

WebDewey translation into Spanish: a knowledge management project

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Translation Project



Referencistas is a Colombian company with offices in Bogotá - Colombia, Mexico City and Columbus, Ohio - United States.

With 25 years of experience, the company specializes in providing innovative solutions for libraries, academic and research institutions.

By leveraging advanced technology and expert knowledge, Referencistas streamlines library workflows and supports custom development projects.

Serving over 190 libraries across Latin America, the company has been an authorized distributor of OCLC since 2009 in Colombia and since 2019 in Brazil.



WebDewey

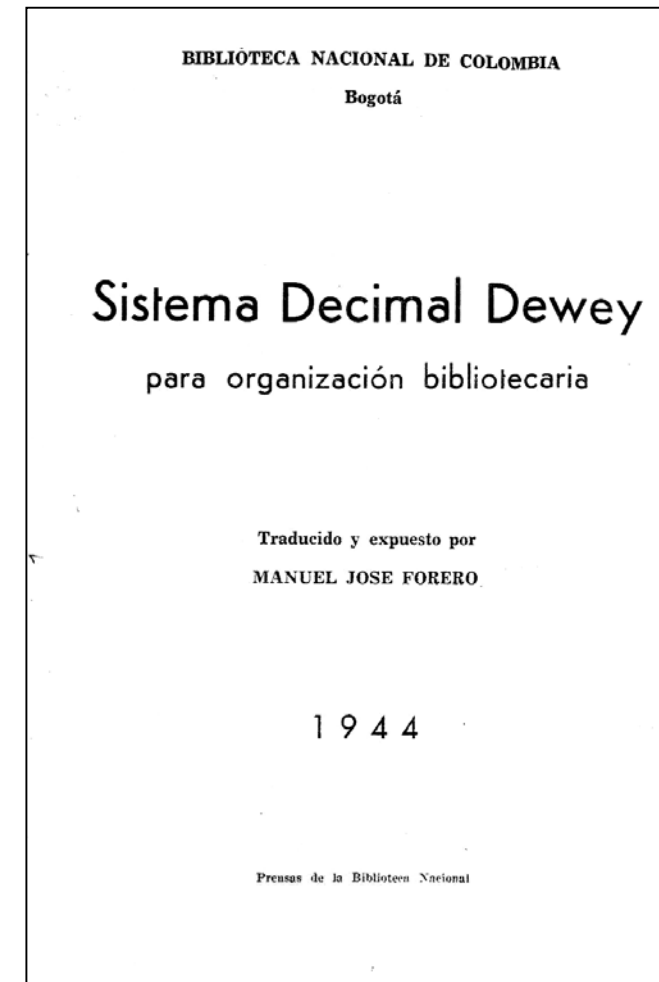
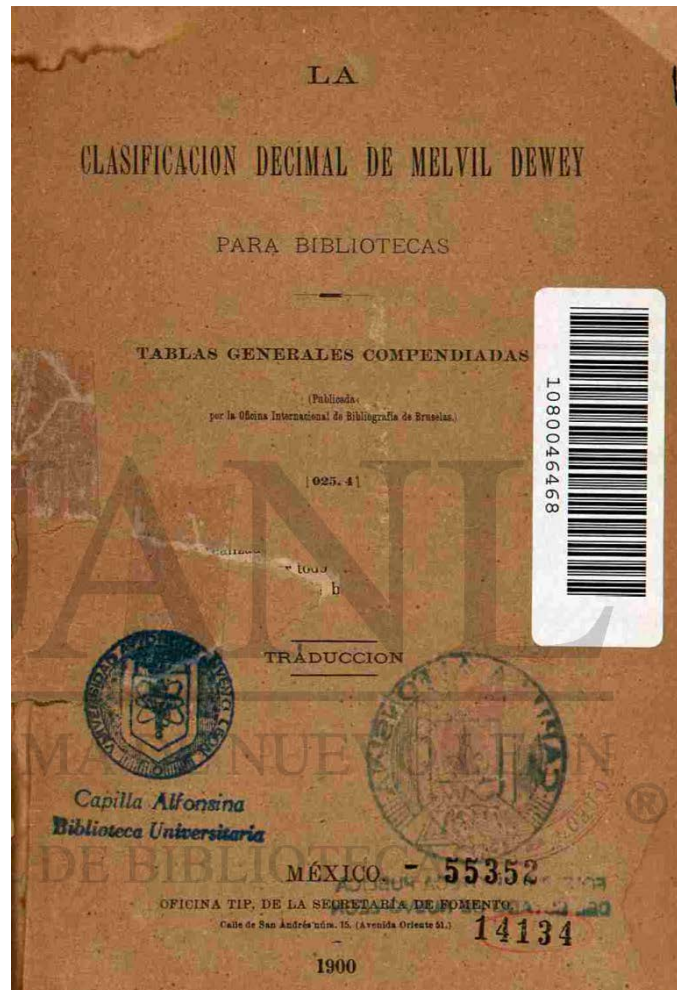
In 2024, OCLC appointed Referencistas as the official translator of WebDewey into Spanish.

