Chapter 13
Semiotics of Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Translation

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13.1 An Introduction

Recently, a growing number of scholars have been studying semiotics as a research tool in translation. At the same time, the *semiotics of translation* or *translation semiotics* (TS) has been established as a theoretical approach in the collective volume *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998; Baker and Saldanha 2009). From the perspective of semiotics, translation is studied as a purely semiotic act that involves the transition from one semiotic system (source language) to another (target language). As Susan Petrilli (2001, pp. 278–279) mentions "[t]ranslation […] is a phenomenon of sign reality and as such it is the object of study of semiotics." This semiotic act can be interlingual, intralingual, or intersemiotic translation. Similar views are also adopted by translation scholars. Susan Bassnett (1991, p. 13) mentions that "[a]lthough translation has a central core of linguistic activity, it belongs most properly to semiotics, the science that studies sign systems or structures, sign processes and sign functions." This perspective is best understood if translation, as defined by Julian House (2009, p. 4), is examined "[…] the process of replacing an original text, known as the source text, with a substitute one, known as the target text." The two terms "text" and "substitution" are fundamental in semiotics as they allow the translatability/substitution of every semiotic system/text[1] for another. In fact, such an approach to translation is largely due to the multidisciplinarity not only of semiotics but also of translation studies.

[1] "The concept 'text' is used in a specifically semiotic sense and […] is applied not only to messages in a natural language but also to any carrier of integral ('textual') meaning—to a ceremony, a work of the fine arts, or a piece of music" Uspenskij et al. (2003/[1973]). For Göran Sonesson (1998, p. 83), "it may also be described as that which is (should or could be) subject to interpretation."

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P. P. Trifonas (ed.), *International Handbook of Semiotics,*
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-9404-6_13

13.2 Translation as an Interdisciplinary Act of Communication

Considerable mutual influences between semiotics and translation studies have existed for several decades. According to Jeremy Munday (2004, p. 182), "[t]ranslation studies is an example *par excellence* of a field which can bring together approaches from a wide range of language and cultural studies, modifying them for its own use and developing new models specific to its own requirements." More precisely, George Floros (2005, p. 61) mentions that translation is related with disciplines that conduct contrastive intercultural research, such as anthropology, cultural studies, intercultural communication, comparative studies, cultural semiotics, and sociology. Floros (2005, p. 77) also observes that "[t]he fact that the Translation Studies are informed by neighboring or 'wider' academic disciplines should not lead immediately to the adoption of their results."

Although I agree with the aforementioned views, I am surprised that linguistics is not included. In the past, translation focused on the nature of the signifier, which accounts for the prioritization of the linguistic dimension of the translation process. As a result, translation was categorized as an exclusively linguistic process. However, we know that interlingual translation implies the other two types of translation, namely intralingual and intersemiotic (Gentzler 2001, p. 1; Torop 2002, p. 593; Tomaszkiewicz 2005, p. 165; Petrilli and Ponzio 2012, p. 21), which are directly linked with the interdisciplinary nature of translation.

In the past, several scholars had reservations against scientificism, believing that it would prevent scientific thought from focusing on a single research subject; in the field of translation, though, this issue has never been raised. This is why translators need to refer to or recall other texts in order to carry out their task. As Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2012, p. 15) remark: "translative processes across languages evidence the dialogic intertextuality structural to texts, such that textual practice itself in a single language is already an exercise in translation." Similarly, Umberto Eco (2001, p. 13) states that "[…] translating is not only connected with linguistic competence, but with intertextual, psychological, and narrative competence." The same concepts, *dialogue* and *intertextuality*, are also used by Roman Jakobson (1971/[1967]), who dedicated an essay to the relationship between linguistics and other sciences. There he described the bond that should exist between them within the so-called interdisciplinary dialogue.

> Interdisciplinarity can work in a "soft" way of simple *multidisciplinarity*, i.e. as a horizontal approach that enables a better comprehension or representation of an object whose comprehensive study escapes the grip of a single disciplinary method; but it can also work in a "strong" way of *metadisciplinarity* or *transdisciplinarity*, i.e. as a research of a vertical dependence that methods and objects of such a discipline can have when read and understood in the light of broader and more foundational knowledge, from which may also implicitly be assumed principles, models and statements. (Jakobson 1971/[1967])

The truth is that researchers on translation have related interdisciplinarity to the concept of text type and not with cultural texts which constitute the basis of semiotics.

Text types are linguistic products, whereas cultural texts are not exclusively linguistic. As Anti Randviir (2007, p. 142) mentions: "[n]ow, communication, the nature of space and the structure of texts are intertwined, and we talk about intertextual spaces, intersemiotic and intersemiosic communication." Thus, the issue of interdisciplinarity is relevant to translation.

