



## Intercambios

Volume 17, Issue 4, Winter 2013

ISSN 1550-2945

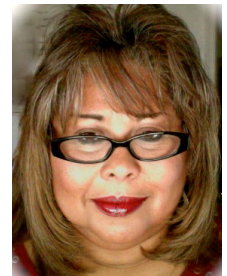
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## From my Desk

The conference was spectacular! I arrived on Tuesday night and from the moment I stepped into the lobby of the hotel I could feel the electricity in the environment. From the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening until the traditional closing dance, it was an extraordinary and amazing experience full of professional development events for translators and interpreters.



On Wednesday morning, I participated in one of the Leadership Training panels. There were several round tables where different topics were discussed among both experienced and new leaders. That afternoon, I had the pleasure of taking the San Antonio Missions Tour organized by Odile Legeay. We visited several of these impressive structures still standing, such as Concepción, San José (the most beautiful of all) and San Juan. We also stopped by one of San Antonio's seven *acequias*. The word *acequia* is an old Arabic word adopted by the Spanish. These *acequias* are gravity-flow irrigation ditches which provided water to the entire area. Thanks so much, Odile, for having organized such a wonderful tour!

On Thursday, as is customary, the Opening Session took place. I am thrilled to report that Rudy Heller was elected to the Board of the ATA. Rudy was Spanish Language Division (SPD) administrator from 2000 to 2004, and has continued to serve this organization and the SPD throughout the years in various roles. Congratulations, Rudy, on this mammoth achievement! Along with Rudy, two more members of the SPD were also elected to the Board: Evelyn Yang Garland and Jane Maier. It is a great triumph that three members of the SPD have been able to reach a position of such influence and prestige.



On Thursday afternoon, during the SPD annual meeting, we covered several topics. Helen Eby and I welcomed all attendees, specially recognizing members of the SPD leadership council who were present, SPD members attending an ATA Annual Conference for the very first time or "newbies," and students attending the meeting. We issued a call to volunteers to those members interested in participating on

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*Intercambios* is a publication of the Spanish Language Division of the American Translators Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the recognition of translating and interpreting as professions.

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#### Submissions

Readers' submissions are encouraged.  
Suggested maximum lengths:

Articles: 800 to 1,500 words  
Reviews: 600 words  
Letters: 300 words

Submissions become the property of *Intercambios* and are subject to editing. Opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors.

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#### Distribution

*Intercambios* is published on the SPD web page  
<http://ataspd.org>

When new issues are released, SPD members are notified via e-mail by ATA Headquarters.

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the SPD nominating committee as well as any other SPD committee. As you know, this coming year will be an election year for the SPD. We also issued a call for those members interested in writing articles for the SPD newsletter.

I must mention that on Wednesday night, the Newbies and Buddies Introduction was a complete success, with 167 ATA members in attendance. Helen Eby and Jamie Hartz, SPD Student Involvement Committee Chair, were co-organizers of this event. **Please check The Savvy Newcomer to see their report!**

On Friday, I attended one of the SPD distinguished speaker sessions, "Quotation Marks" presented by Jorge de Buen, which I found to be quite fascinating. Jorge has the ability to incorporate history, knowledge and humor into his presentations in order to provide a fun environment for professional development. On Friday night, we enjoyed a succulent Mexican dinner at Casa Río, a restaurant located along the famous Riverwalk. The food was exquisite and the interaction amongst peers was superb.

"The conference...was an extraordinary and amazing experience."

This year, we had one of the largest raffles ever in SPD history beginning with Trados and Wordfast license certificates, InTrans Books gift certificates, copies of *The Entrepreneurial Linguist*, courtesy of Judy and Dagmar Jenner, the entire collection of lexicon and dialectology glossaries donated by Andre Moskowitz, Lisa Carter's translation of *The House of Impossible Loves*, rums from Puerto Rico, pisco from Peru, mole from Mexico, *alfajores* from Argentina, and candies from all parts of Latin America, and the most anticipated of items, a one year subscription to Dr. Fernando Navarro's now famous *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de traducción del inglés médico o Libro rojo*.

As if this weren't enough, we had the pleasure of being serenaded by a local Mariachi group. Our guests of honor were Jorge de Buen, the SPD distinguished speaker, and Freck Lankhof of InTrans Books, who has been exhibiting at ATA conferences for the past 25 years (it is really 26 years, but who's counting). The atmosphere was one of celebration and camaraderie, where we sang, laughed, cried and danced. Thanks to all of you for having spent time with us during such a special evening. I would like to thank the following members for their assistance in the planning of this event, their continued support and commitment to making this year's dinner a tremendous success: Milly Suazo, Rosalie Wells, Mónica de León, Margarita Tobar and Olga Lucía Mutis. I also want to thank the members of the SPD leadership council present during the conference: Helen Eby, Milly Suazo, Charo Welle, Julia Andreotti, Virginia Pérez-Santalla, Rudy Heller, Becky Katz, Lisa Carter and Jamie Lorah. Thank you for your ongoing support.