Since October 2024, Referencistas worked for 1.5 years in the translation process.

WebDewey en Español is published in April 2026, aiming to provide Spanish-speaking libraries with one of the most valuable tools for bibliographic analysis and metadata generation in Spanish language.

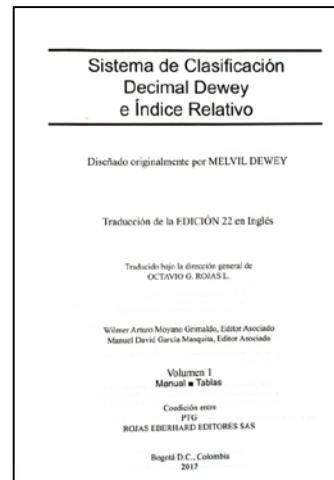
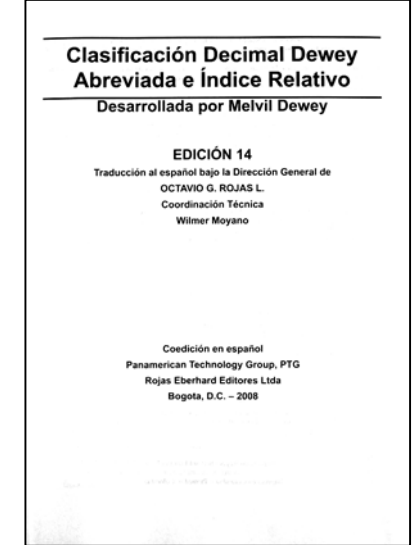
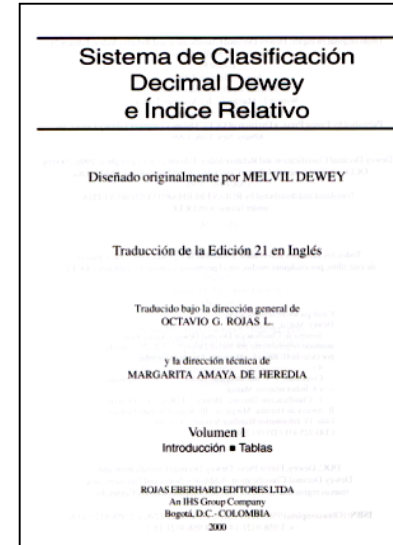
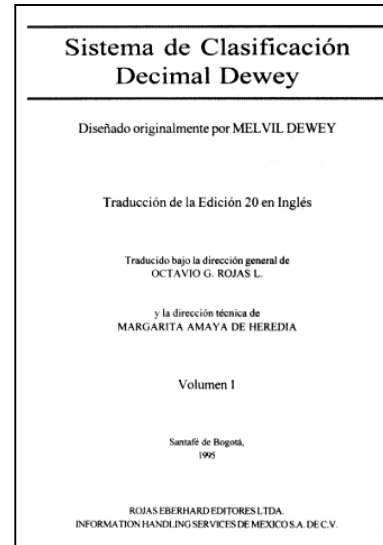
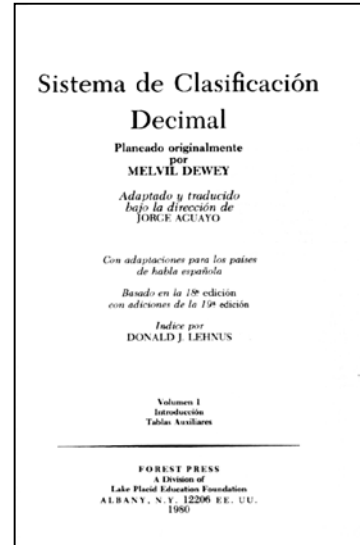
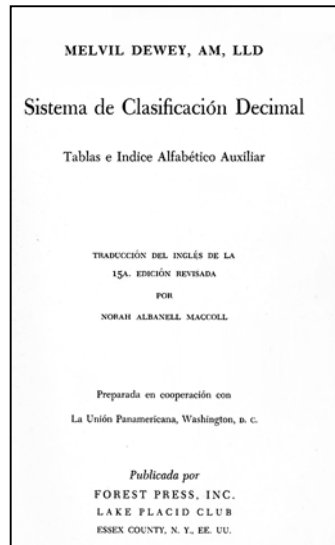
Historical Context: DDC translations into Spanish

