

UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y EDUCACIÓN
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS MODERNOS

MI EXPERIENCIA COMO TRADUCTOR EN EL MUSEO DE CIENCIA Y
TECNOLOGÍA

Denny Ramón Quintero Bravo

MÉRIDA, octubre 2013

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MY EXPERIENCE AS A TRANSLATOR AT THE SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM

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Informe final de Pasantías presentado por el Br. Denny Ramón Quintero Bravo como requisito parcial para optar al título de Licenciado en Idiomas Modernos

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Título del Informe: My experience as a translator at the Science and Technology Museum

Identificación de la Institución Sede:

- Organismo: Museo de Ciencia y Tecnología
- Departamento o Unidad: Gerencia de Áreas Temáticas
- Dirección: Boulevard 5 Águilas Blancas, Urb. Las Tapias, Mérida.

Nombre y Apellido de la(s) Responsable(s) Institucional:

Lic. Isabel Gasperini/ Lic. María Antonieta Rodríguez

Cargo: Gerente Áreas Temáticas/Museógrafa

Duración de las pasantías: 3 meses

- Fecha de inicio: 08 de abril de 2013
- Fecha de finalización: 28 de junio de 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	07
Profile of the Institution	10
Nature of the Internship	14
Reflection Essay	17
Conclusions	24
Recommendations	26
References	29
Appendices	30

TABLE OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix 1: Science and Technology Museum building	31
Appendix 2: Science and Technology Museum location	32
Appendix 3: Prose Translation Signage List	33

INTRODUCTION

The academic studies made by students during eight semesters in the School of Modern Languages have been an important factor in their lives to acquire knowledge that they will put into practice. After eight semesters, the students have the opportunity to participate in programs of internship in order to show everything they learn in a real context. It is also an opportunity to insert the students to the labor market.

Performing the internship in an institution different to the educational institution helps the students know and interact in the working environment. At the same time, the students have the opportunity to interact with others who do not belong directly to the university environment. Moreover, during the internship the students acquire new experiences in the different areas that involve translation.

It is important that the students may participate in the development of the activities of the organization where they were assigned as interns. The students will learn to associate everything they know at work and find the way to develop more their skill and abilities. The students have acquired knowledge day by day at the university and they will improve their knowledge in their professional life, because the learning process never ends.

In the following report, I present my experience as an intern of Modern Languages for a period of twelve weeks. In this report I will present all the

experiences I lived at the Museum of Science and Technology as a translator of scientific and technological texts from English into Spanish. Moreover, I make emphasis in the development of the translations of the different areas represented at the Museum of Science and Technology.

Initially, I introduce the profile of the institution where I worked. I describe the location where the museum operates, some relevant aspects of its institutional history, the mission, the vision and the proposed goals. I also introduce my institutional mentors in the internship and I describe the environment of work and my relationship with the staff of the institution. I also present the structure of the museum through its organization chart at the end of this section.

In the following section, Nature of the Internship, I do a description of my duties as an intern at the Museum of Science and Technology. In this part of my report I talk about the tools I used to translate, the organization to translate the articles from English to Spanish and about some problems I had to translate some information and the solution I found. Moreover, I comment through an example a way to find solutions in a specific translation problem. In addition, I tell in this section the importance of decisions making during the process of translation and, on the other hand, the importance to look an expert else to whom to turn if I do not have a clear knowledge of the topic to be translated.

In my Reflection Essay, I reflect on my positive and negative experiences in the internship and the satisfaction I had when I found solutions to translate some hard sentences from English into Spanish. I also mention some of the subjects taken during my academic studies and how useful and important they were at the moment I was working in the museum.

Finally, I present my conclusions of the report and some final recommendations to the School of Modern Languages and to the Museum of Science and Technology. In the conclusions, I summarize the activities I did as an intern in the museum and I mention all I have learnt in my work as a translator. My gratitude to the School of Modern Languages and to the Museum of Science and Technology is also shown within my conclusions, in order to make them know how important they have been in the development of my activities as an intern. In the topic of recommendations I provide some suggestions to both institutions in order to have a better performance.

PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION

The foundation of *Museo de Ciencias, Tecnología, Artes y Oficios* (MUCTAO) was established on November 11th, 1991 as an Educational Character Project. It was a resulting initiative from the program of FUNDACITE-Mérida (*Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y la Tecnología*). The original name and its acronym MUCTAO were changed by *Museo de Ciencia y Tecnología* (MUCYT) as we know it nowadays.

