

Title of paper : In the beginning was the text, and it is by their texts that you know them

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Abstract

The notion of 'socio-textual practices' (the diverse range of text types, discourses and genres) is proposed as an alternative to more static definitions of 'culture' exclusively in terms of socio-cultural objects and artefacts. The dynamic view of 'culture' relates to how , in serving a particular rhetorical purpose (i.e. rebutting), a 'text' such as the 'counter-argument' is enabled by, and in turn enables, a 'genre' such as the Letter to the Editor to function properly. Genres as communicative events are in their turn seen as vehicles for the realisation of 'discourse' attitudes such as 'racism'. In both form and substance, discursive activity (by and large neglected in most translation theory and practice) is thus defined in terms of 'perspectives' adopted on issues of language in social life (e.g. globalisation, the environment or the commoditisation of higher education). The various communicative resources are examined with the English/Arabic translator and interpreter in mind. Illustrative examples are drawn from published translations.