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Trabajo Fin de Grado

VICKY MARTIN'S TRANSLATION INTO SPANISH OF
THE ELF TAXONOMY IN *KEPPER OF THE LOST
CITIES*. A CASE STUDY.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide an academic analysis of Vicky Martin Santamarta's translation of the taxonomy of the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* saga concerning the skills and abilities of the elves. Additionally, it presents my own personal translation of the elf-name terms that have not been translated yet. The analysis focuses on evaluating the accuracy, and effectiveness, of Martin Santamarta's translation choices. Through a comprehensive examination of the translated terms and their contextual usage, this study contributes to the field of translation studies by shedding light on the challenges and strategies involved in rendering complex terminologies in English language fictional works into Spanish.

Key words: elf-name taxonomy, translation strategies, Spanish, English, skills, abilities.

RESUMEN

Esta tesis de grado pretende ofrecer un análisis académico de la traducción de Vicky Martin Santamarta de la taxonomía de la saga *Keeper of the Lost Cities* relativa a las habilidades y destrezas de los elfos. Asimismo, presenta mi propia traducción de los nombres élficos que aún no han sido traducidos. El análisis se centra en evaluar la precisión y la eficacia de las opciones de traducción de V. Martin Santamarta. A través de un examen exhaustivo de los términos traducidos y de su uso contextual, este estudio contribuye al campo de los estudios de traducción al arrojar luz sobre los retos y estrategias que implica la traducción al español de terminologías complejas en obras de ficción en la lengua inglesa.

Palabras clave: taxonomía de nombres élficos, estrategias de traducción, español, inglés, destrezas, habilidades.

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Introduction

The present thesis focuses on the literary series *Keeper of the Lost Cities* and its translation into Spanish by Vicky Martin. *Keeper of the Lost Cities (KOTLC)* is an upper-middle-grade fantasy series. This book series is designed for children between the ages of 8 and 12 and comprises 10 books, with the most recent addition to the series, *Stellarlune*, which was accessible to readers since November 2022.

Books In the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* Series

Book 1: *Keeper of the Lost Cities* (October 2, 2012)

Book 2: *Exile* (October 1, 2013)

Book 3: *Everblaze* (November 4, 2014)

Book 4: *Neverseen* (November 3, 2015)

Book 5: *Lodestar* (November 1, 2016)

Book 6: *Nightfall* (November 7, 2017)

Book 7: *Flashback* (November 6, 2018)

Book 8: *Legacy* (November 5, 2019)

Book 8.5: *Unlocked* (November 16, 2020)

Book 9: *Stellarlune* (November 8, 2022)

Books In the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* Series translated by Vicky

Martin Santamarta

There have only been two translations of the saga, both made by Vicky Martin Santamarta. She translated books 1 and 2 of the series with the following titles and dates of publication.

Libro 1: *Sophie Foster: La guardiana de las ciudades perdidas* (May 13, 2013)

Libro 2: *Sophie Foster: El secreto de la alicornia mágica* (October 20, 2022)

To fully understand the saga, it is necessary to clarify that the book presented as 8.5 in the series, *Unlocked*, is a novella that deviates from the writing stylistic approach used in the previous books by alternating between the viewpoints of multiple characters in different chapters. In addition to the story, the book provides a guide to the series and features such extras as recipes and official artwork of the characters, drawn by Laura Hollingsworth. Moreover, the book includes numerous files containing information on the different characters. This differentiates it from the other books and is a useful resource for making lists and taxonomies of the different characters, animals, and food that will appear or have appeared throughout the saga.

On January 11, 2021, the news broke that Walt Disney Pictures had chosen Ben Affleck to direct a film adaptation of the first book in the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* series. However, no information has been provided about the movie's release date or cast yet. Therefore, this thesis will focus exclusively on the literary texts and their Spanish translation.

Keeper of the Lost Cities is a popular book series written by Shannon Messenger, a California-based author. The series has achieved significant success, including its being featured on the New York Times and USA TODAY bestseller lists. Additionally, it has been honoured with the California Young Reader Medal. The author, Shannon Messenger is a graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts.

This thesis aims to translate the elf taxonomy presented in all the ten books although only two of them, the first and second books in the series, have been translated

into Spanish. Therefore, the purpose is threefold, on one hand, the thesis aims to analyse the terms that Victoria (Vicky) Martín (official translator of the first two books) has used to name the elfic characters in the first two books in the series that have been Spanish-translated. On the other hand, the project compares these translated names of elves with the translation that I would have done of them preferably, and in the third place, the project offers a proposal of translation for the new elf names appearing in the last books in the series, books III-X, which remain untranslated.

I must also thank the translator for the help she has given me in providing me with a clearer approach to her way of translating the saga. She agreed on having an online meeting through Google Meet where she explained her methods and strategies when translating this saga. Her main advice was for me to make lists of the different aspects to translate, be it names of characters, places, food..., she also explained to me that since the author invents new terms, when translating we could also invent some, as long as they sounded Spanish. As for the translation of the names of elves included in my taxonomy in particular, she advised me to look for Spanish terms that sounded similar to professions.

