

Further reading

Castro, O. and E. Ergun (2018) 'Translation and Feminism', in F. Fernández and J. Evans (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Politics*, London: Routledge, 125–143.

Includes an overview of recent research in feminist translation studies which engages – explicitly or implicitly – with intersectionality. Collins, P.H. and S. Bilge (2016) *Intersectionality*, Cambridge: Polity.

An accessible introduction to intersectionality, written by two sociologists and appearing in Polity's 'Key Concepts' series.

Cooper, B. (2016) 'Intersectionality', in L. Disch and M. Hawkesworth (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 385–406.

A helpful survey of current debates about intersectionality among feminist theorists.

Flotow, L. von (2009) 'Contested Gender in Translation: Intersectionality and metamorphics', *Palimpsestes* 22: 245–255.

The first detailed consideration of intersectionality in relation to translation studies, where the author explains why she believes the concept is of limited use.

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Intertextuality

Julia Kristeva coined the term *intertextualité* in the late 1960s to denote a radical view of textuality that formed part of her own semiotic theory, known as *sémanalyse*. For Kristeva, the text is a "translinguistic apparatus", a "productivity", and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive) . . . and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality" (1980:36; original emphasis). The stress here is not on the interconnections between concrete textual products but on "the absorption and transformation" of one text by another (ibid.:66) and, ultimately, on the "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (Kristeva 1984:59–60).

Two points are worth pointing out. First, this conception is based on a "global notion of text" which encompasses virtually every

aspect of culture, every semiotic process (Pfiester 1991:212). Second, it "seems to evade human subjects in favour of the more abstract terms, text and textuality" (Allen 2000:36). This is epitomized in Kristeva's famous statement that the "notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity" (1980:66; original emphasis). Human subjects retain a position in the whole process, but only as "unimportant mediators" in the transformations of texts (Orr 2003:30). Barthes offers a more concrete account of this mediative role by subverting the traditional view of the author and the reader. The text, he contends, is not the substantiation of the author's expression, but a "tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture", and hence the "writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original", can only "mix writings" (Barthes 1977a:146). The text thus reveals itself as an incessant flow of multiple writings, "but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader". And yet, Barthes argues, "this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology" (1977a:148).

The early, post-structuralist conceptions of intertextuality were followed by the so-called structuralist approaches of Genette and Riffaterre (Allen 2000:95). Both restrict their scope to issues of literary theory and criticism and inscribe the concept in a significantly different view of textual networks. Genette (1997a:1) opens his *Palimpsestes* with a redefinition of the subject of poetics as "the entire set of general or transcendent categories . . . from which emerges each singular text". The new subject is termed "transtextuality" and is divided into five types: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality (Genette 1997a:1–7). Intertextuality is restricted to "the actual presence of one text within another" and concerns the practices of quoting, plagiarism and allusion (ibid.:2). Genette's concept of intertextuality is a tool that fits perfectly with his view of the literary critic as a Lévi-Straussian *bricoleur* who "takes the work and returns it to the system, illuminating the relation between work and system obscured by the author" (Allen 2000:96).

Riffaterre's approach addresses the referentiality of the literary work and rests on the

assumption that “[t]he text refers not to objects outside of itself, but to an intertext” (Riffaterre 1981:228). Intertextuality is then defined as the “web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationships between text and intertext” (Riffaterre 1990:57), and is associated with a specific phase of the reading process, which is triggered by various textual incompatibilities, termed “ungrammaticalities” (Riffaterre 1981:230). The intertextual reading of the work does not result in an unresolvable undecidability, but may lead to “a complete decoding, the one fit to be stabilized” (ibid.:228). Riffaterre’s approach is restricted in scope, but it employs a general notion of intertextuality that transcends mere reference to individual sources. It acknowledges textual interdependence as a constitutive factor of textuality, but at the same time asserts the uniqueness of the literary work and the possibility of a complete decoding of it.

