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# THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH COLLOCATIONS INTO SPANISH

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Treball de Fi de Grau

Curs 2022-2023



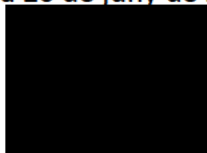


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## **Abstract**

Collocations are known to be arbitrary word combinations that occur in all languages. When it comes to the translation of English collocations into Spanish, there is not always a specific collocation in the linguistic repertoire of the target language. As a result, translators employ other mechanisms that will stay faithful to the idea, more than the actual words that are used in the source text. This research paper analyses the strategies the translator María José Díez uses in the translation of *How to stop time* by Matt Haig. From some minor changes in the lexical choice of verb + noun collocations to more complex alternatives in participial adjectives + noun collocations, this study offers a deep dive into how collocations are translated.

**Keywords:** Collocation, translation, fiction, contrastive linguistics, -ing adjectives.

## **Resumen**

Se sabe que las colocaciones son combinaciones arbitrarias que ocurren en todos los idiomas. Al traducir colocaciones del inglés al español, no siempre hay una colocación específica en el repertorio lingüístico de la lengua meta. Esto hace que las personas que se dedican al mundo de la traducción empleen otros mecanismos que más que a las palabras exactas, serán fieles a la idea del texto origen. Este trabajo de investigación analiza las estrategias que la traductora María José Díez utiliza en la traducción de *How to stop time* de Matt Haig. Desde algunos cambios menores en la elección léxica de las colocaciones verbo + sustantivo hasta alternativas más complejas en las colocaciones adjetivo participio + sustantivo, este estudio profundiza en cómo se traducen las colocaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Colocación, traducción, ficción, lingüística contrastiva, adjetivos terminados en -ing.

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of collocations is known among linguists. From the teaching of foreign languages to translating or interpreting, having a solid knowledge of these is key. When it comes to translation, however, it is not only about understanding and knowing how to use them, but also about having the linguistic awareness of how they translate to the target language. A learner of English will be able to provide a simple translation to their native language as long as the pattern is shared, but will soon struggle when certain aspects of the grammar get in the way. Being proficient in a foreign language does not automatically make one capable of carrying out professional translations. This is why I decided to investigate on this subject and chose collocations as a starting point. These academic years have taught me how much one can learn from reading, both actively and passively. As an avid reader myself it just made sense to be working with a fiction text. For this deep dive into English collocations and their translation to Spanish I chose to work with the fiction text *How to stop time* by Matt Haig and the translation by María José Díez.

Although there are a fair number of monolingual studies on collocations, there is not that much research done on the translation of collocations and the challenges these might pose. The main objective of this research is to learn about how English collocations are translated to Spanish and if there are any existing patterns that re-occur in this process. Before we get into the study of collocations, there will be some background theory and facts about the author and the book. After this, a selection of the most prototypical word combinations in English will be analysed, followed by a more thorough study of -ing adjective (participial) + noun collocations, and the strategies the translator Díez uses. Although English and Spanish are both Indo-European languages and share some similarities, when it comes to grammar things get more complicated. This should be particularly evident in the translation of some collocations that require a completely different structure. When challenged with -ing adjectives pre-modifying nouns, the translator will always use a more complex construction to the one in the source language.

## 2. About the author, the book and the translation

Matt Haig is an English writer for children and adults. He was born in 1975, and after running his own marketing company and taking a few jobs, Haig ended up becoming a novelist. From his first publication in 2004, Matt has become a successful writer with 30 works under his belt. Among his most famous works, there is his memoir *Reasons to Stay Alive* and his most recent publication *The Midnight Library. How to Stop Time* was published in 2017 by Canongate Books Ltd - a novel about time travelling. Haig's work follows Tom Hazard, a man who looks like he is in his forties but has actually lived far more. He is 439 years old. This forces Tom to change his identity every eight years and start his life once again. Stephen Fry called this novel "a fabulous book" and Neil Gaiman said "Matt Haig has an empathy for the human condition, the light and the dark of it, and he uses the full palette to build his excellent stories." The book was translated into Spanish by María José Díez, who had been in charge of book translations such as *El código Da Vinci* and *El símbolo perdido* by Dan Brown. It was the publishing company Destino who published the book in Barcelona in 2018, only a year after the original in English. As for his style, Haig's writing is "[...] highly readable, switching seamlessly between humour and poignancy, but this conceals his pursuit of deeper literary concerns" (British Council Literature). He uses unusual narrators to go deep in issues such as anxiety, suppression, and control. Irony is very present in the novel, which is merged with more passionate moments. For instance, there is a time in the novel where Tom is trying to join Facebook and says "There isn't even an option to put 1581 as your of birth, anyway" (74).

