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THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION IN THE  
SHAPING OF A READER'S VIEW OF WORLD EVENTS  
- THE PRESS AND THE FALKLANDS WAR

VOLUME I: TEXT

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**6. REALITY CONSTRUCTED (The case of 'La Vanguardia')**

## 6. REALITY CONSTRUCTED (The case of 'La Vanguardia')

### 6.1. Readers and constructed reality

News is not 'found' or even 'gathered' so much as made. It is a creation of a journalistic process, an artifact, a commodity even (Philo, 1983, p.135).

At no time, however, would regular readers of a particular newspaper be aware of which news they were reading, if any, had been 'created', or 'adapted' to meet their expectations. Only the outsider, through the comparison of news reports in different newspapers during the same period of time, would be able to do this.

This is because, as a result of the techniques used by newspapers to help their readers understand events, regular readers become increasingly identified with the discursive end established by the newspaper of their choice<sup>129</sup> and ultimately come to interpret events in the same terms.

<sup>129</sup> This is because events are never interpreted in themselves but in terms of what has gone before. The more a reader's view of events coincides with that of a newspaper the more closely identified s/he becomes with the newspaper.

When the reporting of events is impartial and value-free, the orientation established by different newspapers, and as a result, their readers' perspective on events, can be expected to vary minimally.

If reporting is highly evaluative, however, the further along the road readers are taken into a newspaper's constructed reality the greater the difference there is likely to be between their perception of events and that of other reading publics.

#### 6.2. Constructing reality out of discourse

An instance in case are the reports in 'La Vanguardia' of the blockade of Buenos Aires (8-21 April 1982). The coverage given to this news item is found in none of the other newspapers under study. It is, therefore, a construction of reality, based, not on fact, but on the reporter's personal interpretation of the Maritime Exclusion Zone announced by Britain. Within the context of the mediated reality with which readers were conversant, however, it seemed totally plausible and credible.

Arising out of the discursive end established at the outset of the Falklands crisis, whereby the dispatch of a naval task

force to the Falklands in the wake of the Argentine invasion was interpreted as an act of aggression against Argentina similar to that which had occurred 150 years earlier in the Falklands, Britain's declaration of the Maritime Exclusion Zone round the Falklands is interpreted in terms of the declaration of a 'war zone' and understood to entail the blockade of the port of Buenos Aires and that of Argentine ports in general.

Again, in terms of the discursive end established at the outset of the news-story, Argentina is seen to be the victim, not only of the United Kingdom but also of the international community at large. Having passed UN Resolution 502 demanding Argentine withdrawal from the Falklands, this same Resolution is made out by 'La Vanguardia' to at once condone and legitimate this blockade of mainland ports. How does this happen?

#### 6.2.1. The blockade of Argentine ports

The announcement of the Maritime Exclusion Zone (7 April 1982) was reported in 'The Guardian', 'The Times', 'El Pais' and 'La Vanguardia' as follows:

- (i) **Britain to blockade Falkland Islands: Britain announced last night that a naval blockade would be mounted on the Falkland Islands from next Monday. Mr.**

John Nott, the Defence Secretary, told the Commons that any Argentine ship within the 200-mile zone round the islands would be liable to attack ('The Guardian' 8 April 1982);

- (ii) Only Argentine warships and naval auxiliaries are covered by the announcement by Mr. John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, in the Commons on Wednesday, of a 200-mile Maritime Exclusion Zone around the occupied colony. Mr. Nott's statement also declared, with a careful choice of vocabulary that such vessels would only be "liable" to attack by the Royal Navy, as Britain prepares for "self-defence" under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter ('The Times' 10 April 1982)<sup>130</sup>;

- (iii) La decisión del Gobierno británico de aislar una zona de 200 millas alrededor de las Malvinas en cuyo interior todo navío argentino pudiera ser echado a pique por la Royal Navy delimita una llamada zona de exclusión marítima prevista en la Carta de al ONU como el derecho a la autodefensa de un país si su

<sup>130</sup> 'The Times' gave full coverage of the Commons debate on 7 April, but because the announcement of the Maritime Exclusion Zone was announced at the end of the debate and the paper was not published on Good Friday (9 April), comments on the MEZ did not appear until 10 April 1982.

territorio es atacado u ocupado. A pesar de que la Prensa inglesa lo llama "zona de guerra" un oficial de la Armada matizó que el término adecuado era el de "zona de exclusión marítima" porque todavía no se han producido combates ('El País' 9 April 1982);

- (iv) Inglaterra declara zona de guerra un radio de doscientas millas marítimas en torno a las islas Malvinas. El Ministro británico de la Defensa, John Nott anunció esta noche en los Comunes, al finalizar el debate de emergencia sobre las Malvinas, que se había declarado zona de guerra esa zona del Atlántico sur, a partir de las 04.00 hora local del 12 de abril, 03.00 GMT, en un radio de 200 millas marítimas.

Cualquier barco argentino<sup>131</sup> que se encuentre dentro de esos límites, a partir de esa fecha, será considerado como hostil y, por lo tanto, puede ser atacado por las fuerzas británicas ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982).

It is interesting to note that the Maritime Exclusion Zone

<sup>131</sup> 'The Times' 10 April 1982: 'Only Argentine warships and naval auxiliaries are covered by the announcement...'

(MEZ) is referred to in 'La Vanguardia' as a 'zona de guerra' - a misnomer that 'El País' is careful to avoid<sup>132</sup>. Clearly not a translation of the original ('El País' uses 'llamada zona de exclusión marítima'), this value-laden interpretation is much more in keeping with the established discourse - that the dispatch of the naval task force by Britain was the 'beginning of an aggression'<sup>133</sup>.

The area covered by the declaration is widened from 'en torno a las islas Malvinas' to the vaguer 'esa zona del Atlántico sur' and, despite quoting John Nott's words which make the objectives of the MEZ very clear: 'Nuestra primera acción naval se dirigirá a impedir a las Fuerzas argentinas en las Malvinas los medios para reforzar y reabastecerlas desde el continente', the reporter then goes on to make up his own report on 'the fact' that:

<sup>132</sup> To refer to the MEZ as a 'war zone' is to deliberately mislead the reading public since it was not in Britain's interest to declare war - 'The Times' 8 April 1982 quotes John Nott referring to the measures taken by Britain 'in the exercise of our undoubted right of self-defence under the United Nations Charter' - 'while no formal state of war exists between this country and Argentina, we are fully entitled to take whatever measures are necessary in the exercise of that right'.

<sup>133</sup> These were the words used by Eduardo Roca, Argentina's ambassador to the UN, in a note distributed April 1, complaining of British ships being sent to evict the Argentinians on South Georgia Islands (Fredman and Gamba-Stonehouse, op. cit., p.135).



(v) La Armada bloqueará los accesos al continente: Los 36 buques de la Royal Navy (incluidos dos portaviones, destructores, fragatas, submarinos y varios petroleros de apoyo) que se dirigen a las Malvinas para hacer frente a la invasión argentina de la colonia, es probable que se limiten en un principio a establecer un rígido bloqueo de los accesos al puerto de Buenos Aires. Es ésta la posibilidad que apuntan con insistencia los expertos británicos en temas militares (los departamentos gubernamentales guardan, como resulta obvio, un escrupuloso silencio al respecto) ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982).

That this hypothesis should contradict the Minister's own words, quoted just 12 lines above, matters little - it is perfectly credible to readers since they 'know'<sup>134</sup> that the naval task force had been sent to the Falklands in the spirit of the nineteenth century colonial conquests, and that, historically, the blockade of major ports was a strategy widely practiced at that time<sup>135</sup>. The fact that government departments should neither confirm nor reject the report was

<sup>134</sup> The newspaper informed them of this on 4 April 1982 (p. 6) and 8 April 1982 (p. 4).

<sup>135</sup> Argentina had twice been victim of blockades of the River Plate during the nineteenth century (1806, 1807).

perfectly consonant with their behaviour in such circumstances<sup>136</sup>.

The reporter then goes on to quote a Foreign Office spokesman explaining how and why Britain is able to take this action unilaterally:

(vi) A propósito de este bloqueo naval del puerto de Buenos Aires, de indudables repercusiones y peligros internacionales (piénsese en la Royal Navy interceptando, por ejemplo, a los buques mercantes soviéticos transportando suministros a Argentina) un portavoz de la Foreign Office aclaró ayer que para efectuarlo Gran Bretaña no requiere una aprobación especial de las Naciones Unidas. En efecto, la resolución aprobada el sábado por el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, en la que se exige la retirada argentina de las Malvinas, hace referencia al derecho de legítima defensa de Gran Bretaña (en esos casos no hace falta después una autorización explícita del organismo internacional para un bloqueo de este género) ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982).

<sup>136</sup> See 5.2. (i), (ii), (iv), (v).

The information given by the Foreign Office spokesman is truly reflected. In their original context, however, his words refer specifically to the reasons why Britain was entitled to establish a blockade of the Falkland Islands.

By omitting to quote his words within their original context, and using them instead to justify the blockade of Buenos Aires, the reporter not only deliberately misleads readers but incurs in the deliberate misrepresentation of fact. Instead of readers being informed of the fact that, according to the dictates of international law, a British blockade of the Falkland Islands constituted a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defence, they are instead led to believe that an act of aggression, such as the blockade of Buenos Aires, is not only condoned but legitimated by the international community at large<sup>137</sup>.

The blockade of Buenos Aires or any other mainland port was never contemplated by the British government<sup>138</sup>. To have taken any kind of action outside the 200 mile territorial limits around the Falklands would have constituted an act of

<sup>137</sup> See 'La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982 when it was established by the reporter that Argentina was a victim of aggression not only by Britain but also by the international community.

<sup>138</sup> 'The Guardian' 10 April 1982. A look at a map of the area shows clearly that the radius of 200 nautical miles around the Islands leaves a clear passage west of the Falklands along the Argentine coast.

aggression, not one of self-defence<sup>139</sup>, and would certainly not have been condoned by the international community.

Not only had the Director General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council called upon Britain and Argentina to negotiate a peaceful solution to their dispute, an appeal that Britain had heeded, but the Security Council had voted in favour of a resolution tabled by Britain calling upon Argentina to withdraw her troops from the Islands, so that Britain was in a very strong position within the law and would certainly not have wanted to lose that position<sup>140</sup>.

To the reporter in question, however, maintaining the discursive end established in the newspaper (Argentina was the victim of British aggression) was clearly a priority over and above the objective, impartial representation of these facts<sup>141</sup>.

<sup>139</sup> As already pointed out, the Falklands were internationally recognized as a British colony. Resolution 502, passed by the United Nations Security Council, had found Argentina guilty of 'breaking the peace in the area'. Britain was entitled to exercise the right of self-defence according to Clause 51 of the United Nations Charter. (See 'The Guardian' 5 April 1982).

