

## **TRANSLATION AS A SCIENCE AND TRANSLATION AS AN ART: A PRACTICAL APPROACH**

Noa Talaván

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Starting with a splendidly well-chosen cover, Noa Talaván's *Translation as a Science and Translation as an Art: A Practical Approach* is the epitome of what a clear, thorough monograph should be, which will immerse the readers in the world of translation and will have them longing for more. Noa Talaván is a professor at UNED, who has written an array of books within Translation Studies and has specialized in the realms of Audiovisual Translation and the learning of foreign languages through subtitling. The following lines are intended to serve as a guide through the main features of this monograph, and they will deal with topics that go from its physical description to a brief summary of each of its five chapters.

The monograph's front cover makes one stare deeply into it to discover all the details of Hans Holbein the Younger's painting *The Ambassadors* (1533), which conveys a scene in which the arts (and sciences) of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music are reflected. Thus, through a subtle but clever use of a two-fold strategy (the painting and the title) the author already presents the main idea that will be further developed in the following chapters: translation is both a science and an art. Additionally, the book is presented in paperback, which makes it very easy to handle, especially for students who need comfortable materials to read and carry around. The adequate paper caliper, together with a correct choice of fonts, clear charts and general structure, make the task of reading this monograph an easy one.

Chapter 1 starts with a clear —and probably expected— dichotomy: is translation a science or an art, or is it both? In order to make up one’s mind and understand why translation should be considered both, the author starts this chapter with a short but key introduction to the history of translation, dividing the chapter into two main parts: what translation was regarded as up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and from the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Talaván takes the reader through the different theories and representatives of all these periods, and she clearly presents each of their contributions to this discipline, starting with Cicero’s sense-for-sense translation in Roman times and ending with today’s formal and dynamic equivalences, among other theories. The chapter ends with a mention of James S. Holmes and his ideas on Translation Studies to round off the concept of translation being an art and a science.

The second chapter begins by providing the readers with a collection of very useful translation strategies that are strategically presented in layers, starting with the translation at word level and ending with the use of pragmatics in translation. At word level, the author stresses the importance of knowing the different types of lexical meaning that words have and takes the reader to some of the most important strategies used by translators when it comes to non-equivalence (cf. Baker 2011). The following layer deals with collocations (and the most common pitfalls of translating them), idioms and fixed expressions, whose translation strategies are readily provided in a chart full of examples. Grammar is at the next level, in which important aspects such as number, gender, person, or voice are explained as well as two important strategies: grammatical transposition and modulation. The following layer deals with “the text as a complete linguistic unit” (36), which involves the information flow as presented by Halliday’s theme and rheme, types of marked themes, or a number of interesting strategies related to information structure, such as voice change or extraposition (cf. Baker 2011). Additionally, the author rounds out this level by providing different strategies within the concept of cohesion, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, or lexical cohesion (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976). Lastly, the author elaborates on the importance of pragmatics by explaining the concepts of coherence and H. Paul Grice’s implicature and his co-operative principle as well as some strategies by Mona Baker on how to deal with these two concepts (2011). The chapter ends accompanied by a clear and useful summary of all the translation strategies explained for each of the five aforementioned linguistic layers.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the translation of humanistic texts and is pertinently divided into three main sections. The first section deals with the understanding of translations as purposeful tasks, that is, not only shall translations encompass

a linguistic transfer but a cultural one as well. To this end, the author briefly describes the Skopos Theory and Christiane Nord's three aspects of functionalism: "the importance of the translation brief, the role of source-text analysis, and the classification and hierarchisation of translation problems" (1997: 53). In order to deal with cultural elements, Talaván provides a first insight into the concepts of domestication and foreignization (cf. Venuti 2008), along with the concept of cultural transposition (cf. Haywood et al. 2009) and "their continuum that goes from exoticism to total adaptation to the TL culture" (63) —exoticism, cultural borrowing, calque, communicative translation and cultural transplantation. The chapter ends with an explanation of the importance of translation loss, and to tackle this, the author provides four strategies to compensate for such losses —compensation in kind, in place, by merging or by splitting— and six strategies that deal with the role of connotative meaning: attitudinal, associative, affective, reflected, collocative and allusive meanings (cf. Haywood et al. 2009).

