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# The Impact of the Source Language in Spanish Translations: A Survey on English Counterfactuals ‘Should have’

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## RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article montre que la construction la plus fréquente en espagnol pour traduire *Should have* + Participe passé est *Debería haber*. Cette préférence n'est pas cohérente avec les usages en langue des hispanophones natifs en ce qui concerne : (i) le rôle peu fréquent des verbes modaux dans l'expression de la subjectivité en espagnol ; (ii) l'emploi proéminent des verbes modaux en position du participe passé ; et (iii) le rôle principal du subjonctif passé dans l'accès à des interprétations contrefactuelles. Notre étude se base sur un corpus de textes issus des Sciences Sociales réunissant 1,3 million de mots (8 essais, 4 biographies politiques et 2 romans dystopiques). Au total, nous avons analysé 95 phrases contenant l'occurrence *Should have* + Participe passé. Ensuite, nous avons croisé les traductions avec un corpus de référence en espagnol réunissant 145 million de mots (CREA). La préférence des traducteurs pour *Debería haber* comporte un effet dans la lisibilité des textes méta, car celle-ci entraîne un renversement dans les fréquences des constructions généralement associées au domaine de l'irréel. Nos résultats fournissent des indices empiriques pour échapper à la traduction mot-à-mot *Debería haber*, tel qu'éviter les périphrases d'infinitif ou favoriser les temps du subjonctif.

## ABSTRACT

The present article shows that the most frequent way of translating *Should have* + Past participle in Spanish is the word-by-word translation *Debería haber*. This preference is not coherent with the language use of natives at three levels: (i) the marginal role of modal verbs to express the speaker's subjectivity in Spanish; (ii) the preferred use of modal verbs in the past participle position (e.g., *No hubiese debido tener libros*); and (iii) the predominant use of the pluperfect subjunctive as a prompting tense for counterfactual readings. Our survey is based on 1.3 million-word Social Sciences corpus covering 8 essays, 4 political biographies and 2 dystopian novels. In all, 95 sentences containing *should have* + past participle were analyzed. The translations were crossed with a reference corpus in Spanish containing 154 million words (CREA). The translators' preference by *Debería haber* has an effect in the output texts' readability since it implies a reversal in the frequencies of the Spanish constructions pertaining to the *irrealis* semantic domain. Our results provide empirical cues to prevent the word-by-word translation *Debería haber*, such as avoiding infinitive periphrastic constructions or favoring subjunctive mood's tenses.

## MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS

transfert dissimulé, ordre des constituants, verbes modaux, irréel, mode subjonctif  
covert transfer, word-order, modal verbs, *irrealis*, subjunctive mood

Just as we can talk about situations which we believe to be the case, we can talk about situations that might have been performed but were not. Typically, this is done by counterfactual sentences, such as *The police should have intervened*. The present study analyzes the Spanish translations of the construction ‘*Should have + past participle*’ in counterfactual contexts. Previous studies have shown crosslinguistic differences in the way languages encode counterfactuality (Van linden & Verstraete 2008). These authors have shown that there is no one single dedicated marker to encode counterfactuality across languages but rather a combination of elements that have other functions in other contexts (i.e., past-tense markers, aspectual markers, modal markers). In Spanish, the use of the perfect subjunctive is significantly higher compared to the combination of the past conditional and a modal marker (Repiso 2014). If the grammatical categories to express counterfactuality change from one language to another, the question arises whether translators replicate the source construction or use prominent constructions of the target language. Does English, as a source language, have an impact on the Spanish translations either structurally or semantically? The present survey describes the translators’ output constructions and confronts them to the usage-based constructions of native Spanish.

Our objective is twofold. First, we aim to describe the linguistic features of the different constructions provided by translators in Spanish. Special attention will be paid to the description of (i) the tenses and moods more frequently used by translators, (ii) the word order of the output constructions in Spanish, and (iii) the Spanish modal markers related to *Should*. Second, we aim to test whether the constructions provided by translations are coherent with the language use of native Spaniards. This will be done by searching equivalent items in the Spanish reference corpus CREA. The results of our survey should contribute to elucidate the impact of the source construction *Should have + Past participle* in Spanish counterfactual readings, from a structural and a semantic viewpoint. Among his translation rules, Newmark (1986 : 129) states that a translator should not translate an SL item into a TL item which would normally and naturally have another equivalent in the SL. In the present article *Should have + Past participle* is considered and analyzed as a unit of translation. Because compounded by three elements –i.e., a modal marker, an auxiliary verb and a lexical verb–, this construction is likely to be translated by what Newmark (1986 : 141) labels ‘micro’-procedures (e.g., transcriptions, literal translations) subject to syntactical constraints and lexical systems.

Since word-for-word translation would give in Spanish a non-deviant form from a grammatical perspective (i.e., *Debería haber + Past participle*), we make the hypothesis that this will be a prominent solution for translators. If our hypothesis turns to be true, then one might wonder whether modal markers are equally used by English and Spanish native speakers. Significant differences have been demonstrated between Spanish and French on evaluative markers suggesting that native speakers of French tend to ‘modalize’ their discourse, whereas Spanish speakers rarely use modal verbs in counterfactual contexts (Repiso 2013). This typological difference has semantic implications and thus, denoting evaluative judgments by means of modal verbs seems to be a specificity of French that Spanish somehow lacks. The analysis of *Should have + Past participle* addresses this question with special emphasis. Our article is organized as follows. In the first section, we highlight some typological differences between languages that have been at the origins of important translation studies. Subsequently we introduce the semantic domain of counterfactuality to which the construction *Should have + Past participle* is frequently associated. In the third section we present the corpus of written texts and translations that we have reunited, as well as the methods used (i) to elicit the *Should have* occurrences and (ii) to run statistical analyses. The fourth section is devoted to the presentation

of our results. In the fifth section we discuss our findings and relate them to previous studies. Conclusions are drawn in the sixth section.

## 1. Contrastive linguistics and translation studies

Crosslinguistic studies have shown that different languages might have different salient categories to express time, space, movement or irrealis (Carroll et al. 2008, Van Linden & Verstraete 2008). In general these differences lead L2 learners to explicitly replicate the salient categories of their L1 in their oral productions (Slobin 1996, Carroll et al. 2012, Hung 2012, Repiso 2014). As granted *connoisseurs* of metalinguistic issues, translators prevent themselves from overt transfers. Previous surveys at the crossroad of crosslinguistic and translation studies have given evidence on the attention paid by translators to the salient categories of the target language (Fabricius-Hansen 1999, Doherty 2004, Slobin 2005). Slobin (2005) has shown that the French, Spanish and Portuguese translations of *The Hobbit* (Tolkien, 1937) are less specific regarding the expressions of path and manner compared to the German and Dutch translations. Slobin (2005) explains this result because of the grammatical devices available in Germanic languages, which typically encode motion by satellite verbs (go in / out / down / up), whereas Romance languages generally encode motion by lexical verbs (*entrar, salir, subir, bajar*)<sup>1</sup>. Satellite verbs allow German languages to be more specific in the description of motion events concerning manner, path and trajectory compared to Romance languages. In the aim of being coherent with their native language, the Romance translators of *The Hobbit* frequently leave out some spatial details present in the source language.