<sup>140</sup> This, of course, is the reason why the British Government took great pains to emphasize the fact that actions were being taken in self-defence and that, despite press reports to the effect, the country was not at war with Argentina.

<sup>141</sup> Clearly, if these facts had been reported, the Argentine invasion of the Falklands would have been seen in its true light - itself an act of aggression - and the discursive end established by the paper - the legitimacy of the recovery of the islands - would have been called into

In the absence of objective reality, the verosimilitude of the constructed reality presented within the framework of the mediated reality with which the reader was conversant<sup>142</sup> ensured that for a period of 13 days the blockade of Buenos Aires and other mainland ports was discussed in 'La Vanguardia' newspaper as if it were a reality.

That the newspaper's readers should have accepted it as such (the reflection of reality) shows the extent to which readers had been introduced into the constructed reality of the newspaper and the extent to which their perspective of events was shaped by the newspaper itself.

From the time when the blockade of Buenos Aires is first mentioned, substantiated by a long article on page 13 of 'La Vanguardia' 9-10 April, entitled 'La fórmula del bloqueo no es fácil' when the hypothesis that the Royal Navy 'al parecer...puede tener encomendada' the blockade of the River question.

<sup>142</sup> The possibility of a blockade of mainland ports was plausible because readers knew, on the basis of information obtained from earlier reports and historical fact that: a) the dispatch of the naval task force was yet another display of British nineteenth century imperialism; b) its avowed aim to regain the islands constituted a threat to Argentine national territory (Falklands = Argentina); and c) Britain had blockaded the River Plate on previous occasions in history. There was no reason to believe that a blockade of mainland ports (= national territory) in the purest imperialist tradition was not a possibility.

Plata is juxtaposed with the affirmation: 'Cierto que el secular bloqueo marítimo ha sido la fórmula que la Armada británica ha venido aplicando con mayor efectividad en toda su época imperial y especialmente en las dos guerras mundiales' and made the object of debate, regular reference to the possibility of this blockade and its attendant consequences keeps it at the forefront of readers' minds until 21 April 1982, by which time it is clear that the constructed reality is no longer tenable. Retaking the South Georgia Islands constitutes Britain's prime objective.

(vii) El bloqueo económico de Buenos Aires (estuario de la Plata) es al parecer otra de las alternativas que puede tener encomendada la flota británica en ruta hacia el Atlántico Sur; cometido que, a nuestro modo de ver, no resultaría nada fácil de llevar a la práctica...aún en el caso de que las fragatas británicas llevadas de su audacia intentasen interceptar a los buques mercantes en ruta hacia la Plata...la tarea de bloqueo a la vieja usanza no es cosa fácil' (9-10 April 1982).

(viii) A propósito de esta escuadra, se especula con que su primer objetivo será establecer un bloqueo naval

a los accesos a los puertos argentinos y en especial al de Buenos Aires (13 April 1982).

(ix) Mientras una colosal escuadra de 29 buques de la Royal Navy navega por los trópicos con rumbo a la costa argentina donde podrían proceder primero a establecer un bloqueo del acceso al puerto de Buenos Aires, el mando naval sigue requisando buques mercantiles para contribuir al esfuerzo bélico (14 April 1982).

(x) En las capitales del litoral argentino se está registrando una gran actividad militar preparándose para cualquier eventualidad incluida la posibilidad remota por ahora de que los británicos decidan de alguna manera atacar la tierra firme argentina (16 April 1982).

Finally, on 21 April 1982, the truth is disclosed:

(xi) En círculos militares argentinos se estima que el propósito británico no es llevar la guerra a las costas continentales sino intentar un desembarco en las Malvinas (21 April 1982).

### 6.3. Constructing reality out of signs and signals.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.172) 'the greater part of reality-maintenance in conversation is implicit, not explicit...it takes place against the background of a world that is silently taken for granted'.

Given that this 'world that is silently taken for granted' determines the significance conferred upon the signs and signals used by the addresser<sup>143</sup> to represent reality, both addresser and addressee must share that same 'world' if the original significance of the signs is to be perceived and understanding achieved.

In those cases in which signs and signals are perceived but 'the world that is silently taken for granted' is not shared by addresser and addressee, not only is understanding not achieved, but pre-conditions exist for the creation of a new reality as the addressee confers significance upon signs in accordance with an alternative set of propositions. Some examples from 'La Vanguardia' will serve to illustrate this point.

<sup>143</sup> Hartley, op. cit., pp.87-88.



As a result of an earlier study of reporting of the emergency sitting of Parliament, April 3, it was found that 'La Vanguardia'<sup>144</sup> was the only newspaper from amongst those analysed that had omitted to report any part of Mrs. Thatcher's speech referring to Britain's commitment to the Falklands and to the defence of the Islanders' right to self-determination<sup>145</sup>. This omission was understood in terms of the fact that their mention was incompatible with the discursive end established by 'La Vanguardia' whereby the Falkland Islands were Argentine territory rightfully recovered after having been wrongfully wrested from her by Britain 150 years before<sup>146</sup>.

Thus, the reality maintained by 'La Vanguardia' reporters during the period in which Alexander Haig sought to negotiate a peaceful solution to the Falklands crisis (8-25 April) had necessarily to differ from that of the other newspapers under study since the world 'silently taken for granted' upon which that reality was based was also different.

<sup>144</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982.

<sup>145</sup> See 'The Guardian' 5 April 1982: 'It is the Government's objective to see the islanders are freed from occupation and returned to British administration at the earliest possible moment... We have no doubt about our sovereignty which has been continuous since 1833. Nor have we any doubt about the unequivocal wishes of the Falkland Islanders who are British in stock and tradition and wish to remain British in their allegiance'. Also 'The Sunday Times' April 4 1982; 'The Guardian' April 6 1982.

<sup>146</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 2 April 1982.

The signs and signals perceived during Mr. Haig's diplomatic mission (it should be remembered that the dictates of secrecy and confidentiality meant that 'hard' facts were not available) were interpreted and reported in 'La Vanguardia' against the background of the belief that, by taking the Falklands on April 3, Argentina had recovered what was rightfully hers, that Argentine sovereignty was a 'fait accompli', and that the onus was on Britain to negotiate the terms of her withdrawal from the Islands since, after all, Argentina 'tiene la sartén por el mango' ('La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982).

These same signs and signals, however, were perceived and interpreted differently by Britain, who took for granted the fact that the principle of democracy, the right to self-determination, and the dictates of international law took precedence over 'los derechos de los argentinos'<sup>147</sup>. Argentina's invasion of the Falklands was interpreted not as the legitimate recovery of sovereignty but as an instance of unprovoked aggression and the violation of territorial rights. The onus was on Argentina to withdraw its troops from the Islands and restore the status quo in the Islands prior to the invasion. This was a demand made, not just by Britain, but by all the signatories of UN Resolution 502.

<sup>147</sup> Britain's position was supported by UN Resolution 502.

The following examples show how 'La Vanguardia' created reality out of its own interpretation of signs and signals, conferring significance on them through the use of a totally different set of propositions from those used to encode the original.

This created reality was acceptable to 'La Vanguardia' readers (though it was unique to them) since they shared the same set of propositions as the newspaper. These had been established and sustained, albeit artificially, through the discourse.

#### 6.3.1. Administration or Sovereignty?

During the House of Commons debate, 7 April 1982, the Defence Secretary Mr. Pym:

startled MPs by appearing to amend earlier assurances that the objective of British policy was to restore British sovereignty in the Falkland islands. Instead he employed the word "administration". When former premier Mr. James Callaghan challenged Mr. Pym and the Prime Minister to clarify the position...Mrs. Thatcher confined herself to saying that it was the wishes of the Islanders that was paramount ('The Guardian' 8 April 1982).

Coincident with the news that the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was arriving in London on April 8, 'to offer assistance in resolving the dispute', the following interpretations were made in the different newspapers of the different usage of the signs 'sovereignty' and 'administration' during the debate<sup>148</sup>:

'The Guardian' 8 April 1982:

- (i) Washington has still to come up with a negotiating formula but has started laying great stress on the difference between sovereignty and administration. Recent British declarations are being minutely studied to see if there is a big enough gap on this point to insert a diplomatic lever;

'El País' 8 April 1982:

- (ii) ¿Administración o soberanía? La cuestión no quedó clara en el enfrentamiento entre Thatcher y el ex-

<sup>148</sup> 'The Times' 8 April 1982 makes it clear that there is no distinction between the two: 'the Americans and Britain agreed that a pre-condition of negotiations would be the withdrawal of Argentine forces from the islands and that they supported efforts to restore the islands to British administration and sovereignty'.

primer ministro James Callaghan y puede constituir la base de las propuestas de negociación que ayer noche traía a Londres el secretario de estado norteamericano Alexander Haig;

'La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982:

(iii) Londres dispuesta a negociar Margaret Thatcher evitó cuidadosamente comprometer su gobierno en una defensa a ultranza de la soberanía británica sobre las islas Malvinas en la perspectiva de una negociación con Argentina (este país invadió las islas el pasado día 2). Mrs. Thatcher sólo se comprometió a "respetar la voluntad de los habitantes del archipiélago". Esta señal conciliadora coincide...;

(iv) la primer ministro aún insistiendo en que la soberanía de Gran Bretaña sobre las Malvinas "está fuera de duda" prefirió no comprometer a fondo a su gobierno y se limitó a asegurar la voluntad de los 1000 habitantes de las islas (en su mayor parte de descendencia británica). Estos signos conciliadores británicos...

While in examples (i) and (ii) the differentiation made between

'sovereignty' and 'administration' is viewed as a possible point of departure for a negotiated solution to the dispute, 'La Vanguardia' -examples (iii) and (iv) - on the basis of its interpretation of Mrs. Thatcher's 'señal conciliadora'/'signos conciliadores' takes it upon itself to confirm that London is ready to negotiate: 'Londres está dispuesta a negociar'.

Contrary to the fact that it is 'a cardinal element in Mrs. Thatcher's overall strategy...that Britain has not relinquished sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and insists on the right to assert it',<sup>149</sup> Mrs. Thatcher is seen by 'La Vanguardia' readers to be beating a retreat - first, in example (iii), by not wishing to commit the government to supporting the defence of British sovereignty and then, in example (iv), by not wishing to commit the government to supporting British sovereignty.

Readers are thus led to believe that the road is wide open for the negotiation of a peaceful solution to the crisis on the basis of Britain relinquishing sovereignty over the Falklands to the Argentinians.

Indeed, subsequent news items (7-11 April) on possible

<sup>149</sup> 'The Guardian' 8 April 1982.

proposals for a negotiated solution to the Falklands dispute are based on the common knowledge (a constructed reality unique to 'La Vanguardia') that Britain is willing to recognise Argentine sovereignty over the Islands.

