

Modes of Textual Production: Intertextual Transformation, Amplification, Rewriting, and Summarization

Dr. Aissa Kouissi

Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Amar Telidji University of Laghouat, Laghouat, Algeria; Email: a.kouissi@lagh-univ.dz

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the principal modes through which texts are produced from pre-existing textual and cultural materials. It challenges conceptions of writing as an autonomous act of inspiration and instead approaches textual production as a conscious, regulated, and culturally situated process of selection, organization, transformation, and redistribution.

Design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a conceptual and critical-analytical approach grounded in theories of discourse production, intertextuality, textual pragmatics, and linguistic communication. It analyzes several generative practices—including translation, interpretation, commentary, explanation, amplification, rewriting, and summarization—to clarify the relationships between source texts and the new texts derived from them.

Findings: The analysis demonstrates that textual production does not emerge from a linguistic or cultural void. Every text is constructed through interaction with previous or contemporaneous literary, intellectual, scientific, journalistic, and cultural discourses. These materials are not merely reproduced but reorganized within a new textual structure according to specific linguistic, aesthetic, generic, and sociocultural conventions. Amplification generates a new text by expanding a textual nucleus and making its semantic relationships more explicit, whereas rewriting alters the organization, expressive procedures, or generic configuration of the source material. Summarization constitutes an inverse but equally productive operation: it deconstructs a source text, selects and reorganizes its components, and produces an autonomous condensed text. The distinction between “essential” and “secondary” textual elements, however, remains theoretically problematic because the perceived importance of individual elements varies according to the reader’s cultural background, interpretive position, and purpose.

Originality/value: The study offers an integrated account of textual production by treating interpretation, amplification, rewriting, and summarization as transformative rather than merely reproductive practices. It establishes that the resulting text is simultaneously dependent on and distinct from its source: it retains a semantic relationship with the original while acquiring a new linguistic structure, communicative function, and interpretive identity.

Keywords: Textual production; Intertextuality; Textual transformation; Amplification; Rewriting; Summarization; Discourse analysis; Textual pragmatics

¹ Received: January 12, 2026; Accepted: March 11, 2026; Published: July 15, 2026



Introduction:

From the outset, we observe that text production is a deliberate, conscious act, characterized by a high degree of control. A text cannot be produced out of “nothing” or from a void. Rather, it is produced only through prior or contemporaneous texts, that is, through a specific cultural background. We may therefore say that a text cannot be produced or generated—replicated—solely from other literary texts and assembled in the form of a textual mosaic, but also through cultural texts that are not recognized as literary texts, such as journalism, science, and other modes of knowledge transmission.

Michel Foucault considers that “the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and distributed according to a number of procedures whose role is to neutralize powers and dangers, to master the contingent event, and to control its disturbing materiality” (1). Through this statement, Foucault clarifies the conditions and forms of text production. Producing a text is thus a monitored act, meaning that it is directed toward achieving goals predetermined by the author, or sometimes reached incidentally through the act of writing and the operation of language upon language.

Text production is therefore a monitored and responsible act, the opposite of unconscious action that does not place goals—or objectives—within its horizon. The author confronts literary and civilizational responsibilities and must therefore master linguistic and artistic tools, work to regulate objectives, define them, and transform them into a project to be accomplished.

When Foucault states that production is a process of selection, we believe this refers to the selection of the means of production: language, the choice of procedures, style, levels of expression made possible by language, as well as the selection of content and literary genre.

These conditions alone, however, are not sufficient; they must be organized into a structure. This is the nature of the literary text, which appears as a process of construction before being a mere presentation of content that could otherwise be delivered in political, media, or even scientific discourse. The text is, above all, thought—or knowledge—organized into a structure according to criteria recognized within a specific society and culture. It is this structure that gives the text its specificity and distinguishes it from the mass of writings competing with it within the cultural space.

Text production is also a process of redistribution, according to Foucault. This process can be examined on two levels. On the level of content, the text emphasizes certain themes that correspond to its intellectual and aesthetic orientations, thereby ensuring a certain degree of circulation among readers. At the same time, it may revive neglected themes, give them new life, and subject them to contemporary reality.

