

INFORMATION-STRUCTURE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH/SPANISH TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT. *This paper discusses information structure-based strategies that could be used in translating from English to Spanish. It is widely observed that many problems arise in translation when establishing the theme/topic and providing the focus content in the target language, given the grammatical instruments available in the source language. It is extremely important to use similar discourse mechanisms to present the same message in exactly the same terms from an information-structure point of view. This means that the syntactic configuration may be different in the source and target texts. I focus on three information structure phenomena, namely Passive, Topic Fronting and Negative Preposing in the two languages, to analyse the preservation of the discourse flow in various translations for the optimal use of the relevant constructions.*

Keywords: Information structure, translation strategies, passive, topic, focus, English/Spanish.

ESTRATEGIAS BASADAS EN LA ESTRUCTURA INFORMATIVA PARA LA TRADUCCIÓN INGLÉS/ESPAÑOL

RESUMEN. *Este artículo trata sobre diversas estrategias basadas en la estructura informativa que podrían ser utilizadas en la traducción inglés/español. Se ha observado que en traducción surge un gran número de problemas a la hora de establecer el tópico o tema y el foco en la lengua meta, siguiendo los instrumentos gramaticales disponibles en la lengua origen. Es muy importante usar mecanismos discursivos similares en las dos lenguas para presentar el mensaje exactamente en los mismos términos desde el punto de vista de la estructura informativa. Esto conlleva que la construcción sintáctica pueda variar en el texto meta con respecto al texto original. En este artículo nos centramos en tres fenómenos discursivos: la pasiva, la anteposición de tópico y la anteposición negativa en las dos lenguas, lo cual permite analizar el nivel de preservación del flujo discursivo en varias traducciones para un uso óptimo de estas construcciones.*

Palabras clave: estructura informativa, estrategias de traducción, pasiva, tópico, foco, inglés/español.

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1. INTRODUCTION¹

My goal in this paper is to discuss information structure (IS) strategies that may be used in the field of translation, and more precisely in translating from English to Spanish. It is a widespread observation that many problems arise in translation when setting the theme/topic and providing the focus content in the target language, based on the syntactic tools provided by the source language (Vasconcellos 1992; Albrecht 2005; Baker 2006; Dejica 2009; Korzen and Gylling 2012).

I argue that the information structure partition in terms of topic (i.e. given information; what the sentence is about, *sensu* Reinhart 1982) and focus (new information) should be most naturally preserved when translating from a language to another.² This is particularly problematic when English is translated into Spanish, since English is a very rigid language in that it basically makes

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2 In the relevant literature on information structure topic is sometimes referred to as theme, as opposed to the term rheme, which covers what other linguists call comment; see Halliday (1985).

use of the SVO word order in all discourse situations, whereas Spanish is much more flexible and allows other patterns such as OVS, VSO and VOS, for information-structure reasons (Zubizarreta 1998; Jiménez-Fernández 2010; Leonetti 2014).

In light of this, it is extremely important to use similar discourse strategies to present the same message in exactly the same terms from an information-structure point of view, as DeJica (2009) clearly states. This means that the syntactic configuration may be different in the source and target texts. One such case is passive. In English, passive is more productive than in Spanish (middle-passive is preferred in the latter). Even if this is the case, the proposed translation may possibly respect the topic-focus partition, thereby satisfying the Information-Flow Principle, according to which the syntactic ordering of a sentence moves from given to new information.

Here I discuss different discourse phenomena which influence the use of a specific word order, such as Topicalization, Negative Preposing and Passive. I analyse cases of real translations where these information-structure devices have been successfully used alongside other translations where they have not been employed, and propose alternatives based on these discourse strategies to improve the translation. By using this methodology, I intend to show the importance of IS-based strategies in translation, which will prove to be clearly useful for translators, translation teachers and translation trainees in that it establishes necessary instruments from a practical perspective. In discussing the different examples I skip to the idea of giving equi-functional or functionally equivalent translations, given that what is important is to retain the flow of information provided in the source language (Newmark 1988).

The outline of the paper is as follows. In Section 2 I revise some key concepts concerning information structure; in particular, I address the notion of Information-Flow Principle and the partition of a sentence in terms of the double articulation topic-comment / focus-presupposition. In Section 3 I deal with the three IS-based phenomena at issue: Topic Fronting, Negative Preposing and Passive, which are proved to be crucial as translation strategies.³ In Section 4 I present practical cases of translations in which IS is most relevant for a discourse-natural translation; I discuss some problems that the translated texts pose and present solutions taking into account the fact that the target text is informationally faithful to the original text. Finally Section 5 concludes the paper.

3 The use of the term 'translation strategies' is a rather broad one here and it differs from but complements what Hurtado Albir (2001: 271-278) describes as such. In this work I use the term to refer to instruments to be used in translation, based on the interface of syntax and information structure.

