



**Proceedings
of the International
Meeting on Languages,
Applied Linguistics,
and Translation
– LALT 2012 –**



UNIVERSIDADE
DE ÉVORA

ISBN 978-972-99292-7-4

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Authors Several

Publisher Departament of Linguistics and Literatures – University of Évora

Design João Morgado

May 2015

ISBN 978-972-99292-7-4

Portuguese and Spanish in Dale Brown's novels

Act of War and *Edge of Battle*

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The present paper aims to discuss Spanish and Portuguese translations that can be found in *Act of War* (first published in 2005) and *Edge of Battle* (first published in 2006), written by Dale Brown, a well-known American author of novels belonging to the techno-thriller genre. Since the author himself has admitted to having used automatic translation in both novels, we undertake an analysis of some extracts demonstrating what we consider "morphosyntactic aspects" and "wrong choices". Based on the original English equivalents or on what can be extrapolated from the translations, this analysis also includes an outlook on the solutions offered by current tools for Internet translations, namely Google Translate and Bing Translator.

Keywords: Automatic translation, Dale Brown, Spanglish, Porglish

1 Introduction

In 2005, Dale Brown, a well-known American author of novels belonging to the techno-thriller genre, published *Act of War* (2005), the first volume of what was then expected to be the beginning of a new series of novels devoted to the high tech commando group called TALON. Shortly thereafter there came the second and so far last book of the series called *Edge of Battle* (2006). For the present paper, we will be using the paperback editions, referring to Brown (2006) for *Act of War* and to Brown (2007) for *Edge of Battle*.

Both the title and the plot of the stories promise easy reading with pages of action for those who enjoy this genre. However, particularly with the second novel, *Edge of Battle*, where some of the characters, supposedly Spanish native speakers, communicate in a curious mixture of what might be identified as *Spanglish* (cf. Marcos Marín 2004, Stavans 2003), hispanophone and lusophone readers cannot help wondering about some of the author's choices regarding the foreign words used between the American characters and secondary characters from Brazil and Mexico.

The strong idea that the author might have used an automatic translation tool presents itself almost immediately. Thus, and due to the proximity found in the two novels between the "Portuguese" and "Spanish" words and phrases and the author's American English, we propose to analyze those translations from which we think the author's English source text can easily be reconstructed. Finally, we will offer optional and preferably better solutions for some of the translations that seem more problematic.

2 Foreign languages in *Act of War* and *Edge of Battle*

Leaving aside the repetitions of important words and concepts that are reported in two short glossaries in Brown (2006: vii-viii) and Brown (2007: xii-xiii), a total of 349 instances in which individual words, complete sentences or contexts in foreign languages (other than English as the author's mother tongue) are used throughout the two novels. It seems clear that the author's intent may have been to increase the local color and linguistic ambience of both novels to lend greater credibility to the characters in situations of language contact.

2.1 Correspondence with the author

Due to the curiosity that was first aroused by the Portuguese forms in *Act of War* (Brown 2006) and immediately afterwards by the Spanish forms in *Edge of Battle* (Brown 2007), the following text was sent via email on February 8, 2009, to learn more about his method of translation.

The foreign language texts led me to assume that you might have used an internet or software based translation routine, which is why I take the liberty in asking you whether you could tell me exactly how you obtained the foreign language texts published in aforementioned books. More exactly, the question is whether you have used tools such as the Altavista babelfish or any one or several of the many translating programs on the market.

Two days later, the author's enlightening reply read as follows:

Yes, I did use online translation services. I'm not sure which ones I used, but Babelfish and Altavista both sound familiar, so it might have been one or both of them.

I have been told that the Spanish translations in "Edge of Battle" are atrocious, and I'd be very interested to learn more about how these services work and why they were so far off.

I happen to have Google Translate on my browser's home page right now, and I would sign off by using it to say Ich habe nicht einen Newsletter, aber ich häufig aktualisieren Nachrichten über www.AirBattleForce.com .. Vielen Dank für Ihre E-Mail.