Clearly, this interpretation is highly subjective, and is not based on fact: 'In Washington, the British Ambassador, Sir Nicholas Henderson, said that he had told Mr. Haig that there could be no question of negotiations with the Galtieri government until all its invading forces had been withdrawn from the island and the situation there restored to normal' ('The Guardian' 8 April 1982). As far as Alexander Haig's peace mission was concerned: 'Officials say that the British Government's readiness to receive the mission focuses on one point only: in what way is President Reagan able "to secure the immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands (Las Malvinas)"',<sup>150</sup> ('The Guardian' 8 April 1982).

However, this would appear to be of little concern to 'La Vanguardia' and its readers since the interpretation of the situation given is totally acceptable within the discourse developed according to which Argentina has repossessed what is rightfully hers and Britain has no alternative but to begin

<sup>150</sup> Quoted from UN Resolution 502.

negotiating the conditions of her complete withdrawal from the colony: 'La señora Thatcher trata de encontrar una salida honrosa a la crisis'<sup>151</sup>.

### 6.3.2. A solution to the dispute - the Hong Kong option

The 'Hong Kong option' (settlement of the problem of sovereignty/administration in the Falklands on the basis of leaseback) was first mentioned in 'La Vanguardia' on 3 April 1982 in the article entitled 'Una larga guerra política y diplomática'. It was not a new idea, since it had already been tabled at earlier bi-lateral talks between Britain and Argentina, but it had been rejected by both the Islanders<sup>152</sup> and Argentina<sup>153</sup>.

Nevertheless, reference to the option is repeated in 'La

<sup>151</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 7 April 1982.

<sup>152</sup> 'El Gobierno británico hizo en 1980 una triple propuesta a los isleños malvinos: compartir la soberanía del archipiélago con Argentina; congelar las negociaciones durante un cierto tiempo; transferir la soberanía a Argentina y automáticamente tomar en arriendo las islas Gran Bretaña (como en el caso del protectorado británico de Hong Kong en China). Los interesados contestaron que quieren seguir siendo británicos y que de las tres propuestas se inclinan por la congelación de las conversaciones, precisamente la que más irritación producía en Buenos Aires' ('La Vanguardia' 3 April 1982). See also Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse, op. cit., pp.15-17; 'El País' 8 April 1982.

<sup>153</sup> 'La Vanguardia' April 8 1982: 'A este propósito, hay que recordar que según las noticias procedentes de Buenos Aires, las autoridades argentinas excluyen cualquier fórmula de condominio o de alquiler de las islas'.



Vanguardia' on April 7, 8, 9-10 and 11 before it drops from public view coinciding with the end of the first round of talks between Mr. Haig, London and Buenos Aires.

Despite the fact that no information is available as to the content of his proposals<sup>154</sup>, the Hong Kong option is presented in no uncertain terms as one of the proposals to be put forward by Alexander Haig during his peace mission: 'el secretario de Estado piensa moverse en las coordenadas del mencionado acuerdo' (8 April 1982), and in a later report on the same day: 'Haig va a proponer que se conceda la soberanía a Argentina aunque sólo sea el símbolo de una bandera azul y blanca que ondea en Puerto Soledad a cambio de que se respeta la identidad de los isleños'. After being commented upon at length, it is ultimately presented by 'La Vanguardia' as the most valid alternative for a peaceful settlement of the dispute over sovereignty in the Falklands <sup>155</sup>.

The presentation of the Hong Kong option as the most valid alternative for peace is, in fact, a constructed reality<sup>156</sup> -

<sup>154</sup> 'The Times' 8 April 1982.

<sup>155</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 9-10 April 1982.

<sup>156</sup> 'El País' 11 April 1982: 'La mención concreta del caso HongKong fue planteada por periodistas norteamericanos al ministro argentino de Exteriores, Nicanor Costa, quien negó categóricamente haber considerado el tema de sus conversaciones con Haig'.

it is the reporter's opinion made acceptable to readers in the light of his interpretation of Mrs. Thatcher's words referring to the prompt return of the Islands to British 'administration' rather than to British 'sovereignty'<sup>157</sup>, and justified in terms of the absence of signs and signals to the contrary: 'Si esta solución es la que se perfila en estos primeros movimientos diplomáticos, es también debido a que tanto el ministro de Asuntos Exteriores argentino como el embajador de aquel país en la ONU omiten referencia alguna a la retirada militar y concentran su atención en que la soberanía sobre las islas debe ser respetada en cualquier acuerdo' ('La Vanguardia' 9-10 April 1982).

Despite the fact that leaseback had been rejected as a possible alternative in the peaceful settlement of the dispute over sovereignty in the Falklands<sup>158</sup>, 'La Vanguardia' prefers to ignore the fact, focusing attention instead on the construction of the reality of a peaceful solution to the Falklands crisis based on the compatibility of Argentine insistence on their sovereignty over the Falklands being recognised, and Mrs. Thatcher's demand for the withdrawal of Argentine troops from the Islands and their immediate return to British

<sup>157</sup> See Section 6.3.1.

<sup>158</sup> 'La Vanguardia' and 'The Times' 8 April 1982.

administration<sup>159</sup>.

This reality is constructed as follows:

- (i) Al parecer Washington vería con buenos ojos una solución tipo HongKong (paso de la soberanía de las islas a Argentina y alquiler durante varios lustros de las mismas a Gran Bretaña para su administración). No obstante una solución de este género estuvo en la mesa de negociaciones que desde 1977 Argentina y Gran Bretaña entablaron en Nueva York sobre el futuro de la colonia ('La Vanguardia' 7 April 1982).
- (ii) Se está trabajando sobre el borrador de un documento que casi se llegó a aceptar y ratificar entre Londres y Buenos Aires. Según la copia del mencionado acuerdo Argentina recuperaría la soberanía de las islas Malvinas y cedería el archipiélago a Inglaterra en un contrato de arrendamiento muy parecido al que los ingleses tienen con los chinos a propósito de HongKong. El acuerdo no llegó a aprobarse después de

<sup>159</sup> The reporter's interpretation of Mrs. Thatcher's references to the paramountcy of the Islanders' wishes in any negotiated solution (April 7) - 'sólo se comprometió a respetar la voluntad de los habitantes; se limitó a asegurar que se respetara la voluntad de los 1.000 habitantes' - minimises the significance of the role played by the Islanders wishes in the dispute over sovereignty. This contrasts with 'The Sunday Times' 4 April 1982; 'The Guardian' 5 April 1982.

que los habitantes de las islas rechazaran el borrador. El secretario del Estado piensa moverse en las coordenadas del mencionado acuerdo ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982).

(iii) Margaret Thatcher insistió ayer en la exigencia británica de que 'las tropas argentinas se retiren de las islas y de que estas retornen bajo administración británica'. El que la señora Thatcher insista en utilizar el término administración en lugar del de soberanía abre una ventana a una posible transferencia de la soberanía de las Malvinas a Argentina a cambio de que las tropas de este país se retiren del archipiélago ('La Vanguardia' 9-10 April 1982).

(iv) Las sucesivas intervenciones de la primer ministro Margaret Thatcher en la Cámara de los Comunes han permitido entrever que Gran Bretaña estaría dispuesta a negociar el pase de la soberanía sobre las Malvinas a Argentina si este país retirase sus tropas del archipiélago ('La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982).

(v) Lo que más nebuloso resulta es el 'status' administrativo en que quedarían las islas. A este

respecto las posibilidades parecen ser dos: A) soberanía y administración argentinas, pero con el archipiélago convertido en zona desmilitarizada bajo supervisión internacional; y B) soberanía argentina y administración británica en el régimen de alquiler por un largo período de tiempo (como ocurre con parte de la colonia de Hong Kong) ('La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982).

In (i) the 'Hong Kong option' is presented as a proposal apparently acceptable to Washington, 'al parecer Washington vería con buenos ojos una solución tipo HongKong' although it is one which, 'La Vanguardia' points out, was tabled during earlier talks between Argentina and Britain. (This would imply that for some reason it was not accepted).

In (ii) the reason why it was not accepted is given - the proposal was accepted and agreed to, only the basis of the agreement was unacceptable. (Clearly, no agreement was reached although, through this ingenious form of presentation, readers are led to believe that if the basis of the agreement, which was formerly unacceptable, were made acceptable, acceptance and agreement would automatically ensue).

In (iii) the option becomes, as far as 'La Vanguardia' is

concerned, 'la sustancia de un acuerdo pacífico', given Mrs. Thatcher's insistence on Argentine troops being withdrawn from the Falklands and the Islands being returned to British administration. (Mrs. Thatcher's words are interpreted to mean that sovereignty over the Falklands may be relinquished if Argentina withdraws its troops from the Islands). In this case, the Hong Kong option provides the most acceptable solution to the dispute since it satisfies both Argentine demands for sovereignty as well as British demands for the withdrawal of troops and continuing British administration of the Islands.

In (iv) the reporter confirms this interpretation in the light of Mrs. Thatcher's 'repeated' interventions in the House of Commons which, in his opinion, point to the now distinct possibility of Britain giving up sovereignty if Argentina withdraws its troops from the Islands.

The question of sovereignty having been satisfactorily solved, it only remains to determine the type of administration under which the islands remained, either British or Argentine (iv).

Based on Washington's hypothetical predisposition towards a Hong Kong-type solution to the Falklands crisis, and of Britain's supposed willingness to cede sovereignty to Argentina in return for the withdrawal of Argentine troops from the

Islands, this constructed reality is unique to readers of 'La Vanguardia'.

It is not based on fact. It is based on a personal interpretation of signs and signals used to validate an opinion as to the suitability of a hypothetical basis of negotiation for the settlement of the Falklands dispute.

The proposal is presented as a solomonic solution accomodating both British insistence on the withdrawal of Argentine troops with a return to British administration, and Argentine insistence on the recognition of Argentine sovereignty over the Islands.

It is made credible to readers by referring to a similar option tabled in previous negotiations and by consolidating an initial hypothesis with the affirmation that 'el secretario del Estado piensa moverse en las coordenadas del mencionado acuerdo', and that 'Haig va a proponer...'<sup>160</sup>.

<sup>160</sup> Apart from the fact that the confidentiality of Mr. Haig's mission made it impossible for reporters to make this kind of affirmation, the Hong Kong option could not be considered a viable proposition since it had already been rejected by both the Falkland Islanders and Argentina (the British Government's respect for the paramountcy of the Islanders wishes in any negotiations over sovereignty, meant that this option was no longer valid), and the British Government had made it clear that Mr. Haig's mission was to see how the demands made in UN Resolution 502 could be met (it was, therefore, neither his mission nor his place to propose the cession of sovereignty to Argentina).

