



# New Perspectives in Media Translation

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Transcreation in the Digital Age

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*Edited by*  
Loukia Kostopoulou  
Parthena Charalampidou

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction: Transcreation in the Digital Age</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Loukia Kostopoulou and Parthena Charalampidou</i>	
<b>Part I</b>	<b>Theoretical Perspectives on Transcreation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Transcreation as a Means of Distinction: The Use of Transcreation in the Translation Industry</b>	<b>15</b>
	<i>Klaus Kaindl</i>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Transcreation. Coming to Hecuba</b>	<b>45</b>
	<i>José Fernando Carrero Martín and Juan José Martínez Sierra</i>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Transcreation, a Fact of Culture. A Creative Strategy Across Audiovisual Genres</b>	<b>77</b>
	<i>Alessandra Rizzo</i>	

<b>Part II</b>	<b>The Practice of Transcreation</b>	115
5	<b>The Localisation, Transcreation and Adaptation of Cultural Realia in Video Games: The Case of Cultural (re)presentation in <i>Arena of Valor</i></b> <i>Luis Damián Moreno García</i>	117
6	<b>Transmedial Strategies of Retextualisations of Multimodal Humorous Discourse. Turning Image-Macro Memes into Reels</b> <i>Pietro Luigi Iaia</i>	145
7	<b>From Briefing to Voiceover Direction: The Transcreation Workflow in a Practitioner's Experience</b> <i>Claudia Benetello</i>	169
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Training the Transcreator</b>	197
8	<b>Transcreation as an Instance of Journalistic Transediting: A Case Study on Metaphors, Multi-word Ad hoc Neologisms and Headlines in Students' Target Texts</b> <i>Heidi Verplaetse</i>	199
9	<b>Exploring Emotional Skills for Transcreation: Proactivity as Fostering Creativity in Digital Promotional Tourism Transcreations</b> <i>Cinzia Spinzi</i>	229
10	<b>What Are the Skills Required for Transcreators' Training? A Review-Based Curricular Proposal</b> <i>Carla Botella Tejera and Oliver Carreira</i>	259

<b>11 Promoting and Assessing Creativity for the Training of Transcreators: Some Inspiring Training Resources</b>	281
<i>Marián Morón Martín</i>	
<b>12 Transcreation in Translation and the Age of Human-Centred AI: Focusing on “Human” Creative Touch</b>	309
<i>Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo</i>	
<b>Index</b>	321



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# List of Figures

Fig. 2.1	Offers of translation agencies	28
Fig. 2.2	Number of languages offered	29
Fig. 2.3	Transcreation as own category or subcategory	30
Fig. 2.4	Under which category is “transcreation” listed?	31
Fig. 2.5	Transcreation areas (more than one option possible)	32
Fig. 2.6	Service or translation practice	33
Fig. 2.7	Definition of goal (more than one option possible)	35
Fig. 2.8	Other terms for those who do transcreations (more than one option possible)	38
Fig. 4.1	The setting and background of <i>Haribo Starmix</i> (English)	97
Fig. 4.2	The setting and background of <i>Haribo Starmix</i> (Italian)	98
Fig. 5.1	Examples of Chinese visual realia	132
Fig. 5.2	AoV Western holiday events: The Day of the Dead and Christmas	135
Fig. 5.3	Chinese culture-bound Zuka skills	136
Fig. 5.4	Football fever skins	137
Fig. 5.5	Empyrean Champions—Arena of Valor	137
Fig. 8.1	Students’ interlingual transfer strategies for culture-specific metaphor ‘ex-parrot’	211
Fig. 8.2	Students’ interlingual transfer strategies for general metaphor ‘bird’ + ‘fly’	214

**xviii**      **List of Figures**

Fig. 8.3	Students' target renderings of two source text multi-word, hyphenated word formations	219
Fig. 9.1	Dilts' hierarchy of logical levels	236
Fig. 11.1	Example of creative content with constraints	286