2. SOME BACKGROUND ON INFORMATION STRUCTURE AND ITS USEFUL FUNCTION IN COMMUNICATION

As said earlier, my goal in this article is to discuss information structure strategies that can be used in translating from English to Spanish. Given that information structure is in charge of establishing which part of a sentence is more informative in relation to a specific discourse context, it can be said to “package” linguistic information with the aim of optimising the information transfer in discourse in a coherent and cohesive way (Vallduví and Vilkuna 1998; Krifka 2007). In this view, it is very important how the message is organised in a given context so as to produce in the hearer what the speaker intends to do.

The organization of the message is ruled by the Information-Flow Principle, which is related to the normal ordering of information in discourse both in English and Spanish, i.e. moving from given to new information (Prince 1981; Chafe 1987). Let us illustrate how the Information-Flow Principle works by the question and the two possible replies in (1):

(1) Where did you see Mary?

Answers:

A) *I saw her in the supermarket.*

B) *In the supermarket I saw her.*

In the two responses, the new information is underlined and the given information is italicised. The most adequate reply in this particular discourse is A). The given-new order of information contributes to the cohesion of a text, because the given information at the beginning links the sentence to the previous discourse while the new information is usually taken up in the continuing discourse. In addition, this given-new order also helps the addressee to interpret the message in terms of meaning.

Let us imagine now that the question is different, as shown in (2):

(1) Who did you see in the supermarket?

Answers:

A) *I saw Mary in the supermarket.*

B) *In the supermarket I saw Mary.*

This time the discourse question is different, and the most suitable answer is B) since the given information is placed at the beginning, whereas the new information occupies the sentence final position, in compliance with the End-Focus Principle.

This states that the newest and hence most relevant information is kept for final position (Birner 1994; Lozano and Mendikoetxea 2010; Leech and Svartvik 2013).⁴

In terms of word order, two points of emphasis have been held to exist in a sentence, namely the final position (for new information) and the initial position (for already shared information). The former is identified as the primary point of emphasis, while the latter is said to be a secondary point of emphasis. The primary point of emphasis has been illustrated with answer A) in (1) and answer B) in (2).

In addition to this final position, the beginning of a clause is the secondary point of emphasis, which is exemplified in (3-4):

(3) Relaxation you call it! (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1377)

(4) To this list I believe we must now add the maintenance of a clean and attractive environment.

In (3) the secondary emphatic position is used to convey the speaker's disbelief on what he/she has heard before. In (4) the primary focus falls upon the underlined part in final position, whereas *to this list* in initial position has been preposed to allow the heavier element *the maintenance of a clean and attractive environment* in final position, thereby being given more informative prominence. In addition, preposing the prepositional phrase also provides a cohesive link due to the use of the demonstrative determiner, connecting the sentence with the previous context.

The two positions of emphasis are clearly related to the information-structure partition in terms of topic and focus. Recall that in the previous section a definition was provided of the double articulation of utterances in terms of topic vs. comment and presupposition vs. focus (Krifka 2007). Since these two partitions play a pivotal role in my analysis of translated texts, I will illustrate them very briefly in (5) and Table 1:

(5) Q: Who wrote the Quixote?

A: The Quixote was written by Cervantes.

Table 1. IS partitions.

Topic	Comment	
The Quixote	was written	by Cervantes
Presupposition		Focus

⁴ See Biber *et al.* (1999), Birner and Ward (1998) and Lozano and Mendikoetxea (2010) for the integration of the End-Focus Principle and the End-Weight Principle, the latter stating that the end of a clause is the most important point of emphasis.

Across languages a wide array of linguistic means can be identified that can be employed to yield a specific information structure. These are allowed in natural languages either in isolation or in combination. First, intonation and prosody in speech is usually the device used in English to mark the focus of a sentence in terms of a specific pitch (Gussenhoven 1994; Büring 2016).

A second device used in language to express an explicit IS partition is morphology. There are languages such as Japanese in which a specific suffix can be added to a lexical item so as to mark it as the sentence topic. This is the case of the *-wa* suffix in (6) (Miyagawa 2012; Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa 2014):

- (6) *Hanako-ga [pizza-wa Taroo-ga tabeta to] itta.*
 Hanako-NOM pizza-TOP Taro-NOM eat-PAST that say-PAST
 ‘Hanako said that pizza, Taro ate.’ (Miyagawa’s 2012, example (41))⁵

In this example *pizza-wa* carries a discourse-associated suffix to the effect that it qualifies as the topic of the subordinate clause in brackets.