### 3. Theoretical background

Collocations are a phenomenon that occurs in all languages. They can be identified with the help of several semantic and formal features: As Hausmann pointed out, they present a relationship of dependency between the base (the semantically autonomous words) and the collocate (semantically dependent component). This is what in linguistics is called a bipartite structure. This relationship of dependency is seen in the specialisation of the collocate based on the base they go with. Collocations are semantically predictable. What this means is that, in spite of their inherent arbitrariness, learners of a foreign language will have a sense of what to expect. Unlike idioms, which are syntactically and lexically frozen, collocations do not tend to pose problems in comprehension. However, they can be a struggle when it comes to production. There is not reasonable explanation as to why Spanish speakers say *vino tinto* and not *vino rojo*, but a native speaker would not think it twice in the moment of production. Having said that, there are times where there is a conflict between the base and the collocate. That is, two elements that would not be expected to coexist, due to their semantic incompatibility, present a relationship of base and collocate. Writers often use this technique, and they are known in linguistics as *marked collocations*. Typicity is another key feature, which explains how collocations come to be collocations: usage and frequency. In 1966, Halliday expanded the definition of collocations as usual co-occurrences to talk about their restrictive nature. He uses the example of the adjectives *powerful* and *strong* to illustrate his point: you would never hear a native speaker say *powerful tea*, even if *powerful* and *strong* have very similar meanings. This is because these two collocates belong to different collocational fields. Something that should not go unnoticed is the fact that collocations, especially when it comes to transnational languages, are dependent on their respective language variety. Firth (1957; 1968). That is, a collocate that would sound natural to an American English ear, might not to a British one. In addition to this, register is also relevant when it comes to collocations: the proper choice of a collocate will also depend on whether the use of the language is formal, neutral or informal. Already in 1971, Mitchell was touching on a need to study collocations as grammatical units: “[...] collocations should be studied within grammatical matrices, i.e. patterns such as verb + noun, adjective + noun, verb + adverb, verb + gerund, and so forth.” (Corpas-Pastor, p.

5). Another classification that is worth mentioning is the one by Sinclair (1996). In this corpus-driven study, lexical items are seen as extended units of meaning. The classification includes core, as words that are always present; collocation, the word(s) that go with the core; colligation grammatical words that go with the core; semantic preference and semantic prosody. Collocations can also be compared and contrasted as being *lexical* or *grammatical*. If the base and the collocates are both open class (heavy rain), that is a lexical collocation. However, when there is one element open class and the other closed class (interested in), that would be considered a grammatical collocation.

In this research paper collocations extracted from *How to stop time* are going to be divided into their grammatical categories and compared to the Spanish counterparts from the translation. The English collocational patterns that are going to be dissected are as follow: noun + noun, noun + verb, verb + noun, verb + adverb, verb + prepositional phrase.



## 4. Translating collocations in context

### 4.1 Noun + noun

#### REGULAR OCCURRENCE - *algo habitual*

“You might imagine that in the next sixteenth century witch trials were a regular occurrence” (65). The noun + noun collocation regular occurrence is translated as *algo habitual* (70).

#### PHONE RECEPTION

There was no **phone reception** at the temple, so I waited till I was back in my hotel room in the old fort town of Galle tucked inside my mosquito net sticky with heat, staring up at the pointlessly slow ceiling fan, before I phoned Hendrich (8).

The noun + noun collocation phone reception corresponds to the Spanish equivalent *cobertura* (14). Another noun + noun collocation that results in a single word unit: *Personal* (member of staff) and *aparcamiento* (car park).