It is justified in terms of the reporter's earlier interpretation of the significance of Mrs. Thatcher's reference to the return of the Falklands to British 'administration' as opposed to 'sovereignty' (Section 6.3.1.). On the basis of this interpretation, readers are led to understand Mrs. Thatcher's insistence on a return to British administration as a willingness to cede sovereignty over the Islands to Argentina. British and Argentine Government statements are subsequently dove-tailed to suit the framework established by the proposal provided.

Taking it for granted that Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands was a 'fait accompli' and was not negotiable, and that Britain had to find a face-saving solution to the situation, Mrs. Thatcher's insistence on the withdrawal of Argentine troops from the Islands and the return to British administration, interpreted earlier as a willingness to cede sovereignty, can reasonably be understood to imply British Government recognition of Argentine sovereignty 'de facto', with the withdrawal of troops constituting a precondition to that recognition, and the return to British administration as an attempt by the British government to save face<sup>161</sup>.

<sup>161</sup>Because the propositions used to interpret Mrs. Thatcher's words were different, the meaning was different. Thus, Mrs. Thatcher's insistence on the withdrawal of Argentinian troops from the Islands and their return to British administration could only be interpreted from Britain's point of



Sufficient emphasis cannot be laid upon the fact that this view of events was unique to 'La Vanguardia'. Britain refused to even contemplate negotiations till Argentine troops had been withdrawn and certainly it was made plain that Mr. Haig's mission was welcomed only in as much as it could bring about the implementation of Resolution 502.

Nevertheless, by working elements of fact into the discursive framework established, 'La Vanguardia' effectively constructs a reality, albeit plausible and acceptable to readers, which is clearly at odds with other newspapers' views on the subject.

The verosimilitude of the propositions made by 'La Vanguardia' reporters is the product not only of the plausibility of their content (in view of the knowledge at the reader's disposal) but also of the way in which they are presented.

Alexander Haig's meetings with Government leaders in London and Buenos Aires 'han sido acompañadas de signos externos de aparente dureza y de aludidas amenazas, en el panorama de la crisis se perciben también señales conciliadoras y suficientemente explícitas para delinear la estructura de un

view as the mandatory fulfilment of terms established in UN resolution 502, with a return to the situation prior to 3 April 1982 as a pre-condition to future negotiations on the problem of sovereignty over the Islands.

posible acuerdo'. Mrs. Thatcher's statements 'han permitido entrever que Gran Bretaña estaría dispuesta a negociar el pase de la soberanía' ('La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982).

Lexical terms denoting subjective states, possibility, probability, condition, opinion are juxtaposed with terms denoting much more concrete concepts: 'signos'/'externos'; 'aparente'/'dureza'; 'aludidas'/'amenazas'; 'se perciben'/'señales'; 'suficientemente'/'explícitas'; 'delinear'/'la estructura'; 'posible'/'acuerdo'; 'permitido'/'entrevé'.

What is in fact a personal representation of a hypothetical reality is couched in terms denoting concrete objective reality ('externos'; 'dureza'; 'explícitas'; 'la estructura'; 'acuerdo') thereby making it even more credible<sup>162</sup>.

<sup>162</sup> A further discussion of the kind of solution that should be negotiated for the dispute, centring attention on the problem of interim administration is reported in 'La Vanguardia' 18 April 1982. The equally hypothetical solution is presented in much more persuasive terms: 'En síntesis parece que cualquier fórmula de acuerdo debe contemplar los tres puntos siguientes: a) retirada militar argentina del archipiélago; b) establecimiento de una administración provisional; c) negociaciones anglo-argentinas sobre el futuro de las islas. Dándose por generalmente aceptado (aunque no oficialmente en Gran Bretaña) que tal soberanía pasará después de la actual crisis a Argentina, lo difícil reside en establecer el momento de esta transferencia. Obviamente, las posiciones más extremas son la pretensión argentina de que tal cambio de soberanías ya ha sido operada con la invasión y es irreversible y la pretensión británica de que para negociar el futuro de las islas hay que restablecer la situación anterior a la invasión. NI hay que decir que esta pretensión británica es apoyada por la implacable navegar hacia el Atlántico Sur de los 29 buques (entre ellos 2 portaviones) de la Royal Navy. De lo anterior se deduce que el punto más delicado es el segundo: es decir, el del tipo de administración provisional que seguirá a la retirada militar argentina y si esta fórmula administrativa supondrá o no un reconocimiento de la soberanía para el país sudamericano'. 'La Vanguardia' presents its interpretation of what should be the outcome

#### 6.4. Sustaining the constructed reality of discourse

In the previous two sections, an analysis has been made of the way in which news items have originated in and been shaped by the dictates of discourse. The subservience of news reporting in 'La Vanguardia' to the dictates of the overall discourse established for the news story at the outset becomes increasingly apparent through the comparison of reports of the same events in the different newspapers under study. In those cases where the degree of 'fit' with the discursive end is not perfect, inconsistencies may be seen to occur in the Spanish text. Where it is perfect, only comparison with other sources can evidence the fact.

##### 6.4.1. Inconsistencies and illogical connections

The following is an example of how inconsistencies arise when fact is forced to fit discourse. 'La Vanguardia' had, from the outset, supported General Galtieri in presenting Argentina as 'un país amante de la paz y del respeto a todas las naciones

of Mr. Haig's negotiations in no uncertain terms: 'debe contemplar los tres puntos siguientes'; 'Dándose por generalmente aceptado'; 'Obviamente'; 'Ni hay que decir'; 'De lo anterior se deduce'. None of the verbs used are vague or used in conditional forms that denote hypothesis. They are much more categorical, indicating obligations, stating facts and announcing future events: 'debe'; 'pasará'; 'reside'; 'son'; 'ha sido operada'; 'es' (4); 'hay que'; 'tiene que'; 'se deduce'; 'seguirá'; 'supondrá'.

del orbe'<sup>163</sup>. Forced by Britain's 'dilaciones y evasivas' over negotiations to recover sovereignty over the Falklands, Argentina had had to take unilateral action. Caught between its support for Argentina's rights over the Falklands and its desire to present Argentina as a peace-loving nation (Britain being represented in quite the opposite light) the first round of Mr. Haig's talks with General Galtieri is reported as follows:

- (i) Galtieri dejó este mediodía pocas esperanzas para un arreglo pacífico del conflicto con Gran Bretaña por las Malvinas...remarcó que no está en negociación ni un sólo metro cuadrado de suelo argentino... precisando... 'si quieren venir (los ingleses) que vengan, les presentaremos batalla'. En fuentes responsables se recogía, después del discurso de Galtieri, la impresión de los observadores neutrales: las cosas van mal. Según las fuentes... las posibilidades de compromiso parecen estrellarse ante la rigidez de la posición inglesa ('La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982).

<sup>163</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 3 April 1982. Britain, through her 'dilaciones y evasivas' had forced her to take action unilaterally to recover sovereignty over her own territories.

The conclusion attributed to the 'observadores neutrales' (and none more so than the readers themselves) is certainly not the logical conclusion to be derived from the presentation of Galtieri's words, but, rather, would appear to be a dictate of discourse.

Inconsistency at times leads to contradiction as 'La Vanguardia' attempts to sustain the dictates of discourse over and above what is undeniable fact:

(ii) De fuentes próximos al Gobierno británico se sabe que la vía diplomática ha quedado temporalmente bloqueada por la negativa argentina a aceptar la solución propuesta por Haig y aceptada por Gran Bretaña... Hay que ser muy cautas en esta 'guerra de las culpas' ya que Buenos Aires también acusa Gran Bretaña de falta de flexibilidad y, por tanto, le hace responsable de la interrupción de los esfuerzos diplomáticos. Para ser más precisos la misma fórmula de acuerdo puede ser puesta en duda ya que es el resultado de "filtraciones" y no está respaldada por confirmación ninguna ('La Vanguardia' 14 April 1982).

In another report in the same edition, however, we find a rebuttal of this version:

La fórmula de Alexander Haig, se rechaza 'enérgica y definitivamente' dijo el ministro de Asuntos Exteriores', Nicanor Costa Mendez ('La Vanguardia' 14 April 1982).

'La Vanguardia' goes to great lengths to represent the Argentinians as a moderate, peace-loving people, not an aggressive, invading nation. Reports on the treatment accorded to the Falkland Islanders and their reactions to the occupying troops on the Islands are used to assuage any fears that the rights of the Falklanders would not be respected by Argentinians or that Argentine sovereignty was not an acceptable solution.

Thus, 'La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982 (p.11) reports on a hypothetical proposal to be presented by Alexander Haig to London and Buenos Aires in his attempts to find a negotiated solution to the dispute over sovereignty in the Falkland Islands. Summing up 'todas esas hipótesis de acuerdo', the reporter justifies the truth of what he has been said as follows:

(iii) Que algo hay de verdad en lo anterior ha quedado en evidencia con el cambio operado por los medios de comunicación británicos respecto a la población local

de la colonia. Algunos isleños están dispuestos a cambiar de bandera si se retiran las tropas rezaba ayer un título de primera página del prestigioso 'Times',<sup>164</sup> interpretando fielmente los deseos actuales del Foreign Office ('La Vanguardia' 11 April 1982).

Despite the fact that the reporter would have readers believe otherwise, the report on the Islanders' feelings neither proves the truth of what has gone before, nor do the Islanders' reported feelings reflect the wishes of the Foreign Office. Rather, the inclusion of the British press reports corresponds to the desire on the part of the reporter to justify a constructed reality in terms of his personal interpretation of fact - the Foreign Office's willingness to cede sovereignty to Buenos Aires<sup>165</sup> and the Islanders' support of this idea<sup>166</sup>.

<sup>164</sup> 'The Times' 10 April 1982: 'Some islanders ready to change flag if troops withdraw'.

<sup>165</sup> See Section 5.2.2.

<sup>166</sup> The Falklands Island Office in London discredits the source of this information: 'Mr. Carlisle has only been there since November. He is not an elected representative of the islanders, nor is he an islander by birth and he has not lived there long. We cannot take his views seriously as reflecting the islanders attitudes without supporting evidence' ('The Times' 10 April 1982 p.1.)

#### 6.4.2. Misrepresentation of fact to sustain the constructed reality of discourse

According to the discursive end established by 'La Vanguardia' at the outset of the Falklands crisis, Britain, by deciding to send a naval task force to the Islands after their invasion, was guilty of incurring in an act of aggression against Argentina. This decision was unacceptable.

Mrs. Thatcher's announcement of the preparation of the fleet on 4 April 1982 was, therefore, reported to 'La Vanguardia' readers as one which was highly unpopular with MPs and likely to cause Mrs. Thatcher's political downfall<sup>167</sup>.

