IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSLATION: EXAMINING ENGLISH WORD PATTERNS IN A

FIRST-YEAR SPANISH UNIVERSITY TEXTBOOK

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I examined *Vistas*, a first-year Spanish university textbook, for its use of Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words as English translations. Using David Corson's work as a starting point, I analyzed a foreign language textbook, expanding upon his list of texts organized by their percentage of Greco-Latinate words. By analyzing this one textbook, I hoped to inspire others to question the language preferences being instilled in students. My results indicated a nearly equal distribution of Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words, but the textbook authors rarely supplied multiple translations with both Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon options. This initial study suggests a move away from more traditional views of the role of Greco-Latinate words in academic material. However, further studies are required to identify any overarching trends.

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INTRODUCTION

Many teachers and academics unknowingly perpetuate a preference for Greco-Latinate words, which are more difficult for some students to understand and utilize appropriately. This preference often appears when instructors reward students who write with more Greco-Latinate language, but it also occurs in academic material (e.g. textbooks). Because of this, I examined *Vistas*, a first-year Spanish university textbook, for its use of Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words as English translations. By conducting a close analysis of *Vistas*, I investigated the assumptions about English in one context. Although this is not, and cannot be, a comprehensive study, it may inspire the continued examination of the way instructors present English to students. One of the main goals of my study was to encourage teachers to question the types of English words they use when teaching students.

In 1985, David Corson published *The Lexical Bar*. Then, 10 years later, in 1995, he published *Using English Words*. These texts ushered in a new age for linguistics that addressed the barriers that some students encounter when they study subjects, like science, that use more Greco-Latinate language. Corson describes this barrier as "the lexical bar." In his first book, *The Lexical Bar*, Corson explains,

> There is a lexical bar in the English lexicon which hinders the members of some social groups from lexical access to knowledge categories of the school curriculum in their oral and written language and perhaps in their thinking as well. This bar has been created through sociohistorical events that have hindered specialist and learned words from becoming a familiar part of the vocabularies of some social groups. (28)

Since these students face a disadvantage when attempting to understand and utilize academic language, which is primarily viewed as Greco-Latinate, it is important to consider the types of

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words that we use in the classroom. By using too many G-L words, especially when Anglo-Saxon words could also be used, we are impeding our students' opportunities for success. It is essential that we be aware of the innate preferences that many academics have for Greco-Latinate language. Because these preferences undoubtedly exist, they often emerge in the academic texts that we give our students. When possible, we should try to give students both Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words as options.

In his book, *Using English Words*, Corson examined numerous categories of texts for their use of Greco-Latinate words, producing a list of "literary areas ranked according to G-L content" using percentages (103). His list "shows the high correlation that exists between the level of 'difficulty' of subject matter and the G-L percentage in that subject matter" (Corson, *Using English Words* 102). He claims that the more intellectually challenging academic material appears to innately contain more Greco-Latinate words, which reinforces the traditional belief that Greco-Latinate language is more complex. The "literary areas" in Corson's list focus on academic subject material and sections of newspapers (*Using English Words* 102). The academic subjects on the list include philosophy of education, sociology, theology, science education, psychology, physics, mathematics, etc. (Corson, *Using English Words* 102).

However, in his study, Corson does not analyze foreign language textbooks, an important medium for teaching students about a foreign language and a learner's native language. While studying a different language, a student ultimately learns something about his or her native language through the study of grammar and vocabulary. Although Corson does not examine foreign language textbooks in his G-L analysis, he admits that, "… prolonged courses of second language study can offer rich benefits for first language development, especially if the cultural contrasts in meaning preserved in the two languages are significant ones" (*Using English Words*

198). By studying foreign languages, students eventually make connections or experience

realizations about aspects of their native language that they may not have considered before.

Additionally, students often rely on translation between their L1 and L2. In a study

conducted by Joe Barcroft, students' "second language (L2) vocabulary learning strategies" were

analyzed (74). When researching first and second semester students in a Spanish class, Barcroft

discovered that the "most frequently used strategy" "was L2-picture association, followed by L2-

L1 association, L2-L1 translation, and repetition" (82). Therefore, it appears that students often

utilize their native language to understand words in a second language. James Cummins also

elaborates on this connection when he discusses the developmental interdependence hypothesis,

explaining that it "proposes that the level of L2 competence which a bilingual child attains is

partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when

intensive exposure to L2 begins" ("Linguistic Interdependence and the Educational Development

of Bilingual Children" 233). Although Cummins is referring to child learners, his research

demonstrates a connection between one's understanding of an L1 and the comprehension of an

L2. This connection often occurs because many students are able to use cognates between their

L1 and L2 to identify and understand words. Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy explain, "Academic

English is filled with Spanish-English cognates: that is, words that have similar or even identical

spellings and meanings in the two languages (e.g., *family* and *familia*, *animal* and *animal*, *insect*

and *insecto*)" (290). Also, referring to a study conducted by Nagy, García, Durgunağlu, and

Hancin, Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy explain, "results indicated that an awareness of cognate

relationships played an important role in the transfer of knowledge to second language reading"

(291).

Because of the obvious connection that learners make between their native language and a foreign language, the use or absence of certain types of Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words as translations in foreign language textbooks would directly influence a student's understanding of English. Through a careful study of the types of English words presented as translations in foreign language textbooks, certain preferences about the English language can be identified. For example, if language students are given the Spanish word *construir* with the English translation "to build," a student begins to be trained to utilize this Anglo-Saxon word instead of another option like "to construct," a Greco-Latinate cognate. Especially since most language learners in the United States are being taught to translate words from their native language to a foreign language, the translated English words that students are given in vocabulary sections are essential parts of the learning process. Not only will students be influenced by the types of English words provided as translations; they may also encounter difficulties when they learn the foreign language if they are given an English word that they do not understand.