#### SELF-SERVICE CHECKOUT

“They don’t have internet shopping or self-service checkouts” (46). The compound noun *self-service* collocates with *checkout*. The equivalent in Spanish is *cajas de autoservicio* (51). Another noun + noun collocation with the same translation structure: *Calle de sentido único* (a one-way street), *solicitud de amistad* (friend request).

## MONKEY SPOTTING

“I had asked the tuk-tuk driver to take me monkey spotting at the temple” (8). It is not possible in Spanish to keep it short like in English, and the translator uses a clause to express that idea: *que me llevara a ver monos al templo* (13).

Other noun + noun collocation that become alternative structures in Spanish: *Dolor causado por los recuerdos* (Memory pain) and *El tiempo que pasas delante de las pantallas* (Screen time), *Después de todos esos años muertos de vacío* (Dead years of nothingness).

### 4.2 Verb + noun / noun + verb

#### GIVE AN IDEA

‘I am old - old in the way that a tree, or a quahog clam, or a Renaissance painting is old. **To give you an idea:** I was born well over four hundred years ago on the third of March 1581 [...]’ (Haig, 2018, p. 5).

In Spanish this is translated as *para que te hagas una idea* (10). In Spanish \*we do ideas whereas in English they are given. This pattern would also apply in the following examples from The TV Corpus of English: ‘To give you an idea how much this night means to Kaley’, ‘To give you an idea of my background’ and ‘To give you an idea of what's going on with me right now.’ The subtype is the same for both the Spanish and English pair: V + NP. Another example where the lexical choice is different, but syntax is not affected: *Las hormigas le corrían* (Ants crawled).

This subtype can be easily confused with idioms such as *bat an eye* (12). However, these are not necessarily understood in context, which is often the case with idioms, not with collocations.

## MY STOMACH (HUNGRILY) RUMBLED

“I stared down at my exquisitely prepared fish and my stomach hungrily rumbled with the knowledge that I hadn’t eaten like this in over a century” (86). The noun + verb collocation *a stomach rumbles* is translated to Spanish as *mi hambriento estómago rugió* (88). It is interesting to see how the English adverb *hungrily* becomes an adjective in Spanish *hambriento*. Still, if we omit this, the collocation subtype is the same: N + V.

## CONFIDENCE GROWS

“But throughout the day my confidence grew and I switched to English songs and ballads and I quickly acquired an audience” (135). is translated to Spanish as “Pero a medida que avanzaba el día mi confianza fue en aumento, y pasé a cantar canciones y baladas inglesas y no tardé en tener público” (133). In English *confidence grows*, in Spanish *la confianza va en aumento*. Another interesting collocation from this quote is quickly (adverb) + acquire (verb) which is translated to Spanish with the verb *tardar* in the negative form. More noun + verb examples where syntax is altered: *Tenía los ojos cerrados* (her eyes were closed), *las lágrimas le corrían por el rostro* (the tears streamed), *se le han saltado las lágrimas* (he has a tear glistening).

### 4.3 Verb + adverb / adverb + verb

#### BIKE AWAY

“I wave back and **bike away** and I think how easy it would be to just not turn up tomorrow” (72). This was translated as “Yo hago otro tanto y me alejo en la bici mientras pienso en lo fácil que sería no presentarme al día siguiente.” (76). The adverb *away* is used to indicate path, which is typically expressed outside the verb

in English. However, this is not the case in Spanish and the translator opted for a more complex structure using the reflexive verb *alejarse*.

## **HARD TO PIN DOWN**

I felt the woman's hand. It was cold. I imagined she had been lying here, unfound, for about a day. I kept hold of her hand and found myself weeping. **The emotions were hard to pin down.** A rising wave of regret, relief, sorrow and fear. (Haig, 2018, p. 8)

The emotions (NP) + were (verb to be) hard (adverb) to pin down (verb 2) which greatly differs from the Spanish translation: “Resultaba difícil precisar cuáles eran las emociones que sentía” (13). This is a great example to show how English is more rigidly SVO than Spanish. While in Spanish one could move the elements around, that would not be possible in English. In this particular example *hard* collocates with the English phrasal verb *to pin down*, and *resultar difícil* collocates with *precisar*.

## **SLOWLY LOSE**

‘[...] Don't attach yourself to people, and try to feel as little as you possibly can for those you do meet. Because otherwise **you will slowly lose your mind** (Haig, 2018, p. 2).

