Tension in translation: Spain's and Catalonia's discourse on independence

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the 2010 legal and political crisis surrounding the status of Catalonia within Spain, the Catalan pro-independence civil society undertook an extensive campaign during which they produced, translated, and distributed many documents in favour of independence. The aim of this campaign was to make the international community, especially the European Union, aware of the Catalan independence cause, and ultimately to garner support from outside Catalonia and Spain. Our study aims to understand the way pro-independence discourse in translation depicts the crisis at large, and more specifically the relationship between Catalonia and Spain in the early stages of the crisis. To this end, we conducted a critical discourse analysis using Chilton and Schäffner's strategic functions (1997, 2011), drawing on three books produced, translated, and distributed between 2010 and 2014 and that deal primarily with the independence of this autonomous community of Spain.

Keywords: Catalonia, civil society, discourse, independence, referendum, Spain

1. Introduction

The main objective of this article is to expose and analyze Catalan pro-independence discourse in translation in order to understand how Catalan civil society explains the independence process to the outside world. Although Catalan's quest for independence can be traced back centuries, when referring to it here, we deal specifically with the movement that (re-)emerged in and around 2010, first through civil society organizations such as Òmnium Cultural, then backed by political leaders, and whose main objective is full political independence from Spain.

This article is based on the findings of earlier work on the subject in which we analyzed the target languages and audiences of this campaign using a corpus of 21 documents produced and translated in two or more languages during the same period, that is, 2010–2014 (Pomerleau 2017). In a follow-

up study, we analyzed an extended corpus which included pro-independence documents produced and translated into the main languages of immigration to Catalonia until 2017 (Pomerleau 2020). In this article, we concentrate on the only three multilingual books that were produced, translated, and distributed during the first period (2010–2014). Several angles could have been adopted for this study, such as corpus linguistics, especially in relation to translation studies (Baker 1993, Laviosa 2002, 2011) and it is fundamental to our work, but we focus herein on the tools provided by critical discourse analysis, especially Chilton and Schäffner's strategic functions (1997, 2011), because our analysis is mainly qualitative. Moreover, our corpus is relatively small and monolingual, and not comparable nor parallel (Bernardini and Russo 2017, 343), which would have made it more suitable for a corpus linguistics-based approach in translation studies focussing, for example, on translation universals, shifts or norms (Baker 1993). This research also falls within the scope of cultural translation, whether from an anthropological (Asad 1986) or cultural studies angle (Bhabha 1994; Spivak 2000) in the sense that the object of study is not a source text, but the content of target texts that translate a certain reality. As we will see, the political reality depicted by the corpus consists in "consolidating a wide variety of cultural discourses into a target text that in some sense has no 'original', no source text—at least no single source text—" (Robinson 1998, 43).

2. Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies

In Translation Studies, discourse analysis has been used by many scholars, for example Schäffner (2012), Gagnon and Kalantari (2016), and Damaskinidis (2017), to compare the content of an original or source text with a translation or target text. Other studies have compared an original with many target texts in different languages, such as the ones by Navarro Errasti et al. (2004), and Valdeón (2005). Our analysis differs from these works in the sense that we only look at target texts. Very few scholars have done the same, i.e., analyzing target texts without taking into consideration the original: Some exceptions include Bastin and Castrillón (2004), who analyzed the Spanish target text and the paratext of the *Lettre aux Espagnols américains* (Viscardo y Guzmán 1799), Oktar and Kansu-Yetkiner (2012), who analyzed the forewords to Turkish translations of a text originally published in English, and Amirdabbaghian and Shunmugam (2019), who also analyzed forewords, this time of Persian translations of George Orwell's *1984*.

Our study is therefore one of very few that focus on analyzing target texts without comparing them to each other nor to an original. This choice is based on the fact that we want to study Catalan

discourse on independence *in translation*, and not what the authors say or may have said in Catalan—the source language—to Catalans—the source audience. Moreover, our preliminary analysis has not shown any noticeable differences between the original and the different translations, nor between different linguistic versions. In fact, the texts were written with a foreign audience in mind, to the point that the Catalan version of one of the books, *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013), was not published, even though the original manuscript was in Catalan.

Finally, as we have shown (Pomerleau 2017), all the agents (authors, editors, publishers, translators, proofreaders, etc.) who took part in producing the books share the same values: They are in favour of Catalan independence and would have had no interest in manipulating or modifying the texts in any way, therefore making a comparative analysis far less relevant. Here, we cannot omit the importance of ideology in relation to translation, a concept that has been largely studied in the last decades, starting with translation scholars such as Calzada Pérez (2003) and Munday (2007) and which is now being used as a central concept in many case studies (Guillaume 2016; McLaughlin and Muñoz-Basols 2016, 2021; Carbonell i Cortés 2019). In our study, what is translated and published, and by whom (authors, translators, publishers, etc.) is a clear indication of a particular ideology, especially political views related to the Catalan pro-independence movement, as we will see.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis consists in studying the functions of language rather than its internal structure. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is part of the approach Fairclough calls *Critical Language Study*. It aims to explain the links between discourse and social reality from a critical standpoint; it critiques discourse, of course, but also the social reality depicted by discourse (Fairclough 2015, 48). CDA is especially interested in the relationship between discourse and power, and examines how discourse can be used in the exercise of power. In the book *Discourse Studies* (1997), one of the leading experts in CDA, Teun A. van Dijk, clearly and concisely defines critical discourse analysis, and this definition is the cornerstone of our analysis:

> Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. (van Dijk 1997, 352)

This kind of analytical research on discourse can be done from a quantitative or qualitative standpoint or combine both approaches. The quantitative approach allows us to reveal the expressive convergence of the corpus, that is, its identity, the discourse thematic, the statements made, as well as the ideology conveyed by it (Bonnafous and Tournier 1995, 74). The qualitative approach gives more importance to the way words are used by concentrating on persuasion techniques. In this respect, in 1997, Paul Chilton and Christina Schäffner introduced a series of strategic functions as tools for critical discourse analysis. Today, many scholars (Le Bart 2012, Cruz and Pacchiarotti 2013, Navarro 2020) use Chilton and Schäffner's strategic functions to analyze discourse through different lenses such as political science, economy and sociology, as well as translation studies.

According to Chilton and Schäffner (1997, 2011), acts accomplished through language are multiple and can be interpreted in many ways. To address the possible interpretations, the authors established links between political matter, discourse types and levels of discourse organization. Then, they drew connections between them using an intermediate level called *strategic functions*:

> The notion of strategic functions enables analysts of text and talk to focus on details that contribute to the phenomena which people intuitively understand as "political", rather than on other functions such as the informational, the ludic, etc. (Chilton and Schäffner 2011, 311).

The three functions are a) coercion and resistance; b) legitimization and delegitimization; c) representation and misrepresentation. The coercion and resistance function relates to a form of language control. Coercion relates to speech acts that can trigger sanctions. Laws and regulations are examples of coercive measures because they can lead to legal procedures. Resistance is the response to coercion and is usually used by people opposed to the ones exercising power. Feminist translation (de Lotbinière-Harwood 1991, von Flotow 1997) is a good example of resistance to masculine hegemony.

The legitimization and delegitimization function consists in using or adapting text forms to legitimize or delegitimize ideas or actions. Legitimization is closely related to coercion because it aims to convince by using so-called "irrefutable" arguments. For instance, it can be said that a decision is legitimate because "experts have spoken" or because "it is common sense". Delegitimization consists in depicting someone or something negatively, pinpointing negative

aspects. As an example, Gagnon (2013) showed that French to English translations of Québécois pro-independence speeches contributed to delegitimizing the movement's nationalist discourse.

The representation and misrepresentation function relates to the control of information. Representation consists in making someone or something look good by emphasizing positive details or by making some features look better than they actually are. Misrepresentation consists in making someone or something look worse than they really are by intentionally omitting positive details or by presenting only half-truths or lies. Lying is the most extreme example of misrepresentation.

Strategic functions are not mutually exclusive: Someone can easily be misrepresented using coercion and delegitimization. Our critical discourse analysis, based on Chilton and Schäffner's strategic functions, will enable us to identify and understand what the Catalan civil society is saying (in translation) about the independence of Catalonia and its relationship with Spain, and how translation is used to attempt to influence the target audience, i.e., the international community.

4. Corpus

Our corpus is composed of three books: *Catalonia Calling* (Sàpiens 2013); *Keys on the Independence of Catalonia* (ElClauer 2013a), and *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013), shown in the figure below.

Figure 1 – Corpus

All three books were published in the aftermath of the Spanish Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling that invalidated or reinterpreted different clauses of the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, especially the clauses related to the concept of nation as well as to language, justice and fiscality. Concretely, the Statute specified that Catalonia was a nation, it made Catalan the preferential language of public administration, it gave more power to Catalan courts, and it gave Catalonia more

control over the amounts sent to and received from the Central government, among other things (Gencat 2006).

The Constitutional Court ruling triggered a rise in support for an independent Catalonia in the early 2010s. These three books are the only ones published in multilingual versions between 2010 and the 2014 non-binding Catalan self-determination referendum. This event was chosen to circumscribe our corpus because many documents were produced and translated specifically to promote Catalonia's right to self-determination and a vote in favour of independence as part of this consultation. It is important to bear in mind that the books in the corpus were not produced and translated in anticipation of the 2017 referendum that took place without the authorization of the Spanish Institutions. The 2014 referendum was not allowed, but the Spanish Institutions let it happen after the Catalan government chose to change it to a non-binding process comparable to a large-scale poll (Arenas 2014).

