

VÁZQUEZ Y DEL ÁRBOL, Esther

Traducción judicial y policial (inglés < > español) y Derecho Comparado. Court and Police Translation (English < > Spanish) and Comparative Law

Madrid: Dykinson S.L., 2016, 260 p.

ISBN 978-84-9085-928-5

The book under review is the result of a deep research in legal and procedural translation, written by Dr Esther Vázquez y del Árbol. Firstly, it brings together a wide scope, namely, court, police, and legal translation (English-Spanish-English) with Comparative Law of two distinctive legal systems: the Spanish legal system, based on Roman and Napoleonic Law, and the British legal system, coming from Common Law.

Her book begins with the Preface, written by Dr Juan Damián Moreno, in which the main view is given to the English legal system. Thanks to this, Dr Damián includes the author's emphasis in the English language as the *lingua franca* of several specialised fields. In addition, Dr Moreno recalls the comparison between British Law and Spanish Law developed by Dr Vázquez y del Árbol (book named *Derecho Civil Comparado Aplicado a la Traducción Jurídico-Judicial*, Dykinson, 2014) in order to link it to the latest research by the latter one (British and Spanish procedural and police law), regarded a careful and comprehensive study of comparative nature in English-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries. This opening section continues with an introduction to the book.

Vázquez's work is divided into ten chapters and three supplementary chapters. Each of the chapters is clearly focused on Spanish and British legal systems. Vázquez fulfils a two-fold objective: on the one hand, a fully thorough explanation of all the important concepts of each and every chapter in order to succeed in clarifying each of the linguistic and legal features of procedural texts. On the other hand, the reader may immediately perceive

the main aspects of the whole chapter by means of efficient comparisons between the Spanish and the British legal systems.

Chapter one is devoted to the field of law. As an introductory chapter for the remaining chapters to come, it deals with the Spanish and British legal systems. Dr Vázquez does not only show a thorough theoretical explanation, but she also summarises the main concepts in illustrative charts. This is the case of Spanish and British courts. Through those pages, the author explains the major characteristics of tribunals and courts as a useful input to the book.

Chapter two introduces legal-court correspondence, a relevant document for legal and business communication. Once more, the author includes their macrostructure, crucial for legal translators. In addition, this chapter comes to a close with a source text and its translation, together with a glossary. The issues under research become more specific in the following chapter, which introduces the (civil and criminal) powers of attorney, a core document for the official representation (either civil or criminal) of any human being. In this section the author draws a distinction across the different countries (England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, versus Spain).

The fourth and fifth chapters have a common theory, namely, the legal persons and the legal bodies in each of the court systems analysed. Vázquez begins unit four with the Spanish legal-court system by explaining the Spanish figures of "notario", "procurador", "fiscal", "perito", and "juez y magistrado". Thanks to these theoretical explanations, the reader is able to completely unveil the clear correspond-

ence of the Spanish legal system, as opposed to the British legal one. Therefore, the author explains the different “legal experts”, “solicitors”, “barristers”, “notaries”, “magistrates” and “judges” by comparing them with their Spanish counterparts in contrastive charts between Spain and the United Kingdom. Chapter five, clearly related to the previous one, starts the explanation provided with the legal bodies co-existing in both systems. As it happens with the preceding chapters, the comparative theory and its practical use in translation is the main aim of this unit. Vázquez clearly focuses this chapter, as in the rest of the book, on the theory of comparative law applied to translation, followed by a source text and its translation. One again, the chapter finishes with a summarising glossary.

The main objective of chapter 6 is the police system in both countries, an important issue in comparative law and legal translation that the author extends in the seventh chapter, in which she includes the police-court-legal communication routes and types. Owing to both units, the reader may compare the police forces in both countries. In the case of the United Kingdom, Vázquez makes a distinct subdivision in the three British sub-systems, namely, England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Chapter seven brings another essential field in the legal scenario, the kinds of formal communication in the UK and Spain. The author makes further comments by clarifying several documents in the theoretical section. Summons, notifications to appear in court, legal notices or orders embody the main documents are incorporated in this unit. Their relevance in the current society is a main source for legal translators.

The eighth chapter provides the data linked to offences and crimes in the researched legal systems documents, which successfully completes the seventh chapter. Once again, the author proposes a macro-structural analysis; a police certifi-

cate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, another from Scotland, and the third instrument from Spain. As it occurred previously, this analysis clears up a common structure to decrease the difficulties of these intricate documents.

Chapter nine is also devoted to procedural translation, as it deals with the types of court trials. The chapter supplies the relevant theory, thoroughly explained in both systems, and the source text with its translation and glossary.

The book comes to a close with chapter ten, where an introduction to an international assistance document is provided (Rogatory Commission or Letter of Request). This chapter finally concludes the study of legal-court-police documents, their theory and translations with an analysis of a fundamental document in international court cooperation. This final division of the book includes a macrostructure of the document, together with a glossary.

The book offers numerous advantages, as it focuses on several objectives: first of all, all the chapters have a theoretical (and comparative) introduction, in which the researcher brings to light a diachronic depiction of the topic in both countries. This theory certainly entails a complexity that the author avoids by including diagrams and charts, in which the reader can clearly observe the comparison between both cases.

Secondly, Vázquez includes source texts (in English and Spanish) and their translation in most of the chapters. The rich variety of the translation covers from legal-court correspondence (chapters 2 and 4), powers of attorney and an advanced medical decision (chapter 3), legal sections from Acts (chapter 5), notices of fines and collection order (chapter 6), writs of summons (chapter 7), police personal data responses (chapter 8), to court orders (chapter 9).

This wide range of texts and their translations opens a clear perspective to the complex world of police-court-legal

translation. As it happens in additional papers or books by Vázquez, the reader fully understands the importance of this varied corpus of texts and their translations in order to improve the translation techniques of the reader. Thanks to the previous explanation, and with the invaluable help of the glossary, every professional translator or proof-reader who deals with these legal documents may encounter an immediate source to translate and, therefore, to understand these heterogeneous texts.

The final part of the research includes three Appendices (additional sections) which do reflect the clear disposition of the writer: the first one delivers a list of the most common legal acronyms from *REDIRIS*. The second one incorporates the glossary from all the chapters in order to make it more accessible to the reader. Vázquez therefore includes the specific (English-Spanish) glossaries in every chapter and a second (Spanish-English) glossary at the end of the book, this time structured on topics. Finally, the third Appendix shows a

common list of mistakes and errors when carrying out a legal-court translation (English-Spanish/Spanish-English).

This book and its clear clarifications and remarks in every unit are essential tools for legal professionals and translators specialised in the legal-court-police field (and in Public Service Translation). The specific language of law, together with the distinctive differences in both legal systems, has been successfully explained in the book. Vázquez uses an accessible, though academic, language to shed light to complex differences of two clearly different legal systems. By including the most recent information of both legal systems, Vázquez' research also contributes with this fascinating book to a clear understanding of the complex world of comparative law and legal translation.

Francisco Godoy Tena
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Departamento de Filología Inglesa