The truth of the matter was, in fact, that the House supported her decision to a man<sup>168</sup>. Members' annoyance was motivated not by Mrs. Thatcher's decision to defend the Islands by despatching the naval task force, but by the Government's seeming unpreparedness for the Argentine attack, despite repeated warnings to the effect<sup>169</sup>.

<sup>167</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 4, 6, 7 April 1982; 'The Times' 4, 7 April 1982; 'The Guardian' 5, 7 April 1982.

<sup>168</sup> Only 2 MPs did not ('The Times' 4 April 1982).

<sup>169</sup> 'The Times' 4, 7 April 1982; 'The Guardian' 5, 7 April 1982.



Once 'La Vanguardia' had presented Mrs. Thatcher's decision to readers as an act of aggression, unacceptable to the country's representatives in Parliament, steps are taken to sustain this view, despite evidence to the contrary. The results of opinion polls published in Britain are used to this end.

Thus, on April 7, the article 'Londres: opinión pública partidaria de un enfrentamiento' quotes the Opinion Research Centre poll in which 70% of those questioned agreed that the Royal Navy should be ordered to sink Argentine ships if necessary to regain the Falkland Islands<sup>170</sup>.

Un 70 por ciento de los preguntados se ha demostrado de acuerdo en que la Royal Navy mande a pique los buques de la Armada argentina si esto es necesario para recuperar las Malvinas.

On April 14<sup>171</sup>, the results of this same poll are contrasted with those of a more recent poll. In this case, however, the reporter manipulates the text and the figures published in the poll so that, despite evidence to the contrary, the discursive end is maintained.

<sup>170</sup> See also 'The Times' 16 April 1982: 'Backing for Thatcher drops a bit'.

<sup>171</sup> See 'Sólo hay dos buques argentinos en alta mar'.

Thus,

Si inmediatamente después de la invasión argentina de las Malvinas el 70% de los ciudadanos era partidario - según los sondeos de opinión- de hundir buques argentinos y de arriesgar vidas británicas si ello era necesario para recuperar las islas, ahora esa actitud sólo representa el 36%. Un 57% de los ciudadanos, aun aprobando la gestión de la crisis del Gobierno conservador, se opone a que se pongan en peligro la vida de los soldados y marineros ingleses<sup>172</sup>.

From this text, it is understood that only 36% of British people (as opposed to 70% on 7 April) favoured sinking Argentine ships and risking British lives to regain the Falklands. Of those that supported government policy (we understand, sinking ships and risking British lives to regain the Falklands) 57% were opposed to putting British personnel at risk.

To be more precise, 36% of British people were in favour of sinking Argentine ships to regain the Falklands; 36% were in favour of risking British lives to regain the Islands; and 57% were opposed to putting British personnel at risk to regain the

<sup>172</sup> See 'The Guardian', 12 April 1982; 'El País', 13 April 1982.

Islands. Clearly, according to 'La Vanguardia', a minority of the members of the public polled supported Government policy over the Falklands, and a majority opposed it.

This was not true<sup>173</sup>. According to the poll, as reported in 'The Guardian' and 'El País', a majority, not a minority, of the public (65%) was in favour of sinking Argentine ships; and of those who were prepared to put lives at risk to regain the Falklands only 26% were prepared to put as many lives at risk as were necessary (7% were prepared to risk less than 100 and 4% less than 1,000).

By adding the phrase 'y de arriesgar vidas británicas' and quoting the figures for this part of the poll as a total in association with the sinking of Argentine ships, the reporter has effectively misrepresented reality.

Clearly, this has been done in the interests of maintaining the discursive end established by the newspaper according to which support was lacking for the Government decision to take action

<sup>173</sup> 'The Guardian', 12 April 1982: '65 per cent were prepared to support sinking the Argentine Navy in order to recover the Falklands... The 1,000 respondents did not favour the loss of British life in any military engagement. Fifty-seven percent were not prepared to see any British personnel killed, but 26% accepted whatever number was necessary. Seven per cent found under 100 lives lost an acceptable figure, and 4 per cent under 1,000'.

'El País', 13 April 1982, supports these figures - 57% were against the loss of British lives in the recovery of the Falklands and 65% were in favour of sinking Argentine ships.

against Argentina in the Falklands.

On April 26 1982, when Britain attacks South Georgia, this misrepresentation is taken to the extreme where the results of the survey are substituted with results concocted by the reporter himself, again in the interests of discourse<sup>174</sup>:

Mientras que un uno por ciento apoyaba la política de fuerza de la Señora Thatcher, un 52 por ciento se mostraba contrario no obstante a arriesgar vidas de soldados británicos en el conflicto<sup>175</sup>.

In this text, virtually no-one supports Mrs. Thatcher's decision - 1%. The truth of the matter is that 79% supported her policy<sup>176</sup>. The difference between the two figures cannot be attributed to visual error in the reading or transcription of figures, or to errors in calculation (as might be the case in the report on April 14). It can only be attributed to deliberate misrepresentation of fact by the reporter in the interests of the established discourse.

<sup>174</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 26 April 1982: 'Los ingleses no sufrieron bajas'.

<sup>175</sup> See 'The Times' 26 April 1982: 'support for the Falklands policy was running at 79 per cent last week...A full 52 per cent of the survey believed that servicemen's lives should not be jeopardized compared with 41% that thought they should.'

<sup>176</sup> 'The Times' 26 April 1982.

### 6.4.3. The denial of sources to sustain the constructed reality of discourse

The sources used by newspapers to obtain their information are many and diverse. In Section 5.2.1. attention was drawn to the use made by 'La Vanguardia' of rumour, hearsay, and opinion as valid sources for constructing the reality of discourse. Use was also made of press reports appearing in foreign newspapers. Sometimes these were used to reinforce constructed reality<sup>177</sup> or, in those cases in which the information provided in the reports was at variance with what was 'known' to 'La Vanguardia' and its readers, the source, and the information it provided, were rejected as unreliable.

Thus, when Mr. Haig returns to Washington (12 April 1982) after the breakdown of his first round of talks between Buenos Aires and London, rather than accept the fact that Argentina might have rejected the terms of the agreement under discussion<sup>178</sup> (that Argentina should reject a proposal for a peaceful solution to the dispute would have contradicted the image presented of Argentina as a peace-loving nation) 'La Vanguardia' prefers to fault the information made available

<sup>177</sup> An example may be found in Section 6.4.1 (iii).

<sup>178</sup> See Section 6.4.1. (ii): 'se sabe que la vía diplomática ha quedado temporalmente bloqueada por la negativa argentina a aceptar las solución propuesta por Haig'.

about the terms of the agreement since, it says, they are based on sources that are unreliable<sup>179</sup>:

- (i) Para ser más precisos la misma fórmula de acuerdo puede ser puesta en duda ya que es el resultado de "filtraciones" y no está respaldada por confirmación ninguna ('La Vanguardia' 14 April 1982).

So, too, when 'The Times' publishes a report entitled 'Falklands invaders go begging for food'<sup>180</sup>, the source, and the information provided, are disqualified rather than admit Argentina's inability to keep her troops supplied<sup>181</sup>:

- (ii) Para subrayar que este bloqueo<sup>182</sup>, contrarrestado en parte por Argentina con un puente aéreo con las

<sup>179</sup> See 'The Times' 14 April 1982: 'According to Argentine press reports, it was turned down by the Junta in Buenos Aires'; 'El País' 14 April 1982: 'Haig habló telefónicamente...con...Nicanor Costa Méndez, y le presentó la propuesta, que fue rechazada rotundamente por el Gobierno de Buenos Aires. Estos detalles fueron revelados por una fuente militar a la agencia argentina DYN y un portavoz oficial se negó a confirmarlos o desmentirlos'; 'The Guardian' 14 April 1982: 'The rejection by the Foreign Minister, Nicanor Costa Mendez... was widely supported in Government quarters and the Argentine press yesterday because the formula offered by Mr. Haig late on Monday was seen as "a pro-British plot"'.

<sup>180</sup> 'The Times' 16 April 1982, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> One of the main arguments against Britain undertaking action in the South Atlantic was the logistic difficulties involved in keeping her troops supplied 13000 kms from base, while the Falklands were only 700 kms away from Argentina.

<sup>182</sup> The Maritime Exclusion Zone declared by Britain on 7 April 1982, which came into effect 12 April 1982.

islas, comienza a surtir efecto, se difundieron ayer noticias en esta capital según las cuales los soldados argentinos de la fuerza invasora llaman a las puertas de los habitantes de la colonia para pedir comida. Tales informaciones también aseguran que los soldados argentinos, impulsados por el hambre, han comenzado a matar corderos. No obstante, hay que colocar un interrogante ante tales informaciones ya que proceden por vía indirecta de un grupo de 36 isleños expulsados por las autoridades argentinas y llegados el jueves por la noche a Londres. Si la vía es indirecta es debido a que las autoridades británicas impidieron que los periodistas entraran en contacto con los recién llegados. Esta actitud es la que permite dudar de la veracidad de estas informaciones ('La Vanguardia' 17 April 1982)<sup>183</sup>.

<sup>183</sup> 'The Guardian' 16 April 1982: "The Falkland Islanders are feeding starving Argentinian troops begging for food on their doorsteps", Mr. Dick Baker, the expelled deputy governor said yesterday when he arrived back at Gatwick airport. But the remaining 28 passengers on the flight were silent when questioned about this by waiting reporters'. 'The Times' 16 April 1982: 'Mr. Dick Baker, the expelled Chief Secretary of the Falklands, said yesterday when he arrived in Britain that Argentine soldiers on the islands were so hungry they had taken to begging for food...The islanders were interviewed by Foreign Office officials for three hours. Most of them left the airport by a side exit to avoid waiting journalists outside the immigration section'. 'El País' 17 de abril 1982: 'Dick Barker, gobernador adjunto británico "deportado" de las Malvinas, declaró el jueves a su regreso a Londres que los soldados argentinos, cuyo comportamiento había sido correcto, habían mendigado comida entre la población local. Barker llegó acompañado de 35 habitantes de las islas, que informaron a la Administración británica de lo que allí habían visto. No hablaron sin embargo con los periodistas'.

## 7. TRANSLATION



## 7. TRANSLATION

### 7.1. Introduction

The reporting of the Falklands crisis by the Spanish press included reports from correspondents in America, Argentina and London, as well as information gleaned from the international press. A comparison was made of the reporting, in Spanish, of sources of information originating in the English language to determine the role of translation in shaping a reader's view of events.

Signs, it should be remembered, differ in significance according to their relations with other signs in a sign system. Meaning is made possible by the relationship between the signs and the social circumstances in which the signs are uttered. Clearly, it follows that if the social circumstances in which signs are uttered change, their meaning/significance changes accordingly.