On the linguistic level, the text redistributes linguistic and semiotic categories. In this context, it reorganizes the language of other texts as well as standard language, transforming them into new forms and configurations (as al-Jurjani notes). This also means that the text redistributes grammatical categories in order to establish its own “grammar.” This process leads to the creation of new variations in original meanings and modes of expression, even while using the same vocabulary. Through this reorganization, the text generates new texts with unfamiliar forms and structures. In this way, the text creates a new linguistic configuration, which text theory seeks to delineate and define its mechanisms through language and its structure. Textual pragmatics (*pragmatique textuelle*) works to highlight the specificity of the conditions under which speech acts are organized as sequences of speech acts (2). That is, the production and analysis of texts must take into account the socio-cultural conditions and context that allow for the segmentation and combination of sequences in order to produce meaning.

We now raise the following question: what are the means through which we produce a text? Is it through language alone, or through cultural texts and the literary themes they propose?

Naturally, the literary text is not merely a collection of words arranged in a particular system, nor a set of linguistic sequences juxtaposed with one another, nor even an accumulation of different textual fragments. Rather, it is a re-production and transformation of all of these elements simultaneously within a specific textual structure. No text exists in a state of purity, subject exclusively to the laws of a single literary genre, nor does it rely solely on purely literary texts or texts from a single historical period. A literary text may indeed be produced through other literary texts, but also through texts of civilization, culture, and everything that the civilizational context can provide. Todorov observed that “the new text is not constructed solely from elements that belong entirely to ‘literature,’ but through reference to specific frameworks such as style, literary traditions, the use of words, and poetic devices” (3). This means that a text must comply with cultural codes and writing traditions.

The forms of text production through other texts consist of reconstructing them anew. Among these forms are many practices that generate new texts from a given text, such as interpretation, commentary, explanation, rewriting (what was formerly called the versification of prose or the unraveling of verse), or the expansion of a text by adding elements, paragraphs, or chapters, thus resulting in a new text.

The process of text amplification (Amplification), known in ancient Arabic culture as *itnāb* (expansion), appears as one of the forms of text production based on a textual nucleus (a relatively short text), by enriching it with new elements that can be integrated into the same context. “In brief, we may say that amplifying a text means introducing additional elements that make the perception of the text’s components more prominent” (4). This means that expansion clarifies certain relationships between elements and emphasizes or deepens certain themes.

The original text may be equivalent to the produced text semantically, though not quantitatively, in terms of the amount of information, the nature of the message, and the number of themes and motifs. However, the structure of the text changes, whether in the arrangement of elements, artistic supports, or procedural methods. This process may be termed rewriting (*réécriture*).

Conversely, opposite to amplification, there exists another form of text production: summarization (*résumé*), which is the inverse of expansion. This process consists of reducing the text to its essential elements—if we accept that there are essential and non-essential elements in a text. It must be acknowledged that there is no single method of summarization; each individual retains certain elements and excludes others depending on their culture and relationship to the text. Among these practices are book reviews, article summaries, discussion syntheses, or the compilation of the main points (or axes) of an intellectual conference.

Antoine Sayah defines this process as follows: “Text summarization is an informative literary process that aims to convey the content of a text in a condensed form, preserving the essential elements and the logical relations between them, as well as the secondary elements most closely connected to the main idea and most supportive of it, in a manner that helps the reader understand and assimilate it more quickly and easily” (6).

Sayah’s definition may serve as a model in the educational field—his area of specialization—but it is less convincing in the critical domain. Modern critical studies have shown that every element in a literary text may be essential, and that there are therefore no truly essential versus secondary elements. This hierarchy is not valid in practice but exists only at a theoretical level. Likewise, the notion of a “main idea” may be regarded as nothing more than a myth.

Antoine Sayah then provides the procedural method for summarization, emphasizing that it is a form of text production when he states that “deconstructing the text into its constituent elements and composing a new text based on the essential elements and some secondary elements” constitutes the process (1). This procedure appears important for contemporary criticism,

particularly when summarization is understood as both deconstruction and production; however, it reintroduces the hierarchy of elements (essential/secondary).

Sayah integrates “text summarization technique” into modern linguistic theory and related fields of knowledge, arguing that “text summarization falls within the framework of linguistic communication, just as every text has a communicative purpose that carries a message forming a means of communication between sender and receiver and every recipient of that message; likewise, every act of summarization has a communicative purpose that aims to transmit the same message to a receiver after condensing its textual form” (8).

This observation by Sayah has little value in contemporary criticism and may be considered self-evident or a theoretical truism. Moreover, it merely reproduces Jakobson’s communication model without linking it to the core issue of text summarization.