Prevalence of Spanish Studies

In Fall 2013, the Modern Language Association (MLA) conducted a survey of the enrollment numbers for the study of languages besides English at colleges and universities in the United States. The report titled "Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2013" includes enrollment data from 2,435 higher education institutions (Goldberg et. al 1). The report explains, "In terms of ranking, Spanish and French still lead as the two most studied languages," and although "Spanish enrollments dropped, falling from 861,008 in 2009 to 790,756 in 2013," "Spanish enrollments are still greater than all other language enrollments combined" (Goldberg et. al 2). While this decrease is

notable, the number of students studying Spanish in the United States nearly eclipses the study of all other languages.

In the 2013 study, five times as many students were enrolled in introductory Spanish as were enrolled in advanced Spanish at the undergraduate level (Goldberg et. al 40). Specifically, 649,225 students were reportedly enrolled in introductory Spanish courses and 132,409 students were enrolled in advanced Spanish courses (Goldberg et. al 40). Since the majority of language learners study Spanish and the majority of Spanish language learners are taking introductory courses, introductory Spanish textbooks appear to be the most widely used foreign language textbook.

Because of the high enrollment numbers for university Spanish courses in the United States, more students are being exposed to English translations in Spanish textbooks. This is especially prevalent at the introductory Spanish level with the majority of students enrolled studying the language as beginners. As the most widely taken language course other than English in the United States, Spanish is the ideal starting point when analyzing foreign language textbooks. Additionally, since Spanish is a Romance language with Greco-Latinate roots, it is an interesting starting point because there are many similarities and cognates to be considered when translating words from Spanish to English.

Description of the Study

The purpose of my study was to search for any possible patterns that may appear between the use of Greco-Latinate words and Anglo-Saxon words. Specifically, I examined the percentage of Greco-Latinate vs. Anglo-Saxon words listed as English translations of Spanish vocabulary words in the glossary at the back of *Vistas*. In my analysis, I was interested in the way that a foreign language textbook addresses and represents English to college students in the

United States. Overall, I had two main research questions that I set out to answer in my study. First, what percentages of the Spanish words in *Vistas* are translated as Greco-Latinate words and as Anglo-Saxon words, respectively? Second, what do these patterns say about the textbook authors' assumptions about the English language?

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the state of English today, we must first explore the development of English historically. Specifically, the influence of Latin on the English language is important when considering the duality of the English language. I use the term "duality" to stress the fact that English is a language with two distinct origins that converge to form the current version of the language. For example, "In many cases, one can find pairs of words reflecting the two distinct sources of English vocabulary, the first Germanic and the second from Latin (sometimes via French): *eat/dine, be/exist, right/correct, tooth/dental, hand/manual*" (Nagy and Townsend 93). In many instances, there are two or more words to describe similar ideas because of Latin's influence on English.

The origins of most English words can typically be traced back to either Anglo-Saxon or Greco-Latinate origins. In his book, *Latin Alive: The Survival of Latin in English and the Romance Languages*, Joseph B. Solodow shares a simile about Latin that helps one visualize the convergence of the different languages over time. Solodow writes,

> The Latin language is like a great river. Small in its beginnings, hardly more than a brook, it saw its waters swell immeasurably over the course of the years. It gradually branched into a number of streams, some of which became in turn great rivers themselves. One of those streams, French, at a certain point overflowed its banks, so to speak, and poured into the stream of English, which had arisen in an altogether different watershed, that of the Germanic languages. (330-31)

Through his detailed explanation, we see that Latin flowed into English through its exposure to French. The initiator of this tidal shift was the Norman Conquest of 1066, a crucial year that must be mentioned when discussing the development of English. When introducing the

connection between Latin and English in his book, Solodow writes, "After French-speaking

Normans invaded England, in the eleventh century, French (and therewith Latin) got blended

with the local, Germanic language, Anglo Saxon (also called 'Old English'), creating a mixture

that led to English as we know it" (1-2). Again, this was a time of great transformation for

English, as Latin words seeped into the Anglo-Saxon language. In the centuries to come, English

would continue to adopt Greco-Latinate words, as well as words from other languages. For the

most part though, English words mainly fall into the categories of Anglo-Saxon and Greco-

Latinate.

After Latin began to permeate Old English and Middle English, the influence of Latin

increased immensely. Although Latin slightly influenced Middle English, Latin's influence

intensified during the Early Modern English period, transforming the language. David Crystal

writes, "there had been a steady trickle of Latin borrowings into English throughout the Middle

English period, but during the fifteenth century their number greatly increased, and in the

sixteenth century they became so numerous, along with words from Greek, that the character of

the English lexicon was permanently altered" (288). For about four hundred years, Latin words

seeped into the English language, merging to create the language that we use today. If we return

to Solodow's depiction of the language river, the flood of Latin words into English that occurred

during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries definitely caused the current to change course.

During the period after this dramatic change, G-L words were readily used. In her article,

"The Chronology of French and Latin Loan Words in English," Julie Coleman addresses

historical language use when she discusses the "highest share of the lexis" that Latin possessed

(122). Specifically, she claims that, for "terms originating from Latin," it was "during the late

seventeenth century, with a considerable drop in the early eighteenth" (Coleman 123).

As Latin began to influence Early Modern English, people's perception of the language was also altered: "But more important than the structural changes which were taking place in English at the time are the changes in attitude towards the language, in particular the emergence of an explicit prescriptivism midway through what has been called the 'century of manners', and the clear recognition, as a consequence, of what a 'correct English' should be" (Crystal 285). This focus on "correct English" pressured individuals to be proper and educated about their language use, which ultimately prompted the development of writing aids like dictionaries. Starting in the seventeenth century, dictionaries emerged as proponents of correct language use.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English dictionaries also gained popularity. The first dictionary to be published was Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* in 1604 with approximately 2,500 words (Crystal 280). Despite its low word count, Cawdrey's text initiated a new genre that helped define the English language. David Crystal gives Cawdrey credit, explaining, "… the general style of his approach influenced the more ambitious dictionary-makers, over a century later" (284). Cawdrey set an example for future dictionary writers with his *A Table Alphabeticall*, but later, when other dictionaries were published, the word counts increased considerably. A century after Cawdrey's dictionary, John Kersey published his *New English Dictionary* with 28,000 words and Nathaniel Bailey published his *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* with 60,000 words (Crystal 380). From Cadrey's dictionary in the early 1600s to Bailey's dictionary in the 1700s, the documentation of the English language through dictionaries increased by nearly 24 times, which corresponds with the plethora of G-L words that emerged in the seventeenth century, as mentioned by Coleman.