Finally, languages can opt for a characteristic syntactic structure and word order rearrangements in order to display a distinct IS interpretation. For example, passive and middle passive and their distribution in a given language correlate with a specific discourse interpretation (Quirk *et al.* 1985; Fernández-Soriano 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). This has been illustrated for English in (5). In other languages such as Spanish, whose word order is determined by IS, passives are much more restricted (maybe limited to descriptive texts), and instead a middle construction (7) or one involving Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) (8) is preferable:

- (7) *Los resultados se pueden ver en la página web.*
 the results SE can-PRES.3PL see on the page web
 ‘The results can be checked on the website.’
- (8) *Los resultados los pueden ver en la página web.*
 the results them can-PRES.3PL see on the page web
 ‘The results you can ccheck on the website.’

If the word order in Spanish is compared with that in the English translation, it can be observed that the starting point of the sentence is the same, namely *los*

⁵ Throughout this article, single inverted commas are used for the English glosses of examples from other languages.

resultados ‘the results’, which stands as the topic of the sentence. However, the comment is developed by means of a passive construction in English and a middle passive in (7) in Spanish.

One of the functions of the passive construction is to partition the sentence into clearly distinguished informative sections. As always, in the initial portion we find the topic and in final position is the focus, included in the comment. In order for the item *the results* to be the topic, English resorts to the passive construction (Cheng 2012; Stevens 2013). In Spanish the topic is simply the subject of the middle construction and hence the predication part *se pueden ver en la página web* is left behind in the comment position. As is clear, the two strategies are comparable from a discourse point of view since the IS partition is identical in both languages, albeit the different syntactic tool used.

As for the option provided by CLLD, the object is preposed as a topic, which is resumed by the clitic *los* ‘them’ in the comment part. The focus *en la página web* ‘on the website’ occupies the sentence-final position reserved for new information.

The problem, as I mentioned earlier in Section 1 for the field of translation, lies in that sometimes the IS of the original text cannot or is not preserved, leading to an informative mismatch between the original and the target message. In Section 4 I will explore the informational strategy provided by passives in translation. Before doing this, in Section 3 I present the syntactic devices to be used to attain a specific IS interpretation.

3. SOME SYNTACTIC INSTANTIATIONS OF IS

As was seen in the previous section, sentences involve a double articulation with respect to the information they convey. On the one hand, givenness and aboutness are associated with the initial portion, whereas newness and comment-related material are connected to the final position of the sentence. This complies with the Information-Flow Principle. In order to satisfy this principle, syntax offers a series of formal mechanisms which help us in delivering the message we want to give accurately.

These syntactic manifestations of IS are Passive, Existential *there*, Clefting, Extraposition, Dislocation, Fronting and Inversion. Here I concentrate on three IS-oriented phenomena, namely passive, and two types of fronting (Topicalization and Negative Preposing).⁶

⁶ For the discourse interpretation of existential constructions in English, see Kim (2003) and Kuno and Takami (2004), who agree that existential constructions have a presentational reading, which basically are used as all-focus sentences (Erteschik-Shir 2007). The reader is referred to Haegeman (2012) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) for the IS interpretation of Clefting, Extraposition, Dislocation and several types of Inversion in English.

3.1. THE IS OF PASSIVES

One important discourse function of passives is to accommodate information structure by presenting information from given to new and complying with the end-focus and end-weight, as we have seen earlier.

Most frequently, the subject contains given information while the agent presents new information, which means that in most passive sentences, the subject has a higher level of givenness than the agentive phrase. Almost all agent phrases convey new information (Biber *et al.* 1999). The examples I used before to illustrate passive and its discourse interpretation have involved an IS partition in terms of subject topic but the focus was developed by some element other than the by-phrase –see examples (5) for English passive and (7) for middle passive in Spanish. In (9) I offer an example including the agentive phrase:

(9) Q: What causes so many diseases in Brazil?

A: Most diseases are caused by mosquitos.

Here it can be observed that the new information request in the question is fully satisfied by the agentive phrase in the answer, which most naturally occupies a sentence-final position. Hence *by mosquitos* is the information focus in the passive. Note that if the active counterpart were used instead, this would be pragmatically non-felicitous, though syntactically acceptable:

(10) Q: What causes so many diseases in Brazil?

A: #Mosquitos cause most diseases.

The answer in (10) violates the Information-Flow Principle in that the given information follows the new information. Prosody can rescue the construction by putting a special stress on *mosquitos* and selecting it as the focus. If this strategy is used, the anomaly in (10) disappears.

In addition to maintaining the information flow, passives can also help to keep the topic continuous so that the discourse is coherent. The importance of topic continuity is illustrated in (11):

- (11) a. The town is a major attraction for tourists and <the town> is surrounded
by natural countryside housing a lot of wildlife.
 b. The town is a major attraction for tourists and natural countryside housing a
lot of wildlife surrounds it.

