Book Reviews
Mapping translation spaces in motion

Titika Dimitroulia

SIGNATA. *Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of semiotics* 7/2016. *Traduire: signes, textes, pratiques/Translating: Signs, Texts, Practices.* Dossier dirigé par J. Fontanille, M. Songogni & R. Troqe. Liège : Presses Universitaires de Liège.

Whether it is called 'Translation Semiotics', 'Semiotics of Translation' or 'Semiotics and Translation' and irrespective of its conception as a proper discipline or a distinct approach, the contribution of semiotics to Translation Studies is becoming more and more visible nowadays. Semiotics seems entangled with translation studies in the context of a Bakthinian dialogue and dialogism. If every turn in Translation Studies highlights the interdisciplinary character of the field, the nature and dynamics of each encounter needs to be circumscribed and defined, as there are many ways, levels and degrees of interdisciplinarity, while transdisciplinarity itself seems to be the more complex and fruitful form of collaboration between fields and disciplines, as a process of mutual enrichment through a common development (Gambier 2006; Klein 2010; Lambert 2012). Synchrony and diachrony appear, though, to alter the conception of those turns and confluences as separate and distinctive moments in theory and practice, bringing out analogies and similarities and illustrating new entities, informed over a long period and through very complex exchanges – or even with no exchanges and influences but in similar cultural contexts, reminding us of the similarities without influence in literature and the suggestion to address them through the explanation of their common causes (Van Tieghem 1931).

This is the case, for example, with the sociology of translation, as described by Chesterman (2006), examining the social features in many translation theories and starting her historical account from Polysystem Theory and Descriptive Translation Studies in the context of a broad sociocultural approach; or by other translation scholars who stress the interweaving between systemic theories, from Russian Formalism, Structuralism and Polysystem Theory to the sociological theories of Bourdieu or McLuhan, systematically used in Translation Studies (Codde 2003; Wolf 2010). This diachronic consideration of the convergences of the disciplines and, even more, their results and impact, is the most probable place to look for support for trandisciplinary approaches.

The current volume of *Signata* seems to stress the need for this reconsideration of the relationship between translation studies and semiotics-semiology – terms with reference to different theories that are all of great interest for the study of translation. Combining theory and practice with concrete case studies that explore semiotic tools in different research areas, the 18 texts of the volume, coming all from experts in their respective field, present *in extensis* the semiotic turn in translation, its concepts and tools, inciting the reader to uncover similarities between the semiotic and the other translation turns; and to a more complex use of models and tools coming from different approaches in the study of translation, whether situated in the Lotmanian semiosphere, or Even-Zohar's polysystem, or in culture conceived as an autopoietic system, etc. Thus, transdisciplinarity meets and enhances transculturality, broadening and enriching the sociocultural perspective in Translation Studies.

The two texts opening the volume, by Susan Petrilli and Dinda Gorlé, outline the state of the art in the semiotics of translation and explore the semiotranslational perspectives as a contribution to the definition and consequently the practice of translation, with emphasis on its sociopolitical and cultural dynamics. Petrilli considers translation as the essence of thinking and communication, taking into account the inherent communicational entropy. Just as a sign can only live among signs and in interaction with them, she suggests 'vital' translation as a new type of translation which, in completing Jakobson's model, describes this vital process of the sign being in dialogue with the other and the world. She proposes a dialogical philosophical examination of the notion of translation, which places emphasis on ethics and ideology. In this respect, she covers with scholars who examine the question of with ethics in Translation Studies from different points of view, such as Antoine Berman, Lawrence Venuti or Mona Baker, especially in conflict situations; with the hermeneutics of translation and George Steiner in particular, who in *After Babel* argues that 'any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance' (1975: 45); or with the global translation theory proposed by Michel Serres, in *Hermes III* (1974).

From a different perspective but still from a Peircean point of view, Gorlé refutes the Saussurian dualisms for their application to translation tends to obfuscate its cultural dynamics. Referring to the popular model of Vinay and Darbelnet, she attempts to show how much more complicated are translation phenomena, deeply rooted in concrete historical conditions, inextricably interrelated to the human translator, and therefore open to constant modifications that support creative, dynamic responses. Sociotranslation, as semiosis in all types of translation, opens the interpretative perspectives either from the translator's or the reader's point of view, in a complex dialogical movement. Considering translation as re-creation, Gorlé puts forward the role of the translator in the complex, systemic, cultural process of translation. Supporting, moreover, the encounter of semiotranslation with the sociology of translation, on the grounds of the latter's engagement with norms, *habitus* and social practices, Gorlé insists on the dynamics of cultural semiotic formations, in the context of which translation, as interpretation and signification, is situated.

