Offprint from IRAL

International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching

Revue Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée: Enseignement des Langues

Internationale Zeitschrift für angewandte Linguistik in der Spracherziehung

Editors:
Bertil Malmberg/Lund
Gerhard Nickel/Stuttgart

XXIX/2 (1991) May

Assistant Editor:
Dietrich Nehls/Stuttgart

Julius Groos Verlag Heidelberg
TRANSLATION AND BORROWING OF ACRONYMS: MAIN TRENDS

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The main source of ‘double acronyms’ in the majority of languages is translation. When dealing with a concept or organization of foreign origin, one normally expects it to adopt a single acronym form, either through the translation of its underlying phrase or through the direct borrowing of the alien form (e.g. LP, VHS as borrowed from English). In practice however, language use is not free from inconsistencies or fluctuations of various kinds. The object of the present paper is to explain the conditions which account for the major patterns involved as well as the resulting vacillations. Although the data collected come basically from Spanish, an account of the phenomenon as it appears in other languages is also given.

1. The translation or borrowing of an acronym can be accounted for in purely linguistic terms (nature of the noun, common or proper; length of the underlying phrase and of the acronym form; degree of similarity to the source language) or extralinguistically (nature and function of the institution the acronym represents; degree of familiarization with the source phrase, etc.).

When acronyms designate important and influential bodies, and when the underlying phrases are widely known in the speaker’s language and are composed of words in general use, they are mostly translated (e.g. CEE, CECA, ONU, OTAN). Similar reasons lead to the translation of the names of countries (EE.UU., URSS, G.B. for Great Britain, or R.U. for United Kingdom, RAU for United Arab Republic, a name formerly used for Egypt).

This tendency is readily noticeable also in other languages: in French or Italian, as in Spanish, one says CECA (Sp. Comunidad europea del carbón y acero; Fr. Communauté européenne du charbon et de l’acier; It. Comunità europea del carbone e dell’acciaio), in German and Dutch EGKS (Europäische Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl; Europese Gemeenschap voor Kolen en Staal), in Danish EKDF (Det europeiske Kugol Stalflæsskab). Likewise Russian SSSR (Sojuz Sovetskij Sotsjalisti’ceskij Respublik) is USSR (Union of Socialist and Soviet Republics) in English, UdSSR (Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken) in German, URSS (Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques) in French.

On the contrary, when one deals with less important although more specialized bodies or organizations, international communication often favours the use of the original acronym (English or French, predominantly) as a kind of common code. Thus acronyms like AEEF (Association européenne des exploitations frigorifiques), AFG (Association de fabricants de glucose de la CEE), CIC (Confédération internationale des cadres), GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) are the ones used in the various European Community countries.

In a few cases both patterns coexist and compete: on the one hand, each country develops a native variant for its internal use; on the other, superimposed on it, a common abbreviative symbol – an acronym, or more commonly a shortening – is coined for the purpose of mutual understanding, which is readily diffused and generalized through the media. An illustrative example is Interpol, an international abbreviation much better known than the respective acronyms in French (OIPC, Organisation internationale de la police criminelle) or English (ICPO, International Criminal Police Organization), the latter being the form also used in German, Italian and Danish. Similar examples are EUROSTAT, also known as OSCE (Office statistique des Communautés Européennes) in French, SOEC (Statistical Office of the European Communities) in English, SAEG (Statistisches Amt der Europäischen Gemeinschaften) in German, ISCE (Istituto statistico delle Comunità Europee) in Italian, BSEG (Beaureau voor de Statistiek van de Europese Gemeenschappen) in Dutch; and LICROSS, which is also called LSCR in French (Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge) or Italian (Lega delle Società della Croce Rossa), and LORCS (League of Red Cross Societies) in English and German.
The artificial nature of these symbols may even lead to the choice of a single word, which has to be strongly evocative; for example HABITAT is in all languages the name used to refer to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

The advantages of these abbreviations over acronyms proper are their euphonic and evocative power, and it is on this basis that universality is claimed for them.

Outside these special cases, the euphonic condition of the acronymic lexeme is also often valued, although at an unconscious level, in almost all languages when they adopt a foreign form, particularly in the case of very long phrases. Think for example of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)² for which the Spaniard Martínez de Campos (1964) once proposed as translation the acronym OCENU (Organismo Cultural Económico y Científico de las Naciones Unidas), and which would result in ONUECC if we were to follow instead the currently common gloss Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura.