The MUCYT is located in a privileged physical area within the city of Mérida. The MUCYT develops around the *Laguna La Rosa*, an environmental and educational heritage of the state which contributes to the conservation and protection of the biodiversity. The area of MUCYT is 2,330 acres and its perimeter is 873,122 meters.

The building in which the museum operates was built in the grounds and facilities of the *Central Azucarero Los Andes*, (CALA) (see Appendix I), which was closed in 1978. At that time the *Central Azucarero Los Andes* belonged to the University of Los Andes (ULA). In 2000, the museum became dependent on Mérida State Government, and is part of the Direction of Education, Culture and Sports.

The mission of the Museum of Science and Technology is to promote popularization, motivation and socialization of scientific knowledge, technology and innovation through interactive learning processes in the non-formal education and the

healthy recreation, aimed at all age groups through thematic areas designed in based on the guidelines of the development of the nation.

The vision of the MUCYT is to be an interactive center of the learning of the science and technology and their application to the daily life, that is to say the dissemination of scientific and technical ideas among masses who will put in practice this knowledge in their daily life.

The goals of MUCYT presented to be developed by the personnel are:

- ✓ To supplement the formal science education in schools and colleges through non-formal educational program.
- ✓ To promote a community place to impulse the scientific and technical development of Mérida State.
- ✓ To undertake updating program on science education and at the same time encourage and cooperate the young people and non-scientists in their works.

