

Translating news from the inner circle: Imposing regularity across languages

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Abstract

This paper examines the effects of using certain translational strategies in the construction of news headlines in the Internet Spanish services of Anglophone news media, namely the BBC, the CNN and the Reuters Agency. The introduction presents a succinct discussion of news headline structure, questioning Bell's view that it is fairly regular across languages (1991). Examples from Spanish and English media will establish differences and we will also compare them with the headlines produced in American Spanish news media as well as in other Romance languages.

Then we will move to analyse the ways in which the translational processes have an effect on the informative and persuasive functions of news headlines with regards to the target language readership. We shall compare the headlines used in the BBC, the CNN and Reuters Internet services in both English and Spanish to establish the extent to which the informative function is truly achieved in the two versions.

Finally, we will cover the semantic and ideological consequences forced upon the Spanish texts by the translators, and will attempt to provide an explanation for these deficiencies. We shall discuss whether the insights gained by linguistics on news discourse over the past decades have had an effect on the translational strategies used by these media or whether the two disciplines remain estranged from each other in this particular area.

Key words: news headlines, translation, Spanish, English, ethnocentricity.

Resum

L'article estudia els efectes que té l'ús de certes estratègies de traducció en la redacció de titulars de notícies en els serveis d'Internet en espanyol dels mitjans de comunicació anglòfons, en concret la BBC, la CNN i l'Agència Reuters. La introducció presenta un breu comentari sobre l'estructura dels titulars de les notícies, que posa en dubte l'afirmació de Bell, segons la qual aquesta estructura és força regular en totes les llengües (1991). Mitjançant alguns exemples de mitjans de comunicació espanyols i anglesos mostrarem les diferències i també els compararem amb els titulars redactats en espanyol americà i en altres llengües romàniques.

Seguidament analitzarem la manera com els processos de traducció tenen incidència en les funcions informativa i persuasiva dels titulars de notícies respecte als lectors en llengua meta. Compararem els titulars emprats en els serveis d'Internet de la BBC, la CNN i Reuters en anglès i en espanyol per determinar fins a quin punt s'aconsegueix realment la funció informativa en les dues versions.

Finalment, abordarem les conseqüències semàntiques i ideològiques generades en els textos en espanyol pels traductors, i intentarem donar una explicació a aquestes deficiències. Analitzarem si els enfocaments que han creat els lingüistes del discurs periodístic en el decurs de les darreres dècades han tingut cap efecte en les estratègies de traducció emprades per aquests mitjans de comunicació o bé si aquestes dues disciplines es mantenen separades en aquest àmbit particular.

Paraules clau: titulars de notícies, traducció, espanyol, anglès, etnocentricitat.

Summary

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1. News discourse

The analysis of news discourse, its structure and functions as well as the manipulation of its content has been analysed by a number of scholars, both in English (van Dijk 1990; Bell 1991, 1998, 2003; Waugh 1995) and, to a lesser extent, Spanish (Hurtado 2003). News has also called the attention of critical analysts (Fowler 1991, 1996) and critical discourse scholars (Fairclough 1995, 1998). Translation researchers have also become interested in the processes involved in the translation of news (Hatim: 1997; Kelly: 1998; Gottlieb forthcoming).

In this paper¹ we shall analyse the structure and functions of news headlines of English Internet media (BBC, CNN, Reuters) and their matching versions in the Spanish editions of the same news companies. Firstly, we shall challenge the ethnocentric view proposed by some authors (notably Bell 1991) who believe that headline structure is fairly standard across languages, providing examples from English media, on the one hand, and Spanish media as well as other languages, on the other. We shall then proceed to compare the translational strategies used in the Spanish editions of these media. For this paper we have analysed a total of 750 headlines: 150 in English, 150 in European Spanish, 150 in American Spanish, 150 in other Romance languages and 150 in the Spanish websites of Anglophone news media. They cover a six-year span (2000-05), although most of them were collected in the period March 2004-February 2006.