By the mid-eighteenth century, one of the most prominent dictionary writers was undoubtedly Samuel Johnson (Crystal 382). However, Johnson's dictionary was not

indiscriminately praised. Shortly after it was published, the "*Dictionary* was alternatively acclaimed as a marvel and denounced as a product of carelessness or egoism or as a downright corrupting influence" (Noyes 175). Many critics questioned the need for dictionaries, asking, "Could a language be 'fixed,' and, if so, should that responsibility be taken by an individual rather than an academy?" (Noyes 176). These opponents of dictionaries questioned the immense amount of power that was given to dictionary writers, and they had a right to do so. Only a few individuals, notably men, took the future of the English language into their own hands, crafting the lexicon and disseminating some of the first rules about "correct English" to the public.

In his dictionary, Johnson even went so far as to label words, which gave him more power to influence his readers. Referring to Johnson's labeling in *Dictionary of the English Language*, Fred C. Robinson writes, "*Width*, he says is 'a low word.' *Sensible* (meaning 'prudent,' 'reasonable') is, he says, used only in 'low conversation.' *Lead* (as in 'Yale took the lead over Columbia in the second quarter') is 'a low, despicable word.' *Trait* is, he says, 'scarce English'" (Robinson 378). By imposing these connotations on the words in his dictionary, Johnson was able to control the way that users viewed certain words, especially when he labeled them as "low." Johnson and his fellow dictionary writers presented skewed versions of the English language to the public, which potentially impacted the way that people spoke and wrote.

Dictionaries, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have been scrutinized as skewed presentations of language. One of the major implications of dictionaries is their ability to impact the use of English. Phil Benson explains, "The process of lexicographical representation, constrained by the rules and principles of lexicographical practice, leads not to the production of a direct reflection of the language 'as it is,' but to the production of a version of the language, with definite form and shape" (8). Dictionaries did not accurately represent a

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realistic version of the language, as spoken by a typical speaker; instead, they attempted to present an idealistic version.

The inaccurate presentation of the language through historic dictionaries was examined in close detail in a study conducted by Andrea Nagy. She discovered that historical dictionary writers presented a supposedly ideal form of the language, which heavily relied upon Greco-Latinate words. After conducting a close analysis of dictionaries from the seventeenth century, Nagy writes,

> In the letter M, which I have examined in detail […], out of the 200 lemmas appearing in at least two of the first three dictionaries (that is, 45% of the total number of M-words found in these three dictionaries), approximately 44% derive from Latin. In contrast, 20% to 29% of the words introduced into the language as a whole between 1500 and 1700 have this derivation. (444)

She then concludes,

> This statistic suggests that the early compilers did to some extent attempt to promote the 'power words' of the time […] It also confirms that they provided a handbook to aid reading and writing rather than a complete record of the language. […] This focus on the vocabulary of the elite suggests that in part the first three lexicographers did attempt to prescribe a standard of eloquence for the English language. (Nagy 444-45)

These historical dictionaries included a much higher percentage of Greco-Latinate words than what was spoken at the time. This demonstrates a preference, or at least an assumption made by the authors, that placed a greater amount of value on the inclusion of Greco-Latinate words. By conducting close analyses of dictionaries, scholars like Nagy have been able to identify patterns that demonstrate a preferred version of language. Specifically, the historical dictionary writers

possessed an obvious preference for Greco-Latinate words. At the time, the popular usage did

not match the prominence of Greco-Latinate words in the three dictionaries that Nagy studied.

This attitude toward Greco-Latinate words persisted and has manifested itself in the view of

English that many teachers and writers still have today.

In addition to the skewed presentation of language by historical dictionary writers,

writing instructors also help enforce a specific view of the English language, especially in

regards to the use of G-L words. Addressing this issue, David Corson states,

> Nevertheless, in their valuations of words, many teachers are influenced by what I call
>
> 'an ideology of correctness': Because of their own socialization as successful students in
>
> schools, many teachers tend to see specialist G-L words as always 'better' or as always
>
> 'more correct' forms of word use in academic or formal contexts. When there is a choice
>
> between words of similar meaning, they will often prefer the G-L. I call this an ideology,
>
> because it can be a distortion of reality that reinforces undesirable imbalances in power
>
> linked to the lexical bar. (*Using English Words* 187)

In these situations, the teachers' preferences are unduly imposed on students, especially when the

G-L words are viewed as "better" than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. Students are expected to

select certain words simply because teachers have an internal assumption that G-L words are

"more correct" than words with Anglo-Saxon origins, which creates a learning environment that

punishes students for using a significant portion of their language.

Bruce Maylath also addresses this phenomenon in his article "Words Make a Difference:

The Effects of Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon Lexical Variation on College Writing

Instructors." In his study, Maylath discovered that novice writing instructors prefer G-L words

when they evaluate student writing. He states, "As novices—and, perhaps not incoincidentally,

as graduate students all—the GL-favoring instructors displayed insecurity about their position and their knowledge. They manifested their insecurity in their attitudes toward language" (Maylath, "Words Make a Difference" 239). It is clear that teachers, especially inexperienced ones in this case, make assumptions about the quality of students' writing based solely on the word selection without regard to other factors. The overwhelming preference for G-L words by these writing teachers only serves to perpetuate an idealistic view of the English language without consideration of the usefulness of both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words.

