



Multicolor Translation Shifts: An Analytical Model for Studying Text-Picture Intersemiotic Translation

Cambios de traducción a todo color: un modelo de análisis para la traducción intersemiótica texto-ilustración

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Abstract: The present paper is based on the concept of intersemiotic translation coined by Jakobson and its application to translations from text into illustrations. On this basis, the paper seeks to establish a model of analysis that relies on Leuven-Zwart's comparative model and applies some of its tenets to intersemiotic translation processes. The framework suggested here firstly splits both text and illustration into small units of meaning that will facilitate an ensuing contrast between them. This comparison will lead to a second stage where possible shifts of meaning will be spotted and analyzed. It is expected that the results of this stage will help determine the dynamics between a text and its corresponding illustration. Eventually, the aforementioned analytical model will be tested on a series of illustrations from two different picture books: *Titch* and *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*.

Keywords: Intersemiotic translation, comparative model, text-illustration dynamics, picture books.

Resumen: Este artículo parte del concepto de traducción intersemiótica acuñado por Jakobson y se centra en su aplicación a las traducciones de texto a ilustración. Sobre esta base, el estudio busca establecer un modelo de análisis fundamentado en el modelo comparativo de Leuven-Zwart, aplicando algunos de sus principios a los procesos de traducción intersemiótica. El modelo que aquí se desarrolla divide primero texto e ilustraciones en pequeñas unidades de significado que hagan más sencilla la comparación entre ellas. Este contraste llevará a una

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segunda fase en la que se tratará de identificar y analizar los posibles cambios de significado entre unidades. Se espera que los resultados obtenidos de esta comparación ayuden en última instancia a determinar las dinámicas creadas entre un texto y su ilustración correspondiente. Finalmente, el antedicho modelo de análisis se aplicará sobre varios dibujos pertenecientes a dos álbumes ilustrados: *Titch* y *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*.

Palabras clave: Traducción intersemiótica, modelo comparativo, dinámicas texto-ilustración, cuentos ilustrados.

Summary: Introduction; 1. Theoretical grounds; 2. Analysis, 2.1. Analysis of translation 1, 2.2. Analysis of translation 2; 2.3. Analysis of translation 3; Conclusions; References.

Sumario: Introducción; 1. Fundamentos teóricos; 2. Análisis, 2.1. Análisis de la traducción 1, 2.2. Análisis de la traducción 2, 2.3. Análisis de la traducción 3; Conclusiones; Referencias bibliográficas.

INTRODUCCIÓN¹

In 1959, Jakobson coined the term “intersemiotic translation”, which he defined as the interpretation of linguistic signs via the signs of a non-verbal system. In other words, intersemiotic translation applies to the translation processes that occur between two distinct semiotic systems. This idea was not new, since authors like Hjelmslev (as cited in Dusi, 2015: 182) had already explored the translations between semiotic systems with different forms of expression, although the term used to define the process in this case was “transduction”. Albeit not a pioneer, the passing of time consolidated Jakobson as the main referent of translation between different codes. For this and other reasons, Jakobson’s definition has been revisited and labeled in different ways by several authors. Greimas (1966), for example, used the term “transposition” for defining intertextual transformations that render natural language messages via other sensorial orders.

But probably the most relevant redefinition of the concept was formulated by one of Jakobson’s disciples: Umberto Eco. Eco (2008) expanded on Jakobson’s (1959) ideas and focused on the notion of “transmutation”, used by the latter as a synonym for “intersemiotic translation”. As Eco (2008) defended, translation between different semiotic systems cannot be analyzed in terms of translatability, but as an interpretation process in which the “translator” builds a parallel creation, *i.e.*, a recreation of the ST, which implies the addition of new elements

¹ This paper is dedicated to the memory of Pat Hutchins. Thank you for all the joy.

and perspectives, but also a deep identification with the original work (Campos, 2003: 32-34).

In accordance to the abovementioned ideas, the rules and procedures within this branch of Translation Studies have been traditionally dissociated from the precepts that operate in inter or intralinguistic modes of translation. As Jakobson (1959) stated, transmutation processes may follow their own procedures, such as repetition, parallelism, metaphor or synecdoche. However, despite the obvious constraints that moving between different semiotic systems entails, other currents defend that transmutation processes can be at least partly analyzed following text translation theories.