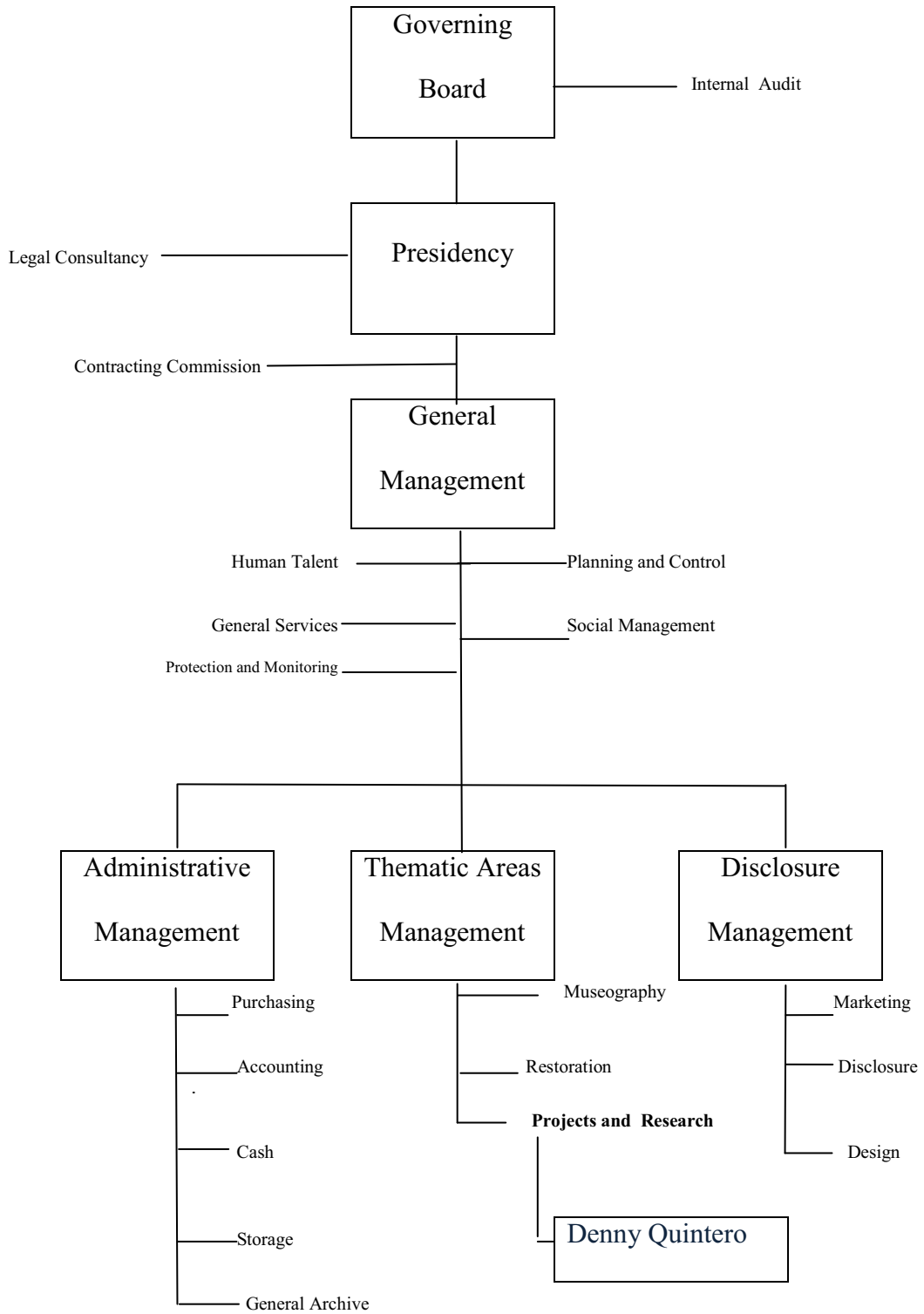
General description of MUCYT

The Science and Technology Museum is located in *Boulevard Cinco Águilas Blancas con vía Andrés Bello, Sector Central, Urbanización "Las Tapias"* (see Appendix II). It can be visited every day from 8:30 to 17:00. The entrance ticket is Bs 30 (children) and Bs 60 (adults). This museum represents a space for education and therefore, invites visitors to learn about the different areas of exhibitions.

Organization of MUCYT

In regards with the administration, the museum depends directly on the Governing Board which is responsible for the functioning of the MUCYT, and staff working in the institution. My Institutional Advisor at the beginning of my internships was Professor Isabel Gasperini, who was in charge of the Thematic Areas Management of the MUCYT. Professor Gasperini was on leave because of a problem of health and from the sixth week of my internship till the end of it became in charge of my supervision Professor María Antonieta Rodríguez.

The following organization chart illustrates the structure of the Museum and the place where I worked during the internship:



Organization Chart of Science and Technology Museum

NATURE OF THE INTERNSHIP

I started my internship on April 8th 2013 at the Thematic Areas Management during twelve weeks, thirty five hours a week. As a student of the University of Los Andes in Modern Languages, I was assigned to work on the translation of several articles from English to Spanish, in order to increase current information of the different areas of knowledge useful in the exhibitions.

From the very beginning I was warmly welcomed by the team, especially those who work in the Thematic Areas Management. The colleagues that I have worked with were very nice and helpful. Professor Isabel Gasperini, my institutional advisor showed me the facilities of the museum, especially the thematic areas of exhibition. Moreover, she told me about the mission, the vision and the proposed goals which are the basis of the Museum of Science and Technology. During the following three weeks I worked on the translation from English to Spanish of some articles about Earth Science. These articles were very important to upgrade information of the thematic area “The pulse of the planet: Earthquakes”. There was current information but only into English and I was assigned to translate it into Spanish in order to be used in the exhibitions of this thematic area.

The translation of this information is very important because in exhibitions people know more about this natural phenomenon like the earthquake and how to know preventive actions if they experience an earthquake. This information

contributes to keep people better informed about the new technologies which help to predict the occurrence of an earthquake. Translating this type of information made me feel very enthusiastic, because it is an interesting topic of general culture and an opportunity to contribute to the proliferation of current information about earthquakes. In every article I had the opportunity to translate I was able to implement an action plan which had to be followed with adequate organization: reading the complete article, detecting the complex structure of the sentences, the technical vocabulary used in the articles and at the same time I thought about the possible sources of support to find the adequate equivalent into Spanish.

Before I started my work of translation, I also looked for the elemental support tools to translate such as English-Spanish dictionaries, monolingual English dictionary, monolingual Spanish dictionary, and Internet. Through Internet I had the opportunity to have access to information related to these articles and the next articles of the different areas of knowledge which I would translate during my internship. One of the most useful tools I had through Internet was Linguee. A translation tool which provides millions of bilingual texts for words and expressions. By using Linguee I could have more security in the translation. Additionally, part of my responsibility was the production of an optimal translation of the articles that had been assigned. That is why the use of the monolingual dictionary in English or in Spanish gave me that security in the translation.

During the fifth week of my internship, I had the opportunity to work in prose translation. The reverse translation of a list of signage which would be employed by the institution in order to show the demarcation areas of the museum. At the end I cannot catalogue this list as a translation because most of the signage to be translated has an established translation (see Appendix III).

