

MULTIMEDIA INPUT AND HYPERTEXTUAL IMPACT IN TRANSLATION PROCESS

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Abstract

This paper attempts to tackle the problems of translation through the form of hypertext. Two aspects- creativity and hypertextual impact- are dealt with. Translation is a cross-cultural activity which relates different languages, literary systems, author's and translator's personal writing styles, social politics and cultural conventions. Multimedia provide the opportunity to experiment with multiform presentation and to explore new dimensions of reading, writing and translating; in fact multimedia can fruitfully supplement, but not supersede, the traditional goal of the single translated text, so that the target reader can experience ST in the hypertextual environment beyond linguistic, cultural and ideological barriers and invest the original with his or her own personal response. A multimedia version, pasted in the Internet, enables the reading activity to become the choice of a route into a labyrinth, the meeting place between ST author, translator and TT reader. It is also a site which obliges many possible modes of reading. Three important conceptual diagrams are discussed in order to find ways of representing the ST to achieve acceptability and thus to activate reader response in that context. My main concern is to call attention to the shifted focus to examining the relationship between the target version, the intermediary version and the reader's version. This target reader's version, different from person to person, is the mixture of his reading, the translator's re-creation and the author's creation. Ultimately, I

hope to justify a means of crossing cultural borders to bring the ST to the target reader. With the development of the multimedia and hypertextual application, we can foresee fundamental changes in the status of translation and its definition. Thus, translation is no longer a formal procedure of substitution on the basis of a simple one-to-one correspondence. Finally, new translation strategies such as multi-versions in the form of hard copy, or multimedia presentations as workshops for further creative literary translation, should be taken into account.

Keywords: hypertext, hypertextual translation, multimedia application, readability, intermediary version, translation process, text-in-performance, creative literary translation

This paper attempts to tackle the problems of translation through the form of hypertext. We may analyse a target text (TT) from the standpoints of the translator's aims, strategies and approaches, and also from the perspectives of goal-oriented action, or reader-oriented communication, but we can hardly draw any conclusions about the specific criteria we should adopt. Alexander Tytler (1978: 16) formulated a set of translation principles and suggested that "the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original; the translation should have all the ease of the original composition." However, the idea of complete transcript, the original writing style and total ease of the source text (ST) remain obscure and intangible. The theoretical description of what the translation should be like cannot indeed help the real translation work. Instead, Octavio Paz (1992) furthermore, claimed that all texts are both invention and translation. From his point of view, the texts no longer possess the ideal originality and the pursuit of originality becomes meaningless. This view gives a new direction to the practice of translation, and helps us to approach translation activities in different ways. The need for cultural integration, and textual perfromability are more concerned, and hypertextual versions in the cyber-space can obviously help to bridge the culture gap. According to Chen (2008), the norm of translatability and untranslatability comes from how much a translator can possibly translate the ST, and present the ST in a comprehensive way in the target cultural context. As translator and translation teacher, my main concern is to find ways of representing the ST to achieve acceptability and thus to activate reader response in that context. Ultimately, I wish to justify a means of crossing cultural borders to bring the ST to the target reader.

Translation activities have been discussed largely in negative ways, in terms of the distortive or disruptive impact of translator's choices. Much theoretical energy has been directed at stripping the translator of deliberate or subconscious divergence from the authorised meaning of the original text, so that the textual process could proceed without intervention from the real world of human interaction and motivation. Unfortunately and also fortunately, this hypothetical situation does not occur. Many interactive elements are involved in the process of translation. Reuben Brower (1974: 1) points out that "translation like poetry

is not limited to a single easily isolated activity.” Snell-Hornby (1995: 81) also thinks that “translation is a complex act of communication in which the ST-author, the reader as translator and translator as TL-author and the TL-reader interact.” Translation generates a space of multiple and shifting relationships. One of the traditional translation views emphasizes word omission and complement, which usually happens when translating into rather distinct languages. Luo (2010) mentions word omission and complement as the features of untranslatability, which relate to rhetorical aspects. Nevertheless, the disadvantages can also be elaborated to be advantages. That is to say, using word omission and complement could put a translator in the readers’ shoes, and create a rather different presentation of the TT to inspire the target reader and reveal the source cultural mentality. All the grammatical issues, idiomatic expressions and writing style can be viewed as translator’s advantages to re-create, re-shape and invent a TT which may not completely satisfy the requirements of the ST (if there is any) but faithfully reveal the ST’s face in front of the target reader. My aim is to underline the interactive textual and extra-textual relations which influence the translation process, in order to re-define translation as an interdisciplinary activity, which bridges the gap between different fields of study through processes of communication, interpretation and re-creation, and to provide a forum for more open debate of these issues.