Reconsidering texts in a broad semiotic sense, as all units, verbal and non- verbal, which carry an integral meaning, Gambier contributes to the intense dialogue on the complexification of the translation's perception by integrating the history of the text as well as the media perspective, with particular reference to the multisemiocity on the current digital paradigm. Revisiting both the text type models and exploring the new multisemiotic digital paradigm, he connects Jakobson's types of translation with the study of hybrid translation practices, highlighting the need for collaborative, polysemiotic tools in the theory and the practice of translation. In his persistent exploration of the textual and the digital, Gambier meets Federico Pellizzi's assumptions on digital textuality (2006) and enters into dialogue with Kay O'Halloran, Sabine Tan and Peter Wingell, in addressing the web of meanings informed through intersemiosis, conceived as resemiotisation. Semiotic resources are modeled as multilevel systems of meaning and the shifts occurring in and across them are analyzed according to a systemic functional approach and with customized software tools, with emphasis on the multiple decisions taken during the process of resemiotisation, according to which some meanings remain and new meanings come across, in a dynamic semantic expansion that defines cultural communication. Setting up a theoretical model and applying it to concrete case studies, the article offers an integrated approach to the dominant multimodal texts, all the while assisting translators to realize the complex formation of meaning and its rendering in translation.

What seems very important in this volume is that even the more theoretical approaches give, or may give, practical solutions to translators, proving that semiotics of translation can very well serve the practical orientation of translation studies, underlined by Roya Jabaruti with reference to the pioneers of the cultural turn, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere. Both her study on conceptual metaphors of body parts and their translation from Persian into English, and Mohammad Ahmad Thawabteh's study on intertextuality as rhetorical device in a speech of Bin Laden make fruitful contributions to the debate about the translation of culture-bound elements and cultural translation.

All of the volume's articles converge in their systematic contextualization of translation practice, by taking into account both explicit and implicit sociopolitical and cultural parameters in mainly interlingual and intersemiotic translations, through various transpositions, situated on the micro- and macro-level. For example, as regards literature, Allesandra Chiappori's article on translating the Oulipian narrative practices and rhetorical devices of Raymond Queneau's works challenges the untranslatability of his experimental writing, identifying linguistic and cultural translation difficulties that cannot be resolved without creative cultural rewriting. In doing so, she enters into dialogue with Gorlé, who refers to Barbara Cassin and her dictionary of untranslatable utterances and stresses the centrality of the translator in creative recreation; but also with Richard Dixon, who discusses the range and depth of shifts in all literary translation in order to naturalize a work in a new culture, with reference to Umberto Eco's last book and special reference to the author–translator collaboration that offers greater freedom

to the translator to adapt the work into a new cultural context. Dixon's views harmonise with those of Susan Bassnett and Peter Bush (2007) or of Gabriela Saldanha (2014) on creativity and style in translation. Federica Massia explores similar transpositions, focusing both on creativity and on the ideological aspects of the shifts introduced by Collodi when he confronts the issue of national identity when he translates Perrault's *contes* into Italian during the period of Italian reunification. His translation is qualified as a *belle infidèle*, like those described by Georges Mounin as shaping, elevating and enriching the French language two centuries before. It must be stressed that all these interlingual analyses foreground the autonomy of the translations in the literary field, as well as the major importance of the translating subject, unveiling the potential of semiotic approaches as regards the study of this very specific translation type. In addition, corpus-based analysis in the education of the literary translator, with a parallel corpus and language technology tools, as described by Diva Cardoso de Camargo, appears as a very effective method in translation teaching, pointing out linguistic and cultural similarities and differences through authentic translated discourse and its proper modalities. From a semiotic perspective, this practice meets the long and heated debate on the use of corpora in translation studies and translator's education (Baker 1993; Laviosa 2002; Zannetin, Bernardini and Stewart 2003; Olohan 2004; Kruger, Wallmach and Munday 2011; Fantinuoli and Zanettin 2015)

There is no doubt, though, that this potential is much more important when it comes to polysemiotic texts and even more in social practices – at which point semiotics meets sociology. Miguel A. Bernal-Merino's article on videogame localization explores the gaming experience as a whole, in its material and immaterial modalities and in its cultural and intercultural context. Pointing out the deficiencies of the current videogame localization system, Bernal-Merino suggests a holistic approach to the transposition of videogames to another linguistic and cultural system, as a prerequiste for a felicitous gaming experience, but also for the international commercial success of the games. Sabrina Baldo de Brébisson's typology of special subtitles offers insight into the verbal-nonverbal interaction in movies, by highlighting in detail how different techniques and expressive alternatives enhance the possibilities of verbal expression by integrating the connotations and the communication context, and allowing for the flexible interaction between the different semiotic systems responsible for the spectator's experience. Given the technological affordances, what must be done is to train translators adequately, so that they can explore fully the new possibilities offered by the digital media. Evangelos Kourdis deals with interlingual and intersemiotic translation, studying Greek lithographs of the Balkan wars period, whose captions contain both the Greek text and its French translation. Reading the iconic content and finding, at the text level, important differences between the original and the translation, Kourdis strives to explain these transpositions with reference to national identity and ideology, as well as to the different target groups and objectives aimed by each language.