In this vein, authors like Eco's fellow countryman Omar Calabrese (2000) showed their reluctance to accept an absolute separation between the concepts of "transmutation" and "text translation". In his view, texts can indeed be translated into an opera or a film as long as the purpose of the process is creating a target work with a certain degree of equivalence to the source. The result could be an imperfect translation, but a translation after all. My thesis in this regard aligns with Calabrese's ideas and intends to demonstrate that albeit commonly applied to text translation, traditional translation theories may be useful at systematizing the examination of text-picture transmutation or intersemiotic translation.

Based on this premise, the main objective of this paper is to create and test an analytical model to prove that text-picture intersemiotic translation can be studied following traditional translation procedures. It is expected that this model will eventually help translation researchers to identify preserved, added, or modified meaning in the illustration and label the decisions taken by the illustrator. If these conditions are met, it will be easier to categorize the type of relationship between text and picture and determine the way they interact with one another.

1. THEORETICAL GROUNDS

In recent years, several authors such as Pereira (2008) or Martinovski (2016) have defended the similarities between intra- or interlinguistic translation and a translation from text into picture or vice versa. Their works are based on the assumption that intersemiotic translation shares a parallelism with other branches of translation and thus, pictures are just a particular way of translating words. The present article tallies with this viewpoint but tries to go one step further. In the

same vein, the analytical model presented here seeks to systematize this comparison by spotting specific elements and splitting both the text and the illustration into small significant units, suitable for a subsequent contrast. It is expected that this type of analysis will result in a more accurate study of the translation process and, eventually, in a more precise categorization of the dynamics created between text and picture.

The analytical model presented in this paper operates on segments of text and their corresponding illustrations, and it is divided into several stages. The initial stages are based on some of the core elements within Leuven-Zwart's (1989; 1990) comparative model, which is a model of shift analysis that encompasses syntactic, semantic, and stylistic shifts. It is divided into two components: a comparative framework, aimed at identifying and classifying shifts, and a descriptive model that focuses on the effects of these shifts at a macrostructural level. Originally aimed at comparing narrative texts to their translations, some of the bases of this model will be applied in this paper to intersemiotic translations from text into illustration.

The first relevant concept that should be presented is that of “transeme.” According to Leuven-Zwart (1989: 155), transemes are comprehensible textual units which are suitable for the subsequent comparison of a text and its translation. Transemes can be both predicates with their arguments or adverbials with no predicate at all. The second important concept in this vein is that of “architranseme”, which will work as a common denominator, *i.e.*, the core sense shared by the transeme in the ST and the TT (Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 156-157). Architransemes can be established either in terms of the content the source and the target text share or by paraphrasing the idea they define. The model discussed in this paper takes these concepts to the field of intersemiotic translation and uses them for completing the first stage of the analysis: formulating an architranseme by comparing an ST with its illustration and spotting common transemes later. For this purpose, a careful contrast between both representations should be made in order to spot the transemes they share. A final list of these elements will also serve as a tool to pinpoint other relevant traits such as additions or omissions, which are relevant elements in the analysis as well.

Once common transemes have been identified and an architranseme has been devised, the present analytical scheme introduces other concepts from Leuven-Zwart's (1989: 159-169) comparative model: modulation, modification, and mutation. According to the author, modulation would

imply that one of the transemes remains faithful to the architranseme, whereas, the other differs from it, being either more or less specific than its counterpart. On the other hand, in modification processes both transemes diverge from the architranseme, albeit a tangential relationship can still be established. Modification is in turn branched into several types, but for the purposes of this paper I will define and focus on two of them: explanatory and contrastive. The former implies that the modification either supplies additional details or makes some information explicit. *Per contra*, the latter entails that a relationship of contrast can be established between the ideas in the source and the target transeme. Mutation occurs when it is impossible to establish a *tertium comparationis* between the source and the target text due to a radical change in the meaning of the translation (Leuven-Zwart, 1989: 168). Finally, a synonymous relationship between both transemes would imply that no shift occurs in the translation process (literal translation).