In the face of such long phrases sometimes speakers choose an abbreviated gloss, for example UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) is translated in some texts as Fondo u Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia and not even the specialized dictionaries (cf. Martínez de Sousa 1978 and 1984; Alvar y Miró 1983) contain the complete literal translation. In these circumstances the reduced gloss seems right, but that does not mean that it has to result in a new acronym form. Such an attempt in French with FESIE (Fonds international de secours a l'enfance)³ produced a form which was shorter, more euphonic and more transparent than the original but has not been generally adopted.

In both cases the translators of the acronyms have certainly stuck to linguistic principles but their proposals have failed since they have not taken into account the principle of the right to coin a new acronym. When dealing with international bodies, only the delegations of the respective countries can propose the translation and, where appropriate, the acronym, as Martínez de Sousa (1984: 41, 42) reminds us.

When the acronym has an internal use within one particular country and, therefore, has a more concrete reference (political parties, police bodies, firms, etc.), general usage tends to respect the original form, irrespective of the currency it may enjoy beyond its borders. Thus we say the FBI, KGB, CIA, SDP, etc., without a translation, and this applies not only to Spanish but to other languages as well. With regards to this, Alfaro (1970: 413) is right in pointing out that there are acronyms such as GOP (Grand Old Party) that have a strictly local flavour and are therefore untranslatable, but in my opinion he is wrong in rejecting RAF (Royal Air Force) in Spanish on the grounds that the natural form of the acronym should be based on the order of the initials, the result being then RFA (Real Fuerza Aérea), a solution which in any case would be taken as improper given the homonymy produced by the acronym RFA (República Federal Alemana).

Occasionally however, there are acronyms (mostly of political parties) that become widely known and are difficult to decode in their original forms; in such cases, the journalist, prompted by explanatory intentions, resorts to loan translation. Thus in English we find BNP (Basque Nationalist Party)⁴ instead of PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco); in Rumanian PSMS. (Partidul Socialist Muncitoresc Spaniol)⁵ as a translation of PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) the ruling party in Spain today; PCUS (Partido Comunista de la Unión Soviética) and POU (Partido Obrero Unificado de Polonia) in peninsular Spanish instead of Russian KPSS (Kommunističeskaja Partija Sovetskogo Soyuza) and Polish PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Robotnicza). Now this practice is not free from inconsistencies that may harm the process of communication, especially when dealing with varieties of the same language.

Thus in Mexican Spanish, instead of IRA (Irish Republican Army), which is the form used in Spain, the form ERI was coined (cf. Martínez de Sousa 1984: 41)⁶; and in Cuban Spanish we find PSUA (Partido Socialista Unificado de Alemania)⁷ to refer to the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), which is the form used in Spain⁸.
2. Common nouns are ruled by considerations similar to those ruling the names of organizations. In the first place, there are concepts which are used internationally though instituted simultaneously in each country and these naturally tend to adopt a native acronym form without any intervening process of translation as such. Thus value added tax (VAT) is taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (TVA) in French, impuesto sobre el valor añadido (IVA) in Spanish, imposta sul valore aggiunto (IVA) in Italian, imposto sobre o valor acrescentado (IVA) in Portuguese, Mehrwertssteuer (MWSi) in German.

Besides these names there are many others, generally very technical and specialized, which take a single acronym form. There are practical reasons for this based on the advantages of sharing a code to refer to the same institutions, services, systems, etc., in international communications. Good examples of this are acronyms like ATS (Air Traffic Services), ECU (European Currency Unit), COREU (Réseau télex des correspondants européens), SI (Système international d'unités), TCV (tarif commun international pour le transport des voyageurs et des bagages), TIR (transport international de marchandises pour route), TIF (transit international par fer), which in Community circles are the forms utilized in languages as different as French, English, Italian, Dutch or Danish. The length of some of these phrases may contribute to some extent to the use of a single symbol.

Similar behaviour is observable with those technical terms which name objects, gadgets or devices which circulate in the form given by their makers; e.g., LP (long playing-record) and EP (extended play) in musical jargon, VHS (video home system) and UHF (ultra high frequency) in electronics. The phenomenon is more evident with 'acronyms' stricto sensu like laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation), radar (radio detection and ranging), etc. These then are all products launched on the market through English acronyms the underlying forms of which are not very familiar; as in the case of trade names, what really matters is to recall an easily memorizable label and its function, i.e. the object designated.