In Section 1, attention was drawn to an example of the effects of cross-cultural transfer on meaning when the word/sign 'Malvinas' (normally used in countries that were not included in the British sphere of influence) was used by President Reagan in a telephone conversation with General Galtieri to refer to the Islands at the centre of the dispute between the

United Kingdom and Argentina.

The fact that the sign was used outside its normal social context conferred particular significance upon it, i.e., that the United States was implicitly supportive of Argentina's claims.

In order to determine the role of translation in shaping readers' view of events, an analysis was made of the translation of signs to determine the extent to which meaning was affected by cross-cultural transfer (the meaning of the original text in English changed when represented in Spanish); the use of signs that are culture-specific to Spanish; mistranslation; and misrepresentation. Given that 'La Vanguardia' provided the author with the clearest examples of how interpretation shaped a reader's view of events, particular attention was given to the translation of terms in this newspaper.

## 7.2. Cross-cultural transfer

### 7.2.1. 'Humiliation', 'honour': 'humillación', 'honor'

After the news broke of the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, both 'The Times' and 'The Guardian' report a feeling

of what Lord Carrington describes as 'great national humiliation':

There is a sense of humiliation among Conservative MPs that a Government which came to power with a commitment to strengthen the nation's defence policy could not prevent the invasion of one of its few remaining overseas territories ('The Times' 3 April 1982).

In the words of Denis Healey, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, the 'humiliating' experiences Britain had had over the last week were 'the failure not only of foreign policy but also defence policy' ('The Times' 6 April 1982).

It is clear, therefore, that 'humiliation', as understood by the British public, is the uncomfortable feeling one has when a job is badly done and people's respect is lost. The Falklands invasion evidenced the Government's failure to meet its political and moral obligations towards its citizens abroad.

As a result, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, resigned from his post: 'It was the honourable thing to do' ('The Times' 6 April 1982) - 'honourable' in this context being synonymous with conferring respect, dignity. Having lost people's respect

as a result of the humiliation suffered in the wake of the invasion of the Falklands, this respect is restored by Lord Carrington resigning. In so doing national self-respect was also restored as a new Foreign Secretary was appointed.

'La Vanguardia' translates the English 'humiliation' by the Spanish 'humillación'. However, in doing so, it confers upon it a completely different meaning as it assumes social/cultural connotations that are not present in the English original: 'la fulgurante ocupación de las Malvinas ha supuesto una humillación para el orgullo nacional británico' (4 April 1982).

By contrasting 'humillación' with 'orgullo', the reporter effectively establishes terms of reference for these words that are specific to the Roman Catholic Church<sup>184</sup> and it is this context that confers upon them their significance. 'Humillación' is the bringing low of those guilty of the sin of pride: 'el viejo león británico no puede quedarse con la humillación (esta es la palabra que suena en Londres) de que un país sudamericano le pise la cola' (6 April 1982).

As a bull-fighting nation, further connotations for the Spanish reading public are to be found in the 'fiesta' in association

<sup>184</sup> See Section 3.2.1.

with the moment in which the bull 'humilla' - lowers his head in front of the bull-fighter - acknowledging defeat: 'humillación...la impotencia ante la "insolencia" argentina' (6 April 1982). The reference to 'insolencia' brings to mind the attitude of bull-fighters as they challenge bulls to charge.

The use of 'honor' in 'La Vanguardia' does not correspond to the English use of its homonym<sup>185</sup>. 'Honour' in English is a matter of being true to one's word. Lord Carrington's resignation was a question of honour - he had not been able to keep his word as Minister accountable to the nation to defend British territory in the Falklands. 'Honor', however, in Spanish has to do with one's good name, having one's good name stained/wiping off the stain on one's name/reputation, traditionally, seventeenth century style, by challenging the offender to a duel/fight to the death.

General Galtieri refers to Argentina's situation in the Falklands in the following way: 'Hemos recuperado salvaguardando el honor nacional.. las islas australes' (3

<sup>185</sup> The difference between the two concepts is made clear in the following references from 'El País' 6 April 1982: '..si la crisis no es pronto resuelta de una forma honorable para el gobierno británico', in other words, in a way in which Britain may be seen to keep her word to the Falklanders, and 'La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982: 'a favor de una salida honrosa de los argentinos', where the Argentinians' good name will be preserved.

April 1982); and sovereignty is not negotiable : 'el honor y dignidad nacional no son negociables' (11 April 1982). Britain, on the other hand, closes ranks 'en defensa del malherido honor nacional (4 April 1982) and Mrs. Thatcher, despite the fact that General Galtieri assures her that he has said 'ni una palabra que ultrajara su honor o reputación', seeks to satisfy her 'honor herido'. Clearly, as far as 'La Vanguardia' is concerned 'hay más honor en litigio que otra cosa'(6 April 1982).

Given the cultural significance of the sign 'honor', a logical consequence, as far as 'La Vanguardia' readers are concerned, is that war is inevitable: 'los primeros enfrentamientos navales anglo-argentinos podrán registrarse a partir del 28 de abril' ( 7 April 1982).

### 7.2.2 'The Iron Lady': 'la dama de hierro'

The prime minister has received a sobriquet as the Iron Lady. It arose in the context of remarks she made about our defence against the Soviet Union and its allies. In the next week or two the house, the nation and the prime minister herself would learn

of what metal she was ('The Times' 4 April 1982)<sup>186</sup>.

Enoch Powell,... sostuvo que esta será la ocasión para saber "de qué metal está hecha la Señora Thatcher" (denominada como se sabe, "la dama de hierro") ('La Vanguardia'/'El País' 4 April 1982).

The occasion on which these words were uttered was during the emergency debate in the House of Commons held on Saturday, April 3, after the Government had announced the preparation of a naval task force to be sent to the Falklands to recover the Islands.

Either as a result of the misrepresentation of the homonym 'mettle' ('to show your mettle' = show that you are capable of doing something well when tested or challenged), or their unawareness of the play on words 'mettle': 'metal' (referring at once to Mrs. Thatcher's sobriquet as 'the Iron Lady'<sup>187</sup> and her ability to face up to a challenge), the British reporters effectively limit the meaning of the sign 'metal' to

<sup>186</sup>'The Guardian' 4 April 1982: 'of what metal she was made'.

<sup>187</sup> Mrs. Thatcher had shown an iron will and determination in implementing unpopular economic policies and defence cuts in Britain; in allowing IRA hunger strikers to die rather than give in to their demands; and in taking a strong line in foreign policy against the Soviet Union.

that of 'a hard substance' and 'La Vanguardia' and 'El País' translate the text into its word-for-word equivalent in Spanish: 'de qué metal está hecha la Señora Thatcher'.

Since it makes no sense to the Spanish readers to ask what metal a person is made of, 'La Vanguardia's reporter solves the problem by providing additional information to clarify the point - 'denominada como se sabe, "la dama de hierro"'.

The shortcomings of cross-cultural transfer are evident as it is impossible to represent the play on words mettle: metal, and moreover the socio-cultural connotations of 'Iron' ('the Iron Duke'<sup>188</sup>/'the Iron Lady') are lost. Effectively emptied of its cultural content, the value of the sign 'dama de hierro' is conferred upon it by 'La Vanguardia' through its use in the sign system selected by the newspaper. Thus, it is 'la dama de hierro' who 'lleva adelante su proyecto de recuperar militarmente las islas' (4 April 1982), and when called upon to resign after the invasion, 'contestó secamente "No, lo que hace falta ahora es fuerza y resolución"' (6 April 1982). When Mrs. Thatcher sent the task force to the Falklands, MPs supported 'la firmeza de "la dama de hierro"' (15 April 1982).

<sup>188</sup> The Duke of Wellington.



Significance is thus conferred by 'La Vanguardia' on the sign 'la dama de hierro' consonant with attributes of 'fuerza', 'resolución', 'firmeza'.

### 7.2.3. 'Jingoism': 'el espíritu victoriano'

During the Parliamentary debate, 7 April 1982, Mr. James Callaghan, in a call for moderation in Britain's reaction to the news of Argentina's invasion of the Falklands, stated that:

It was the responsibility of MPs to put jingoism on one side. Britain must do her best to secure peace with honour ('The Times' 8 April 1982).

A word closely associated with the spirit of colonial conquest and charged with cultural significance for the British, 'La Vanguardia' makes no attempt either to translate the term 'jingoism'<sup>189</sup> (there is no equivalent in Spanish) or to confer upon it any significance of its own, as in 'la dama de hierro'. Instead, significance is established through reference to 'el espíritu victoriano' - the British Empire having reached

<sup>189</sup>Oxford Concise Dictionary: 'jingoism - an attitude of belligerent nationalism'.

its period of maximum splendour under Queen Victoria<sup>190</sup>. Labour MPs are quoted in 'La Vanguardia' as stating that the dispatch of the naval task force to the Falklands 'no debe estar inspirada en el "espíritu victoriano"' ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982) thereby giving readers to understand the action of sending the fleet to the Falklands in terms of aggression and imperialist expansionism.

#### 7.2.4. Britannia rules the waves?

¿Britannia, rules the waves? Recordando el secular himno 'Britannia rules the waves' es hora de preguntarse si realmente Gran Bretaña sigue dueña de los mares ('La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982).

This cultural reference is unique to 'La Vanguardia'. The reporter, within the context of the send-off given to the naval task force as it leaves for the Falklands, quotes the title of a patriotic song 'Britannia Rules the Waves'. The words of the

<sup>190</sup> 'El País' 8 April 1982, however gives a lengthy explanation of the term: 'Por Jingo, no queremos guerra pero si hace falta...El refrán de esta canción, popularizada en 1877 cuando la escuadra británica del Mediterráneo partió hacia Gallipoli para disuadir los rusos de ocupar Constantinopla, está en la boca de todos. El nombre de la legendaria emperatriz de Japón en el siglo III, Jingo, vuelve a la actualidad cargado de patriotismo agresivo y xenofobia.'

song pay tribute to Britain's prowess as a colonial power and a maritime nation during the time of the British Empire.

No attempt is made to translate the title, which, when incorporated into the Spanish text, is emptied of significance. The reporter instead proceeds to confer significance upon the sign by modifying it through the use of punctuation. By adding a comma and a question mark he converts a statement into a rhetorical question<sup>191</sup> (in grammatically correct English: 'Does Britannia rule the waves?'). For those who might not be conversant with the English language, the question is rephrased in Spanish<sup>192</sup>.

From the above examples, it is clear that the cross-cultural transfer of signs brings with it the loss of, or the acquisition of, significance as the socio-cultural factors which confer significance on signs vary.

In 7.2.1. significance is conferred on the signs 'honour' and 'humiliation' that were not present in the English original.

<sup>191</sup> This is an example of what might be termed 'Spanglish' - perfectly understandable to Spanish readers with a minimum knowledge of English. The punctuation and words are English, the syntax Spanish. The grammatical error made is common amongst Spanish learners of English.