Non official translations



Historical Context: DDC translations into Spanish

Official translations



I. General foundation

- The translation of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) **is not merely a linguistic task**, but a technical, conceptual, and collaborative knowledge organization process.
- In this context:
 - The DDC operates as a global conceptual structure (implicit ontology)
 - Translation involves **its semantic reconstruction in another language**
 - The process is shaped by:
 - structural constraints (DDC hierarchy)
 - technological limitations (XML, platform environment)
 - the need for terminological consistency

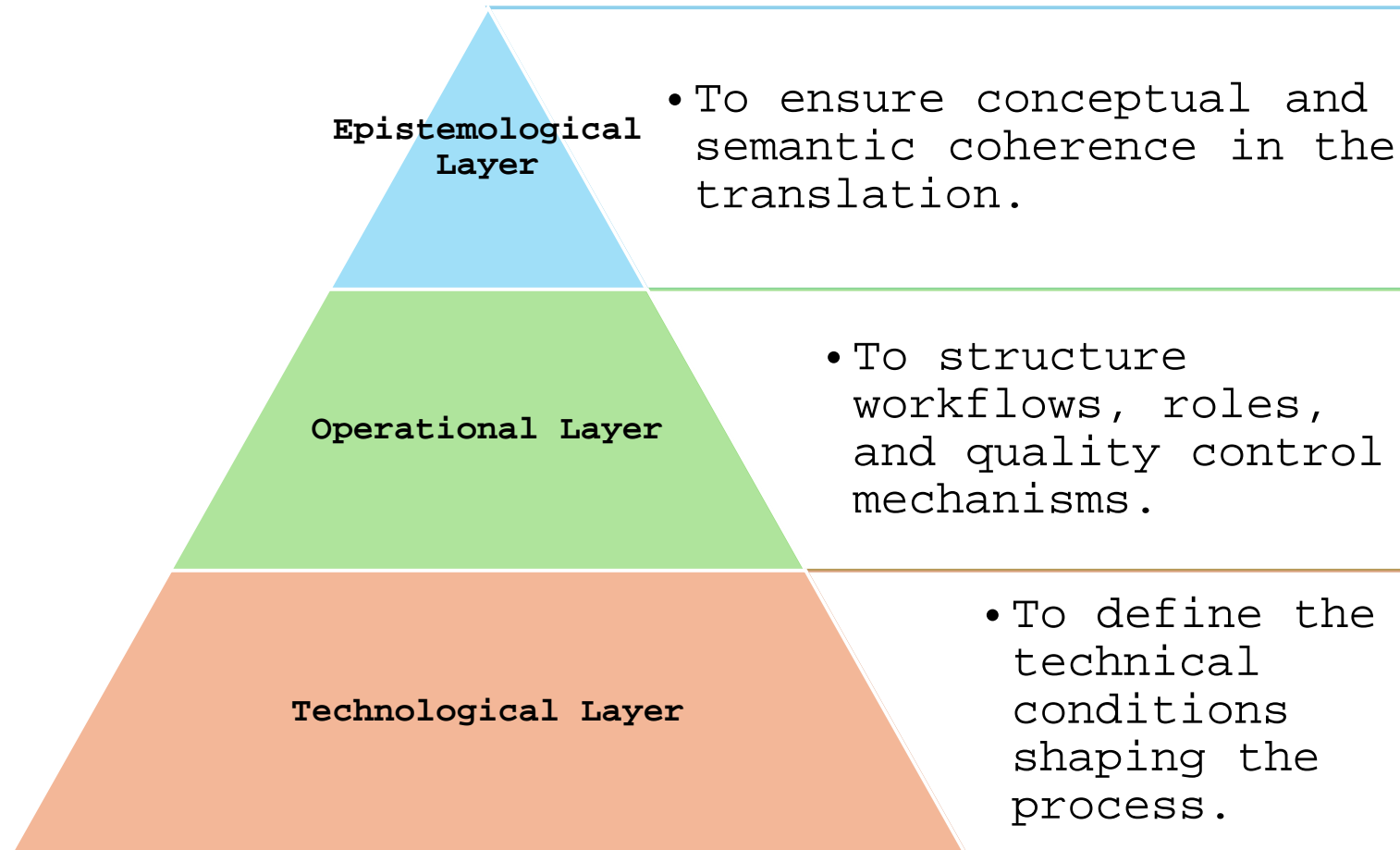


I. General foundation

- Grounded in the experience accumulated from previous translations (Since Edition 20)
- Combined with systematic review, terminological control, and continuous team feedback.
- Following recommendations from DDC editorial team.
- Documented since 1995.
 - Reports to DDC editor (Joan S. Mitchel)
 - Construction of editorial policies to the Spanish translation
 - Glossary of most used terms