This sentence is made up of various collocations. To begin with, the adverb *slowly* collocates with the verb phrase *lose your mind*. In the VP *lose your mind*, *mind* is a collocate as well. In Spanish this is translated as *perderás la razón poco a poco* (8). It is interesting to see how *slowly* becomes *poco a poco*; and *mind*, *la cabeza*. While in English this follows a slowly (adverb) + lose (verb) + your mind (noun phrase), in Spanish the subject is omitted and the adverb is placed at the end: *perderás* (verb) *la razón* (NP) *poco a poco* (adverb).

Some dictionaries provide “lentamente” as an option but in this case it would not collocate as it belongs to a higher register. “The cognate -mente adverbs in this language are not always pragmatically equivalent to the English adverbs.” (Ramon & Labrador, 2008, p. 292).

Other instances of -ly adverbs: *Daphne me mira poco convencida* (Daphne looks at me doubtfully) and *Una chaqueta de punto larga que ondea suavemente al viento* (A long cardigan that flaps gently in the wind).

## **EVENTUALLY LOSE**

In “I will eventually lose muscle mass and mobility” (6). *Eventually* is an adverb that precedes and collocates with the verb *to lose*. Could we say “Con el tiempo perderé” or “Al final perderé masa muscular”? It is not that is wrong to say that, but they don’t quite capture the meaning of *eventually* in this particular context (grammatically but not pragmatically correct). “Las perífrasis de gerundio expresan acciones, **procesos o estados de cosas vistas en su desarrollo.**” (Garachana, 2012) This verbal periphrasis is perfect as a translation strategy: “Y acabaré perdiendo masa muscular y movilidad” (11).

## **4.4 Verbs + prepositional phrase/preposition**

### **BE IN PAIN**

“So you aren’t in pain?” (98) is translated as “Entonces ¿no le duele nada?” (99) The English collocation *in pain* is translated with the reflexive form of the Spanish verb *doler*.

## **LIVE BY MY RULES**

“So, so long as you live here, you must live by my rules” (128) is translated as “Así que, mientras vivas aquí, deberás seguir mis normas” (125). Just like the previous example, there is no preposition or prepositional phrase in the Spanish translation. Instead, a verb is used.

## **SIT IN COMFORTABLE SILENCE**

“Just sitting there, in the comfortable silence of a couple” (132) is translated as “Sentados sin más, compartiendo el silencio cómodo de una pareja” (130). In this example, a Spanish verb is used in the gerund form to express manner.

## **BE IN ALIGNMENT**

“[...] everything in the world was in alignment” (140) is translated as “el mundo entero se hallaba alineado.” (137). The prepositional phrase “in alignment” is translated in Spanish with the verb phrase *hallarse alineado*.

### **4.5 Adverb + adjective**

#### **POINTLESSLY SLOW**

[...] staring up at the pointlessly slow ceiling fan, before I phoned Hendrich (8). *Pointlessly slow* is translated as *lento e ineficaz* (14). In this particular case, an adjectival phrase is used in Spanish. Similarly, *wildly inappropriate* in “...was a wildly inappropriate tune for a child to know” (137). is also translated with the adjectival phrase *de lo más inapropiada* (134).

## EASILY ENOUGH

Human beings, as a rule, simply don't accept things that don't fit their worldview. So you could say 'I am four hundred and thirty-nine years old' **easily enough**, but the response would generally be 'are you mad?'. (Haig, 2018, p. 7).

There are three entries for the adverb *easily* on The Merriam Webster Dictionary: 1. in an easy manner: without difficulty; 2. a) without question: by far, b) at the minimum: at least; and 3. in all likelihood : INDEED. The Spanish cognate *fácilmente*, however, only shares the first of those: Con facilidad (RAE). *Easily enough* does not appear in any dictionary as a set expression. Easy, however, is said to collocate with **enough**, *fairly*, *quite*, *rather* and *relatively* (Online OXFORD Collocation Dictionary). Díez translated this with the adverbial phrase *sin problema* (12), which encompasses the meaning of the first entry in The Merriam Webster Dictionary.

