60 years after Jakobson: new directions in intersemiotic translation

Maud Gonne, University of Namur
Laurence Meurant, University of Namur

Ever since Jakobson’s seminal 1959 paper, research in Translation Studies has mainly focused on one type of translation – interlinguistic – at the expense of intralingual and intersemiotic translations. Nevertheless, during the last few decades intersemiotic translation has inspired a growing body of interdisciplinary work not only as a response to the proliferation of multimodal productions (e.g., O’Sullivan & Jeffcote 2013) but also as a theoretical framework embracing a variety of translational practices and forms. The cover term of “transfer” can therefore be seen as an attempt to unite the three types of translation under one single methodological framework (e.g., Göpferich 2010, D’hulst 2012). Recent views on translations as traces of hybrid encounters have also opened up theoretical reflection towards a more comprehensive model of translational processes (e.g., Simon 2012). Currently, some translation scholars deal with (inter)semiotic translation (e.g., semiotranslation, ecotranslation) as an overall epistemological background for Translation studies – and the Humanities in general – challenging a.o. text-oriented and linear approaches (e.g. Marais 2014, Cronin 2017). However, the intertwining of the three types of translation remains unclear, as a lack of consensus on the definition and scope of intersemiotic translation tends to limit theoretical discussions. While more and more attention is given to multimodality, including gesture, co-speech gesture and sign languages (e.g., Napier 2015, Goldin-Meadow & Brentari 2017), little effort is made to initiate a dialogue between (sub)disciplines sharing common preoccupations such as Adaptation studies, Multimodal analysis, (interpretive) Semiotics, Sign language interpreting or Transfer Studies. Which obstacles – be them theoretical, conceptual, institutional or related to the difficult dialog between disciplines – have hindered the use of the concept of intersemiotic translation?

The status of intersemiotic translation as a product, as a process, as an epistemological paradigm or as an analytical tool constitutes an important challenge and opportunity for Translation Studies to define its scope across a variety of modes of signification – textual, signed, visual, oral, gestural. Therefore, this panel aims to discuss the way questions and debates of translation scholars can be looked at anew from intersemiotic perspectives. We invite papers contributing to this theoretical issue through different (disciplinary) angles. Possible subtopics include but are not limited to:

- Multimodality and the translation of oral, gestural, signed and/or written practices;
- The input of Adaptation studies, Multimodal analysis, (interpretive) Semiotics, Sign language interpreting, Transfer Studies and/or other (sub)disciplines to Translation Studies and vice versa;
- Tracing intersemiotic translation and translational processes;
- Intersemiotic translation as epistemological paradigm and/or methodological tool.

References


D’hulst, L. “(Re)locating translation history: from assumed translation to assumed transfer” (Translation Studies 5 : 2, 2012), pp. 139-155.


Mossop, B. “Judging a translation by its cover” (The Translator 24 : 1, 2018).