<sup>192</sup> However, the translation is effective for any Spaniard with a modicum of English (and it is a known fact that this is the case of many) who can translate the question literally and can understand the issue at stake.

'La Vanguardia' readers view the situation after the Argentine invasion of the Falklands as one in which Argentina, albeit unexpectedly, has taken the initiative and triumphed. This accounts for the feeling of 'humillación' amongst the British.

Being a proud nation, however, it is only to be expected that they should retaliate, to wash the stain from their reputation. The concept of 'orgullo' and 'honor' in Spanish would lead 'La Vanguardia' readers to accept conflict as inevitable: 'si se llegara a la fatalidad de que la escuadra inglesa disparara' ('La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982).

In 7.2.2. and 7.2.4., the signs transferred lose their cultural significance but are provided with new significance by the reporter. Connotations of aggressiveness, single-mindedness and inflexibility are conferred upon 'la dama de hierro', while a question mark is placed over Britain's ability to effectively defend her territories abroad.

In 7.2.3., historical reference to 'el espíritu victoriano' places the crisis within the context of nineteenth century British imperialism.

### 7.3. Culturally significant terms in Spanish

#### 7.3.1. 'Gran Bretaña'

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the correct term of reference to the country termed as 'Gran Bretaña' by 'La Vanguardia'<sup>193</sup>.

The use of the sign 'Gran Bretaña' may be interpreted as ironic, given the fact that the sign-system established is one in which Britain's 'greatness' is queried (Britain has been brought low by the Argentine invasion, and the ability of the Royal Navy to recover the Islands has been questioned).

Cultural connotations, specific to Spanish-speakers, however, are also attached to the sign 'Gran Bretaña', given its use as an insult - 'hijo de Gran Bretaña' - dating from the time when Spain and England were sworn enemies on the high seas. References to the British as 'piratas'<sup>194</sup> would bring these connotations to mind: 'En Plaza de Mayo, frente a la casa de Gobierno, se congregaron numerosas personas entonando el himno nacional y, refiriéndose a los británicos, se oían estribillos

<sup>193</sup> 'El País' uses most frequently the term 'Reino Unido'.

<sup>194</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 3, 15 April 1982.

mencionando a los "piratas" ('La Vanguardia' 3 April 1982). This interpretation would also be supported by the discursive end since Britain was accused of the 'usurpación' of the Falklands 150 years before.

### 7.3.2. 'Escuadra'

As both Britain and Spain are traditionally sea-faring nations, each a colonial power in its own right, the English and Spanish languages are replete with words to refer to groups of ships on the move, words that are differentiated by the size of the groupings, the purpose for which the ships are commissioned, and the historical context in which these actions take place.

An analysis of the terms used in 'La Vanguardia' to refer to 'the naval task force'<sup>195</sup>, reveals the use of many different terms: 'fuerza naval' 'Royal Navy', 'flota', 'escuadra', 'armada' 'marina'.

This may be attributed to a problem of style. However, it is worth pointing out that there is a differentiation between the

<sup>195</sup> 'El País' regularly uses the terms: 'el Royal Navy'; 'un destacamento naval'.

use of terms depending on the stage of development of events<sup>196</sup>.

The term 'escuadra' is used to refer to the naval expedition in terms of the action it is expected to take when it arrives in the South Atlantic: '¿Qué hará ahora la escuadra británica?' (6 April 1982). It will, it is presumed, 'establecer un rígido bloqueo de los accesos del puerto de Buenos Aires' or 'que ataque y desaloje algunas de las islas' (8 April 1982).

The sign in Spanish has historical connotations associated with nineteenth century territorial expansionism and colonialism. Repeated reference is made the naval task force in terms of 'la escuadra británica' since it is established early on by 'La Vanguardia' that its sailing is: 'una auténtica expedición colonial en pleno siglo XX'; 'la expedición de una gran escuadra' (4 April 1982) within the context of 'un conflicto que tiene más del siglo XIX que de finales del siglo XX' (8 April 1982). The autonomy of the discourse is shaped by the concept of nineteenth century imperialism to such an extent that readers are invited to consider what will happen 'en el

<sup>196</sup> Thus when Mrs. Thatcher announces the preparation of a naval task force to be sent to the Falklands, this is translated as 'fuerza naval' (7 April 1982). Mrs. Thatcher's decision to send the task force is viewed by 'La Vanguardia' as an act of aggression against Argentina - 'fuerza naval' emphasizes the idea of force. On its way to the Falklands, the task force was referred to as 'Royal Navy' or 'flota'.

momento que la escuadra disparara el primer cañon contra las Malvinas o contra las costas argentinas' (8 April 1982) - an unlikely occurrence in the twentieth century.

The use of this term encourages readers to interpret Britain's actions in sending the task force, as an act of aggression, multiplied up through its association with nineteenth century colonial conquest.

The term is also culturally significant for Spaniards since it is associated with the loss of Spain's last colonies overseas<sup>197</sup>, an event that caused much debate amongst Spanish intellectuals at the time<sup>198</sup>. As far as 'La Vanguardia' was concerned, the loss of the Falklands was a 'fait accompli'. Having lost one of her last colonies overseas, it was time now for Britain to stop and consider whether she continued to be the power she used to be.

<sup>197</sup>Spain lost Cuba and the Phillipines to the United States at the turn of the century.

<sup>198</sup> Known as 'la generación del 98'.



## 7.4. Mistranslation

### 7.4.1. 'kitbag': 'mochila'

When Alexander Haig arrives in London to begin consultations with the British government in an attempt to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the dispute in the Falklands, he is quoted as: 'not carrying any approved American solutions to the dispute in his kitbag'<sup>199</sup> ('The Times' 10 April 1982).

A knowledge of the English language would have indicated that 'kitbag' is used only in military circles, and general knowledge has it that before becoming Secretary of State of the United States, Alexander Haig was the Head of the Armed Forces in Europe - General Alexander Haig.

The reporter, unaware of the significance of this sign for English speakers, translates the text as '"No traigo ninguna solución en mi mochila" declaró'<sup>200</sup>. This translation substitutes one culturally significant sign with another which is associated with rambling and country walks. The unfortunate

<sup>199</sup> The translation of the same term in Spanish is 'petate'.

<sup>200</sup> 'El País' 9 April 1982: 'El propio Haig declaró que "no traía en el bolsillo ninguna solución aprobada por los Estados Unidos"'.

consequence of the use of this sign was to belittle the importance of the mission about to be undertaken by Mr. Haig.

#### 7.5. Misrepresentation.

In the face of opposition calls to resign after the Argentine invasion of the Falklands, Mrs. Thatcher refuses to do so, pointing out that: 'This is the time for resolution, not resignation' ('The Times' 7 April 1982). In English, this affirmation is illustrative of the determination and iron will characteristic of Mrs. Thatcher when faced with a challenge<sup>201</sup>.

This sentence is translated in 'La Vanguardia' 7 April 1982 as: 'No, lo que hace falta ahora es fuerza y resolución'. Within the context in which it appeared - sending the task force to the Falklands - the translation of 'resignation' by 'fuerza' must be attributed to a conscious effort on the part of the reporter to reinforce the fact that Mrs. Thatcher was, by sending the fleet, using force<sup>202</sup>.

<sup>201</sup> See Section 1. 1.

<sup>202</sup> When Mrs. Thatcher announces the preparation of a task force to be sent to the Falklands, this is translated as 'fuerza naval' (7 April 1982).

It can only be assumed that the substitution of the English term by another which was not its equivalent in Spanish was the result of linguistic choice and that this choice was determined by the discursive end established by the newspaper. 'Fuerza' here assumes the value of 'force', synonymous with aggression, which is how 'La Vanguardia' views the dispatch of the task force.

An analysis of the examples of translation dealt with in this section shows that significance is conferred upon the signs used in translating terms from English into Spanish by the discursive end established in 'La Vanguardia'.

Having established that Argentina's recovery of the Falkland Islands was legitimate and that Britain's decision to send the task force to the Islands was the 'beginnings of aggression', the view of events in the Falklands presented by 'La Vanguardia' is shaped by the evocation of a colonial, imperialist scenario in which Britain is about to wrest one more territory from its legitimate sovereign. Translation serves to support this end.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

## B. CONCLUSIONS

A comparison was made of press coverage of the Falklands War in four quality newspapers - two British newspapers ('The Times' and 'The Guardian') and two Spanish newspapers ('La Vanguardia' and 'El País') - in order to test the author's hypothesis that the press shapes a reader's view of world events, that this view varies between newspapers and that the role of translation and, in particular, interpretation, is instrumental in shaping that view.

A first approach to establishing the possible existence of differences in the way 'it' - the Falklands crisis - was reported in each of the four newspapers under study was made through the analysis of the noun phrases used in the headlines of articles (1-30 April 1982). This was done on the assumption that headlines usually constitute a synthesis of the contents of the article that follows. It was found that each of the four newspapers used noun phrases referring to the Falkland crisis in different ways, thus indicating four different approaches to the reporting of events.

In 'La Vanguardia' these differences indicated a more culturally-biased and emotionally-involved approach to the reporting of events ('el Gibraltar argentino'); in 'El País',

a more dynamic, factual approach, fore-grounding the agents and actions involved in developing events; in 'The Times', a more factual approach, reporting events taking place in a particular part of the world ('Falklands crisis'); and in 'The Guardian', a more politically sensitive approach, presenting events in terms of, and as a continuum of, an earlier crisis ('The Falklands crisis').

The subsequent analysis of newspaper reports corresponding to one day's reporting (3 April 1982) and to one week's reporting (1-7 April 1982) confirmed the results of the initial analysis. Clear differences were found among the orientations (preferred meaning/discursive end) given to events by each newspaper, each differentiating itself along the same lines as indicated in the first analysis<sup>203</sup>.

'La Vanguardia' viewed Argentina's invasion of the Falklands as justified, given that, according to the newspaper, sovereignty was unlawfully wrested from her in the first place, by Britain, 150 years before. Having recovered her sovereignty 'de facto', Britain's decision to recover the Islands is,

<sup>203</sup> 'The Guardian' 7 April 1982 testifies to the different views presented by newspapers in Britain, as expressed in leaders: 'Fighting words fill the columns': 'the editorial writers of the British press have responded to the Falklands crisis by producing a wide spectrum of opinions and recommendations, ranging from angry endorsement to trenchant criticism of the military option.'

therefore, viewed as 'the beginnings of aggression'. Deep-seated anti-colonial sentiments are appealed to as Britain's determination to recover the Islands is interpreted as a twentieth century version of nineteenth century colonial conquest. The issue at stake is made sense of in terms of 'el Gibraltar argentino' thereby compounding anti-colonial sentiment with more specific anti-British feelings amongst the Spanish population, since Spanish claims to sovereignty over Gibraltar had been the corner-stone of foreign policy for 40 years under the dictatorship of General Franco. Despite the fact that the newspaper's view of events was contrary to that of the international community<sup>204</sup>, and the Spanish government itself<sup>205</sup>, the discursive end established at the outset was maintained throughout the period under study.