## ENTIRELY IMMUNE

"And I am no longer entirely immune to colds and fevers" (98). *Entirely immune* is translated as *totalmente inmune* (99). The same structure is kept: adverb + adjective.

## PERFECTLY FINE

"I was perfectly fine with that" (116). is translated as *no me importaba lo más mínimo* (114). From a simple adverb phrase in English, a whole sentence is used in Spanish to convey the same idea. Something similar happens in "relentlessly frantic city", which is translated as *en una ciudad frenética que no descansaba nunca*.

## 4.6 Adjective + noun

### RARE ONE

I thought of it as an illness for quite a while, but illness isn't really the right word. Illness suggests sickness, and wasting away. Better to say I have a condition. **A rare one**, but not unique. One that no one knows about until they have it.' (Haig, 2018, p. 5).

First let's look at two monolingual dictionaries and see if the definitions coincide: Seldom occurring or found : UNCOMMON (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) and *Extraordinario, poco común o frecuente*. (RAE) It is worth pointing out that although these two definitions coincide, this was not the first but second entry in the Spanish dictionary. Since it was, however, the first one in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, this suggests this particular use of *rare* is found to be more common in English than it is in Spanish. No wonder the translator chose not to use the cognate *raro*, but a more widely used alternative for this particular meaning: "[...] así que es mejor decir que tengo un trastorno. **Poco común**, pero no único." (208). The cognate is, however, used in the summary of the book "[...] debido a una rara enfermedad" (5). This is explained on the basis of a difference in tone and register: while the nature of a literary text is to entertain, a summary informs.

Other instances where the cognate is avoided: *La verdadera soledad* (the real loneliness), *el verdadero motivo* (the real reason), *vida normal y corriente* (ordinary life), *enfermedades espantosas* (terrible illnesses).

### WRINKLED FACE

"Chendrika Seneviratne was lying under a tree, in the shade, a hundred metres or so behind the temple. Ants crawled over her wrinkled face" (8). Díez translated this as "Las hormigas le corrían por el arrugado rostro" (13). She opted for



keeping the original adjective + noun order, as it fits quite well in the narrative. Other instances where this order is kept: *Una creciente oleada* (a rising wave), *familiar sensación* (familiar sense).

## JUDGING EYES

“I heard a rustling in the leaves above and looked up to see a monkey staring down at me with judging eyes” (Haig, 2018, p. 8). Díez translated this as [...] *un mono me miraba con ojos críticos* (13). In contrast with the previous translation where the translator kept the English word order in the translation, here the adjective is postponed. It is also worth looking at how *a rustling in the leaves* was translated: *Percibí movimiento entre las hojas*. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, [a rustling is] “a quick succession or confusion of small sounds.” In Spanish it gets a little trickier: [of leaves, wind] *susurro m*; [of paper] *crujido m*; [of silk, dress] *frufnú m* ♦ *crujido m* (Collins Dictionary). That is, while English uses a more general noun, Spanish specifies as for the type of sound we are referring to. Other instances with the same translation structure: *Una marca distintiva* (a distinguishing mark), *polluelos de cisne aterrorizados* (panicking cygnets), *ojos acusadores* (accusing eyes), *manera desconcertante* (disconcerting way), *las vistas son impresionantes* (it’s a very impressive view), *zonas rurales* (rural areas).

## CURVING SMOKE

I stared through the curving smoke of his cigar, out over Central Park where trees lay uprooted from the hurricane. (Haig, 2018, p. 2). The adjective *curving* collocates with the noun *smoke*. The adjective *curving* that pre-modifies *smoke* in English is translated as *espiral de humo* (8). While in English an adjective collocates with the base *smoke*, in Spanish it is a PP. Additionally, *of his cigar* is translated in Spanish as *del cigarro*, not *de su cigarro*. Other instances with the

same translation structure: *Punto de partida* (starting point), *aire de tristeza* (mournful look), *cara de perplejidad* (confused look).

## AN INCREASING CHALLENGE

“I am trying to seem normal. It is an increasing challenge.” (15) An increasing (adjective) + challenge was translated to Spanish as “cada vez me cuesta más” (20) Another instance with the same translation structure: *Oí que algo caía a la piscina* (I heard a small splashing sound).

