

Portuguese-Spanish-English Trilingual Vocabulary: Amazonian identity in the lexicon of forest and waters

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Introduction

The Amazon rainforest is recognized all over the world as a synonym of greatness and diversity. The greatest biodiversity on the planet is concentrated on it, whether in botanical, biological or human terms (RODRIGUES, 2001). Besides hundreds of indigenous nations that still use this forest as their land and their world, European peoples have invested upon its riches since 16th century, from which Portuguese and Spaniards colonies that resisted time developed civilizations, and built nations on the Eurocentric culture foundation, that became empire or nation.

The so-called Legal Amazon, despite of the attacks of explorers and investors, consists today in the largest biome on the planet and spans nine countries in northern South America: three of which have Spanish as official language (Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador), two as co-official language (Bolivia and Peru); and only one has Portuguese as official language, Brazil, and an English-speaking one, Guyana.

We believe there is a linguistic variety of Spanish and English that is closer to the reality of the apprentice of these foreign languages in the state of Pará and that it is imbued of an Amazonian identity that crosses geographic borders, the collective imagination and lusophone, anglophone and hispanophone representations of the

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world (BLIKSTEIN, 2003). Thus, the present work aims to propose a Portuguese-Spanish-English trilingual vocabulary of river and forest panamazonian regionalisms, based on a Portuguese, Spanish and English language model that contemplates the reality of the northern region of South America (Amazon identity).

For this purpose, we collected lexical units in fictional literature, academic and promotional texts under the nomenclature of elements of nature present on the space of the river and the forest in the Brazilian variant of Portuguese language and we indicated equivalents in Spanish Language (South American varieties) and in English Language (American varieties), with the primary objective of fulfilling the needs of a group of learners of these foreign languages in Amazonian context.

The difficulty in carrying out procedures like these results from what Severi and Hanks (2014) call social translation, in which not only words, but values, theories, artifacts, as well as other cultural aspects, become greater than the language itself. Even when there is an apparent equivalence between terms, the word contains inseparable elements, consequently the simple replacement of sign does not carry its cultural load.

At the end, we propose a Portuguese-Spanish-English trilingual vocabulary with 60 unities, that should, in one hand, serve as a reference material for the lexical competence development of northern region Brazilian apprentices of both foreign languages and, on the other hand, contribute to the diffusion of Amazonian cultures.

About communicative competence, Rosa (2015) states that

A speaker's communicative competence – encompassing both linguistic competence and extra-linguistic knowledge of the experiential context in which a language is used (i.e. verbal and non-verbal codes) – offers awareness of the relation of a set of linguistic features with communicative meaning and sociocultural value.

We think that considering the sociocultural context is a central aspect in the learning process, more specifically the extra-linguistic knowledge of the apprentice and its relationship with motivation and autonomy. That is why one of the justifications of this product is the issue of the linguistic variation, object of further reflection, even contemplated in working legal documents of teaching and learning guidelines of foreign language and culture in Brazil. These documents indicate that the variety to be taught (recommended) is the one that meets the needs of the learner group, once the idea of a standard language model has already been widely questioned.

Another justification for this work is that, in the last two decades the teaching of Spanish to Brazilians has been contemplated by substantial development, mainly due to the enactment of law 11.161/2005, that makes mandatory the provision of Spanish as a modern foreign language in high school curricula across the country alongside English. In the same sense, the expansion of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education, through the REUNI program, took the training career of FL teachers to distant regions of the national territory, meeting the training needs of this professional profile. It did not take long to realize that specific needs would arise in this implementation process, and that they should gradually receive more attention in research and pedagogical reflections.

Considering learners needs and reality plays a vital role in the learning process, once it can improve student motivation. According to Harmer (2007), there are basically two kinds of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is created by anything that happens inside the classroom, like a specific methodology, activity, or subject and extrinsic motivation in the one related to everything students bring with them, like their culture, beliefs, and any kind of previous experiences. Even highly extrinsically motivated students may feel bored about books and activities that do not relate with their lives. Also, bringing learners culture to the classroom as a part of the subject may arise the interest of the ones who were not very motivated. Offering a glossary with the names of natural elements that are part of their daily routines can combine extrinsic and intrinsic motivation together to provide a better level of attachment and, consequently, learning.

Linguistic Variation and Language Teaching

Besides constituting the vernacular of the dominant cultures in the Legal Amazon, Portuguese, Spanish and English also share a great variety of cultural elements that results in a huge linguistic variation. Such variations are rarely contemplated in textbooks, educational books, and bilingual school dictionaries, which commonly favor a standard variety, cultured or more general, if not the European varieties (Castilian and Britain).