The dance on Saturday was fantabulous! I danced the night away while enjoying the company of so many of our friends and colleagues. Additionally, it was so good to see ATA headquarters personnel in a more relaxed and social environment after the conference. A big thank you to Walter Bacak, Jr., Jamie Padula, Roshan Pokharel, Teresa Kelly and Mary David for your continued support of the Spanish Language Division, and congratulations to our new president, Caitilin Walsh.

I encourage each and every one of you to begin planning to attend the next conference in Chicago. I wish you a wonderful and safe holiday season and a very prosperous and happy New Year. The SPD is at your service and I look forward to seeing you again soon.

I leave you with the SPD mission statement:

*The mission of the Spanish Language Division (SPD) is to serve as a means of communication among its members, to provide those members with information, professional development opportunities and services related to the field of Spanish translation and interpreting, and to promote the policies and objectives of the American Translators Association.* ♦

*Francesca (Fran) Samuel*

SPD Administrator

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# Editorial

Welcome to the new look of *Intercambios*! The team behind the Spanish Language Division (SPD) newsletter hopes you like it! I personally think it was time to redesign it and provide a better reading experience, with more white space to improve readability, a cleaner and more professional look. The thoughtful and creative mastermind behind the attractive new layout of the newsletter is the new designer of *Intercambios*: Cynthia Gresham. Thanks are due, here, too, to Mónica de León, who volunteered to design the two most recent issues of *Intercambios*. Thank you!



Please let us know what you think. Even if the new design is rolling out today, we want to hear what you think about it. There is always room for improvement and we value the feedback you can give us. Send your comments to [intercambios.ata@gmail.com](mailto:intercambios.ata@gmail.com). We hope you enjoy the new *Intercambios*!

This issue contains several articles that explore the English and Spanish languages through different aspects. Ricardo Chiesa examines some of the many possible translations into English of the adjective *propio* in a legal context. Graciela del Pilar Isaía y Ruiz, previous editor of *Intercambios*, offers a practical approach to treat Latinisms in legal translation. Eva De Vallescar's exclusive interview of Laura Godfrey and Leticia Molinero gives us a glimpse of all the effort behind the project of updating the Spanish translation of many names of agencies and departments of the government of the United States. Emilio Bernal Labrada offers a solution to avoid the excess of redundant Anglicisms in the Spanish language, this time in reference to the word *smartphone*. Translators, as cultural mediators, should be aware of the role language has in building (or destroying) social relationships in a community, which Gabriela Llull manages to show in her study of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Are you one of the fortunate 1,413 who attended the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, this past November? If so, then a great big thank you for making this conference one of the best ever! With 175 educational sessions in total, and a dozen Spanish sessions, it must have been very difficult to choose which ones to attend. With all the social events, networking sessions, meetings, receptions, and lunch, coffee and dinner opportunities with colleagues, I'm sure you were very busy those days! I hope you enjoyed it and that you are already making plans for Chicago. If you were not able to attend San Antonio this year, then please check the [impressive bios](#) of the speakers who wanted their colleagues to grow professionally in this increasingly competitive translation and interpreting industry. A big thank you also to all these language professionals who shared their expertise with colleagues in San Antonio! If this is not enough to convince you to start making plans for the next annual conference, here's the [promo video](#)!

This being the last issue of the year, I want to express my gratitude to the volunteers who, behind the scenes, make it possible to bring you this newsletter. And to the authors, whose contributions are essential to the success of this publication, my deepest gratitude.

Happy New Year to all! ♦

*Paula Irisity*

Editor

# Communicational Approach in Legal Translation: The Case for Latinisms

Graciela del Pilar Isaía y Ruiz, PhD

“The translator’s main task (in translating legal documents) is to translate a text as precisely as possible. S/he has to find linguistic equivalents which in their legal relevance correspond to both the original text of the source language and the translated text of the target language.”

Schwarz, H. (1997) *Legal Administrative Language*. Babel 23.1, p. 19

Mastering the target culture as deeply as the source one is a must to achieve excellence in translation. Since the translation of legal texts is not simply a matter of linguistic transference alone but an attempt to communicate a message through another language, the translator will have to master both language systems, understand the culture underlying them and maximize the idea conveyed as far as possible without invading the rules of the target language and the peculiarities of its culture. Translation difficulties arise when two legal cultures clash during translation. There are sometimes certain conceptual differences between the two languages in contact which cannot easily be translated by an exact equivalent, since there is none. Lack of equivalence, then, leaves the translator with the difficult task of deciding what to do to minimize dissimilarities. In order to cover these gaps, traditional tools (dictionaries, glossaries, the Internet, etc.) will not suffice. Here, only specific knowledge of the two legal traditions in contact, as well as of specific technical language usage, will secure a sound translation.

Translation theory offers a path to sometimes unexplored avenues for a translator.

According to Cook<sup>1</sup>, a sentence has a ‘time-free’ and ‘place-free’ meaning if taken out of context. These two kinds of meaning are differentiated as *semantic* meaning (the fixed context-free meaning) and *pragmatic* meaning (the meaning which the words take on in a particular context, between particular people). Translation, then, would only be accurate if the utterance is considered from the pragmatic standpoint.

