

1ST WORLD CONGRESS ON TRANSLATION STUDIES
PARIS NANTERRE UNIVERSITY



**Raising awareness in future lawyers about the work of legal
and sworn translators and interpreters: chimera or reality?**



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1. Introduction
2. English in the training of legal practitioners
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Teaching proposal
6. Conclusions



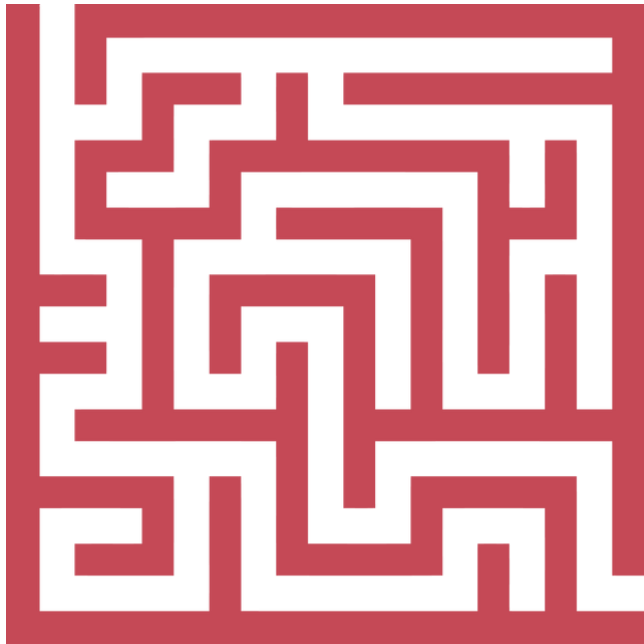
Hypothesis:

Postgraduate students of the Master's Degree in Law and Legal Practice of the University of Burgos, Spain, have little knowledge about the profession of translators and interpreters when they are involved in a specific legal situation.

Purpose:

To raise awareness of the need to work with professional translators and interpreters and how to combine our work with their own profession in the field of law.





The profession of legal and sworn translators:

- Professionally and socially ignored
- Access to professionals and registers is unknown
- Regulations exist but professionals do not know how they must be applied
- Subservient position leading to poor self-concept and lack of projection (Way, 2016: 1010)
- Fragmented nature of the profession

2. English in the training of legal practitioners



COULD YOU
SUMMARISE THE
FINDINGS OF THE DUE
DILIGENCE PROCESS
IN ENGLISH
FOR A CLIENT
WHO WANTS
ONLY THE MOST
ESSENTIAL FACTS?

2. English in the training of legal practitioners



The need of translation and interpretation in these contexts requires the growing intervention of highly specialized language professionals.

(Lara Aguado, 2016)



Should translators of a specific field be...?

...experts with advanced language skills?



...translators with expertise in the subject-matter area?

2. English in the training of legal practitioners

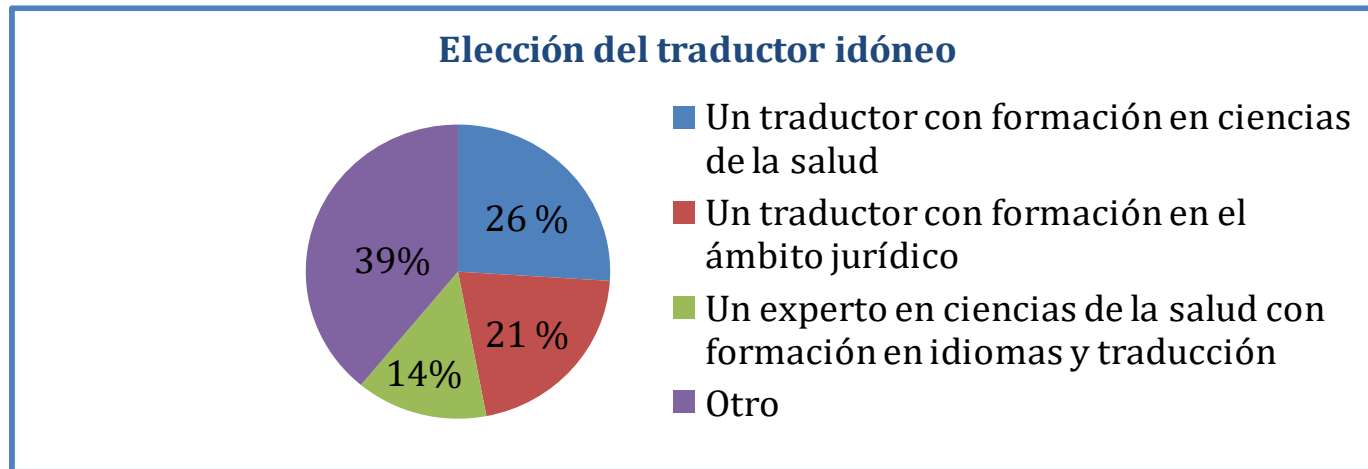


A similar question was proposed to sworn translators and interpreters:

PREGUNTA 7. Lea el siguiente texto e indique qué tipo de traductor considera más idóneo para la traducción de este tipo de textos.