In the process of translation, a translator is faced not only with verbal texts but also with other semiotic texts, even nonverbal texts, since:

> The translator must navigate in the iconic dimension of language and move beyond the conventions and obligations of the dictionary to enter the live dialogue among national languages, among languages internal to a given national language, and among verbal signs and nonverbal signs. (Petrilli and Ponzio 2012, p. 20)

In fact, Petrilli and Ponzio point to the continuous transition of the translator from one cultural text to another. The expansion of the translation process to include nonverbal texts has caused a dispute about the nature of translation. However, there seems to be an agreement that contemporary communication is based almost exclusively on multimodal texts. According to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006/[1996], p. 39), there is an "[…] incessant process of 'translation,' or 'transcoding'—transduction—between a range of semiotic modes [that] represents, we suggest, a better, a more adequate understanding of representation and communication." The boundaries of the term *translation* were expanded by the semioticians quite early, a fact not acknowledged by translation scholars, who perceived their approach as being primarily metaphorical. Gradually, however, this attitude changed.

Several translation scholars turned this metaphorical character into an advantage for the image–text communication of our time, and started to comply with Michaela Wolf's (2009, pp. 77–78) argument that "[…] banning a metaphorical variant of the translation notion […] from the field of research of Translation Studies would ultimately mean rejecting any sort of interdisciplinary work in this respect. Interdisciplinarity, however, has been constitutive for the discipline from its very beginning."

13.3 Semiotics and Translation: Definitions and Propositions

Semiotics of translation should be seen within a wider interdisciplinary context. The term is used nowadays to define the semiotic approach to translation process. Although the term seems to have prevailed both in the area of semiotics and of translation studies, if we follow chronologically the thought of seminal scholars of the semiotic approach to translation, we will see that this particular term has not been the only one proposed to describe that approach. The term *semiotics of translation* was used in the early 1980s by Gideon Toury (1980, p. 12), along with the term *semiotics and translation* (Toury 1980, p. 7), according to which translation was considered to be a semiotic activity.

Later, Dinda Gorlée (1994, pp. 226–227), based on the work of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, introduced the term *semiotranslation*, arguing that we should consider the logical semantics of semiotics as an example of the translation of signs. In particular, Gorlée argues that translation is an endless semiosis where translators play a key role as they try to interpret the source text and produce its translated form in the target language.

At the same period, Peeter Torop (1994), one of the leading figures of the semiotic approach to translation nowadays,[2] also spoke of the *Semiotics of translation* and *translation semiotics*. For Torop (2008, p. 257), "[t]he ontology of translation semiotics rests on the recognition that culture works in many respects as a translation mechanism […]." As it is shown later, the fact that translation is identified with culture is in the core of the semiotics of culture.

Other theorists of semiotics associated translation with the transmutation of semiotics systems. Thus, Paolo Fabbri (2008/[1998], pp. 160–161) referred to *transduction* defining it as "[…] the translation between different semiotic systems."[3] Fabbri argues that we are led to this proposition by the ability of the semiotic notions to have grammatical patterns open to comparisons between the various types of semiotic systems. Furthermore, he claims that it is possible to proceed to intralingual translation between different discourses, i.e., translate the scientific discourse into the poetic one.

A more cautious approach toward the semiotics of translation is adopted by Umberto Eco and Siri Nergaard (2001/[1998], p. 218), who refer to *semiotic approaches to translation* since "translation studies adopt more and more interdisciplinary approaches in the study of translation as an intertextual and intercultural drift." They also highlight (Eco and Nergaard 2001/[1998], 221) that "[translation] involves passing from a text 'a,' elaborated according to a semiotic system 'A,' into a text 'b,' elaborated according to a semiotic system 'B.'" Later, Eco justified once more the relevance of semiotics to translation by claiming that "linguistics itself cannot explain all translation phenomena, which should be approached within a more general semiotic view" (Eco 2003 p. 342).[4]

The term used by Eco and Nergaard (2001/[1998]) has also been adopted by Mathieu Guidère (2008, p. 58), who claims that "the semiotic approach has the advantage of manipulating different 'worlds' with the appropriate conceptual tools [….] as it allows the translator to integrate signs that come from different systems." The term *semiotics of translation* suggested by Toury and Torop has also been adopted by other researchers. Thus, Petrilli (2007, p. 311) uses the term *semiotics of translation*, stressing the fact that "the theory of translation cannot ignore the semiotics of translation. On the other hand, the semiotics theory could benefit from the contribution of the theory and practice of translation." Moreover, during the same period, Elin Sütiste and Peeter Torop (2007 p. 196) use the term *translation*

[2] See also Sütiste (2012, p. 271).

[3] All translations from French and Greek into English are mine.