BBCMundo, Reuters Spain and CNNenEspañol are news services produced by English-speaking companies which offer a Spanish-speaking readership the chance to read news items in their mother tongue. It should be noted, however, that the CNN discontinued its Spanish service in 2004 and that no archive is available at the moment. Therefore, the examples from this service were gathered during 2004. On the other hand, Reuters readers can have access to the news items posted over a fif-

1. A first draft of this paper was presented at the *SLT Conference The Study of Language and Translation*, held at Ghent School of Translation Studies, Belgium, 12-14 January 2006.

teen-day period whereas the BBC has an archive that spans over a seven-year period, that is, since the inception of the service back in 1999. Reuters has a base in Madrid, whereas the services of the other two were provided from their bases in the US and the UK respectively. In all three cases the obvious assumption is that the commission of the translations originates in the source culture, an anomaly in itself (Valdeón 2005a & 2005b). That is, the texts posted on the Internet to cater for a Spanish-speaking audience have originated in the source culture and have been translated by text-producers anchored in the source culture. Therefore, translators, irrespective of whether they are native speakers of the target language, are bound to be heavily influenced by the source language and the editorial routines of the news corporation, whose political and ideological agendas are shaped by source culture political motivations. At this stage, we can introduce three concepts developed by Kachru (1985: 12) and later used by Phillipson (1992: 37). These writers mention the existence of an inner circle of English speakers, which would correspond to the native speakers of the language, an outer circle where English has a similar status to that of the native language, and, finally, an expanding circle where English is learned as a second language. These concepts will be resumed in the final discussion.

2. Headline structure and news translation

As shown in previous papers (Valdeón 2005a: 201-203), Spanish headline structure in these services follows patterns characteristics of the source language, so we shall assume from the start that the influence of English headlines is all pervasive. Our discussion will focus on its effects on the target language. The features of headline writing in English, or *headlines* (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 845-46), have been covered both by descriptive (Quirk *et al.* 1999: 201-203) and pedagogical grammars (Swan 2005: 411-422). Both underline the specificity of this variety of the language and the difficulties that non-native speakers of English may encounter when learning it. This seems to contravene the view expressed by researchers like Bell, who states that «headline structures appear to very regular across languages» (1991: 189). He relies on previous research carried out by Kniffka (1980: 333) into German and American newspapers, which complements his own research into British and Australian headlines. This would point in the direction of the existence of a shared international grammar of headline writing (Kniffka 1980: 333 quoted in Bell 1991: 189). Later work on the same topic seems to ratify his initial findings (Bell 1998: 66) since he continues to use the same framework with only minor alterations. The main question that arises from his research is the extent to which critical linguistics is, in fact, critical or, else, has remained rather self-complacent over the years.

According to Bell, news headlines have two main functions: they summarize the news events and, as part of the news rhetoric, they attempt to attract the reader (1991: 189-90), resorting to devices such as alliteration or punning (1991: 189). Headlines can also rely on ambiguity to arouse the interest of the reader (Bell 1998: 82), although ambiguity can also be involuntary (Bucaria 2004: 279-309). Disambiguation will follow in the lead and main story (Bell 1998: 83-84), a view that is not shared by other writers. Carter and Nash, for instance, mention the case

of tabloid headlines, such as *Canute Kinnock*, which they studied and described as an «ingenious piece of rethorical sophistry» (1990: 64-65). The same text has also been commented upon by translation scholars such as Hatim, who underlined the discursual switch in this type of headlines from the expected strictly informative content to a more biased approach to news events (1997: 60-63).

Headline structure is as varied in English as it is in Spanish, but perhaps we could mention two major types. On the one hand, we encounter headlines with verb phrases, where subject, verb and complements are present, as in these two examples:

Al-Sadr hails quick Spain pullout
(CNN, 19/04/04)
Two die in London terror blasts
(BBC, 07/07/05)

But, on the other, readers can also across more economical phrases containing a non-finite verb, as in:

Terror of passengers stuck on tube
(BBC, 07/07/05)
Drug halves breast cancer returns
(BBC, 19/10/05)

Some of these noun phrases can be so tricky that many advanced courses of English devote specific sections to explain the puzzle and help learners understand newspapers and news websites. Bell mentions one particular example where the noun phrase is so complex that readers would need to work their way back to reach the core of the news event: *Strike threat plea probe move shock hope storm* (Bell 1991).

