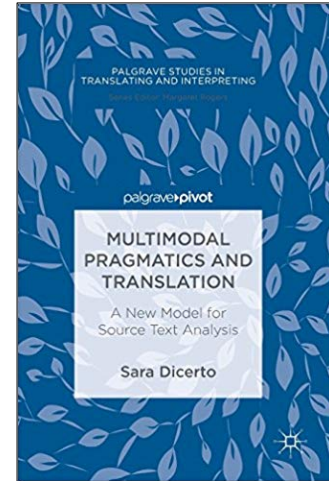


Sara Dictero, **Multimodal Pragmatics and Translation: A New Model for Source Text Analysis**, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 178 pp., \$69.99 (hardcover).

Reviewed by
Linxin Liang¹
Huazhong University of Science and Technology, China

Multimodal Pragmatics and Translation: A New Model for Source Text Analysis is one book in the series *Palgrave Studies in Translating and Interpreting*, which “examines the crucial role that translation and interpreting in their myriad forms play at all levels of communication in today’s world, from the local to the global” (p. ii). This book is a timely addition to the readings of scholars, teachers, and students in the fields of translation studies, multimodality, and pragmatics and makes a significant and valuable contribution to the exploration of multimodal texts and their potential translation issues. As the title indicates, this book stands out by leading the reader into a new model for the translation-oriented analysis of multimodal source texts (ST).



The book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 proceeds from a review concerning previous studies on multimodal translation, in which the author sets the stage for the whole book by providing a full picture of the main arguments of the following chapters. This chapter particularly calls for attention to “a more comprehensive understanding of multimodality in translation from the perspective of its starting point, the ST, and the challenges this poses” (p. 7).

Chapter 2 gives a general survey of social semiotics and multimodality, treating the investigation of the organization of individual modes at length, including their similarities and differences, and discussing “two isolated attempts aimed at building a model of multimodal meaning looking at potential overriding principles of multimodality” (p. 23). With this connection, the chapter provides a critical analysis of these two attempts and advises that pragmatics be adopted in analyzing multimodal texts.

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive and detailed portrait of the relationship between multimodality and pragmatics and offers explanations of major pragmatic theories, including Grice’s theory of cooperativeness and Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory. Furthermore, this chapter presents readers with some papers that deal with pragmatics and translation studies, with a focus on the links to multimodal issues. In fact, this chapter mainly investigates the related literature on multimodality, pragmatics, and translation studies, serving as a stepping stone to subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 builds on the discussion in chapters 2 and 3. It consists of four parts focusing on multimodal pragmatic meaning, the semantic representation of multimodal texts (mainly about visual–

¹ This research is supported by the Humanities and Social Sciences Project, Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, under Grant No. 18YJC740045.

verbal relationships), individual modes and pragmatic processes, and the concepts of multimodal text development (namely cluster and phase). The first three parts make up the model for analysis of a multimodal ST. On the whole, this chapter mostly frames the dimensions of the model that are used for “the systematic analysis of multimodal texts and their translation” (p. 64).

Chapter 5 shifts the focus from theoretical exposition to practical application. It first presents a brief introduction to the model’s method of application, including selection of material, analytical procedure, and the coding system. Later, by applying the proposed model, it devotes much space to examining in close detail the organization of some multimodal texts, which are classified into expressive texts, informative texts, and operative texts based on Reiss’s text types. Through empirical analysis, two general trends are identified to discuss possible solutions to translation issues from the three analytical dimensions.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, sums up the main points and goal of this book, reflects on the model’s contribution and potential modifications, and expresses hope about the application of the model to the training of new translators. Moreover, this chapter highlights the model’s multidisciplinary nature, which “inherently means that its potential applications are also multidisciplinary” (p. 165).

The main strength of this book is successfully constructing a model for analysis of a multimodal ST for translation purposes and applying the model to an analysis of practical examples. And it offers a balanced and sophisticated description of theoretical underpinning and practical application. This book is well structured and chapters clearly build off of one another. Every chapter has its own abstract and list of references that give the reader a quick tour through the content of every chapter. Moreover, a complete list of reference resources is done at the back of this book, showing all cited items. This is followed by an alphabetical index, which makes sources of information easy to find. In addition, the helpful lists of figures and tables in the front of the book allow the reader direct access to the specific location in the book proper.

However, this book is not without its weak points. First, on the contents page, there is only the title of every chapter. It is necessary that chapter divisions should be listed here, which can provide an important introduction to the organization of this book. Second, not every chapter ends with a conclusion, which would offer a concise summary of the stated content. It would be good to guide the reader as to what to think or consider about the topic. Furthermore, “before the current popular embrace of computers and ICTs in our digital world, audiovisual translation has been a fertile terrain for the discipline’s earliest research in translation and media” (Gambier, 2016, p. 895). Thus, apart from expressive texts, informative texts, and operative texts, further detailed studies should be scrupulously pursued to demonstrate the model’s application to audio-visual texts, which “construct multimodal discourses that are based on the interplay between linguistic utterances and semiotic representations on the screen by means of multifaceted semiotic cohesive devices” (Balirano, 2013, p. 564).

All in all, just as the author says, “the multimodal focus of this book distinguishes it from other work in the same area, shifting the spotlight from language to a detailed analysis of how a variety of multimodal text types convey meaning” (p. 3). Therefore, this book can be seen as a fundamental step forward to provide an interdisciplinary model for analyzing multimodal ST for translation. It successfully

integrates theory and practice and should be of value to anyone striving to ramp up their understanding of this interesting topic.

References

- Balirano, G. (2013). The strange case of *The Big Bang Theory* and its extra-ordinary Italian audiovisual translation: A multimodal corpus-based analysis. *Perspectives*, 21(4), 563–576.
- Gambier, Y. (2016). Rapid and radical changes in translation and translation studies. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 887–906.