The fourth chapter is divided into five main sections and it deals with a series of methods, strategies and techniques to cope with the lack of equivalence in translation. The first section addresses the differentiation between methods, strategies and techniques and the author provides an instructive chart with some of the most relevant translation methods according to Newmark (1988) and a brief description of each of them. The second section deals with the source-text oriented strategy of foreignization and four of its techniques (literal translation, equivalence, borrowing —or loan—, and calque) and the third section deals with seven target-text oriented strategies, namely adaptation, compensation, modulation, neutralization, specification, substitution and transposition, and an array of different techniques within each of them. Footnotes and glossaries are also mentioned as possible translation solutions. Section four deals with the translation of humor and the different strategies to tackle this difficult topic, following Chiaro (2010). Additionally, this section includes seven strategies (cf. Delabastita 1993) to translate puns or wordplay, each of which is presented with clear definitions and examples. The last section of chapter 4 elaborates on the topic of translation quality and translation errors, such as pragmatic or adequacy errors (cf. Hurtado Albir 2008). The author provides a relevant ending to this chapter by stressing the importance of the fact that "there is no scientific absolute right or wrong" when it comes to translating; however, the translator should produce a "balance between accuracy, naturalness and overall comprehension" (95) to achieve a certain level of quality in his/her translation.

The last chapter lays emphasis on the importance of background knowledge before approaching any kind of text, such as knowing who the author is, his or

her style, the intention of his or her text, knowing about the source-text and target-text culture, etc. Its first section deals with the art of translating poetry, about which the author says that it is “probably one of the most challenging tasks for a translator” (100) as it is the most personal kind of literature. She then provides different approaches to translating poetry, following Bassnett (2002), such as phonemic, metrical or rhymed translations, but she reminds the readers that blank verse is probably the most reasonable and frequent approach to adopt. For the translation of prose, the author provides some interesting guidelines to take into account such as considering the source text as an integral unit, bearing in mind the various levels of equivalence at all times, the importance of false friends, etc. The third section deals with the translation of drama and the macro-, micro- and intersystemic textual levels it presents (cf. Merino Álvarez 1994), as well as with some challenges that the translators may face when dealing with this genre (cf. Hurtado Albir 2011). Section four tackles the difficulty that may arise when dealing with dialects, and section five can be summarized by Talaván’s idea that “the beauty of translation lies precisely in this flexibility that allows for the existence of multiple translated versions of the very same ST, all of which can be perfectly valid” (119). Through this quote, the author reminds the reader once again that translation is both a science and an art.

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Noa Talaván’s monograph is an exceptional piece of work that comprises all the important elements a newborn translator should bear in mind, ranging from the most basic translation techniques, to dealing with the most complicated uses of the language, such as humor, puns or even dialects. To complete this impressive work I would only suggest adding another chapter that may inform about what the current trends in this realm are, especially for those students who are considering doing translations for a living. Furthermore, information on different software that translators use would be ideal in order to understand what a translator does when dealing with new translations. Each of the chapters in Talaván’s monograph contemplates what the students will face when it comes to handling texts and for that purpose she provides dozens of examples of translation practice for them to do. Moreover, at the end of the monograph, a key to all the practical tasks can be found, each of which comes with a translation (into Spanish) and a thorough analysis of the methods, strategies and techniques used. Since Talaván keeps her students (and the general reader) in mind at all times when providing clear examples to each challenge and quotes the most important authors in the realm of Translation Studies, it can be concluded that her work of art and science is a must on anyone’s bookshelf.

## Works cited

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