Following the nature of the original model, these four processes will be used to determine the type of relationship (if any) established between the transemes in the ST and the transemes in the illustration. In addition to the previous processes, the notion of “transcreation” will also be part of this analysis. Resuming Campos’ (2003) ideas, a recreation of a given text inevitably results in a combination of new perspectives with a greater or lesser degree of affinity with the ST. Thus, transcreation (understood as a reinterpretation of –part of– the ST), is inherent to intersemiotic translation processes: the viewpoint of the illustrator will be inevitably added to shape certain items, but the key factor in the subsequent analysis is the possibility of establishing 1) the points in common and divergences between a ST and its illustrations and 2) to which extent transcreation processes provide necessary or additional information.

In this vein, it is convenient to introduce two opposite concepts that apply to the type of transcreation processes we may observe. For this purpose, I have established a binary distinction between mandatory or elective transcreation. The former would relate to variations which are imperative to fill in those blanks of the text that must be necessarily conveyed in a visual representation of the scene (such as the clothes or body shape of a character when they are not described in the narrative representation). On the other hand, elective transcreation encompasses those particulars added to compulsory traits that also expand or add new details to the ones provided by the ST. This type of information allows the reader to draw several conclusions by focusing not only on the mere

meaning of words, but also on that of the illustration. This would be the case of the facial expression of a character showing us the feelings a certain event triggers on him/her only in the non-narrative representation, thus complementing the meaning of the ST.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, it is expected that an analysis of shared and dissimilar transemes following the previous stages will facilitate the categorization of the relationships established between a given text and its illustrations. These connections are highly important since picture books are not only a form of entertainment and a source of pleasure, but also a relevant teaching, learning and research tool (Driggs and Sipe, 2007: 280). Over the years, researchers have devised different classifications to categorize text-illustration dynamics. Schwarz (1982: 14-16) was one of the first authors in suggesting a possible classification for the relationship between a text and its illustrations. In his case, it was a binary categorization into “deviation” and “congruency” depending on whether text and pictures share a harmonious relationship or they oppose each other in some way.

One of the most salient taxonomies is the one crafted by Nikolajeva and Scott (2001: 225-226). The model created by these authors establishes five possibilities of interaction between text and illustrations. “Symmetrical”, would apply to situations in which words and pictures state basically the same information. An enhancing dynamic implies that one of the sources expands on the meaning of the other; extreme cases of enhancement result in a complementary relationship. The fourth case, a counterpointing interaction, occurs when pictures and words provide alternative information. When the latter cases create an opposition of information, the interaction could be labeled as “contradictory”. The authors, however, also admit that these are not absolute terms, since the lines dividing them can be oftentimes blurry. For instance, relationships between text and illustrations “will never be completely symmetrical or completely contradictory” (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001: 226).

Given its overall impact on the field of text-picture dynamics, other researchers such as Martínez and Harmon (2012: 327-328) have used Nikolajeva’s and Scott’s model as a reference to create their own taxonomy. In this instance, the relationships between texts and illustrations were categorized as “picture only”, “primarily pictures”, “interdependent”, “parallel” or “only through text”. This classification was built *ad hoc* for a specific project, but it includes new categories that may be interesting for constructing a more comprehensive classification

for the study of text-illustration dynamics. Still, given its role as a landmark in this field, I have opted to use Nikolajeva's and Scott's original taxonomy. In particular, the analysis provided in upcoming sections will focus on three types of interaction: symmetrical, enhancing and contradictory.

2. ANALYSIS

The illustrations on which I have based the analysis belong to two works: *Titch* (Hutchins, 1993) and *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever* (Frazee, 2008). The former is a picture book for children with Titch, the youngest and smallest of three brothers, as the protagonist. Titch is little, and it seems everything his brothers have is bigger and better than his belongings. But the protagonist gets a new viewpoint when he plants a seed and it starts to grow bigger and bigger... Pat Hutchins was both the author and illustrator of the book.