How close is that to "I don't have a newsletter but I frequently update news on www.AirBattleForce.com.

Thanks for your e-mail." ?

Dale...

In his response, Dale Brown acknowledges having used online-translation. Although he is not certain which exactly might have been the service used in the preparation of the translations in question, the message further confirms that he knows of and currently uses the Google Translate service (translate.google.com). Given the forms of words in foreign languages (and especially Portuguese and Spanish) that can be found in these two novels, the real question is therefore not, as in other cases of translations, the degree of the translator's linguistic or translatorial competence, but rather the power of the available automatic translation services.

2.2 Foreign languages in *Act of War*

In Brown (2006), the Portuguese language is not the only foreign language used by the author. The 180 total occurrences (excluding repetitions) were distributed as follows in Table 1.

Although, in keeping with the geography of the novel, Brazilian Portuguese represents 55% of the foreign language occurrences in *Act of War*, a brief overview of the treatment of other languages will first be provided, in proportion of occurrence.

Table 1: Foreign languages in Act of War

Language	Occurrences	Percentage
Egyptian Arabic	12	7%
(Brazilian) Portuguese	100	55%
Russian	56	5%
Spanish	9	31%
Turkish	3	2%

The Turkish language is used on just three occasions when the cargo ship belonging to the Turk Yusuf Gemici is searched by the American Coast Guard and Gemici responds both in Turkish and in English:

[1] “*Evet, anliyorum,*” Gemici said, sniffing. “I understand.” (Brown 2006: 39)

On the record that the Turkish word *evet* simply means "yes" in English, it seems that Dale Brown might have based himself on a phrase like *"yes, I understand"...

In *Act of War*, Spanish is only spoken by Ariadna Vega, an American of Mexican origin, and in three cases by a character named Ray Jefferson who is rather self-conscious of speaking "[...] pidgin Spanish to make himself understood [...]" (Brown 2006: 247).

[2] “*Ojete!*” Ari exclaimed. “No, jerk, I mean you.” (Brown 2006: 148)

In example [2], Ariadna Vega uses a Mexican expletive that corresponds more to the English word *asshole* than the term "jerk" that is used in the corresponding sentence in English.

[3] “I’ll keep it. *¿Una muchacha consiguió protegerse, no? A girl’s gotta use protection, right?*” (Brown 2006: 242)

Taking hold of a pistol, Ariadna states that a girl needs to defend herself. The Spanish text does not really make any sense due to the automatic translation of "got to" as the past tense "consiguió" rather than “has to”. In order to better correspond with the English text, the sentence in example [3] seems more appropriate as, "*¿Una muchacha tiene que usar protección, no?*" or better yet "*¿Una muchacha tiene que protegerse, no?*".

The Egyptian Arabic can be found in twelve occurrences. In the first one, Brown (2006: 336) defines the language spoken at that moment:

[4] “*Ahlan wa sahlán*,” Gemici said in Egyptian Arabic. (Brown 2006: 336)

In most cases, the Arabic words or phrases are attributed to native speakers but, in example [5] below, the speaker is an undercover FBI agent, which is why his use of language is commented upon:

[5] “*Misae el kher*.” “*Ahlan bik*,” the man said in response, in stilted but passable Arabic with an American accent [...] “*Enta bititkallim inglizi?*” “Yes, of course, I speak English,” Gemici replied (Brown 2006: 336).

Like the Arabic words, the Russian words are similarly not written in the Cyrillic alphabet, but in the usual romanized transcription, as in example [6].

[6] “*Spasibo*,” Zakharov responded, draining then refilling his glass. (Brown 2006: 103)

Written *Спасибо* in Cyrillic letters, the term meaning “thank you” is one of the best known Russian words and can also be seen as the equivalent of the English form *thanks*. Not all of the Russian forms are similarly suitable. In the example [7], for instance, the author chose to use the American term *Colonel* instead of the Russian form *polkovnik*. After all, as Google Translate (GT) (n.d.) shows quite correctly, the Russian phrase “Да, полковник” in English means “yes, Colonel”:

[7] “*Da, Colonel*,” Khalimov responded. (Brown 2006: 286)

Further on, however, the correct Russian form *Polkovnik* for *полковник* is used:

[8] “*Davajte vyhodit zdes*,” *Polkovnik*,” Khalimov growled (Brown 2006: 389).