Two aspects- creativity and hypertextual impact- are dealt with. Translation is a cross-cultural activity which relates different languages, literary systems, author’s and translator’s personal writing styles, social politics and cultural conventions. Susan Bassnett asserts that “a translation always takes place in a continuum, never in a void, and there are all kinds of textual and extratextual constraints upon the translator.” (Bassnett 1998:123). The common translation situation that various translation strategies target on the same source text, suggests not only that no single translation can achieve an ‘absolute’ status but correspondingly that more fluid, multiform versions do better justice to the source text. Consequently, a multimedia version is created to cater that need. Multimedia provide the opportunity to experiment with multiform presentation and to explore new dimensions of reading, writing and translating; in fact multimedia can fruitfully supplement, but not supersede, the traditional goal of the single translated text, so that the target reader can experience ST in the hypertextual environment beyond linguistic, cultural and ideological barriers and invest the original with his or her own personal response. What is stressed on through hypertextual version is that translation concentrates on the relationship of the ST and TT according to form and content, and translators have disputed about literal or free translation (Reiss, 2014). However, literal and free translation approaches are both deficient in the real translation situations. A translated text is embedded within its own complicated network of both source and target cultures (Venuti, 2012). In other words, the intercultural turn between source language and target language is more accessible in the real world with greater cultural awareness (Bassnett, 2007), and therefore, the cyber-space translating and reading need to be more concerned to cater the needs of a modern reader.

A multimedia version, pasted in the Internet, enables the reading activity to become the choice of a route into a labyrinth, the meeting place between ST author, translator and TT reader. It is also a site which obliges many possible modes of reading. Placed at a cross-road, the reader, absorbed in solving that enigma, is free to follow any route he or she prefers. Its potentialities for creative composition and cross-cultural communication are only too apparent. Very likely, the distance between text and hypertext will diminish in the future. With the progressive development of computer technology, texts can not only be presented through hard copy but delivered in cyber-space and shared by many more readers. Giovanna (2011) points out that text has always experimented with new ways of writing or rewriting; making the textual invention of digital computing recently with various media to provide the cyber-reading with a new reading experience. Media, for instance film, television, radio and internet have developed their own storytelling competencies and their own language. Each media has their own special features to produce different creative elements with which one might interpret text anew. Baetens and Looy (2008) also emphasize on the features of e-text, which are able to create certain interactive relationships with the reader and are able to give the form of multimedia writing expected to be more than receiving and reading, but actually experiencing. And this new type of experiencing can convey some aspects of the ST, which cannot be realized in the traditional reading of hard copy. For example, acoustically, sound effects can strengthen an emotional involvement of a text; yet a narrator's speaking could create a strong mood in a poetic context, described or implied by the ST. The term 'breathability' discussed by Snell-Hornby (2007), means "stress patterns and sentence structures should fit in with the emotions expressed in the dialogue" (Snell-Hornby, 2007: 111). Applying the concept of breathability, voice can be added in the animated version to emphasize the original rhythm or rhyming effect so as to express the development of author's inner world. Animated multimedia version creates a simulated micro-world of a textual situation that makes possible the process of understanding and deepens the enjoyment of experiencing the textual meaning with poetic narration, music, images, and sound effects. On top of that, one can hypertextulize the TT to refer to other versions and enrich the journey of reading in the cyber-space. Furthermore, Ohlander and Chuang (2009) mention that animations are suggested as means of providing conceptual models that assist to develop people's mental models. And the mental models are important during reading process. Animated multimedia version is ideal for depicting a simplified or abstract process. It is like a bridge between ST and TT that facilitates the comprehension process to build a meaningful and vivid textual world. On the other hand, inspiring readers' motivation is an effective way to realize some abstract thoughts, in which visual effects may suggest a favourable approach to attain understanding. Namely, though texts may have imagery delivered, the reader may not immediately get into the actual scenes during the reading process. Thus, animated multimedia version seems to interpret the untranslatability of the actual textual scene. Visual effect is one of the methods to provide meaning directly and to give context. The multimedia version can then reinforce the sense of experiencing the textual being. Seen from this angle, the multimedia version can provide not only textual images but also aural effects to assist a