1. *Keeper of the Lost Cities* Book Series

In this section, an explanation of the title and the plot of the series will be given, as well as some important cultural background required to completely understand the importance of abilities and skills in the series of books.

1.1 Title

In the original English version, all the books in the series share the main title, *Keeper of the Lost Cities*, but each book has a unique subtitle that provides additional information about its plot. However, in the Spanish translation, there are significant changes to this use of a second title. The second book, titled *Exile* in English, is translated as *Sophie Foster la Guardiania de las Ciudades Perdidas y el Secreto de la Alicornia Mágica*¹ in Spanish. This translation reveals crucial information about the book, including the secret of the magical alicorn, deviating from the original title “*Exile/Exilio*”, which maintains the suspense. According to Martin Santamarta, the translator, she would have preferred a more direct translation, but the editors decided to alter it for marketing purposes. Another notable difference in the Spanish translation is the decision to use the name of the protagonist, Sophie Foster, as the main title of each book. In English, the main title remains consistent across all books, serving as a unifying element. However, the Spanish translation opts for adding the protagonist’s name, making it easier for readers to refer to the series. This choice in Spanish also draws parallels to the immensely popular *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, which similarly features both the main character's name and an identifying element related to the plot in each book's title. To further connect with fans of Harry Potter and attract some of its success, some English versions of the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* series even include a label on the cover

¹ Changes from the original cover to the Spanish one can be seen on page 38.

that says “Perfect for fans of Harry Potter²”. This marketing strategy seeks to attract readers who enjoy the *Harry Potter* series and suggests that the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* series offers a similar magical and immersive experience. According to a survey conducted by Leigh Ann Jones³, it was found that a significant majority of students are influenced by book covers when selecting fiction books. In fact, 76% of the students stated that covers usually have an impact on their book choices, highlighting the importance of visual image appeal. Only a mere 4% responded that they “rarely” consider covers. This demonstrates that book covers play a crucial role in capturing the attention and interest of readers, especially among adolescents. Moreover, the survey revealed that 70% of students consider the title of a book a determining factor in their decision to read it. The title serves as a key identifier and can provide insights into the story’s genre, theme, or premise (Jones, n. d.). It acts as a concise preview, allowing readers to gauge whether the book aligns with their interests and preferences. Taking these findings into account, the mention of the well-known *Harry Potter* saga on the cover of the *Keeper of the Lost Cities* books serves as a strategic marketing tactic to make them more appealing to teenage readers who are fans of J.K. Rowling’s work. By associating the two series, publishers aim to tap into the popularity and fandom surrounding Harry Potter, implementing its capacity to attract a similar audience with similar success.

1.2 Plot

It is worth knowing more about the novel in detail so as to understand the terms that are going to be translated. *Keeper of the Lost Cities*, from now on *KOTLC*, is about a girl

² As can be seen in *Neverseen* (November 3, 2015), *Nightfall* (November 7, 2017), *Flashback* (November 6, 2018), *Legacy* (November 5, 2019), and *Stellarlune* (November 8, 2022).

³ Survey published in *Library School Journal* in 2007.

named Sophie Foster who has the special ability to be a telepath⁴, something that she has never been able to comprehend or explain. This changes the day she meets Fitz, an elf, which explains to her that she is an elf too. From this point on we discover the world these elves share with Sophie and learn that their world is organized very differently than The Earth. Both worlds are separated and humans on Earth have no idea of the existence of this completely different world. Every elf born in The Lost Cities⁵ is given a birth fund of five million lusters. According to the author, a single luster translates to a million human dollars. Despite the majority of them having enough money to live a comfortable life they are not equally seen and are divided into three social classes, the nobility, the working class, and the talentless. This classification is made on the basis of the abilities each elf manifests. Apart from these three classes, we have the leaders who can be considered the elite justice and rulers, they are called The Councillors, and form a fourth group of twelve elves with different abilities who are considered part of the nobility class. Councillors are the elite elves in charge of making decisions or judging non-elite elves. At certain times they are helped by some members of the nobility that make an oath of obedience and loyalty to the council. In this fictional world, individuals possess unique abilities that fall into three distinct groups. The first one, known as the nobility, wields the most powerful and valuable abilities. They hold the prestigious titles of Lord or Lady and typically assume the positions of Mentors⁶, Regents⁷, and Emissaries⁸.

⁴ Telepath: elf who can sense the thoughts of others and shield their mind not allowing people to read it as well as to protect themselves from the thoughts of humans as their thoughts are louder than the ones produced by elves.

⁵ Name of their world, which they share with other intelligent fictional creatures such as Trolls, Gnomes, Ogres, Dwarves, and Goblins. The Earth is known as 'The Forbidden Cities'.

⁶ Mentors: appointed to help future generations reach and exploit their full potential.

⁷ Regents: appointed to carry out assignments for the Council.

⁸ Emissaries: appointed to carry out highly classified assignments for the Council.