In (11a) the topic of the two clauses (the town) is continuous. Silent topics, represented here between angles, play a crucial role in the discourse interpretation of the sentence in that they serve the purpose of continuing the topic across sentences (Frascarelli 2007; Jiménez-Fernández 2016). On the other hand, in (11b) the topic is discontinuous. For the first clause, the topic is *the town*, but this changes in the second clause, selecting as topic *the town natural countryside housing a lot of wildlife*. The continuity in (11a) makes this option preferable from the point of view of cohesion, and it can be achieved by using the passive.

In Spanish, topic continuity can also be provided by passive (in this case, a statal passive; Huddleston and Pullum 2002):

- (12) *La ciudad tiene mucho atractivo para los turistas y <la ciudad> está rodeada por parajes naturales que albergan una rica vida salvaje.*

‘The town has much attraction for tourists and is surrounded by natural settings which house a lot of wildlife.’

As is clear, the topic *la ciudad* ‘the town’ is continuous in the two clauses, giving coherence to the whole sentence.

A different discourse function can also be developed by passives, namely broad focus. This type of focus involves all-new sentences. More precisely, the information in the sentence is new to the hearer/reader, as Zubizarreta (1998) describes it. English passive can exhibit this broad-focus function. In an out-of-the-blue context, a sentence such as (13) is fully felicitous:

- (13) Full payment will be required upon reservation.

In this case there is no partition in the information structure of the sentence since this is topicless. The most natural equivalent in Spanish may be a middle passive construction which follows that word order VS, as shown in (14):

- (14) *Se requerirá el pago total a la hora de reservar.*

SE require-FUT.3SG the payment total at the time of to.reserve

‘There will be required full payment upon reservation.’

In middle passives the subject may be said to be a hidden object. In all-focus sentences the canonical pattern SVO is the most natural option (López 2008: 150). However, the post-verbal position of subjects in a middle passive can be explained by comparing it with the corresponding active:

- (15) *Requerirán el pago total a la hora de reservar.*
 require-FUT.3PL the payment total at the time of to.reserve
 ‘They require full payment at the time of making a reservation.’

Given their semantic equivalence, the object in the active sentence and the subject in the (middle) passive counterpart start by occupying the same syntactic position, i.e. as complements of their respective verb.

3.2. TOPIC FRONTING

Fronting or preposing involves placing in initial position a clause element which normally follows the verb. It is used for achieving focus and cohesion as it takes advantage of both final and initial points of emphasis. In English, the fronted element usually refers to given information, or forms a contrast with respect to a previously mentioned element. In other words, the preposed element functions as a topic.

Examples of English Fronting are given below:

- (16) a. What they will buy, we don't know.
 b. *That kind of behaviour*, we cannot tolerate in a civilised society.

(Radford 2009: 329)

The italicised fronted object involves a special point of emphasis and a contrast with respect to some implicit or explicit alternative. Hence topic fronting in English is an instance of contrastive topic (Frascarelli 2007; Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa 2014). In other words, sentence (16) involves a tacit contrast with some other behaviours. Also the use of demonstratives displays the shared status of the information conveyed by the preposed element. Additionally, the end-focus falls upon new information. In this case it is *in a civilised society*. In conclusion, the message follows the structure given information + new information in compliance with the Information-Flow Principle.

Spanish also allows other linear possibilities which seem to involve some kind of rearrangement of the canonical pattern SVO. Alongside (17), we find the additional word orders in (18):

- (17) *Ángela pintó la pared.* (S-V-O)
 Ángela paint-PAST.3SG the wall
 ‘Angela painted the wall.’

- (18) a. *Pintó Ángela la pared.* (V-S-O)
 b. *Pintó la pared Ángela.* (V-O-S)
 c. *La pared pintó Ángela.* (O-V-S)
 d. *La pared(,) la pintó Ángela.* (O-cl-V-S)
 e. *La pared Ángela la pintó.* (O-S-cl-S)
 f. *Ángela la pared la pintó.* (S-O-cl-V)

From a first look at these sentences, the descriptive conclusion is that elements can be freely reordered in Spanish. Nevertheless, in my view this rearrangement is not completely free. It is subject to discourse rules. Radford (2009) holds that optional movement is not truly optional in that it reflects some type of discourse-like properties. This is exactly what we may find in (18): all these sentences have a different informational reading. To be more precise, in (18a) we may have a case of broad focus used typically in descriptions; in (18b) a special discourse emphasis is placed on the subject, which is seen as the informational focus (new information). In (18c) a contrastive focus is detected when preposing the object, whereas in (18d) the object has been displaced to the left periphery and it is the topic of the whole sentence (CLLD). This latter phenomenon can also be observed in (18e-f), where multiple topics can be stacked in the left periphery of the sentence.

From the data in (18) the following generalisation can be extracted: in Spanish movement of constituents is not optional, it has a discourse-determined motivation.