A noteworthy group of acronyms, at times overlapping with the previous one, is used to refer to the increasing number of concepts that appear in the most diverse fields of science: biology, chemistry, medicine, computing science, data processing. Here there are two separate tendencies leading to notable inconsistencies. In the first place it is easy to see the convenience of using, for example in Spanish, the initials ADN (ácido desoxirribonucleico) instead of the English DNA (desoxyribonucleic acid) or DGE (derechos especiales de giro) instead of SDR (Special Drawing Rights) within a well-established text, as Martinez de Sousa (1984: 42) argues. On the other hand, no-one will deny the advantages brought to the international scientific community by adopting a common code, as some scientists and lexicographers have been claiming.

According to Martin-Municio (1986: 108), in the face of the chaos which would result from the inversion or alteration of initials belonging to the scientific field, there is no alternative to accepting and adopting the acronyms in their original form, which is in any case internationally established. This seems to be the way the Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences has understood the matter when adopting uniformly for its Vocabulary the international version of terminology elaborated through acronyms. Similar proposals have been made by some international scientific organizations such as the Union of Biochemistry (IUB) and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC). The argument and the measure gain strength from Martín Municio's account of how some authors object to saying DNA (they write and say ADN instead) but not to saying ATP (which in Spanish should be ATF), ACTH (in Spanish it should be HACT) or VLDL (in Spanish it should be HACT). And the thesis is further strengthened by observing the fluctuations that occur even in a newspaper as renowned and influential as El País.

Similar positions are also taken in French. In 1962 J. C. Sournia (quoted by Poinsotte 1977: 32), in an article published in Le Concours Médical, said with regard to anglomania:

Now, a quarter of a century later, ACTH and FSH form part of the current medical jargon, and in view of this we have no alternative but to agree with Martin-Valiquette (1985: 33) that:

On peut évidemment traduire la FSH par hormone folliculo-stimulante, la TSH par hormone thyrotropique, la GH par hormone de croissance et ainsi de suite, mais, dans un contexte où le sigle s'impose, il faut savoir que FSH et GH son bien ceux utilisés en français par rapport à toute tentative de francisation de ces mêmes sigles.

In spite of the logic of these countercharges, with which I agree in principle, it does not seem as if borrowing in the scientific field is always necessary or desirable, since in certain cases this would clash with rules of usage which also have their logic. OVNI and SIDA are good examples of this. To take the first of these, UFO as well as OVNI are easily pronounced 'acronyms'. The almost total displacement of English UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) can be explained if one takes into account the popular fascination with objetos volantes no identificados (popularly known before as "flying saucers") and the resulting familiarization with that phrase in Spanish. The mark of UFO, has been left, however, on the derivatives ufólogos, and ufología, which are especially suited for a scientific register and turn out to be more euphonic than their native counterparts *ovnilogía*¹¹. This pattern recurs in some humorous nonce-words like UFesca (in gira UFesca), UFero¹².

SIDA (síndrome de inmnodeficiencia adquirida), in its turn, like other technical terms of foreign invention, came to the fore in its English form, AIDS (Acquired Immounodeficiency Syndrome)¹³, and was thus attested repeatedly in the media in the early stages. Soon hesitations between the English and the Spanish form appeared, before SIDA finally prevailed. This time the way was easier than in the previous case. On the one hand, the spread of the disease and the vast coverage it received, as if it were a plague, introduced the expression and its acronym into everyday language; on the other, the English acronym proved appropriate since it lacked a natural syllabification and, furthermore, the sequence of its two final initials constituted a phonotactic constraint difficult to overcome (on this point, see Rodriguez González 1982).