According to Baker<sup>2</sup> the choice of a suitable equivalent in a given context depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of them are merely *linguistic* and others *extra-linguistic*. Understanding the difference in the structure of *semantic* fields in the source and target languages allows a translator to assess the value of a given item in a lexical set.

When the non-equivalence at word level is due to the existence of borrowed words in a language which do not have an equivalent in another, the translator may: a) translate by a more general word (superordinate); b) translate by a more neutral word; c) translate by a cultural substitution with the same impact on the target reader; d) translate by using a loan word or a loan word and an explanation; e) translate by paraphrasing (when the frequency in use of a word in a source text is significantly higher than would be natural in the target language); or f) translate by omission.

Nida<sup>3</sup> argues that there are two different types of equivalence, namely *formal correspondence* (message: a target language item which represents the closest equivalent of a source text word or expression) and *dynamic equivalence* (equivalent effect). There are not always formal equivalents between language pairs. Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation principle according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the target language achieves the same impact on the target culture audience as the original wording did upon the source text audience.

Hervey, Higgins and Haywood<sup>4</sup> argue that the transfer of meaning from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT) is necessarily subject to a certain degree of translation loss; that is, a target text will always lack certain culturally relevant features that are present in the source text. Translation loss is not a loss of translation, but of exact ST-TT correspondence in the process of translation. Once the translator accepts the concept of inevitable translation loss, he can concentrate on the realistic aim of reducing it. The challenge to the translator is, therefore, to reduce said loss by deciding which of the relevant features in the ST it is more important to respect, and which can most legitimately be sacrificed in doing so.

According to Robinson<sup>5</sup>, terminology studies as they are traditionally conceived are typically grounded methodologically in the neglect of one essential point: that terminology is most easily learned in context –in actual use situations. He argues that languages seem to have more or less permanent patterns, regularities, which do change

<sup>1</sup> Cook, Guy (1989) *Discourse*. New York, Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Baker, Mona (1997) *In Other Words*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>3</sup> Taber, Ch. R. and Nida, Eugene (1971) *La traducción: théorie et méthode*, Londres.

<sup>4</sup> Hervey, Sándor, Higgins, Ian and Haywood, Louise M. (1998) *Thinking Spanish Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>5</sup> Robinson, Douglas (1998) *Becoming a Translator*. London and New York: Routledge.

with time and place, but so slowly and incrementally that at any given moment they seem somehow built in, intrinsic.

Excellent examples are Latin words and expressions. Legal language has some hallmarks that are of its essence and become intrinsic to it. For translators of legal texts to handle Latin expressions, they should be aware of the cases in which these expressions are used and how the idea may be conveyed in the other culture without sounding unnatural and trying to cause the same impact on the target audience as they had in the source text. Not in all cases will it be correct to leave them in Latin, since unlike what many translators think, Latinisms are not necessarily universally understood.

According to Yebra<sup>6</sup>, there are cases where no autochthonous word can provide an exact equivalent. In such cases, they are left in the source language and sometimes adapted to it at the morphological and phonetic levels. In this way, 'foreign words' are incorporated into the language to an extent that they feel natural to natives. This process is known as 'naturalization'. Those words become loaned words which will, thus, be used naturally in a certain language.

The DRAE (*Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*) has included many Latin words and expressions. There are also many others that are accepted by the RAE and which are not included specifically in its Dictionary, but in some others, which are considered supplemental (such as legal dictionaries).

The *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* stresses that Latinisms are progressively adapting to Spanish. In the field of Law, for instance, some expressions are used as nouns irrespective of their original Latin case. Sometimes, however, lack of knowledge of the rules of Latin leads to confusion in the use of Latin words and expressions. This is the case with *status quo* (in the state with which/by which), *in statu quo* (in the state in which) and *statu quo* (by which state). The case denoted by the pure Latin expression changes its meaning. It is said, however, that out of context, these expressions have been crystallized, thus losing their literal sense and, therefore, they are used with only one spelling to mean only one thing.

In this sense, the *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* considers that the expression *status quo* is incorrect since although it exists in Latin, it does not match the idea of the text from which the expression was crystallized. The same applies to the expression: *in statu quo*: it is possible in Latin, but it is not the crystallized expression<sup>8</sup>.

"*statu quo*. Latin expression (pron. [estátu-kuó], no [estátu-kúo]) that means 'in the state in which'. It is used as a nominal masculine expression with the meaning 'state of an issue at a certain time' (...). It is invariable to form the plural: *los statu quo*. 'status quo' is incorrect."<sup>9</sup>

English significantly tends to prefer the nominative to the ablative construction. *Status quo* is perfectly good Latin when one is using the term as a nominative. The word *status* only adopts the form *statu* when it is being used in the ablative (as it would be when following the preposition *in*.) One may correctly speak of "*statu quo*" only when the preposition is included: *In statu quo* (preferred at the international level).

Latinisms convey a specific and succinct idea that cannot be expressed with the same emphasis and language economy as with said Latin

words and expressions, but usage varies from country to country. Taking the examples of Argentina and the United States, there is a common core of legal Latin where translation will not pose a threat, but there are still some others for which there is an asymmetry. Some expressions, actually, are not even known in the other country. Leaving them in Latin, consequently, will render the translation awkward.