A final note is in order with respect to the relation between topic fronting and passive. In sentence (16b) the subject *we* shows a very vague reference. In those cases, Spanish may opt for a middle passive, given that the content import of the English subject is minimal. In this view, (19a-b) are perfect equivalents to (16b):

- (19) a. *Ese tipo de comportamiento no lo podemos tolerar*
 this kind of behaviour not it can-PRES.1PL to.tolerate
en una sociedad civilizada.
 in a society civilized
 ‘This kind of behaviour, we can’t tolerate in a civilised society.’
 b. *Ese tipo de comportamiento no se puede tolerar*
 that kind of behaviour not SE can-PRES.3SG to.tolerate

en una sociedad civilizada.
 in a society civilized

'This kind of behaviour can't be tolerated in a civilised society.'

In both sentences the given information occurs in initial position, thereby qualifying as topic, whereas the final position is reserved for new information, satisfying the Information Flow Principle.

3.3. NEGATIVE PREPOSING

Negative Preposing is a subtype of Focus Fronting (Radford 2009; Haegeman 2012; Miyagawa 2012; Jiménez-Fernández 2018), which exhibits a contrast in terms of polarity. It may be classified with other independently identified fronting types such as Quantifier Fronting (Leonetti and Escandell 2009), since the preposed element shows a clear negative polarity. This IS phenomenon is very common both in Spanish and in English, and may involve fronting of both arguments and adjuncts which are connected somehow to the polarity of the sentence. This is illustrated in (20-21) for English and in (22-23) for Spanish:

(20) Not a single book did he buy. (Haegeman 2012: 9)

(21) On no account should you eat an apple before breakfast.

(Haegeman 2012: 43)

(22) *Nada tengo que añadir a lo que ya dije en su*
 nothing have-PRES.1SG that to.add to it that already say-PAST.1SG in its
 day
día.

'I have nothing to add to what I said at the time.'

(Leonetti and Escandell 2009: 156)

(23) *En modo alguno se puede tolerar tal*
 in way some SE can-PRES.3SG to.tolerate such
actitud.
 attitude

'By no means can such an attitude be tolerated.'

(Bosque 1980: 34)

As observed in the previous examples, Negative Preposing involves the negation of the whole sentence and it applies to both arguments and adjuncts. In this case the Information Flow Principle is deliberately violated in order to achieve the focalization of the fronted element.

A syntactic property which describes this type of IS strategy is that in both languages the subject occurs after the finite verb. In English this verb is an auxiliary; in Spanish it may be either an auxiliary or a lexical verb. From this it follows that non-inversion ends up in ungrammaticality:

(24) *Not a single book he bought.

(25) **Ni un solo libro él compró.*

not a single book he buy-PAST-3SG

'Not a single book did he buy.'

To conclude this section on the description of the three IS phenomena that I will consider as strategies for translations, three ideas can be highlighted. First, the information structure of a sentence has two parts –one for given information and one for new information, and old information is normally presented before new information (Information-Flow). Second, information structure is manifested in a great variety of sentence structures in English and Spanish. Although Spanish is a language with a relatively free word order in comparison with English, the latter has its own syntactic devices to achieve the presentation of any message in terms of given/new information. And finally, in some constructions the Information-Flow Principle is intentionally not taken into account, which has been exemplified by Negative Preposing, in order to achieve a specific discourse effect.

4. IS AND WORD ORDER AS STRATEGY IN TRANSLATION

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned the importance of strategies provided by IS in the correct expression of the message that a speaker conveys. The equivalence in terms of the topic+focus partition is crucial when translating from a language to another since if the IS of the original text is not preserved the message in the target language can be different as far as discourse intentions in the original language are concerned.

In this section I present a number of texts/sentences which have been extracted from English novels and the corresponding Spanish translations in order to show that a translation which does not stick to the original IS is misleading in the

discourse effect expected in the interlocutor. As stated earlier, I concentrate on the three phenomena introduced in the previous section, namely Passive, Topic Fronting and Negative Preposing.

It is extremely important to use similar discourse strategies to present the same message in exactly the same terms from an information-structure point of view and within an equi-functional translation framework. This may mean that the syntactic configuration will be different in the source and target texts. One such case is passive. In English, passive is more productive than in Spanish, where middle-passive is preferred in the latter.

In a context where we already have information about *bread*, this is elligible as a topic in a passive sentence such as (26):

- (26) From my barrack-room alone a basketful of bread was thrown away at every meal. (from Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, p. 10)

However, the Spanish passive is hardly natural in the same context, as observed in (27), and we usually find the use of the active counterpart, as in (28):

- (27) *En nuestro barracón solo, una canasta de pan era tirada en cada comida.*
 in our barrack-room alone a basketful of bread be-PAST.3SG
 thrown at every meal

'In our barrack-room alone a basketful of bread was thrown away at every meal.'