The second group comprises the working-class, elves who possess more specialized abilities that contribute to specific areas of expertise. While not as universally potent as those of the nobility, their skills are still highly valued and essential for the functioning of various sectors within elf society. The third group is known as the talentless because it includes individuals who either do not manifest any abilities or possess ones that are considered dangerous and require strict control and suppression. Unfortunately, the talentless face social scorn and encounter restrictions concerning their marriage options and job opportunities. Their perceived lack of abilities often leads to a marginalized position within society.

Apart from having specific differential abilities, elves can learn to use a set of skills, which are completely different from abilities. Skills are possessed by every elf but they need to train in order to learn how to use them properly. But before elves can use them at all, they must become aware skills exist as many of them do not know it. This is because skills are not considered to be as important as abilities in the elven society. Elves only care about manifesting an ability and not being considered talentless.

The first two books present almost every one of Sophie's friends as talentless and only from the second book on, they start to acquire some abilities. Sophie discovers that she has a rare telepathic⁹ ability that makes her a powerful weapon against the evil group of The Neverseen, who want to overthrow the elven society. Sophie's powers also make her a target, and she must navigate the politics and danger of The Lost Cities while trying to discover the truth about her past. In each book, this group of elves faces unique problems that reveal new skills and abilities that become central to their lives.

⁹ She is able to read each other's minds but no one is capable of reading hers.

2. Vicky Martin's translation. Book 1

Keeper of the Lost Cities (October, 2012) translated by Martin Santamarta as *Sophie Foster: La guardiana de las ciudades perdidas* (May, 2013) is a middle-grade fantasy saga that presents different taxonomies, such as one for fantastic creatures, another for places, and so on for character names, for food types, for skills, for abilities, for races, and for stars. Selecting from this variety, the present project is going to focus on both the taxonomies for skills and for abilities of the elf society. Even though some of the terms have already been translated this dissertation will provide readers with an analysis based on the translation given to those terms while proposing new ones for those who are not translated yet. For presentation purposes, the terms have been listed and divided into two alphabetically ordered sets. Each list provides a brief explanation for what each skill or ability consists of according to Shannon Messenger (2020, 8.5 pages 261-269).

2.1 Taxonomy of Elf Names Corresponding to Elf Abilities

There are 22 abilities listed:

- **BEGUILER:** elf with great power of persuasion who can manipulate others by using the tone of their voice to affect someone's emotions.
- **CHARGER:** elf who can sense and manipulate electricity.
- **CONJURER:** elf who can sense the threads connecting everything and use them to pull objects through the void.
- **DESCRYER:** elf who can sense the "potential" inside of someone.
- **EMPATH:** elf who can sense the emotions of others through physical contact (stronger ones can feel them through the air).
- **ENHANCER:** elf who stores energy in the tips of their fingers and can amplify someone else's ability by physical contact.

- FLASHER: elf who can sense and manipulate light.
- FROSTER: elf who can sense and gather particles of ice in the air and use them to freeze things.
- GUSTER: elf who can sense air and manipulate it.
- HYDROKINETIC: elf who can sense the presence of water and manipulate it.
- INFLICTOR: elf who can gather their emotions into tangible mental energy and launch their force at others.
- MESMER: elf who can sense someone's will and manipulate it, putting them into a kind of trance and controlling their actions and behaviour.
- PHASER: elf who can sense the bond between their cells and can temporally break them allowing them to slip through solid barriers.
- POLYGLOT: elf who can instinctively speak any and all languages. With practice, they are able to mimic other voices.
- PSIONIPATH: elf who can manipulate energy and create force fields.
- PYROKINETIC: elf who can sense and control the heat in the air and use it to spark anything.
- SHADE: elf with the ability to sense and control darkness using shadowvapor or shadowflux.
- TECHNOPAHT: elf who can communicate with technology and use that to create new inventions or manipulate gadgets at their will.
- TELEPATH: elf who can sense the thoughts of others and shield their own mind.
- TELEPORTER: elf who can use momentum to build a unique type of energy that can create a crack in the void for them to slip through.
- VANISHER: elf who can sense the light by making contact with their skin and allow it to pass through their cells rendering themselves invisible.

- VOCIFERATOR: elf who can manipulate the volume of their voice to an extreme degree, making ear-splitting screams that force everyone to pay attention to them but can incapacitate them.

2.2 Taxonomy of Elf Names Corresponding to Elf Skills

This list is composed of the 8 skills that appear in the saga; all elves are able to learn how to use them. In *Keeper of the Lost Cities* (October, 2012) these terms are not mentioned, we know about them in Book 2 *Exile* (October, 2013).