The Russian equivalent of the American term *Colonel* can also be found amongst the Russian occurrences in *Edge of Battle* (Brown 2007).

The use of the Russian language by English speakers requires explanation since, when FBI agent Bolton tries to clear a room of terrorists, the Russian words he pronounces are explicitly attributed to his automatic translation system as exemplified in [9].

[9] “Whoever is in this room, come out immediately,” Bolton said through his electronically synthesized voice. “*Sdacha teper!*” he tried in Russian, using his on-board voice translator (Brown 2006: 359-360).

Some similar and other new mistranslations are recorded in the second novel analysed in the section that follows.

2.3 Foreign languages in *Edge of Battle*

In Brown (2007), the linguistic diversity is considerably less than in *Act of War*. The 169 occurrences of the use of foreign expressions, again excluding repetitions, have the distribution that follows in Table 2.

Table 2: Foreign languages in *Edge of Battle*

Language	Occurrences	Percentage
Foreign Words (loan words)	3	2%
Russian	18	11%
Spanish	148	87%

The single foreign words can be understood as loan words that have been incorporated in modern English. In the present case, these are the Russian word *pogrom* (relative to the persecutions of Jews, or, in this case, of Mexicans), the Arabic term *wadi* (for a desert river) as well as the French concept of *nom de guerre* (meaning *a warrior's pseudonym*).

Amongst the Russian occurrences, several are repetitions of words that previously occurred in *Act of War* (Brown 2006). Overall, the importance of Russian words and phrases is considerably reduced. This makes sense since the Russian terrorist Zakharov generally speaks Spanish and even insists on speaking Spanish in Brown (2007: 9). However, half of the occurrences in Russian can be attributed to the Mexican Ernesto Fuerza while talking to Zakharov.

2.4 Portuguese and Spanish in *Act of War* and *Edge of Battle*

Considering the author's admission, the following study uses Google Translate which today seems to be the most frequently used and most developed browser-based automatic translation service (cf. Google Translate n.d.). It must, however, be noted that when Dale Brown wrote the books, the AltaVista BabelFish tool used to be more well-known, having in the meantime lost a lot of its previous popularity. The transformation of the automatic translation service offered by BabelFish, named for Douglas Adams' epic *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), now renamed as Bing Translator (BT 2012) is best described by Damaster (2012).

Based on the 100 Portuguese as well as the 148 Spanish translations, in the overwhelming majority of cases it is possible to reconstruct what we presume to be the author's original text. The tool Bing Translator is only used when its translations provide relevant information. In those instances in which Brown provides no explicit English equivalent, expected reconstructed forms will be marked by an asterisk (*). In a way similar to historical linguistics, these interpolated English forms / sentences are marked in order to document that these are based on an interpretation of the Portuguese forms. All other English forms are Brown's.

In a more detailed study of Portuguese automatic translations in *Act of War* (Kemmler 2012), there are several areas that seem problematic from a linguistic point of view. Among them are i) morphosyntactic aspects, ii) orthographic aspects, iii) word choices we simply regard as wrong options, iv) foreign words attributed to Brazilian characters, v) Americanisms, and vi) mixed phrases. Given their importance for an analysis of Brown's translations, the focus will be on extracts pertaining to the first and third categories – morphosyntax and mixed phrases.

2.4.1 Morphosyntactic aspects

The first morphosyntactic aspect is the lack of agreement of some of the verb forms, notably the correspondence between the English verb "to be" and the Portuguese verbs "ser" and "estar".