It is not an easy task to choose the variety of Spanish and English to be taught in language classes, especially because it is an approach loaded with beliefs that may affect the apprentice's perception of what learning a FL is, as well as the whole conception of language. The image of a unique model of American Spanish or English or even European Spanish or English (Spain and England) is as false as that of a single Brazilian

Portuguese. Recent studies (CARDOSO et al., 2014) indicate that not even what was thought to be an Amazonian Portuguese is unique.

Severi and Hanks (2014) think of translation as a multidimensional phenomenon and understand language as first and most important dimension in this process. At the same time, they point to several other factors as layers of complementary information. The authors note that even approaches that focus on language translation, such as Jakobson, Benveniste and Pierce, already consider the importance of extratextual elements and that, in the last 50 years, linguists and anthropologists have been striving to develop studies with a strong social and ethnographic foundation, as well as other aspects, such as metalanguage, discourse analysis and multimodal relations. Lloyd (2014) assumes that reality itself is multidimensional and understands translation as a matter of mutual intelligibility is a few registers, among them, a certain natural language, so that, if we accept the multidimensional nature of reality, aiming a definitive and unique translation is a mirage. This concept is close to what Severi and Hanks understand by social translation, which, in general, considers, beyond the dimension of language, the exchange of values, theories and cultural artifacts, such as the processes that involve religion conversion or cultural mimesis, for instance.

About language varieties, Harmer (2007) uses a set of examples to illustrate the differences that can be found in the English language. He not only compares British, American, and even Indian and Pakistani speakers, but also highlights the fact that, even among what we might call a variety itself, there are plenty of differences.

English is not just one language of course. There are many different varieties. Even if we take just British English, for example, we will find that whereas a speaker from southern England might say 'It's really warm in here', someone in Newcastle in the north of England might say 'It's right warm in here' (where 'right' is pronounced 'reet'). There are regional variations in Britain in pronunciation, word choice and grammar.

According to Fernández (2000; 2005), regarding Spanish, for example, there are three possibilities or models to be chosen: the Castilian model (cultured norm), the more general (standard) and the closest one. It is possible to find studies, documents, and didactic guidelines about the first two with relative abundance. There is very few research about the third model, except in North America and southern South America, where studies in intercultural translation are much more developed.

En muchos lugares alejados de España, se prefiere decididamente un modelo más cercano, capaz de satisfacer mejor los intereses y expectativas de quienes aprenden la lengua. Desde esta perspectiva, existe la posibilidad de tomar como modelo el español de la región hispánica propia, de la más próxima o con la que tiene una mayor relación y afinidad. Por eso, muchos estadounidenses prefieren aprender un español de México o centroamericano; por eso en el sur de Brasil se prefiere manejar un español de La Plata (FERNÁNDEZ, 2005, p. 747-748).

Although there is a very interesting possibility of execution, the linguistic borders in Amazon, especially in Acre, only now start to receive attention. School dictionaries – as the most recurrent title, the *Dicionário Espanhol Melhoramentos* (2009) – and textbooks available at schools and universities in this region, several times do not contain elements that show the local reality and neither are we teachers prepared to act in this context, understanding and making use of its particularities. Even the largest bilingual dictionaries used, *Senãs* (2013) and *Michaelis* (2014), although very efficient in didactic activities, do not favor low-prestige varieties over a more general model of language or the previous mentioned more prestigious varieties.

As one of the principles of this work is to determine a model of Spanish and English languages that includes the closest variety to the Amazonian reality in what concerns the lexicon, the Portuguese, Spanish and English varieties spoken in the Legal Amazon (FERREIRA, 2009), we elected the lexicon of forest and waters, believing it consists the only reference that is meaningful and known by three different cultures: the lusophone, anglophone and hispanophone versions. Therefore, and for methodological feasibility, the selected lexical fields will be limited to the fauna (insects, birds, and fish), flora (fruits and plants) and geographic features (water flow, terrain).

Finally, the established criteria to the selection of the lexical unities that compose this vocabulary, besides belonging to the field we are studying, is their absence in bilingual school dictionaries like the previously mentioned.