The books in our corpus were publicized mainly through social media, and this is how we first became aware of their existence. To ensure that our corpus was complete, we searched for all books published in all languages between 2010 and 2014, inclusively, in the Biblioteca de Catalunya database using the keywords *independència* and *Catalunya*. Therefore, our corpus falls into the category of "disposable" or "do-it-yourself" in the sense that it was built "from scratch" (Baker 2006, 25) and created "for a specific task" (Bernardini and Russo 2017, 342), that is, studying the Catalan pro-independence discourse in translation.

4.1 Catalonia Calling

Catalonia Calling (Sàpiens 2013) was produced by *Sàpiens*, Catalonia's leading history magazine. This 145-page book was simultaneously published in Catalan, Spanish, English, French, and German in 2013. It deals mainly with the relationship between Catalonia and Spain over the course of 300 years and up to the publication of the book (1714–2014). The book's subtitle *What the World Has to Know* gives us an idea of how the subject matter is addressed and for whom it is published. In fact, on the first page, the director of *Sàpiens* Clàudia Pujol writes that the book will enable the reader "to discover the past and present of Catalonia, as well as the future that most Catalans would like to define for ourselves" (Sàpiens 2013, 5), implying that a majority of Catalans want independence. The English translation was done by Alan Moore, a professional translator who works for *InTransit*, a Catalan monthly that publishes English literary texts originally written in Catalan. The English version of *Catalonia Calling* was revised by Liz Castro, a very prominent

English-speaking activist in favour of independence and editor of *What's up with Catalonia?* (see 4.3).

4.2 Keys on the Independence of Catalonia

Keys on the Independence of Catalonia (ElClauer 2013a) is based on the content of the ElClauer website (ElClauer 2013b). It consists of answers to 80 hypothetical questions about independence. Some of the "keys" are government institutions, language and culture, and Catalonia in the world. The book is available in Catalan, Spanish and English. For journalist Germà Capdevila, the publication of a book whose content was already available online is just another example of how much civil society (in this case, the Comanegra publishing house) is committed to the Catalan cause, an idea confirmed by Comanegra's director Joan Sala, who called the book a "service for the country" (Capdevila 2013). The English translation was done by a professional translator[1], but no name is mentioned in the book, nor anywhere in the paratext.

4.3 What's up with Catalonia?

What's up with Catalonia? (Castro 2013) was edited by Liz Castro, an American-born Catalan activist. This collection of 35 essays is 224 pages long and was published by Catalonia Press, a publishing house founded in 2011 by Castro. Catalonia Press's mission is to raise the outside world's awareness of Catalonia by publishing books in English about the region. The essays were written by some of Catalonia's most preeminent figures, including the then president of the Generalitat, Artur Mas. The subtitle of the book, *The causes which impel them to the separation* comes from the U.S. Declaration of Independence (Castro 2013). It was produced and distributed both in paper and electronic format in English and Spanish, and explores the ins and outs of Catalan independentism. With few exceptions, the essays were translated by Castro herself and revised by Margaret Trejo (Castro 2013, 8), a professional editor.

4.4 Collective work

The three books are particularly interesting because they are collective works. They are collective in the sense that they have several authors, but also because many activist organizations and individuals took part in their creation, including translators. Indeed, they were produced and

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[1] Information obtained by email from Jordi Lon on March 21, 2017.

translated by activists to act as a "key vehicle for disseminating, sifting and understanding cultural and social phenomena" (McLaughlin & Muñoz-Basols 2016, 2), in this case, Catalan independentism. Concretely, here, the translators are "the spokesperson[s] for a group that has built a system of representations on specific issues" (Pagni, Payas and Willson 2011, 7; cited and translated by Carbonell i Cortés 2019, 124).

5. Methodology

The sum and variety of authors and articles gives us a considerable amount of material to analyze. As previously specified, the analysis is not contrastive, and it is done using only the English version of the books. Thus, we are specifically analyzing how Catalan pro-independence discourse takes shape in English translation, i.e., what the texts convey to the target audience—here, the English-reading world—and how they say it through translation.

Our analysis is twofold, quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative analysis was done using WordSmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2015), a software that allows the user to create a list of the most frequent units (words, lemmas, phrases, etc.) in a corpus, and obtain data about the selected units, including concordances. Before creating the list, we converted the books to text files and merged them into a single file comprising 128,259 words (see Table 1). The list of the most frequent words was then grouped by subject matter in order to highlight the main topics depicted in the corpus. We know for a fact that the books are about the independence of Catalonia, and there is no need to elaborate on that aspect. But what do they talk about specifically and what is their angle? The quantitative data provides an overview of the texts' content and guides us through the qualitative analysis.

As described above, the qualitative analysis is based on Chilton and Schäffner's (1997, 2011) strategic functions. Therefore, our critical discourse analysis (CDA) starts by showing the topics presented in the texts using quantitative data. Then, we proceed with a qualitative analysis based on excerpts related to the most frequent units as revealed by the quantitative analysis. This enables us to understand not only what the texts are about, but also *how* they discuss each topic.

