

Cosnautas: Good news for Spanish to English translators?

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Cosnautas: <http://www.cosnautas.com/>

- MUNOA, LAURA (COMP.) (2014): *Árbol de Cos*. Edición electrónica en línea (versión 1.06). Madrid: Cosnautas.
- NAVARRO, FERNANDO A. (2013): *Repertorio de siglas, acrónimos, abreviaturas y símbolos utilizados en los textos médicos en español* (2.^a edición). Edición electrónica en línea (versión 2.02). Madrid: Cosnautas.
- NAVARRO, FERNANDO A. (2014): *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de traducción del inglés médico* (3.^a edición). Edición electrónica en línea (versión 3.02). Madrid: Cosnautas. Suscripción anual al diccionario: 44 EUR.

Cosnautas is the new on-line one-stop shop for medical translators who work from English into Spanish. It consists of a database with online medical resources (*Árbol de Cos*), a collection of Spanish medical abbreviations (*Siglas médicas en español*) and a dictionary discussing English-Spanish challenges and their solutions (*Libro rojo*). Its value for Spanish translators is undeniable.

But how does *Cosnautas* size up for translators whose target language is English? As a Spanish to English medical translator, I started using the *Cosnautas Oro* version when it came out in July last year and have been seeing how it can be leveraged in the course of my work.

Árbol de Cos

Both Spanish and English translators benefit from this resource. In fact, many of the resources are in English, which is very useful for English translators when researching terminology.

When searching for resources on the internet, many translators will instinctively turn to Google because of its exhaustive nature, using their expertise to pick out the quality links among all the inevitable junk that contaminates search results. The *Árbol de Cos*, however, uses just the opposite approach. These resources have already been cherry picked and so searches will lead to reliable, quality references.

A good number of these resources will already be bookmarked in a translator's browser. But the *Árbol de Cos* sometimes throws up unexpected pearls, and this is where its value really lies. I was translating a haematology article recently and finding it hard to pinpoint the right descriptive terms for morphological changes in red blood cells. A search for haematology in the *Árbol de Cos* only brought up one hit, but it was just what I needed: *Red Cell Nomenclature*¹, complete with images, etymological notes and morphological descriptions.



Plane tree of Hippocrates, Cos Island. Attribution: Steven Fruitsmaak

Siglas médicas en español

Spanish to English translators will be familiar with the original format of this resource, published on the Tremédica website². This essential collection of abbreviations has grown exponentially and it now contains 28,000 entries and 80,000 different meanings (originally 18,500 and 37,000, respectively). The default search mode is set to Spanish and it is free access (only registration is required). The advanced search offers an interesting filter by country and so, for example, filtering by *Reino Unido* brings up a list of UK-specific abbreviations.

This resource is particularly valuable for English translators who are faced with a deluge of abbreviations in patient discharge reports and referrals, where the target reader is another healthcare professional and therefore little or no effort is made to gloss the abbreviation.

Libro rojo

In its former print format³, the *Libro rojo* was almost useless for English translators because it was only English to Spanish. Paradoxically, it was the nearest a non-fiction book can get to being a page-turner in its own right, because it was full of fascinating topics, opinions and explanations. But still, it was frustrating to see the *Libro rojo* gathering dust on a Spanish-English translator's bookshelf.

Enter the new online format. Its main benefits are common to both English and Spanish translators. It is a living dictionary and so it is constantly updated. Searches are fast. Cross references are reached with a single click. But the biggest advantage of all for English translators is the advanced search mode, in English and Spanish.

There are different ways to perform searches. A quick search from the user's personal area is a good way of entering

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one or more Spanish terms. It's also easy to set up a quick search using IntelliWebSearch (IWS)⁴. Using IWS you can select a word in the source text and in one or two clicks *Cosnautas* opens with the search result.

These IWS settings can be used for a quick search in *Cosnautas*:

IntelliWebSearch settings for a quick search of all three resources in <i>Cosnautas</i>	
Start string:	http://www.cosnautas.com/index.php?pag=areasuscriptor&busqueda_rapida=
Finish string:	&libro_rojo=1&arbol_cos=1&dic_siglas=1

A slight drawback when searching Spanish terms is that a single word is likely to lead to many hits and common sense is required to identify the most appropriate result. For example, *hipófisis* brings up five hits. However, with a quick glance a discerning translator will click *pituitary* and a less-experienced translator will also arrive at the right place by clicking *body*, *gland* or *process*. Only an unfortunate translator will click *tentorium* and be in danger of using *hypophysis* for *hipófisis*, which is a false friend outside the context of the *tentorium of hypophysis* or *diaphragma sellae*.