These preferences, which have existed since the early dictionaries first stressed the use of "correct English," are repeatedly reinforced in modern times. Often, this occurs because many G-L words are associated with more specialized language: "Most of the specialist and high status vocabulary of English is G-L in origin, and most of its more everyday vocabulary is Anglo-Saxon in origin" (Corson, *Using English Words* 36). Teachers often prefer G-L words because they typically fit into the category of "academic language." William Nagy and Dianna Townsend explain, "The grammatical attributes of academic language—more affixed words, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and nominalizations—are means of achieving greater informational density and abstractness, and these are typically done with Latin and Greek, rather than Germanic, vocabulary" (93). Especially since we label these words as "academic language," it is understandable that teachers often attempt to reinforce the use of these words with students, rewarding students who utilize G-L words appropriately. However, again, this is a harmful precedent to enforce because it hinders some students from the lower socioeconomic classes from succeeding in the same way as their peers from higher-class backgrounds.

Besides being viewed as more specialist and "academic," G-L words are also viewed as more formal, according to a study by Harry Levin and Margaretta Novak. In the study, they

claim "subjects judged that the Latinate items, more than the Germanic, were addressed to formal listeners" (Levin and Novak 389). However, frequency also played somewhat of a role in their study because "within the Latinate forms, word frequency had no effects; among the Germanic forms, low frequency words were more formal than high frequency ones" (Levin and Novak 389). Although the G-L words were viewed as more formal overall, the frequency of Anglo-Saxon words also contributed to the subjects' perception of formality. When someone is not as familiar with a word because it is used less frequently, that word is considered more formal. This makes sense since many G-L words are not typically used in conversations. According to their findings, the historical influences of Latin continue to influence English today: "these meanings have survived many centuries so that words whose origins are in the Latin languages still carry connotations of formality: grand, pretentious, and formal. Further, these words form an internal lexicon to be called on to communicate messages of formality" (Levin and Novak 396).

In another study, Harry Levin, Howard Giles, and Peter Garrett address the origin of English and the perceived formality of G-L words. They write, "Our research indicates that even today the Latinate forms are considered 'formal', 'fancy', 'high-faluting', etc. Consider these pairs, for example: flood/inundation; house/domicile; front/facade; and inside/interior" (Levin, Giles, and Garrett 265). When reading the listed pairs, one can easily select the Anglo-Saxon words from the Greco-Latinate words because of the perceived complexity of the G-L words like "inundation" and "domicile." These types of words are not used in informal speech. Instead, they are reserved for educated speech that attempts to flaunt a certain level of intelligence to its audience, which ties back to the level of power that one is able to assert when wielding these

words. To those hindered by the lexical bar, they are left without many options for interpreting the vocabulary.

When considering all of these different factors that perpetuate a preference for G-L words, it can be assumed that these preferences are often reinforced in our written texts. This is especially probable because of the connection made between G-L words and academic subjects, as recognized in Corson's study about the percentage of G-L words in more difficult academic subject matter. It is important to remember that this attitude towards G-L words has existed for centuries and will not be easily dispelled. Because of this, we need to be conscious of the choices we make and encourage in others. By conducting one detailed textbook analysis, I hope to encourage others to explore this subject matter further.

METHODS

For my analysis, I examined *Vistas*, a textbook used in first-year university Spanish

courses. According to Vista Higher Learning's website, *Vistas* is credited as "the most successful

introductory program in more than a decade" ("Spanish Programs"). Because of the supposed

popularity of the text and its accessibility, I used *Vistas (4ᵗʰ Edition)* written by José A. Blanco

and Philip Redwine Donley. I selected the fourth edition of *Vistas* because it was the newest

edition at the time of my analysis. However, the 5th edition of *Vistas* was released in November

2014. In a description for the 4ᵗʰ edition, *Vistas* is described as catering to "beginner students"

and meant to be "a comprehensive program to build strong language skills" ("Vistas, 4ᵗʰ

Edition"). Because of its specific target audience and purpose, *Vistas* is an ideal textbook to use

for my analysis.

I selected an introductory Spanish textbook for two main reasons. Mainly, the number of

students enrolled in introductory Spanish, as shown in the report by MLA, is too substantial to

ignore. The sheer number of university students being exposed to English translations through

the use of introductory Spanish language textbooks demonstrates the relevance of this type of

text. Secondly, the students enrolled in the introductory classes are most likely freshman or

underclassmen students who are new to the university setting. This is a more diverse group with

different levels of understanding when it comes to the English language, which means that the

students will probably have differing amounts of familiarity with Greco-Latinate words.

For my study, I analyzed the vocabulary section in the back of *Vistas* that translates

Spanish words into English. The section is titled "Vocabulario" and is described as a "Guide to

Vocabulary." It functions as a glossary with English translations and chapter numbers for

reference. For the main component of my study, I collected the English translations and labeled them as Anglo-Saxon or Greco-Latinate.

When David Corson analyzed academic texts and newspapers for their use of G-L words, he used a "G-L instrument." In his article, "The Graeco-Latin (G-L) Instrument: A New Measure of Semantic Complexity in Oral and Written English," Corson lists 11 rules to consider when analyzing texts for their percentage of G-L words. Rules 1 and 2 list types of words to exclude from analysis, while rules 3 to 11 give instructions for determining whether a word is Greco-Latinate or Anglo Saxon (Corson, "The Graeco-Latin (G-L) Instrument" 9-10). Rule one instructs one to exclude "essential ordinary language words," including "(1) 'numerals'; (2) 'units of time'; (3) 'pivot words' – *because, except, apart*; (4) 'everyday nouns' (and their inflected forms), e.g., *colour, family, money,* etc; (5) 'everyday verbs' (and their inflected forms), e.g., *cover, enjoy, paint,* etc' (6) 'everyday adjectives' (and their cognate adverbs and inflected forms), e.g., *quiet, simple, pleasant*, etc." (Corson, "The Graeco-Latin (G-L) Instrument" 9). Rule two excludes "conventional intensifiers and expletives" like "*sort (of), really, actually, definitely,* etc" (Corson, "The Graeco-Latin (G-L) Instrument" 9). Although Corson's G-L Instrument enables an individual to identify G-L words, it is no longer required to identify the origins of English words.