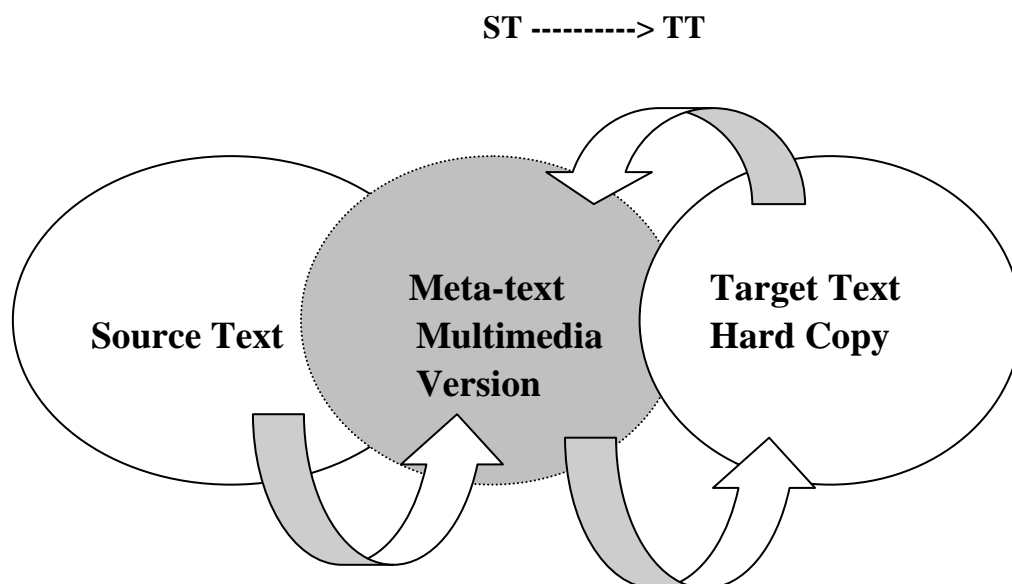
meaningful message when reading. Multimedia is a tool for organizing and constructing knowledge including text, audios, graphics, animation and videos that promote understanding (Wang, 2006). Moreover, Mayer (2009) also points out that visual/pictorial and auditory/verbal processing of multimedia messages help cognitive learning by selecting relevant words and images, organizing the words and images into coherent verbal and visual representations, and then integrating the visual and verbal representations. By adopting multimedia version as a new type of translation, it is hoped that both textual meaning and implied significance can then be rediscovered and reproduced. Through cyber-reading, both meaning and significance can then be invented and reinvented in different cultures. Through encouraging this type of translational experiments, we may then claim that translation can be achieved through re-creating the process of experiencing the text with the help of multimedia tools in a new cyber-reading environment.