# List of Tables

Table 4.1	<i>Garnier</i> voice-over in English and Italian – 2017	92
Table 4.2	Graphic code and fruit colour in <i>Garnier</i>	94
Table 4.3	English and Italian script for <i>Haribo—Kids’ Voices</i>	99
Table 4.4	Italian (Sicilian) dubbed dialogue between Landa and Raine	102
Table 4.5	Dialogue between Liz and Giovanni in the Italian dubbing of <i>Eat, Pray, Love</i>	105
Table 5.1	Japanese proper names of people detected	127
Table 5.2	Japanese culture-bound common nouns detected	128
Table 5.3	Chinese proper names detected	129
Table 5.4	Chinese culture-bound common nouns detected	130
Table 5.5	Chinese culture-bound skins via visuals detected	132
Table 5.6	Proper names of heroes and their linguistic origin/inspiration	133
Table 6.1	The selected corpus of memes representing the source texts	152
Table 6.2	Multimodal composition of reel 1A	155
Table 6.3	Multimodal composition of reel 1B	156
Table 6.4	Multimodal composition of reel 2A	158
Table 6.5	Multimodal composition of reel 2B	159
Table 6.6	Multimodal composition of reel 2C	161
Table 6.7	Multimodal composition of reel 3B	163
Table 6.8	Main features of the examined transmedial adaptations	165
Table 7.1	The transcreation workflow	177

**xx**      **List of Tables**

Table 9.1	Congruent logical levels associated with being a transcreator	238
Table 9.2	Overview of the design of the experiment	243
Table 9.3	Activities carried out during the training	244
Table 9.4	Example 1	247
Table 9.5	Example 2	249
Table 10.1	Analysis of EMT and PACTE competence models in relation to transcreation	269
Table 11.1	Creativity variables: as an input and as an output	287
Table 11.2	Creativity variables in the training process	292
Table 11.3	Main features of the TeCreaTe simulation project	294
Table 11.4	Creative training materials produced in the TeCreaTe project	294
Table 11.5	Creative training materials produced in the TeCreaTe project	299



# 1

## Introduction: Transcreation in the Digital Age

Loukia Kostopoulou and Parthena Charalampidou

### 1 Introduction

In the new reality created by the extensive use of technology and the digitalisation of almost every aspect of human life, translation has evolved to include new practices—ones which challenge traditional approaches in the academic field and set new standards in translator training, the theorisation of Translation Studies and the integration of technology in translation. The increasing trend of new media translation has given rise to more peripheral translation types such as localisation and transcreation. These allow for a broader understanding of the field, and stretch its borders to include concepts like adaptation, re-writing and re-creation. From an industry perspective, transcreation very often constitutes a distinguished service, separate from the more “traditional” translation services (for more details see Chesterman, 2019; Galbalo, 2012; Pedersen, 2014).

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This take is the opposite of academia's view, according to which transcreation can be seen as a translation strategy indicating high levels of modification (Guidère, 2000). Katan (2014) suggests that the term includes both the practice of faithful transmission and that of creation, thus highlighting that both tendencies are inherent in the practice of transcreation. In a similar line of thought, Chaume (2018, p. 96) argues that the terms translation, localisation and transcreation can describe the same concept and that transcreations are seen as “forms of semiotic adaptation and manipulation where some or most—if not all—semiotic layers of the original (audio)visual product are localised, that is, manipulated” (ibid., p. 96). We can thus have the “reinvention” (Fowler & Chozick, 2007) or transcreation of cartoon/videogame characters for overseas fans or for transmedia products.

Furthermore, transcreation practices call for new translator profiles with enriched competences and skills (see the chapters in Part III of this volume) found in closely related professional profiles. Said competences and skills include visual literacy and visual design, information architecture (Minacori & Veisblat, 2010), content strategy, content marketing and integrated marketing communication, usability and cultural competence, web and multimedia development (Cleary et al., 2017), multimodal literacy (Charalampidou, 2018), knowledge of hypertext theory, hypertextual structures, linking, etc. (Jiménez-Crespo, 2012). Thus, an urgent need for new approaches in training and curricula design is created.

This volume aims to explore the practice of transcreation in a variety of contexts from audiovisual to digital media and bring together insights both from industry and from academia. Through an interdisciplinary lens, rooted in new trends within translation and media studies, this volume seeks to promote an understanding of the transcreation process in the era of digitalisation and the way it challenges not only the concept of translation (Chaume, 2018) but its impact on training for translators, localisers and content creators. Bringing together insights from diverse approaches, language pairs and cultural contexts, the book aspires to further our understanding of the complex nature of translation and provide insights for the training of professionals in this academic field.