El término <i>hipófisis</i> no tiene entrada propia en el diccionario, pero aparece mencionado en el cuerpo de las siguientes entradas		
ID	Sigla, acrónimo, abreviatura o símbolo	Favorito
1	<i>body</i>	★
2	<i>gland</i>	★
3	<i>pituitary</i>	★
4	<i>process</i>	★
5	<i>tentorium</i>	★
Se muestran 1 a 5 de 5 resultados		

Clearly, a combination of words is a better strategy to use, if possible. In the advanced search mode, only one term can be entered in the search box when *término español* is selected as the search criterion. The solution is to enter one term and then use the operator *and* to enter a second term. However, this rather lengthy process can be overridden using the following IWS settings:

IntelliWebSearch settings for an advanced search in Spanish	
Start string:	http://www.cosnautas.com/index.php?pag=libro_buscador_avanzado&_criterio=T_ES&_busqueda=
Finish string:	&_condicion=

So, with a little tweaking, the *Libro rojo* provides meaningful results for English translators. But is it really worth it? After all, the excellent *Diccionario de términos médicos*⁵ is published in Spanish to English in print as well as online.

However, the *Libro rojo* is not simply a bilingual dictionary. It has other unsuspected benefits.

Knowledge source

Each entry comes with a discussion of possible solutions, if appropriate, and this usually entails an explanation of the term itself. Therefore, the entry for *fracture* has a long list of types of fractures; *free radicals* explains what radicals are; and *Osler's disease* includes an etymological analysis of the name.

Some entries are glossed in much more detail, even warranting the use of tables to provide fuller explanations. *Euthanasia*, for example, is discussed in fascinating detail in Table E6. The periodic table is explained in Table P2, with complementary tables providing even more information. A list of all these tables would provide a useful point of access, because at present they can only be accessed by chance.

English usage

Another unsuspected benefit for English translators is the help that the *Libro rojo* provides in terms of English usage.

Fernando A. Navarro unpicks the meanings of similar English terms with the aim of finding the best solution for Spanish translators. Unknowingly, he helps English translators chose the right term for their translations by explaining their differences.

For example,

Sexo: Should this be translated as gender or sex?

Eficacia: Should this be translated as efficacy or effectiveness?

Convulsion: Should this be translated as seizure or convulsion?

False friends

False friends are translators' worst enemies. A quick check in the *Libro rojo* will avoid all sorts of embarrassing translation errors:

Spanish	False friend error	English as confirmed in the <i>Libro rojo</i>
comité de seguimiento	follow-up committee	monitoring committee
conmoción cerebral	brain commotion	concussion
ensayo abierto	open trial	open-label trial
principio activo	active principle	active substance
velocidad de sedimentación globular	globular sedimentation speed	erythrocyte sedimentation rate

Back translations

The *Libro rojo* is also a useful resource for back translation projects. In international clinical trials, back translations play an important role by checking that patient information sheets and informed consent forms have been consistently translated into different languages. When back translating into English, the *Libro rojo* offers vital clues about terms that have been challenging for the forward translator. In fact, translators who use

the *Libro rojo* in their work (LR-assisted translators) are readily identified, and this makes the back translation task easier. Here are some examples of terms found in the work of avid LR-assisted translators, the correct back translation, and the term that would probably been used by a non-LR-assisted translator.

LR-assisted translator	Back translation	Non-LR-assisted translator
hemorragia digestiva oculta	occult blood loss	pérdida de sangre oculta
crisis de angustia	panic attack	crisis o ataque de pánico
leucemia mielógena aguda	acute myeloid leukemia	leucemia mieloide aguda
cláusula de confidencialidad	privacy clause	cláusula de privacidad
uso para una indicación no recogida en la ficha técnica	off-label use	uso fuera de ficha técnica

To sum up, *Cosnautas* is an excellent new resource for Spanish to English translators. It has many unsuspected benefits that make the subscription worthwhile. The three-day demo period is not long enough to discover all its possibilities, and in the case of into English translators, who absolutely need the advanced search features that are only accessible through the gold subscription, *Cosnautas Oro* is the only way to go.

Notas

1. <<http://microscopic-haematology.com/RedCellNomenclature.pdf>> [accessed: 20.V.2014].
2. <<http://www.tremedica.org/glosarios/siglas/index.html>> [accessed: 20.V.2014].
3. *Diccionario crítico de dudas inglés-español de medicina*. Segunda edición (2005). Madrid: McGraw-Hill.
4. <www.intelliwebsearch.com> [accessed: 20.V.2014].
5. Real Academia Nacional de Medicina (2011): *Diccionario de términos médicos*. Madrid: Médica Panamericana.