In Chu and Wang's research (2013), animation is employed to aid viewers; meanwhile, readers understand the textual meaning by re-experiencing a virtual environment that would bring them closer to ST quite spontaneously. Accordingly, this paper intends to apply animation to describe or reproduce the message of a text. Animated multimedia version is used to interpret the untranslatable message in TT. Andre L  f  vere (1992) proposes that translation from ST is a way of "rewriting"; however, "re-creating" is suggested here to give way of a new type of translation. This is in accordance with Reiss' (2014) assertion of describing "a poet-translator is creative when dealing with the work of a poet in a foreign language, and his 'own new purpose' is equally a work of art." Moreover, Ha (2001) suggests that translation not only renders some languages or words into another language but also is a kind of creative product. For this reason animated multimedia version imbedded a creative hypertextual reading space should be encouraged. E-text, or the animated hypertext in cyber-space, has led the shift from the technological foundation to inter-cultural application and it has revolutionized the way we deal with textual images (Baetens & Looy, 2008). E-text strengthens its images thereby achieving the equivalence of the spirit of ST through the creation of a hypertext. This kind of hypertext can help the reader to easily enter the original world and experience the original feelings (Gerv  s, Herv  s, & Robinson, 2007). That is to say, the hypertext can possess equivalent traits that permit it to express the spirit of the ST and what the author really wants to say in a way that reflects the origin and nature of the ST. The text produced in the labyrinth- on paper, on video, on disk, or on any other new form- is structured according to its own image and inevitably creates its own culture and identity. The status of minor literature, in relation to the main stream, has been reshaped through translation, and in the new cyber-culture, it will again be re-mapped, this time through the multimedia hypertextual version. Venuti comments on inter-cultural power relationships and asserts that "translating that builds minor cultures simultaneously creates identities for them, however much hybridised, reinforcing their social presence and challenging the majority that defines their marginal position" (Venuti 1998: 138). This hybridity will inevitably undermine the hierarchical relationship in literature and will enrich the target literature and culture.

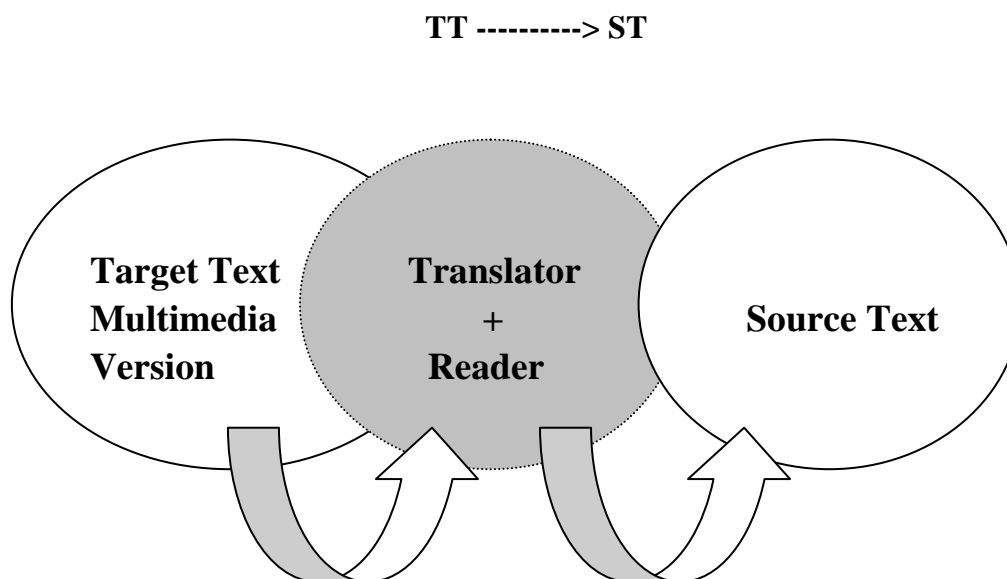
Furthermore, Louis Kelly (1979: 1) points out that “Western Europe owes its civilisation to translators.” Each time a new translation is brought into the target culture, literary refreshment follows as a by-product. Literary history of itself seems to generate interaction and thus linguistic and formal hybridity. The characteristic of hybridity will increase with the application of multimedia because the forms and devices of presentation will be increased. Tensions are created between the continuity of the page and discontinuous juxtapositions on screen, between confirmation of preconceptions and constrained interrogative renewal, between textuality as immobilised system and textuality as a sequence of momentary achievements, between intertextuality which strengthens tradition and intertextuality which is improvised and suffused with individuality, between expected roots for a selected readership and variety of roots for an unselected readership. The result may not necessarily be a conflict; rather, the two ‘versions’ of a translational ethos, which again produces an enormous impact on TT and its culture. The importance of translation deserves constant re-affirmation and study. Seen from this angle, different experimental approaches, which begin by focusing attention on translations as independent texts, are ways of claiming legitimacy for studying translation in the first place.

