

VÁZQUEZ Y DEL ÁRBOL, E. (2014). *DERECHO CIVIL COMPARADO  
APLICADO A LA TRADUCCIÓN JURÍDICO-JUDICIAL. REINO UNIDO Y  
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Elisa Santos Townsend

*Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul*

Christiane Heemann

*Universidade do Vale do Itajaí*

Reading Vázquez y del Árbol's book we realize, at once, it is the reading we had been looking for, but were unaware of its existence. The business and international legal practice has increased to the point that law firms and international companies need to have their documents, contracts, memos and everything else of legal content, translated from English to Spanish or vice-versa, in the perspective of the author, or to other languages, in general. In the linguistics field, English has, long ago, become established as the 'lingua franca' in the world of international business. Whether as a university teacher, as a researcher, or as a translator, the author has been able to notice the need to investigate and, subsequently, to write a specialized treatise about legal translation; more specifically, about the documents that result from the branch of law called Civil Law (and let us, here, make sure it is understood that we are not, at this point, talking about the Civil Law system), one of the branches most used, on a daily basis, by persons, companies, lawyers, translators, English teachers and translation teachers. The inexistence of a similar study, applied to translation and written from the perspective of comparative law, previously, makes this book innovative and of invaluable relevance.

Approaching legal translation of documents from different legal systems, such as the British and the Spanish legal systems, contributes to the tasks of the translator and of the lawyer with a layer of deeper dimensions and of higher complexity. Vázquez y del Árbol, following the global trend of linguists, lawyers and legi-linguistics professionals, germinated an interdisciplinary and comparative investigation that she starts from a corpus of 500 documents (that exist in real life), outlining her research so that each chapter unravels the theoretical problems of comparative law with its corresponding practices in Legal Translation detailing each of the divisions of the Civil Law.

The Introduction is signed by the distinguished Professor and Procedural Scholar Juan Damián Moreno and provides an overview of the book, emphasizing that it details the work of the translator and the current situation of legal translations in comparative law. After an introduction that is plentiful of arguments, a list of particularities and difficulties of articulating the legal discourse between the English and the Spanish legal systems is offered, focusing on lexical, syntactic, stylistic and semantic controversies. The type of approaches chosen by the author include aspects such as nouns, verb, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, pronominal syntax, stylistics, orthographical and typographical aspects in the translation of legal texts pointing to directions of a very important nature. For instance, the author mentions that *Ley*, in Spanish, is rarely translated to *Law* in English (p. 23), as *Act* would be its most accurate choice. For those reading this review in Brazil – or who have interest in the Brazilian Law, in the Brazilian Legal System, in the Translation of Legal texts from, or to Brazilian Portuguese – the example depicts exactly the same situation of what happens with the term *Lei* in Portuguese: whenever it is intended as legislation, norm, rule, it will rarely be translated to *law*, but frequently translated to *Act*, instead.

Next, an extensive corpus of legal binomials, trinomials and polynomials is analyzed, with the proposition of an ideal translation for each of them. Even though the topic is not a novelty in the field

of legal translation, the wide assortment of examples makes the contribution valuable. Subsequently it gears towards the discussion of more pragmatic details of the research, proposing the concatenation of Comparative Law with Legal Translation through the use of the following methodology: after providing the legal context of each of the two cultures, British and Spanish, a macro structural contrast is offered between the documentation of each system, and that method is replicated for each branch of the civil law, comparing all legal concepts that are being investigated through the use of explanatory tables in which several translations from English into Spanish and from Spanish into English are proposed for each of the chapters, which end, each, with complete bilingual glossaries about the matter discussed in each chapter, and references.