On the other hand, Frazee's work tells us the story of James and Eamon, two kids who will spend a week away from their parents at Nature Camp. There, they will also meet Eamon's grandparents, a very special and peculiar couple. At first, they want to spend the days playing videogames and doing indoor activities. However, they soon discover nature can be much more interesting than they expected. The author of this book, Marla Frazee, was its illustrator as well.

In short, this analytical model follows the next stages. First, it identifies the transeme in narrative and non-narrative representations. Based on their comparison, it establishes a common architranseme. Subsequently, a triangulation between these three units reveals differences and similarities and allows us to identify translation shifts (if present). In addition, those elements in the illustration that do not appear in the ST are categorized as transcreations, either mandatory or elective. Finally, all the information gathered throughout previous stages is used to determine the dynamic created between the text and its corresponding illustration.

2.1. Analysis of Translation 1

The first example I intend to analyze belongs to a passage of Hutchins' book. In particular, the analysis is conducted on the segment "Mary had a big hammer" (Hutchins, 1993: n.p.) and its corresponding

illustration (see figure 1). In this first case, the transeme of the ST could be the whole passage with the omission of the subject (“had a big hammer”), since the segment is a simple unit of meaning itself. As for the non-narrative representation, “paraphrasing” this illustration via words may result in a very similar transeme: “(Mary) had a big hammer” can perfectly work as a back translation of the picture into text again. Accordingly, the architranseme that stems from a comparison between both transemes is formed by the elements (to have a big hammer). This phrase will be now used as the *tertium comparationis* for the dual representation under analysis.

Contrary to the examples that will be later analyzed, text-picture translation does not provoke any shifts in this instance: the hammer is present in the text and in the picture, and the depiction of this object matches the description provided by words since, when compared to the size of the girl, it can be immediately seen that it is a big hammer. As for the verb “have”, the illustration adds no meaning to it: Mary only holds the hammer, doing nothing with it. In addition, the subject, Mary, is represented in both the ST and the illustration. Considering all these elements, it can be stated that the non-narrative representation is neither more nor less specific than the description we can find in the text; thus, the same verb can be included in both transemes and no eventual shift occurs between the ST and the illustration. Consequently, it can be stated that a synonymous relationship is established between both transemes.

Other elements appear in the illustration which are not part of the narrative representation, but not all of them can be classified as examples of transcreation. All these elements relate to Mary’s physical appearance. On the one hand, Mary’s size is not a random decision by the illustrator: it is determined by previous passages in the book, where Mary is described as smaller than Pete but bigger than Titch. On the other hand, transcreation, or those elements included by the illustrator to fill in the gaps left blank by the narrative, includes features such as the girl’s clothes, the color of her hair, her hairstyle, or her facial features. Since none of these elements are previously or subsequently mentioned, we can assume they are compulsory pieces of information the illustrator must include following her own perspective. Consequently, if we resume the binary distinction established in section 1, we can categorize this as an example of mandatory transcreation.

According to the analysis conducted hitherto, the dynamic between text and illustration would be, in this case, an example of symmetry. The

picture mirrors the content of the source text and there is a complete correlation between the information provided by words and their corresponding illustration. In this first example, the narrative and non-narrative representation basically tell the same story –a little girl has a big hammer– and none of them expands on each other beyond compulsory visual information. Further examples of symmetrical relationship can be found in the book; for instance, on the page where “Titch held the nails” (Hutchins, 1993: n.p.).

Figure 1



2.2. Analysis of Translation 2

The second example of analysis is also part of Hutchins’ book, and it is based on the passage “Pete had a big drum” (Hutchins, 1993: n.p.) and the illustration on the same page (see figure 2). As in the first case, the straightforwardness of the ST makes it possible to analyze this as a simple unit of meaning; thus, the transeme of the source text would be “has a big drum”. However, in this occasion, it can be observed that there is not a complete correspondence between the narrative and non-narrative representation of the ST transeme since “wording” the engraving would not result in a similar sentence. Paraphrasing the illustration would probably culminate in a segment like “Pete plays a big drum”. A comparison between both units results in a more overlapping architranseme like (a big drum).