[10] "*Onde e Zakharov agora?*" (Brown 2006: 223)

The English equivalent to example [10] may be *"*Where is Zakharov now?*". Due to the temporal nature expressed by "now", the more appropriate Portuguese verb, however, is "estar", rather than "ser", so the equivalent in Portuguese should be "*Onde está o Zakharov agora?*" or "*Onde está Zakharov agora?*" without an article.

Among the online translation tools GT (n.d.) first proposes the solution "Onde está", but offers the additional alternatives "Onde é; Onde está a; Onde fica; Onde está o". BT (2012) only offers the equally acceptable translation "Onde está o Zakharov agora?".

[11] "*Quem esta? Pode me ajudar?*" (Brown 2006: 221).

In example [11], the opposite can be observed. Given a presumed English source text like *"*Who is it? Can you help me?*", one adequate Portuguese translation would be "*Quem é? Pode me ajudar?*". The proposal of GT (n.d.) coincides in essence with the proposed solution but adds the personal pronoun "*Quem é? Você pode me ajudar?*". BT

(2012) goes further and adds the personal pronoun "ele", possibly to translate the English pronoun "it": "Quem é ele? Você pode me ajudar?".

Similarly, the Spanish translation of what can be presumed *"Who are you, sir?" in example [12] is not quite adequate.

[12] "*¿Quiénes son usted, señor?*" (Brown 2007: 16)

Both the plural ending of the interrogative pronoun and the plural form of the verb "ser" do not agree with the verb form or the subject of the sentence. GT (n.d.) offers an adequate solution, "*¿Quién es usted, señor?*", while BT (2012) offers an incorrect verb form in "*¿Quién eres, señor?*".

The statement in example [13] is equivalent to the English *"Don't know" and should be "*Não sei*" in Portuguese, since the subject is clearly not the first but the third person singular present indicative.

[13] "*Nao sabe,*" Pereira replied. (Brown 2006: 223)

GT (n.d.) offers not only the first and third person singular, but also the first and third person plural, as well as the third person plural of "conhecer": "*não sei; não sabe; não sabem; não sabemos; não conhecem*".

Considering that the context leads to believe that the English base text of example [14] might be something like *"I understand everything, Sir", there is no reason why the phrase should contain what looks like a present subjunctive.

[14] "*Compreenda tudo, senhor.* We have one of them in our sights now." (Brown 2006: 257)

The best approach in Portuguese seems to be "*Entendo tudo*". GT (n.d.) offers the alternatives "*Eu entendo tudo; Entendo tudo; Compreendo tudo*", leaving the choice of pronoun or verb form to the user.

In Portuguese, the more appropriate equivalent of *"Gone, Sir" would be "*Foi-se*", but never the past participle "*ido*" as in example [15].

[15] "*Ido, senhor,*" Judge Amaral said (Brown 2006: 260).

When we look at possible Portuguese translations for *"Gone, Sir", GT (n.d.) interestingly confirms Brown's usage as "Gone, Sir" and only offers vernacular alternatives like "Senhor" for "Sir", while BT (2012) offers the equally unacceptable solution, "Ido, Sir".

It seems that the following character, Judge Amaral, would say *"Come quickly! I need it [...]" in English, rather than what we see in example [16].

[16] "*Vindo rapidamente! Eu necessito-o ...!*" (Brown 2006: 249).

The use of the Portuguese gerund in this situation is not justified, where it is more adequate to think of a solution like "*Venham depressa! Eu preciso disso/ de vocês [...]*" for what may be presumed to be *"Come fast! I need it/you..." with an imperative. Both GT (n.d.) and BT (2012) only offer solutions with finite verb forms.

[17] "*¿Quién cuida?* Just run!" (Brown 2007: 82).

The context suggests that the English equivalent of the Spanish example [17] should be *"Who cares?". In this sense, it seems evident that a translation like "*¿A quién le importa?*", offered as primary translation by GT (n.d.) and BT (2012) would be more adequate.

Since the automatic translation tools can not assess the extralinguistic contexts, another common problem arises as errors of agreement.

Example [18] is attributed to a female character speaking Portuguese. Thus, the adjective must match the gender of the noun it is referring to.