Translators will then have to transcend the semantic, linguistic aspect or formal correspondence of the words and achieve a pragmatic, extra-linguistic or dynamic equivalence of the idea, thus taking a communicational approach. The translator will have to do as much research as possible to handle said differences, so as to minimize translation loss and find the most suitable and proximate equivalent to bridge the gap between cultures. ♦

<sup>6</sup> García Yebra, Valentín (1989) *Teoría y práctica de la traducción*. Vol. 1, Madrid

<sup>7</sup> Consultation to the Real Academia Española, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Consultation with Prof. Pablo A. Cavallero, July 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Translated from: Real Academia Española (2009) *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*. Madrid.

**Graciela del Pilar Isaía y Ruiz** holds a PhD in Modern Languages, is an English<>Spanish sworn translator and professor in Legal Translation and Anglo-American Law at Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina. She is an ATA-certified (English>Spanish) translator and has been working independently since 1993.



*The SPD recognizes this year's  
SPD Annual Dinner raffle sponsors  
and contributors, with special thanks to:*

**Andre Moskowitz**

**Dr. Fernando Navarro**

**InTrans Books**

**Judy & Dagmar Jenner**

**Lisa Carter**

**Trados/SDLX**

**Wordfast**

*Thanks to all the members that  
contributed to this year's event.*

*See you next year!*

# Nuevo directorio en español de agencias del gobierno de EE. UU.

Eva De Vallescar

**G**obiernoUSA.gov, el portal oficial del gobierno estadounidense en Internet, publicó recientemente una revisión de su directorio de agencias y departamentos. Constituye el resultado de una iniciativa para estandarizar los nombres en español de las entidades del gobierno encabezada por la argentina Laura Godfrey, gerente de GobiernoUSA.gov y miembro correspondiente de la Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española (ANLE), y su compatriota Leticia Molinero, miembro numerario de la ANLE y Presidenta de la Comisión para el estudio de la norma lingüística del español de los Estados Unidos.

Eva De Vallescar, nuestra colega y especialista en Comunicación, tuvo la gentileza de entrevistarlas para que describieran el proyecto, sus retos y resultados, y hoy nos hace llegar el fruto de esa entrevista. *Intercambios* agradece a Laura Godfrey y a Leticia Molinero su disposición para permitirnos conocer mejor el esfuerzo que implica semejante proyecto.



Laura Godfrey

## ¿Cómo nació el proyecto?

**Godfrey:** El proyecto surgió de la iniciativa de hacer un acuerdo entre el gobierno y la ANLE para mejorar y estandarizar el uso del español en las comunicaciones del gobierno de Estados Unidos. En 2009, firmamos el primer convenio de trabajo, que renovamos en 2012.

**Molinero:** En función del convenio de colaboración, realizamos una tarea específica: se llevan a cabo las verificaciones y recomendaciones para los nombres de las agencias federales. Al mismo tiempo investigamos y respondemos consultas que nos llegan de distintas entidades del gobierno federal.

## ¿Cuál fue el objetivo principal?

**Godfrey:** Aunque siempre buscamos la corrección de la terminología, el objetivo principal de este proyecto fue la uniformidad de nombres, ya que en muchas ocasiones las agencias les dan documentos a distintos traductores y cada uno devuelve el nombre de la agencia traducido de una manera distinta, lo que confunde al público.

**Molinero:** La traducción no tiene que ser siempre literal. En algunos casos nos hemos alejado de las palabras inglesas para expresar más fielmente el significado, como en el caso de *Bureau of Reclamation* que tradujimos como «Oficina de Recuperación». Así es como la

ANLE recomienda que se traduzca puesto que «Recuperación is a Civil Engineering term that comes closer than 'rehabilitación' or 'reclamación' to the meaning of 'reclamation' in the sense of building dams and other such civil works».

## ¿Cómo fue el proceso?

**Godfrey:** Fue un proceso largo que requirió de negociaciones con la ANLE para limitar los términos que serían objeto de traducción. Se decidió que solo se vería afectada la terminología práctica y que se respetarían los nombres que habían sido ya instituidos y gozaban de un reconocimiento de marca (como el programa *Energy Star*). Pero se revisarían aquellos que definitivamente necesitaban un cambio porque estaban mal traducidos, porque existían múltiples nombres para una misma agencia, o porque sus nombres no correspondían a su misión en inglés.



Leticia Molinero

Formamos una comisión Gobierno/ANLE donde participan otros traductores. Esto ha sido muy importante para encontrar consenso

y también porque ante la presencia de disenso, nos obligó a tener discusiones profundas sobre el español de Estados Unidos, sobre lo que se acepta en este país y, a partir de ahí, poder definir más concisamente el alcance de este proyecto.

## ¿Cuáles fueron los retos principales que encontraron?

**Godfrey:** Los retos han sido varios. Primero, la definición del alcance del proyecto, la pugna por la corrección académica y la practicidad de nombres que ya estaban muy establecidos y asociados con una agencia. Ese es el caso del «Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos», por ejemplo. Quedó tal como se traduce del inglés aunque hubo bastante discusión sobre si eran «servicios humanos» o «servicios sociales».

