

# **Translation: The Captive of Intertextuality**

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# ABSTRACT

**Intertextuality:** coined by Julia Kristeva (1960s), being rooted in **Saussurean & Bakhtinian theories of language and literature.**

Kristeva`s theory of intertextuality had a tremendous impact on the emergence of **Barthes` “Death of Author”** (1968/1977) according to which author is not responsible for the multiple meanings readers draw from texts.

Approaching texts as intertexts leads us to view the acts of text reading, interpreting, and translating from **the post-structrualist perspective.**

# The Conceptual Bases of Intertextuality

The theory of Intertextuality (**Kristeva, 1960s**) is based on:

**Saussure` theory of language:** Sign, Signifier, Signified, Signification;

The systematic features of language establish the relational nature of meaning and texts.

**Bakhtin`s theory of literature:** Dialogism, Polyphony, and Heteroglossia in narrative.

# Bakhtin`s Dialogism

**Dialogism:** All utterances respond to previous utterances and are always addressed to other potential speakers, rather than occurring independently or in isolation. (Bakhtin, 1975,1981)

Dialogism is a central feature of relation between discourses of characters , and even each character`s own individual discourse.

**Narrative:** the recounting of events without attention being paid to the person doing the recounting, e.g. ‘The King is dead’.

**Discourse:** Related to the speaker or writer and the situation from which they speak or write, e.g. ‘He told them the sad news that the King was dead’.

**Discourse points to the fact that language always occurs in specific social contexts** and always reflects specific codes, expectations, ideological pressures and presuppositions.

# Bakhtinian Terminology

## (language in social context)

In novel- e.g., Dostoevsky`s- each character, and narrator, interprets the world for him/herself and expresses this interpretation through his or her own specific discourse.

**Heteroglossia** (Hetero= Other + Glossia=Voice): the ability of a language to contain within it many voices, one's own *and* other voices.

Character's speech increasingly shows the marks of its addressivity- e.g., anticipating the comments of other speakers, and arguing, criticizing, refuting words. This increasingly demonstrates the dependence of his own discourse on other people's utterances

The polyphonic novel emphasizes this fact that all discourses are interpretations of the world, responses to and calls to other discourses.

# Kristeva's Theory of Intertextuality (1966-1980)

**Split subjects:** The explicitly intertextual forms of literature foreground the fact that they are **not original works written by unique authors**, but rather that they are **the product of split subjects**.

Texts follow the same split movement between **logical** and **alogical, symbolic** (Phenotext) and **semiotic** (Genotext) forces inside a subject (i.e. traditional author).

**No text is purely semiotic (via signification: the conventional relationship between signifier & signified);**

The **semiotic** always manifests itself within the **symbolic (via significance; the actual text compilation)**.

Texts do not just utilize previous textual units but they transform them and give them new positions.

# Barthes` Death of Author (1968/ 1977)



What Kristeva subverts is authority– the authority of the monologic science, of filiation (Barthes, 1986, p.168).

The Death of the Author: the liberation of the readers from the traditional power & authority of the author who is now dead.

Authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from preexistent texts.

The origin of the text is not a unified authorial consciousness, but a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts.

Meaning is not stabilized by readers as the intertextual nature of text leads them to new textual relations.

Therefore, author is not responsible for the multiple meanings readers draw from texts.

**Intertextuality in Literature:** Literary texts carry resonances of the texts that have preceded them, and discourses are the sum of past discourses.

E.g.,

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, a collage of different texts from different periods and languages, such as German, French, Latin & even Sanskrit.

**Intertextuality in Media:** Journalists record or describe events, reporting on other texts, citing speeches, attributing ideas. They make use of uncertainties on future for their own political or social purposes.

**Intertextuality in Scientific Discourse:** In expert-to-expert communication, and the way medical specialist talk about illnesses among themselves, or to lay people; scientists build on previous researches to push knowledge forward.

**Intertextuality in CDA:** to help revealing writers' strategies in reinforcing or reformulating ideas and beliefs in texts, and detecting traces of the dominant ideology or evidence of ideological struggle.

## According to what was presented:

- All texts show traces of differing discourses, contending and struggling for dominance.
- Texts/Translations are not separated from the larger cultural or social textuality out of which they are constructed.
- Recreation of a text (here, **translation**) leads to chains of texts- mainly ST and similar texts in TL.
- Networks of texts develop- in Fairclough`s terms (2003)- in which chains of texts move across different contexts (e.g., target sociocultural context).
- Intertextuality resist to the notions of originality of text, its uniqueness, singularity of meaning , and autonomous interpretation.

- Translation is not necessarily replicating what was explicated /implicated by ST author.
- As meaning exists between text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, its translator needs to detect its **network of textual relations** via reading.
- However, to which degree the translator respects it or that of TL is another question which requires further studies.
- All in all, TT and its meaning is bound to the intertextual links (either SL or TL oriented) it holds with other texts in the TL social context.
- Therefore, translation is a bounded text in the target language and culture, whose formation (by translator) and reading and interpretation (by TL readers thrust into a different network of textual relations ) interdepends on other texts in TL.

***Thank you for participation***