The most popular terms that have been associated with translation over two thousand or more years are *equivalence*, *accuracy*, *faithfulness*, *fidelity*, *correspondence*, *matching*, *mapping*, and so on. Translation has been constructed metaphorically in a highly mechanical way, as an impersonal process of transferring a message from an ST to a TT without noticeably changing it. When one makes claims such as “translators never just translate” (Hermans 1999: 96), one has already identified the translation activity as a purely technical process, so that there could possibly be a ‘just translating’ job. Theories draw their strength from dualism, mainly, fluent vs. foreignising translation, which might be slightly modified by other theorists into other sets of dual terminology. Absolute dualism implies irreconcilability. However, this dualism “fails to acknowledge that there is a continuum of readability; at one end of the continuum a text may be either fluent or opaque but there is a grey area where the text’s readability is very much a matter of opinion” (Crisafulli 1999: 102). A plausible scenario can then be constructed which casts the translator as engaging in a sustained campaign to break the mould of the TT stereotyped as mechanical transformation, by revealing, introducing or recovering an impulsive mode of writing. The translator, as cultural mediator, can select certain source texts, and employ a particular style of writing, to unhinge the prevailing translation convention.

Traditionally, translation can be regarded as a representation of an historical moment, or a representation of the signified (through the original author and the translator), see the diagram below:



Translation theories hold the ST in one hand against TT in the other. The meta-text, or intermediary stages, is the ground on which the two dualised bodies -ST and TT- meet, conflow, commingle. And now, theorists (Lefevere 1992 and Hermans 1985) move back to concentrate on re-discovering this intermediary stage. However, the real situation does not follow this artificial picture at all. The historical moment provided by the TT is not the same as the original one. At each stage as the arrows show, there must be a twist. Thus, the TT can never be equivalent to the ST and very often, the translator does not want the TT to be the ST's identical twin, anyway. In fact, the TT projects the underlying values and images of the ST through the translator's textual reshaping and responsive interaction with the ST. In a way, with a more open-minded view, we can say that the TT constructs the ST, or even 'invents' the ST (Niranjana 1992: 81). Therefore, it might be fruitful to turn the first diagram into the one below:

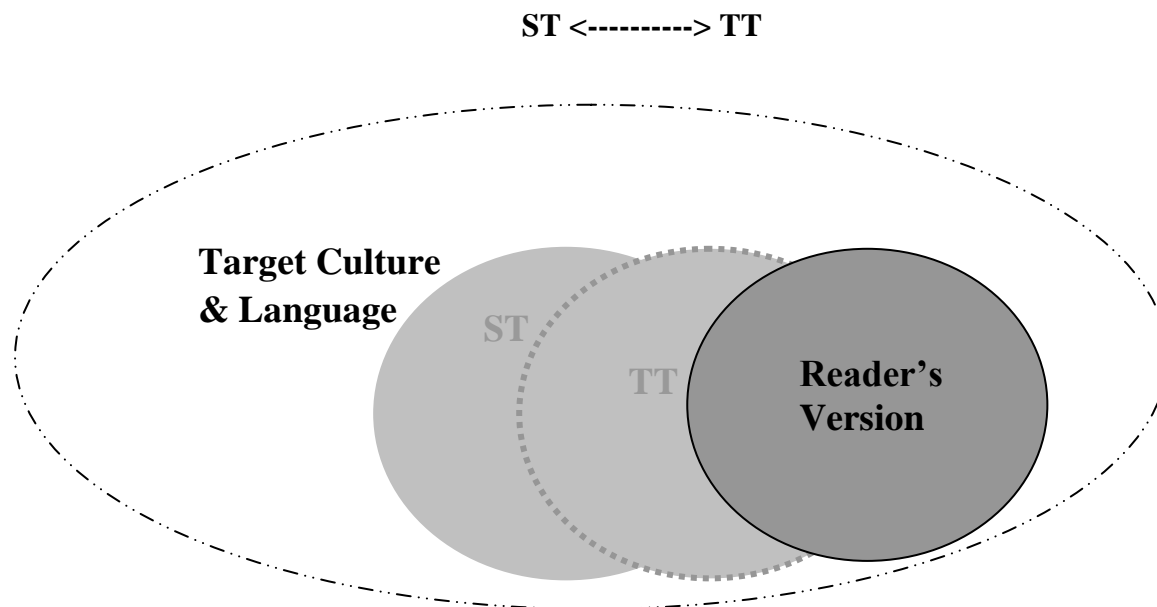


The ST becomes an empty body for the TT to refer to and fill in. The translator, also the reader, plays a crucial role in the process of filling-in. The multimedia version activates the process more vividly, visually and physically. Concepts like ‘how to’ or of ‘how good’ are irrelevant terms. Instead of an activity performed on words or sentences, the translator emphasises the whole body of the text. More personality and more integrity are injected during the translation process. ST no longer provides the sole criteria by which the TT is to be judged. The checking list of ST is taken away. The traditional idea of translation in highly mechanical and purely technical ways, ‘as an impersonal process of transferring a meaning from a source text to a target text without changing it significantly’ (Robinson 1997: 8) is swept away. Furthermore, the focus has been shifted to examining the relationship between the intermediary version and the reader’s version. This target reader’s version, different from person to person, is the mixture of his reading, the translator’s re-creation and the author’s creation. Theo Hermans (1999: 122) suggests that:

When texts are moulded and manipulated via any number of intermediary versions and stages, it is no longer relevant to speak in terms of ‘source’ and ‘target’, let alone that translations could be ‘facts of one system only’. Binary models, postulates, neatly delineated systems and the idea of translations as complete texts cannot cope with the hybrid nature of many of the operations in these types of discourse.

Many scholars of translation tend to think of translation in terms of original binary concepts between two opposed alternatives: between text as ST and text as TT; between translating individual words or whole sentences; between studying translation in terms of linguistics or of literature. The binary concept might relate to the binary division between signified and

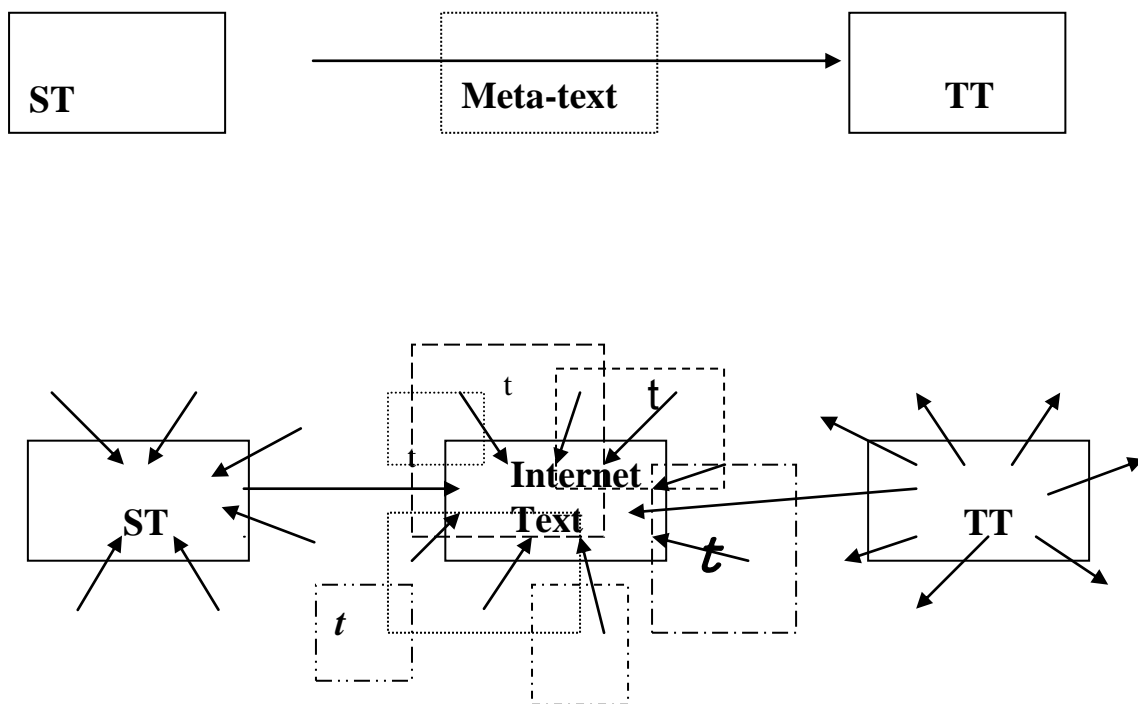
signifier. However, erasing the line of the binary concepts, breaking the frame of division, may offer us a new pretext for rethinking translation. The whole diagram, therefore, needs to be re-drawn as follows:



The reader’s understanding is emphasised, an understanding based on TT and, hypothetically at least, on ST. The process is firmly located in target the cultural and linguistic systems. They provide a foundation for the translation activity. Robinson thinks ‘the act of translation, then, involves the unidirectionalising of the bilingual confluence, a channelling of internal heteroglossia into a current from one (ST) to the other (TT).’ And the translator’s role is to ‘open up the floodgates’ and to “let SL words direct somatic response into a more or less artificially constructed TL lake” (Robinson 1991: 107). In fact, we can see that the ‘opening up the floodgates’ happens not only in the movement of the ST towards the TT, but also *vice versa*, and furthermore, occurs in the movement of the TT towards the target reader. The whole translation process should be pushed further so that the reader’s feedback from TT is examined and the attention can be drawn away from the binary obsession of ST against TT towards the real situation of responsive interactions. There may be more than one responsive ‘lake’ for us to look at.

Recently, Translation Studies has moved on to consider itself part of the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, which draws on anthropology, sociology, gender studies, ethnic studies, literary criticism, history, psychoanalysis, political science and philosophy, to examine various cultural texts and practices. Translation Studies has served to break down the division, and bridge the gap, between different fields of knowledge. The characteristic of interdisciplinarity, or even, transdisciplinarity, provides a powerful means to analyse the textual transformation and sheds light on several important issues.

Furthermore, experiments should be made welcome, in order to enrich the content of Translation Studies, and to supply various methods of translating and modes of presentation. Rob Pope suggests different types of textual possibility in the form of hard copy including “various kinds of ‘collage’ and ‘montage’: simultaneous, alternating, sequential or overlapping”. He also points out that “various kinds of ‘hybrid’ - with or without contextual information spliced in - are also possible. Performance versions can readily be devised for four, five or more voices” (Pope R. 1995: 29). Translation can, certainly, enjoy experiments designed to project and to reshape experience, attributed to the translator. As far as the Internet is concerned, reading, writing, translating and publishing have taken on a whole new meaning. Of course, hard copy remains irreplaceable and the value of traditional modes of translation will not be superseded. Nevertheless, the interactive relationship created in the web, through Internet connections and hypertext devices, iconises the relation the translator has with the ST and TT. Most important of all, it helps to make possible the transparency of the translation process. A single published document is all that is required, and since the actual document is dynamic, it can be updated or corrected with the minimum amount of effort. The hyperlinks will stretch the TT to any related sources or contextual information. Let us turn to the following diagram, comparing hard copy with hypertext:



The hyperlinks make the physical connections between texts and facilitate the reader's access to knowledge. As indicated in the second diagram above, we can see that the vortex effect mobilises the text in its current of intertextuality and accelerates the interactive process which traditionally might take ages. Obviously, this type of text-in-performance can offer us a way of rethinking translation and its relationship with creativity.

Finally, with the development of the multimedia and hypertextual environment, we can foresee fundamental changes in the status of translation and its definition. Translation is no longer to be considered as a derivative work of less literary merit, but as something creatively on a par with the original and equally deserving of copyright. The definition of translation, which, traditionally, requires linguistic faithfulness, has shifted its focus to functional equivalence in terms of cultural attitudes and behaviour. Translation is not a formal procedure of substitution on the basis of a simple one-to-one correspondence. Thus, new translation strategies such as multi-versions in the form of hard copy, or multimedia presentations as workshops for further creative literary translation, should be taken into account. And, correspondingly, a theory that accommodates flexible methodology, combining multimedia, translation and cultural studies, is called for.

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