### 4.7 Marked collocations

In the field of linguistics, markedness is a feature that serves to signal whether a linguistic element is prototypical or not in a language. When it comes to collocations, this distinction is also quite interesting. Marked collocations play a major role in literary texts, as they truly are what makes a text unique and brings it to life. They can be recognised as they are those word combinations that challenge our expectations.

There are several marked collocations when referring to the past:

It is strange how close the past is, even when you imagine it to be so far away. Strange how it can just **jump out of a sentence and hit you**. Strange how every object or word can house a ghost (179). The Spanish version: Es extraño lo cerca que está el pasado, incluso cuando uno se figura que está muy lejos. Es extraño que pueda **salir de una frase y golpearte**. (174)

“The past is never **gone**, it just **hides**” (96) which is translated as “El pasado no **desaparece** nunca. Sólo **se esconde**” (97)

“The past **resides** inside the present, repeating, hiccuping, reminding you of all the stuff that no longer is. It **bleeds out** from road signs [...]” (180). The Spanish version: “El pasado **vive** en el presente, repitiéndose, interrumpiéndose, recordándote todo lo que ya no existe. **Brota de** señales de carretera [...]” (174)

“She is **breaking out** of the **chains** of the past” which is translated as “**Huye** de las **cadenas** del pasado” (91).

The past is used as a metaphorical entity and the reader with their own human experience understands and might relate to those marked collocations. Haig also writes that music “runs” around, snow flurries “danced busily and loneliness “howls” through you.

## 5. Data analysis of -ing adjective + noun collocations

Source Text	Translation by Díez	Applied Procedure	Spanish grammatical pattern
'I heard a rustling in the leaves above and looked up to see a monkey staring down at me with <b>judging eyes</b> (8).	Percibí un movimiento entre las hojas, y al levantar la vista, vi que un mono me miraba con <b>ojos críticos</b> (13).	Transposition	<b>N+ADJ.</b>
A <b>distinguishing mark</b> , interfering with my anonymity (41).	Una <b>marca distintiva</b> que interfiere en mi anonimato (46).	Transposition	<b>N+ADJ.</b>
Panicking cygnets (53).	Polluelos de cisne aterrorizados (58)	Transposition	<b>N+ADJ.</b>
Accusing eyes (53)	Ojos acusadores (59)	Transposition	<b>N+ADJ.</b>
Disconcerting way (62)	Manera desconcertante (68)	Transposition	<b>N+ADJ.</b>
Curving smoke (2)	Espiral del humo (8)	Transposition	<b>N+PP</b>
Starting point (20)	Punto de partida (24)	Transposition	<b>N+PP</b>
I am trying to seem normal. It is an <b>increasing challenge</b> (14).	Intento parecer normal, pero <b>cada vez me cuesta más</b> (20)	Modulation	<b>Adv. P.</b>
I heard a small <b>splashing sound</b> (14).	Oí <b>que algo caía a la piscina</b> (19).	Modulation	<b>Subordinate noun clause</b>

William Manning stared at the <b>darkening sky</b> (65).	El cielo, <b>cada vez más nublado</b> (70).	Modulation	<b>Adv. P.</b>
It's just that, according to the latest, <b>ever-changing science</b> , various aspects of our ageing process (6).	De acuerdo con los últimos avances <b>de la ciencia, siempre en constante cambio</b> (11).	Transposition	<b>Adv. P.</b>
She was still in <b>mourning black</b> , Queen Victoria-style, and looked every part the upper-class lady (83).	Seguía vistiendo <b>de negro, de luto</b> , al estilo Reina Victoria, y todo en ella apuntaba a que era una dama de clase alta (86).	Transposition	<b>PP</b>
he can read faces and body language with an <b>astounding accuracy</b> (90).	es capaz de interpretar el rostro y el lenguaje corporal con una <b>precisión asombrosa</b> (92).	Transposition	<b>N+Adj.</b>
This beautiful, <b>sad-looking dog</b> (29).	Este bonito perro <b>que parece triste</b> (33).	Transposition	<b>Adjective relative clause</b>
My silence was the <b>embarrassing answer</b> (140).	Mi silencio fue la <b>bochornosa respuesta</b> . (137)	Transposition	<b>N+Adj</b>
Men with <b>ill-fitting suits</b> (33)	Hombres con <b>trajes andrajosos que les sentaban mal</b> (38).	Transposition	<b>Adjective relative clause</b>

