

Transferring the text across the Atlantic: a multimodal analysis of intralingual translation

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If we are to consider that “the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic” (McGann 1991, 13), but rather a “laced network of linguistic and bibliographical codes”, what exactly is the role played by multimodality in works of fiction, and how is it to be translated? Using recent approaches to multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen; Kong; Nørgaard), this paper will address two main questions: How far does the translation of the material text reveal how the various actors in the production process have positioned themselves in relation to the linguistic text? How far is intersemiotic translation also shaped by cultural, historical and social factors (Jewitt 2013, 251)? In order to address these questions, I will be working from a corpus of American editions of British English novels, and also using American English editions of British English translations of French novels. If we compare British English editions of novels with their American English counterparts, then we can observe quite marked differences in their choice of multimodal features: is this a cultural difference or simply the whim of the individual publishing house?

My analysis will include a number of multimodal features: book covers, layout, illustrations and the use of typeface and punctuation. After underlining the important but often neglected role played by multimodal elements in creating specific reader expectancy, I will investigate how these elements are modified for the American English edition. I will be seeking to demonstrate the interplay between intralingual and intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959), both of which have been largely neglected in translation studies.

KEY REFERENCES

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