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**Katia Fach Gómez, El Derecho en Español.
Terminología y Habilidades Jurídicas para un Ejercicio
Legal Exitoso**

by

Dante Figueroa

Book Review

Katia Fach Gómez, *El Derecho en Español. Terminología y Habilidades Jurídicas para un Ejercicio Legal Exitoso*

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* Adjunct Professor, Georgetown Law Center – Vice-Chair, DC Bar’s International Investment & Finance Committee, and can be reached at df257@law.georgetown.edu.

Professor Katia Fach Gómez has recently published a book titled, in Spanish, "*El Derecho en Español. Terminología y Habilidades Jurídicas para un Ejercicio Legal Exitoso*" [Law in Spanish. Terminology and Legal Skills for a Successful Legal Practice]. The book was published in 2014 by the University of Texas Press, and is catalogued at the Library of Congress: <https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/holdingsInfo?&bibId=17821804&searchId=12227&recPointer=0&recCount=25>. Professor Fach teaches conflicts of laws, international arbitration and business transactions at the University of Zaragoza (UZ), Spain. She was an Adjunct Professor at Fordham University (NY), a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University, and Pre- and Post-Doctoral Grantee at Max-Planck Institut (Germany). She is the author of several books, book chapters and peer-reviewed papers, and also external reviewer of various international legal journals. She has been the Executive Director of the Excellence Campus at the UZ, and has also worked as a national expert for the European Commission in Brussels.

My professional and academic experience during the last decades have made me a frequent user of English-Spanish legal dictionaries, and other bilingual manuals that explain to non-civil law parties how to conduct legal research and practice law in Spanish-speaking jurisdictions. The legal practice of an increasing number of lawyers from the civil and common law worlds requires them to develop or deepen their language skills in either English or Spanish. However, few of these practitioners reach a level of proficiency in both the foreign language and a profound understanding of the legal institutions germane to the other jurisdiction. These skills are obtained mainly by practice, but also by study. In this context, well-written and accurate legal dictionaries and manuals are essential in assisting the cross-border practitioner to develop sound legal advice to his/her clients. Professor Fach's book is an excellent example of such manuals.

The specific talent of Professor Fach's book and what makes it stand amongst its equivalents is its well-achieved and highly pedagogic approach. The book contains ten chapters on the topics of the university and legal profession, constitutional law, contracts law, banking law, criminal law, family law, immigration law, human rights law, international litigation and arbitration, and legal cinema. Each chapter contains five exercises requiring the student to find the correct word for a given legal sentence, or to reconstruct properly a phrase, or to assess the veracity of a given proposition. Specific tasks are required from the reader for each exercise, and the responses are included in an annex.

The book might be somehow challenging for those just enjoying a beginner's level in the Spanish language, and who might find themselves working alongside with a Spanish-English dictionary to efficiently profit from the exercises contained in the book. The intermediate Spanish speaker, however, will find enough stimuli to strengthen his or her legal skills, and to stay motivated throughout the book. It seems that this is not a book to be read in the traditional manner, that is, at once. Instead, this is an organized collection of class materials on different topics which, put together in a book, give the reader the chance to follow a structured guide to a full immersion into legal Spanish.

Finally, the book is prologued by the well-respected scholar Professor Alejandro Garro, who is broadly recognized as one of the pioneers in the teaching of civil law in the United States. I add my own positive comments to Professor Fach's interesting and highly educative book.