Fabricius-Hansen (1999) has approached typological differences from a macro-structural perspective comparing German and Norwegian. Since German texts present a relatively higher degree of subordination and Norwegian texts are characterized by a more paratactic style, her survey focuses on how Norwegian translators deal with the problem of informational density. The way in which it is solved is by ‘sententialization’ (i.e., one source sentence is translated by a sequence of independent sentences) or by ‘clausalization’ (i.e. rendering non-clausal source constituents as subordinate clauses without changing sentence boundaries). Doherty (2004) explores the constraints of English and German regarding the word order of attributes and appositions at a phrasal level. These typological differences frequently lead German translators to reorganize dependencies in their output texts. Doherty (2004) claims that not to do so could be seen as a violation of the target language expectations or as presenting information in a discourse-inappropriate way. The above studies suggest that being aware of the typological differences between languages is a critical ingredient of translation’s good practices. A specific grammatical property of English is its high level of composition (i.e., when two or more radical elements form a single word). This linguistic feature was described by Sapir (1921), alongside to affixation and word-order, as a linguistic process allowing to pair languages within a formal taxonomy. The word-formation variable has been analyzed by Lefer and Cartoni (2013) in order to test whether the English *-less* and *-un* negative affixes have an effect in translated texts. Much of the contribution of linguistics to descriptive translation studies lies in providing reliable variables –e.g., language pair, formal properties– that may work as explanatory factors. The present study focuses on the translations of *Should have* + Past participle into Spanish. Our objective is to test whether the word by word equivalent *Debería haber* + Past participle is privileged by translators or, conversely, whether they use others constructions not so formally similar to the source one but, nonetheless, used in Spanish. This question is actually related with

the notion of covert transfer or ‘positive transfer’ accordingly to Toury (1995)<sup>2</sup>. We will henceforth talk about covert transfer as a subtle influence which leads to a form that is possible in the source language but does not correspond to what the native speakers normally do in such a context. Covert transfers are hardly recognizable to the reader because the output construction is still grammatical. Nonetheless, covert transfers hence a shift at the level of frequency ratios between more or less frequent constructions pertaining to a specific semantic domain. In this regard, we find Newmark’s principle of frequency (1986 : 145) a reliable cue to validate a translation<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. The notion of counterfactuality

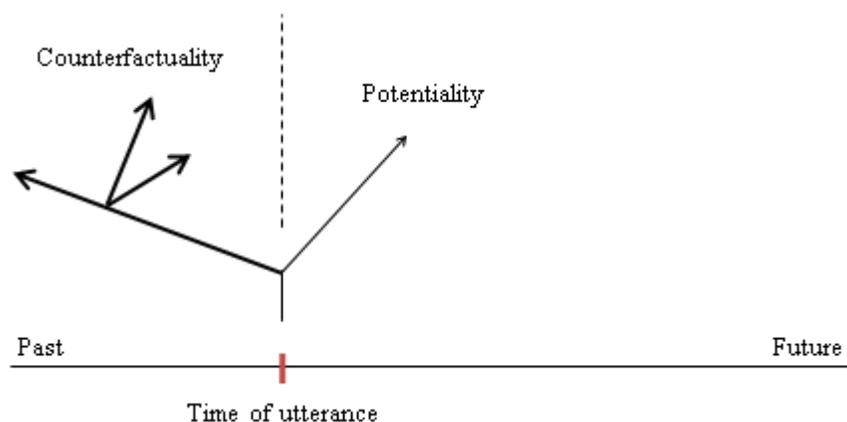
The present study investigates the translation of the English construction *Should have* + Past participle, which is generally associated to counterfactual meanings. Pietrandrea (2010) defines counterfactuality as a subdomain of a larger semantic category that she calls *irreality*. From a semantic viewpoint, counterfactuality combines the apparently contradictory features of potentiality and non-actualization (Versatrete 2005). Counterfactual sentences express something that was desired but did not happen, or an action that was intended but not carried out in the end, like in example (1).

- (1) The police should have done something to prevent the killing (Van linden & Verstraete, 2008 : 1866)

The speaker’s state-of-knowledge at the moment of the topic time plays a crucial role in processing a meaning as potential or counterfactual. Potentiality implies the speaker’s uncertainty about the actualization of the propositional content, whereas counterfactuality implies the speaker’s certainty about the non-actualization of the propositional content. One is more likely to be certain about present or past states-of-affairs rather than future states-of-affairs. This is why some authors insist to place counterfactuality in the non-future time (Iatridou 2000, Veters 1994). The temporal span to which counterfactual sentences refer to is actually a future within the past (Grevisse & Goosse 2008). Thus, in example (1) the construction *Should have* + Past participle expresses a temporal value of non-factual posteriority rooted in the past.

FIGURE 1

### Graphical representation of other possible worlds



Past tense morphology has been mentioned as a component of counterfactual morphology (Iatridou 2000), all along with modal markers (Van linden & Verstraete 2008). Typological

differences between Spanish and French have been observed in the oral production of counterfactual scenarios (Repiso 2014). In a mutation task consisting of providing alternative scenarios to factual states-of-affaires native Spanish speakers significantly used the perfect subjunctive with no modal markers (e.g., *la policía hubiera intervenido*), whereas native French speakers privileged the combination of the past conditional and a modal marker (e.g., *la police aurait dû intervenir*). The frequencies of these grammatical devices proved to be a major difference between French and Spaniards.

In Spanish, counterfactual readings can be conveyed by different tenses and moods. According to grammarians, the most recurrent tenses are the pluperfect subjunctive (2 & 3), the past infinitive within iterative sentences (4), and the past conditional within *if*-clauses' main sentences (5). From a semantic viewpoint, example (2) usually denotes the speaker's dismissing about the topic or theme conversation. The pluperfect subjunctive is used in a concessive manner to reject an eventuality that the speaker considers false (i.e., *In that case they had warned me*). Within negative sentences (3), the pluperfect subjunctive denotes a polarity and, at the same time, asserts the lexical content of the verbal segment (i.e., *You was actually late*).

- (2) Me **hubieran avisado** (RAE 2009: 3136)  
*(In that case) they had warned me*
- (3) No te **hubieras demorado** tanto (RAE 2009: 3136)  
*You better ain't be so late*
- (4) **Haber venido** ayer! (RAE 2009: 3572)  
*You should have come yesterday*
- (5) Si se lo hubieran explicado, lo **habría entendido** (RAE 2009: 3573)  
*If they had explained it to her/him, she/he would have understood*

Beyond flexional features like tenses the notion of probability can also be encoded in Spanish by lexical means, like the periphrastic segments *Tener que* + Infinitive and *Deber* + Infinitive. The former is more frequent than the latter and conveys a modal message that is presented by the speaker as something inevitable (RAE 2009 : 2144). Unlikely, the periphrastic *Deber* + Infinitive conveys a message socially desirable or accordingly to the norms of a given community. Both of these formulae are used to denote epistemic values in a wide range of indicative tenses such as the present indicative (6), the Spanish *imperfecto* (7), the past simple (8) and the present conditional (9). Thus, the periphrases *Tener que* or *Deber* + Infinitive can be seen as different points within a scale of intensity or evaluative language in Spanish. This raises the question whether the construction *Should have* is more frequently used in English with a binding connotation or a desirable connotation. It may well be that in some contexts the semantic equivalence of *Should have* is the Spanish *Tener que*, whereas in other contexts *Deber que* is more accurate. Anyway, the translator seems to have some degree of choice here.