Considering summarization as one of the processes of text production, Sayah distinguishes between the source text (original) and the resulting text (produced), as did A. Pétroff, whom Sayah cites repeatedly. “The source text and the resulting text are equal and distinct at the same time: they are equal in conveying the same meaning and distinct in the degree of attention given to details or non-essential elements, and in the formulation that carries the main ideas or elements of the text. The process of summarization cannot be limited to transferring certain sentences that carry essential ideas from the source text; rather, it consists of producing a new text, different from the source text, that conveys the main ideas and expresses them in sentences that often differ from those of the source text” (9).

What concerns us in this long passage drawn from Antoine Sayah is that he distinguishes between two texts: the source text and the resulting text. The latter is the subject of our discussion, as it represents one of the modes of text production derived from a specific text (the source).

It is possible to produce a text or a set of texts based on a particular theme or a specific myth. This field has been a major area of interest in comparative literature, which studies how a myth is transmitted from one culture to another, the forms of its construction, and the articulation of its elements. Here, we may observe that the second text attempts, as much as possible, to differentiate itself from the first and not to dissolve into it. Michel Foucault observed that “a single literary work can allow for the existence of very distinct discourses simultaneously and at the same time. In *The Odyssey* as a primary text, we find it recurring in the same era, in Bérard’s translation, in countless interpretations of texts, and in Joyce’s *Ulysses*” (10), as well as in Jean Giraudoux’s play *La guerre de Troie n’aura pas lieu*, among many other texts.

This observation also applies to the myth of Oedipus, which has been reproduced in numerous texts, from Sophocles to André Gide and Jean Anouilh, from Taha Hussein to Tawfiq al-Hakim, and in many other works, until it eventually became a fundamental subject in scientific discourse (psychoanalysis in Freud). The same occurred with the myth of Electra. Among the productive means of text generation identified by comparative literature are what are called “human models,” such as the miser, the warrior, and the lover, among others. From these, psychoanalysis—particularly in the work of Carl Gustav Jung—derived the concept of archetypes (archétypes).

Within the Arab-Islamic cultural sphere, the Qur’an has generated an immeasurable number of interpretations of various orientations, as well as the sciences of the Qur’an, theology (‘ilm uṣūl al-dīn), jurisprudence (fiqh), in addition to the compilation and interpretation of the Prophetic Sunnah, the stories of the prophets, the writings of the founders of the legal schools, and the texts of different religious sects and denominations, Sunni and Shi‘i alike, in all their currents.

Interpretation (tafsīr) is considered the most widespread form of text production. The conditions of this production are linked to the existence of a text that is interpretable. E. Barbotin defines this form by stating: “Interpretation is a work upon a work, a discourse upon a discourse, aimed at

serving a meaning believed to be of great value, with all the risks this entails of distorting meaning, impoverishing it, or dissolving it into the triviality of scholastic repetition” (11). This idea is clearly present in Arab-Islamic thought, particularly in the writings of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, when he discusses levels of discourse, arguing that “speech about speech is difficult,” because the first level of discourse may be produced from cultural and civilizational texts or from direct observation of reality, whereas the second level is more difficult since it takes the first as its object.

From this perspective, interpretation may be described as writing about writing, whose function lies in revealing the most prominent, stimulating, or ambiguous aspects of a literary work. Interpretation also seeks to clarify meanings deemed to be of great value; yet, at the same time, it may expose them to distortion or hinder their expression. Consequently, great artistic works become the object of multiple interpretations, with each era offering its own reading. In such cases, the resulting texts often far exceed—at least quantitatively—the interpreted text, while simultaneously enriching the original text and compensating for some of its shortcomings and gaps. For example, Marcel Proust’s novel *In Search of Lost Time* has generated a vast number of interpretations and commentaries that together constitute an entire library, encompassing texts of various kinds: psychological, historical, aesthetic, and others.

However, the texts that have received the greatest number of interpretations, across different levels—epistemological, juridical, historical, and others—are religious and sacred texts. The Qur’an, as a religious text, which I know better than other religious texts, has interpretations that exceed the capacity of an entire library. This accumulation of interpretations has occurred over fifteen centuries, that is, since its revelation.

In all these interpretations, one may observe a displacement between the original text—considered as a language bearing multiple semantic potentials—and the interpretive text, regarded as an explanatory language addressing the levels of the first language. This displacement prevents the original text from dissolving into its interpretations (the one / the multiple).

This distinction between the two texts (the original and the resulting) is not merely methodological but also procedural. As Foucault notes, “the difference between the first text and the second plays two complementary roles. On the one hand, it helps generate new texts endlessly: the first oversees the process by virtue of its permanence and dominance, reinforcing its position as a discourse continually open to reinterpretation... On the other hand, the task of interpretive text, regardless of the technical means employed, is ultimately to say aloud what was said quietly there” (12). According to Foucault, interpretation thus plays a dual role: it enables the production of new discourses while highlighting aspects of the text that may be poorly articulated.

