

Introduction of the English term “Maskne” in the Spanish language

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Editorial

After a hard work of linguistic research, analysis of the meaning of terms and approval of new words, the Royal Spanish Academy is adding lexical novelties to its Dictionary of the Spanish language; however, these are not always clear, generally used, or completely accepted by people, social groups, commentators and critics of the Spanish language. Even, sometimes, the Academy has been the object of criticism for incorporating words into the Dictionary that are not normally used or that are unknown to the majority, leaving behind others that do deserve notoriety. Hence, there are groups that expect certain words to disappear from the Dictionary; to make room for others.¹

The arrival of the coronavirus since 2020 has affected many aspects of human life, including linguistics. Update 23.5 of the Spanish Language Dictionary incorporated words that are now part of common conversations between people and social groups, such as the term COVID. Additionally, in more recent updates such as the one of the year 2021, modifications related to the health situation due to the pandemic have been added, such as, mask covers, swabbing, nasobucco, screening, social bubble, new normal, triage, vaccinology, among others.^{2,3}

In this same vein, Muñoz¹ explains that of the new words that have been considered for the Dictionary of the Spanish Language, the ones that have attracted the most attention are those associated with the pandemic; such as, for example, barbijo, face masks, beard, muzzle, among others, which have surprised because they are unknown in Spain, but used in some other countries. It should be noted that, among the words that have emerged during the pandemic is: Maskné, a term that the Historical Dictionary of the Spanish language refers to in the year 2020, to refer to acne caused by the use of masks.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority of people around the world began to wear masks every day to prevent the contagion and spread of the virus. However, its prolonged use over time and for many hours during the day has brought negative consequences to human skin; such as irritations, infections, spots and imperfections on the face. Due to this, dermatological health professionals have begun to show concern to treat this pathology, to which they have assigned the diagnosis of Maskné, that is, acne resulting from the use of the mask.

According to the Historical Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy,⁴ Maskné is an English term composed of two words mask and acne that in the Spanish language means mask and acne. When the two terms are joined, the resulting meaning is mask acne; that is, an acne that begins or intensifies by prolonged use of a mask or mouth covering. According to the aforementioned Dictionary, it is a noun word of masculine gender, whose synonym in the Spanish language is mascacné, that is, the union of mask plus acne.

In addition to the above, the term Maskné fits perfectly into modern linguistics as an acronym, that is, as an acronym that is pronounced

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as a word, and that ends up being incorporated into the usual lexicon of a society Modern. It is also considered as a word that is formed by joining part of two or more words. In the specific case of the term maskné, two English words mask, which in Spanish means mask, and acne, which in Spanish is translated acne, are joined. This English expression mask acne means mask acne, and it is adapting to Spanish as maskacné and mascacné.

In this same vein, it should be mentioned that the maskné script in the English language is correct without the graphic accent, however, in the case of the Spanish language, it can be used to adapt the word to the Spanish lexicon. Now, the most appropriate thing in the Spanish language is that both words are translated into that language, that is, instead of being called maskné, it is called maskné or “mascacné”; referring to the mask as an object of personal use and to acne as a dermatological pathology.

Already by this date there are many mentions of the term Maskné that are duly documented in news, informative articles and scientific research articles, among others. Despite this, the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language still does not fully recognize the term to give it legal entry to the Dictionary of the Spanish Language; a reference and consultation dictionary of the Castilian language widely used worldwide, which collects the lexicon used in Ibero-American countries.

However, the word itself is found in the Historical Dictionary of the Spanish language, a digital dictionary that seeks to describe the history of the lexicon of the Castilian language. Its main characteristic is its willingness to analyze the history of the aforementioned lexicon from a relational perspective, taking into account the etymological,

morphological and semantic links that are established between terms. This Dictionary was recognized and approved in 2019 as a pan-Hispanic academic project; and, later, in April 2021, the Pan-Hispanic Network of Academies, Universities and Research Centers was created for the Elaboration of the historical Dictionary of the Spanish language, with the purpose of documenting all those researches carried out on the history of the lexicon of the Castilian language.⁵

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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