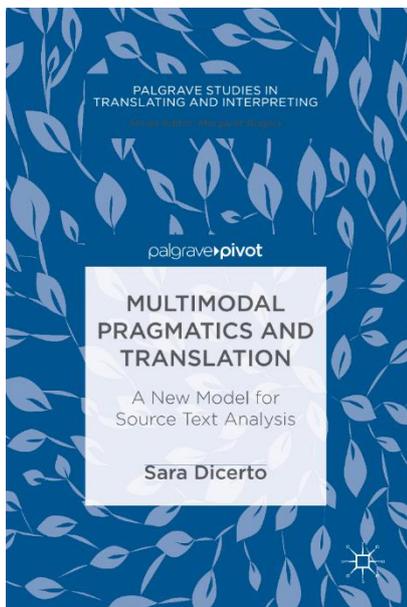




Multimodal Pragmatics and Translation: A New Model for Source Text Analysis

Sara Dicerto

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Review by Dora Renna*

This volume by Sara Dicerto aims at contributing to a recent development of translation studies, which have started to become interested in multimodality and pragmatics.

The author introduces the topic by outlining a state of the art of the research concerning the interaction between those disciplines. She argues that, although some authors have already taken on the challenges of intersecting Translation Studies in these non-verbal directions, the attempts have generally been “scarce and fragmented” (9).

Indeed, Dicerto shows that the most innovative contributions to the investigation of multimodal products derive from media studies and semiotics. By reinterpreting the findings in these fields in terms of Translation Studies, Dicerto pursues the goal of understanding the way in which the different modes interact with each other to create a message that contains both explicatures and implicatures. This also allows to infer which mode carries the crucial information and how the others complement the communication process.

In order to test her model, the author creates a corpus of static multimodal texts such as adverts, comic strips, web pages, and graphs, divided in three categories: expressive, operative and informative texts.

Dicerto's research focuses on the source texts only. She explains that this kind of analysis might have various uses, for example understanding whether the construction of certain intermodal relations is specific of an author or a genre. However, perhaps the most stimulating use suggested by the author is not “purely” descriptive. She proposes her model as a training method for translation trainees, with the aim to understand

* Dora Renna (dora.renna@univr.it) is a PhD candidate in Modern Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Verona, Italy. Her main research interests are linguistic minorities and non-standard varieties of English, audiovisual translation and multimodality. She is also Lecturer in Varieties of English at the University of Verona and in Audiovisual Translation at the University of Bergamo. She is a member of the editing staff of the scientific journal Iperstoria.



the relation between modes in the source text and consequently reproduce them in a similar way in the target text. Undoubtedly, Dicerio acknowledges the fact that two main obstacles might jeopardise resemblance between source and target text, namely 1) the inability (due to the translator) or the impossibility (due to linguistic or external restrictions) to reproduce the logical form and the relative intermodal relations of a text; 2) differences between source and target culture's "contextual and/or encyclopaedic knowledge to which the textual resources appeal in order to suggest explicatures and implicatures meant to lead the recipient towards a certain interpretation" (85). Nevertheless, this model helps "reading" images and text together, and to consciously interiorise a process that otherwise tends to remain subconscious.

The volume by Dicerio represents a relevant contribution to the opening of Translation Studies to an expansion beyond the textual analysis – which is surely important but does not completely reflect the way multimodal products are created, used and understood. Its state-of-the-art section is updated and complete, making the book very useful for those approaching the topic for the first time, while the model proposed can find applications in terms of training, but also be a starting point for the elaboration of new research, both in theoretical and applied Translation Studies.