Spanish headlines can initially be classified along similar patterns. Newspapers use declarative sentences as well as interrogative and exclamative ones, depending on the effect they are seeking:

El puente de la Expo de Lisboa tiene graves problemas de estructura
(*El País*, 15/03/01)
¿Hacia dónde va el FMI?
(*El Mundo*, 30/09/00)
¡Ojalá fuera casualidad!
(*El País*, 26/01/02)

Spanish headlines can also be constructed using non-finite verb phrases, whether they are past or present participles, or even gerunds:

Un líder militar de Hamás, condenado a 12 años por un tribunal palestino
(*El País*, 03/09/00)
Vivir en la incertidumbre
(*El Mundo*, 10/11/00)
Esperando a manejar el primer euro
(*El Mundo*, 04/09/01)

However, in Spanish what seems clear is that headline structure is closer to the standard variety of the language than their counterparts in English, where the omission of articles, tense and modal selection and the specificity of the lexicon used provide the language with unique features. Spanish and English headlines might have similar aims, but certainly differ in the ways those aims are achieved, so this seems to contradict the hypothesis of the regularity of headline structure across languages. The ensuing question is whether the irregularity encountered in the 150 Spanish headlines surveyed can be restricted to European Spanish or whether it also applies to American Spanish headline writing. We also surveyed 150 headlines of articles posted on various South and Central American newspapers. These are a few examples:

Estados Unidos realizó la ejecución 1.000 desde el regreso de la pena de muerte
(*Clarín*, Argentina, 02/12/06)
El Presidente Bush hace una visita sorpresa a Afganistán
(*El Universal*, México, 02/03/06)
Sondeo revela la reducción en las posibilidades de reelección de Lula en Brasil
(*El Comercio*, Perú, 15/12/05)
El 30 por ciento de los colombianos que se van del país son profesionales
(*El Tiempo*, Colombia, 01/12/05)

Phrase or sentence structure remains very similar to European Spanish web sites with all the elements, including articles being present. However, it should be noted that, out of the 150 examples considered, 14% included some degree of omission, as in «Ley permitirá a parejas homosexuales adoptar hijos en Bélgica» (*El Mercurio*, Chile). Here all the elements have been maintained with the exception of the articles. It should also be mentioned that all the news web sites consulted are based in their respective countries, that is, they are not produced in Anglophone areas for a Spanish-speaking audience.

Having surveyed Spanish headlines produced in various parts of the world, we moved to study another set of 150 headlines from non-Spanish and non-English news websites. The sample contains examples of French, Italian, Catalan and Portuguese headlines, all of them from news sites based in their native areas (France, French-speaking Belgium, Italy, Catalonia and Portugal), including *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, *Le Parisien*, *La Stampa*, *Il Giornale*, *La Repubblica*, *Diari de Barcelona*, *Avui* and *Diário de Notícias*. The findings registered, once again, the existence of regularity across languages based on the English pattern. These are but a few examples:

Encore un an pour trouver un accord
(*Le Monde*, 19/06/05)
Il tesoro scomparso della Germania nazista
(*Corriere della sera*, 20/10/05)
Elezioni, la battaglia sarà su internet
(*La Repubblica*, 16/12/05)
Bush insta Damasc a respectar l'ONU i retirar les tropes del Líban
(*Avui*, 05/02/05)

In all these headlines we found that the standard structure of the sentence was maintained, which seems to indicate that if there is regularity in the construction of headlines across languages, English certainly does not partake in it. The only notable exception was the case of Portuguese news websites. These come closer to their Anglophone counterparts than the rest of the sites, as can be seen, for example, in «A história de Belmiro na Bolsa entre fortes críticas e altos lucros» or «Registro da OPA é aceite sem decisão sobre limites de voto» from the *Diário de Notícias*. And yet, leaving aside the omission of articles, both headlines follow the patterns of standard Portuguese, with all the elements present as well as the standard syntax and vocabulary being used. This degree of dependence of Portuguese headlines on English structure might be understood from the traditional political, economic and cultural links between Portugal and the UK, and it could be worth considering the extent to which Portuguese news websites differ from other Romance languages, or even from Portuguese printed headlines.