Despite their differences, a certain degree of correlation between both transemes still exists: Pete has a big drum, regardless of whether he plays it or not. But beyond the presence of the drum, there are several disjunctions built on some specific decisions taken by Hutchins when drawing this picture. Firstly, Pete's position, (allegedly) moving his arms up and down; secondly, the addition of two drumsticks which are not mentioned in the source text. These two elements are not present in the ST, and their addition to the illustration brings in the feature "to play" that the ST does not present. Accordingly, this set of decisions fits in the category of elective transcreation, since it is not aimed at meeting the needs of a visual representation but at conveying supplementary information that expands on the ideas of the text. Consequently, Hutchins' choice to include them has a strong impact on the meaning of the non-narrative representation.

The abovementioned decisions crystallize in a translation shift that could be labeled as an example of modification, since all the premises of this process apply. Firstly, there is a tangential relationship between the transeme of the ST and the transeme of the illustration: they share an element such as the direct object (the big drum). But the verb establishes an essential semantic difference between the two representations. Whereas the first transeme only describes possession, the second one adds a key notion: the action of playing. Albeit, the latter is embedded in the former, both transemes show aspects of disjunction with the architranseme; therefore, the illustration causes a translation shift through modification.

The previous analysis excludes the possibility of a symmetrical relationship. Thus, the dynamic between the text and its corresponding illustration could be labeled either as enhancement or contradiction. To determine the nature of this relationship it is necessary to underscore whether translation shifts provide new information or details which are completely different to the ones conveyed by the ST. At this point, it is imperative to revisit the concept of explanatory modification. In this instance, the picture does not mirror nor contradict the ST, but adds certain information that takes the narrative one step further. By reading the text, the audience knows Pete has a big drum and by combining the text with its non-narrative representation, readers discover that Pete not only has, but also plays this drum. Besides, children receive additional chunks of information connected to this instrument, such as the need of drumsticks for playing it. Consequently, an explanatory relationship can

be established between the transemes of the narrative and the non-narrative representation. This relationship also determines the text-illustration dynamic that could be labeled as a case of enhancement. Further examples of this relationship can be found later in the book. One of the most obvious ones is the text-illustration relationship in “Pete had a big saw” (Hutchins, 1993: n.p.).

Finally, it is worth stressing that in this picture, mandatory transcreation can be observed as well. As in Mary’s case, this process applies to the physical appearance of the character. Pete has been previously described as a kid who is bigger than Titch and bigger than his sister, and this is the way the illustrator depicts him. As in Mary’s case, this feature could be classified as a case of a synonymous relationship between the ST and the illustration. However, there is no reference to the color of his hair, his facial features or the clothes he is wearing. Hutchins has once again the possibility of deciding how the character should look and the liberty to fill in the gaps the text leaves unexplained. Thus, mandatory transcreation can be found in the depiction of Pete’s facial features, hair, and clothes.

Figure 2



2.3. Analysis of Translation 3

The third and last example to be analyzed is from Frazee’s (2008) *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*. Particularly, the analysis revolves around the passage where James, one of the two protagonists,

arrives “with just a couple of his belongings” (n.p.) to Eamon’s house before leaving for the Camp. In this example, the transeme of the ST would be “arrives with just a couple of his belongings”. However, their relationship with the non-narrative representation differs from previous examples. In the case of this picture, the transeme that can be extracted would be similar to “appears with most of his belongings” (see figure 3). From these divergent transemes, we can create an architranseme which could be formulated as follows: (arrives + his belongings). Again, the differences between the transeme of the ST and that of the illustration create a *tertium comparationis* that immediately dispels the possibility of a synonymous relationship between these two units.

The presence of common elements, such as “arrive” and “his belongings”, excludes the possibility of observing a mutation shift. This fact, together with the divergences both transemes have with regard to the architranseme create a translation shift that in this case, fits again in the category of modification. Nevertheless, this shift cannot be analyzed in the same manner as the case in section 2.2. As it can be easily observed, there is a strong contrast between the information conveyed in the ST and the one represented in the illustration. Thus, the level of disjunction between the transeme in the ST and the transeme in the picture should not be measured in quantitative but in qualitative terms: they do share some elements (analyzable even as important ones since James’ belongings are a core item in both cases), but the scenario each representation depicts around them is totally different.