The following weeks of my internship, I had the opportunity to translate articles about other areas of knowledge such as Geological Ages. At this point the scientific name of animals and plantations was useful to find an adequate equivalent into Spanish. The names in Latin helped me to find through Internet the possible names I could use in Spanish. For example, in botanical area, a plant whose common name in English is “Dwarf Umbrella Tree” has an equivalent hard to find into Spanish, but through its scientific name, *Schefflera arboricola*, *Schefflera actinophylla*, I had the possibility to find the common name into Spanish: “Cheflera”.

Finally, the institutional supervisor invited me to translate information about innovation of robotics: There were three articles of ten pages each one in which I worked on translations of technological information like robotics. In these translations I needed support from my colleagues who knew about this area. When I had doubts in translating some sentences, my colleagues clarified all the queries I had.

REFLECTION ESSAY

After having taken and passed the subjects that constitute the study syllabus of Modern Languages, it is necessary to put into practice all the knowledge acquired during the eight semesters, in order to test the capacities of students in the working world. The internship represents the last phase in which the student can complement their training as a future professional. The experience lived as a translator in Science and Technology Museum has showed me that although we are ready for the professional life, we have to learn more everyday in order to enrich our life and our profession.

Throughout the internship, I was able to put into practice most of the subjects of Modern Languages, but specifically those ones regarding translation, which was my professional minor. By working in translation I had the opportunity to develop everything I had learnt in the School of Modern Languages. But at the same time, I wanted a new challenge and learn and improve new sets of skills performing duties and activities and analyzing them from different perspectives in a real context.

With the knowledge I obtained in the university, I knew I could learn and I knew I could achieve my learning objectives. At the same time, I contributed with my work in the institution I chose to do my internship. I wanted to follow my internship and apply my knowledge where I could work in the translation field, because I had an interest in this area. The process in translation: observing, analyzing and researching

has always interested me. I have high expectations for my professional future in the area of translation.

When I applied to do the internship at the museum as a translator, I thought of the diversity of interesting articles to be translated and the added value of my contribution in order to increase the information of the science and technology, which is subject to change at any moment. It is therefore necessary to update the information according to the new times. My expectations were high about the nature of articles I had to translate. In general terms I knew all text for translation were basically addressed to the technological and scientific areas, but I did not know the specific topic of the information to be translated.

I was assigned to tasks that were related to my educational background. It also occurred that I could learn tasks and projects that were not related to my education. This is quite beneficial, because I learned about different work fields. I got the experience in event planning of future exhibitions and how that process occurred.

The environment where I worked was very important because of the nature of my internship. I needed to be always concentrated to do the translation and thanks to a cozy atmosphere of work I could develop my work successfully. It was very important the support I had from my colleagues. Along my internship period I was happy with them. But they not only made me feel comfortable, the place where I worked made me feel as if I were working at home. When I was tired because of spending a long time working on translation, I had the opportunity to visit the exhibitions or the Laguna La Rosa to have some time to relax. It is known that

translating makes people overexert mentally and from time to time I had to get some rest and gather new strength to continue my work.

From the previous point, I want to mention that the museum presents seven thematic areas. Each one of these areas is developed in order to show the visitors some of the resources we have in our planet: Natural resources, human resources, scientific resources. The interrelation of these resources makes our world a place where we can live in a comfortable or an uncomfortable way, depending on how we use all these resources.

In this museum I found several areas in which people can learn about the natural phenomena which cause the transformation of the earth such as earthquakes and the influence of the temperature on earth. For example, in the exhibition “Pulse of the Earth”, people can experience an earthquake of 5.5 degrees on the Richter scale. One of the most interesting areas where I worked on translation was the thematic area “Echo of the Past” that shows a gigantic dinosaur. There is another interesting and very educational area, where I noticed that visitors can learn about how the human body works. In this area, the guides show each part of the human body and illustrate how they work. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to translate information of this kind of topic because it is available into Spanish and there is no necessity to find more current information.

The benefits I have gained translating information about the thematic areas in exhibition in Science and Technology Museum extend not only to the development of

the language skills I had before my internship and the reinforcement of the subjects that I studied at the university, but also to the cultural and current information I learnt at the museum. In my translation work there was something new to know every day and I felt fine to know that in my professional life I will always find something new to learn. But not only having obtained experience in this institution was a benefit for me, the fact of being a producer of knowledge and being a support for others through my knowledge made me feel satisfied.