It may also be said that the interpretive text takes the original text as a cause (‘illa) for producing a new discourse. The pretext (prétexte) is defined as the set of production conditions surrounding a work and granting it meaning at a given moment within the cultural space (13). The pretext that provides conditions for producing new texts approaches, in concept, the notion of context, which likewise plays a decisive role in determining the conditions of text production, reception, and circulation.

In its critical context, explanation (explication) has been associated with strict scholastic methodologies, that is, with following a system of concepts and attempting to apply it to a literary text through precise procedural steps. Explanation seeks to reveal the facts proposed by the text, whatever their nature may be, along with the external elements that may justify their specificity. It relies primarily on the cultural and human context to which the text is connected (14).

The development of explanatory practice within universities is linked to the evolution of critical activity in its scientific sense. Gicquel states: “Since the explanation of texts at the university aspires to integrate the common practices of literary criticism, which evolve daily, explanation—being itself subject to a set of procedures—must adopt a more complex theoretical structure” (15). These

remarks constitute a reaction against traditional explanatory practices that dismantled the text and reduced it to scattered elements and disconnected fragments.

In Arab-Islamic culture, scholars distinguished between three terms—or practices—related to text production: explanation (*sharḥ*), interpretation (*tafsīr*), and exegesis (*ta'wīl*). In *Lisān al-‘Arab*, under the root *sh-r-ḥ*, explanation is defined as unveiling and clarification: “to explain a matter is to make it clear; to explain a problematic issue is to clarify and elucidate it; to explain something is to open it, clarify it, and uncover it” (16). Conceptually, explanation refers to clarification and the unveiling of obscurity contained in the text; procedurally, it constitutes a form of text production.

As for interpretation (*tafsīr*), *Lisān al-‘Arab* traces it to *faṣr*, meaning elucidation and disclosure. “In technical usage, interpretation refers specifically to the explanation of the Qur’an; however, it also encompasses the explanation of Qur’anic language, the study of its miraculous nature, the clarification of its rulings, and knowledge of the circumstances of revelation and the arrangement of verses and chapters” (17). From this definition, it becomes clear that interpretation includes explanation and goes beyond it, adopting an exploratory method.

The term *ta'wīl* refers to deriving meaning beyond the literal sense of words and moving from the apparent to the hidden meaning. “In technical usage, it means diverting a word from its predominant meaning to a less likely meaning based on supporting evidence.” However, a survey of works on interpretation, explanation, and exegesis reveals that the distinction between these terms was not clearly defined by most exegetes and commentators, whose views on the matter varied considerably (18).

From this definition, we observe that these three concepts—explanation, interpretation, and exegesis—overlap in their boundaries and frequently exchange roles. Nevertheless, from a procedural perspective, each concept may assume its own specific function and define its field of activity.

When these concepts became established as cultural practices extending from poetry to oratory, proverbs, and *maqāmāt*, the features of each practice gradually became defined, and their orientations and fields of interest diverged. “It appears from the introductions to literary commentaries that most commentators on literary texts also recognized this distinction: they restricted interpretation to the lexical and grammatical study of words and sentences, while making explanation encompass semantic analysis, interpretation, and the narration of reports” (19).

From this, we can conclude that the conditions of explanation were linked to the collection of Arabic speech. “Therefore, we can say that explanation, although it accompanied the process of documentation in its early development, did not stabilize as an independent literary movement with its distinct characteristics until most Arabic poetry was compiled in books and anthologies” (20)

Since ancient times and up to the present, explanation has been associated with education. Therefore, it relied heavily on analytical methods to bring words and meanings closer to the minds of learners. For this reason, Wanas ibn Misbah states: “The early connection of explanation with education had a significant impact on the choice of the detailed method by the commentators, because it enabled the commentator to examine each verse for unusual words or grammatical and morphological issues, as well as to translate references to people or events mentioned in the verse, and to provide reports necessary for understanding the verse” (21).

Due to this connection with education, commentators turned explanation into a means for teaching Arabic sciences such as grammar, morphology, and historical knowledge. In other words, explanation sought to encompass everything surrounding a poetic verse. This means that the commentators were not solely concerned with sentence structure or explaining rare words and other matters. The commentaries they left indicate that meanings were not their only goal in

engaging with texts; meaning was just one of several objectives, such as explaining rare words, variant readings, and grammatical parsing (22).