That euphony or sonority is not always decisive is quite evident in the pair IDE/SDI, where the process seems to be reversed. IDE made an early entry in the media as a translation of SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative), a technical and euphemistic name with which Reagan's programme of the militarization of space was made known. The special 'acronymic' shape of IDE in Spanish made the initials easily pronounceable, far from the coldness of the 'initialism' SDI. In the end, however, SDI is the form that has prevailed in the national newspaper while IDE is only found in provincial dailies¹⁴ and publications of limited readership¹⁵. This can be explained if one considers the nature of this acronym, a term from military jargon found almost exclusively in journalism, in particular in sections devoted to political information. Although the subject of the arms race is no doubt of general interest, it is a highly specialized topic followed in detail mostly by a minority or cultivated readership. For the average speaker the concept of SDI is better conveyed by the expression guerra de las galaxias ("Star Wars") which has become very popular and is used in the media as an explanatory paraphrase.

The last example is indicative of the decisive role which may be played by the lexical fields to which acronyms relate, regardless of the formal features that these may show. This fact is worth underlining since the lexical fields exhibit varying degrees of translatability, as a quick glance at some texts from Spanish scientific publications would show.
In the domain of computer sciences, for instance, translation is rare due to the strong mark made by English, which causes Spanish people to accept practically all acronyms in their original form. The following terms taken from a journal of electronics give good evidence: diseño asistido por ordenador (CAD), integración a escala elevada (LSI), circuitos integrados para aplicaciones específicas (ASIC), circuitos integrados (IC). The latter also occurs in the specialized sections of El País Semanal where we also find ordenador personal (PC) and disco compacto (or compact disc, CD), which are particularly noticeable given the simple structure of the phrases.

Of the numerous acronyms and abbreviations compiled in the Diccionario McGraw-Hill de Computación, only four have in fact been translated into Spanish, namely, control automático de frecuencia (CAF), control automático de ganancia (CAG), control automático de volumen (CAV), circuito integrado (CI), frecuencia intermedia (i-f). If these expressions have anything in common it is the presence of words of daily use, in contrast with the markedly technical and specialized nature of computer science terminology as a whole.

This criterion is revealing when one compares the patterns found in areas closely related to medicine. If we take our attention to the already cited acronyms DNA (from the field of biology), we realize how technical and complex in their morphology they are, as compared to expressions like enfermedades de transmisión sexual (ETS), virus de inmunodeficiencia humana (VIH), enfermedad infecciosa pélvica (IEIP), which belong to the field of immunology and are found in specialized journals.

Moreover, in the light of this, we can now understand the reason why some authors, according to Martín-Municio, say ADN (and ARN, we could add) in Spanish, whereas they consistently use ATP and ACTH, which are of English origin. If the former and not the latter have been turned into Spanish, although with variations, it must be because of their greater frequency and memorability (cf. ácido vs. trisfosfato or hormona; (desoxi)ribo nucleico vs adenosina or adrenocorticotrópico). This would also explain why ADN (and ARN) is the form found in school handbooks, whereas in University handbooks and texts written for and by scientists DNA occurs with a considerable frequency. The same fact in part helps to answer the question asked by Sournia (1962), and referred to earlier, about the reason that led French medical language to adopt ACTH and FSH without hesitating, while at the same time OMS (Organisation Mondial de la Santé) and not WHO (World Health Organization) was used.

The existence of two criteria which are so divergent and yet are not always clearly differentiated, or even assumed or formulated, involves a good number of technical acronyms, for some time, in vacillations finally resolved in favour of English. In the field of computing science the above examples show us the vacillation between the hispanicized acronym CI (circuitos integrados), recorded in a dictionary — in itself a somewhat conservative type of work — and what appears to be a more frequently used acronym variant, English IC (integrated circuit), attested in specialized and divulgative publications. Within biology, the fluctuation between ADN and DNA also seems to confirm this tendency given that DNA is the most frequent form in scientific circles and has been taken up by mass media as influential as Televisión Española and the Madrid daily El País (cf. note 10). In Physics the symbol HP (horsepower) prevails, particularly in scientific contexts, over the native variant CV (caballos de vapor) (cf. Martínnez de Sousa 1983: 37).

3. The openness of acronyms to translation varies a great deal from one language to another and depends on internal and external factors. If in Spanish the native forms SIDA, OTAN, OVNI are now established, in German and Italian the reverse happens as witness AIDS, NATO, UFO, and also SDI. The noticeable receptiveness towards borrowing from English may be understood in German, given the close relationship of the two linguistic systems, but it causes surprise in a Romance language like Italian.
Within the Romance languages the most radical opposition to English comes from French, which has traditionally been distinguished by a linguistic nationalism sponsored by official institutions. Such an attitude explains the fact that in this language the corresponding acronyms systematically used are SIDA, OTAN, OVNI, as well as IDS (Initiative de Défense Stratégie); contrary to Spanish IDE, IDS has a spelling pronunciation, like English SDI.