- (6) Son muy listos y además **tienen que haber hecho** estudios (RAE 2009: 2145)  
*They are very smart, plus they might have completed some degree*
- (7) Escobedo **debía haber llegado** a Madrid, pero no había noticias (RAE 2009: 2145)  
*Escobedo should have arrived at Madrid though there was no confirmation*
- (8) No me extraña que se matara [...], **debí haberlo previsto** (RAE 2009: 2145)

*Her/his death didn't surprise me [...], I should have expected it*

(9) **Tendría que encender** las luces [...] y gritar de dolor (RAE 2009: 2144)  
*I/she/he would turn the lights on [...] and scream out with pain*

(10) **Habría que haber traído** uno aquí (RAE 2009: 2148)  
*Should we have brought one of those here*

(11) Eva Girón salió de aquella viudedad con una alegría que, en todo caso, **pudo haber sorprendido** a quienes no conocían bien el estado de su relación con Umbrosa (RAE 2009 : 2153)  
*Eva Giron escaped from her widow condition with a joy that could somehow have surprised those who did not know the state of her relationship with Umbrosa*

Other periphrases expressing some degree of probability are *Haber que* + Infinitive (10) and *Poder* + Infinitive (11). We will discuss some of the examples above in Section 4.2 during the presentation of the Spanish translations.

### 3. Corpus and methods

Our study is based on 1.3 million-word corpus covering 8 essays, 4 political biographies and 2 dystopian novels. Our purpose was to collect a sample of texts related to Social Sciences. We reunited texts from political activists Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky (2 each), political leaders Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and Malala Yousafzai, psychologist Daniel Kahneman and feminists Audre Lorde, Silvia Federici and Judith Butler. We also included Virginia Woolf's essay *A room of one's own*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and George Orwell's *1984*.

We used the freeware toolkit AntConc to identify the contextualized occurrences of *Should have* + Past participle. We elicited 95 sentences containing this item. We stored every single sentence carrying the targeted item within a table in a Word file. For the sake of transparency, every occurrence was given a code composed by the initials of the author plus a figure (e.g., VW#01, BO#95). This code appears in the Results section to quote or comment some of our examples. Working with AntConc allowed us to quantify the occurrences of *Should have* + Past participle per manuscript and thus, to have a picture of the authors who used it more and less frequently (cf. Figures 2 & 3).

In general, we proceed to identify the equivalent translations in Spanish by using AntConc although a small part was done manually<sup>4</sup>. Every translated sentence was stored right after the English source sentence in a Word table to allow a segmented overview. Then we analyzed the grammatical features of the Spanish segment corresponding to *Should have* + Past participle (e.g., tenses and verbal moods of the 95 translations, presence or absence of modal markers, word order) and dumped the data to an Excel file. Finally, the Spanish translations were crossed with a reference corpus in Spanish containing 154 million words (CREA), which is open and accessible online at <http://www.rae.es>.

TABLE 1

#### Corpus' source texts and translations

	Original	Translation
AL	LORDE, Audre (1982): <i>Zami: A New Spelling of My Name</i> . London: Persephone Press.	<i>Zami. una nueva forma de escribir mi nombre</i> (2010): Translated by María DURANTE. Madrid: Horas y horas.

BO	OBAMA, Barack (2004): <i>Dreams from My Father</i> . New York: Three Rivers Press.	<i>Los sueños de mi padre</i> (2008): Translated by Fernando MIRANDA y Evaristo PÁEZ RASMUSSEN. Granada: Almed.
DK	KAHNEMAN, Daniel (2011): <i>Thinking fast, thinking slow</i> . London: Penguin.	<i>Pensar rápido, pensar despacio</i> (2012): Translated by Joaquín CHAMORRO MIELKE. Barcelona: Debate.
GO	ORWELL, George (1949): <i>1984</i> . London: Secker & Warburg.	<i>1984</i> (1980): Translated by Rafael VÁZQUEZ ZAMORA. Barcelona: Salvat.
JB	BUTLER, Judith (1999): <i>Gender Trouble</i> . New York: Routledge.	<i>El género en disputa</i> (2007): Translated by María Antonia MUÑOZ. Barcelona: Paidós.
MY	YOUSAFZAI, Malala, LAMB, Christina (2013): <i>I Am Malala</i> . London: Orion.	<i>Yo soy Malala</i> (2013): Translated by Julia FERNÁNDEZ. Madrid: Alianza.
NC	CHOMSKY, Noam (2003): <i>Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance</i> . New York: Metropolitan.	<i>Hegemonía o supervivencia. El dominio mundial de EEUU</i> (2004): Translated by Carlos José RESTREPO. Bogotá: Norma.
NC <sub>2</sub>	CHOMSKY, Noam (1989): <i>Necessary Illusions. Thought Control in Democratic Societies</i> . New York: South End Press.	<i>Ilusiones necesarias. Control del pensamiento en las sociedades democráticas</i> (1991): Translated by Loreto BRAVO DE URQUIA & Juan José SAAVEDRA ESTEBAN. Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias.
NK	KLEIN, Naomi (2000): <i>No Logo</i> . London: Flamingo.	<i>No Logo</i> (2001): Translated by Alejandro JOCKL. Barcelona: Paidós.
NK <sub>2</sub>	KLEIN, Naomi (2007): <i>The Shock Doctrine</i> . New York: Metropolitan.	<i>La doctrina del shock</i> (2007) Translated by Isabel FUENTES GARCÍA, Albino SANTOS MOSQUERA & Remedios DIÉGUEZ DIÉGUEZ. Barcelona: Paidós.
NM	MANDELA, Nelson (1994): <i>Long Walk to Freedom</i> . Boston: BackBay.	<i>El largo camino hacia la libertad</i> (2012): Translated by Antonio RESINES & Herminia BEVIA. Madrid: Aguilar.
RB	BRADBURY, Ray (1953): <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> . New York: Ballantine Books.	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (2006): Translated by Alfredo CRESPO. Almería: Ediciones Perdidas.
SF	FEDERICI, Silvia (2004): <i>Caliban and the Witch</i> . New York: Autonomedia.	<i>Calibán y la bruja</i> . (2010). Translated by Verónica HENDEL & Leopoldo Sebastián TOUZA. Madrid: Traficantes de sueños.
VW	WOOLF, Virginia (1929): <i>A room of one's own</i> . London: The Hogarth Press Ltd.	<i>Una habitación propia</i> . (2008). Translated by Laura PUJOL. Barcelona: Seix Barral.

## 4. Corpus and methods

### 4.1 The English corpus

The quantification of each manuscript's words and the quantification of the *Should have* items gave us an approximate volume about the role of counterfactuality in conceptualizations. The volume of the *irrealis* readings expressed by *Should have* + Past participle is 0.005% in our English sample. Of course counterfactuality can be expressed by other means not analyzed here, like *if*-clauses or nominalizations. But still the message is clear: discourses referring to counterfactual scenarios are only a small part out of what we communicate. Biographies turned to be one of the most prolific types of text to obtain *Should have* items (17 occurrences in Obama's *Dreams from My Father* and 12 in Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*). This seems to be logic with the motivation of writing such a text and the intellectual exercise of watching back to the past with some degree of criticism.