[4] I use Eco's version translated into Greek in addition to Eco's English version of the same book because there is information in the Greek version, which is not available in the English version.

semiotics to describe the research area "which forming part of Semiotics analyzes comparatively the semiotic systems and the functional relations between different semiotic systems, and as an autonomous field, it provides the means to distinguish the degree of translatability of semiotic systems." In fact, one year later, Torop (2008, p. 253) makes the overconfident statement that "[t]ranslation semiotics is on its way to becoming a discipline on its own," even thought, at the beginning, he saw the upsurge of this field as "a general change in attitudes to problems of translation" (Torop 2000, p. 597).[5]

For several years, there was no terminological agreement. Unlike the terms proposed by Eco and Nergaard in the first edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, in the second edition of the volume, Umbaldo Stecconi (2009, p. 261) speaks of *semiotics* and *translation*. Although Stecconi sets out his framework through a mixture of semiotic approaches to translation,[6] the influence of Peirce becomes evident when he refers to *translation semiosis*. More recently, the last issue of the journal *Sign System Studies* (2012) adopts the term *semiotics of translation*. This is an indication that this term tends to become dominant.

13.4 Proponents of the Semiotic Approach to Translation

Several scholars argue that the interest of semiotics in the field of translation dates back to the Russian linguist Roman Jakobson (1959) and his work "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation."[7] In this work, Jakobson (1959, p. 233) characterizes translation as a form of indirect discourse, since it involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. However, long before Jakobson's seminal article, the translation process attracted the interest of several semiotics scholars such as Peirce (1931–1966), Victoria Welby (1983/[1903]), and Mikhail Bakhtin (1986/[1950–1951]). The impact of Peirce's work in the late nineteenth century is evident even in Jakobson, who described translation as *interpretation*. According to Eco and Nergaard (2001/[1998] p. 219–220), the relation of translation with the notion of interpretation reflects the influence of Peirce. Jakobson is believed to have referred to three types of *interpretation* influenced by Peirce (1931–1948, p. 4.127), who claimed that the sign lends itself to interpretation, and, as such, is translatable by other sign systems.

[5] In 2010, Torop (2010, p. 2) redefined this research area by claiming that the semiotics of translation is a subdiscipline of the semiotics of culture.

[6] This position is also evident in the definition given by Stecconi (2009, p. 260) "[…] semiotics is a theory of how we produce, interpret and negotiate meaning through signs."

[7] Despite the originality of this text, Elin Sütiste (2008, p. 309) concludes, after meticulous research on its influence on academia, that even though his influence was considerable, the categorization of types of translation was not further analyzed in accordance with his communicative model or vice versa. This has created the impression that this scope of study remained unexplored. Other scholars, such as Aline Remael (2010, p. 15), mention that Jakobson's terminology itself relegated the terms to translation's periphery.

Another important contribution to the field of semiotics of translation is the work of Victoria Welby in the early twentieth century. Welby (1983/[1903], p. 34) describes the human ability to assign meaning in the context of *translation thought*, i.e., an automatic process "in which everything suggests or reminds us of something else." Thus, according to Welby (1983/[1903]), translation becomes a method of research and discovery, a method for verifying and acquiring knowledge, and for the development of critical consciousness.[8]

Furthermore, several semioticians argue that Jakobson's statement about translation is based on the work of Louis Hjelmslev, who attributes a special place to language in relation to other semiotic systems. Hjelmslev (1963/[1943]), p. 109) argues that "in practice, language is a semiotics into which all other semiotics could be translated—both all the other languages and the other possible semiotic structures." This translatability is based on the fact that all languages are capable of forming any meaning.

The semiotic approach to translation was also influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin. Torop (2002, p. 598) argues that although Bakhtin's thought was not directly related to the problems of translation, scholars still find reasons to connect him to issues of translation. In particular, for Bakhtin (1986/[1950–1951], p. 106), there are two elements in the text: the language as a semiotic system and the text as utterance. Bakhtin claims that the text can never be translated perfectly.

Along with Jakobson, the Russian semiotician Lotman (1990) was also interested in the translation process expanding its scope from a challenging perspective. Lotman (1990, p. 143) influenced the field of semiotics of translation when he made provocative claims, such as "the fundamental act of thinking is translation," and went on to add that "the fundamental mechanism of translation is dialogue." Lotman's ideas have resonated well with the work of translation scholars such as Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury, who, similarly to Lotman, drew considerable inspiration from Russian formalism (Sütiste 2012, p. 273). Torop (2002, p. 593), considers the contributions of Bakhtin and Lotman to be seminal because the two traditions together, namely Bakhtin's *philosophy of language* and Lotman's *semiotics of culture*, manage to bring together concepts such as dialogism, autonomy, polyphony, and translation.

