QUESTIONNAIRE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Which pet do you have?</td>
<td>1=Dog 2=Cat 3=Fish 4=Tarantula 5=Snake 6=Parrot 7=Guinea pig</td>
<td>Predictor, grouping or independent variable</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>What is its name?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Criterion or dependent variable</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>If it is a dog, is it small?</td>
<td>1=Small 2=Big</td>
<td>Predictor, grouping or independent variable</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final_sound</td>
<td>Final sound in the name</td>
<td>1=Vowel 2=Consonant</td>
<td>Criterion or dependent variable</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>- (it is gathered from 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2B: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VARIABLES

What is its name?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>ABNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANGEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BOUDICEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BUSTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BUZZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COCOA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRUSH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHARLIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FLORENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAYLEY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIRA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LADY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASSIE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LILY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOUIS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONKEY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLIVER</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUFFLES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMPSON</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHADOW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEEBA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNOWY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPICE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is it big or small?

- Small: 42.85%
- Big: 57.14%

Final sound in the name

- Vowel: 65.38%
- Consonant: 34.62%