- APPETITE SUPPRESSION: Elf who is characterized by his skill to control hunger, which allows longer survival without food.
- BLINKING: Elf with the skill of blinking. This skill is similar to vanishing but lasts less and absolute stillness is needed.
- BREATH CONTROL: Elf who is characterized for being able of controlling the distance between breaths by distancing the mind, slowing the body's systems.
- CHANNELING: Elf who is characterized for using the mind to send energy where it is needed, arms, legs, core...
- DARKNESS VISION: Elf who is able to focus on the small amount of light that remains letting the mind amplify it.
- LEVITATION: Elf who is able to concentrate on the force of gravity and push against it with the mind.
- BODY TEMPERATURE REGULATION: Elf who is able to focus on whatever small amount of heat or cold and amplify the sensation with the mind.
- TELEKINESIS: Elf who is capable of drawing on the energy stored in the core and thrusting it out through the limbs as if it was an extension of the body, allowing things to be moved and lifted without physical contact.

2.3 Analysis of the translated terms

The following tripartite chart shows the original term in English on the first column, the Spanish translation of Martín Santamarta on the second column, and my preferred translation on the third and last one. After the chart, there will be an explanation of the reasons why I decided either to change or maintain her translation in each particular case.

ORIGINAL TERM	PUBLISHED TRANSLATION	MY PROPOSED TRANSLATION
CONJURER	HECHICERO	CONJURADOR
DESCRYER	PERCEPTOR	PERCEPTOR
EMPATH	ÉMPATA	ÉMPATA
FLASHER	CENTELLA	ILUMINADORES
FROSTER	GÉLIDOS/CRIOKINETICOS	GÉLIDOS/ INVERNOS
INFLICTOR	DUEÑOS DEL DOLOR	DUEÑO DEL DOLOR/CANALIZADOR
MESMER	MESMERIZADOR	MESMERIZADOR
POLYGLOT	POLÍGLOTA	POLÍGLOTA
PYROKINETIC	PIROKINETICOS	PIROQUINETICOS
TECHNOPAHT	TECNÓPATAS	TECNÓPATAS
TELEPATH	TELÉPATAS	TELÉPATAS
VANISHER	VOLÁTILES	ETÉREOS/DIÁFANOS/EVANESCENTES

As Kok explains, “The commonplace characteristics of the genre are simple: a fantasy novel contains elements that are impossible in the real world” (2023, page 6).

This means that in order to be able to translate some of the words above, I had to play

with Spanish words in order to do a proper translation that sounds Spanish but that does not exist as a real word in the RAE. Some of the names used by Shannon Messenger are invented, so there is not yet an adequate translation in Spanish to adequate those terms.

As to the first word ‘conjurer’ I decided to translate it as ‘conjurador’ using the strategy of literal translation, as this Spanish word registered in the RAE is, in my opinion, more accurate than the term used by Martin Santamarta, who uses the term ‘hechicero’ for ‘conjurer’ instead. The translation ‘hechicero’ also implies the use of magic, but, for me, its meaning is more general and also incorrect as the back-translated meaning of ‘hechicero’ following WordReference can be ‘sorcerer’, ‘wizard’, ‘enchantress’, ‘witch’, etc. As the term ‘conjurador’ appears in the RAE and is also given in WordReference as the first option while translating the English term, I think that it fits the original more accurately, especially if we take the definition. The elves that awaken this ability are only able to draw objects through the void if they know where they are, they can store them in this void, but they cannot do magic tricks or conjure any type of spell.

The following word, ‘descryer’ does not exist in English, the author has created it from the English verb ‘descry’. Knowing this, the translation made by Martin Santamarta, ‘perceptor’, is precise as she has found a Spanish word that describes the action conveyed by the English verb, and for doing this she has used the strategy of transposition, which entails changing the original grammatical category to another, concretely she has transposed from the verb ‘descry’ to the noun ‘descryer’ (the word used by the author, Shannon Messenger, in the original books) and finally to the

Spanish word ‘perceptor’. I agree with this translation so my proposal to the translation of this term is the same as Martin Santamarta’s,

‘Empath’ could be translated into Spanish by means of a nominalized adjective ‘empático’ or ‘empática’. In some contexts, the noun form ‘empatía’ might also be used as a translation for the noun ‘empath’. The term ‘empath’ in my opinion is perfectly translated into Spanish as ‘émpata’ by Martin Santamarta, who has used the strategy of literal translation. ‘Empath’ has an easy translation into Spanish and describes perfectly what these elves are capable of doing, besides that, the word in Spanish is very similar graphically and phonetically. On the other hand, the term ‘empath’ is contemplated by many web pages, cinematographical universes, and books, so it is a familiar word for fantasy readers who, even if they do not know it specifically, will find it very easy to guess its meaning.

The translation of the term ‘flasher’ was a challenge, as the translation given by Wordreference was not related to the ability of these elves. Also, Martin Santamarta’s translation was ‘centella’, which did not please me, as the term ‘centella’ according to RAE can be applied to describe a person, or in this case an elf, with the meaning of “f. Persona o cosa muy veloz” (RAE, 2014, page 2004). So my proposal for this term is ‘iluminadores’, which sounds like a term referring to a profession and also gives more information about what the ability is about, manipulating light. The meaning of ‘centella’, even if it can also be related to light, associates light to movement, travel, or velocity. I understand why Martin Santamarta has decided to use the term ‘centella’ but in my opinion, the translation ‘iluminadores’ fits the original better.