- (28) *En nuestro barracón solo, tiraban una canasta de pan después de cada comida.*
 in our barrack-room alone throw-PAST.3PL a basketful of
 bread after of every meal

'In our barrack-room alone They threw away a basketful of bread at every meal.'

Ideally, the translation may preserve the IS of the original text by selecting *a basketful of bread* as the topic and highlighting *at every meal* as the focus. In order to achieve this discourse effect I suggest the translation provided in (29):

- (29) *En nuestro barracón solo, una canasta de pan se tiraba*
 in our barrack-room alone a basketful of bread SE throw-PAST.3SG

en cada comida.

at every meal

'In our barrack-room alone a basketful of bread was thrown away at every meal.'

Here the topic (*a basketful of bread*) and the information focus (*at every meal*) coincide in both source and target language, thereby satisfying the information-flow Principle, and hence the syntactic ordering of a sentence moves from given to new information. This shows what an IS accurate translation adds to decide whether the message is conveyed in the same way in both source and target languages.

In light of the crucial role of IS in translation, I analyse cases of real translations where these information-structure devices have successfully been used alongside other translations where they have not been employed, and propose alternatives based on these discourse strategies to improve the translation.

4.1. PASSIVE AND ITS IS PACKAGING

In this section I analyse a passive sentence which has been translated using the corresponding active. This is given in (30), from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Nelle Harper Lee, p. 57, and its translation into Spanish by Baldomero Porta:

- (30) a. Calpurnia's message had been received by the neighborhood.
 b. *Los vecinos habían recibido el mensaje de Calpurnia.*
 the neighbours have-PAST.3PL received the message of Calpurnia
 'Neighbours had received Calpurnia's message.'

This sentence is produced in a context where Calpurnia wants to spread the word that there is a mad dog in the street and wants to warn the neighbours. Word order has fully changed, since the English subject has *Calpurnia's message* in subject position whereas in the Spanish translation this constituent functions as object. Consequently, the organization of the message is thoroughly different. On the one hand, topics are different in the two languages, i.e. *Calpurnia's message* is the English topic, while the Spanish topic is *los vecinos* 'the neighbours'. On the other hand, the information focus has shifted from the by-phrase in the English text to *el mensaje de Calpurnia* 'Calpurnia's message' in the Spanish one.

To preserve the information structure of the original sentence, two alternatives emerge:

- (31) *El mensaje de Calpurnia había sido recibido por los vecinos.*
 the message of Calpurnia have-PAST.3SG been received by the neighbours
 ‘Calpurnia’s message had been received by the neighbours.’
- (32) *El mensaje de Calpurnia lo habían recibido los vecinos.*
 the message of Calpurnia it have-PAST.3PL received the neighbours
 ‘Calpurnia’s message, the neighbours had received it.’

In (31) Spanish passive is used, whereas in (32) CLLD has been used instead. In both sentences the topic *Calpurnia’s message* is maintained favouring the discourse interpretation of the whole sentence being about this entity. In addition, the information focus is also in its right position (final part of the sentence), either via a the by-phrase or a postverbal subject. Since CLLD is much more natural in Spanish than passive, it is preferred.

Now let us turn to one particular example in which the original IS has been preserved. I concentrate on the passive sentence in italics in the context provided in (33), also from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, p. 32, translated into Spanish by Baldomero Porta. The relevant sentence and its translation are given in (34):

- (33) There are no clearly defined seasons in South Alabama; summer drifts into autumn, and *autumn is sometimes never followed by winter*, but turns to a days-old spring that melts into summer again.
- (34) a. [...] autumn is sometimes never followed by winter.
 b. [...] *al otoño a veces no lo sigue el invierno.*
 to.the autumn sometimes not it follow-PRES.3SG the winter
 ‘Autumn, winter sometimes doesn’t follow it.’

This time the IS packaging has been preserved. In both English and Spanish sentences the topic occurs first. Note that in the immediate context (33) autumn has already been mentioned and this qualifies it as given information in the following sentence. The translation in (34b) is an instance of CLLD in which the topic has been displaced to the beginning of the sentence and it is resumed by the clitic *lo* ‘it’ inside the clause.