With contributions both from scholars and from professional transcreators, the volume unveils the often differing and oppositional approaches

to transcreation and highlights various aspects of one and the same ontology. The majority of authors in the volume acknowledge and describe this controversy in detail but their stance differs depending on the context they represent. Kaindl (see Chap. 2) very accurately interprets this antagonism in sociological terms claiming that it is the interests of different social fields that actually lead to this opposition rather than specific defining characteristics that have been attributed to the concept of transcreation. The didactic approaches in the volume (see Chaps. 9, 10 and 11) also reflect this reality as, on the one hand, there is an effort to approach training on transcreation as a highly specialised process that can be part of translators' education developing specific skills but, on the other hand, there is the view that pre-existing translation competence models can be used as a base for new curricular proposals on transcreation. It seems that although transcreation is considered distinct from translation mainly in terms of service provision and professional workflows, its strong relationship to translation is not ignored. In most contributions a more or less detailed literature review is offered in an attempt to decipher the nature of transcreation from the point of view of both academia and industry. Some scholars claim that transcreation is not an entity on its own but rather a manifestation of translation within the commercial and marketing field as well as within other creative cultural industries such as cinema and television, exhibiting a highly creative nature (see Chaps. 3 and 4). Transcreation is also considered a strategy when it comes to transediting (see Chap. 8), a process included in the broader concept of journalistic translation. On the contrary, from a professional standpoint, the same phenomenon is seen as a hybrid practice/service in between translation and copywriting rather than as a translation strategy (see Chap. 7). Within the context of video game localisation (see Chap. 5) the concept of transcreation is placed closer to those of localisation, adaptation and internationalisation rather than translation. It is seen as a step further than translation and a phenomenon that encompasses various strategies such as cultural adaptation, regional customisation and the modification of audiovisual elements so as to achieve similar levels of impact to the target audience.

It seems, thus, that different departure points lead to different conceptualisations of transcreation either as a strategy, as a separate translation

type or as a service on its own. The terms used to describe it mirror oppositional focal points which finally form different realisations of the same process.

## 2 Organisation of the Book

The volume is divided into three parts, each one focusing on different aspects of transcreation in an era of rapid technological advancements. Part I, entitled “Theoretical Perspectives on Transcreation”, unveils diverse theoretical approaches to transcreation and presents the evolution of the term within Translation Studies over the years. Part II, “The Practice of Transcreation”, delves into the practice of transcreation and the challenges entailed by drawing examples from various audiovisual and interactive media (video games, reels, etc.). The final part of the book, “Training the Transcreator”, highlights the specific competences needed for transcreation. The book comprises 12 chapters, including an introduction and a conclusive chapter. All parts logically lead to one another and shed light on diverse aspects of this concept.

The volume opens with the chapter by **Klaus Kaindl**, entitled “Transcreation as a Means of Distinction: The Use of Transcreation in the Translation Industry”. The author explains how the phenomenon of transcreation is critically received by translation studies’ scholars and how it, on the contrary, is enthusiastically received by practitioners. While the former question the necessity for a new term, that for many, is part of the very nature of translation, the latter view it as a way to counter the negative impact of machine translation on their profession. The author addresses the question posed by Pedersen (2014, p. 69) of “why the transcreation industry seeks another word rather than ‘translation’ to describe its activities”. Through a qualitative analysis he draws conclusions on the very nature of transcreation as it is portrayed by translation agencies and the various terms used to describe this activity. Emphasising the sociological dimension of the phenomenon of transcreation, Kaindl draws on Bourdieu’s field theory. He complements Bourdieu’s approach with Goffman’s impression management and branding theories. In his analysis, he explores how transcreation is presented on the websites of

translation agencies and, more specifically, he tries to answer the question of “how impression management is implemented for transcreation as a brand and whether the added value of transcreation for clients is consistently portrayed”. The author concludes that there is the necessity of a closer collaboration between academia and practitioners in the field of transcreation.

In a similar vein, Chap. 3 explores the concept of transcreation within the discipline of Translation Studies. This chapter, entitled “Transcreation: Coming to Hecuba”, aims to define what transcreation is according to the existing literature, how it has evolved, and to reflect on its true status. **José Fernando Carrero Martín** and **Juan José Martínez Sierra** examine the nature of this concept. Through a historical retrospective analysis, they trace the evolution of the term in the last decade and explain how it is viewed in translation studies. They document the origins and definitions of the concept and analyse it through the lens of the different theories and approaches of Translation Studies. As they note, the concept was initially used to refer to a practice that is different from literal translation, entailing a notable degree of creativity. Over time, as they explain, the concept evolved to become almost synonymous with creativity. In this sense, this chapter seeks to decipher whether transcreation is similar or independent from the very concepts and approaches put forward by translation studies scholars. They conclude that transcreation cannot be considered as something diverse from translation and they acknowledge “that it can be a powerful label in terms of marketing that allows practitioners to embellish their list of services with some apparent added value”.