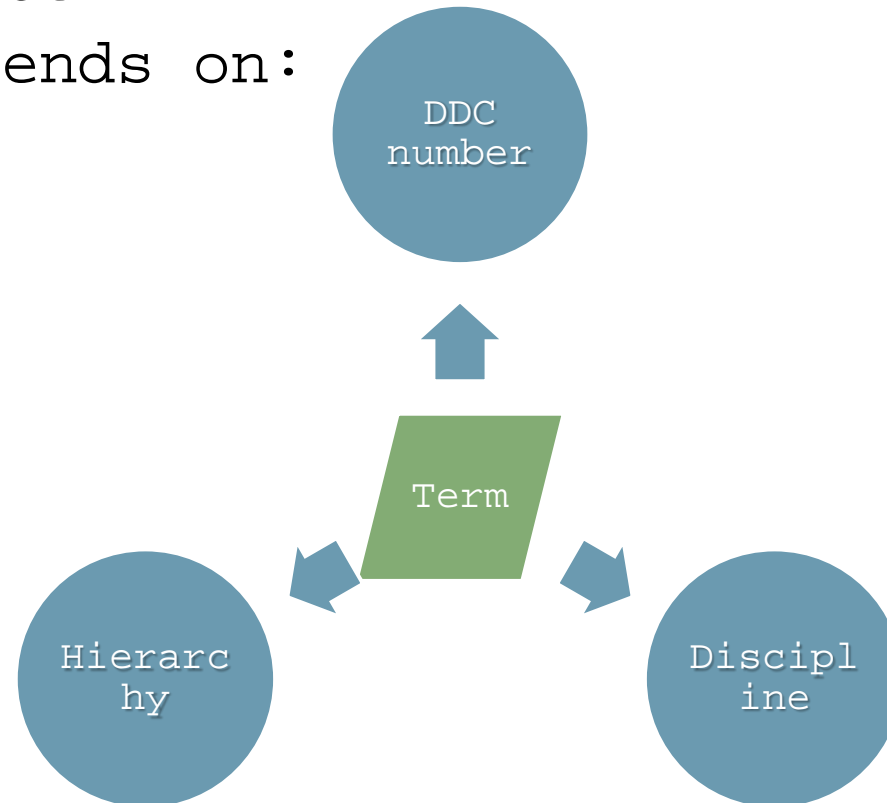
II. KM methodological architecture



1. Epistemological Layer (Meaning Production)

1.1. Translation as Ontological Reconstruction

- The process does not translate words, but concepts within a structured system
- Translation meaning depends on:



1. Epistemological Layer (Meaning Production)

1.2. Contextual Semantic Control

- The validity of a translation is contextual, not literal
- Priority is given to:
 - Neutral Spanish translation vs. Fidelity to DDC
 - Conceptual coherence

E.g. Management = Administración, gestión or gerencia

Computer science = Ciencia de la computación