Translation also attracted the interest of Eco (2003, p. 23), who claimed that semiotics considers the concept of translation essential, even when this is not explicitly stated. However, he argues that several of the contemporary concepts of translation studies (*equivalence*, *skopos*, *fidelity/faithfulness*, or *the translator's initiative*) are now under negotiation. Eco (ibid., 24) also argues that translation is based on a process of negotiation where the loss of something is accepted in order to gain something else. In particular with regard to *fidelity/faithfulness* in translation, Eco (2003, p. 483) remarks that if we look up the synonym of the word *faith* in any dictionary, we will come up with the word *accuracy* among others.

[8] For an analytical presentation, see Petrilli (2009).

13.5 Typologies of Translation with a Semiotic Background

Torop (2002, p. 593) sets Jakobson's tripartite categorization as the starting point of the semiotic approach to translation. According to Torop (ibid.), here for the first time translation was explicitly related to semiotics. Jakobson (1959, p. 233) distinguishes three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: (a) *intralingual translation* or *rewording*, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language; (b) *interlingual translation* or *translation proper*, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language; and (c) *intersemiotic translation* or *transmutation*, an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems. As Torop (2011, p. 24) observes, the three types of translation outlined by Jakobson reflect the simultaneity of the three processes in the psychological process of translation, but the same kind of simultaneous process also takes place in culture.

Although this typology is considered a landmark by the researchers of semiotics of translation, it is not the only one. In his attempt to integrate more closely the semiotic approach to the field of translation,Gideon Toury (1994/[1986], p. 1114) expanded Jakobson's typology by distinguishing translation as either *intrasemiotic* or *intersemiotic*. Intrasemiotic is further divided into *intrasystemic* translation, i.e., intralingual, and *intersystemic* translation, i.e., interlingual. Toury[9] does not elaborate on his typology, although he does explain that this categorization:

> […] it seems important and useful only to the extent that the relations between various semiotic systems really affect the mechanisms which are inherent in translating itself as a type of activity, a question that has not really been answered yet. (Toury 1994/[1986])

A rather controversial typology is proposed by Eco (2001, p. 99), who does not distinguish between types of translation, but between forms of interpretation. In his typology is attached to the problems posed by variations in both the substance and the purport of expression. Eco's typology distinguishes between *interpretation by transcription*, *intrasystemic interpretation*, and *intersystemic interpretation*. Equally important, though not particularly known, is the typology of translation proposed by Petrilli (2003, p. 19), who distinguishes between *intersemiotic* and *endosemiotic* translation. The former refers to the translation process between two or more semiotic systems, while the latter is about the internal process in a given semiotic system. Petrilli explains that both types are part of the real world and not only of the world of human culture.

It is worth mentioning that despite the efforts to categorize translation through a semiotic perspective, Jakobson's typology still remains the most influential among semioticians. Torop (2002, p. 593) underlines the important role of translation in producing culture, and points to the semiotic interpretation of the theory of

[9] Toury (1994/[1986]) also wrote an entry on translation for the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics* edited by Thomas A. Sebeok that was probably the first systematic discussion of the interrelations between translation and semiotics (Sütiste 2012, p. 273).

translation. According to Torop (2002), these researchers have put together interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic translation as a typology that is important for a further understanding of culture.

13.6 The Schools of Semiotics of Translation Today

The schools of semiotics that have studied translation have mainly adopted the positions of Peirce, Jakobson, Lotman, and Eco. I argue that the most important semiotic theorization of translation has been developed by the semiotic school of Moscow–Tartu. This school has influenced not only semiotics as a scientific area—advocating the autonomy of the semiotics of culture—but also translation, creating a school that is still influential for the semioticians of translation. So far, the most prominent figure of this school has been Torop, a systematic researcher of Lotman's work, who has been closely involved in the foundation and development of this semiotic school.

Torop adopted Lotman's concept of *semiosphere*[10] to translation to describe its limits not as a restrictive factor but as a mechanism which translates external messages into the internal language of the semiosphere. Based on this approach, Torop (2002, p. 603) stated that "[i]n the discipline of the semiotics of culture it comes naturally to say that culture is translation, and also that translation is culture." Torop (2002, p. 602) argues that the relation of the semiotics of culture to translation studies has introduced the concept of intersemiosis in addition to the concept of semiosis to the semiotics of culture. These theses seem to be embraced by Peeter Torop, Elin Sütiste, Anti Randviir, and others.

The Peircean school of the semiotics of translation has been very influential, especially to the Anglo-Saxon and the Scandinavian world. This school is based on Peirce's fundamental claim that interpretation precedes translation. Thus, translation becomes a central part of the sign and semiosis constitutes a translation process (Petrilli 2003, p. 17). These statements seem to be embraced by Dinda Gorlée, Susan Petrilli, Agusto Ponzio, Bruno Ossimo, Ubaldo Stecconi, Ritva Hartama-Heinonen, and others.