Interestingly, the use of *Should have* + Past participle was not correlated to the use of *Should*. Kahneman's *Thinking fast, thinking slow* presented the higher ratio of *Should* (259 occurrences) but only 3 of them were succeeded by *have* plus a past participle. This dropped Kahneman's ratio to 0.001% in what concerns the number of *Should have* + Past participle per words. The same ratio was observed in Federici's and Butler's texts. As said above, the sample's

mean of *Should have* + Past participle per words was 0.005%, and this is precisely the value found in Malala’s biography. The highest ratio of *Should have* per words was observed in Woolf’s essay (0.04%) followed by Obama’s and Bradbury’s texts (0.01% respectively). This huge gap between the English author and the rest of the sample’s writers can be observed in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

**Use of *Should* and *Should have* + Past participle per author**

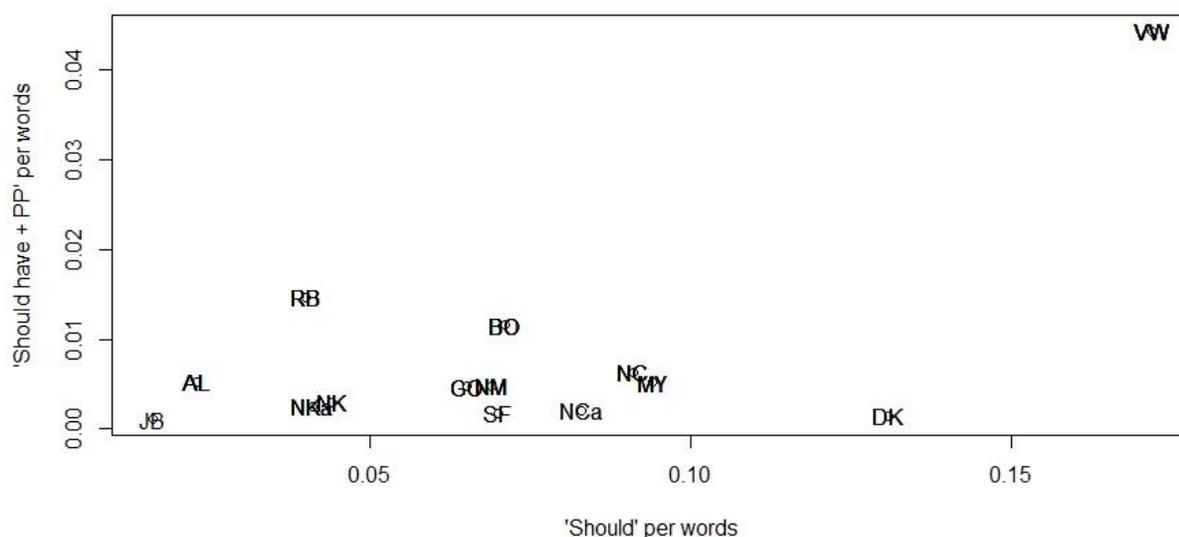
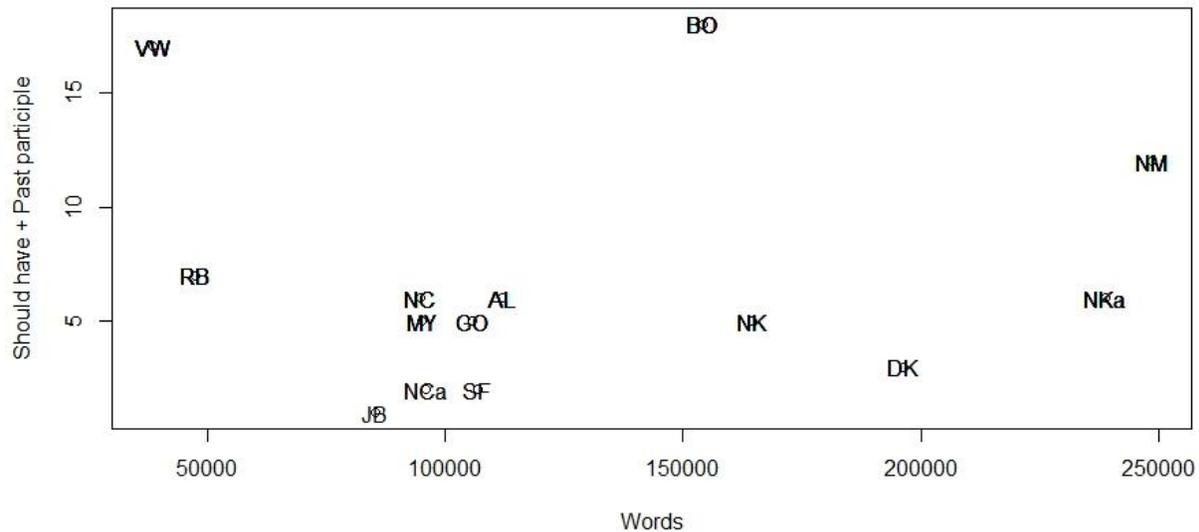


Figure 2 highlights the difference between Woolf’s and the rest of the group regarding the use of *Should* in relative terms. Woolf’s text contains more occurrences of *Should* per words than any other (0.17%). The second text in which *Should* is more used per words is Kahneman’s *Thinking fast, thinking slow* (0.13%). This means that *A room of one’s own* is a text highly modalized in itself. In section 4.2 we will see whether this stylistic feature has an impact on the Spanish translation. Conversely, the lowest ratio of *Should* per words comes from Butler’s and Lorde’s texts (0.01% and 0.02%, respectively). The mean’s group of *Should* per words is 0.07%. Figure 3 shows, for every manuscript, the relationship between the occurrences of *Should* and *Should have* + Past participle per words. A summary of the numerical data for each author is available in the Annexes (cf. Annexe 1). The group’s standard deviation regarding the frequencies of *Should* is 0.042, whereas the group’s standard deviation regarding *Should have* + Past participle is 0.01. This means that the data points regarding the amount of *Should have* + Past participle are clustered more closely around the mean compared to the *Should* values, which are spread slightly further from the mean. Therefore, Figure 2 illustrates a more compact group regarding the frequencies of *Should have* + Past participle and a more eclectic group regarding the frequencies of *Should*.

FIGURE 3

**Frequency of *Should have* + Past Participle per author**



#### 4.2 The Spanish translations

Our results shows that *Should have + Past participle* is translated in Spanish by repertoire of verbal tenses and periphrastic solutions. For example:

- (12) Todo **debería haber sido** diferente en Rosario [NK#23]  
*It should have been a different Rosario*
- (13) Después de cada accidente de aviación conocemos historias de pasajeros que no **debieron haber tomado** el avión [DK#21]  
*After every plane crash there are special stories about passengers who “should not” have been on the plane*
- (14) Les dijimos que **debían haber visto** la isla en 1964 [NM#49]  
*We told them that they should have seen the island in 1964*
- (15) No **hubiese debido tener** libros [RB#58]  
*She shouldn't have had books*
- (16) Así sea, **hubiera dicho** yo [VW#04]  
*So be it, I should have said*
- (17) A veces pienso que **debí quedarme** en Chicago y luchar allí. [AL#77]  
*Sometimes I think I should have stayed and fought it out in Chicago*

From a formal viewpoint, translations (12) to (14) share the word order of the source construction (i.e., Modal marker + Auxiliary verb + Past participle). Both translations (15) and (16) carry the Spanish subjunctive but the difference between them is that number (16) lacks of a modal verb. From these general observations, we can distinguish different factors allowing us to classify the Spanish translations: (i) word order<sup>5</sup>, (ii) the presence or absence of a verbal form related to *Deber* (Should), and (iii) the main verb's mood. These features were accurately

described one by one for each of the 95 occurrences in an Excel table (cf. Annexe 2). The detailed description of these variables allowed us to run statistical analyses using the software R. The point to do so was to know whether the presence of a modal verb was correlated to a certain word-order or to a certain length across the translated constructions.