Chapter 4 is the third chapter of Part I and offers a theoretical investigation of the concept of transcreation with valuable examples taken from audiovisual media. **Alessandra Rizzo**, in her chapter entitled “Transcreation, a Fact of Culture: A Creative Strategy Across Audiovisual Genres”, underlines that transcreation is not only a creative process but a creative service, a way to mediate between languages and cultures. The author stresses that transcreation, in Diaz Cintas’s words, is a process of rewriting since reception is inextricably linked to this process of translation. The author uses the cultural-conceptual translation (CCT) model as her theoretical framework. Within this model, transcreation is “perceived as a cultural fact in which source texts are rewritten in the target language

according to sociocultural, ideological, and marketing constraints”. She draws examples from TV commercials and excerpts from multilingual films and showcases transcreation as a “culture-based and creativity-oriented process”. The chapter ultimately seeks to address the immense growth of transcreation as a method of translation and, as the author claims, this awareness will strengthen the role of transcreators as audiovisual translators and enhance their visibility within the industry of audiovisual translation.

**Luis Damián Moreno García** opens the second part of the book with his chapter “The Localisation, Transcreation and Adaptation of Cultural Realia in Video Games: The Case of Cultural (Re)Presentation in *Arena of Valor*”. In it, he explores the way culture-bound elements are transcreated in the mobile video game *Arena of Valor* (2016). Adopting the notion of *cultural representation*, he sets out to examine how Japanese and Chinese cultural realia as well as realia from other cultures have been transferred in the international version of the game. Focusing mainly on proper nouns and common nouns, the author discovers that the approach employed in most cases is a hybrid one which includes not only transcreation but also localisation and adaptation. As the author points out, the game could be described as a melting pot due to its combination of minimising Chinese elements and its integrating of elements from multiple cultures. The author describes a blend of various cultural, historical and mythological influences in the game and detects an effort for cultural inclusivity and acceptability. Luis Damián Moreno García closes his chapter emphasising the significance of responsible transcreative choices on cultural representation by localisers for greater cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

In his chapter, “Transmedial Strategies of Retextualisations of Multimodal Humorous Discourse: Turning Image-macro Memes into Reels”, **Pietro Luigi Iaia** investigates the strategies adopted for the transmedial adaptation of the humorous discourse of memes, by turning a corpus of pictures into reels. More specifically, by assigning the transmedial renderings to non-linguistics students, the author attempts to acquaint them with the stages of the production and translation of multimodal texts, along with the types of competences that are needed, which, as the author points out, are not merely linguistic. Then, he uses



the corpus of memes and of their transmedial reformulations to enquire into the methods of multimodal expansion of the source texts' plots in order to assess whether the gist of the text is preserved. His analysis reveals a tendency to expand the original plots or structures to produce transmedial reformulations while maintaining the core meaning of the text. The memes' transcreated edits include an extra mode, the acoustic one, and they provide alternative stories in a way that makes them act as independent entries, since knowing the source texts is not essential. According to the author, the reels' humorous effect lies on the feeling of belonging to the authors' communities and the opposition created with otherness. At the end of the chapter, Pietro Luigi Iaia proposes studying the transmedial adaptations produced by subjects of various backgrounds as an interesting subject for future research.

Chapter 7, "From Briefing to Voiceover Direction: The Transcreation Workflow in a Practitioner's Experience", explores the intricacies of the profession of the transcreator. **Claudia Benetello** stresses that for the advertising industry transcreation is considered a process of interlinguistic and intercultural adaptation that demands skills of both translation and copywriting. She provides an in-depth analysis of the transcreation workflow with examples from her experience as a practitioner and notes that the future of this profession is well preserved despite the rise of machine translation and automated practices. She documents the diverse skillset required by transcreation and stresses that transcreators are more so "fully-fledged consultants rather than [mere] language service providers". The chapter thus offers valuable insights into the transcreation profession (tasks, skills, work conditions, challenges) and contributes to disseminating best practices.