‘Frosters’ is another complicated term to translate, the translator alternates between two terms to refer to these elves, ‘gélidos’ and ‘criokinéticos’, the first word does not exist in Spanish as a concrete noun, it comes from the nominalization of the adjective ‘gélido’, and Martin Santamarta has chosen the strategy of transposition to adapt it and create a new word that fits the other names of abilities. On the other hand, the noun ‘criokinéticos’ does also not exist as such in Spanish, but can be derived from the term ‘criogenia’ which is described by the RAE as “f. Práctica o técnica que utiliza la congelación a muy bajas temperaturas con diversos fines” (RAE, 2014, page 2719). Equivalent terms exist in English too, ‘cryogenic’ and ‘cryokinetic’. Their etymology comes from the Greek ‘kryos’ (very cold), so even if the term ‘criokinético’ does not pre-exist as a noun in Spanish, it sounds familiar to Spanish ears, similarly to the term “empath/émata”. They are both recognized as forming part of previous fictional fantastic worlds and universes. It is a very common imaginary superpower so fans of fantasy have created derived words for this type of terminology. I propose to keep the word ‘criokinéticos’ as it sounds scientific and is easy to identify. Additionally, I propose the term ‘invernos’, this term also makes the reader think about low temperatures and may be handy as it is easier than the former word. Again, Shannon Messenger, the author of the original books, has used a noun and has modified it to create a new term for her fantasy word. If the author of the book is creating new words in her language, English, the translator may also create new words mimicking the target language to achieve creating a proper term easy to understand and that conveys the same meaning as the original one. That is what I have done with the term ‘invernos’. On the other hand, the option proposed by Martin Santamarta is also a great idea as she has used the

Greek etymology to build the Spanish word that is very similar to the English one for etymological reasons.

Kok suggests that a fantasy translator must also take into account that “the author of a fantasy novel generally has a good idea of the world he’s writing and will have notes and maps about the important places and aspects to keep all the facts straight to create the image in his head. The translator only has the information provided in the novel itself to go on” (Kok, 2023, page 10). When Martin Santamarta translated the first book, she did not have all the following books of the saga available so she only had the information presented in *KOTLC*. So, her translation of the term ‘inflictor’ is not totally correct, as it can be seen in the chart, she uses the expression ‘dueños del dolor’, which perfectly matches the idea the reader has in the first book about the said ability. The problem is that the third book¹⁰ changes this ability as Sophie (who was recognized to be an inflictor from the end of the first book) discovers that this ability also allows her to inflict a continuum of feelings from positive to negative, and other types in between, onto others. So, the Spanish translation of the term will not be entirely correct, it will only fit up to a certain point as it only describes the idea of being used to inflicting pain. On the other hand, the English term is very neutral, as Shannon Messenger was planning to develop Sophie’s ability in the future. Having had the opportunity to read all the books of the saga, I knew this information beforehand so my translation from the beginning would also have been a more neutral term so as not to have to change it in the middle of the process of translating the saga. The term I came up with is ‘canalizadores’ rather than ‘dueños del dolor’ as ‘canalizadores’ describes the idea of the ability without

¹⁰ *Everblaze* (November 2014) has not been translated into Spanish so Martin Santamarta does not contemplate the changes the ability overcomes in this book for making her first translation of the term ‘inflictor’. On the contrary, I have considered the protagonist’s evolution in the novel.

giving extra information about what they are able to channel or inflict. This would fit perfectly the description given by the author in book 8.5¹¹.

The term ‘mesmer’ comes from the verb ‘mesmerize’, which follows the description provided by the Longman dictionary, “if you are mesmerized by someone or something, you cannot stop watching them or listening to them because they are so attractive or have such a powerful effect” (Longman Dictionary, 2014, page 1147). The term describes what these elves are capable of doing, they captivate others and manipulate them to do their will. In Spanish, it exists a word ‘mesmerizador’ that is a calque of the English term and which is the one that the translator has decided to use, but, as there is also another Spanish word with a similar meaning, ‘hipnotizar’, this indicates that the translator, in this case, has chosen for her translation the term most similar in sound and form to the original. The term ‘mesmerizador’ is derived from the name of the Austrian physician Franz Mesmer, who developed the concept of animal magnetism in the 18th century and believed he could induce a hypnotic state in people by using magnets. Nowadays, these terms ‘mesmerizing/mesmerizador’ are more commonly used in a figurative sense to describe something or someone that exerts a great power of attraction or fascination on others. Even if the word does not appear in the RAE, it is used as a conversational Spanish neologism, and it is known that the RAE commonly accepts new words that become popular and are integrated into the language over time. So, I agree with the translator on her chosen word, as it is similar to the original one, follows the morphological rules of Spanish, and conveys perfectly the meaning of what this ability is about.

¹¹Inflictor: elf who can gather their emotions into tangible mental energy and launch their force at others (Messenger, 2020 page 264).