However there is little point in this persistence in the face of the unstoppable growth of English, which is established as a lingua franca in international relations. Very significant examples are the above mentioned FESI, CDM (Conférence des Nations unies sur le droit de la mer) and UCE (unité de compte européenne), which have not been able to compete with their English equivalents UNICEF, UNCLOS, or UNLOSC (United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea) and ECU (European Currency Unit). This acronym, ECU, is even more meaningful if one considers that its use is closely linked with Community matters where there is still a greater number of French acronyms (especially of international organizations) that follow an autochtonous model. According to a count of the Multilingual Glossary of Abbreviations compiled by the Council of European Communities, the proportion of acronyms of French origin used in French is 88% vs. 12% of English origin. The ratio is reversed for English origin. The ratio is reversed for English, where 73% of the acronyms in use are of English origin and 27% of French.

The tendency towards a growing displacement of French forms in favour of the English is well demonstrated in our language by SEATO (South East Treaty Organization), which is the acronym that has prevailed against its French counterpart OTASE (Organisation du traité de défense collective pour l’Asie du Sud-Est); to this we should add the Spanish OTSEA (Organización del Tratado del Sureste de Asia), attested in the standard dictionaries (Martinez de Sousa 1978 y 1980; Alvar y Miró 1983) and completely out of use today.

When translating from one language to another we should bear in mind that there is not always an equivalent acronym, especially in dealing with common nouns. Thus the English phrases direct universal suffrage (DUS) and maximum residue limits (MRL) have their corresponding acronyms in French (suffrage universal direct, SUO; limites maximales de résidus, LMR) but not in German, Italian, Dutch, Danish or Spanish. Likewise in English, where acronyms are deeply rooted, there is not an acronym for man-work unit, contrary to what happens in French (unité de travail humain, UTH), Italian (unità lavorativa-uomo, ULI), German (Vollarbeitskraft, AK), Dutch (volwaardige arbeidskracht, VAK), or Danish (månsarbejds­senhed, MAE).

None of these acronyms derives from phrases frequently used, but frequency is not a decisive factor, as shown in the German expression Intensivstation, for which there is no known acronym, at least in the spoken language, quite the reverse of what happens in English (intensive care unit, ICU) or in Spanish (unidad de vigilancia intensiva, UVI).

Frequency is decisive if it is tied to economy of expression, and this is made evident, for instance, if we look at the term VAT. Whereas this acronym and its foreign counterparts (cf. supra) are used in the speech of many languages, German MWSt is technically an ‘abbreviation’, i.e. it is not pronounced; otherwise its phonetic shape would be very similar to the full form Mehrwertsteuer. It is used in the written language, in particular in very specialized contexts (tables bills, etc.), where the most economic expression is preferred for reasons of space. In German it is equally significant that Fernsehen (‘television’) has no initials, which in itself does not seem to be very strange in a short colloquial term, but there is an acronym for its classical synonym Television, which adopts the quasiinternational abbreviation TV, widely used in journalistic circles to replace the four syllables of the original term.

Examples such as these allow us to get a slight idea of the difficulties that await the translator when dealing with acronyms and abbreviations of another language. Given the
uneven frequency and conditions of use of many of them, he would be ill-advised to translate them in certain cases.

We are faced with a more difficult problem when the target language lacks not only an acronym or abbreviation but also the concept. Thus Russian KPD (Koeffitsijent Poljesновo Djeistvija) has "efficiency" as its equivalent in English, but this fails to render the real (and literal) meaning 'coefficient of useful action'. For dealing with abbreviations the translator requires, then, a full understanding of the text and access to large reference works, among them multilingual dictionaries.26

Concluding remarks

Generally the translation of foreign acronyms is not very difficult in comparison with the difficulties found in the translation of other types of lexicon. The underlying phrases or syntagms on which acronyms are based on the whole constitute a scientific and/or specialized terminology characterized by a high degree of isomorphism which owes its existence to the denotative nature of the lexemes integrated in them. This fact facilitates a literal and exact translation ("calque"); moreover, that is necessary in a field where the same conceptualizations are needed.