Commentators focused on specific texts, either because of their importance for teaching the language or because they contained rare words and intriguing meanings. For example, the number of commentaries on Maqamat al-Hariri exceeds thirty, and the commentaries on Diwan al-Hamasa reached twenty, as Wanas ibn Misbah observed. This means that Maqamat al-Hariri produced thirty texts and Al-Hamasa produced twenty texts. This indicates that explanation—and similarly interpretation and hermeneutics—can be considered forms of textual production derived from a single text or a group of texts.

Translation can also be considered a form of textual production because producing a precise and complete translation of a literary text with a certain density is impossible. Each language has its own linguistic system and meanings that go beyond lexical definitions, as well as its worldview and the collective perspective of the linguistic community into which the translation is made. Poetic structures cannot be transferred intact from one language to another. Al-Jurjani realized the possibility of transferring meanings and ideas, but the impossibility of transferring styles and performance methods. He framed translation in broader terms as a process of transformation, meaning translation from one linguistic level to another. He concluded that translating poetry is essentially a transformational process (23).

This transformational process carried out by the translator leads to the production of a new text, even if there is only one translation of a specific text. The number of texts produced increases with multiple translations. Abdul-Qahir al-Jurjani asserts that this principle is universal across all languages and cultures: “What is important is that translation, in his view, does not replace the original text with a new one in the target language; it is a new creation rather than a transfer, and this is not limited to the Arabic language—it applies to all languages” (24).

From these initial observations, we can say that translation raises several theoretical issues. On the one hand, linguistic categories and expressive structures differ from one language to another; on the other hand, a single word cannot be transferred from one language to another without encountering difficulties. Words carry cultural, historical, and civilizational context, as well as connotations and nuances that cannot be precisely rendered in another language.

For these reasons, translation is almost impossible. In reality, when we transfer a text from one language to another, we only express a common subject in another language, using expressions that may be superior or inferior to the original. Moving from one cultural model and linguistic system to another confronts us with two different texts. At the reception level, we perceive a text translated into Arabic through the lens of texts originally written in Arabic, and similarly for any “foreign” text, whether translated or not.

Abdul-Qahir al-Jurjani addressed this issue, emphasizing the specificity of each language. For example, “Arabs know all parts of the human and animal body thoroughly, and each part has its specific term: the human lip is ‘al-mushfar,’ the camel’s lip is ‘al-jahfala,’ and the horse’s is ‘al-jahfla’” (25). This applies to lexical meaning.

At the structural level, al-Jurjani noted that sentence structure differs across languages, because the syntactic system in Arabic differs from that of French or English: “Languages differ in the system that governs the arrangement of words in sentences and the relationship of each word to the others. The verb occupies a specific place, the subject another, the object a third, and so on” (26).

Thus, the best that can be achieved in translation is expressing shared or general issues, while precise translation is impossible because every word in a literary text hides, on multiple levels, a kind of mythology reflecting the cognitive structure of its users. Each word is embedded in a cultural, social, and historical context, accumulating layers of meaning from its first use to its most

recent context. Jacques Lacan addressed this issue extensively, arguing that each word has its own unconscious, previously referred to as the “spirit of the language” or the “genius of language.”

From a linguistic perspective, Roman Jakobson states: “It is very difficult, during translation, to remain faithful when translating into a language with different grammatical categories than those of the source language” (27). He concludes that languages differ by what they must express, not by what they can express. Similarly, al-Jahiz highlighted the impossibility of translating poetry: “Poetry cannot be translated, nor is it permissible to transfer it; when translated, its rhythm is broken, its meter lost, its beauty disappears, and the element of wonder is gone” (28).

Al-Jahiz was aware of the impossibility of translating poetry. Even if we can transfer meanings—or part of them—we cannot transfer the “poetic essence,” which is culturally and temporally specific, linked to a particular sensitivity.

When translating a poetic text, peripheral meanings and metaphors are replaced by equivalents aligned with the poetic and cultural dimensions of the target language. Jakobson refers to this as a change in the dominant value (*Changement de valeur dominante*). Henri Meschonnic explains this as follows: poetry does not transfer directly into ordinary language. As Benveniste noted, it represents an interaction between two systems: the interpretant system and the interpreted system. Poetry is the interpreted system (*Interprété*) and language is the interpretant system (*Interprétant*) (30). Since poetry represents a special way of engaging with language and exploring its depths, any translation cannot capture its essence; it produces a parallel text with a new aesthetic and poetic form.