Two other prominent variants of the concept of intertextuality as an analytical tool derive from text linguistics and critical discourse analysis, respectively. In the former, intertextuality is defined as one of the seven standards of textuality and is said to concern “the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts” (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:10). Here intertextuality is seen from a cognitive point of view in terms of the “systematic tendencies in interaction of stored world-knowledge and text-presented knowledge” of text users (ibid.:202). In critical discourse analysis, intertextuality is explored in connection with a distinctive type of textual analysis, which focuses on the texts’ selective use of the existing “orders of discourse” and thus “draws attention to [the texts’] dependence upon society and history” (Fairclough 1992a:194–195). Like Kristeva and Bakhtin, Fairclough emphasizes the socio-historical aspect of texts. But unlike them, he uses the concept of intertextuality to analyze texts as instances of specific linguistic practices (1989:152–155).

These early influential approaches were soon followed by derivative ones in various fields of study. Many of these emerged through a mixture of different strands of thought and therefore do not lend themselves easily to clear-cut classifications. Plett distinguishes between a progressive and a traditionalist group of “intertextualists”.

Members of the former “try to cultivate and develop the revolutionary heritage of the originators of the new concept”, whereas “[t]he traditionalists . . . use ‘intertextuality’ as a general term to improve their methodological and terminological instruments” (1991:3–4). This distinction may not cover all cases, especially those that rest on a combination of incompatible elements from both groups. Yet it allows for revealing the mixed (or even contradictory) character of several approaches in terms of both the purposes they are intended to serve and the adopted mode of use of the concept. The “progressive” group uses what Culler (2001:116) calls the “larger concept” of intertextuality, emphasizing the “anonymous discursive practices . . . that make possible the signifying practices of later texts” (ibid.:114). The “traditionalists”, by contrast, prefer a narrower concept that enables them to focus on identifiable sources and determinable relations. However, a conflation of the two concepts is not unusual. Thus, between the stances exemplified by the two groups we could envisage a range of intermediate positions. This would be especially helpful in dealing with disciplines that present no unified approach to intertextuality. Translation studies is a case in point.

Intertextuality and translation

Early references to intertextuality in connection with translation can be found in Eagleton (1977) and Spivak (1976). Both scholars argue for a reconceptualization of translation in terms of non-hierarchical intertextual relations, a theme later widely adopted in translation studies. Translation scholars have shown an increasing interest in intertextuality since the 1980s, resulting in a series of diverse studies on the topic. The mixed character of many of these studies makes a straightforward classification difficult. Yet two dominant tendencies, along with variant applications, can be discerned. On the one hand, there is a tendency to use a specific concept of intertextuality to address general or specific problems of translation. On the other hand, there are studies that seek a redefinition of translation itself in intertextual terms, usually drawing on post-structuralism and deconstructionism.

Studies that exemplify the first tendency subsume under the notion of intertextuality the

background knowledge of text users, together with relevant textual conventions relating to areas such as rhetoric and style. The most typical of these studies draw explicitly on text linguistics and/or critical discourse analysis. Neubert (1981) was the first to discuss translation in intertextual terms, from a text linguistic perspective. Although his approach largely retains the common treatment of translation in terms of equivalence, it does foreshadow a shift in orientation. This is clearly indicated by his statement that “the key notion of translatability is in fact synonymous with intertextuality” (1981:143). His notion of translatability rests on the assumption that “human beings share an experiential world and perhaps also universal processing strategies” and adopts a view of translation as an aspect of the “general . . . human potential to generate textual variants” (ibid.:142). This can be understood as a variation on the dominant understanding of translatability in the 1950s and 1960s in terms of cultural universals (Sakellariou 2017:565–566). The focus on texts as communicative occurrences allows for specific translation problems to be addressed on the basis of a conception of intertextuality as “a phenomenon that a communicatively equivalent translation or interpretation shares with its source” (Neubert 1981:143). Neubert’s study anticipated themes that now enjoy some currency in translation studies, such as the proliferation of intertextual relations triggered by translational activity and the function of translation as a mediative process. The latter theme was taken up by Hatim and Mason (1990a) in connection with the specific issue of the transfer of intertextual references.

