

Words Travel Worlds. The Translator Does the Driving.

Mona Baker's *In Other Words*. Routledge, 2018

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The third edition of the book *In Other Words* by Mona Baker (professor Emerita of Translation Studies at the University of Manchester, UK) represents the definitive guide and a must read for anyone studying translations, regardless of their language combinations and of their prior knowledge in the field of linguistics. Reflecting recent developments in a fast-growing discipline, the book is a reference work for students, teachers and researchers alike.

Why a book on translations? We are living in an era of increased visibility for translators and interpreters, as every aspect of our social and political life is heavily mediated by translations; translations have become part and parcel of our professional and academic life nowadays, and because uncredited book-length translations now belong to an earlier, less enlightened time, the field of translation studies has become more appealing to would-be translators.

Drawing on linguistic theory and social semiotics, the third edition of this best-selling book serves as a practical, user-friendly guide, accessible and authoritative at the same time, combining scholarly rigor with graspable explanations. The book is structured in nine chapters, providing a comprehensive coverage of the major theories in the field, bringing forth numerous problems that translators are faced with, and offering solutions to overcome them.

The organization of the book is hierarchical, starting at the simplest possible level – the word – and gradually widening its focus to aspects such as pragmatic and semiotic equivalence. Chapter one is an introductory chapter, discussing translation as a profession. The second chapter focuses on the smallest unit to possess meaning i.e. the word, and discusses the relationships between word and meaning, the different types of meaning: propositional, expressive, presupposed, and evoked meaning, as well as the problems that arise when there is non-equivalence between the words in the source language and the target language. Chapter three, '*Equivalence above word level*' looks at collocations, idioms and fixed expressions and at the difficulties encountered by translators in rendering their various aspects of meaning, as well as strategies used by professionals to deal with such issues. Chapter four deals with grammatical categories such as person, number, gender, tense, voice, modality etc. Chapters five and six explore the notion of cohesion, identifying grammatical and lexical relationships that provide links between various parts of a text. Chapter seven goes beyond the textual level of connecting sentences and paragraphs together, focusing on the way in which utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context, thus stepping in the realm of pragmatics. Chapter 8, '*Semiotic Equivalence*', moves beyond verbal expression, to explore the interplay between verbal and visual elements, in popular genres such as comics, films, children's literature etc. Chapter 9, '*Beyond equivalence: ethics and morality*', is meant to raise the reader's awareness to the wider implications of their decisions when translating a text, and to the impact their choices might have on others. It deals with some of the concrete ethical choices and dilemmas that translators often encounter, while attempting to respond to the increased pressures on translators to demonstrate accountability and awareness of the tremendous social and political implications of their decisions.

As Gill and Guzman² put it

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² Gill, Rosalind and Maria Constanza Guzman (2010) „*Teaching Translation for Social Awareness in Toronto*”, in Julie Boeri and Carol Maier (eds) *Compromiso Social y Traducción/Interpretación//Transaltion/Interpreting and Social Activism*, Granada:ECOS, 121-133

Translation is a point of contact between peoples, and since it is rare that two peoples have the same access to power, the translator is in a privileged position as mediator, to make explicit the differences between cultures, expose injustices or contribute to diversity in the world.

Based on extensive research, each chapter is accompanied by a plethora of examples from a wide range of languages, such as French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic etc. The book is also perfectly suited to online learning environments, as the third edition comes with an accompanying companion website, offering additional end of chapter exercises, with a wider range of example answers in even more languages, new videos and audio lectures, links to training resources and translation blogs etc.

Drawing on interesting examples from a wide range of genres and languages, Mona Baker's *In Other Words* remains the essential coursebook for any student of translation studies, shedding light not only on the provocations of translating one language into another, but also on the ethical and moral challenges faced by the translator.