Translation tools used were basically dictionaries such as those mentioned in Nature of the Internships, automatic translators such as Word Magic Translator Professional Dictionary Plus. Unfortunately, during the time of my internship there was not Internet service because of maintenance of internal wiring. But the absence of Internet was not a reason for stopping translating. When I needed to use Internet I had freedom to work where I could have this service, either at home or at the faculty. That is why I used Linguee when I was working at home, where I had internet service. Often I worked at home by night and I had progress in the translation of the articles. The lack of Internet access in the museum made me reflect about the alternatives I had to look for, in order to continue my work. The lack of a working tool is not a pretext to stop working.

During my internship I learnt how to manage my time and be more organized, in order to advance the assigned translation and have the opportunity to review it. By

being organized has made that I accomplish the tasks successfully and deliver them on time.

I put into practice what I learnt during my major in a real context. In translating English texts into Spanish I could implement several subjects studied in the courses I took. Subjects like Morphology and Syntax, which was useful to construct a text which respects the morphological and syntactical standards and trends. English Reading and Writing, which led me to explore, discover and build up knowledge in connection with language; Documentation and Terminology, in order to know how to select and choose the documentation sources in a specific information, and finally, the four subjects on Translation in which I had the opportunity to work. They were some of the subjects which supported me to translate texts.

Furthermore, when I was translating, I noticed that my vocabulary increased and improved. I knew vocabulary in different areas of science and technology: natural sciences, robotic, seismology, oceanography, geology and astronomy. Moreover, I knew how to avoid false friends, because I sometimes took for granted sentences or phrases that looked or sounded similar, but they differed significantly in meaning. False friends can cause difficulty for the students translating from English to Spanish and that is something in which attention should be paid at the moment we find these words or phrases and consider that we would do a wrong translation because of the use of a bad word translated.

Moreover, I learnt to find adequate equivalents in Spanish instead of using borrowings. In order to use fewer loan words, it is important to acquire a full knowledge of the counterparts. In scientific and technical translation one must not use poorly adapted borrowings indiscriminately. Fortunately, I found some dictionaries in order to help me find unknown terms or clarify others. I found a lot of phrasal verbs and compound nouns during all the translation process. My doubts were always clarified and if not, I asked my institutional superior to clarify them.

The first translations I did were evaluated by my supervisor as appropriate to the level required, that is so, according to the knowledge of the professionals who would use the information translated into Spanish. My supervisors and I had an excellent communication, I appreciated all the time when professors Isabel Gasperini and María Antonieta Rodríguez offered me alternatives of translation when I had doubts to write determined sentence or when they read my work and they noticed that my decision was wrong or when I used a word instead of another that could be more appropriate.

The experience during my internship made me develop the skills as translator and at the same time, it made me think that I need to be always active on the searching of knowledge to do better translations. I have observed that the translation can be developed in a wide field of the knowledge. I do not say it because of the vast information to be translated, but because the demand of this service in the whole world. There are many public and private institutions which require this service.

My experience has created on me some expectations about the sources of employment that I can find. I would be like to work in translation as freelance as I have noticed this in people whom I know in this field of work.

Reading was always present in the process of translation. As the internship progressed, I noticed that I needed to improve reading. At the beginning I read the texts rapidly and I did not understand the general idea of the texts at first reading, nor second, but I did it at the third or fourth time. One way to save time in reading was to read in a calm way and pay attention to understand the nature of the information.

Finally, I have noticed that working on translation is important not only to put in practice our knowledge or learn more to become a diffuser of the knowledge created by others, but to build one's own knowledge based in all the acquired information. Research allows transcending people through the creation of new knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of my internship during three months at Science and Technology Museum was very positive and enriching because I had the opportunity to put into practice everything I learnt during the courses in Modern Languages. My studies in the professional courses have provided me with a solid base in translation and academic knowledge.

During the internship I experienced many enjoyable moments, which taught me a little more not only about the studies of Modern Languages, but about how the functioning of a museum is and about the relationship among the staff in this organization. These experiences have taught me how important the activity behind the institution and the importance of doing all the work in a correct way and do it timely.

The performance of the intern reflects the quality of the courses taught during the academic studies. I am pleased for having left a good image of my performance as an intern, then I have showed my interest of doing translation and at the same time I showed that my academic knowledge has had a solid base in the development of the activities I had to do. Also, I have had the opportunity to develop my duties in a positive and comfortable environment.

I knew that a good performance would be beneficial to the image of the School of Modern Languages the Universidad de Los Andes, in order to maintain the relationship between both institutions and provide the opportunity to receive more interns in all professional options of Modern Languages.

Doing internship in this renowned institution was an experience that despite the arduous and mentally exhausting work, I did all the assigned translations successfully. My work as an intern was a small contribution I gave to the Science and Technology Museum to update the information available only in foreign language, in which is required into Spanish.