In order to identify Anglo-Saxon words and Greco-Latinate words in *Vistas*, I utilized the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, which includes detailed sections about the etymologies of English words. Using this online database and its etymology sections, I was able to determine whether an English word was of Anglo-Saxon origin, Greco-Latinate origin, unknown origin, or other. This allowed me to perform my analysis without the aid of Corson's rules because the easily accessible database confirmed origins without any speculation.

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Using Microsoft Excel, I entered the Spanish words and their English translations into columns in a spreadsheet. Most of the translations were word-to-word; however, there were a few entries that included phrases or multiple word explanations. In order to conduct the study of translated English words, I eliminated any translations of English phrases, because all of the words listed in a phrase were typically listed individually elsewhere in the glossary. Additionally, I excluded symbols (e.g. "@ symbol"), proper nouns like place names (i.e. the names of countries) and ethnicity names (e.g. "American," "Asian," etc.). Otherwise, I analyzed all of the English words listed as translations, even when the words were duplicated. I considered the data collection as a whole because eliminating the duplicate words skewed the results in a way that did not accurately represent the set of translations. For example, the Spanish word *amable* was translated as "nice" (GL) and "friendly" (AS), and the Spanish word *simpático/a* was translated as "nice" (GL) and "likeable" (AS). If I had removed one of the entries with the English translation "nice," the results would not have recognized the different secondary Anglo-Saxon options given in the two entries. By considering all of the English translations, without regard to duplicate words, I was able to study all of the instances when the authors provided Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon options to the readers.

After collecting the Spanish words and the English translations in the spreadsheet, I looked up every English word in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. By reading through the etymology section for each word, I was able to place most words into the Anglo-Saxon category (labeled "AS") or Greco-Latinate category (labeled "GL"). In some instances, a compound word was derived from one Anglo-Saxon word and one Greco-Latinate word. In those cases, I labeled the word "AS/GL" or "GL/AS," depending on the order of the compound word. This designation of "Anglo-Saxon/Greco-Latinate" and "Greco-Latinate/Anglo-Saxon" represents compound

words with morphemes of both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate origins with significant relevance to the word. For example, the origin of the English word "grandfather" is divided into two parts: "grand" and "father." When the origins of these two words within the larger word are examined, "grand" is designated as Greco-Latinate and "father" is designated as Anglo-Saxon. Therefore, the word "grandfather" is labeled "GL/AS." Additionally, there were a few words with an obscure origin or an unknown origin; I labeled these "OU." Words like "boy" and "girl" fall into this category because their origin is uncertain or unknown according to the *OED*. Also, there were a few words, without Anglo-Saxon or Greco-Latinate origins, from other languages that have been acquired into English; I labeled these as "other."

In Levin and Novak's study, they also utilized dictionaries to determine the etymology of the words (393). Specifically, they explain, "to be categorized as a Latinate item, 80% or more of the content words must be derived from Latin, Greek via Latin, or a romance language. For a Germanic classification, 80% of the content words are derived from a Germanic base: German, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, or one of the Scandinavian languages" (Levin and Novak 393). In the *OED*, the words falling into the Anglo-Saxon category were often described as "Common Germanic," "Old Frisian," "Old Saxon," "Old High German," "Old Norse," "Old Germanic," "Dutch," etc. Likewise, the words falling into the Greco-Latinate category were often initially described as "Middle French" or "Old French" with an ultimate designation of being derived from Latin or Greek.

Additionally, I disregarded certain prefixes and suffixes that did not impact the overall meaning of a word, which possibly impacted the way a word was labeled in the spreadsheet. However, often, the prefixes and suffixes only served to transform the main component of a word slightly. This is because, as French began to influence English during the Middle Ages, the

two languages often merged to create new English words that combined components of both French and English. David Crystal writes, "words formed by juxtaposing elements from two languages became increasingly common in Middle English" (149). For example, "The *be-* prefix was attached to several other Old French words, such as *befool*, *besiege*, and *beguile*, and a number of Old English affixes were used to produce hybrid forms" (Crystal 149). For example, the Spanish word *durante* was translated to English as "during." The –ing suffix in "during" has Anglo-Saxon origins, but according to the *Oxford English Dictionary's* entry for "during, prep., adj.2, and conj." "during" is a present participle of "dure," which is a verb meaning "enduring, lasting, continuing, used in French and English in a construction derived from the Latin 'ablative absolute'; thus Latin *vita durante*, Old French *vie durant*, English *life during*, while life endured or endures." Despite the use of Anglo-Saxon prefixes and suffixes in Greco-Latinate words, the origin of the word is still typically Greco-Latinate.

After establishing the methods for my study, I entered the data into an Excel spreadsheet. For each entry, I tried to complete the table with as much information as possible. The column headings in the spreadsheet for each entry include: "Spanish Word," "English Word 1" through "English Word 7," "Part of Speech," "Etymology Word 1" through "Etymology Word 7," and "Notes." Although the English words and their etymologies are the most important types of the collected data, the extra information is important for considering the translation collection as a whole.

RESULTS

After collecting all of the data from the Spanish-English glossary section in the back of

Vistas, I analyzed it for the percentage of Greco-Latinate vs. Anglo-Saxon words. In total, I

collected 1,948 English words from the glossary and analyzed them for their origins. Out of the

1,948 English words, 922 words (47.33%) were Anglo-Saxon and 911 words (46.77%) were

Greco-Latinate. The percentage of Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words was nearly equal,

with only 0.56% more Anglo-Saxon words. Please see figure 1, which displays the percentages

of the different categories for the origins of the English translations.