As it can be appreciated with all these examples, there isn't a one and only approach to translate -ing adjectives. There are, however, patterns that keep coming up. Starting with the first few examples (ojos críticos, marca distintiva, ojos acusadores...), many -ing adjectives premodifying nouns are translated with the Spanish collocation pattern noun + adjective. Although there are times where the adjective keeps the English

pattern of adjective + noun (e.g. *una creciente oleada*), that is not the case with any of the examples of -ing adjectives. Examples such as *espiral de humo* and *punto de partida* are translated following the pattern N+PP. Certain participial adjectives in English such as *darkening* and *increasing* are translated into Spanish with an adverbial phrase. Also, the compound adjective *ever-changing*, which is made up of an adverb and an adjective, is translated into Spanish using an adverbial phrase *siempre en constante cambio*. There are several instances where -ing English adjectives + noun result in clauses in Spanish:

Subordinate noun clause: Oí que algo caía a la piscina (I heard a small splashing sound).

Adjective relative clause: Este bonito perro que parece triste (This beautiful, sad-looking dog) and Hombres con trajes andrajosos que les sentaban mal (Men with ill-fitting suits)

Finally, there is a pattern in the analysis of these -ing adjectives premodifying nouns, and that is the more complex structures that result in Spanish. Besides some occasions where Spanish keeps the unmarked position of adjectives noun + adjective, the structure is always more complex than the one in the source text. Be it a clause or a phrase that includes more elements, the translator employs alternative structures to convey the same message.

## 6. Conclusion

Collocations are by nature arbitrary and the differences in grammar between English and Spanish do alter the pattern in the translation sometimes. Among different collocation + base combinations, there were many instances where the cognate was avoided: *habitual* (regular), *poco a poco* (slowly), *poco convencida* (doubtfully), *poco común* (rare), *la verdadera* (the real), *normal y corriente* (ordinary), *espantosas* (terrible). Some noun + noun and adjective + noun collocations became noun + PP in Spanish: *cajas de autoservicio* (self-service checkout), *solicitud de amistad* (friend request), *espiral de humo* (curving smoke), *punto de partida* (starting point), *aire de tristeza* (mournful look). At the same time, it so happens that some verb + prepositional phrase collocations become VP in Spanish: ¿no le duele nada? (you aren't in pain?); *seguir mis normas* (live by my rules); *sentados sin más, compartiendo el silencio cómodo* (sit in comfortable silence). Some English collocations resulted in a single word in Spanish: *cobertura* (phone reception), *personal* (member of staff) and *aparcamiento* (car park). However, there were more examples where the phrase became more grammatically complex in Spanish: *me alejo en la bici* (bike away), *dolor causado por los recuerdos* (memory pain), *el tiempo que pasas delante de las pantallas* (screen time), *no me importaba lo más mínimo* (perfectly fine), *ciudad frenética que no descansaba nunca* (relentlessly frantic city). The combination of -ing adjectives and nouns is particularly interesting as it clearly points out at differences in the internal workings of English and Spanish. Adjectives are commonly derived from verbs, but that is not the case in Spanish. This makes it challenging for translators as they need to come up with alternative structures (descriptive phrases, clauses...) that will convey the same idea. This makes the Spanish translation of some -ing adjectives wordier than the collocation in the source text: *cada vez me cuesta más* (an increasing challenge), *oí que algo caía a la piscina* (I heard a small splashing sound), *el cielo, cada vez más nublado* (the darkening sky), *de la ciencia, siempre en constante cambio* (ever-changing science), *sad-looking dog* (perro que parece triste), *trajes andrajosos que les sentaban mal* (ill-fitting suits).

This research emphasizes on the importance of a linguistic awareness of English collocations but also for translators to have thorough knowledge of the target language to

find the perfect match. Collocations are more than just a combination of words, as they can happen at phrase level, clause level or above.

Future studies could address adjective + adverb or noun + noun collocations as some interesting differences were found there, too. It might also be a good idea to look into how collocations evolve over time in a specific language variety, that is, a diachronic study of a certain collocation combination in two languages.



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