The French school of the semiotics of translation is also important, though not widely known. It follows the translation typology of Jakobson, one of the founding members of the Paris School of Semiotics.[11] Quemada (1982, p. 5) claims that "in the perspective of the School of Paris, [the sign] is mainly a manufactured object," therefore, I claim, decodable and translatable. Greatly influenced by Greimas, the

[10] Lotman (2005/[1984], p. 206, 208) defined *semiosphere* as a "specific semiotic continuum, which is filled with multivariant semiotic models situated at a range of hierarchical levels" or as the "[…] semiotic space, outside of which semiosis itself cannot exist."

[11] According to Alexandros-Phaidon Lagopoulos (2004, p. 159–160), it is a structuralist and linguistically based school. The area in which it is most purely semiotic and which is most scientifically solid is the theory of Algirdas Geimas. Nevertheless, there is another area of this literary theory which lies on the fringe of Semiotics (Bremond, Todorov, Genette, Barthes) which may be considered as a moderate structuralism.

Semiotic School of Paris was structured on a "Sociosemiotics as a theory for the production and the search for meaning in action" (Landowski 2009, p. 75). For this school, as John Lyons (1968, p. 50) observes, "each language is regarded as a system of relations (more precisely a set of interrelated systems) the elements of which—sounds, words, etc—have no validity independently of the relations of equivalence and contrast which hold between them."

But does not that definition also encompass the translation process? I argue that this school lends itself most to applications in the area of the semiotics of translation, since it is not restricted by the theoretical considerations of the Peircean school of translation or the school of Moscow–Tartu. Although Roland Barthes has not referred explicitly to translation, his influence has been significant. The relation between language and image, and as such the transformation of the semiotic system of language to the semiotic system of image, has been studied and researched by this school. Moreover, several semioticians like Georges Mounin had pointed quite early to the dynamics of *intersemiosis* in translation. Although Mounin (1963, p. 16) does not use this term, he observes that "translation (mainly in the fields of theatre, cinema and interpretation) also comprises non-verbal and paralinguistic aspects" . The research fields of the French semiotic school of translation seem to have paved the way for scholars such as Mathieu Guidère, Paolo Fabbri, François Rastier, Carine Duteil-Mougel, Maurice Pergnier, and Herman Parret, to name but a few.

Eco has been influenced by all three aforementioned scholars. It is worth mentioning that his influence has divided semioticians into those who consider interpretation as translation, and those who consider translation and interpretation to be independent processes.[12] Eco, quite successfully I believe, made the translation process central to cultural communication. In the framework of cultural communication, semiotic systems coexist, cooperate, and get translated, since:

> [c]ulture continuously translates signs into signs, and definitions into definitions, words into icons, icons into ostensive signs, ostensive signs into new definitions, new definitions into propositional functions, propositional functions into exemplifying sentences, and so on; in this way it proposes to its members an uninterrupted chain of cultural units, and thus translating and explaining them. (Eco 1979, p. 71)

We should stress the fact that during the past decades, a new trend has emerged within semiotics, namely that of audiovisual translation, based mainly on a number of works by Jorge Díaz Cintas, Pilar Orero, Henrik Gottlieb, Yves Gambier, Patrick Zabalbeascoa, Fotios Karamitroglou, and Dirk Delabastita, among others. These scholars have employed semiotics as a tool for the study and analysis of audiovisual translation, because audiovisual texts are multimodal as they require the combined deployment of a wide range of semiotic sources or *modes*[13] for their production and development.

[12] This discussion has also been reflected in Greece. Giannis Lazaratos (2007, p. 200) adopts Eco's position, even though he believes that the term *translation* may be substituted with the broad term *interpretation*. In my opinion, since in everyday practice the term *translation* is used in a broad sense to describe many acts of communication, it could also be used instead of the term *interpretation*.

[13] According to Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault (2006, p. 4), "different semiotic modes create different meanings in different forms according to the different expressive means they employ."

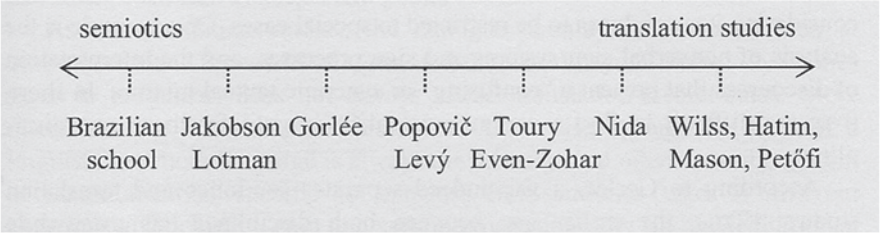

Fig. 13.1 The relation between semiotics and translation studies

Studying the relation between the fields of semiotics and translation studies and based on Gorlée's approach Ritva Hartama-Heinonen (2008, pp. 31–32) presented a continuum (Fig. 13.1) that links pure semiotics with pure translation theory:

She initially refers to the Brazilian school, which approaches translation in a wider sense based on the notion of Jakobson's intersemiotic translation. From the 1960s, with the poetical work of the de Campos brothers, the *cannibalist metaphor* has been used by the strong Brazilian translation studies community to stand for the experience of colonization and translation: the colonizers and their language are devoured, their life force invigorating the devourers, but in a new purified and energized form that is appropriate to the needs of the colonized people (Vieira 1999, pp. 98–99; Barbosa and Wyler 2001, p. 332). According to Else Vieira (1999, p. 105), for Brazilian school, translation is an operation in which it is not only the meaning that is translated but the sign itself in all its corporeality (sound properties, visual imagetics, all that makes up the iconicity of the aesthetic sign).

Hartama-Heinonen then presents semioticians who have adopted this approach, but also study problems of interlingual translation as Jakobson and Lotman do. Jakobson borrows a single element from Peirce's theory, the idea of interpretant and the concept of unlimited semiosis. The notion of *semiosphere*, introduced by Lotman, is related at the same time to language and to translation, since "[t]he semiosphere complicated the intertwined web containing 'text,' 'space,' 'culture,' etc., with the idea of linguistic interaction and internal translatability" (Randviir 2007, p. 142).[14]

In the continuum, these scholars are followed by semioticians who study translation based on Peirce's theory of the interpretation of signs. Gorlée is the main representative of this trend. Gorlée's (1994, p. 226) central premise has been that a Peircean semiotics provides crucial insights that may enrich both our theoretical accounts of translational phenomena and our observation of the phenomena themselves. Gorlée (2004, pp. 103–104) introduces the term of *semiotranslation* that is "[…] a unidirectional, future-oriented, cumulative, and irreversible process, a growing network which should be pictured as a single line emanating from a source text toward a designated target text." Then, there are translation scholars who draw on Russian formalism (Levý and Popovič). Jiří Levý, like other formalists, first viewed

[14] See also Lotman 2005/[1984], pp. 208–213.

language as a semiotic system with synchronic and diachronic aspects. Levý's translation theory emphasized less the "meaning" or the "object being represented" in the second language, but the specific literary features of the text that make it literary (Gentzler 2001, p. 84). Anton Popovič's project begins where the work of Levý's (but also František Miko) leaves off. He believes that instead of prescribing a (translation) technique which eliminates losses and smoothes over changes, he accepted the fact that losses, gains, and changes are necessary part of the process because of inherent differences of intellectual and aesthetic values in the two cultures (Gentzler 2001, pp. 87–88). After them, there are translation scholars, such as Gideon Toury and Itamar Even-Zohar, who adopt a weaker semiotic approach, but whose work is included within translation studies. It is worth mentioning that Lotman's ideas have resonated well with Toury's and Even-Zohar's work, who drew considerable inspiration from Russian formalism, as Lotman did. Their contribution abandoned attempts at prescription, incorporated descriptions of multiple translation processes and the idea of systemic change which undermines static and mechanistic concepts, especially linguistics' concepts (Gentzler 2001, p. 109). Translation scholars whose work more or less diverges from semiotics, such as Eugene Nida,[15] are closer to the end of the continuum. Nida's more systematic approach borrows theoretical concepts and terminology both from semantics and pragmatics and from Chomsky's work on syntactic structure (Munday 2004, p. 38).

Finally, there appear translation scholars whose studies have a slight influence of pure semiotics (Wilss, Petöfi, Hatim, Mason). Wolfram Wilss considers cognitive psychology the most appropriate framework for the study of translation as a cognitive activity. According to him, translation is a knowledge-based activity and, as with all kinds of knowledge, it requires the acquisition of organized knowledge (Albir and Alves 2009, p. 60). In the beginning of the 1970s, János Petöfi took a next step toward his proposed comprehensive text theory, and offered his "partial text theory" 1974, 1975, on the basis of which he built a pragmatic–semantic text interpretation process (Gorlée 2004, p. 36). Basil Hatim and Ian Mason paid extra attention to the realization in translation of ideational and interpersonal functions (rather than just the textual function) and incorporated into their model a semiotic level of discourse (Munday 2004, p. 99).

Hartama-Heinonen (2008, p. 32) stresses the fact that the semiotic end of this continuum reflects the historic tendencies of general semiotic research: initially, the influence of structuralism and its successors; later, Peirce's interpretative semiotics; and finally, eclectic theories and applications. Nevertheless, one can observe that the approaches of the French,[16] Italian,[17] and Spanish[18] semioticians are absent from the above continuum. Also, intersemiotic translation is presented as pure semiotics, while interlingual translation is understood as a research field pertaining

[15] It is worth mentioning that in the early 1980s, Nida characterized his approach as *sociosemiotic*.

