

About afternoon snacks and editors

De meriendas y editores

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Dr. Escamilla Ortiz¹ writes an editorial note on the difficulty for editors to manage a scientific journal, a topic that has been addressed in other papers.²⁻⁴ I quote the *Dictionary of the Spanish Language*, which describes such bedlam in Spanish as a *merienda de negros*.

It is worth noting that an academic and scientific journal with Latin American outreach, and virtually present worldwide through the Internet, should be careful with titles in order to avoid hurting anyone's susceptibilities.

It is fit to read what a website called *Hispanoteca* points out:⁵

"Esto es una merienda de negros is one of that kind of phrases that, according to style manuals, should not be used because they are offensive to a specific group of people, such as Jewish bail, Chinese deal, Gypsy's leave and others."*

The Spanish dictionary *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (22nd. ed., 2001) includes both colloquial expressions *merienda de negros*: "Confusion and disorder where no one can understand each other", and *boda de negros* (literally, Negro wedding): "An event where there is much noise, confusion, hubbub, and clamor". The first dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (1780) includes *hacer merienda de negros*: "To mix up and entangle some business or affair in order to make off with the profits, damaging those entitled to it".

The 1837 edition keeps such definition, and even widens the derogatory sense: "To muddle something, in order for those handling it to keep it for themselves". The 1899 edition of the dictionary contains a less negative definition, and eliminates all connotations: "To mix up in order to profit from something". It offers a definition that will last until 1984: "*merienda de negros*: Confusion and disorder where no one understands each other. Whimsical or neglectful distribution". As of 1989, all the editions of the Academy's dictionary repeat the abridged definition: "Confusion and disorder where no one understands each other", and eliminate "Whimsical or neglectful distribution".

I wish doctor Escamilla all kinds of success in this new academic adventure.

REFERENCES

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