Thus, it seems that, at least, Romance languages share similar news headline structure, quite distinct from English news writing. But, in spite of this, English headline structure has been imposed upon the translated versions of the Spanish phrases examined, as already shown in previous research on BBC Mundo (Valdeón 2005a & 2005b) and CNNenEspañol (Valdeón forthcoming). The same applies, to a lesser extent, to Reuters Spain. In the next section we shall consider the effects this may have on the target language.

3. News headlines translated

Now we turn to consider the effect that this imposition may have on the resulting texts. For this section we have selected a last set of 150 headlines from the Spanish services of the above news corporations. Many of the articles posted on these three services did not seem to have a source text in the English sites since, in many cases, the Spanish headlines differ considerably from the English ones. However, the selection was made making sure that the articles they introduced did have matching sets in the source language. These had typically been posted on the Internet a few hours before the Spanish ones. The articles were, for the most part, literal renderings of the source items. However, the headlines, as we shall see, were often adapted for the Spanish readers. We shall test whether the two main functions attributed to headlines are maintained and what effects the influence of the source language may have on the translated versions.

The omission of elements regarded as irrelevant for the informative function of the headline has already been noted as the most obvious feature of what could be defined as Spanglish headlines. For instance, in *Encuentran artefacto explosivo en línea ferroviaria de España/Bomb found on Spanish rail line* (CNN and CNNenEspañol), all the articles have been omitted following the English pattern. The following selection from the various sections in these news websites (economy, politics, obituaries...) provides us with further examples of the imposition of headline structure, although the translated versions pose virtually no problems of understanding to the target reader:

Telefonica bids £18bn for UK's O2
 Telefónica adquiere empresa británica
 (BBCWorld & BBCMundo, 31/10/05)

Merkel to lead Germany in coalition of rivals
 Conservadora Merkel será nombrada canciller alemana
 (Reuters UK & Reuters Spain, 10/10/05)

However, further transformations that might affect the perception and interpretation of the news item are also frequent. These could range from superficial alterations to major changes with important semantic implications. For instance, in 2005 BBCMundo included an item on Spanish Princess Letizia's pregnancy. This featured as «Letizia de Asturias está embarazada» (08/05/05). In this case no element of the sentence was eliminated: the headline looks straightforward enough. However, the writer/translator does not seem to be aware of a cultural difference as regards the way in which the various members of the Spanish Royal Family are referred to. Spanish uses the name of a king/queen preceding the country over which they reign, but not in the case of other titles. In this case the option «Princesa de Asturias» or «Doña Letizia» would have been the appropriate noun phrases. The choice made by the writer clearly originates in the series of English phrases «Princess Diana», «the Princess of Wales», «Princess Diana of Wales», «Diana of Wales», all of which are used in the source language. Once again Spanish structure has been superseded by the English original, even if the informative function has been maintained and the target readership will be aware of what the news event is about.

However, these transformations and omissions can have a greater influence on the informative function of the headline when an essential lexical item is omitted or altered. In *BBC: regresa «un pagano»/Shot BBC reporter returns to work* (BBCWorld and BBCMundo), the Spanish version uses a structure characteristic of Internet news reporting: the split of the news headline into two units, the first being used to place the news event spacially, the second one to explicit the news event or introduce the actor(s). In the example, the transadaptation process is deeper since it introduces an element that is present in the news story, but which is totally irrelevant for the opening section of the news item: the fact that a journalist had been wounded in a Muslim country. Thus, it emphasizes the sense of «otherness» of the journalist rather than the fact that he is now fully recovered and has returned to work as a correspondent. That is, the headline has not fulfilled its informative function.