Having done the internship has been an unforgettable experience, because I have not only put into practice my skills to translate but also to experience the employment relationship in this kind of institution never experienced in other kinds of institutions. This way, I can say that one must be versatile at the moment of working in different institutions, because not all of them operate in the same way.

I would like to say that the improvement in translation never ends. Every day we work on translations we will have new problems to be solved, because we will find new terms, new phrasal verbs, new borrowings, complex structures and more problems which need to be correctly translated with every problem in the translation of a document we have to find strategies to face it and deliver a well elaborated work.

Finally I would like to thank everybody from the museum, from the School of Modern Languages, the Coordination of Internships and my Academic and Institutional Advisors for being always present to guide and help me to have success in all my activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After having finished my academic studies in Modern Languages and having worked as an intern in the Science and Technology Museum, I would like to propose some recommendations to both institutions in order to continue and improve the academic training of the students of Modern Languages.

To the School of Modern Languages:

- ✓ The School of Modern Languages should maintain a closer relationship with the Science and Technology Museum, so that more students could have an opportunity to be interns in this important institution.
- ✓ Derive from the previous, I suggest the School to choose students for this internship not only in the area of translation, but also students in International Organizations, because the Museum of Science and Technology relates to other museums inside and outside of the country.
- ✓ To motivate the students of Modern Languages in the elaboration of a degree thesis that serves as a research and development contribution to the School of Modern Languages. Certain fears and concerns make the students choose internships as a comfortable and quick alternative.
- ✓ To offer more orientation about all the professional minors in order to guide the students to select the best choice at the moment to do an internship or to elaborate degree thesis.

- ✓ To include more subjects to the plan of study of Modern languages which offers knowledge to the students about Prose Translation, because the institution where I worked needs interns to translate from Spanish into English.
- ✓ To promote the global activities of the School of Modern Languages to the national community. This is necessary for a better understanding with the public and with the private institution to find more alternatives for the modern language students to do the internship.

To the Museum of Science and Technology:

I propose the following suggestions to the Museum of Science and Technology in order to have a better operability.

- ✓ As suggested to the School of Modern languages, Science and Technology Museum should strengthen the relationship with the School of Modern Languages in order to receive more interns who may assist in the activities requiring their abilities and skills acquired during the academic studies.
- ✓ To establish a permanent office, where interns can perform translations into Spanish, English, French, German and Italian languages.

- ✓ To have a multilingual website in order to be known nationally and internationally.
- ✓ To keep the attention given to the interns of the School of Modern Languages. I am grateful for the attention and interest received at all the levels of administration during my internship.
- ✓ To create a library to make it available to the public. This would allow visitors to investigate more about the thematic areas of exhibitions.
- ✓ To maintain all the translated information filled in order to be available to all the personnel in charge of managing this information.
- ✓ To translate the signage into French, Italian and German as it was translated into English. I think that there must be an established translation into those languages too.
- ✓ To pay a stipend to interns as a reward for their duties during the internship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM BUILDING



Photography of the building of the museum. The Author.

APPENDIX 2

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM LOCATION



Prospectus which illustrates Science and Technology Museum address.

APPENDIX 3

PROSE TRANSLATION SIGNAGE

Sólo personal autorizado	Authorized personnel only
Escalera de servicio	Backstairs
Precaución	Caution
Cerrado	Closed
Peligro	Danger
No entre	Do not enter
Equipo eléctrico	Electrical equipment
Salida de emergencia	Emergency exit
Entrada	Entrance
Salida	Exit
Escalera de incendio	Fire-escape
Material inflamable	Flammable material
Jardín	Garden
Estacionamiento para minusválidos	Handicapped parking
Alta tensión	High voltage
Manténgase alejado	Keep away
Mantenga las manos alejadas	Keep hands clear
Golpee antes de entrar	Knock before entering
Izquierdo(a)	Left
Prohibida la entrada	No admittance
Agua no potable	Non-potable water
Prohibido fumar	No smoking
Prohibido estacionarse	No parking
Fuera de servicio (No funciona)	Out of order
Veneno	Poison
Hale	Pull
Empuje	Push
Baño	Restroom
Derecho(a)	Right
Turno de trabajo	Shift work
Letrero	Sign
Cafetería	Snack-bar
Pare	Stop
Boletería.	Ticket office
Baño	Toilet
Información turística	Tourist Information
Bienvenido	Welcome

Signage List Spanish- English. The Author