Intersemiotic translation is not reduced to verbal and iconic elements. Halloran, Tan and Wingell examine graphs as a translation of verbal information in the same text. Loveday Kempthorne and Peter Donolan present the Romanian poet and mathematician Ion Barbu-Dan Barbilian, who conceived his work as a continuous intersemiotic translation between poetry and mathematics and outlined both his productions accordingly. Although the study of Richard Stiff on representation and the tension between artifact (analog and digital) and reality, the medium and the message, addresses the issues of Translation Studies from a mere theoretical point of view, his analysis concerning the modes of perception in the public sphere and the arbitrary nature of cultural codes, by engaging with media theory's concerns on transparent immediacy, hypermediacy and remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) offers exciting new ideas for research. The practice of cosplay, and the translation of costume between comics or film or literary characters and its reconstruction is described and analysed by Emerald L. King. The volume concludes with a history of the semiotic debate in comics theory in France and Belgium and an article defining sports practice, and especially tennis, as a multilevel system of resistance.

Any review is necessarily reductive but this is particularly so in the case of a volume with such a broad range and scope, that endeavors to present the state of the art in Semiotics of Translation and explore the dynamics of the encounter of semiotics with translation and translation studies, especially in the new, digital landscape. An exciting, insightful, inspiring reading.

REFERENCES

Baker, Mona 1993. Corpus linguistics and translation studies: Implications and Applications. In: Mona Baker, Gill Francis & Elena Tognini-Bonelli (eds) *Text and technology: In honour of John Sinclair.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 233–250.

Bassnett, Susan and Bush, Peter 2006. *The Translator as Writer*. London and New York: Continuum.

Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Chesterman, Andrew 2006. Questions in the Sociology of Translation. In: João Ferreira Duarte, Alexandra Assis Rosa and Teresa Seruya (eds) *Translation Studies at the Interface of Disciplines*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 9-27.

Codde, Philippe 2003. Polysystem Theory Revisited: A New Comparative Introduction. In *Poetics Today,* 24:1, 91-126.

Gambier, Yves 2006. Pour une sociotraduction. In: João Ferreira Duarte, Alexandra Assis Rosa and Teresa Seruya (eds) *Translation Studies at the Interface of Disciplines*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 29-42.

Kruger, Alet, Wallmach, Kim and Munday, Jeremy 2011. *Corpus-based Translation Studies: Research and Applications*. London: Continuum.

Lambert, José 2012. Interdisciplinarity in Translation Studies. In: Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (eds) *Handbook of the Translation Studies*, vol.3. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 81–88.

Laviosa, Sara 2002. *Corpus-based translation studies: Theory, findings, applications*.
Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Olohan, Maeve 2004. *Introducing corpora in translation studies*. London: Routledge.

Saldanha, Gabriela 2014. Style in, and of, Translation. In: Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (eds) *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Serres, Michel 1974. *La Traduction. Hermès III.* Paris : Editions de Minuit.

Steiner, George 1975. *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation.* Oxford / London / New York: Oxford University Press.

Thompson Klein, Julie 2010. Typologies of interdisciplinarity: The boundary work of definition. In Robert Frodeman, Julie Thompson Klein, and Roberto Carlos Dos Santos Pacheco (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity.*New York: Oxford University Press, 15-30.

Van Tieghem, Paul 1931. *La Littérature comparée: Le mot et la chose.* Paris: Armand Colin.

Wolf, Michaela 2010. Sociology of Translation. In: Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (eds) *Handbook of Translation Studies,* vol.1. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 337-343.

Federico Zanettin, Silvia Bernardini and Dominic Stewart (eds) 2003. *Corpora in Translator Education*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing.

Claudio Fantinuoli and Federico Zanettin (eds) 2015. *New directions in corpus-based translation studies*. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Titika Dimitroulia is Associate Professor of Translation Theory and Practice in the Department of French Language and Literature, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
Email: tdimi@frl.auth.gr