‘Polyglot’ is an easy term to translate as in Spanish there is a word that is almost a calque, ‘políglota’. Both the English and the Spanish words derive from classical Greek and they refer to a person that can speak several languages. Even if this etymological meaning of the term does not cover the full extent of the ability concerned, it nevertheless helps understand it and using this well-known word makes it easy for the reader to keep in mind the meaning and the possibilities of the ability. Concretely what polyglots in the book are able to do, is to speak each and every language only by hearing it once. They are also able to mimic voices by training.

Now we have the term ‘pyrokinetics’ for the elves that manipulate and create fire. The term, coined by the novelist Stephen King in his 1980 novel *Firestarter*, is not recognized by the RAE but authors of fantasy worlds have kept this term when they needed to give their superheroes the ability or power to control or create fire with their mind. For this reason, Martin Santamarta has decided to use a Spanish calque of this word, preferring to keep the letter “K” instead of using the Spanish transcription “Qu”, so my only proposal will be the slightly changed translation ‘piroquineticos’ so as to fully adapt this term to a Spanish audience.

The skill term ‘Technopath’ like other terms in the list is borrowed from other fictional fantasy worlds where these powers exist; the term has been previously used, for instance by the translators of “*Boku no Heroe Academia*¹²” or for the universe of the X-Men¹³. As a result, the Spanish-reading audience and fans have been given time to

¹² *Boku no Heroe Academia* is a manga series written and illustrated by Kōhei Horikoshi and translated by Daruma Serveis Lingüistics S.L. The story takes place in a world where 80% of the population has developed "gifts", thus emerging heroes and villains and the main character are giftless. It was published on July 7, 2014.

¹³ X-Men is a team of fictional superheroes appearing in American comic books published by Marvel Comics in 1963.

assimilate the idea that the translation ‘tecnópata’ is correct and acceptable. For that reason, I decided to keep that pre-existing translation of the term that Martin Santamarta has also chosen for her translation of this particular word.

‘Telepathy’ is another well-known term for a ‘superskill’ that has been already thematized in many other novels, films, and TV series. The Spanish term ‘telépata’ looks like a calque from the source language, even the RAE has an entry in its dictionary for it, but this is so because the word is a Spanish borrowing from classical Greek like the English word. The translation was easy as the terms in the source and target language have both been accepted as borrowings from classical Greek.

The last ability is one of the most difficult ones to translate, the term ‘vanisher’ is again an adaptation from the verb ‘vanish’. As it is an adaptation and an invented term by the author the translation into Spanish must be also an adaptation or a word that sounds like something invented. Martin Santamarta has decided to translate ‘vanishers’ as ‘volátiles’ but the definition provided by the RAE of the term ‘volátil’ is “Que vuela o puede volar”. “Dicho de un líquido: Que se transforma espontáneamente en vapor” (RAE, 2014, page 8967). As this book is addressed and therefore translated for young adults or teenagers, the term must be easily recognised and follow the description of the ability itself. This term ‘volátiles’ does not fit the original description as the ability to vanish does not entail flying but becoming invisible. I would propose to use the term ‘etéreos’, the term ‘diáfanos’, or the term ‘evanescentes’ as better translations for ‘vanishers’, the three words suggest the idea of invisibility or transparency. The first one has a more religious meaning as if it is often used in referring to angels while the second one is more neutral and perhaps a better option. It is a word that conveys the

meaning of the ability, it is catching and is an adaptation from the Spanish word ‘diáfano’ that is described by the RAE as “Dicho de un cuerpo: Que deja pasar a su través la luz casi en su totalidad” (RAE, 2014, page 3223). The third possible translation is ‘evanescente’, which is a more literal translation and will give the readers the impression of this character being able to become invisible. This is also a really appropriate option but is conceptually associated with smoke or a more mystical being. In my opinion, although all options are valid, I would go for the word ‘diáfanos’, as it is more catching and easier to say and read, and does not evoke religious or mystical notions.

The only skill already included and translated in the first book is ‘telekinesis’, this is a simple translation as it is a concept known to society, especially those readers who are into fantasy books or superheroes. The term ‘-kinesis’ is also a borrowing from classical Greek, which is why scientific words in all modern languages that have borrowed them from Greek are so similar. The Spanish translation may seem like a calque of the English one, ‘telequinesis/telekinesis’ but in reality, both are borrowings from the Greek language so, it is better not to translate or search for a more Spanish-looking word. Also, in other languages, this word is written or pronounced in a very similar way, for example:

French: Télékinésie

German: Telekinese

Italian: Telecinesi

3. Additional terminology related to abilities and skills, a personal proposal for their translation from English into Spanish.

In the following chart, we have the terms that appear throughout the last books in the saga and have not been translated yet into Spanish, concretely books III-X. Each English term is accompanied by my proposal of what would be a good translation for them. The first chart is about elf abilities and the second one is about elf skills.