Therefore, one chapter contains the study of issues related to birth, adoption and foster care; the next, deals with marriage, annulment, separation and divorce; the following one deals with details concerning death and succession. The level of depth and richness of minutiae into which the author cares to delve includes - for example, in chapter three, while discussing birth, adoption and fostering (p. 46 *et seq.*) - delineating all of the procedures and how these legal events happen in each part of the United Kingdom territories: from England to Wales, to Scotland, to Northern Ireland, and also in the country of Ireland, explaining the way each of them deals with the proceedings related to birth, adoption and fostering, allowing, consequently, a comparative study. All that paired up with the corresponding resources, such as forms, applications and legislation of each Nation – a true and profound comparative law perspective. There are three texts as case studies and its proposed translations, with comments about the reasons why such translations solutions were chosen accompanied by glossaries in the two directions (English to Spanish and viceversa), and references.

Chapter four does a similar job to that of chapter three but related to marriage, separation, divorce, and marriage annulment, listing legislation and its development in history, comparing the U.K.

and Spain, including legal and religious matrimonial rites and procedures, along with its different approaches to marital dissolution and the applicable legislation in comparative law in Spain and in the U.K. Once more, the chapter resources are supplemented with three case studies along with its proposed translations, comments to justify the reasons why such translations solutions were adopted, also accompanied by glossaries in English to Spanish and vice-versa, as well as references.

Chapter five deals with death and succession, comparing the differences – between the U.K. and Spain - of who can inherit and who can make a will, the procedures involved in these legal acts, types of wills, revocation and annulment of wills, the legitimate portion, the disposable portion in each of the countries involved: Spain, England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Ireland. The same resources of chapters three and four above are offered: three cases studies with its translation, explanations and comments for the translations, glossaries and references.

Next is chapter six, which encompasses a segment of significant impact to translators when it provides the existing translation techniques, informing those best suited to translate legal and judicial discourse. Here the author reminds the reader that one of the most challenging obstacles of legal translation is the difference in cultural origin and legal systems. As a consequence, the translator is bound to be faced with legal concepts in the legal culture of origin that do not have an equivalent corresponding concept in the target language, as it is with the examples of the terms *solicitor*, *trust* and *notary public*: when used in the legal inception of these terms, the translation to Spanish, as stated by the author, does not carry the precise idea as portrayed by the original word in the source text. The author, then, offers a list of possibilities that are available to the legal translator in cases of such difficult translations. The enterprise of comparing translations from the common law to the civil law legal systems is a definitive tool to help any and all translators that come across this book. At the end, a collection of points of view of other business professionals that are authorities in the field, compiling

various interviews with experts in the area of Civil Law as well as in Legal Translation. And with that, the book comes to a conclusion.

Its relevance is invaluable not only for its educational usability - it can be used by teachers with university students in law schools, letters schools, business schools, amongst others, in subjects that include English, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), Business English, Legal English (English for Law), English for Translation, Legal Translation, Comparative Translation and Comparative Law, to name a few - but also for its professional usability to help professional translators and lawyers who need to work with both systems, the common law and civil law. An important feature of this book is the fact that, for each document studied, the reader has access not only to the text in the source language but also the result in the target language, with comments, in addition to the comparative law studies.

The author, Esther Vázquez y del Árbol, is a Sworn English Public Translator, who holds a Bachelor's Degree and a PhD degree in Translation and Interpretation from the University of Granada (UGR); Faculty member of the Undergraduate and Graduate level schools at the Universities of Granada, Castilla-La Mancha, Murcia, Autónoma de Madrid and Saint Louis; Visiting Professor with Erasmus Scholarship at the University of Bologna (Italy), Mons (Belgium), Heriot-Watt (Scotland) and Warsaw (Poland). She is responsible for the Research Project CCG10-UAM / HUM-5665 and has participated in numerous national and international conferences. With more than twenty years of professional experience, she is currently a Chair Professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid in the specialties of Legal-Sworn in-Judicial and Scientific-Technical Translations, as well as a Coordinator of the Translation and Interpretation Degree at the UAM; she is an active member (since 1997) of the Research Group Hum383 and AIETI, having published numerous articles and chapters and a total of thirteen books about translation.

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