Poetic texts resist translation and criticism, because the words are loaded with nuanced meanings. Thus, translated texts are always inferior to the original and require multiple translations and readings. Khorshid notes: “Among the marvelous poetic effects encountered by Arab translators between poetic and prose translation of the ‘Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam,’ it was translated into Arabic by Wadi’ al-Bustani in poetry, excellently; then by Muhammad al-Sibai in poetry; and by the Iraqi poet Al-Sayyid al-Hashimi, as well as Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi and Ahmad Rami, who translated it from Persian into Arabic in poetry. Later, many others translated it” (31).

These numerous translations of a single text, Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, confirm our earlier point that translation constitutes a form of literary textual production. A single text can generate a large number of derivative texts. When reading them, we observe differences among all versions, whether reproduced in poetry or prose.

Therefore, translation issues must be approached with a perspective that does not separate language from the cognitive and poetic structures of the source language speakers. Every language is part of a cultural model and contributes to producing the deep structures of that model.

Translation, as a form of textual production, is not neutral; it reflects a particular linguistic and aesthetic stance. When translating, we advocate or emphasize a certain perspective, confirm or deny an idea, or convey a specific concept (the process of communication). “The recipient of a translation possesses a cultural framework and a set of references that may not correspond to those of the original Arabic author and audience” (32).

Hence, differences between the original text and its translation are determined at the level of reading, because one reads two texts through two different systems. Reading, whatever its type or depth, is an intertextual process (*Lecture intertextuelle*). If the original text is Arabic, we read it through the entire Arab-Islamic heritage. A translated text is read through the heritage of the target language. The text appears singular, yet we encounter or perceive it through two distinct systems of knowledge, values, tastes, concepts, and perceptions, hierarchically organized for each language. Therefore, the Italians say: *Traditore*, *Traduttore* (Translator = Traitor).

The most translated texts are those with major cultural, aesthetic, and civilizational value. Media discourse, the framing of events, and academic criticism also play roles in promoting certain texts. However, the most privileged texts for translation are sacred texts, as they contain spiritual and civilizational systems.

French translations of the Qur'an are numerous, confirming our previous observation about the impossibility of translation, especially for dense texts. A single text—the Qur'an—has produced a massive number of derivative texts. This confirms the impossibility of its translation, because the miracle of the Qur'an lies in its eloquence and structure, a linguistic and rhetorical miracle that surpasses conventional Arabic rhetoric, especially in poetry, pre-Islamic odes, sermons, and wisdom literature.

Ibn Qutaybah acknowledged this long ago: "With all these methods (metaphors, rhetoric...), the Qur'an was revealed. Therefore, no one among translators can render it into any language, as the Bible was rendered from Syriac into Abyssinian and Greek, and the Torah, Psalms, and other books of God in Arabic; because non-Arabs cannot encompass metaphor as Arabs do" (33). This explains why Qur'anic translations have multiplied: they could not capture its miraculous elements.

According to Greimas, translation, within semiotics, can be defined as: "Translation, as a semiotic activity, can be divided into an interpretive act and a textual production act" (34). Accordingly, translation is both reading/interpretation and a tool for textual production.

From this definition, we may ask: why are there so many translations of a single text? Literary texts allow multiple readings and therefore require different translations, because translation is a form of reading; each reading produces the text. Every translator in a specific era reads the text in their own way (Aristotle's Poetics exemplifies this).

Another reason for multiple translations is that each new translation claims that previous translations were deficient, incomplete, or inaccurate, necessitating a new translation to legitimize the work. M. Safadi, in *Al-Arab wa al-Fikr al-'Alami* (No. 10, Spring 1990), comments on re-translating Roland Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text*: "We found the Moroccan translation (published by Dar Toubkal) by Fuad Safa and Al-Hussein Sabhar closest to Barthes and the Arabic formulation. Yet we received a translation by Muhammad Khair Baqai, which differed, and entrusted it to another colleague, Muhammad Rafrafi. We consider the Moroccan effort the most successful attempt so far, despite some minor shortcomings or differences in interpretation" (35).

This discussion concerns Roland Barthes' text *The Pleasure of the Text*, on which four distinct readings were conducted.

In the realm of creativity, we observe that the translation of Tayeb Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North* deviated from its original title, replacing it with *Le Migrateur* (translation by Fadi Noon). This translation omitted many passages and situations (30), because the target society required such modifications. The translation was characterized by the search for an appropriate language, which led to over-translation (*Sur-traduction*) (37). Later, Abd al-Wahhab Moudeb's translation restored the original title and came closer to the spirit of the Arabic text.