[18] "*Muito obrigado,*" Kristen said. "I believe we've met, *senhor*" (Brown 2006: 245).

While the supposed original English text *"Thanks a lot" is invariable, the more appropriate and common Portuguese solution would be "*Muito obrigada*". GT (n.d.) offers several alternatives, among which the last two are ungrammatical: "*muito obrigado; muito obrigada, thanks a lot; agradecimentos muito; graças um lote*". BT (2012) only offers "*Muito obrigado*" without any considerations for gender.

As the mother in the Spanish example [19] is talking to her daughter Ariadna Vega, it seems reasonable to presume an original text like *"Do not kill him, child".

[19] "*No le mate, niño,*" Ariadna's mother Ernestina said. (Brown 2007: 392).

While a translation like "*No lo mates, niña*" seems quite adequate, a solution like "*No lo mates, hija*" even seems better. As an English equivalent of *"Do not kill him, child" both GT (n.d.) and BT (2012) only offer the masculine version that can be found in example [19].

The correct usage of a pronoun proves in this data set to be problematic with automatic translation, as demonstrated in the following examples.

In example [20], the accent on the personal pronoun "*nós*" is missing.

[20] "Uh... *senhor, nos temos um problema aqui*," the pilot radioed back. (Brown 2006: 258).

If the whole pronoun were to be omitted, as in "*Coronel, temos um problema aqui*", the translation would be acceptable for "Sir, we've got a problem here". Nonetheless, GT (n.d.) and BT (2012) both include the pronoun, as in "*Senhor, nós temos um problema aqui*".

Based on a supposed English text "Yes. [...] And speak Spanish, you idiot!",

[21] "*Sí*," another voice responded in Spanish, much closer. "*¡Y hable español, usted idiota!*" (Brown 2007: 14).

the most adequate translation seems to be "*¡Y habla español, idiota!*" without the personal pronoun. GT (n.d.) also offers a nearly acceptable solution without pronoun, but without subject-verb agreement, in "*Y hablan español, idiota!*". The result offered by BT (2012) is even less adequate: "*Y habla a español, usted idiota!*".

The English equivalent to example [22] is "Who is this?".

[22] "*¿Quién es ello?*" one of them called out. (Brown 2007: 18).

In Spanish, it would be sufficient to translate this phrase with "*¿Quién es?*". However, GT (n.d.) offers a similar result that maintains a similar structure: "*¿Quién es este?*" while BT (2012) only offers a laconic "*¿Quién?*"...

The name of the group of environmental activists/terrorists GAMMA is problematic, since there are Portuguese words which are mixed with a Spanish article.

[23] *Grupo do Abaete de la Movimento Meio Ambiente* (vii, 89).

In its Portuguese name, the group whose designation in English would be "Environmental Movement Group of Abaete" uses the pairing of preposition and Spanish feminine article "de la" instead of the masculine article combination which would result in the Portuguese form "do". While a translation as "Grupo ambientalista do Abaeté" seems more appropriate, the preference for matching the abbreviation GAMMA leads to what we would consider a more accurate translation "Grupo do Abaete do Movimento Meio Ambiente". Similarly, the equivalent of an "Environmental Movement Combat Alliance" should be "Aliança do Movimento de Luta Ambiental" instead of example [24].

[24] *Guerra Alliance de la Movimento Meio Ambiente* (Brown 2006: vii, 89),

But it seems that a translation as "*Guerra da Aliança do Movimento Meio Ambiente*" would be less unacceptable.

2.4.2 Wrong choices

In addition to the examples presented, there is yet a considerable number of options simply considered as wrong choices, mostly pertaining to the area of vocabulary.

[25] "*Direita lá, senhor.* Right there, sir," (Brown 2006: 213)

The more adequate Portuguese choice of "Right there, sir" seems to be "*Aí mesmo, senhor*". GT (n.d.) proposes "Bem ali, senhor; Ali mesmo, senhor; Ali senhor; Logo ali". BT (2012) ends up blending Portuguese and English in a completely inadequate solution "Ali, sir"!