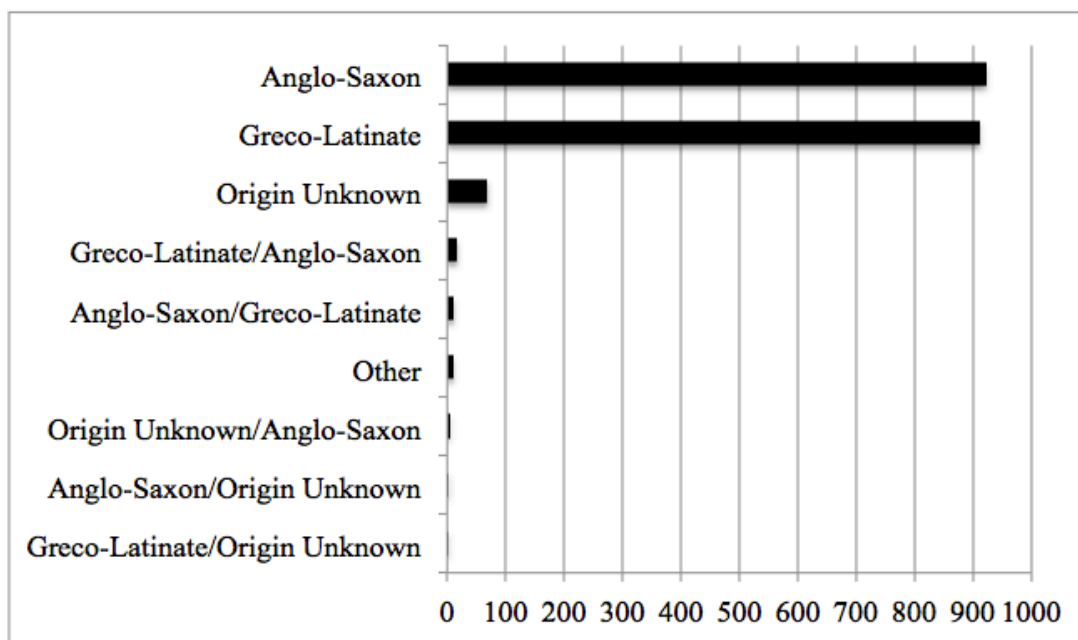Figure 1. Origins of English translations

A rather small number of the total words fell into other categories besides those

considered strictly Anglo-Saxon or Greco-Latinate. Specifically, 11 words (0.56%) were Anglo-

Saxon/Greco-Latinate and 17 words (0.87%) were Greco-Latinate/Anglo-Saxon. The number of

AS/GL and GL/AS words was rather small, though, because most of the compound words

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consisted of only Anglo-Saxon parts (and were labeled "AS") or only Greco-Latinate parts (and were labeled "GL").

Additionally, 69 words (3.5%) were of unknown origin, 10 words (0.51%) originated in other languages, 3 words (0.15%) were of Anglo-Saxon/unknown origin, 1 word (0.05%) was of Greco-Latinate/unknown origin, and 4 words (0.21%) were of unknown origin/Greco-Latinate. Except for the words with unknown origins, the other types of entries, which did not even make up 1% of the total entries, were too miniscule to consider significant. The words labeled "origin unknown" did not have traceable origins according to the *OED*. The origins of these words were unknown, uncertain, or obscure. For example, table 1 includes a list of selected words that fall into the "origin unknown" category. The number of words with unknown origins was also small, leaving the majority of the English translations to fall into the major categories of Anglo-Saxon or Greco-Latinate.

Table 1. Select words with unknown origins

Spanish Word	English Translation
abrazar(se)	hug
balde	bucket
basura	trash
cartera	wallet
chico	boy
chica	girl
excursión	hike
mal, malo/a	bad
mono	monkey
niebla	fog
pasear	stroll
perezoso/a	lazy
playa	beach
terco/a	stubborn

The majority of the translations from Spanish to English were word-to-word without any additional words included as alternate translations. In total, there were 1,675 entries that translated a Spanish word into English. However, of those 1,675 entries, 238 entries (14.2%) also provided a second translation. Additionally, 22 entries provided 3 English translations, 4 entries provided 4 English translations, 4 entries provided 5 English translations, 3 entries provided 6 English translations, and 2 entries provided 7 English translations. Please refer to the table in the appendix for a complete breakdown.

Of the 238 entries with 2 translations, 30 entries listed 1 Anglo-Saxon word and then 1 Greco-Latinate word (see table 2) while 20 entries listed 1 Greco-Latinate word and then 1 Anglo-Saxon word (see table 3). The 50 entries that included the option of an Anglo-Saxon word and a Greco-Latinate word or a Greco-Latinate word and an Anglo-Saxon word only made up 3% of the total number of entries. Also, 7 entries included more than 2 English translations with both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate translations being listed. The 57 entries that included multiple English translations with Anglo-Saxon words and Greco-Latinate words represent a relatively small portion (3.4%) of the 1,675 total entries. Of the 238 entries with multiple translations, the 57 entries that provide Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate translations as options make up 24%.

Table 2. Translation entries with 1 Anglo-Saxon word and 1 Greco-Latinate word

Spanish Word	English Translation 1	English Translation 2
alegre	happy (AS)	joyful (GL)
apenas	hardly (AS)	scarcely (GL)
cocina	kitchen (AS)	stove (GL)
cocinero/a	cook (AS)	chef (GL)
conseguir	to get (AS)	to obtain (GL)
cuenta	bill (AS)	account (GL)
dejar	to let (AS)	to quit (GL)
desear	to wish (AS)	to desire (GL)
dolor	ache (AS)	pain (GL)
dulces	sweets (AS)	candy (GL)
encuesta	poll (AS)	survey (GL)
enviar	to send (AS)	to mail (GL)
fenomenal	great (AS)	phenomenal (GL)
funcionar	to work (AS)	to function (GL)
luz	light (AS)	electricity (GL)
mareado/a	dizzy (AS)	nauseated (GL)
negocios	business (AS)	commerce (GL)
pasado	last (AS)	past (GL)
pastel	cake (AS)	pie (GL)
plato	dish (AS)	plate (GL)
poner	to put (AS)	to place (GL)
saber	to know (AS)	to taste (GL)
seguir	to follow (AS)	to continue (GL)
sentir(se)	to feel (AS)	to regret (GL)
terminar	to end (AS)	to finish (GL)
tienda	shop (AS)	store (GL)
tierra	land (AS)	soil (GL)
tonto/a	silly (AS)	foolish (GL)
único/a	only (AS)	unique (GL)
usar	to wear (AS)	to use (GL)

