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Paratexts as a valid component of (re)translations

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Introduction

The notion of paratext was first explored by Gérard Genette, who describes it as "what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (Genette 1997: 1). Genette emphasizes that a literary work is not limited to its primary text but is accompanied by additional elements, such as the title, cover, preface, and others. These components collectively present the work to the audience and "ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption" (Genette 1997: 1).

Within the broader category of paratexts, Genette (Ibid.: 4) differentiates between peritexts and epitexts. Peritexts include elements "around the text and either within the same volume or at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance," such as titles, prefaces, and notes. In contrast, epitexts comprise "those messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, this including generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others)" (Ibid.: 5). Therefore, given their adaptability and transitional nature, paratexts may serve as tools to adjust a work to the evolving target culture.

Simultaneously, they offer a platform for translators to assert their visibility.

The analysis of paratexts in translation opens up numerous avenues for exploration (see Kovala 1996; Harvey 2003; Thompson-Wohlgemuth 2009; Gerber 2012; Batchelor 2018, Zambor 2018), offering a fascinating perspective on how these elements shape the reception of a work as well as the translator networks, reflecting also the temporal and social aspect (Stanitzek 2004).

The paratextual examination of retranslations holds even greater potential for scholarly inquiry. Retranslation, as described by Tahir Gürçaglar (2009: 233), refers to "the act of translating a work that has previously been translated into the same language, or the result of such an act, i.e. the retranslated text itself." Therefore, investigating the ways in which (re)translations are packaged, marketed, and received offers a deeper understanding of the roles played by individuals and institutions in their distribution (Deane-Cox 2014).

Since the early 2000s, a growing number of studies have explored (re)translations by examining their paratextual aspects, investigating the context and reception of a given literary work (e.g., Tahir Gürçağlar 2008; Deane-Cox 2012, 2014; Badić 2020; Raffi 2022). The findings from these studies reveal that paratextual elements reflect the context in which a (re)translation is created, showcase the prevailing ideologies and norms of the target culture, and function as both marketing tools and facilitators for engaging new audiences.

With this special issue, we thus aim to gather theoretical, methodological, and empirical reflections on the notion of paratext, as well as the (in)visibility of translators to be discussed from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The first paper in the issue is Haiden's *Paratext as a Tool to Measure Translators' Social Capital*. The paper investigates the translator networks at the Paul Zsolnay Verlag publishing house in interwar Vienna through an analysis of correspondence and translation peritexts. It employs Bourdieu's concepts of social, symbolic, and economic capital to uncover professional hierarchies within the publishing house, and classifies translators into three groups: author's translators, publisher's translators, and independent translators, with translators in each group figuring in different networks, exhibiting different professional behaviours, and having varying incomes.

The second paper in this issue, Spišiaková's *Paratext in Slovak Retranslations of A Christmas Carol*, switches focus from analysing texts to examining visual paratexts across ten Slovak editions/retranslations of Dickens's iconic novella. Through them, the paper aims to test the retranslation hypothesis originally proposed by Goethe and see whether it extends to visual paratexts of retranslations.

Wu's *Paratexts in the English Translation of Contemporary Science Fiction—A Case Study of Waste Tide* (largely) moves away from visual

paratexts and the Carol's fantasy nature to instead focus on English translations of Chinese science-fiction novels. It explores both the peritext and the epitext as understood by Genette of the novel Waste Tide by Chen Quifan translated into English by Ken Liu with the aim to examine how paratextual strategies facilitate cross-cultural reception of Chinese science-fiction among English-speaking readers.

Ponomareva's *The Analysis of Paratext in Two English Translations of Pushkin's Eugene Onegin* then compares the paratextual strategies employed in Douglas Hofstadter's and Stanley Mitchell's translations. The author focuses exclusively on book covers and supplementary materials included in the translations. The paper shows how Hofstadter's presence is more evident in the translation, hypothesising that the translator's "fame" in the academic world enhances his visibility, whereas Mitchell's translation adheres to Penguin Classics' traditional branding, which highlights the text's literary quality rather than the translator.

Orsi's *The Shaping of a Writer: Gollancz's Epitextual Construction of Daphne du Maurier's Persona* explores how Victor Gollancz's catalogues built the myth of du Maurier's persona and life, impacting how mid-20th-century British readers received her works and perceived the writer herself. The exploration is conducted through an analysis of the collection Papers of Sir Victor Gollancz, employing Bourdieu's concepts of capital and Genette's paratext, particularly epitext.

The issue concludes with Perez's review of the monograph *Theatrical Interpreting into Slovak Sign Language* (2022) by Angela and Michal Hefty and Koželová's review of the monograph *Theoretical, praxeological and didactical aspects of dubbing translation and dialogue editing* (2024) by Andrej Zahorák and Emília Perez.

The presented thematic issue of The Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies on *Paratexts as a Valid Component of (Re)translations* provides valuable insights from various perspectives on translation, as well as from diverse cultural contexts. Together, the contributions demonstrate the multifaceted roles of paratexts in shaping the reception, interpretation, and positioning of texts and their creators across different historical, cultural, and literary landscapes. By employing varied methodologies and examining cases from multiple aspects, genres, and geographical regions, this issue highlights the dynamic interplay between paratexts and broader sociocultural, economic, and literary systems. As editors, we believe it will serve as a thought-provoking and stimulating contribution to ongoing discussions, inspiring further exploration and dialogue in this vibrant area of study.

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