[26] "*Olhar Para fora! Tem um foguete!*" he shouted, but he was too late (Brown 2006: 219)

It seems obvious that the original text of example [26] would have been something like *"*Look out there! He's got a rocket!*" The published Portuguese translation does not make much sense, as the context leads us to believe the character is talking about a RPG launcher, which is why a more suitable Portuguese translation would be "*Olhe por aí! Tem um míssil!*". GT (n.d.) offers as main translation "*Olhe por aí! Ele tem um foguete*", together with the alternatives "*um foguetão; de um foguete; um foguete de; um míssil*". BT (2012) offers a not really more appropriate solution "*Olhe lá fora! Ele tem um foguete!*".

[27] "*Quem é aquele? O deus, o que é ele?*" (Brown 2006: 221)

The context of example [27] (in which a person first gets to see a CID) leads to the preferable English text, *"*Who is this? O God, what is that?*" Consequently, the more appropriate Portuguese equivalent would seem to be "*Quem é isso? Ó Deus, o que é isso?*" (whilst remaining somewhat awkward in both languages). GT (n.d.) presents a translation "*Quem é esse? Ó Deus, o que é?*" while BT (2012) confirms the alternative English version. In reality, the Brazilian Intelligence Agency mentioned in example [28] is the *Agência Brasileira de Inteligência*.

[28] They might be *Atividade de Inteligencia do Brasil*, the Brazilian Intelligence Agency [...] (Brown 2006: 219)

Given that the term "*Atividade de Inteligência do Brasil*" can be found on the agency's website, more exactly on the page describing the history of the organization from its

beginning up to the present, one is lead to believe that Brown might have found this term after individual online research.

If example [29] seems wrong, the English text might be more like "No transmission of your voices, okay?"

[29] *Nenhuma transmissão de suas vozes, aprovação?*" (Brown 2006: 45)

The resulting Portuguese translation would be "*Nenhuma transmissão das suas vozes, de acordo?*". GT (n.d.) proposes "*Não há transmissão de suas vozes, ok?*" and BT (2012) "*Nenhuma transmissão de suas vozes, OK?*". Curiously enough, both translation tools limit their "Portuguese" translation of the English form okay by offering the abbreviation ok/OK.

[30] "*Concordado,*" Fuerza said. (Brown 2007: 154)

Given the preferable English equivalent for example [30] as a simple *"agreed", the more suitable Spanish translation would be "*De acuerdo*" as proposed by BT (2012). However, GT (n.d.) offers the main solution "convenido" and its variants "Acordó, Acordado, Convino, convendidas", which clearly are not applicable for this context.

[31] Suddenly they heard an electronic voice shout, "*¡Parada!* "Stop!" " directly in front of them, but they could see nothing in the darkness. (Brown 2007: 83).

[32] "Hold it, Victor! *¡Parada!* It's me, Purdy! *¡Espera!* Dammit!" (Brown 2007: 251).

The translation of the English imperative "Stop" in [31] and [32] would be the interjection "*¡Alto!*", which seems to be problematic for the translation tools. Brown's solution "Parada" is really not adequate, given the noun's meaning as "bus stop". Even today, results differ, as GT (n.d.) offers the proposed solution "*¡Alto!*", while BT (2012) maintains the English word "STOP!".

As previously presented in example [3], examples [33] and [34] confirm that Brown usually includes translations of the English verb "to get" with forms of the Spanish verb "conseguir".

[33] To Flores, he shouted, "*¡Consiga abajo!* Victor, get down!" (Brown 2007: 252).

[34] "*¡Consígalo! ¡Mátelo!*" they shouted, raising their tools and fists into the air. (Brown 2007: 257).

Example [33] provides a direct translation of what presumably should be "*venga abajo*", or better yet, "*bájate*" in Spanish. In example [34] the original English text should be something like *"Catch him! Kill him!". Considering the context, the adequate

Spanish translation must be in the plural, hence "*¡Atrápenlo! ¡Matenlo!*". As GT (n.d.) and BT (2012) cannot relate to the context, both tools offer "Atrápalo! Mátalo!"