Drawing on text linguistics, Hatim and Mason (1990a:132–137) constructed a “unified framework” that starts from the recognition of “intertextual signals” and leads progressively to an evaluation of the intertextual reference’s contribution to its “host text”. As “an essential condition of all texts” (ibid.:137), intertextuality lies at the heart of the work of translators as both critical readers and text producers. The translator can be portrayed as someone who is able to process intertextual references and, more generally, mediate between diverse semiotic practices. Mediation is the new generic term for the complex decision-making process of the translator, which is said to be influenced by temporal

and cultural factors (ibid.:128). An approach to intertextuality that focuses on the translator’s decision-making and mediative role can be easily adjusted to support research on specific translation problems or challenges. Schäffner (2012c:347), for instance, focuses on the challenges posed by “intercultural intertextuality”, by which she means intertextual references to texts that originate in different languages and cultures. She investigates intercultural intertextuality, thus defined, in political speeches and identifies a set of specific translation strategies for dealing with such intertextual relations (ibid.:353–359). Like Hatim and Mason (1990a), Schäffner examined intertextual references from the point of view of their functions for different readers, with emphasis on how these references may shift through the process of translation.

Other studies on particular aspects of intertextuality in the context of translation cover such diverse topics as the choice of metric pattern and lexicon in the translation of poetry (Canani 2014:123–127), translating “the voices and echoes of tradition” in classic plays (Komalesha 2014:231), the use of Shakespearean poetic form and diction in the English translations of ancient Greek drama (Roberts 2010:306–312), the interconnections between conference papers and their impact in simultaneous interpreting (Alexieva 1994) and the translator’s choices at the textual levels of culture-specific works of children’s literature, including the relation between verbal text and illustrations (Desmet 2001). Desmet’s study highlights the interaction between verbal and non-verbal systems. This is a key topic in audiovisual translation, where intertextuality is not an established term to refer to the relationship between verbal and non-verbal systems but has been used in relation to other issues in the literature, both in a general and a specific sense. Some scholars have suggested, for example, that Beaugrande and Dressler’s (1981) concept of intertextuality can be applied to audiovisual products (Sakellariou 2012:687; Zabalbeascoa 2008:22). It has also been suggested that recourse to the concept of intertextuality can help to elucidate the “semiotic status” of subtitling as a “type of translation that is semiotically determined by intersemiotic intertextual relations” (Sakellariou 2012:690). Such intertextual relations may be of various types, encompassing sociocultural allusions

(Hurtado de Mendoza Azaola 2009:70–71) as well as specific references to books, past events and audiovisual programmes (Muñoz Gil 2009:148). In audiovisual translation, intertextuality involves greater inter-semiotic interaction between different elements of the situation, and in that respect the translated text can be said to come closer to Kristeva's concept of a translinguistic apparatus. What all these studies have in common is that they attempt to operationalize a conception of intertextuality that can be used for their specific research interests. They tend to start from a general statement about the significance of intertextuality in processes of textual production and interpretation, and then proceed to investigate its role in specific domains.

Studies that exemplify the second tendency have a similar point of departure, but rather than addressing translation challenges seek instead to redefine the ontological status of translation. An endeavour of this kind typically engages with a set of interrelated issues that revolve around the relationship between the source and the target text. The concept of intertextuality is instrumental in addressing these issues and has been primarily used to challenge accounts of translation based on an essentialist concept of equivalence (Sakellariou 2015:40–44). Essentialist accounts are critiqued for drawing on a view of the text as a self-sufficient work with a unitary meaning and/or a fixed function, which logically leads to a conception of translation as a reproductive process. Against this approach, it has been argued that “[m]eaning is a plural and contingent relation . . . and therefore a translation cannot be judged according to mathematics-based concepts of semantic equivalence or one-to-one correspondence” (Venuti 1995b/2008:13). Translation equivalence is treated as unattainable (Hermans 2007b:59; Littau 1997/2010:440; Venuti 2009:159), and equivalence thus becomes unreliable as a means of defining translation (Farahzad 2008:126).