or Informática

- Natural Spanish expression
- Alignment with the DDC structure



1. Epistemological Layer (Meaning Production)

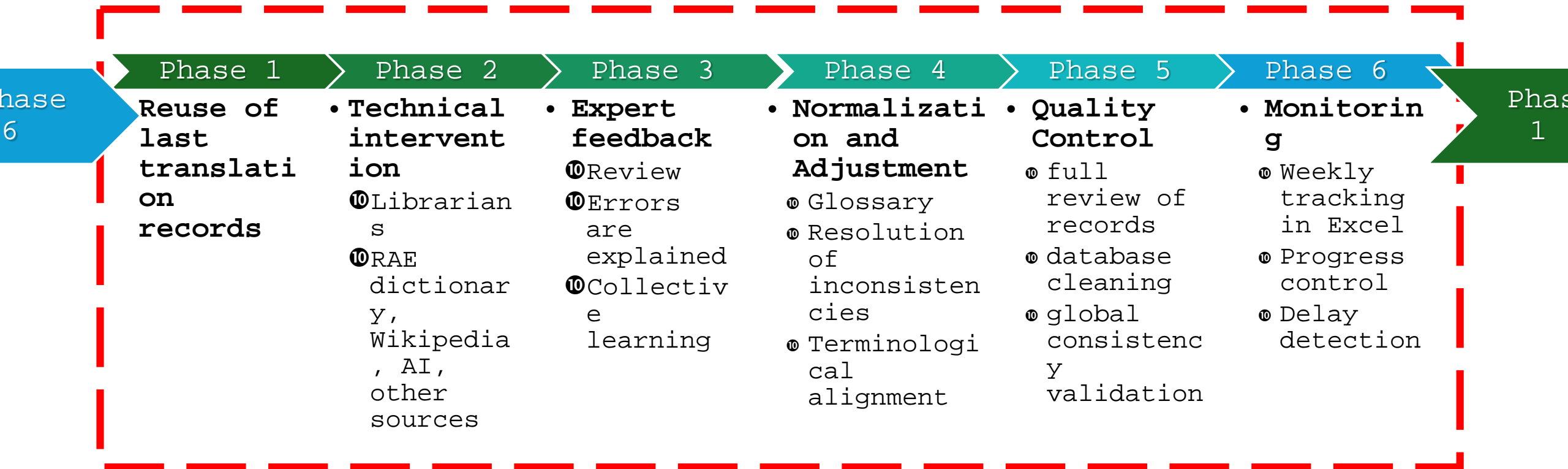
1.3. Terminological Normalization

- Systematic use of a controlled glossary developed across previous editions
- Ensures:
- Priority is given to:
 - Consistency
 - Inter-edition continuity
 - Linguistic stability

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Glosario de la traducción Clasificación Decimal Dewey																																	
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2. Operational Layer (Process Execution)