3.1 Taxonomy of New Elf Names corresponding to Abilities

BEGUILER/S	MANIPULADOR/ES
CHARGER/S	ELECTRO/S
ENHANCER/S	AMPLIFICADOR/ES
GUSTER/S	VENTISCA/S
HYDROKINETIC/S	HIDROQUINETICO/S
PHASER/S	CAMBIAFASES
PSIONIPATH/S	PYSIQUICO/S
SHADE/S	OSCURO/S
TELEPORTER/S	VIAJERO/S
VOCIFERATOR/S	VOCIFERADOR/ES

With regard to the first chart, the term ‘beguiler’ really exists in English, and fits the ability that the author has invented as it is based on the definition of this word. Following the translations provided by the English/Spanish Longman dictionary, which were ‘embustero’, ‘embustera’ ‘embaucador’, ‘embaucadora’, the first option was not

accurate as these elves do not lie, they only manipulate others, the second one is more precise but the term is kind of archaic and is not used in daily conversation so it is much more difficult for the audience to relate to it. That is why my translation would be ‘manipuladores’, a word that is popular and fits the ability itself, as beguilers manipulate others into doing what they please.

‘Charger’ in Spanish can be translated into ‘cargador’, which teens will relate to a function of their mobile phones, but, as chargers are elves capable of manipulating electricity, my proposal will be to use the word ‘electro/s’ as a better translation, since the word conveys the idea of electricity, and moreover, in the Marvel universe, there is a character named Electro that controls electricity, so using this name for the elves capable of manifesting this ability gives the reader the idea of what they are able to do.

‘Enhancers’ are elves that power up other abilities when there is physical contact between them. As they amplify other abilities, the Spanish name for them would be ‘potenciadores’, this is a term used in many video games that describes the ability perfectly, sounds powerful and exists in the Spanish language.

‘Gusters’, the English name for the elves that control the wind, is an invented term in English so there is nothing it makes reference to initially, thus I decided to search for a translation term that fits in the definition of what this ability allows the elves to do, and I could find an appropriate name, in this case, ‘ventisca’. Its definition in the RAE is “(f. Borrasca de viento, o de viento y nieve, que suele ser más frecuente en los puertos y gargantas de los montes)” (RAE, 2014, page 8849) and its principal description includes the simultaneous presence of wind with snow. This means that

Spanish readers will relate the meaning of these elves to wind, like the English reader of ‘gusters’, which is the principal objective of the translation. The Spanish term, like the English one, both give the idea of the power of wind being involved with the ability.

The English term ‘hydrokinetic’ was easy to translate, it comes from the Greek prefix ‘hydr-’, which means water, plus ‘-kinetic’ meaning movement. In Spanish, the same happens and the word ‘hidrokinético’ is used when referring to the energy produced by water. As both words are real and used in specific contexts both in English and Spanish, they are a calque of each other because both of them come from the Greek prefix and the following word ‘kinetikos’, the proper translation will be ‘hidroquinético’. Like this, it follows the pattern of the word ‘piroquinéticos’, which makes them sound more Spanish-like.

‘Phasers’ are elves able to pass through matter, a great translation of the term should imply this, so my proposal would be to call them ‘cambiafases’, for it is understood that to pass through matter they must break their cells so they can pass through solid objects such as walls. In the process they pass from the solid state to what we could call gaseous, allowing solid objects to traverse them.

The term ‘psionipath’ is one of those terms invented by the author, which is used to describe elves who can manipulate energy and create force fields. Since there is no other record of the use of this term referring to the powers that the author describes. Researching other fantasy universes with powers involved, the only characters found capable of creating force fields are the ‘psychic/psíquicos¹⁴’. Even though the Greek etymological root means ‘soul’, this term has nothing to do with its prefix. Therefore, it

¹⁴ These characters are present in *Pokémon* like Mewtwo, which is classified in the psychic class. *Pokémon*; is a media franchise that originally started as an RPG video game, but due to its popularity has managed to expand to other entertainment media such as TV series, movies among others.

could be argued that the translation of this term would be the best appropriate in this case, since it is recognized in fantasy worlds by the readers and is also capable of fulfilling the expectations of the abilities of such elves.

‘Shades’ is the name for elves that manipulate shadows, and in my opinion, a Spanish-translated name that fits them well is ‘oscuros’ because they can control darkness. The term ‘oscuros’ not only hints at the nature of this ability but also suggests that they might be misunderstood or misjudged by elven society. With the connotations that this term conveys, for instance, meanness, it helps the development of one of the plots of the saga as one of the characters is a shade. This elf will have to pretend to change to the side of the bad guys because he is under duress. Although we know the latter, several characters do not fully trust him because of his ability. The name ‘oscuro’, harmonizes perfectly with the plot and this character who finds it difficult to trust others.

‘Teleport’ is a term used to describe the kind of action taken by alicorns¹⁵ and by Sophie, they travel through the void and appear wherever they want. The translation of this into Spanish is without question ‘teletransporte’ but as it is the name of an ability and an elf, I have decided to use the Spanish term ‘viajeros’, teleporting is normally achieved in fiction thanks to a machine, not an individual, so I needed to find a term that described the situation and ‘viajeros’ is perfect for it. Another translation could be ‘televiajeros’. With this translation, we keep the prefix “tele” which means distance, and also keep the idea of the English word.