A translation that changes the original title retains a certain legitimacy because it refers us to the history of the original text and its author. When we say *Le Migrateur*, we refer to Tayeb Salih's novel translated by Fadi Noon; when we say *La Saison de la Migration*, we refer to Abd al-Wahhab Moudeb's translation. Both translations reflect different historical approaches to translating the text.

This phenomenon also extends to the titles of some critical books. For example, Roland Barthes' *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* was translated by Na'im al-Homsi as *Writing at Zero Degree* (Ministry of Culture Publications, Damascus, 1970) and by Muhammad Barada as *The Zero Degree of Writing* (3rd Edition, Moroccan Company of United Publishers, 1985).

Studying the third chapter of this book linguistically reveals obvious differences in translation, starting from the chapter title itself. Na'im al-Homsi translated it as "In Narrative Writing", while Muhammad Barada rendered it as "Writing the Novel". A close reading of this chapter in both translations highlights the differences between the two texts. Thus, Barthes' text, when transferred into Arabic, produced two different texts and, consequently, two divergent readings.

In previous sections, we discussed translation as both production and reading. We now address reading itself as a form of textual production. According to critics and theorists, reading is a process of reconstructing meaning, whether mentally (the "imagined" text, understood as a set of cognitive mechanisms for linguistic signs) or on paper (writing criticism, impressions, or responses elicited by reading a particular text).

In this context, semioticians use the concept of reading to indicate: "a procedural method in analysis, used to reconstruct meaning (formed through the signifier) and establishing the work of textual semiotics (narrative and rhetorical). From this perspective, reading encompasses both structural and semantic construction of the semiotic subject, which is the text-sign" (38).

Thus, the first concept of reading within the semiotic discourse is the critique, analysis, and understanding of a literary text—that is, producing a new literary text based on the original.

The second meaning of reading is the notion of transformation, which considers reading a semiotic function (*sémiosis*). Reading is a fundamental activity that integrates content with expression, transforming a sequence of expressions into a sequence of signs. This accomplishment presupposes a reader's competence similar to, though not necessarily identical with, the competence of the text producer (39).

From the above definitions, we can say that reading is not merely abstraction at the level of meaning or semantic structures, nor is it a simple mental operation; rather, it is a transformation of the text and its reproduction in a new formulation. As we have observed, reading is the reformulation of a text, integrating it within a new semiotic system and a distinct semantic structure.

To achieve this transformation, the reader adopts various strategies to grasp the expressed meaning and to position themselves—through a sense of attraction—within the hidden point of the foreign self where meaning flows, revealing the active intention of the signifier as it emerges (40). According to this view, the act of reading is astonishing; it surprises the reader at every moment, captivates them, and positions them either to defend a stance or to highlight the shortcomings or key moments that constitute the text's semantic structure.

By examining some modes of textual production, we can observe that they take different forms. They may stem from the personal or artistic experiences of the author (in the case of creative writing), or from prior texts (criticism in all its forms: reading, interpretation...). Studying the interaction between the original text and the produced text reveals the observable shift between the two and exposes the nature of the various processes applied to the text, which attempt to absorb, transform, or integrate it into a specific semiotic and semantic system.

Declarations

Ethics Approval: Not applicable.

Funding: No external funding was received.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no competing interests.

Data Availability: All materials are available in the cited sources.

AI Use Disclosure: Generative AI was used solely for language editing. The author reviewed the final text and assumes full responsibility for its content.