Segundo, la duración del proyecto. Como fue el primer proyecto que se realizó en conjunto, fue largo y tedioso. Tuvimos varias reuniones para definir el proyecto y en qué nos íbamos a apoyar para hacer recomendaciones. Luego tuvimos discusiones y reuniones virtuales para discutir terminología y documentar cada cambio.

Tercero, este proyecto se hizo *ad honorem*, por lo que no podíamos exigir a los participantes una fecha de entrega.

## ¿Ha habido cambios drásticos en las denominaciones de algunas entidades?

**Godfrey:** No diría drásticos, pero sí de fondo. Por ejemplo: *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement* (ICE) estaba traducido como «Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas», cuando en realidad debe ser «Servicio de Control de Inmigración y Aduanas». Hace años que se separaron los servicios de inmigración, ahora bajo la órbita del USCIS [*U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*], de los servicios de control de las leyes de inmigración, a cargo de ICE, y este cambio ahora refleja la misión de la agencia.

## «Tratamos de validar los términos en función de las comunicaciones dirigidas a un público variadamente bilingüe y de diversas procedencias»

### En su investigación, ¿recurrieron a ejemplos de organismos públicos de otros países de habla hispana?

**Molinero:** No necesariamente. Tratamos de validar los términos en función de las comunicaciones dirigidas a un público variadamente bilingüe y de diversas procedencias. Además, siempre tenemos presente la tradición escrita hispanounidense, por ejemplo los términos que se usan desde hace mucho tiempo en las comunicaciones, como «agencia» en vez de «dependencia» o algún otro equivalente de cualquier otro país. Tampoco queremos imponer palabras nuevas sino más bien establecer preferencias entre las opciones existentes.

### ¿La ANLE consultó con otras academias de la lengua española?

**Molinero:** Nunca consideramos consultar con otras academias porque las consultas del gobierno son específicas para este país, y para eso estamos nosotros.

### ¿Han tenido en cuenta los estadounidismos para adoptar algunos nombres?

**Godfrey:** Sí. Por ejemplo, nos referimos a agencias y departamentos pero no a ministerios, como es común en Latinoamérica. La palabra «ministerio» en Estados Unidos tiene una connotación religiosa y no está establecida como organismo gubernamental.

### De modo que «Departamento» ¿es un estadounidense?

**Molinero:** Sí, lo consideramos un estadounidense cuando se emplea como denominativo de lo que en nuestros países es un ministerio público.

### ¿Qué pasa si el público ya está familiarizado con los antiguos nombres?

**Godfrey:** En casos en que ya está muy arraigado un nombre, por ejemplo FBI (Buro Federal de Investigaciones), dejamos la palabra «buró» aunque no la recomendamos para otros *bureaus*. La gente se refiere al «efe bí» y cambiarle el nombre sería muy confuso.

## ¿Ha habido aceptación por parte de las entidades cuyos nombres han sido modificados?

**Godfrey:** Esta es el área más complicada. Yo estoy trabajando con las distintas agencias individualmente para llegar a acuerdos en los que hemos recomendado cambios. Algunas han aceptado o negociado el cambio y otras todavía no. De todas maneras, GobiernoUSA.gov, y HowTo.gov, el portal del gobierno para ayudar a las agencias gubernamentales a brindar una excelente experiencia al público, han publicado la lista de agencias federales como sus nombres oficiales. También hemos desarrollado una API, o interfaz para programación de aplicaciones, para que desarrolladores de sitios y aplicaciones móviles tomen estos nombres y los usen en nuevas tecnologías, y así se diseminen. Esto va a llevar tiempo, es lo que se llama *diseminación orgánica*.

### ¿Hay algún proyecto relacionado con la traducción de los nombres de cargos en el gobierno?

**Godfrey:** Lo pensamos en un principio, pero a medida que me he ido metiendo en el análisis de este proyecto, he decidido que no es práctico, ya que no hay uniformidad de cargos en inglés.

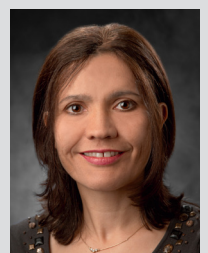
### ¿Cuál es la suerte del famoso «Cirujano General»?

**Molinero:** No nos han preguntado esto, pero seguramente diríamos que es el «Director General de Salud Pública» dado que «Cirujano General» distorsiona la realidad de este cargo público. De todos modos, hemos abandonado el proyecto de sugerir las traducciones de cargos públicos porque existen demasiadas variantes en el inglés de este país, y no todos los cargos significan lo mismo en todos los Estados.