2.1. Process Phases

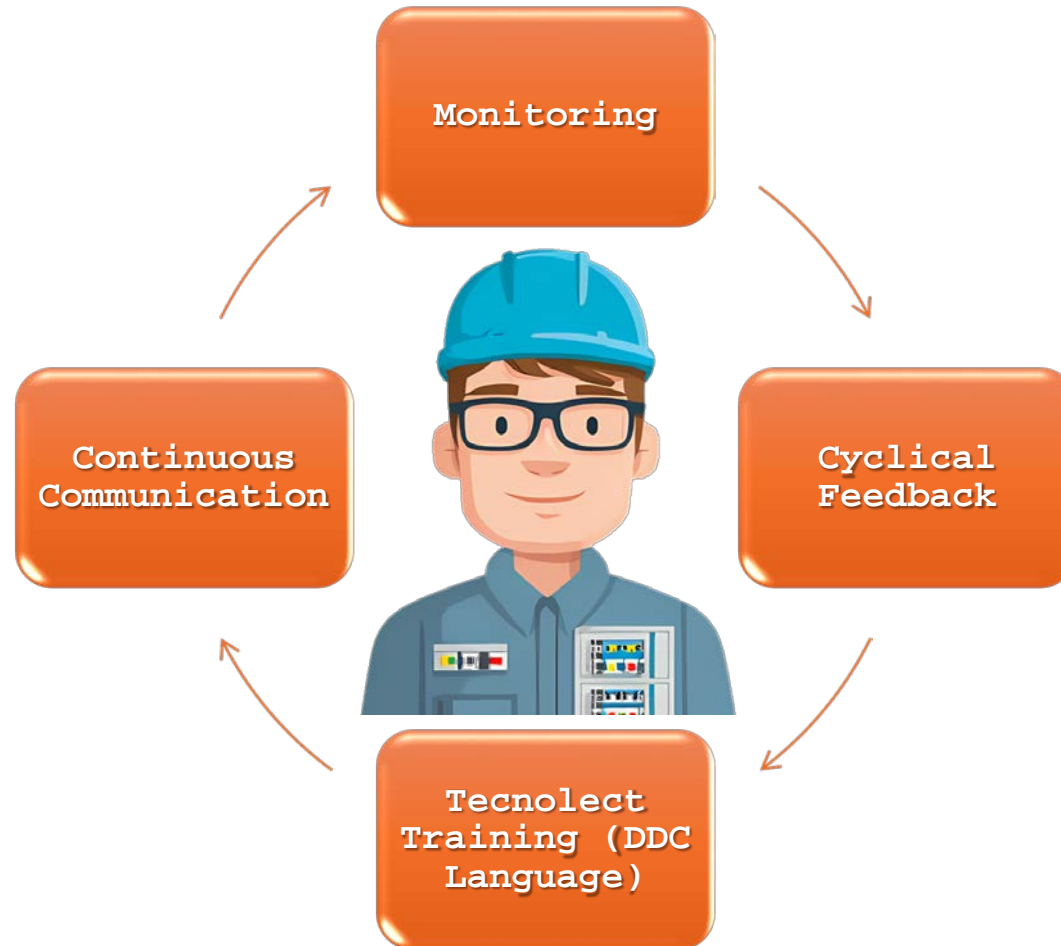


TECHNICAL SUPPORT

VALIDATION OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

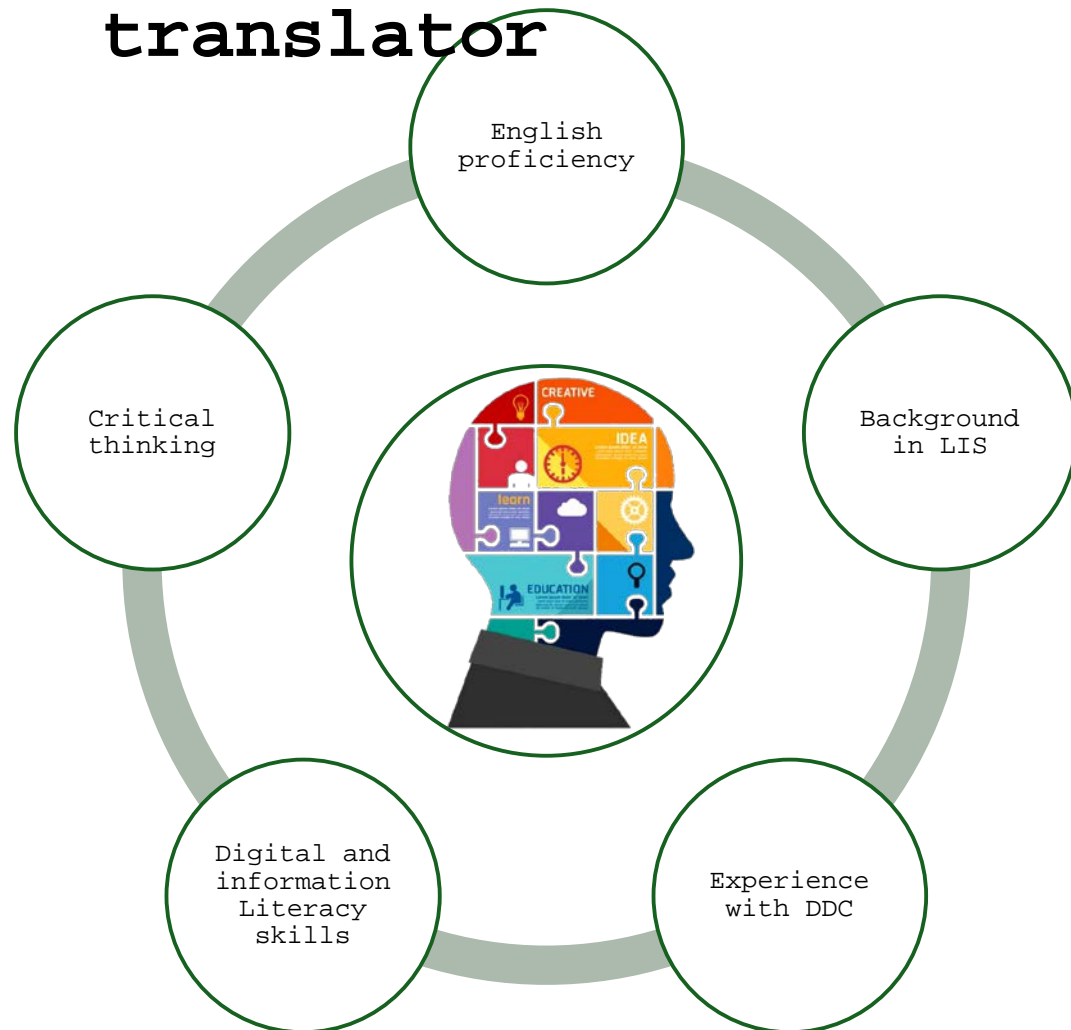
2. Operational Layer (Process Execution)

2.2. Expert Guidance System



2. Operational Layer (Process Execution)

2.3. Profile of the specialized translator



Translators must decide between:

- Literal translation
- Contextual adaptation
- Retention of original terms
- How to translate the different notes