As far as 'El País' was concerned, the Argentine invasion of the Falklands was totally unjustified. Whether or not her claim to sovereignty over the Islands was legitimate, the use of force to assert that claim was not. Making sense of the Falklands crisis in terms of the Argentine-Chilean dispute over the Beagle Channel, Argentina is shown to have repeatedly

<sup>204</sup>As stated in UN Resolution 502.

<sup>205</sup> See the Government's official statement in 'La Vanguardia' and 'El País' 3 April 1982. It should be remembered that in the Security Council vote, Spain abstained from voting ('La Vanguardia' 6 April 1982).

placed herself above the law, first, by refusing to recognise international boundaries with Chile, and second, by refusing to accept the results of international arbitration in the dispute over those boundaries. As a result of this attitude, both countries had been brought to the brink of war in 1980. The discursive end established is one in which Argentina's use of force in asserting her claim to sovereignty is condemned and Britain's right to self-defence is recognised.

'The Times' views the Argentine invasion of the Falklands as an instance of 'naked aggression' which must not go unanswered. Despite on-going negotiations to find a solution to the problem of sovereignty, and despite repeated appeals from the President of the Security Council, the General Secretary of the United Nations and the President of the United States to exercise restraint, Argentina chose to violate the principles of international law and consensus. She must either recant, thus returning to within the boundaries of consensus<sup>206</sup> or, if not, she should be made to do so. The discursive end established is that the violation of international law must be answered and the dictates of international law and consensus enforced, if need be, through the use of force.

<sup>206</sup> She must accept the terms of UN Resolution 502 thus reestablishing the status quo pre-3 April 1982.



While recognising that Argentina's invasion of the Falklands had contravened the dictates of international law and consensus and that the crisis provoked had to be solved in accordance with those dictates, the discursive end established by 'The Guardian' is one in which the Government's insistence on the recovery of the Islands is queried and the use of force at the outset to defend Britain's legitimate right to self-defence is rejected in favour, instead, of a negotiated solution through the use of international diplomacy.

Of the four newspapers studied, three coincided in understanding the Falklands crisis in terms of the result of a violation of international law and consensus - 'El País', 'The Times' and 'The Guardian'. Within the overall consensus, each differs from the other in the importance given to certain aspects of the dispute. While recognising the basis for Argentina's claim to sovereignty, 'El País' advocated settlement of the dispute within the framework of international institutions; 'The Times' confirmed Britain's sovereignty over the Islands and her right to defend her territory, by force if necessary; 'The Guardian' queried whether or not British sovereignty should be retained, renouncing the use of force in favour of international diplomacy as a means to finding a solution to the problem.

These differences in orientation (the terms in which the newspapers chose to explain events to readers) were maintained throughout the period under study. A process of selection and transformation of information served to support and reinforce the discursive end established at the outset.

Only one newspaper placed itself outside the overall consensus - 'La Vanguardia'. By supporting Argentine claims to sovereignty and the use of force in asserting her claims, 'La Vanguardia' effectively rejected, along with Argentina, the dictates of international law and consensus, reinforced on April 4 1982 by the mandatory terms of UN Resolution 502. For this reason attention was focused on 'La Vanguardia' in an extended analysis of the way in which it presented events to readers as it provided an exceptional example to illustrate the hypotheses outlined.

As was the case in the other three newspapers, the discursive end established by the newspaper at the outset of the event was maintained throughout the duration of the crisis. There was, however, one significant difference - in the case of 'La Vanguardia' the discursive end established by the newspaper was later invalidated by events (the passing of UN Resolution 502 meant that the Argentine invasion was not justified and that Argentina's sovereignty 'de facto' over the Falklands could

not, and would not, be recognised). Despite this fact, its original orientation on events was maintained.

Given that the view of events presented to readers no longer corresponded to objective reality (as represented in the other three newspapers) but to a reality unique to 'La Vanguardia', an analysis was made to determine the techniques used to sustain this reality.

It was found that the role of common knowledge (knowledge shared by the newspaper and its readers), together with a process of constant recall of this knowledge through the use of brackets, imperatives and formulaic expressions, would lead readers to assume as factual knowledge what was in fact the discursive end established by the newspaper.

As events developed, the framework established by discourse determined which news items were included for presentation. Consequently, if they did not fit into the pre-established discursive framework they were filtered out. In those cases in which the 'fit' was not exact, reports were dove-tailed, or in more extreme cases, modified, to suit the dictates of discourse. In such cases facts were misrepresented or distorted for the sole purpose of sustaining the reality of the pre-established discourse.

Ultimately the autonomy of discourse was such that an instance arose of a news item being published that was the product of, and was entirely justified by, the discursive end established - in fact, since none of the other newspapers carried the same news item, it could safely be assumed to be a 'construction of reality' unique to 'La Vanguardia'<sup>207</sup>.

Translation was seen to confirm and reinforce the reality of discourse. Words which were translated from English to Spanish either assumed cultural significance which was not present in the original ('humillación'; 'honor') but which served the dictates of discourse, or were emptied of their cultural significance and provided with new significance within the context of this pre-established discourse. Culturally significant terms in Spanish were used to interpret the situation as viewed by 'La Vanguardia' and in accordance with the dictates of discourse also.

It may therefore be concluded that the results of the case study carried out confirm the author's initial hypothesis that the press tends to shape readers' views of world events, that each newspaper's view is different and that both translation and interpretation play a key role in the shaping of the view

<sup>207</sup> 'La Vanguardia' 9-10 April 1982: 'La fórmula del bloqueo no es fácil'

presented.

As a final reflexion, and in view of the results obtained in this study, the author would like to draw attention to the role of reporters of international events as mediators between the reader and reality.

Reporters are fully aware of the press's two-way role in society. It not only reflects public opinion: 'la transcripción de los comentarios periodísticos españoles compensa la actitud oficial porque revelan simpatía y adhesión por parte de la opinión de la península' ('La Vanguardia' 4 April 1982) but it also leads public opinion: 'los comentaristas reconocen que la prensa - y citan a 'la Vanguardia' - haya adoptado una actitud amistosa y comprensiva' ('La Vanguardia' 8 April 1982). Depending upon the forcefulness with which it is led, public opinion may be swayed both at home: 'el clima de preparativos bélicos...se está adueñando de Gran Bretaña. A ello contribuyen los diarios sensacionalistas que tanta difusión tienen en este país' (La Vanguardia' 7 April 1982) and abroad: 'los medios de comunicación londinenses han comenzado una campaña al unísono en pro de una actitud norteamericana menos neutral y más favorable a los intereses británicos' ('La Vanguardia' 16 April 1982); 'la prensa soviética... una campaña de prensa de doble objetivo, mostrar la debilidad del gabinete

conservador y sembrar cizaña en las relaciones entre Washington y Buenos Aires'.

Given the role of translation and interpretation in the reporting of the Falklands crisis in 'La Vanguardia' and the fact that newspaper reports were believed to have prompted Argentina to preempt British action in South Georgia by invading the Falklands<sup>208</sup>, and to reject Alexander Haig's mediation in favour of UN mediation as a result of a 'mendacious' press leak<sup>209</sup>, sufficient emphasis cannot be laid on the need for unbiased factual representation of reality where international peace and understanding is at stake. Reporters of international events must be made more aware of their responsibilities in this field given the effect their reporting may have on decision-makers in other countries:

<sup>208</sup> Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 76-79. On the basis of Spanish and British press reports, the Argentine Government's assessment on the eve of the invasion concluded that the British task force had left as early as 24 March 1982.

<sup>209</sup> On 13 April 1982, the 'Washington Post' reported that the United States was supporting Britain's efforts through the provision of satellite communication links, weather forecasts, intelligence and jet fuel. This report was commented in 'The Times' 14 April 1982: 'Reagan embarrassed by leaks on aid' and in 'La Vanguardia' 14-16 April 1982. According to Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (op. cit., p.191) 'Alexander Haig appears to have been satisfied that the story was inaccurate but complained that: "My day in Washington which I had hoped to devote to a fresh examination of the Falklands crisis and other acute problems, was spent instead in trying to convince an outraged and deeply nervous Argentina that the U.S. government was telling the truth and that my return to Buenos Aires should not be cancelled as the result of a mischievous press report based on a mendacious leak. Finally I succeeded, but it was an arduous process. In addition to being the enemy of results, leaking is the thief of time".

The President...initially appeared to confirm reports that the Soviet Union was providing military intelligence to Argentina. "That has been reported and evidently been established", he said, adding "I would like to see them (the Russians) butt out". Later, however, he appeared to back off: "I only know what I have heard and read" ('The Times' 14 April 1982).

The language of diplomacy is the language of signs and signals. There was no doubt that the misinterpretation of signs during the Falklands crisis, particularly at the outset of the crisis<sup>210</sup>, led to rising tension and thereafter to conflict<sup>211</sup>. Given the cultural and ideological significance of language, it is vital that reporters - and indeed all those involved in the task of promoting international cooperation and understanding, translators and interpreters alike - should have an in-depth knowledge of the language, culture, and society of the country from which they obtain their source material in order to avoid misunderstandings that may result from cross-cultural transfer. They should also be aware of the effect on readers of the use of culturally significant terms in their own

<sup>210</sup> 'The Guardian' 2 April 1982: "Islands dispute" near solution'.

<sup>211</sup> Freedman and Gamba-Stonhouse, op. cit., pp.98-99.

language that may cause situations to be interpreted erroneously.

Further analysis of the reporting of the Falklands crisis remains to be done. The same methodology applied in this study could be applied to comparing the treatment of the event in other international newspapers, or in the Spanish national press, given the traditional diversity of opinions between regions in Spain. The differences noted by the author in the role of translation and interpretation in 'El País' and 'La Vanguardia' would be a topic of interest. The fact that, at the time of the Falklands crisis, 'El País' was published only in Madrid, and 'La Vanguardia' in Barcelona may be a differentiating factor, but it is also significant that 'El País' reporters took the lead amongst Spanish reporters by ascribing, in 1981, to a professional code of conduct unifying criteria on the style and manner of reporting events.

Finally, the author hopes to have demonstrated that there exists a challenge to continue research in the field of press reports on international events. The Gulf War and recent events in the former Yugoslavia today would indicate that there is ample opportunity, and indeed a need, for work to be done in this area so that the different views of international events presented to different communities may increasingly converge,



thereby contributing to a greater understanding between the peoples of the world.

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