The most frequent pattern used by translators is *Debería haber* + Past participle (29.5%). This construction was followed by the *Debía haber* + Past participle (13.7%), and by the pluperfect subjunctive with no modal verb (12.6%). The construction formed by the pluperfect subjunctive carrying the modal *Deber* in the past participle position was used in 9.5% of the translations. In other words, the preferred option by translators was example (12), which is a word-by-word translation of the English source construction. The second translation more frequently used corresponded to example (14), which consists of the Spanish *imperfect*. Note that both of these translations replicate the word-order of the English source construction (i.e., a conjugated modal verb followed by the auxiliary verb's infinitive followed by the construction's main verb in the past participle position). This is to say that the two most frequent translations share the same semantic and word-order patterns, which appear in Annexe 2 under the acronyms of MAV & CIP, respectively. Together, these translations represent 43.1% of the total<sup>6</sup>. This result suggests that the English source construction has a notable effect in the word-order and the semantics of the Spanish translations. The third and the fourth translations most frequently used corresponded to examples (16) and (15), respectively, which both contain subjunctive verbal forms. Together they represent 22.1% of the total translations but, unlikely examples (12) and (14), their semantic and word-order patterns do not converge. The four most frequent translations discussed above –examples (12), (14), (16), (15)– represented 65.2% of the total. In Table 2, they have been highlighted in grey to distinguish them from other translations relatively less used.

Table 2 shows a great variability in the Spanish constructions provided by translators. This is because of some constructions from which only one or two occurrences were elicited, like the progressive periphrasis *Ir a* + Infinitive (*iba a ser*), the modal verb *Poder* (*podía*) or some forms from the pluperfect conditional carrying *Haber* as a main verb (i.e., *habrían transferido*; *habrían tenido que ser*). In addition, we observed the use of an infinitive as well as two verbal forms within adverbial constructions (i.e., *en lugar de ir a parar*; *como debía*; *de lo que debía*).

TABLE 2

**Translations of *Should have* + Past participle (n = 95)**

	Occurrences	Main verb's mood
<i>Debería haber</i> + Past participle	28	35 (36.8%)
<i>Debería / tendría que</i> + Infinitive	5	
<i>Habrían</i> + Past participle	2	
<i>Debí / debimos / debió haber</i> + Past participle	5	31 (32.6%)
<i>Debí / debió / debieron</i> + Infinitive	6	
<i>Debía haber</i> + Past participle	13	

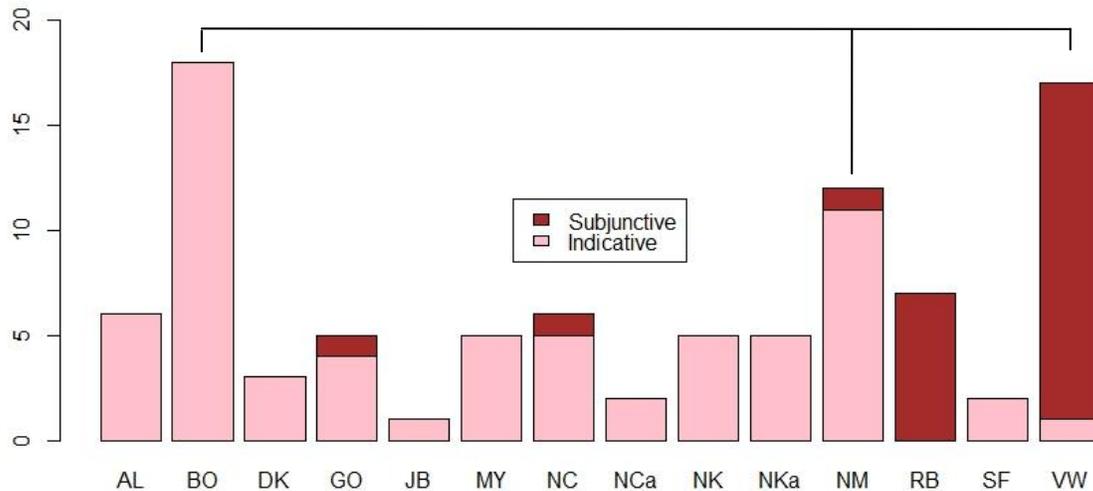
<i>Debía/debía de</i> + Infinitive	3	
<i>Iba a</i> + Infinitive	1	
<i>Podía</i>	1	
<i>Han/hemos debido</i> + Infinitive	2	
<i>Hubiera/se debido</i> + Infinitive	9	26 (27.3%)
<i>Hubiera/se</i> + Past participle	12	
<i>Haya/hayan</i> + Past participle	2	
Bare present subjunctive (e.g., <i>volviera</i> )	3	
Others		
- Adverbial constructions (e.g., <i>como debía, de lo que debía, en lugar de ir a parar</i> )	3	

The main verb's mood more frequently used was the conditional, with a frequency of 35 out of 95 (36.8%), followed by the indicative (32.6%) and the subjunctive (27.3%). The comparison of these frequencies revealed no significant differences,  $X^2(3, N = 95) = 1.9582, p = 0.37$ . This result means that the subjunctive, the indicative and the conditional are similarly used across the translated constructions in Spanish.

A factor that revealed significant differences was the presence of the modal verb *Deber* within the translated constructions. Independently of the tense or the main verb's mood, *Deber* appeared in 71 out of 95 translations. Chi-squared analysis revealed that this feature is a salient pattern of the output constructions,  $X^2(2, N = 95) = 52.725, p < 0.001$ . The high frequency of *Deber* contrasted with the low frequency of the modal expression *Tener que*, from which we obtained 6 occurrences<sup>7</sup>. In five of them *Tener que* appeared as the past participle of a pluperfect subjunctive (e.g., *Hubieses tenido que verla*). Only in one occurrence *Tener que* appeared as the past participle of a past conditional (e.g., *Habrían tenido que ser idénticos*).