### Resultados a la vista

Después de meses de trabajo y negociaciones, el 20% de los nombres de entidades analizados fue objeto de modificaciones. Se elaboró una tabla con esos nombres, su traducción al español, los cambios recomendados y la justificación para dichos cambios. Las propuestas se presentaron al Consejo de Sitios Web del Gobierno para que llevara a cabo los cambios pertinentes en sus respectivos sitios. Además, el Consejo tuvo que notificar los cambios a las oficinas de comunicación de las agencias correspondientes para que adoptaran el nuevo nombre en sus comunicados de prensa y otros materiales de divulgación. Pero consultar el directorio de agencias y departamentos de GobiernoUSA.gov es un primer paso para navegar por el complicado mundo del gobierno estadounidense. ♦

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## Con sentido *propio*

Ricardo Chiesa

En textos jurídicos y burocráticos, el adjetivo «propio» es muy frecuente, en distintas combinaciones. Sin ánimo de agotar las variadísimas posibilidades que ofrece, comentaremos hoy algunos usos particularmente interesantes por la riqueza de alternativas disponibles en la traducción al inglés.

En principio, tendemos a hacer una asociación inmediata con el vocablo «own», tal como se lo utiliza en textos vinculados con el derecho de propiedad; por ejemplo, «prender las *propias* acciones en...» (es decir, las acciones de las que se es titular en el capital de una sociedad) tiene su equivalencia en «pledge one's own shares / the shares one owns in...». Pero este equivalente no nos resultará útil para traducir frases como (1) «las atribuciones *propias* del Ejecutivo» o (2) «las responsabilidades *propias* de la función de síndico», donde se expresa una relación de atribución, pertenencia o inherencia ajena a los derechos de propiedad o dominio. En el caso (1), el adjetivo «propio» suele usarse en el sentido de «privativo», es decir, «propio y exclusivo»; de allí que, en inglés, podamos hablar de «powers *unique* to the Executive» o «powers *vested solely* in the Executive». De modo similar, si nuestro texto fuente reza «El Ministerio de Trabajo se arrogó facultades *propias* del juez laboral», podemos traducirlo como «The Ministry of Labor claimed for itself powers that *were not its own but unique* to the labor courts». En el caso (2), podemos recurrir a adjetivos como «inherent» o «incident»: «the responsibilities *inherent in/to // incident* to the position of trustee».

La misma relación de pertenencia o intermediación se advierte en frases como «los gastos *propios* del mantenimiento de la unidad» o «las circunstancias *propias* del caso de autos». En ambas frases, la traducción del adjetivo depende claramente del sustantivo que lo precede, que exige una combinación léxica («collocation») apropiada: por ejemplo, «all expenses *associated with* maintenance of the premises» y «the circumstances *surrounding* the case at hand».

Con el sentido de «característico, peculiar de una persona o cosa», decimos, por ejemplo, que un instituto «es *propio* del derecho anglosajón». Muy probablemente, en el texto se compare a ese instituto con figuras existentes en otros ordenamientos o se describa su adaptación a un determinado sistema jurídico; en este caso, la atribución de proveniencia se puede expresar diciendo «a device *originally developed under* Anglo-Saxon law». Aquí podemos traer a colación las relaciones de pertenencia a un campo o rama del Derecho, que ya hemos comentado en una columna anterior: si leemos que «la noción de beneficio de inventario es *propia* del Derecho Sucesorio», una traducción posible es «the notion of benefit of inventory *falls within the purview/domain* of the Law of Succession».

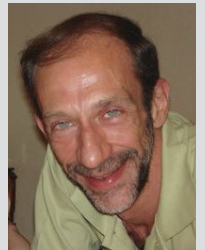
Un uso análogo al descrito en los párrafos anteriores se observa en este texto, tomado de la enumeración de facultades concedidas en un poder:

«Otorgar los documentos que fueren necesarios para ejecutar los actos antes mencionados, con las formalidades *propias* de cada contrato o acto de que se trate». En este caso, es necesaria una reformulación en inglés, por ejemplo, con «such...as»: «Execute all documents that may be necessary to perform the above-mentioned acts, with *such* formalities *as may be required by* each contract or other act».

Cuando se lo emplea en posición atributiva, esto es, antes del sustantivo, el adjetivo «propio» puede ser neutro en cuanto a su connotación o bien tener una ligeramente negativa. En la oración «Cada asociación tiene sus *propias* reglas sobre cómo llevar adelante el arbitraje», no se advierte, en principio, una connotación especial; en inglés, bastará con decir «Each association has *its own* rules / rules *of its own* on how to conduct the arbitration proceeding». En cambio, en la oración «En conflictos como estos, los sindicatos siempre tienen sus *propios* intereses», se aprecia una actitud de desaprobación por parte del emisor, por lo que convendrá recurrir a alguna frase con igual fuerza expresiva: «...labor unions always have *vested interests*» o, más laxamente y si el contexto lo justifica, «...labor unions always have/pursue *their own agenda*».