Table 3. Translation entries with 1 Greco-Latinate word and 1 Anglo-Saxon word

Spanish Word	English Translation 1	English Translation 2
afueras	suburbs (GL)	outskirts (AS)
alfombra	carpet (GL)	rug (AS)
amable	nice (GL)	friendly (AS)
bolsa	purse (GL)	bag (AS)
cocina	kitchen (GL)	stove (AS)
contar	to count (GL)	to tell (AS)
declarar	to declare (GL)	to say (AS)
difícil	difficult (GL)	hard (AS)
drama	drama (GL)	play (AS)
en punto	exactly (GL)	sharp (AS)
fijo/a	fixed (GL)	set (AS)
hora	hour (GL)	time (AS)
jardín	garden (GL)	yard (AS)
libertad	liberty (GL)	freedom (AS)
obtener	to obtain (GL)	to get (AS)
ocurrir	to occur (GL)	to happen (AS)
plazos	periods (GL)	time (AS)
prohibir	to prohibit (GL)	to forbid (AS)
servir	to serve (GL)	to help (AS)
simpático/a	nice (GL)	likeable (AS)

Comparatively, 91 entries (38.2%) out of the 238 entries with multiple translations used only Anglo-Saxon words, and 58 entries (24.4%) out of the 238 entries with multiple translations used only Greco-Latinate words. These types of entries with only Anglo-Saxon or only Greco-Latinate translations were much more common than the entries that provided dual translations with at least one word with Anglo-Saxon origin and one word with Greco-Latinate origin. Of the 238 entries with more than 1 English word given as a possible translation, 149 (62.6%) were only Anglo-Saxon or only Greco-Latinate. The remaining 32 entries (13.4%) of the 238 entries with multiple translations included different combinations of compound words (e.g.: AS/GL AS, GL/AS AS, AS/GL GL, GL/AS GL, etc.). These compound words also included components with unknown origin or words from other languages.

DISCUSSION

One of the most relevant results for the purpose of this study is the distribution of Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words included as English translations in the glossary of *Vistas*. Because the distribution is nearly equal, it seems as though students are being exposed to an equal number of the different types of English words while they learn Spanish. However, this potentially creates a problem when one considers the usefulness of cognates when learning a foreign language.

When students study a foreign language, the use of cognates or similarities as teaching techniques can be extremely useful. Rimantas Kalindra explains, "language teaching based on similarities is rather effective, because they (similarities) form the base for a strong and active memory and then help to recall the information stored in the long-term memory… Any sounds, morphemes, words or items of grammar of the foreign language may or may not have counterparts in the native language" (32). If the textbook is giving equal time to both types of English words, a student could potentially be missing out on Greco-Latinate cognates in some situations where only an Anglo-Saxon translation is given. Specifically, returning to the example of *construir*, *Vistas* provides only one English translation, and it is the Anglo-Saxon word "to build," even though "to construct" would have also been a useful Greco-Latinate cognate translation.

After examining the comprehension of English cognates by native Spanish speakers, Hancin-Bhatt and Nagy conclude, "Our results are consistent with the belief that these students can capitalize on their first language knowledge when reading English, and, in particular, that instruction on relationships between Spanish and English derivational morphology may be helpful, especially at the higher grade levels" (306). This suggests that native English speakers

may also benefit from the use of cognates with Spanish. The problem with this strategy for English speakers is that the Greco-Latinate words that function as cognates of the Spanish words are sometimes unfamiliar to students, but they can ultimately help the students learn both English and Spanish.

When determining the impact that cognates may have for foreign language students, research has been conducted that shows a connection between ESL speakers, who speak a Romance language, and their comprehension of G-L words. Referencing the major scholarship in the field, David Corson discusses the advantages that native Spanish speakers may have when learning G-L words: "the evidence that students do transfer knowledge from their first language to later languages is now very strong […] Indeed for Spanish-as-a-first-language bilinguals, low-frequency Latinate words in English may become more transparent semantically because their cognate forms are high-frequency and more everyday words in Spanish" (*Using English Words* 189). This demonstrates a connection between common Spanish words and more complex G-L English words. However, one can assume that this knowledge transfer between Spanish and English would also exist for native English speakers, if they were familiar with the Greco-Latinate words, or at least given the cognates as optional translations.

Although the Greco-Latinate cognates are often provided with the single word translations in the textbook, because nearly 50% of the words are translated using Greco-Latinate words, the students in the introductory university Spanish class seem to be given an either/or option. Most of the time, students are given either one Anglo-Saxon word as the only translation of a Spanish word or one Greco-Latinate word. In many cases, a student would benefit from having access to both an Anglo-Saxon word and a Greco-Latinate word as translations of a Spanish term, if applicable. However, in *Vistas*, the textbook authors do not include many entries

with multiple translations, and when they do, the authors rarely provide both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate options.

By taking advantage of the duality of the English language with both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate translations, the textbook authors would be able to supply students with cognates for easier translation from Spanish to English. Additionally, if the authors included two translation options, a larger portion of students would be able to comprehend the English translations. This would be especially impactful for students with a more limited Greco-Latinate vocabulary. Possibly, if students are given too many Greco-Latinate only options, they may encounter a lexical bar similar to the one described by David Corson.

When proposing the inclusion of more Greco-Latinate cognates, especially in addition to an Anglo-Saxon translation, one must realize that there are instances when the formality and specialization of a Greco-Latinate word impact the meaning and context of the word. Suzanne Levine addresses how the difference in the formality of words also impacts the way that those words can be translated in written texts. She explains,

> For example, a general problem that comes up when translating from Spanish into English is the translation of cognates, that is, Latinate words which in English have a strictly learned connotation and which, while having a similar connotation in Spanish, are, at the same time, common words in Spanish. Often, if you translate the word literally, you get a specialized expression which the average reader will have to look up in the dictionary; but if you transmit the everyday quality of the word, you lose the special sense. (Levine 266)

Levine explains that translating with cognates is not always an effective technique because "common" Spanish words may be considered more "specialized" English words, a term that

Corson also uses to describe G-L words. In this statement, Levine is acknowledging that Greco-Latinate words have certain connotations and are often used for more specialized purposes.