Endnotes

1. Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971, pp. 10–11.
2. T. A. Van Dijk, “Le texte : structure et fonctions”, p. 81.
3. Tzvetan Todorov, *Poétique*, Seuil, Paris, 1973, p. 45.
4. A. Pétroff, “Méthodologie de la contraction des textes”, Larousse, Paris, 1975, p. 53.
5. Ibid. P53.
6. Antoine Sayah, *Technique de la contraction des textes*, Dirassat arabia, N7/8, 1989, pp. 123–124.
7. Ibid., p. 124.
8. Ibid., p. 124.
9. Ibid., p. 124.
10. Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971, p. 26.
11. E. Barbotin, “Présupposés et requêtes de l'acte de lire”, José Corti, Paris, 1975, p. 120.
12. Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971, pp. 26–27.
13. François Rigolot, “La renaissance du texte...”, Seuil, Paris, 1982, p. 191.
14. Bernard Gicquel, “L'explication de texte et la dissertation”, P.U.F., Paris, 1979, pp. 51–52.
15. Ibid., p. 5.
16. Ounas Ben Misbah, *Notes préliminaires sur les commentaires littéraires*, Al hayat ethakafia, N41, Tunis, 1986, p. 35.
17. Ibid., p. 35.
18. Ibid. P.35.
19. Ibid., p. 36.
20. Ibid., p. 38.
21. Ibid., p. 40.
22. Ibid., p. 43.
23. Mohamed El-Hadi Trabelsi, *Recherches sur le texte littéraire*, Eddar el arrabia Lilkitab, Tunis, 1981, 5^e Edition, p. 97.
24. Ibid., p. 101.
25. Anis Ibrahim, *La signification des mots*, Al maktaba al anglo misriya 5^e Edi., el kair, 1984, pp. 169–170.
26. Ibid., p. 171.
27. Roman Jakobson, *Essais de linguistique générale*, Minuit, Paris, 1963, p. 83.
28. Al-Jahiz, *Al-Ḥayawān*, vol. 1, p. 574 ; Tawfiq Al-Zaydi, *Le concept de la littérarité*, Dar ehya e torath el arabi, Beirut, S.D. p. 99.
29. Roman Jakobson, *Essais de poétique*, Seuil, Paris, 1973, p. 148.
30. Henri Meschonnic, *Pour la poétique II*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971, p. 117.

31. Ibrahim Zaki Khurshid, La traduction et ses problèmes, Al haya el misria, Alkair, 1985, p. 87.
32. N. Tomiche, La littérature arabe traduite, Mythes et réalités, Guthner, Paris, 1978, p. 69.
33. Muhammad ibn Qutayba, Poetry and Poets, Dar ethakafa, Beirut, 1964, p. 21.
34. A. J. Greimas & J. Courtès, Sémiotique : Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage, Larousse, Paris, 1966, p. 398.
35. J. Drida, Emargement-Evenement-Contexte, Al-‘Arab wa al-Fikr al-‘Ālamī, no. 10, Beirut, 1990, p. 5.
36. N. Tomiche, La littérature arabe traduite Mythes et réalités, Guthner, Paris, 1978, p. 69.
37. Ibid., p. 41.
38. A. J. Greimas & J. Courtès, Sémiotique : Dictionnaire, Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage, Larousse, Paris, 1966, p. 206.
39. Ibid. 206.
40. E. Barbotin, “Présupposés et requêtes de l’acte de lire”, José Corti, Paris, 1975, p. 124.

References

- Al-Jahiz. (n.d.). *Al-Hayawān* (Vol. 1).
- Al-Zaydi, T. (n.d.). *Le concept de la littérature*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Anis, I. (1984). *La signification des mots* (5th ed.). Al-Maktaba al-Anglo Misriya.
- Barbotin, E. (1975). *Présupposés et requêtes de l’acte de lire*. José Corti.
- Ben Misbah, O. (1986). Notes préliminaires sur les commentaires littéraires. *Al-Hayat Al-Thaqafiyya*, 41, 35–43.
- Derrida, J. (1990). Émargement–événement–contexte. *Al-‘Arab wa al-Fikr al-‘Ālamī*, 10, 5.
- Foucault, M. (1971). *L’ordre du discours*. Gallimard.
- Gicquel, B. (1979). *L’explication de texte et la dissertation*. Presses Universitaires de France.
- Greimas, A. J., & Courtès, J. (1966). *Sémiotique: Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*. Larousse.
- Ibn Qutayba, M. (1964). *Poetry and poets*. Dar Al-Thaqafa.
- Jakobson, R. (1963). *Essais de linguistique générale*. Éditions de Minuit.
- Jakobson, R. (1973). *Essais de poétique*. Seuil.
- Khurshid, I. Z. (1985). *La traduction et ses problèmes*. Al-Hay’a Al-Misriyya.
- Meschonnic, H. (1971). *Pour la poétique II*. Gallimard.
- Pétroff, A. (1975). *Méthodologie de la contraction des textes*. Larousse.
- Rigolot, F. (1982). *La renaissance du texte*. Seuil.
- Sayah, A. (1989). Technique de la contraction des textes. *Dirassat Arabia*, 7–8, 123–124.
- Todorov, T. (1973). *Poétique*. Seuil.
- Tomiche, N. (1978). *La littérature arabe traduite: Mythes et réalités*. G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose.

Trabelsi, M. E.-H. (1981). *Recherches sur le texte littéraire* (5th ed.). Al-Dar Al-Arabiyya lil-Kitab.
van Dijk, T. A. (n.d.). *Le texte: Structure et fonctions*.