In other cases, the resulting text can lead to ambiguity in the presentation of the news event. In BBCMundo's «Marchan en contra de ETA y el gobierno», the text producer has translated a BBCWorld article entitled «Madrid holds huge anti-Eta march» (04/06/05). The main story renders the original text almost literally but the headline has undergone an important transformation process: the subject has been eliminated so the actors have disappeared and, consequently, the news event has been depersonalized. But the most conspicuous change is that the

demonstration seems to have a two-fold purpose: to oppose the terror group Eta, on the one hand, and the central government, on the other. This bundles Eta and the Spanish government together as part of the same problem. However, as we read the article it is clear that this is not the case, even if some of the demonstrators also carried banners against the ruling Socialist Party.

Ambiguity, together with a certain degree of cultural incompetence, can also lead to confusion. In the following Reuters Spain headline, the reader is misled by the use of the subject: «Bono dice a primer ministro Canadá negativa ayuda es exasperante» (Headlines in Reuters UK and Reuters US: «“You’re infuriating,” Bono tells Canadian PM», 07/07/05). The translator seems to be unaware of the fact that, in the target culture, Bono might make reference to two different personalities. First and foremost to the current Spanish Minister of Defence, who is often referred to as Bono by the Spanish media. Unlike other European languages where members of the government receive a more formal treatment (Mr Blair in the British media or M. Chirac in French news corporations), Spanish tends to eliminate the titles, particularly in the case of headlines. Since news writers would rarely refer to Bono as «el Sr. Bono», the headline in Reuters catches the attention of the reader but for the wrong motives: the confusion might lead the reader to wonder about what forced the Spanish minister to become so undiplomatic in the way he addressed the Canadian Prime Minister. As we plunge into the story, we soon realize that the Reuters article was reporting on U2 singer Bono, not on the Spanish cabinet minister. A possible interpretation of the writer’s choice as an attempt to play on the names of the two well-known personalities would make little sense here, since there are no indications in the text about possible links between the two men. The most likely explanation might lie in the time pressures of news writing and editing in a news corporation which needs expediency to post material on the web.

The same explanation might be at the base of another problem identified in the construction of some of these texts. Maintaining the same syntactic structure in some headlines can cause unexpected (and probably unintended) semantic implications. In another Reuters headline, the readers encounter the following text: «Un indio de baja casta, encadenado durante dos años —diario» a literal translation of the ST «Low-caste Indian man chained up for 2 years —paper» (20/09/05). Unlike other examples, here there is some degree of readjustment of the ST to the target language, notably the introduction of the article «un». However, the writer maintains the order of the noun phrase «low caste» as «baja casta», unaware of the different implications that the position of certain adjectives may entail in Spanish. In this case rather than informing on the social origin of the *actor* of the news event, the position provides a much more negative connotative value to «baja» than originally intended. The context will certainly compensate for this deviation of the real meaning but the question about the appropriate use of the language in cases where it can have ideological implications for the reader remains.

This is, in fact, the case of the BBC Mundo headline «Trato brillante para mineros negros». In this example, the writer is consciously playing with the words to create a pun. The emphasis here is on the word «brillante», which can be inter-

preted as «excellent» or as a synonym for «diamonds». The headline, however, is not very enlightening and the success of the pun depends very much on the likeliness of being interpreted as such by the readers, that is, on the norms and conventions of the target language (Delabastita 1996: 132). But here it would be virtually impossible to interpret the pun as it is intended unless we proceed to read the whole article. So if the purpose of the pun was to persuade the readers to read the whole text, it could be argued that the target readership might actually miss the point. In fact, we are more likely to see a patronizing tinge in the presentation of the *actors* of this news item, the black miners. As we turn to the original headline, we realize that there has been a complete adaptation of the ST, even if English headline structure has been maintained by omitting the articles and using a short noun phrase instead of a full sentence. In BBCWorld the informative function seems quite clear: «Black firm gains De Beers stake» (08/11/05), that is, the readers are informed about a South African black-owned company that has managed to partake in a larger white well-established diamond corporation. But the Spanish version fails to communicate the success of a black firm in post-apartheid South-Africa and turns it into a patronizing wordplay.