«Desde el punto de vista de la traducción, [los textos médico-jurídicos] plantean problemas diferentes a los que aparecen en la traducción médica o la traducción jurídica por separado. De hecho, existe una cierta polémica sobre quién debería ocuparse de su traducción. Los traductores médicos, al enfrentarse a la complejidad del discurso legal y a las diferencias entre sistemas jurídicos, opinan que deberían ser los traductores jurídicos los encargados de traducirlos. Por su parte, los traductores jurídicos consideran muy arriesgado traducir la terminología médica especializada —procedimientos quirúrgicos, patologías, nombres de medicamentos, principios activos, términos anatómicos, etc.— y enfrentarse a los numerosos peligros y trampas ocultas que encierran los textos médicos para los profanos.»

Borja Albi, A. (2012). Aproximación traductológica a los textos médico-jurídicos. *Revista de Medicina, Lenguaje y Traducción Panace@*, 13(36): 167-175



2. English in the training of legal practitioners



The importance of projects combining the work carried out by translator and professionals from the legal field:



Perspectiva práctica de la traducción, interpretación y aplicación del derecho extranjero

(Practical perspective of translation, interpretation and the application of foreign law)



Training Action for legal practitioners: linguistic skills and translation in EU Competition Law

2. English in the training of legal practitioners



Universities play an important role when training law students.

Three aspects should or must be considered:

- 1) Theory and practice
- 2) Language and communication skills
- 3) Collaboration

Law degrees are commonly offered to cover any aspects related to a **specific legal system or country**. They sometimes include **other legal systems** (e.g. EU law) or courses on **comparative law**. However, no attention is given to languages and communication with other professionals.

Nine academic institutions from 3 different countries were analysed to determine if language skills and translation were part of the official programmes offered. They were chosen following different official classifications for top universities in legal studies.

2. English in the training of legal practitioners



Training in language skills, translation and law in different universities:



ES

	COURSES FOCUSED ON			
	FOREIGN LANGUAGES (GENERAL)	FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES	FOREIGN LEGAL LANGUAGES AND SYSTEMS	LAW AND TRANSLATION
Autonomous University of Madrid	No	Yes	No	No
Charles III University of Madrid	Yes	No	No	No
Ramon Llull University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No




UK

	COURSES FOCUSED ON			
	FOREIGN LANGUAGES (GENERAL)	FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES	FOREIGN LEGAL LANGUAGES AND SYSTEMS	LAW AND TRANSLATION
University of Oxford	No	No	Yes (Year abroad)	No
University of Cambridge	No	No	No	No
University College London	No	No	No	No

2. English in the training of legal practitioners



Training in language skills, translation and law in different universities:

 FR	COURSES FOCUSED ON			
	FOREIGN LANGUAGES (GENERAL)	FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES	FOREIGN LEGAL LANGUAGES AND SYSTEMS	LAW AND TRANSLATION
Panthéon-Assas University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Aix-Marseille University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
François Rabelais University	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

3. Methodology



- **Qualitative approach**
- **Open-ended questions**
- Master's Degree in Law and Legal Practice of the **University of Burgos** (90 ECTS credits)
- Legal English class that was part of the Lawyer Skills module

Máster Universitario en Acceso a la Abogacía

Rama de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas

90 ECTS

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4. Results



- Low level of English.
- 47.6 % of the students that were completing this master's degree and that had already an undergraduate degree in **Law had not heard before about how translators and interpreters work in the legal sphere.**
- 100% of the students stated that they did **not know the difference** and just two mentioned that the difference between a translator and interpreter was in the written and oral form but were unsure about the role of a sworn and legal translator and interpreter.
- Regarding the regulations of the work of translators and interpreters, **33 % of students said they were not familiar with any laws that mentioned their role** and **25 % said they knew some regulations existed but could not name them.**



5. Teaching proposal



1) Conceptual framework

Types of translators and interpreters that can be found in the legal sphere:



Legal translators



Court translators and interpreters



Sworn translators and interpreters

5. Teaching proposal



2) Real situation in Spain

- Legal vacuum
- No qualifications are required > Lack of professional entity

3) Practical exercises

- Terminology
- False friends
- Comparative law

4) Students' group presentations on related topics

5. Teaching proposal



5) Participation of students as legal interpreters in mock trials



6. Conclusions



- 1) Language skills are not important in law degrees in Spain, probably due to the fact that most courses are focused on national law.
- 2) Results from our questionnaire show a very low level of familiarization with the profession of translators and interpreters.
- 3) After the end of the legal English course, we were able to verify a qualitative change in the students' perception on the work of legal and sworn translators and interpreters.
- 4) Translators in the field of law cannot afford to be experts in all subjects and law specialists cannot afford to have the same language skills as these professionals, so this interdisciplinary combination will allow moving towards an improvement in the rights of the people who will benefit from this situation.

A photograph of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, taken from a low angle. The tower's intricate iron lattice structure is the central focus, extending from the bottom left towards the top right. In the background, the Parisian skyline is visible under a clear, bright sky. The foreground shows some greenery and a small structure with a spherical top. The overall scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Thank you for your attention

Merci pour votre attention

Gracias por su atención

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