FIGURE 4

**Verbal mood within Spanish translations (n=95)**

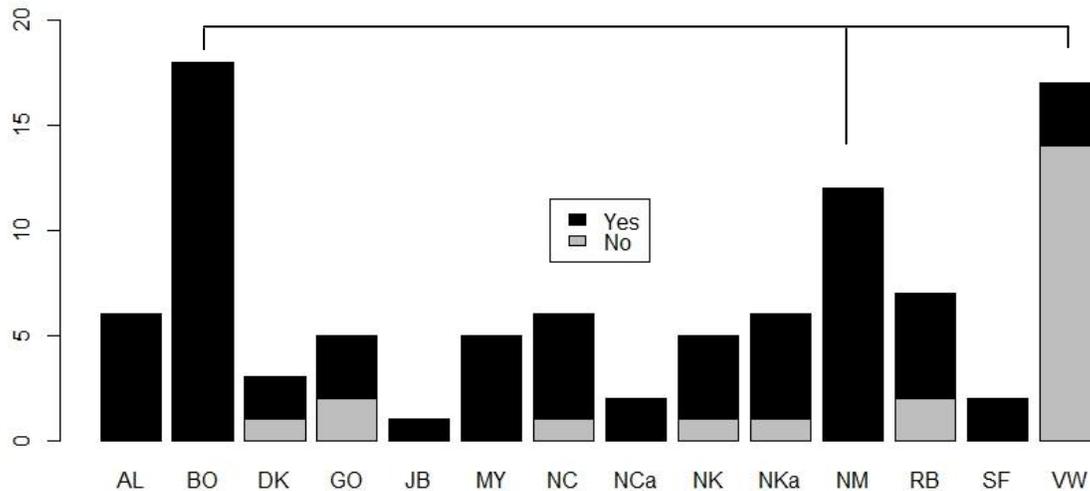


*P*-value = 0.0006 (resulting from the *t*-test analysis)

The comparison between the translated constructions in Spanish revealed critical differences between some translators. Concerning the tense variable, we found a significant difference between Laura Pujol's *Una habitación propia* on the one hand, and Antonio Resines & Herminia Bavia's *El largo camino hacia la libertad* as well as Fernando Miranda & Evaristo Páez Rasmussen's *Los sueños de mi padre* on the other hand,  $t(95) = 4.2426$ ,  $p = 0.0006$  (cf. Figure 4). The pluperfect subjunctive with no modal markers was more frequently used by the former (e.g., *hubiera hecho*), whereas the latter privileged the past conditional marked by the modal *Deber* (e.g., *debería haber hecho*). Figure 4 reveals shows that Alfredo Crespo's *Fahrenheit 451* is the only translator to join Laura Pujol's preference for subjunctive tenses. But unlikely Pujol, Crespo tends to mark his translations with the modal *Deber* in the past participle position (e.g., *hubiera debido*). Figure 5 shows that keeping a modal marker is a generalized pattern in the translations of María Durante's *Zami*, Julia Fernandez's *Yo soy Malala*, Fernando Miranda & Evaristo Páez Rasmussen's *Los sueños de mi padre* and Antonio Resines & Herminia Bavia's *El largo camino hacia la libertad*.

FIGURE 5

Presence of modal markers related to "should" within Spanish translations (n=95)



$P$ -value =  $2.012^{-07}$  (resulting from the  $t$ -test analysis)

Concerning the maintain of a modal marker in the Spanish translations, Pearson's correlation test confirmed a significant relationship between the word order 'Modal marker + Auxiliary verb + Past participle' and the use of tenses from the indicative mood,  $r = 7.4341$ ,  $n = 95$ ,  $p = 5.064e-11$ . In other words, keeping the word order of the source language generally implies for the translator to exclude the subjunctive as a way to express counterfactuality in Spanish. Conversely, the use of the Spanish subjunctive allows disengaging from modal markers more likely compared to indicative predicates, as in example (18). Another factor that prevents from transferring modal markers in Spanish is the length of the output construction. Those compounded in Spanish by one or two units are less likely to contain *Should* equivalents, like in example (19).

- (18) Es apenas natural que las instituciones modernas de control del pensamiento -llamado con franqueza propaganda antes de que la palabra cayera en desuso por sus connotaciones totalitaristas- **hayan tenido origen** en las sociedades más libres [NC#29]

*It is only natural that the modern institutions of thought control—frankly called propaganda before the word became unfashionable because of totalitarian associations—**should have originated** in the most free societies*

- (19) Es una lástima tremenda que una mujer capaz de escribir así, con una mente que la naturaleza hacía vibrar y dada a la reflexión, **se viera empujada** a la cólera y la amargura [VW#08]

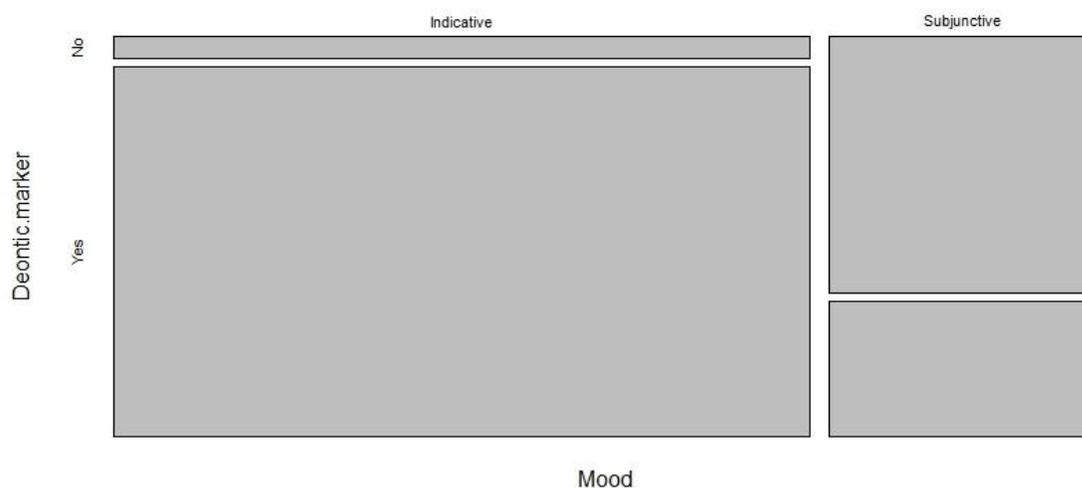
*It was a thousand pities that the woman who could write like that, whose mind was tuned to nature and reflection, **should have been** forced to anger and bitterness*

The Spanish translations composed by two verbal units or even just one represented 35.7% over the total (34 out of 95). Within this subgroup, verbal forms from the subjunctive were the most used (17 occurrences), followed by verbal forms from indicative tenses other than the conditional (10 occurrences) and by verbal forms from conditional tenses (7 occurrences). This means that the use of non-compounded tenses – as the present subjunctive in example (19) – prevents translators from including a modal verb in the output construction.

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of two factors across the translations: (i) the presence of a modal marker, and (ii) the mood of the verbal construction. Figure 6 shows that the combination of indicative tenses and a modal marker is the most frequent way of translating *Should have* + Past participle<sup>8</sup>. Conversely, the presence of modal markers is less frequent in those translations carrying subjunctive tenses.

FIGURE 6

#### Mood and modal markers in the Spanish translations



### 4.3 The reference Spanish corpus CREA

The results from our corpus were crossed with the Spanish reference corpus CREA, which contains 154 million words coming from 140.000 written documents. Interestingly, the Spanish output constructions more frequently elicited in our corpus represented 0.004% of the CREA's volume. This suggests that from a semantic viewpoint counterfactual readings are similarly represented in the conceptualizations of our English corpus (0.005%) and in the CREA Spanish corpus.