In the examples commented so far, the ideological implications of some of the choices might have been unintentional. However, there are cases where the text-producer is clearly aware of the consequences of using or omitting certain lexical items. This ideological positioning can be traced in some of the news items posted on 19th April 2005 after the death of John Paul II and the election of a new Pope. The English headlines in Reuters US read as follows:

Conservative Ratzinger elected Pope
Conservative German elected pope

The writers opted to introduce the *actor* of the news event by means of introductory adjectives that presented cardinal Ratzinger to the American readership. In the first case, posted slightly earlier than the second one, the option was to place the new Pope ideologically whereas in the latter his nationality was also highlighted. For an European readership, specially in Catholic countries, the most remarkable piece of information was the origin of the cardinal, so Reuters Spain emphasized this in the first headline posted on that day: «El cardenal alemán Joseph Ratzinger elegido Papa». The subsequent reports also incorporated the ideological element together with the chosen name: «El conservador alemán Joseph Ratzinger será Benedicto XVI».

4. Final discussion

The study of these 750 headlines seems to indicate that the existence of regularity in headline structure across languages does not exist, as argued by Bell. Or, at least, not taking English as a model upon which other languages can be based. Certain features are shared by the Romance languages covered here, Spanish, French, Italian, Catalan, and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese. However, these fea-

tures seem quite distinct from those of English headlines in Internet news sites from both sides of the Atlantic.

Therefore, the influence of English permeates language boundaries, particularly in the case of translational processes. That is, regularity is imposed upon Spanish in headlines produced by the Spanish services of the CNN, the BBC and the Reuters News Agency. This imposition typically leads to ambiguity or might even confuse the readership. When this occurs at least one of the two main functions attributed to news headlines is not achieved, which is particularly regrettable in the case of the informative function. As stated, this often derives from the erroneous use of lexical items and structures in the target language, but these are not the only reasons. In some of the examples we have examined, ambiguity or misinformation stems from the attempt to adapt the headline to the target language (even in the rest of the article is relayed literally). This adaptation process often aims to project some degree of originality in the target text, although the result is not always successful.

However, one of the three services surveyed is more successful than the other two. Reuters Spain tends to produce much clearer headlines than the CNN and the BBC, even if omission does take place. In «Búsqueda desesperada en Pakistán, donde muertos llegan a 20.000», the main verb («continua») and the articles have been omitted. And yet the news event is easily identifiable and the sentence could be easily reconstructed from the elements left. The headline reproduces a Reuters US headline almost literally: «Frantic search as quake toll tops 20,000» (10/10/05), and, in spite of these omissions, the news event is communicated to the readership. Another instance of a successful adaptation process to the target language can be traced in «Fallece Tony Randall, el actor de «Extraña pareja»». Here the writer has used all the elements of standard Spanish and, consequently of headline structure in the target language, to construct a sentence that is comprehensible, direct and informative. It translates a much shorter Reuters US text, «Tony Randall dead at 84» (19/05/04). The adaptation here has taken into account not only the grammatical and syntactic peculiarities of the TL but has also had recourse to a strategy characteristic of journalistic discourse, the addition of informative elements that will contribute to a full understanding of the news event. A different matter is whether the news item in itself is relevant to the target culture or is, in fact, an instance of what we have defined elsewhere as «globalized parochialism» (Valdeón forthcoming).