¹⁵ Alicorns: the rarest creature on the planet, with only four in existence. They have shimmering silver fur, feathered wings, brown eyes, a wavy silver mane and tail, and a white and silver-swirled horn jutting out of their foreheads. They are also telepathic and can teleport. Shannon Messenger (2020 8.5 pages 291, 292)

The Spanish translation for the term ‘vociferator’ is ‘vociferadores’, a calque of the English word, and a term that appears in the Harry Potter universe meaning a letter that has a message recorded at a very loud voice volume. Also, in Spanish, ‘vociferar’ is to speak very loudly which fits the ability.

3.2 Taxonomy of New Elf Names corresponding to Skills

APPETITE SUPPRESSION	SUPRESIÓN DEL HAMBRE
BLINKING	DESTELLEAR
BREATH CONTROL	CONTROL DE LA RESPIRACIÓN
CHANNELING	CANALIZAR
DARKNESS VISION	VISIÓN NOCTURNA
LEVITATION	LEVITACIÓN
BODY TEMPERATURE REGULATION	REGULACIÓN DE LA TEMPERATURA CORPORAL

For the translation of the skills mentioned above, I decided to use the strategy of literal translation, ‘appetite suppression’ which will be translated as ‘supresión del hambre’, as they are both equal in the target and source language.

For the term ‘blinking’ I decided to translate it as ‘destellar’, this skill allows elves to become invisible for a certain period of time, and ‘a destello’ is a live and ephemeral glow so turning invisible is similar to a ‘destello’ as it happens fast and even if you can perceive it, then you are no longer visible.

For translating 'breath control' I used again the literal translation strategy, so in Spanish, the skill will be named 'control de la respiración'.

'Channeling' will be 'canalizar' a term that has been used in other universes with superpowers, and also is used when referring to energy, both in English and Spanish, so fits the skill itself as it consists of sending energy to certain body parts.

The term 'darkness vision' is also an exploited power and term in many universes and literary works, everyone knows that this term equals in Spanish 'visión nocturna' as there are many gadgets in the market that supposedly are able to facilitate this activity.

'Levitation' is also another wild known term and is translated into the target language as 'levitación' for example is a very well know spell in the Harry Potter books and films.

To end with, for translating the term 'body temperature regulation' I have also used the strategy of literal translation, so it will be 'regulación de la temperatura corporal', both share the same word number and fit the pattern of the other skills.

4. Conclusion

This thesis has dealt with the intricacies of literary translation as applied to Elvin's taxonomy of skills and abilities. All this has allowed me to reach the conclusion that this type of translation is a complicated task that requires, above all, a great deal of creativity, as well as a broad knowledge of both the source and the target language.

In this particular case, due to the large amount of terminology in this saga, translating it became a complex task. Martin Santamarta has used several translation strategies, such as the creation of new words, literal translation or transposition. Therefore, I have tried to follow some of her strategies, with the aim of maintaining a similar structure to that of the translator. One of them is literal translation, which has been reflected in my translation of the skills. In my opinion, skills are more technical than abilities, so I used simpler structures and words easy to understand, with the exception of the term 'blinking'. The latter word was a challenge. The term was an invention of the writer, so in Spanish a new word was needed or one that already existed but did not apply to this skill. Besides, as it was related to becoming invisible, I decided to try and keep it more magical with the term I chose, 'destellar'.

I believe that future translations of this terminology will be similar or the same as those proposed in this thesis. Also, it is important to note that in making this translation, the target audience has been taken into account, which, although it is a book for teenagers, this particular audience is very much into these fantasy and superhero worlds. This facilitates the translation since many skills are similar to those presented, for example, in the Marvel and DC worlds.

Mainly the words I chose as the target language are easy to read and pronounce. Also, I tried to make them look or chose the ones that look and sound like Spanish, following Martin Santamarta's advice. Some of them were a challenge, since they were already, English-accepted terms by many people like 'telekinesis'. Furthermore, I decided to keep some of them as similar to the source language as possible, in this category are included all the terms with a Greek origin.

The use of charts and lists has helped me organize the work and make this thesis more visual and easier to follow. Besides, I consider that the covers of the books are of great help to show how translation varies and is modified for marketing purposes. Overall, one might conclude that the translation of the taxonomy was a real challenge. Moreover, I want to thank again the translator Vicky Martin Santamarta for her advice and for giving me the idea of using lists to classify all terminology.

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ANNEX

Photographic Sub-Index:

Covers of the books of the saga:

Book 1: *Keeper of the Lost Cities*

Libro 1: *Sophie Foster: La guardiana de las ciudades perdidas*

Book 2: *Exile*

Libro 2: *Sophie Foster: El secreto de la alicornia mágica*

Book 3: *Everblaze*

Book 4: *Neverseen*

Book 5: *Lodestar*

Book 6: *Nightfall*

Book 7: *Flashback*

Book 8: *Legacy*

Book 8.5: *Unlocked*

Book 9: *Stellarlune*