Table 1 – Corpus and word count

Document: *Catalonia Calling*	Words
Presentation & Intro: A Nation Called Catalonia	3,958
Dossier 1: The War of Spanish Succession 1714	14,116
Dossier 2: 300 Years Within Spain	22,953
Conclusion: The Future We Want	1,686
Total *Catalonia Calling*	**42,713**
Document: *Keys on the Independence of Catalonia*	
Intro: In support of exercising the democratic right to decide	1,568
Keys	21,782
Total *Keys on the Independence of Catalonia*	**23,350**
Document: *What's up with Catalonia?*	
Editor's note and Prologue: A new path for Catalonia	1,805
Essays	60,391
Total *What's up with Catalonia?*	**62,196**
Total Corpus	**128,259**

Documents analyzed and word count per document (English versions)

6. Analysis

6.1 Lemmas

The following table shows the 30 most frequent lemmas in the corpus after removing empty words such as conjunctions and pronouns, and the verbs *to be* and *to have*. The Frequency column shows how many times each lemma appears in the corpus, the Relative frequency column shows how frequently the same lemma appears for every 100 words in the corpus (e.g., there are 1457 occurrences of "Catalan" as a lemma in a total of 128,259 words, i.e., it appears 1.14 times for every 100 words).

Table 2 – Most frequent lemmas

Rank	Lemma	Frequency	Relative frequency	Rank	Lemma	Frequency	Relative frequency
1	Catalan	1457	0.0114	16	World	198	0.0015
2	Catalonia	1370	0.0107	17	War	192	0.0015
3	Spanish	711	0.0055	18	Economic	191	0.0015
4	State	585	0.0046	19	Million	169	0.0013
5	Spain	524	0.0041	20	Century	166	0.0013
6	Government	424	0.0033	21	First	166	0.0013
7	Language	407	0.0032	22	European	152	0.0012
8	Country	356	0.0028	23	Independent	144	0.0011
9	Year	323	0.0025	24	Madrid	144	0.0011
10	Barcelona	307	0.0024	25	Euro	136	0.0011
11	New	300	0.0023	26	Public	134	0.0010
12	Political	274	0.0022	27	Europe	129	0.0010
13	People	261	0.0020	28	Fiscal	125	0.0010
14	Time	219	0.0017	29	Parliament	120	0.0009
15	Independence	199	0.0016	30	National	117	0.0009

The data shows that lemmas directly related to Catalonia and its inhabitants (or its language), that is "Catalan" and "Catalonia", are by far the most frequent (2827 occurrences) in the corpus. The presence of the lemma "Barcelona" (307 occurrences) is also closely linked to words referring to the Catalan collective. When we look at concordances for "Catalan" and "Catalonia", we see that these lemmas are often associated with "Independent" and "Independence", as well as with "State", as shown in Table 3. This demonstrates the highly politicized aspect of "Catalan" and "Catalonia" in the corpus, as well as how it is seen or people wish it to be seen: as a State and as a (potentially) independent one. We will discuss these lemmas in the qualitative analysis.

Table 3 – Concordances for Catalan/Catalonia

Rank	Concordance	Frequency
1	Government	336
2	Spain/Spanish	270
3	Independent/ Independence	247
4	State	240
5	Language	78
6	New	77
7	Europe/European	76
8	People	72
9	Future	68
10	Law	64

Lemmas directly related to Spain and its inhabitants (or its language), that is, "Spanish" and "Spain", come in second place (1235 occurrences). The lemma "Madrid" (114 occurrences) can serve the same function as "Barcelona" and refer to the Spanish collective. When we look at the concordances for both "Spain" and "Spanish" in Table 4, we see than these lemmas are often associated with "State", a word often used to portray Spain in a somewhat remote manner, which we will discuss in the next section. In addition, the frequency of "War" and "Succession" as concordances of "Spain" shows how the corpus in anchored in history, and from a somewhat negative perspective. Moreover, many terms related to the monarchy appear as concordances of "Spain" and "Spanish" despite not appearing in Table 4. Such terms (kingdom, monarchy, throne, Bourbon, etc.) appear 110 times, and if calculated together would rank 2nd in the table. This shows how pro-independence Catalan organizations perceive Spain and wish to depict it to the reader, i.e., as somewhat of a relic that is not guided by modern democracy. We will discuss this in the qualitative analysis below.

Table 4 – Concordances for Spanish/Spain

Rank	Concordance	Frequency
1	Catalonia/Catalan	268
2	State	116
3	War	96
4	Government	82
5	Succession	50
6	Civil	40
7	Language	40
8	France/French	40
9	Europe/European	32
10	People	28

After lemmas referring directly to Catalonia and Spain in the corpus, we find lemmas referring to the institutional apparatus, that is "State", "Government" and "Parliament" (1129 occurrences). These lemmas can refer to either the Catalan or Spanish collectives, as well as to other national or supranational collectives. The lemmas "Country", "People" and "National" (734 occurrences) can also refer to distinct national collectives. Finally, lemmas referring to the European collective are also frequent in the corpus, that is "European" and "Europe" (281 occurrences), as well the lemma referring to the entire "World" (198 occurrences).