Searches throughout the CREA corpus were made on line by collocations of two verbal units. In Spanish, the collocations carrying a verbal form from *Deber* plus the auxiliary infinitive *Haber* (e.g., *debería haber*) are in general followed by a past participle. Because of this grammatical regularity, searches concerning this type of construction were rigorous and the frequencies obtained exact. As for the searches involving pluperfect subjunctives, we proceed by collocations made of the auxiliary *hubiera* or *hubiese* plus either a modal past participle –*debido* or *podido*– or a past participle coming from verbs that we assumed as being pretty much used in Spanish<sup>9</sup>. For this reason the results of Table 3 involving subjunctive tenses are approximate and we assume that the CREA corpus contains other occurrences that we have not accounted for. The results based on the CREA corpus revealed three features accounting for the expression of counterfactuality in Spanish. These features are the following:

- The predominant use of the pluperfect subjunctive as a prompting tense for counterfactual readings. Table 3 shows a higher use of the pluperfect subjunctive compared to the word-by-word translations *Debía / Debería / Debimos haber* + Past participle (5,316 occurrences versus 1,071, respectively). This ratio represents a great shift compared to the frequencies found in the

Spanish translations. The pluperfect subjunctive was used in 22% of the output constructions (cf. Table 2). However, in the CREA corpus it represents 83%. Interestingly, the frequency of modal verbs in the past participle position represented 38% within the pluperfect subjunctive – i.e., *Hubiera* or *hubiese podido / debido*–, which is similar to the amount found in our corpus (cf. Figure 6). This suggests that translators are aware over the frequencies of constructions combining a modal verb and a subjunctive tense in Spanish.

– The non-iconicity of modal verbs to express the speaker’s subjectivity in Spanish. The amount of occurrences marked by modal verbs in Table 3 represented less than the total’s half. Modal verbs *Deber* and *Poder* were elicited in 3,091 constructions against 3,296 modal-free constructions (48% versus 52%, respectively). This suggests that the role of modal verbs is less important than the use of subjunctive tenses in order to convey counterfactual readings in Spanish. Moreover, the low frequency of the verb *Deber* within pluperfect subjunctive occurrences (2,3%) arises the question whether it is perceived as a redundant combination for Spanish users.

– The use of modal verbs within verbal predicates in written Spanish, which generally appear in the past participle position (e.g., *No hubiese debido tener libros*). Table 3 suggests that modal verbs are more likely to be used in the past participle position within pluperfect subjunctives rather than as indicative tenses introducing a periphrasis (2,020 occurrences versus 1,071, respectively). In other words, Spanish privileges verbal sequences like *hubiera debido / podido* rather than *debería / debía haber*. This preference challenges the overuse of *debería / debía haber* by translators compared to *hubiera debido*. If we apply this observation to the translations of section 4.2, we conclude that the construction *No hubiese debido tener libros* (RB#58) is likely to sound more familiar to native Spanish readers than *Todo debería haber sido diferente en Rosario* (NK#23). Still both translations contain the modal verb *Deber* but whereas the latter replicates the word-order of the source language by means of the conditional tense, the former carries the pluperfect subjunctive.

TABLE 3

**CREA’s frequencies corresponding to the Spanish translations<sup>10</sup>**

	Occurrences	Indicative Vs. Subjunctive mood	Subtotal / Total
<i>Debería haber</i> + PP	587 (9.2%)	1,071 (16.7%)	6,378 / 154,000,000 (0.004%)
<i>Debía haber</i> + PP	464 (7.3%)		
<i>Debió/debimos haber</i> + PP	20 (0.3%)		
<i>Hubiera/se debido</i>	150 (2.3%)	5,316	
<i>Hubiera/se podido</i>	1,870		

	(29.3%)	(83.3%)	
<i>Hubiera/se</i> + Past participle	3,296 (51.7%)		

## 5. Discussion

The importance to produce output texts accordingly to the language use of native speakers and readers is crucial, especially when involving a major language as English. Resistance to transfers differs from one linguistic community to another and tolerance tend to increase when translation is carried out from a highly prestigious language/culture (Toury 1995 : 278). Positive transfers are less noticeable than negative ones, but still they can make the difference between *sourcier*-driven and *cibliste*-driven translators, to put it in Ladmiral's terms (2014).

“Attempts to produce translations which would represent their sources ‘as closely as possible’ are in constant tension with the attempts of establish in a target culture and language native-like texts.” (Toury 1995 : 276)

Our data confirmed the incidence of literal translation –fairly straightforward word-by-word processes (Pym 2014 : 13)- in Spanish related to the English construction *Should have* and thus, the impact of the source language at the morphosyntactic level. Previous results on this domain have shown that English translations involving the suffix *-less* and the prefix *un-* were marked differently depending on whether the source languages were Romance or Germanic (Lefer & Cartoni 2013). Our results suggest that translators practice is not coherent with the language use of native Spaniards in counterfactual contexts. We base this claim on the asymmetrical frequencies found in the CREA corpus and our sample concerning the construction *Debería haber* + Infinitive. Accordingly to grammarians, the access to non-factual interpretations in Spanish is genuinely prompted by the use of subjunctive tenses<sup>11</sup>.

“El modo subjuntivo aparece de forma destacada en una serie de contextos modales o modalizados que suelen llamarse no factuales (es decir, no reales, no verificados o ni experimentados), lo que sugiere que la flexión del subjuntivo podría considerarse la manifestación en forma gramatical de las nociones abstractas que corresponden a estos contextos.” (RAE 2009 : 1866)

*The subjunctive mood is used remarkably in certain modal or modalized contexts which are called non-factual (i.e., unreal, non-verified or non-experimented). This suggests that the flexional features of the subjunctive could be seen as the grammatical way to encode abstract notions that pertain to such contexts*

However, the translations analyzed proved to disregard the role of the Spanish subjunctive and favored in general the combination of conditional or indicative tenses with a modal marker. At a lexical level, translators preferred the modal marker *Deber* over *Tener que* –71 versus 6 occurrences, respectively–. The translators' overuse of *Deber* over *Tener que* is not coherent with the frequencies of both modal markers in Spanish, where the latter appears to be more frequent than the former (RAE 2009 : 2144).

Beyond the subjunctive mood, Spanish displays a variety of indicative tenses that may refer to counterfactual contexts. Among them, the so-called *auxiliares modales de obligación* fill the functions of the subjunctive mood by means of the Spanish *imperfecto* (RAE 2009 : 1871). This is a feature that Spanish translators seem to be aware of and they applied in 13.7% of the output

translations. This said, the past conditional plays also an important role and is considered a direct concurrent of the pluperfect subjunctive, although the latter is extensively more used in the American varieties of Spanish.

“Alternan *habría cantado* y *hubiera cantado* en la mayor parte de los contextos, como en *Yo lo {habría ~ hubiera} hecho*<sup>12</sup> de otro modo, si bien se ha observado que en el español americano es más común la segunda opción que la primera.” (RAE 2009 : 1795)

*In the majority of contexts 'habría cantado' and 'hubiera cantado' are used randomly –e.g., I {would have ~ have had} made it differently–. However it has been observed that the latter is more frequent than the former in the American varieties of Spanish*

Thus, we can conclude that the past conditional translations of *Should have* + Past participle are coherent with the Spanish prominent tenses in counterfactual contexts. But what factors explain its higher frequency over the pluperfect subjunctive translations? In Section 4, evidence has been given about the influence of the word-order and the length of translations in using the indicative or the subjunctive mood. We consider the construction *Debería haber* + Past participle a word-by-word translations that might result from both automatized mechanisms and linearity in the translator practices. Translating *Should have* by *Debería haber* has economic advantages in terms of time and cognitive processes for the translator. However, it has an effect in the readability of the output text by Spanish users, who assist to a reversal in the frequencies of the prominent constructions related to counterfactual contexts. The question arises whether the preference by *Debería haber* has to do with the translators' approach to the English construction *Should have*. To which extent do they approach and process it as one entity or as an organization of lower-level linguistic entities? Are translators who privilege the Spanish subjunctive with no modal verbs more influenced by a communicative approach? Are translators who privilege the Spanish conditional plus a modal verb more influenced by the task's linearity? These are questions that further research must clarify.