Next I will turn to a case of translation where passive is involved in English and the translator has decided to use middle passive and postverbal subject. The relevant example is taken from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, chapter I, translated by José Luis López Muñoz:

- (35) “My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”
- (36) *–Mi querido Sr Bennet –le dijo un día su esposa a este caballero–, ¿te has enterado de que por fin se ha alquilado Netherfield Park?*

In this case there is a new topic or a shift of topic (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010; Frascarelli 2007) in the English version; and as such Netherfield Park is at the beginning of the sentence. In Spanish this has not been kept. Much to the contrary, the subject of the middle passive construction is placed in the usual position of information focus, at the end of the sentence. The alternative that I suggest in order to comply with the information flow of the English text occurs in (37):

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| (37) | ¿te has | enterado | de que Netherfield Park se |
| | SE have-PRE.2SG | heard | of that Netherfield Park SE |
| | ha | alquilado | por fin? |
| | have-PRES.3SG | let | at last |

This alternative translation respects the original IS in that Netherfield Park is displaced to the beginning of the sentence, the typical position for topics, and the adverbial *por fin* ‘at last’ takes final position as information focus.

4.2. TOPIC FRONTING

In this section I discuss cases of topic preposing in English and how this is dealt with in translation. As I showed earlier, both English and Spanish make use of this phenomenon, placing the topic in initial position. For this operation I have chosen examples from Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Let us consider the italicised sentence in the text (38):

- (38) “I can but die,” I said, “and I believe in God. Let me try to wait His will in silence”.

These words I not only thought, but uttered; and thrusting back all my misery into my heart, I made an effort to compel it to remain there—dumb and still.

Here the object *these words* have been preposed to qualify as the topic of the sentence. However, the translation does not follow this particular IS partition and instead it leaves the object in its original position.

- (39) *No sólo había pensado aquellas palabras, sino que mis labios*
 not only have-PAST.1SG thought those words but that my lips
las habían pronunciado en alta voz; [...]
 them have-PAST.1PL pronounced in high voice
 'I did not only think these words, but uttered them in high voice.'

Typically, topic fronting has an equivalent in Spanish, namely Clitic Left Dislocation. Hence the improved translation that I suggest is as in (40):

- (40) *Estas palabras no sólo las había pensado, sino que mis labios*
 these words not only them have-PAST.1SG thought but that my lips
las habían pronunciado en alta voz. [...]
 them have-PAST.1PL pronounced in high voice
 'These words I did not only think, but uttered them in high voice.'

In (40) IS package has been preserved since the topic is kept and the strength of the message remains.

In the following instance the IS packaging is preserved. Let us consider the italicised sentence in (41), extracted from a passage in Edgar Alan Poe's *The Black Cat*:

- (41) To those who have cherished an affection for a faithful and sagacious dog, I need hardly be at the trouble of explaining the nature or the intensity of the gratification thus derivable.

Here the information provided by the fronted prepositional object is shared information, which is clearly supported by the use of the demonstrative. In the corresponding version in Spanish (42), the equivalent CLLD is found, which makes it an optimal translation in this context. The resumptive dative clitic *les* 'them' is inserted to indicate the original position of the preposed constituent:

- (42) *A los que han mimado con afecto a un perro fiel*
 to the that have-PRES.3PL pampered with affection to a dog faithful
y sagaz, apenas necesito molestarme en explicarles
 and sagacious hardly need-PRES.1SG to.bother.myself in explaining

la naturaleza o la intensidad del placer que de ello se deriva.

the nature or the intensity of.the pleasure that of it SE derive-PRES.3SG

'To those who have pampered a faithful and sagacious dog with affection, I need hardly be at the trouble of explaining the nature or the intensity of the pleasure that derives from it.'

Finally, I will discuss another case in which the text in the target language does not conform to the ordering of constituents of the source language, thereby leading to a loss of strength in the discourse properties of the sentence. Let us focus on the italicised sentences and the context provided in (43), from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*:

- (43) I left Lowood nearly a year since to become a private governess. I obtained a good situation, and was happy. *This place I was obliged to leave four days before I came here. The reason of my departure I cannot and ought not to explain:* it would be useless, dangerous, and would sound incredible.

The translation offered in the target language does not take into account the two instances of topic fronting that the source language sentences contain, thereby making the discourse dumb. This is given in (44):

- (44) *Cuatro días antes de llegar aquí tuve que dejar el empleo.*

four days before of arriving here have-PRES.1SG that quit the job

No puedo decir ni debo decir por qué.

not can-PRES.1SG tell neither must-PRES.1SG tell for what

'Four days before arriving here, I had to quit the job. Neither I can nor I must tell why.'

As argued earlier, the most natural equivalent IS pattern that we find in Spanish is CLLD. Accordingly, the suggested improved version, preserving the topic-focus partition, follows:

- (45) *El empleo lo tuve que dejar cuatro días antes de llegar*

the job it have-PRES.1SG that quit four days before of to.arrive

aquí. Las razones que me llevaron a esto no puedo ni

here the reasons that me lead-PAST.3PL to this not can-PRES.1SG neither

debo decirlos.

must-PRES.1SG tell.them

'The job I had to quit four days before arriving here. The reasons that led me to this I neither can nor must tell.'