In short, lemmas referring to the acting parties are clearly predominant in the corpus: The texts talk about Catalonia and Spain, the collectives directly impacted by the crisis that gave birth to the production and translation of the books used in this analysis. Some of the other frequent lemmas in the corpus point directly at the political crisis opposing Catalonia to Spain, that is "Political", "Independence" and "Independent". Others refer to sources of misunderstanding between Catalonia and Spain like "Language", "Economic", and "Fiscal". Lemmas referring to temporality such as "Year", "Time" and "Century", as well as the lemma "War", are intrinsically related to the importance of history in the documents. Finally, the target audiences are represented by the lemmas referring to "Europe" and the "World".

6.2 Discourse

This section deals with the depiction of "Catalonia" and "Spain", the focus of the corpus, as seen in the quantitative analysis. We pinpoint the words and expressions other than "Catalonia" and "Spain"—for example, "Generalitat" and "State"—used to depict these national collectives. This allows us to understand how the enunciators refer to these collectives, a key dimension of political discourse. The designation of national collectives, that is, society as a whole, above the mere political organization, allows the enunciator to depict reality according to an identity/alterity standpoint, dissociating "Us" from the "Other" (Duchastel and Armony 1994 :7).

In the tables below, the number of occurrences of every word or expression related to the Catalan and Spanish collectives, "Catalonia" and "Spain", include occurrences verified with collocations in context. For example, occurrences of "Government" in the table referring to the Catalan collective include occurrences such as "Catalan Government" and "Government of Catalonia", whereas occurrences of "Government" in the table referring to the Spanish collective include "Spanish Government" and "Government of Spain". The same applies to the words "State", "Nation", "Country" and "Republic" for both, as well as "Monarchy" and "Crown" for Spain.

a) Catalonia

The following table shows the words and expressions used to refer to Catalonia in the corpus. The words "Government" and "Generalitat" are combined because their meaning is the same: The Government of Catalonia is the Generalitat, and they are used interchangeably.

Table 5 – "Catalonia" as a collective

Word or expression	Frequency		% of Catalan collective	Relative frequency
Catalonia		1370	82.28%	0.0107
State		135	8.11%	0.0011
Government	48	88	5.29%	0.0007
Generalitat	40			
Nation		43	2.58%	0.0003
Country		9	0.54%	<0.0001
Principality		9	0.54%	<0.0001
Republic		6	0.36%	<0.0001
Autonomous community		5	0.30%	<0.0001
Total		**1665**	100%	**0.01298**

As we can see in the table above, the quantitative data shows that for Catalan *independentistes* (pro-independence supporters, in Catalan), Catalonia is first and foremost simply "Catalonia" (82.28% of occurrences, and that its relative frequency is 10 times higher than "State" and 15 times higher than "Government/Generalitat"). When it is referred to using a different word, it is sometimes a "State" (8.11%), a government ("government" or "Generalitat") (5.29%) or a "nation" (2.58%). The expression "autonomous community" (0.3%) is almost nonexistent in the corpus, even if it refers to the official status of Catalonia within Spain. These data show that the authors prefer to use "Catalonia" by a large margin, a clear and simple word, instead of using potentially obscure words like "Generalitat" or words that are connoted or can mean different things depending on context, language and readership, for example "nation". In an article about translation at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, Pym (1998) talks about issues relating to the difference in meaning between Catalan and English words depicting Catalonia:

> An important political problem nevertheless remained on the level of determining the host "country". If Catalan could be an official language, why shouldn't there be an official Catalan team, with its own national committee? The Catalan term "nació", like most of its Romance-language counterparts, does not necessarily imply a nation-state. A stateless nation can still be a "nació" […]. (Pym 1998:365)

The discrepancy in meaning between languages can therefore have played a certain role in the misunderstandings—or at least in some of them—between the actors at play, something that was later pointed out by academics such as Gemma Rigau (Núvol 2019).

Terms such as "government" and "Generalitat" are not prone to controversy because they are not positively nor negatively connoted. Terms such as "State" and "nation", as well as the expression "autonomous community" are used differently. The following examples are extracted from the corpus and analyzed using Chilton and Schäffner's (2011, 1997) strategic functions.

Whereas it is true that the term "nation" is used moderately in the corpus when referring to Catalonia (2.58% of occurrences), it is worth taking a look at how it is used because it is highly symbolic, as evidenced in the following excerpt, where the authors write about the Catalan nation as a fact, not as a project or a mere fantasy:

> What we must recognize in this nation called Catalonia is its tenacious will to survive against all adversity. This tenacity is what we hope will lead us, three hundred years after the great disaster, to regain our liberty and build our own state within the Europe of the 21st century.
>
> - Creus and Pujol in *Catalonia Calling* (Sàpiens 2013:17)

In this excerpt, the authors write "this nation called Catalonia", meaning that it is viewed as a nation, no matter its official status within Spain or in the eyes of the international community, a clear indication of their particular ideology. In the following excerpt, the author not only states that Catalonia is a nation, he adds that it was a nation before Spain even existed. To make his point, the author uses a legitimization strategy based on the apparent undisputed fact that Catalonia is a nation:

> […] the Spanish Government and Parliament have actively moved against any sort of recognition of the national identity of Catalonia even though it is well known that Catalonia was a nation well before Spain was created and, obviously, long before Castile was divided up.
>
> - Solano in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:170)

For van Eemeren et al. (2007:106), an expression like "everybody knows" (here, "it is well known") "often indicates that the speaker is trying to hide that a starting point that is assumed to be common may not be a common starting point at all." In the general discourse against the independence of Catalonia, it is often stated that Catalonia is not a "nation", even if the Spanish Constitutional Court stated that Catalonia can be seen as a "nation" from a cultural standpoint. Nevertheless, legally, the Constitutional Court stated that Catalonia cannot constitute a nation:

It is indeed possible to speak of nation as a cultural, historic, linguistic, sociological and even religious reality. But the nation of importance here is solely and exclusively the nation in its legal and constitutional sense. And in that specific sense, the Constitution does not recognize anything other than the Spanish Nation […]. (TC 2010)

Despite this very important nuance brought forward by the Constitutional Court, the message conveyed in the following excerpts by some anti-independence figures leads us to believe that Catalonia cannot be considered a nation, no matter the sense (cultural, constitutional, etc.). The first excerpt is from activist Susan Beltran from Societat Civil Catalana, an anti-independence civil organization. The second excerpt comes from an article by Fernando Álvarez Balbuena published in *La Crítica de León*:

Catalonia is a region, not a nation like Scotland.

- Susan Beltran in *Le Monde* (AFP 2014)

Catalonia is not a nation. Nationalists falsify the history of Spain.
- Fernando Álvarez Balbuena in *La Crítica de León* (Álvarez Balbuena 2016)

These examples clearly show the discursive tensions around the concept of nation and the different underlying ideologies: On the one hand, for pro-independence supporters, Catalonia being a nation is a strong legitimization argument: If Catalonia is a nation, it should have the right to decide and to secede. On the other hand, the discourse conveyed by anti-independence actors, as shown in the examples above, falls into the misrepresentation category because it occults the fact that the Constitutional Court ruled that from a non-constitutional point of view, Catalonia can in fact be considered a nation.

As for the expression "autonomous community", which is the official status of Catalonia within Spain, it barely appears in the corpus, with five occurrences. Here are two examples of how it is used:

> Presently, those territories [where Catalan is spoken] make up distinct "autonomous communities" within the current territorial structure of the Spanish State, in force since the approval of the Constitution of 1978. There is, therefore an "autonomous community" of Catalonia, one of Valencia, one of the Balearic Islands, and one of Aragon.
>
> - Sanchis in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:155)

> Catalonia celebrated what we hope will be our last "Autonomous Community" elections.
>
> - Junqueras in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:20)

In the first excerpt, it is clearly stated that the expression "autonomous community" refers to the "current" status of Catalonia, which leads the reader to believe that it will eventually change. The second excerpt conveys a similar idea with the word "last" indicating that soon Catalonia will no longer be an autonomous community. Thus, in both excerpts the author takes for granted that Catalonia's status as an autonomous community is temporary. Moreover, both authors use quotation marks, a sign that they want to add an underlying comment, that they want to take their distance from the expression "autonomous community" (Ponge 2013), which puts Catalonia on par with all other autonomous communities of Spain.

In summary, in our corpus, Catalonia is most often simply called "Catalonia". This being said, it is also depicted as a "State", a "government" and a "nation", but not as a mere "autonomous community". From a qualitative standpoint, Catalonia, no matter what it is called, is depicted with positively connoted words such as "liberty", "tenacity", and "survive" (see Table 6). Finally, there are tensions between what the corpus says and what the media says, notably when it comes to the concept of nation. – Examples of positively connoted words used to depict Catalonia

Word
Culture
Democratic
Exceptional
Fair
Liberty
Nation
Peaceful
Tenacity
Support
Survive

b) Spain

We will now look at the way Catalans depict Spain in our corpus. Before examining the quantitative data, it is necessary to contextualize the use of the word "State" or "*Estat*" in Catalonia, since we will come to it shortly. Anyone who follows Catalan politics and news in general has read or heard the word "State" or the expression "Spanish State" when referring to Spain (e.g., Moliner 2017; ACN 2021). In *España contra el Estado* (2013), Ángel López García-Molins broadly discusses the subject and argues that the word "State" allows "peripheral nationalists" (Catalans, Basques, etc.) to say:

> *The State oppresses us*, but also *the State's football team beat Italy* and still be happy about it […] without having to say the inconvenient word *Spain*. […] Those who use the word do not feel that they are Spanish citizens, but citizens of a state called Spain. (López García-Molins 2013, 7–8; italics in the original; our translation)

The word "State" is therefore highly connoted in Catalonia. The frequency of this word and other words used to refer to Spain as a national collective are shown in the following table:

Table 6 – "Spain" as a collective

Word	Frequency	% of Spanish collective	Relative frequency
Spain	524	68.68%	0.0041
State	95	12.45%	0.0007
Government	95	12.45%	0.0007
Monarchy/Crown	26	3.41%	0.0002
Nation	11	1.44%	<0.0001
Country	7	0.92%	<0.0001
Republic	5	0.66%	<0.0001
Total	**763**	100%	**0.00595**

The results show that despite what López García-Molins (2013:7–8) says about the word "State", for Catalan *independentistes*, Spain is most often simply called "Spain" (68.68% of occurrences and a relative frequency more than 5 times higher than "State" or "Government"). The word "State" comes in second place, tied with "Government" (12.45% each), which is sometimes "Central", sometimes "Spanish". In the corpus, Spain is also referred to as "Monarchy" and "Crown" (3.41% and a relative frequency about 3.5 times lower than "State" or "Government"). The use of

"Monarchy" and "Crown" can be explained by the presence of history in the texts, and also by parallels established between the Monarchy and the Spanish government's way of doing things, as shown by this excerpt from the corpus:

> Joan Fuster was in favour of the old political union between Catalans, Mallorcans, and Valencians as the only viable alternative to the disappearance of the nation. As a single valid answer to the pretensions of being diluted as "Spanish"–of Spanish language and culture. A pretension that the crown and the State have spent centuries trying to achieve. Without success so far.
>
> - Sanchis in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:155)

In the excerpt above, the author writes that both the Spanish crown and State want to "dilute" any differences in order to homogenize Spain. He adds that they have tried to do so for centuries, but that it has not worked "so far", a legitimization argument for independence because it implies that without independence, the Spanish State might ultimately achieve homogenization, something that would go against the right of minorities to exist and lead to the "disappearance of the nation".

Here are other examples of how the words "Spain" and "State" are used in the corpus. Once again, the excerpts are compared to examples found in the Spanish and international press. The first excerpts deal with the origin of Spain, a recurring topic in the corpus:

> For, although certain Spanish historiographical currents of thought date the birth of Spain from this union [between Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469], the truth is that, under the Catholic Monarchs, the crowns were not united. […] It was not until more than two centuries later that the Catalan nation received its deathblow, with the fall of Barcelona on September 11, 1714.
>
> - Creus and Pujol in *Catalonia Calling* (Sàpiens 2013:16)

> Catalonia's defeat in 1714 […] led Castile to convert itself, by force, into what we now call Spain […].
>
> - Borràs in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:146)

> The Castilians, who were the largest of the nations that constituted the Spanish State, after conquering the other Iberian nations and abolishing their laws, languages, and constitutions, established a process of *castilianization* of the new unified Spain.
>
> - Solano in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:170; italics in the original)

The first excerpt refutes that Spain was born in 1469 through the union of Castile and Aragon, an interpretation often brought forward by representatives of the Spanish government, as we can see in the examples below; the first excerpt is from a letter written by the Spanish ambassador to Italy Javier Elorza and published in the *Corriere della Serra* newspaper in 2014; the second comes from a statement made by then Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs José Manuel García-Margallo during an official visit to Washington in 2015:

> Catalonia's […] cultural identity is rooted in our common history […] which is part of the great plurality of Spain, Europe's oldest nation; a nation that was born as a modern country through the union of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, and not from the kingdom of Catalonia, which never existed as such.
>
> - Elorza in *Corriere della Serra* (Elorza 2014; our translation)

> We are the – probably the oldest nation in the [sic] Earth. We were born back in 1469, before America was discovered […]
>
> - García-Margallo at the U.S. Department of State (USDS 2015)

In the excerpts from the corpus, the key year for Catalonia is 1714, not 1469 or any other date. Furthermore, according to the texts, the inclusion of Catalonia in Spain has nothing to do with a "union", contrary to what Elorza says in the above excerpt; for Catalan *independentistes*, Catalonia was incorporated into Spain "by force" and "conquest" and this constituted a "deathblow" for Catalonia. For them, the consequence of the creation of Spain was the "abolishment" of Catalonia's distinctive characteristics and its "castilianization". All of these concepts associated with Spain are negatively connoted and misrepresent the country, at least from an official Spanish point of view when it comes to the use of "force" as shown in this excerpt from an open letter from the Spanish ambassador to Israel:

> Spain has never occupied Catalonia. You only need to stroll by any Catalonian city to judge by yourself the nonsense of that idea. There was never a history of Spain against Catalonia.
>
> - Carderera in *The Jerusalem Post* (Carderera 2014)

In the aftermath of the Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling regarding the status of Catalonia within Spain, Catalan pro-independence organizations put forward Catalonia's "Right to Decide", notably

during the 2010 massive demonstration *Som una nació. Nosaltres decidim* [We are a nation. We decide], a right denied by Spain, which argues that the Constitution does not provide for it. In this sense, the President of the Government of Spain Mariano Rajoy made the following statement in 2013:

> I want to state clearly that this consultation will not happen; it is unconstitutional and it will not happen. It goes against the fundamental principle of the Constitution, which is the indissoluble unity of Spain.
>
> - Mariano Rajoy, President of the Government of Spain (2011–2018) (El Mundo 2013; our translation)

This interpretation of the Spanish Constitution is disputed throughout the corpus, as we can see in the following examples:

> In Spain, the Constitution of 1978 is interpreted in a fundamentalist, immutable, radical fashion and is used against the growing desire for freedom felt by increasing numbers of Catalans.
>
> - Termosa i Balcells in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:171)

> Spain's Constitutional Court (CC) was given the task of cutting the Statute down […]
>
> - *Keys on the Independence of Catalonia* (ElClauer 2013a: 53)

> Regardless of these common-sense considerations, the Constitution and other major Spanish laws have been presented as a conservative cage designed to prevent change rather than build a house of liberties.
>
> - Bosch in *What's up with Catalonia?* (Castro 2013:117)

In these excerpts, Catalan *independentistes* put forward Madrid's intransigence regarding this interpretation of the Constitution. It is, in their opinion, a "cage", it generates a "vicious circle" and goes "against […] freedom". Moreover, the Constitution is interpreted in a "fundamentalist", "radical" and "immutable" manner.

In the above excerpts, negatively connoted words are used again, thus delegitimizing Spain. Moreover, the pro-independence discourse implies that the Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling was not dictated by legal imperatives, but that the Court "was given the task" by someone or some institution.

In general, in the excerpts we have presented, Spain is delegitimized or misrepresented by the use of negatively connoted words such as "cage", "force", "fundamentalist", and "radical". Conversely, Catalonia suffers from Spain's actuations and policies, as shown by the words: "abolished", "deathblow", "underfinanced" and "diluted". From a pro-independence standpoint, this wrongdoing by Spain is a major argument for the legitimization of independence because it demonstrates the imbalance of power in the current political organization, that is, Catalonia as an autonomous community of Spain.

Table 7 – Examples of negatively connoted words used to depict Spain

Word
Abolishing
Artificial
Cage
Conquering
Deathblow
Force
Fundamentalist
Immutable
Impose
Obligation
Overturns
Radical
Unbalanced

The critical analysis of the excerpts herein reveals the following in the discourse: Spain and the Spanish State are a mere creation of Castile and are oriented towards Castile, which takes shape through centralization; the Spanish State came about by force, and is therefore undemocratic; the Spanish State and government are costly for Catalonia, which gets little back in return for its financial contribution to the State; finally, no matter the entity—Spain, the State, the government or the monarchy—the goal is to assimilate Catalans, and this is a major legitimization argument used by pro-independence supporters.

7. Conclusion

The results of our discourse analysis around the concepts of "Catalonia" and "Spain" in the corpus show that Catalonia is generally represented with positively connoted words such as "liberty", "freedom" and "tenacity". It is also positively represented in terms of what it brings to Spain and in

what it could eventually contribute to the European Union and the world. In opposition, Spain is misrepresented with negatively connoted words such as "impose", "radical" and "cage", especially when it comes to its relationship with Catalonia. In addition, some examples show resistance towards the actual idea or concept of Spain, notably by the use of "State" instead of "Spain".

The representation of Catalonia and misrepresentation of Spain are used as a backdrop to legitimize arguments in favour of independence, whether they are historical, political, economic, linguistic or other. There is clear tension between pro-independence and anti-independence discourses, particularly when it comes to the concepts of "State", "nation" and "autonomous community". Similar discursive tensions exist in relation to the way historical events are perceived, for example the union of Castile and Aragon and the War of the Spanish Succession, as well as more recent events such as the Spanish Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling regarding the status of Catalonia and the 2014 non-binding Catalan self-determination referendum. There are also discrepancies in the discourse regarding fiscal deficit, the level of centralization of the Spanish State and the inclusion (or not) of an independent Catalonia in the European Union. Not all discrepancies are specifically addressed here for the sake of concision, and we refer the reader to previous work (Pomerleau 2017) for details.

This critical analysis of Catalan pro-independence discourse in translation shines a light on how translation can be used to achieve, or try to achieve, political goals. Critical discourse analysis, specifically, has enabled us to expose not only the subjects of the texts, but also the way in which main ideas are presented in translation. Catalan pro-independence organizations produced documents with the specific intention of translating them to disseminate their ideas—their discourse—to a wider audience and to gain political support for their project. The targeted objective has only been partially achieved since it did make the international community, especially the European Union, aware of the cause of Catalan independence, but it did not attain the ultimate goal: international and European support for Catalan independence. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Carbonell i Cortés (2019, 130), translation did contribute to "[…] the process of dissemination of activist discourses and plays an essential role in their international awareness." In conclusion, we hope that this research may inspire researchers using CDA in other fields, such as political science and sociology, to regard discourse *in translation* as highly as any "original" discourse.

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