## 5. Conclusions

We hope to have drawn attention to the crucial role that linguistic factors –e.g., word-order, lexical units and length– play in translation and, more specifically, in covert or positive transfers. The degree of awareness of the target language's uses and its prominent categories makes the difference among translators. In the present article, we have shown that the most frequent way of translating *Should have* in Spanish is the word-by-word translation *Debería haber*. This preference is not coherent with: (i) the marginal role of modal verbs to express the speaker's subjectivity in Spanish; (ii) the use of modal verbs within verbal predicates in written Spanish, which generally appear in the past participle position (e.g., *No hubiese debido tener libros*); nor (iii) the predominant use of the pluperfect subjunctive as a prompting tense for counterfactual readings.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## NOTES

1. Italian is an exception within Romance languages because motion events can be expressed like in satellite-framed languages by adding adverbial particles to a verb (e.g., *andare giù / su / avanti / indietro*; go down / up / ahead / back).
2. Toury (1995 : 275) defines transfers as phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text which tend to be transferred to the target text. Positive transfers are made up of selected features which do exist in the target system and are used in any case, whereas negative transfers are deviations from normal, codified practices of the target system.
3. The principle of equivalent frequency of usage in source and target language applied to grammatical structures and lexis is particularly useful as an additional method of verifying a translation (Newmark 1986 : 145).
4. This was the case for Barack Obama's *Los sueños de mi padre* and Audre Lorde's *Zami: una nueva forma de escribir mi nombre*.
5. The translations' word-order concerns two parameters: the position of each constituent in the verbal segment and the semantic role played by each of them. The former parameter accounts to the structure of the verbal segment and the latter to its semantic values. Concerning the structural parameter each translation has been described as a combination of a conjugated form, an infinitive and a past participle (cf. Annexe 2, column Word order). Concerning the semantic parameter translations were described as combinations of a modal verb, an auxiliary verb and a main verb (cf. Annexe 2, column Semantics).
6. The number of translations that share this semantic and word-order patterns reaches 48.4% if we add the occurrences of *Debió haber* + Past participle (cf. Annexe 2, example 13).
7. VW#2, VW#10, VW#11, DK#19, RB#57, RB#59.
8. Note that the indicative mood covers conditional tenses.
9. Hecho, dicho, imaginado, escrito, supuesto, olvidado, hablado, sentido, escuchado, actuado, provocado, jurado, causado, recordado, prometido, arrepentido, generado, declinado, acarreado, creído.
10. Real Academia Española: Banco de datos (CREA) [en línea]. *Corpus de referencia del español actual*. <<http://www.rae.es>> [2015 November the 5th].
11. Other grammatical elements prompting the non-factual interpretation of a given utterance in Spanish are: adjectives introducing a causal clause, verbs expressing rejection or opposition, the adverb *sólo* (only) when used in the sense of 'almost nobody' (*prácticamente nadie*), and the combination of *algún / alguno* ('some' or 'any' in interrogative sentences) and countable nouns (RAE 2009: 1950).
12. The bold text is ours to highlight the word-order of the construction –i.e., auxiliary verb appearing either as conditional or subjunctive plus the main verb in the past participle position–, which is concordant with 24% of the Spanish translations (23 out of 95).

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## ANNEXES

### Annexe 1. Frequencies of *Should* and *Should have* + Past participle

	Original	Word Types Word Tokens	<i>Should</i>	<i>Should have</i> + PP
AL	Lorde, A. (1982). <i>Zami: A New Spelling of My Name</i> . London: Persephone Press.	10,305 111,877	26 (0.02%)	6 (0.003%)
BO	Obama, B. (2004). <i>Dreams from My Father</i> . New York: Three Rivers Press.	11,467 154,206	111 (0.07%)	18 (0.01%)
DK	Kahneman, D. (2011). <i>Thinking fast, thinking slow</i> . London: Penguin.	12,330 196,404	259 (0.13%)	3 (0.001%)
GO	Orwell, G. (1949). <i>1984</i> .	9,059 105,586	69 (0.06%)	5 (0.004%)
JB	Butler, J. (1999). <i>Gender Trouble</i> . New York: Routledge.	7,907 85,193	14 (0.01%)	1 (0.001%)
MY	Yousafzai, M., Lamb, C. (2013). <i>I Am Malala</i> . London: Orion.	7,562 95,111	90 (0.09%)	5 (0.005%)
NC	Chomsky, N. (2003). <i>Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance</i> . New York: Metropolitan.	9,855 94,798	87 (0.09%)	6 (0.006%)
NC <sub>2</sub>	Chomsky, N. (1989). <i>Necessary Illusions. Thought Control in Democratic Societies</i> . New York: South End Press.	9,164 95,934	80 (0.08%)	2 (0.002%)
NK	Klein, N. (2000). <i>No Logo</i> . Great Britain: Flamingo.	14,977	73	5

		164,433	(0.04%)	(0.003%)
NK <sub>2</sub>	Klein, N. (2007). <i>The Shock Doctrine</i> . New York: Metropolitan.	18,180 238,940	100 (0.04%)	6 (0.002%)
NM	Mandela, N. (1994). <i>Long Walk to Freedom</i> . Boston: BackBay.	14,265 248,583	174 (0.06%)	12 (0.004%)
RB	Bradbury, R. (1953). <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> .	4,989 47,390	19 (0.04%)	7 (0.01%)
SF	Federici, S. (2004). <i>Caliban and the Witch</i> . Autonomedia.	16,055 106,750	75 (0.07%)	2 (0.001%)
VW	Woolf, V. (1929) <i>A room of one's own</i> . London: The Hogarth Press Ltd.	5,563 38,349	66 (0.17%)	17 (0.04%)
	SUBTOTAL	151,678 1,783,554	1,132 0.063%	95 0.005%
Standard deviation			0.042	0.01

Annexe 2. Descriptive factors accounting for the translations

	Example	Word order	Semantics	Modal verb	Tense	Main verb
(12)	<i>Debería haber sido</i>	CIP	MAV	Yes	Present	Conditional
(13)	<i>Debieron haber tomado</i>	CIP	MAV	Yes	Past simple	Indicative
(14)	<i>Debían haber visto</i>	CIP	MAV	Yes	<i>Imperfecto</i>	Indicative
(15)	<i>Hubiese debido tener</i>	CPI	AMV	Yes	Pluperfect	Subjunctive
(16)	<i>Hubiera dicho</i>	CP	AV	No	Pluperfect	Subjunctive
(17)	<i>Debí quedarme</i>	CI	MV	Yes	Past simple	Indicative

Legend: C = Conjugated form, I = Infinitive, P = Past participle; A = Auxiliary verb, M = Modal verb, V = Main verb.