[16] Paris School of Semiotics.

[17] For example, the work of Eco and Fabbri on the semiotic study of translation is seminal and cannot be overlooked.

[18] Spanish researchers of audiovisual translation.

to translation studies, a position also shared by other scholars.[19] I also argue that Heinonen's work has made an important contribution to the field of semiotics of translation by providing a very good theoretical framework. However, her work lacks application of the theory since it does not offer applied examples to comprehend his theoretical framework.

13.7 Research Fields of the Semiotics of Translation

The studies in the field of the semiotics of translation seem, I believe, to be of three types:

- Theoretical studies that link semiotics with translation studies. Such are the schools of Peirce and Moscow–Tartu, which seem to be the most prolific. The former approaches translation by means of semiotic hermeneutics, whereas the latter considers translation to be a cultural practice, as mentioned earlier.
- Studies which deal with the transference from a verbal to a nonverbal semiotic system (intersemiotic translation). This is a direction also followed by translation scholars who focus on the power of the semiotic system of the image. The semiotic system of image is a dimension that has also been stressed for quite some time by researchers working in visual culture.[20] Thus, Jeremy Munday (2004b, p. 216) mentions that "translation studies must move beyond the written word and the visual, and multimodal in general." Mona Baker (1992, p. 42) also considers that translation by illustration "[…] is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated, particularly if there are restrictions on space and if the text has to remain short, concise, and to the point." We should add that tasks involving the translatability of a nonverbal semiotic system into another nonverbal semiotic system (intersemiotic translation without the use of language) are very rare.
- Studies that pertain to interlingual translation. These comprise studies on an impressively wide range of topics, such as:

  a. The interlingual translation of *multisemiotic/multimodal texts*, i.e., texts in which more than one semiotic systems coexist. Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1997, p. 338) observes that no text can consist only of the semiotic system of language, as it necessitates some kind of physical support. More simply, we could say that nowadays a text can hardly be monosemiotic. As a result, the coexistence and synergy of semiotic systems is indispensable, and the production of meaning stemming from that process must be translated. As Petrilli

[19] See Jean Peeters (1999, p. 17).

[20] John Walker and Sarah Chaplin (1997, p. 53) note that "those who point at the inadequacies of language in regard to visual experience should remember that most visual culture lecturers use illustrations to supplement their words. […] It should be noted however that illustrations are themselves 'translations' and their accuracy of reproduction is always in question."

(2013, p. 118) characteristically mentions, "[t]ransposition, translation, transfer, intersemiosis, intertextual, interverbal, intelinguistic, interlingual, dialectic, dialogue: these expressions tell us that the sign can only subsists in the relation *among* signs and the modality of this relation is translation."

b. The translation of *connotations*. Barthes (1964, p. 130–131) claims that connotations are second-order semiotic systems, which means that they pertain to the level of ideology. Scholars such as Mounin (1963, p. 166), Newmark (1998, p. 93), Ballard (2003, p. 23), Nida and Taber (2003, p. 91–98), Nord (2005, p. 102), and House (2009, p. 31) insist that we should translate connotations as we translate denotations. Petrilli (2007, p. 335) also supports that "the problem of ideology should definitely be taken into consideration in a semiotic approach to translation."

c. The interlingual translation of *semantic isotopies*. Ubaldo Stecconi (2009, p. 260) mentions that "in practice […] translators routinely compare semiotic structures. Two texts—one the translation of the other—can be compared on various grounds, including lexical items, isotopies, or sense levels […]." Greimas and Courtés (1993, p. 197) define *isotopy* first as designated iterativity along a syntagmatic chain of classemes which assure the homogeneity of the utterance–discourse. Every and any act of translation can be approached through the perspective of semantic isotopies in order to enhance a cultural understanding of the function of translation (Kourdis 2012, p. 115).

d. The use of *eye tracking* in the semiotic study of the translator's choices in interlingual translation, as well as the reading paths in intersemiotic translation. It is worth mentioning that, according to O'Brien (2009, pp. 265–266), "while eye-tracking does not reveal all there is to know about how humans translate, it certainly adds a very rich dimension to the tools and methods we have for investigating this activity […]."

e. The *quantitative equivalence* in interlingual translation. The term was introduced by Jacques Derrida (2004, p. 428), who claimed that for aesthetic purposes, the target text should be quantitatively equivalent with the source text. Eco (2003, p. 350) also says that "… we instinctively end up judging the adequacy of a translation in terms of quantitative relations between physical qualities as well." This may be the reason why Nord (2005, p. 121) refers to nonverbal elements that are decisive for the process and product of translation and constitute serious restrictions on the task of the translator. Therefore, she claims that the captions/instructions in the target text should not be longer than the respective captions/instructions in the source text.

f. The role of the semiotic system of *graphism* and more especially of *typography* in interlingual translation. Eco (1992, p. 65) mentions that the code of graphics (shapes, special marks, lines, fonts) contributes to the production of meaning, as the graphic conventions acquire a different content according to their environment. This position is not adopted only by semioticians. Communication specialists stress the visual dimension of language, as "[…] verbal language can suggest particular qualities as a result of how it appears: in other words, writing is a form of image-making, too. It could be said to have its own paralanguage, as a result of 'clothing' the copywriter has chosen for it" (Goddard 1998, p. 16).