Finalmente, recordemos que las expresiones «por derecho propio» y «por mi propio derecho» se utilizan en el ámbito procesal para denotar que se actúa en defensa de los propios intereses (y no en defensa de los de un tercero, por ejemplo, los de un menor o un incapaz de quien se es representante legal); pero eso no necesariamente implica, en todas las jurisdicciones de habla hispana, que la parte que así actúa carezca de la asistencia de un abogado o que se le permita prescindir de ella. Por eso, una vez examinado el alcance de la frase en el texto de origen, puede ser aconsejable traducirla como «on my own behalf» y no con las voces latinas «pro se» o «pro persona», típicamente asociadas, en el derecho estadounidense, con la ausencia de representación letrada, es decir, con la decisión de no actuar por intermedio de un abogado. ♦

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# Nation-building and the power of language in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

Gabriela M. Llull, MA

Language can play a crucial role in creating or destroying intercultural bonds among members of a community, bonds that do not imply a mere “peaceful” coexistence but a recognition of diversity and hybridity, particularly in ethnically diverse groups. Robin Lakoff (1990, 13) has shrewdly said that “[l]anguage is a change-creating force and therefore to be feared and used, if at all, with great care, not unlike fire.”

Bosnia and Herzegovina, a former member of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, began a strenuous nation-building process after the 1992-1995 war, which implied healing deep social, political and economic wounds. Also, international intervention meant that additional voices started playing a role in an already fragmented scenario. The resulting work environment, where negotiation and dialogue among locals and international actors were the only officially recognized tools for achieving a stable present and future for the country, relied mostly on language, which could work either as an ally or an enemy, especially when it was not used, as Robin Lakoff recommends, “with great care, not unlike fire.”

In 1980, American linguist G. Lakoff and philosopher M. Johnson put forward the idea that metaphors are not simply rhetorical devices that have to do only with words and belong to the realm of literature. Rather, they argued “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (1980, 3). They went on to say that we are rarely aware of the existence of this system, and that because “communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like” (1980, 3). Taking these basic ideas into account, as well as a general definition of metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (1980, 5), we may look at the following discourse sample that refers to Bosnia:

“Before the responsibilities for running the state are completely transferred to the domestic authorities, the country’s leadership will however have to demonstrate a higher degree of political maturity and improve mutual readiness for dialogue and consensus.” (Council of Europe Assembly, 2004)

The conceptual metaphor behind these words seems to be “Bosnia is a misbehaving child that needs to be educated.” How would such a message permeate to local politicians and citizens? We are not questioning the accuracy of the message, which is for political analysts to assess, but the cognitive and ideological patterns it activates through terms such as *political maturity* and presuppositions<sup>1</sup> such as “mutual readiness for dialogue and consensus is not good enough” (an assertion that could be contested by the parties involved) are

certainly not conducive to enhanced ownership: the underlying message is actually a threat, meaning that if some external body decides that Bosnia is not mature enough, it will not be rewarded with self-government.

“... linguistic choices can distort interactions among interlocutors attempting to reach consensus on a controversial matter.”

Later on, Lakoff developed the *frame theory* and applied it to United States politics. He said that “frames are mental structures that shape the way we see the world” (2004, XV). Frames are activated through the language we use, which we choose according to our worldview, our ideas and values (2004, 3-5), and one of the main principles governing frame theory is that even if we negate a frame, we have already evoked it. Let us analyze how this works in the following comment on the Bosnian situation:

“The unified, democratic, multi-ethnic nation the international community delivered at the Dayton peace talks was stillborn. The great powers quickly rushed the corpse into the operating room [...] then stood around watching it decompose.” (Woodward 2000, in Paris 2004, 106)

The metaphor used here is that “Bosnia—as created by the Dayton Accords—is a dead baby.” The evoked frame, through lexical selection (*stillborn*, *corpse*, *decompose*) is one of death, impotence and destruction. However, there is also a strong sarcastic tone in the semantic contrast made between a “unified, democratic, multi-ethnic nation” and the idea that it failed (it “died”). Again, how are these messages received by Bosnians, be they Bosniacs, Serbs or Croats? If the frame of death and destruction is replicated by those whose voices are heard by many, it is no wonder that, for example, in April 2012, at a ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the war, a citizen said “One cannot even describe the feeling. It’s *not hatred*. It’s *not anger*. It’s just *endless sadness*.”<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added] Although she denies them, the frames she is resorting to are precisely hatred, anger and sadness.

<sup>1</sup> Presuppositions, from the point of view of the linguistic sub-discipline of Pragmatics, “can be informally defined as an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence” (Huang 2007, 65).

<sup>2</sup> “Bosnia-Herzegovina marks 20th anniversary of war.” BBC News. April 6, 2012. Accessed November 1st, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17636640>

## «Teléfonos inteligentes»\*

Emilio Bernal Labrada

Creía yo, ingenuo que soy, que en la clasificación de los seres únicamente los vivos y pensantes podían calificarse de *inteligentes*, o sea dotados de raciocinio.

Pero no. Ahora resulta que tenemos «teléfonos *inteligentes*» – que pronto podrán conversar con nosotros sin necesidad de otro interlocutor–, y en breve vendrán cafeteras, tostadoras, planchas, mondadientes y desgrapadoras inteligentes. Nada, un mundo gobernado por el robot en que los entes pensantes, como los humanos, seremos obsoletos, nulos, por siempre mortales y desechables. Es decir, como han pronosticado los grandes visionarios, el mundo estará en manos de la tecnología, de la inmortal computadora *pensante*.

Buen chiste, ese. Como si las computadoras llegaran a tener conciencia de su propio ser y a volverse ambiciosas, avariciosas y ávidas de poder como su propio creador: ese malévolo ser, el humano. Bueno, en mejores manos estaríamos.