3. Technological Layer (Environment and Constraints)

• Core Infrastructure

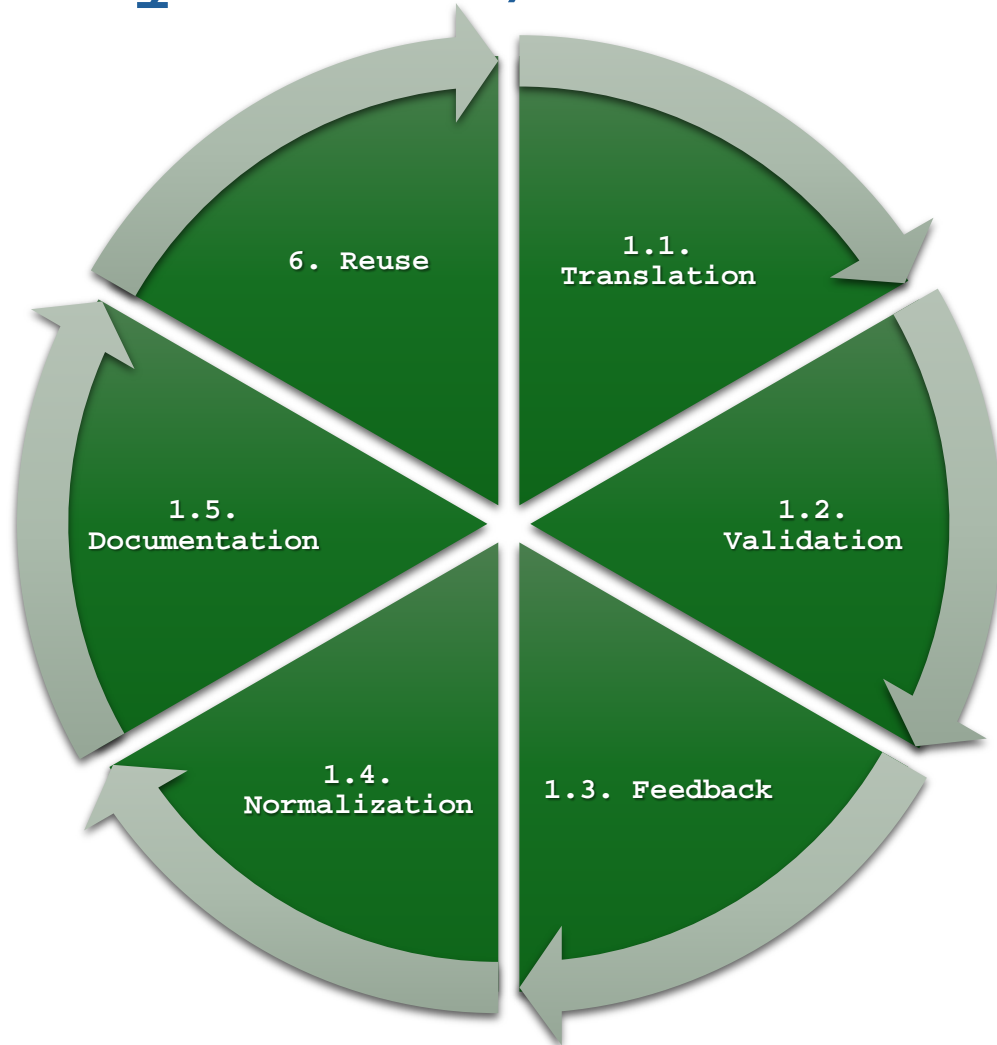
- Platform: Pansoft (WebDewey)
- Format: structured XML
- Tools (Digital ecosystem):
 - RAE dictionary
 - Wikipedia
 - Excel
 - AI* tools
 - WhatsApp

• Technological Constraints

- XML editing limitations
 - Update to the last XML version
- Restricted cultural localization
 - E.g. American native languages vs. Latin American native languages



KM Translation Cycle (as KO system)



Supported for

1. Organizational Memory
2. Collective Learning
3. Knowledge Production
4. Knowledge Transfer



The primary asset of the process **is not the translation itself**, but **the accumulated knowledge** that continuously improves it.



WebDewey

Future Developments:

- Mapping of Dewey numbers with subject headings of the National Library of Spain.
- **WebDewey** translation into Portuguese



Conclusion

The DDC translation methodology is:

- Incremental rather than total
- Grounded in accumulated knowledge
- Dependent on hybrid expertise
- Constrained by structural and technological factors
- Simultaneously productive and formative

It can be defined as:

A multilayer system for semantic reconstruction, terminological control, and organizational learning applied to knowledge classification.



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Thanks!

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