The final part of the book opens with Chap. 8. In this chapter entitled "Transcreation as an Instance of Journalistic Transediting: A Case Study on Metaphors, Multi-word Ad Hoc Neologisms and Headlines in Students' Target Texts", **Heidi Verplaetse** discusses the practice of transcreation in the context of journalistic translation studies, approaching it as a creative transediting process. The author situates the analysis in the context of a translation classroom and closely examines the transcreative methods for the transfer of metaphors, new multi-word, hyphenated ad hoc word formations and newspaper headlines. The analysis of three case

studies for the language pair of English into Dutch focuses on undergraduate students' transcreative strategies which include (i) a heightened level of creativity; (ii) omission, addition and alternative content; and (iii) productive word generation and word combination. From a didactic perspective, the author highlights the need for training on function-oriented source-text analysis that will allow for successful or creative interlingual transfer of metaphorical culture-specific references pinpointing at the same time the need for metaphorical coherence throughout the text. She also urges language professionals' educators to encourage the use of creative multi-word renderings as well as the transfer of headlines through rewriting or selection of new, familiar content. The chapter closes with conclusions from the case studies and suggestions for future research such as the use of generative large language models (LLMs) and training on prompt writing for transcreative purposes.

In Chap. 9, "Exploring emotional skills for transcreation. Proactivity as fostering creativity in digital promotional tourism transcreations", **Cinzia Spinzi** reconsiders transcreators' skills from a psychological perspective highlighting the need for an emotion-oriented approach to translators' training. Drawing on concepts and tools from emotional intelligence theory and practice such as neuro-linguistic programming and the Logical Levels model, the researcher designs an experimental training for 40 Master's students. In her experiment the author applies her training to two separate groups of students (the study and the control group) to examine how specialised training that stimulates creative and proactive thinking can affect translation choices and the transcreation product. The chapter provides readers with a list of emotional intelligence-orientated activities that can be applied in the translation/transcreation classroom and with a comparative presentation of less or more creative solutions given by the two student groups when translating promotional tourism content for the language pair English - Italian. The importance of feedback from the students is also highlighted as one more way of stimulating creative thinking. In her conclusions the author points out that a correlation seems to exist between creativity and a more flexible, less constrained, more proactive behaviour.

Chapter 10, entitled "What Are the Skills Required for Transcreators' Training? A Review-Based Curricular Proposal", focuses on transcreation

competences. **Carla Botella Tejera** and **Oliver Carreira** draw on various projects that have training as their focal point and review previous didactic proposals on transcreation. The chapter begins by outlining that transcreation is a value-added service. The authors then detail the competences put forward by two translation competences frameworks, namely EMT (2022) and PACTE (2020). The authors combine the insights proposed by these frameworks and they analyse their own didactic proposal for transcreation. The trainers involved in this proposal should have professional experience in completing transcreation projects. Furthermore, the didactic proposal is divided into four modules, each one with the same teaching load whereas the hours could be adapted based on the training format that will be chosen. The proposal covers four modules: (1) an introduction to transcreation; (2) an introduction to advertising; (3) creative writing and copywriting; (4) transcreation project management and simulated transcreation tasks. The chapter finally suggests that these modules could be incorporated either in undergraduate or in postgraduate programmes and that they could be included in Translation or Advertising curricula.

In her chapter **Marián Morón Martín** approaches creativity as a learning objective and presents some didactic practices in order to incorporate creativity in translation training. Taking into consideration both the academic and the professional approach to transcreation as well as acknowledging that creativity is an integral part of both translation and transcreation, the author showcases how creativity can be embedded in relevant training contexts. After a brief presentation of innovative translation training practices and the position of creativity in translation training over the years, the author highlights the need to integrate creativity dimensions (both as a product and as a process) for improved translators' employability. The main part of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of training tools that have been designed at Pablo de Olavide University, Seville (Spain). The first one is the TeCreaTe project, which focuses on the transcreation workflow through a professional-simulation approach. The author takes the opportunity to describe in detail the main features of the project and to provide readers with a rough overview of the creative training materials that have been designed over the four editions of the project. The second tool that the author presents is an evaluation

framework, based on the “game jam” format, which was developed in the context of the ECT project. According to the author the specific project which led to a top prize was highly valued by students and increased their incentive to participate. The third tool presented by the author is short creativity workshops embedded within the translation course. The chapter closes with the remaining question of whether “the translator is born or made” and the urge by the author for transdisciplinary approaches to translation training.

The conclusive chapter, “Transcreation in Translation and the Age of Human-Centered AI: Focusing on ‘Human’ Creative Touch”, synthesises the views of both academia and industry on transcreation. **Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo**, going beyond this debate, suggests that the emergence of generative large language models (LLMs) and AI apps puts to the fore the urgent need for an exploration of distinctive features of how humans cognitively process translations in relation to AI. To this end, the chapter seeks to analyse “ways in which LLMs, and humans ‘generate’ creative translation renderings, and how they subsequently ‘select’ them”, thus situating transcreation within the “expert professional competences and skills” that will be needed in the future.

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# Part I

## Theoretical Perspectives on Transcreation