As we turn to the other two services, we encounter less successful examples of adaptations to the target language, particularly in the case of the BBC. The main problems involve the loss of the informative content as well as wordplay that may cause confusion and ambiguity. For instance, «New species found in Papua “Eden”» is transformed into «El Edén en Papúa Nueva Guinea» (07/02/06), where the main news event, the discovery of a new species in that region, has been omitted. Playing with words in the headline may result in rather clumsy phrases such as «Algo claro en la materia oscura» (English headlines: «Dark matter comes out of the cold», 06/02/06). It may even verge on the ridiculous, as in the case of the headline introducing a report on the first woman to have been transplanted part of a face after suffering an attack from her dog. BBCWorld introduced the item thus: «Face op

patient “said thank you”», featuring omissions and journalistic jargon (the abbreviation «op»). This was turned into «Dice gracias y come fresas» (02/12/05) for the Spanish service.

Silly as some of these examples may sound, the most dubious phrases are those that involve some degree of ideological manipulation. BBC’s claims to impartiality may be sometimes more than doubted. In February 2006, a diplomatic incident between the President of Venezuela and the British Prime Minister was presented to the British readership as «“Go to hell”, Venezuela’s Chavez tells Blair», quoting directly the alleged words of the Venezuelan President. The choice was awkwardly direct for the BBC, which tend to show a greater degree of restraint in the presentation of news events. It certainly sounds rather aggressive in tone, quite reminiscent of tabloid rhetorics. The Spanish version of the article is certainly more restrained and text-producers have adapted the headline to «Venezuela protesta formalmente por las palabras de Blair» by making reference to a formal protest rather to the actual words used by Mr Chávez. The writer has been careful enough not to project the image of an aggressive and bad-mannered leader onto the target readership, which might be regarded as face-threatening by South-American readers, in view of the tendency to portray the Venezuelan President in that light in Anglophone news media.

We can now return to the concepts of the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle to attempt to cater for some of the deficiencies and characteristics of Spanish headline structure in Anglophone news websites. The inner circle is constituted by countries where English is the official, but not the only, language: Britain, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The outer circle encompasses those countries where English is a second language, that is, they use it as «their window to the world» (Phillipson 1992: 61), including both developing and developed countries (ranging from India to Scandinavian nations). In the expanding circle, English is usually taught as *the* foreign language. The main feature of the news services analysed here is that they cater for a readership outside their linguistic and cultural scope. The services, therefore, originate at the core of the English-speaking world, Britain or America, that is, in the inner circle, but they do not use English as the language, but other languages. In fact, the BBC has services in over forty languages, the CNN is currently translated into four languages and Reuters has eighteen different services. Therefore, the target language has undergone various processes of translation and adaptation through cultures, but basically from inside the inner circle. The difference that we noted in the case of Reuters Spain can be explained if we consider the fact that it is an inner-circle corporation that has been transplanted into the expanding circle, since it is also based in Madrid.

Critical linguistics, as an approach that has paid particular attention to news media and which has tended to carry out research into discoursal types in Anglophone texts, has tended to make some of its findings universal. In this sense, this approach has proved rather ethnocentric considering only texts from the inner circle as if they epitomized news construction in other languages and cultures. The study of issues such as modality or transitivity as features of news texts could prove indeed valuable in other fields such as Translation Studies, only if complemented

with comparative studies between the source language, which in the case of news production is usually English, and other languages into which those news events are translated. This might foreground the existing power struggles between the centres of news production, British or American, and the periphery or peripheries. These peripheries would typically include developing countries, as in the case of BBC Mundo, which specifically targets readers in South and Central American. But it would also apply to developed audiences in the periphery of English: Reuters has, as mentioned, a base in Madrid, unlike the other two services. And even countries in the outer circle depend on English-speaking sources for the production of news in their own languages: Scandinavian countries often resort to Anglophone news agencies as their «window to the world» (Phillipson 1992: 61). The remarkable feature of the headlines analyzed in this paper is not that they originate in the centre and are later endorsed by countries in the periphery, but rather the fact that we are dealing with texts produced, translated and projected from the core onto the periphery under the false pretence of specificity for the target readership. It seems that, in news production at least, English might have evolved from being a window to the world to becoming a linguistic, cultural and political Trojan horse.

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