Digamos que es totalmente ilógico hablar de lo inerte como si tuviera cerebro capaz de hacer lucubraciones y tomar ponderadas decisiones. Pero eso nos pasa por ser copiones sin criterio, puesto que el sentido en que se usa *smart* en este caso no es el de capacidad razonadora sino el de algo ágil, veloz, dinámico, flexible, capaz de hacer múltiples cálculos y operaciones en fracciones de segundo.

Por cierto, empecemos con que el *smart phone* es equívoca denominación en inglés, puesto que el dispositivo es lo que hoy se llama *cell* o *mobile*, en tanto que *phone* es apócope del teléfono tradicional, con cables y todo. Pero nada, insistimos en copiar cualquier

disparate. A tal punto que hemos visto, en artículos periodísticos, avisos publicitarios y demás, *teléfonos inteligentes*, *teléfonos smart* y hasta *smart phones* tal cual.

Si no me equivoco, el sistema tradicional para nombrar los artefactos o incluso seres más avanzados o desarrollados, ya sea en capacidad, dimensiones o jerarquía, es muy sencillo: se agrega el prefijo *súper* o *híper* y listo. Así tenemos *supermercado*, *superhombre*, *supercarretera*, *hipersensible*, *superintendente*, *hiperacústico*, etc.

Por consiguiente, la solución al intríngulis es tan sencilla que se cae de su peso: *supermóvil*. Reto a cualquier lector a pronunciar la palabra en contexto para ver si algún tonto la cuestiona.

Los seres pensantes del mundo hispanófono tenemos que «ponernos las pilas» y salirle al paso a los copiones que nos quieren anular la propia *inteligencia* con la pretendida superioridad de un exógeno vocabulario. ♦

\* Versión adaptada de artículo previamente publicado. Reproducido con autorización del autor.

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### ***Nation-building and the power of language in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina***, cont from page 9

Discourse samples involved in the nation-building process may also be probed in light of Van Dijk's multidisciplinary analysis of ideology. On talking about ideological discourse structures, he says that, when reproducing ideology, the strategy of communication consists of four basic moves, namely, to emphasize positive information about *us*, to emphasize negative information about *them*, to de-emphasize negative information about *us* and to de-emphasize positive information about *them* (1998, 267). This is relevant because the linguistic choices involved in these communicative strategies, in turn, reveal underlying conceptual metaphors and frames that may end up bringing about twisted and destructive worldviews in politicians and citizens. Examples abound in the Bosnian case, but –for the time being– let us just look at Bosnia's 1995 Constitution:

**Paragraph 5 Refugees and Displaced Persons:** All refugees and displaced persons have the right freely to return to their homes of origin. They have the right, in accordance with Annex 7 to the General Framework Agreement, to have restored to them

property of which they were deprived in the course of hostilities since 1991 and to be compensated for any such property that cannot be restored to them. Any commitments or statements relating to such property made under duress are null and void.<sup>3</sup>

The deliberate use of the causative *have* and passive voice without mentioning the agents ("to have restored", "they were deprived", "to be compensated") does little to hide the existence of two groups: those who lost their property (*us/we*) and those who took it from them (*them/they*). The first group is ideologically favored, since a right is asserted either to have their goods restored or to be compensated. Also, a negative aspect of *them* can be presupposed from the last sentence: *they* obtained property through duress, and now *they* are being punished for it with the nullity of *their* acts. The selection of the lexical item *homes of origin* also reinforces the idea that we

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. 2013. Accessed November 1st. [http://www.ccbh.ba/eng/p\\_stream.php?kat=518](http://www.ccbh.ba/eng/p_stream.php?kat=518)

are originally entitled to this property, that it belonged to us in the first place. The emphasis achieved in the second sentence through repetition (the right to...and to... and repetition of the verb "restored") and semantic contrast (deprived-compensated) also strengthen the existence of opposing groups with different rights and duties.

The question here seems to be: how could such a foundational document be a positive influence for bringing about a harmonious whole out of a fragmented community, if, apart from what we have observed, the words *unity*, *union* and *unified* do not even appear? We agree with Lakoff in that the frames that determine our thoughts and actions are embodied in the language we use, so is this constitution activating the right frames (in terms of what is best for the people of Bosnia)? After all, a constitution enshrines the principles according to which a country is to be governed. It is deemed to be known and accepted by all, which means it should roughly match the frames of most of the population. If it does not, then it should be amended by rightful means or risk losing all legitimacy, thus fatally wounding the rule of law.

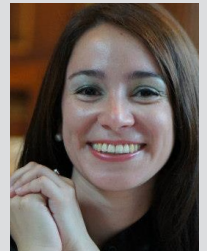
These are just a few examples of how linguistic choices can distort interactions among interlocutors attempting to reach consensus on a controversial matter. However, the reverse also holds true: language, if used conscientiously and with a genuine focus on dialogue, can play a crucial role in knitting together a dismembered society, and

this is certainly a fact to be borne in mind by professional translators, who usually act as cultural intermediaries in these environments. ♦

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