The difficulties found in translating acronyms lie not so much in their content, in obtaining a monosemantic value for their constitutive lexemes, as in deciding in each case whether an acronym is translated or not and which form it would have. The translation and borrowing of acronyms is conditioned by various different factors which intermingle in their effects and cause variation.

Essential in deciding which is to be used is the meaning of the acronym, as it is expressed in its source phrase, as well as its form. If the acronym is highly technical the speaker or writer tends passively to adopt the acronym in its original foreign form. Foreign terms may raise strong reactions from purists when they are incorporated into ordinary or literary language, but not if they are technical. In the latter case they are welcome or tolerated in so far as they contribute to a univocity that is very much needed in scientific communication.

In the contrary, when the foreign phrase to be abbreviated contains a very common and general vocabulary, including the technical terms that share these features, native speakers resort to the calque, prompted by the need to give the designatum the maximum semantic transparency. This principle finds a perfect application in 'abbreviations'.

At the formal level the creator of such designations tries to provide them with an easy articulation, the best example being so called 'acronyms', and often the calque or the borrowing sticks to this principle.

The imprecision of these two criteria, semantic and formal (morphophonological), and the multiplicity of acronyms, with which users are not always familiar, lead to the choice of different methods.

In particular, the journalistic field, where acronyms flourish, favours such a diversity.

The condition of designation or 'denomination' – rather than of 'name' or appellative – on which many acronyms are based, inclines the writer or speaker to choose a single signifier. As so often happens with synonyms, acronym variants, once the double use is established, are sometimes distributed in correlation with pragmatic and sociolinguistic parameters like user (speaker or writer) and addressee, medium, style, type of journal, etc. A thorough study of this type of variation has not been attempted here, though I hope to publish the results of my findings in a separate paper.
The most noteworthy variations in the conditions of use of acronyms should be pointed out in journalistic stylebooks (and even kept up to date by means of interim memoranda) as well as in dictionaries of acronyms (whether general or specialized, bilingual or multilingual) so that the writer, journalist, or the translator can find in them any help necessary to dispel doubts and avoid mistakes.

However contradictory it may sound, these lexicographic works would have the additional effect of contributing to the standardization of acronyms, a need felt most acutely within the field of technology. In the 'global village' in which we live, the scientist more than anyone else needs single signifiers for his conceptualizations, and in this context one cannot but praise all attempts to lay out rules that put an end to the multiplicity of forms. However, it must be stressed that where they exist, variants of a certain frequency should be tolerated and consequently registered, for were it not so the reader or writer would often be left helpless.

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NOTES

1. Unless otherwise specified, the reference used for the various comparative sets of acronyms from Community countries quoted here is the Glossaire d’abréviations multilingue published by the Conseil des Communautés européennes (Conseil 1983).

2. Similarly English UNESCO was originally intended to be UNECO, the S (for Scientific) being added to facilitate pronunciation (Hockett 1958: 316).


6. Cf. also English CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and German KPdSU (Kommunistische Partei der Sozialistischen Union).


11. The word has been attested in a Spanish seller’s brochure (I owe this information to Prof. Alberto Forcadas of the Univ. of Alberta. Apart from being longer, it unfortunately echoed the paronym ornitología (‘ornithology’).


15. Cf. En pie de Paz, No. 0 (February 1986), p. 6. Recently I heard this form being used by former minister Fernando Morán in a television debate, 1–1–1988, 10.30 p.m.


22. This linguistic nationalism has affected the field of economics in particular. As recently as 18 of February 1987, the decision was taken to enrich French economic and financial vocabulary by drawing up “an alphabetic index of replaced terms” (i.e., English expressions), cf. Philippe Gavi, “Marcatique, marketing, marchétiqueste”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 117–4–1987.
24. The same tendency can be observed in other languages: for example, in German 21% of the acronyms in this field are taken from French vs. 27% from English; in Italian the figures are 34% English and 22% French, and for Dutch, 44% English and 32% French. The remainder includes acronyms based on the initial letters of native words. This count is based on the first 100 acronyms listed in the source cited in which all the languages under consideration were represented.
25. Included among the acronyms most generally used in Spanish that are listed in *Collins Spanish-English Dictionary* (London & Glasgow, 1971).
26. In some receipts I have come across MST, an even more abbreviated form of the initials.

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