Thus, it is their relation and interaction that produces meaning and calls upon us to decipher them, and which we must take into consideration during the translation process. This position is adopted by many translation scholars as well. Thus, for Nord (2005, p. 88), the use of nonverbal elements (intratextual factors), such as indentations, chapter headings and numbers, asterisks, layout, illustrations, tables, initials, boldface types, and italics, are critical in the translation process and product.

The last two research areas, I believe, can be classified into the research field of *aesthetic equivalence* of translation. Both quantitative equivalence and nonverbal semiotic systems involve target text aesthetics. Usually, the reproduction of source text aesthetics is opted for the target text aesthetics basically to connote faithfulness to the source text. Furthermore, translation theorists such as Koller (1989, pp. 99–104) or House (2009, pp. 31–32) classify the effect of nonverbal semiotic systems into the field of equivalence, using different terminology though, i.e., *text-normative* and *formal-aesthetic equivalence*.

13.8 Conclusive Remarks

Though there are researchers who define the field of the *semiotics of translation* as a new discipline (Sütiste and Torop 2007; Torop 2008), as an *activity* (Toury 1980), as an *alternative* or *different perspective* (Snell-Hornby et al. 1999), or as an *approach*, Eco and Nergaard (2001/[1998]), I believe, that it should be considered an *approach*, a semiotically based approach to the translation process. The study of translation with the aid of semiotic tools renders this research field an area where different approaches converge one in which interdisciplinary approaches unfold, since semiotics per se is interdisciplinary. As Hartama-Heinonen (2012, p. 305) mentions "[t]he semiotic approach to translation first leads us to the sphere of texts and discourses […] that presuppose the co-existence, interaction and even the confrontation of different semiotic systems and signifying practices. These systems, which reach beyond linguistic boundaries, manifest themselves in varying codes and combinations."

We also notice that there is no established term of this field, but that there are many terms to describe more or less the same approach. Nevertheless, if we consider the fact that a large part of academic output in this area is produced by researchers of the semiotic school of Moscow–Tartu, it seems that the two dominant terms in English are *semiotics of translation* and *translation semiotics*.

The semiotics of translation seems to have been influenced as a scientific field by most of the semiotics schools. It is also clear that in the establishment of this field, the most influential figures have been Peirce, Lotman, Jakobson, and Eco, although of course more often than not ideas influence one another. Thus, for example, it is not surprising that Lotman considers translation as *dialogue* and that Eco speaks of *negotiation* in translation—and activity that falls within dialogue—as Eco wrote the introduction to Lotman's book (1990), which greatly influences him. When Eco suggested his own typology of translation, though, clearly influenced by Peirce, he used Jakobson as his starting point.

The fact that studies addressing the translatability of nonverbal semiotic systems with other nonverbal semiotic systems are rare is indicative, I believe, of the influence of linguistic thought on the translation process. This is so, since many researchers do not accept the position that intersemiotic translation constitutes a type of translation.[21] In my opinion, there is no good reason to restrict the study of translational phenomena to interlingual translation- a pure linguistic level.

13.9 In Lieu of a Conclusion

As a field of translation studies, the *semiotics of translation* constitutes an interdisciplinary approach to the translation process. It is interdisciplinary even within the framework of semiotics, as scholars often base their work on different semiotic theories when they study the translation process. The fact that most studies in the field of the semiotics of translation work on a theoretical level seems to me *paradoxical*, as it appears to be in contrast with the position that translation is a special case of semiosis, in other words applied. Indeed, the mere fact of speaking of the *semiotics* and not the *semiology of translation* indicates the influence of the Peircean school on the study of translation, even though Peirce did not propose a full-fledged theory of translation. Nevertheless, I believe that as a result of the above, the semiotics of translation runs the risk of becoming entangled in a theoretical level of thought which is not compatible with a primarily applied practice like translation. That is why I believe that this research field can be considerably enriched by the French school of semiotics, which has a long history of applied semiotics.

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[21] For instance, Jean Delisle et al. (1999, p. 188) consider translation only as a procedure of interlinguistic transfer involving written documents.

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