Chart 1 – Amazonian trilingual vocabulary of forest and waters (to be continued)

Categoria	Português	Español	English
fruto/fruto/fruit	abricó	albaricoque	apricot
fruto/fruto/fruit	açaí	hausáí	acai-berry
fruto/fruto/fruit	araçá	arazá	araçá
fruto/fruto/fruit	abiu	caimito	abiu
fruto/fruto/fruit	bacaba	milpesos	bacaba
fruto/fruto/fruit	bacuri	bacuri	bacuri
fruto/fruto/fruit	banana	plátano	banana
fruto/fruto/fruit	biribá	anón-amazónico	wild sugar apples
fruto/fruto/fruit	buriti	moriche	buriti
fruto/fruto/fruit	cajarana	jobo	june plum
fruto/fruto/fruit	camu-camu	camu-camu	camu-camu
fruto/fruto/fruit	castanha-do-pará	castanha-do-pará	brazil nut
fruto/fruto/fruit	cubiu	cocona	cubiu
fruto/fruto/fruit	cupuaçu	copoazó	cupuassu
fruto/fruto/fruit	cupuí	-	cupui
fruto/fruto/fruit	guaraná	guaraná	guarana
fruto/fruto/fruit	inajá	inayuga	inaja
fruto/fruto/fruit	ingá	ingá	ice cream bean
fruto/fruto/fruit	jambo	pomorrosa	yamb
fruto/fruto/fruit	mangaba	mangaba	mangaba
fruto/fruto/fruit	murici	nance	nance
fruto/fruto/fruit	piquiá	pequí	piquia
fruto/fruto/fruit	pupunha	chonta	peach palm fruit
fruto/fruto/fruit	sapota-do-solimões	zapote	south american sapote
fruto/fruto/fruit	sorva	-	sorb apple
fruto/fruto/fruit	taperebá	jobo	yellow mombin
fruto/fruto/fruit	tucumã	cumaré	tucuman
fruto/fruto/fruit	umari	umarí	-
fruto/fruto/fruit	uxi	-	uxi
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	bertalha	espinaca china	indian spinach
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	espinafre d'água	kangkong	swamp moring glory
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	jambu	jambú	toothache plant
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	chicória do pará	sachaculantro	culantro
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	maxixe do reino	caigua	slliper gourd
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	quiabo de metro	calabaza serpiente	snake gourd
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	ariá	lerén	guinea arrowroot
vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	inhame roxo	ñame de água	taro

Chart 1 – Amazonian trilingual vocabulary of forest and waters (conclusion)

vegetal/vegetal/vegetables	jacatupé	jicama	andean yam bean
cereal/ cereal/cereal	feijão regional	poroto	-
farinha/harina/flour	farinha de carimã	harina de mandioca	manioc flour
geografia/geografia/geograph	rio	río	river
geografia/geografia/geograph	igarapé	arroyo	stream
geografia/geografia/geograph	mata	bosque	wood
animal/animal/animal	sucuri	anaconda	anaconda
animal/animal/animal	garça	garza	heron
animal/animal/animal	turu	teredo	naval shipworm
animal/animal/animal	peixe-boi	manatí	amazonian manatee
animal/animal/animal	caranguejo	cangrejo	Crab
animal/animal/animal	paca	paca	lowland paca
animal/animal/animal	tatu	armadillo	Armadillo
animal/animal/animal	aracuaã	guaracachi	speckled chachalaca
animal/animal/animal	urubu	buitre	Vulture
animal/animal/animal	anta	tapir	brazilian tapir
animal/animal/animal	onça	jaguar	cougar
animal/animal/animal	maracajá	gato margay	margays
animal/animal/animal	jaguaririca	ocelote	ocelot
animal/animal/animal	jabuti	tortuga terrestre	tortoise
peixe/pez/fish	mapará	maparate	mapará
peixe/pez/fish	pirarucu	pirarucu	arapaima
peixe/pez/fish	tamatá	carachama	atipa

Source: Created by the authors.

Final considerations

Although brief, the vocabulary repertoire that we propose in this work presents three contributions to the improvement of the discussions about regional identities not only to Translation Studies but also for language teaching in Amazonian context.

First, to consider the lexical unities that form the lexical field of Amazonian fauna, flora and geography includes vocabulary items which are absent in bilingual dictionaries and are very rarely studied in English and Spanish textbooks for Brazilians. This repertoire then contributes to the improvement of vocabulary teaching for apprentices in a specific context, especially considering the importance of motivation in the learning process, that we believe will result from this approach.

The development of lexical competence of the specific group of learners consists in the second contribution: both the students and the English and Spanish teachers in the Amazon region, and eventually translator of this linguistic pair to Brazilian Portuguese, gain a reference to the approach of regional lexicon, imbued of an identity. Language learners particularly have the possibility to tell their reality in a foreign language, as they will find correspondence in this lexicon.

Last but not least, this work also includes the translation of texts strongly marked by regionalism. Literary works, when translated, force the erasure of regionalist marks precisely due to the translator's lack of knowledge, that even knowing the vocabulary of the source language, has difficulties in finding equivalents in the target language. With the improvement in sociolinguistic, lexicological, and translational studies, it is increasingly possible for the translator to make a choice that was not available before, that is, to choose the regional equivalent to a regional reality.

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