The Spanish noun "repartidor" (meaning "distributor" or "deliveryman") is inadequate for the English "avenger" in example [35], where the adequate Spanish word would be "*Su vengador*", as offered correctly by GT (s.d.) and BT (2012).

[35] "*Su repartidor*," Salinas said. "Her avenger." (Brown 2007: 344).

As the character in the following example [36] is talking about a car that has been damaged due to gun shots, the obvious English original seems to be "No, it's shot".

[36] "*No, es tiro.*" (Brown 2007: 15).

Based on this translation, a Spanish equivalent is proposed, such as "*No, se llevó disparos*". Both GT (n.d.) with "No, se disparó" and BT (2012) with "No, es asesinado" offer unacceptable solutions.

Finally, there are two examples for which no solutions can be proposed, as the sense of the Spanish sentences cannot really be understood.

[37] There is no use running. *La permanencia y nosotros le daremos el alimento, el agua, y la medicina.*" (Brown 2007: 15).

[38] In pretty good Spanish, he added, "*Ellos no pueden parar mi Veracruz y su belleza, señorita.*" (Brown 2007: 166).

3 Conclusions

The novel *Act of War*, a techno thriller written by the American author Dale Brown, features 180 occurrences of words or phrases in foreign languages. One hundred occurrences are translations to Brazilian Portuguese, corresponding to 55.55% of all foreign language examples found in this novel. Among these, only 32% may be considered appropriate, resulting in the conclusion that the overwhelming majority of Portuguese occurrences (over two-thirds) are examples of incorrect automatic translation.

In the sequel *Edge of Battle* the main foreign language is Spanish, with a total of 148 occurrences, or 87.57% of all foreign language examples found in the data set for this novel, excluding repetition and Mexican slang. Among the study corpus, more than half of the Spanish occurrences (76 occurrences or 51.35%) seem acceptable.

The analysis of the translations, mostly elaborated, as Brown himself has conceded, thanks to automatic translation tools, shows that it is quite easy to reconstruct the

English text that would have been the basis for translations. Especially with regard to morphosyntactic aspects and "wrong choices", several of the cases, where we found that the translation in Brown's novels (first published in 2005 and 2006) does not meet the linguistic standard of Brazilian Portuguese or Spanish, would nowadays be solved more adequately by both of the translation tools we consulted.

As a further note, since automatic translation tools have always provided the accentuation and other diacritical marks such as the tilde, their omission as well as other graphical errors in Brown (2006) and sometimes also in Brown (2007) might be due to the fact that the author did not use the *copy/paste* method for his online sources. Instead, it seems that he may have (at least partially in *Edge of Battle* and probably mostly in *Act of War*) copied the text manually; if so, it seems that the absence of the tilde and the accents on the American keyboard might serve as a possible explanation for what could be seen along the Spanish and Portuguese examples.

The adequate translations that can be found in both novels clearly demonstrate that there are indeed cases where machine translation can be used by someone who does not know the target language. However, these translation attempts can lead to failure whenever the user of the translation tools is unable to choose between wrong and right choices.

In conclusion, among the free automatic translation tools, the service formerly known as Babelfish, today's Bing Translator, does not yet reach the level of today's Google Translate, based on the many questionable or even wrong translations evidenced in translations for *Act of War*'s Brazilian Portuguese and *Edge of Battle*'s Spanish. While GT provides a variable number of alternatives, Bing Translator usually offers but a single solution, which greatly reduces its usefulness to the user with translatorial competence.

While automatic translation is undergoing constant improvement, no automatic translation tool is yet able to replace first-hand knowledge of any given target language. It can indeed serve as a powerful tool for translating, provided the translator disposes of the necessary language skills to make a proper correction of faulty or incomplete machine translation results. Without this linguistic correction, the translation result unfortunately is too similar to what in other contexts is known as *Porglish* and *Spanglish*.

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