Using Levine's rationale, in order to maintain the integrity of a text, translators must carefully make choices that enable their readers to easily comprehend the writing while staying true to the intended meaning of the writing. Although this is an important technique to consider when translating a Spanish text into English, it is not as applicable to textbook translations. The word-to-word translations in foreign language textbooks do not require the same nuances that translated novels require, because students are meant to interpret the translations in the textbooks. The students rely on the translations to form their own sentences, and they would be able to select the most appropriate words by having access to a majority of the English options, both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate. Having access to both Greco-Latinate and Anglo-Saxon words would enable students to utilize the language with a deeper understanding of their word choices, and would likely improve the comprehension level of the foreign language being learned through the study of English.

Even though the distribution of Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate translations is nearly equal, the textbook authors seem to disregard the fact that the English language often has multiple options for the same word. By ignoring the multiple English options available as translations for the Spanish words, the authors are limiting the level of understanding that students are able to achieve. However, one cannot be too harsh when critiquing the authors, as there are always limitations in place. Whether it is page count limitations or accessibility issues, textbook authors ultimately are not able to dwell on every deciding factor that goes into the creation of a textbook. Often, the editor may play a part in deciding what makes the cut. Eventually, the text needs to be finalized and published, and the time constraints for such a task,

especially when the authors are attempting to stay relevant and up-to-date, are somewhat daunting on their own.

Despite their disregard for the use of both Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words in each translation entry, by giving equal space to Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words, the textbook authors are displaying their attitudes toward the way English words should be used. They do not show preference toward any certain type of English word. Instead, they utilize the two main types of English words equally. This is surprisingly in contrast with the more traditional beliefs that have been historically documented. From the foundation of dictionaries to more modern perceptions by English teachers, a preference for Greco-Latinate words has persisted. By avoiding that dichotomy, the authors of *Vistas* provide a fresh presentation of the English language through the teaching of introductory Spanish.

CONCLUSION

Relevance to Writing Teachers

Since my research focuses on the way that the English language is presented to college students in written form, it is specifically relevant to composition studies. As writing instructors and academics, we need to realize that we often show preference toward Greco-Latinate language. We need to be conscious of the way we reinforce this attitude, especially since "a growing body of research points out the contradictions between what we writing instructors say—and consciously believe—we do, and what in actuality we do unconsciously" (Maylath, "Do We Do What We Say?" 31-32). Specifically, Maylath explains that many novice writing instructors "professed to teach their students that simple, short, Anglo-Saxon words were preferable to long, complex Greco-Latinate words," but they would ultimately grade with a preference for Greco-Latinate language ("Do We Do What We Say" 35). Overall, we need to be more consciously aware of these language preferences when we grade student writing, give feedback to students, and assign textbooks.

While a comprehensive examination of students' educational backgrounds is not realistic, a closer consideration of this one aspect of learning yields valuable results. It is important for us to consider the language preferences that may be reinforced or perpetuated through educational material. Specifically, it is essential that we consider the diverse language needs of our students. In regards to the *Vistas*, some students may face challenges because of the types of English translations provided to them; however, further exploration into this topic is necessary in order to discover any overarching trends in foreign language textbooks.

Future Research

In the future, it would be beneficial to examine the English translations in other foreign language textbooks to identify more encompassing attitudes. This one study is only the beginning of a much larger examination of texts. To be able to comment on the larger topic, more texts must be analyzed and compared.

One of the first avenues for future research that I would like to explore is the analysis of the 5th edition of *Vistas* that was recently released. It would be interesting to see if the percentages for the different types of words changed in any noticeable way between the two editions. Along these same lines, it would also be intriguing to analyze the older editions of *Vistas* to track any changes in the percentages of Anglo-Saxon and Greco-Latinate words, which may represent a shift in attitudes or preferences.

After examining the different versions of *Vistas*, one could also analyze other popular first-year university Spanish textbooks. Then, one would be able to compare the results from the *Vistas* studies to the way other authors approach English translations in Spanish textbooks. Expanding the analysis to this level would enable one to make comments about the way that Spanish textbooks, in general, present English to students.

Another way to expand this project would be to explore the English translations in other foreign language textbooks besides Spanish. In particular, it would be worth comparing the types of English translations in similar romance languages and non-Romance languages. A German foreign language textbook would be especially noteworthy because it may potentially utilize more of the Anglo-Saxon words.

Finally, after further analysis of the textbooks themselves, it would be useful to compare the presentation of English with the corresponding views of students. Initially, I would propose a

study that interviews or surveys students to compare their English translations of Spanish words with the English translations provided in the textbooks that they use for learning the foreign language. If students repeatedly used the English words given to them in the textbooks instead of other options, it might prove that the types of English translations in the textbooks influence the students. Instead of making assumptions about the possibility that students are influenced by the English words that they are given in the foreign language textbooks, it is imperative that this theory be tested.

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APPENDIX. NUMBER OF ENGLISH WORDS WITH ETYMOLOGIES

	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3	Word 4	Word 5	Word 6	Word 7	Total
Anglo-Saxon	770	126	15	4	3	3	1	922
Greco-Latinate	804	99	6	0	1	0	1	911
Anglo-Saxon/ Greco-Latinate	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Greco-Latinate/ Anglo-Saxon	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	17
Origin Unknown	60	9	0	0	0	0	0	69
Other	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	10
Anglo-Saxon/ Origin Unknown	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Greco-Latinate/ Origin Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Origin Unknown/ Anglo-Saxon	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Origin Unknown/ Greco-Latinate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1675	238	22	4	4	3	2	1948