The emphasis on meaning as a plural relation goes hand in hand with a shift in focus from texts as products to their internal differentiation and the productive intertextual forces that shape textuality. From this perspective, “no text is original; no text is the source of another” (Farahzad 2008:126). Thus “the very distinction between translation and original” is blurred and “the hierarchical relation between . . . what is deemed primary and unique and what is deemed sec-

ondary and second-rate” is undermined (Littau 1997/2010:438). This multidimensional critique is targeted simultaneously at a set of interdependent understandings of textuality, meaning, the relation between the source and the target text, the status of translation as a practice and its character as a meaning-assigning process. The collapse of the specific conception of textuality that underpins essentialist accounts brings about a domino effect, which results in a reconceptualization of translation in intertextual terms. The meaning-transfer analogy becomes untenable, and translation can now be conceived of as a process of recontextualization (Farahzad 2008:126; Roux-Faucard 2006:108; Venuti 2009:159–162). This process “involves the creation of another intratextual context and another network of intertextual and interdiscursive relations” that entails “not only a formal and semantic loss, but also an exorbitant gain” for the source text (Venuti 2009:162). It further results in the enrichment of the target culture's intertextual space with new threads that in turn also impact the source text's intertextual network (Roux-Faucard 2006:116).

The key idea behind this redefinition is not correspondence but proliferation. Rather than striving for accuracy or adequacy, translation is thought to involve choices and thus be inherently partial (Farahzad 2008:127; Hermans 2007:61; Venuti 1995b/2008:13; Venuti 2011b:246). This precludes the attainment of a definitive translation (Hermans 2007:59; Littau 1997/2010:440), which in turn entails an inexhaustible potential for retranslation (Farahzad 2008:126; Hermans 2007:61). In this sense, translation “is nothing other than the celebration of the many multivalent translated versions of an already ‘anoriginal original’”, Littau argues, with the shift “from the one to the many” . . . [constituting] also a shift from loss to gain, a shift from an unattainable equivalence to an unstoppable proliferation” (1997/2010:440). Studies in this second strand of research appear to be breaking new ground, but in a sense they merely provide a theoretical ratification of earlier developments in translation studies. The view of translation they sought to put forward had already started to take shape, gradually, through the numerous novel approaches that evolved over a number of preceding decades. From the descriptive translation studies of the 1970s to the cultural studies

approach and its aftermath, the discipline has undergone a profound, multidirectional reorientation that broadened its research horizon and yielded a wide array of diverse studies (Sakellariou 2017:564–565). Taken together, these studies have variously contributed, through their mutual exchanges and the debates they triggered, to constructing a notion of translation that shares many features with the (largely postmodernist) redefinition of translation outlined above. Yet this notion does not rest exclusively on postmodernist foundations, notwithstanding the key role that post-structuralism and deconstructionism played in this connection (Gentzler 2001:167–186; Gentzler 2002).

Future directions

The reorientation of translation studies at the turn of the century along the lines outlined above was decisive in investigating the relationship between intertextuality and translation. In its diverse variants, the concept of intertextuality started to gain currency in the discipline at a time when translation scholars were experimenting with new perspectives and methods. To this end, it was appropriated both as an analytical instrument and an ideological weapon in theoretical debates. As an instrument of analysis, however, it has not been systematically elaborated; rather, it has remained an underdeveloped category covering heterogeneous phenomena. As ammunition in theoretical debates, the concept may not have been used consistently, especially in its postmodernist variant, but it has proved quite effective as the trademark of an ambitious view of translation.

The concept of intertextuality is likely to lose much of its popularity in translation studies unless a comprehensive typology of intertextual relations can be provided for the specific research needs of the discipline. On the other hand, it has little to offer now as an ideological weapon and will presumably play no significant role in the major debates of the future. Yet the issue of textual interconnections will continue to be highly relevant, and many future developments in the discipline are likely to engage with novel approaches to this theme.

See also:

DECONSTRUCTION

Further reading

Littau, K. (1997/2010) 'Translation in the Age of Postmodern Production: From text to intertext to hypertext', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 33(1): 81–96; reprinted in M. Baker (ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, London & New York: Routledge, 435–448.

The first and most explicit account of translation and intertextuality along postmodernist lines.

Neubert, A. (1981) 'Translation, Interpreting and Text Linguistics', *Studia Linguistica* 35(1–2): 130–145.

The first text to outline a linguistic approach to translation as an intertextual relation.

Sakellariou, P. (2015) 'The Appropriation of the Concept of Intertextuality for Translation-theoretic Purposes', *Translation Studies* 8(1): 35–47.

An extended account of the redefinition of translation in intertextual terms.

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