Whereas the ST describes a character carrying a few personal effects, the non-narrative representation portrays James surrounded by a myriad of his possessions. As opposed to Pete’s example, both representations do not complement each other with additional chunks of information; in this case, we are receiving contradictory information so modification cannot be categorized as explanatory but as contrastive. And as in the second example of the analysis, the shift is again spurred by the illustrator’s decisions.

In this case, transcreation once more exceeds compulsory additions such as James’ physical description. In the figure below we can see how the author includes several elements that are not described in the text. In this case, the main difference does not lie in “what” but in “how many”: instead of limiting elective transcreation to the pillow and the paper bag (just to give an example), Frazee includes several bags, boxes full of toys, and a video game platform among other items. Consequently,

elective transcreation helps build a very different scenario to the one depicted by Frazee's words, and this decision creates a very specific type of dynamic between the text and its corresponding picture.

All the aforementioned arguments lead us to categorize the dynamic created between this passage and its illustration as an example of contradiction, since the main information conveyed by the text opposes its corresponding picture (and vice versa). While context and characters create a semantic thread communicating the text and the picture, readers cannot trust only the narrative representation because they would not grasp the actual events occurring in the story. At this point, they should rely on both the narrative and the non-narrative representation provided by the author to fathom what is really going on. This type of relationship may have different effects on the reader but in this case, the intention is obviously comical. The author contradicts her own words in order to cause a humorous impact and create an ironic situation; and the irony contained in this page of the book can only be understood if readers contrast the information included in the text with the details provided by the picture.

Figure 3



CONCLUSIONS

Examples of intersemiotic translation are extremely difficult to analyze. If studying text-translation samples already entails several obstacles, the fact of dealing with two different semiotic systems makes the task even more complicated. Hence the importance of building solid and reliable models that can help researchers determine the processes that operate in translations from text into music, into film or, as in this case, from text into illustration. In the same vein, the analytical model presented throughout these pages is a proposal to promote the study of intersemiotic translations in this framework.

This model is based on the premise that fragmenting the text and the illustration into small units of meaning makes it easier to systematize and speed up an analysis of intersemiotic translations from one representation into the other. This process leads to a more precise comparison between the ST and its corresponding illustration. Eventually, applying this model of analysis facilitates an accurate identification of the dynamics created between text and illustrations and can help establish a clearer distinction between blurry concepts such as symmetrical and enhancing dynamics.

In addition, further conclusions could be drawn from the analysis of specific examples. Some of them are solid, such as the fact that a synonymous relationship between transemes tends to result in a symmetrical text-illustration dynamic. In this respect, it can also be established that modification shifts in their different versions cannot be connected to a single dynamic; *per contra*, they may prompt multiple types of interrelations such as enhancement or contradiction depending on the occasion.

Other conclusions, however, can only be envisaged. For instance, it is plausible to think that translation shifts via mutation may be commonly connected to specific text-illustration dynamics, such as contradiction. These statements could crystallize if further research is conducted on this matter. In a similar vein, future studies could be aimed at consolidating and enhancing the model described throughout this paper by including additional examples that span other processes such as modification. Additionally, more complex illustrations could also be analyzed in order to test the effectiveness of the model in other scenarios.

As Eco (2008) stated, there will never be an exact equivalence between a source and a target text, especially if they belong to systems

with different forms of expression. True as this may be, it should be noted that, at least in connection to text into picture intersemiotic translation, there may be enough items in common to enable an analysis in the framework of traditional translation theories. “Intersemiosis” and “translation” are two concepts that can work together perfectly, and this fact opens a wide field of research, since it entails the possibility of extrapolating other translation techniques and procedures to the analysis of intersemiotic translations.

This may lead to new approaches and more accurate examinations of the interrelation between different semiotic systems such as texts and drawings. In this sense, it is important not to see the model described throughout these pages as an excluding proposal, but as an inclusive suggestion created to enrich the literature on intersemiotic translation and boost new strategies to approach its complexities.

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