The IS partition is kept to the original version. Hence for the first sentence the topic is *el empleo* 'the job' and the information focus is *cuatro días antes de llegar aquí* 'four days before arriving here', whereas for the second sentence the topic is *las razones que me llevaron a esto* 'the reasons that led me to this' and the information focus is *no puedo ni debo decirlas* 'I neither can nor must tell'. This gives the discourse coherence and the information flows from given to new.

4.3. NEGATIVE PREPOSING

The phenomenon of Negative Preposing involves fronting of a negative constituent that triggers subject/(auxiliary) verb inversion in English and Spanish. This strategy is used to emphasize the negative polarity of the sentence. In this section I present cases of translations from English to Spanish, instantiating this IS strategy.

Examples have been extracted from different English sources and their Spanish translations. All of them are contextualised so as to understand the precise informational import of the message delivered by the relevant sentences. I start with a sentence from Alan Poe's *The Black Cat*:

(46) Neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

Here we find an archaic expression in which the negative element has been fronted and this produces an inversion between the subject and the lexical verb. In more current terms, this sentence would involve subject/auxiliary inversion, as in (47):

(47) Neither by day nor by night did I know the blessing of Rest any more!

In any case, what is important is that the phenomenon of Negative Preposing is also quite common in Spanish, and as such it has been the translators' choice:

(48)	<i>¡Ni</i>	<i>de día ni de noche</i>	<i>volví</i>	<i>a conocer</i>	<i>la bendición</i>
	neither	of day nor of night	return-PAST.1SG	to know	the blessing
	<i>del</i>	<i>descanso!</i>			
	of.the	rest			

The target sentence entirely sticks to the source sentence in terms of word order and IS strategy, which contributes to present an identical flow of information.

Next I turn to a couple of cases in which the IS partition changes from source to target language. Let us start with a brief passage from *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë in (49) and one of the Spanish translations I have found in (50):

- (49) [...] never did his manner become so impressive in its noble simplicity, as when he delivered the oracles of God.
- (50) [...] *jamás sus modales eran tan impresionantes en su*
 never his manners be-PAST.3PL so impressive in their
noble simplicidad como cuando hacía escuchar los oráculos
 noble simplicity as when make-PAST.3SG listen the oracles
de Dios.
 of God

As is clear, the translation involves fronting of the negative element but does not convey the same effect of emphasized polarity since the subject has been left in preverbal position. The alternative is to have subject-verb inversion in Spanish, which according to Leonetti and Escandell (2009), is also obligatory in the target language. Hence the fronting has a prominent highlighting function. This alternative in (51) is just a clear instance of the information-structure strategies that translators may take into account to provide a natural translation.

- (51) [...] *jamás eran sus modales tan impresionantes en su noble simplicidad como cuando hacía escuchar los oráculos de Dios.*

Let us move now to another example from *Jane Eyre* in which the subject is pronominal and the translator has decided to use a null subject, typical in null-subject languages such as Spanish. However no Preposing at all takes place in Spanish, losing the emphatic flavour of the English original sentence:

- (52) A pang of exquisite suffering—a throe of true despair—rent and heaved my heart. Worn out, indeed, I was; not another step could I stir. I sank on the wet doorstep: I groaned—I wrung my hands—I wept in utter anguish.
- (53) *Un sufrimiento inmenso, una desesperación infinita colmaron*
 a suffering immense a despair infinite fill-PAST.3PL
mi corazón. No pude dar un solo paso. Me senté
 my heart not can-PAST.1SG to.give a single step me sit-PAST.1SG

en el peldaño de la puerta, con los pies sobre el suelo mojado,
 on the doorstep of the door, with the feet upon the floor wet
junté las manos y lloré con angustia.
 wring-PAST.1SG the hands and weep-PAST.1SG with anguish

The alternative I suggest, focussing on the target sentence is as follows:

(54) Ni un solo paso pude dar.
 not a single step can-PAST.1SG to.give

In this case the Negative Preposing of the original sentence is preserved, thereby keeping with the emphatic meaning that the particular context requires. To sound natural in Spanish, a null subject has been used.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this work, I have shown that IS packaging in the two languages involved in a specific translation (source and target languages) is quite important to preserve the organization of the message conveyed, displaying hence similar emphatic features.

The partition in terms of topic/focus may ideally be kept in the target language, though this may lead to a change in the syntactic construction used, as we have seen with English passives, which may have two equivalents in Spanish from a discourse perspective. On the one hand, a middle passive may be suggested when the whole sentence expresses broad focus. On the other hand, CLLD where the object is displaced to the sentence initial position is the best option when the English passive subject is the topic in the IS partition.

Research should be carried out in the near future regarding the IS-based processes that inverse translation may take into account given the different word order properties of English and Spanish.

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