

Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero & Sara Rovira-Esteva (eds)

# TRANSLATION PERIPHERIES

Paratextual Elements in Translation



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## Introduction: Translation Peripheries The Paratextual Elements in Translation

The term *paratext*, coined by the French literary theorist Gérard Genette in what is now considered a classic essay, *Seuils* (1987), opened up a previously undiscovered area of thinking in the field of literary studies: the text conceived of as a continuum and as an extension of itself which goes beyond the novel, the essay or poetry anthology to include not only front and back covers, introductions, prologues, indices or illustrations (or what Genette termed *peritexts*) but also reviews, interviews with the author, literary criticism, etc. (or what Genette termed *epitexts*).

In the same way that a city cannot be understood or defined without taking into consideration its surrounding areas (its various ‘peripheries’), the in-depth comprehension of texts – taken here in the broadest possible sense of the term – also requires seeing them from a perspective that goes beyond the texts themselves and which also takes into account all those elements which, while separate, accompany and define them. As Genette himself states, regardless of whether these ‘external’ elements belong to the text in question or not, the fact is that they surround and extend it: ‘*précisément pour le présenter, au sens habituel de ce verbe, mais aussi en son sens le plus fort: pour le rendre présent*’ (Genette 1987: 7 – original italics).

While it is true that the notion of paratext has been tried and tested in certain fields of human science – such as literary theory or discourse analysis – this is far from being the case in other disciplines. Translation is a case in point. A few noteworthy exceptions are the following: Kovala (1996); Watts (2000); Tahir-Gürçağlar (2002); Enríquez Aranda (2004); Pérez Cañada (2003); Harvey (2003); Yuste-Frías (2005); Gil-Bardají (2009), and Roberts (2010).

The notion of paratext is an unquestionably important consideration for many lines of research in translation studies: the history of translation, literary translation, audiovisual translation, and the analysis of ideo-

logical discourse in translation or self-translation. This inexplicable shortage of studies on paratexts in translations was one of the reasons why the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona decided to organise the *7th International Conference on Translation* in 2010, which on this occasion was organised under the title *Paratextual Elements in Translation*. Many of the ideas presented in this book date back to this conference, which served as a forum and platform for debate for all those researchers interested in the links between paratextuality and translation in their various forms and aspects.

For example, Leah Gerber in her article analyses the front covers and illustrations of twelve Australian children's novels translated into German between the 1960s and the present day. The aim of her analysis is to uncover the kind of mediating role that these paratextual elements perform in the transmission of a text from one culture to another and how they contribute to the forging of a specific image in the source culture (Australian) in the target culture (German).

From another perspective, Madeleine Statford's article delves into the poetic spaces created by the Argentinean poet Alejandra Pizarnik in her *El árbol de Diana*. Statford compares these with the German translations. She comes to the conclusion that the German translators of Pizarnik's work prove to be more inclined towards reproducing a certain poetic rhythm (mainly through punctuation, which is absent in the Spanish original text) than towards preserving a random visual poetic void.

Elizabete Manterola presents an analysis of the paratexts of the complete works of the Basque novelist Bernardo Atxaga and their translations into seven languages. In order to classify the various translation modalities used in each case – translation, self-translation, translation in collaboration with the author or indirect translation via a third language (namely, Spanish) – Manterola carries out an in-depth statistical analysis of both the peritexts and the epitexts of these works. The results of her study show that although the epitexts provide a wealth of information, further contrastive analysis at the text level is required.

Ellen McRae goes a step further by analysing the prologues and introductions in a corpus of 800 works of fiction translated into English. Of these, only 20 per cent include some form of preface, and in only half of the cases is there any explicit reference to the translation or the source-language culture. After meticulously analysing the contents of these prologues, McRae comes to the conclusion that their main function is to

promote mutual understanding between cultures. Other secondary functions uncovered include raising the readers' awareness of the translators' roles and of the translators' mediation of the original text, and explaining the (sometimes negative) attitudes of academics and editors which the translators of the works in question are faced with.

The article by Rocío García spans music and translation. It analyses both the techniques used in the Spanish translation of two Italian songs from the 1960s and the influence of paratextual factors. These include – moving beyond the music – the cultural context in which the songs were composed and translated and the historical moment when they appeared, among other considerations.

The focus of Ulf Norberg's article is on the comments made by Swedish translators on their translations in certain paratextual spaces, particularly in the prefaces and afterwords of six translations into Swedish of literary works, although these are contrasted with interviews with editors. For Norberg, these paratextual spaces – analysed from macro as well as micro perspectives – can provide relevant information about the prevailing translation norms in a given culture (*doxa*) and at a given moment in time, as well as information about the images that translators have of themselves. Norberg's analysis of these translator comments is based on role theory and Bourdieu's sociology of culture. One of the main conclusions of this study is that the writing of prefaces by translators is an infrequent practice in the present Swedish book market. This includes translations of prestige literature. When books do contain prefaces, they are written by either editors or the authors of the originals, not by translators.

Mary Louise Wardle challenges Genette's arguments for categorising translation as a paratextual element, which would relegate translation to a marginal role with respect to the source text. She shows how – in some cases – the original text can become a paratextual element at the service of the translation. The example that Wardle provides is the controversial 1988 Italian translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Aldo Busi, whose reputation, associated scandals and presence in the media were to turn him into a paratext of his own translation.

The article by José Yuste Frías attempts to demonstrate the utility of the concept of *paratraducción* (paratranslation), a term coined by the research group *Traducción & Paratraducción* at the Universidad de Vigo as a methodological tool for studying paratextual elements in translation. Taking orotypography as a key paratextual element, Yuste Frías under-

takes an analysis of the typographic image in the titles of two French children's books and their translations into Spanish. Yuste Frías concludes that dialogue between the translators and the editors can guarantee better 'paratranslations' of originals.

In their article *Hayri Potur vs. Harry Potter: A paratextual analysis of glocalization in Turkish*, Neslihan Kansu-Yetkiner and Lütfiye Oktar take on board a paratextual analysis of localized Harry Potter. The results reveal that each of the paratexts identified addresses a culturally specific moment and a culturally specific readership, hence reflecting a local version of the text through the lens of each local socio-political context.

Finally, Miquel Edo looks into Carducci's poetry in Catalan and Spanish literature. Focusing on the translations from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he analyses some examples which clearly reveal disparities or discord between text and paratext. The method adopted attempts to demonstrate how this discord can be particularly useful when attempting to identify the key factors which influenced how Carducci's work was received in Spain and Catalonia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The cases studied here concern adapting his Latin metre, shifting emphasis between civil commitment and contemplative hedonism or between monarchic and republican ideology, and the dichotomies classicism/romanticism and classicism/decadence. This discord found in Catalan and Spanish translations and their corresponding paratexts illustrates not only difficulties importing Carducci's metrical model, but also major departures from certain postulates in his poetry, and while this is made clear in some cases, in others it is hidden from the reader.

All the articles presented in this book illustrate the wide range of topics and approaches that can be found in the epistemological space of paratextuality in translation, in these peripheries which are so often central to the translated text. Hopefully, these reflections will serve as a source of inspiration and a starting point for future research into this field.

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