From poetry to song

A corpus-based approach to textual variation

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Outline

- Introduction
  - Context: the project PoeMAS
  - Theoretical framework
- Research question
- State of the art
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
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Framework

- PoeMAS: **Poesía para más gente. La poesía en la música popular española contemporánea** (https://poemas.uned.es)
- PIs: Clara Martínez Cantón & Guillermo Laín Corona
- Start date: January 1st 2019
- Goal: development of a database with Spanish songs in Spanish from 1975 onwards with some type of relation with a previous poetic composition. Twofold broad public dissemination goal.
Musical adaptation

- Formalization of the relation between two cultural objects:
  - citation, parody, continuation, adaptation to a different medium...
- **Musical adaptation** (Albrecht, 2010; Hopkins & O’Leary, 2005; Ingham, 2013) vs **musical setting** (Da Silva, 2004; Ingham, 2013)
- Different theoretical frameworks and categorizations within intermediality (literary theory & comparative literature) and adaptation studies
Transtextuality

- All that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts (Genette, 1992: 83-84)
- Five types of transtextual relationships (Genette, 1982):
  - Intertextuality
  - Paratextuality
  - Metatextuality
  - Hypertextuality
  - Architextuality
### PoeMAS database (12/2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation with the poem</th>
<th>Number of songs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar adaptation</td>
<td>585</td>
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<td>Identical adaptation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allusion</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of intertextuality</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of transposition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parody</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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93.2% identical / similar adaptations
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Investigation

- What type of textual variation is implemented? What are the most frequent changes within musical adaptations? Does the structure, the semantics or the style of the text change?
- Are there specific changes motivated by the new medium?
- Are there consistent or common changes between the musicalizations of the same poem?
- Related question: what those changes entail in terms of authorship? Could the new intermedial object function as a critical reading of a poem?
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Previous work

- Musical adaptations of poems have been thoroughly studied from different theoretical frameworks (comparative literature, semiotic translation, adaptation, intermediality...)
- Dalmonte (1987) and the concept of “expansion” (cf. A. Martinet): the different ways in which music may expand the sense of a poetic text
  - Phonological
  - Grammatical
  - Semantic
- Romano (1994) and musical adaptations as intersemiotic translations (cf. Jakobson, 1959)
Originality of this study

- First corpus-based approach of textual changes within musical adaptations of poems (in Spanish)
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Methodology

- Selection of musical adaptations from the category *similar adaptation*
- Comparison of texts (poem and lyrics)
- Manual annotation
Methodology: classification of textual changes

- Type of change: transposition, repetition, omission, addition, substitution
- Modified sequence types: fragment, line, word
- Level of analysis: phonic, semantic, structural
- Relevance: major, minor
Workflow

- **Automatic collation:**
  - Conversion of the TEI encoded files into plain text (XSLT)
  - Pairwise automatic comparison ([CollateX](#))
  - Creation of alignment tables

- **Manual literary annotation**

- Creation of dataframe with the change annotations

- **Quantitative analysis**
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Frequency of textual changes by type

- Addition
- Omission
- Repetition
- Substitution
- Transposition

Modifications in musical adaptations
Frequency of textual changes

Proportion of adaptations showing each change type

- Repetition
- Substitution
- Omission
- Addition
- Transposition

Musical adaptations (%)
Sequence types modified in musical adaptations

Proportion of adaptations where each sequence-type is modified

- Fragment: 75.00%
- Word: 75.00%
- Line: 57.00%
Change by level of analysis

Proportion of adaptations showing a change for each level of analysis

- Structural
- Semantic
- Phonic

Musical adaptations (%)
Recurrent changes

- Decreasing intensity (substitution - word - semantic)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Todos ustedes parecen felices by Ángel González (1965)</th>
<th>Todos ustedes parecen humanos by Disidencia (2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y guardan toneladas de</td>
<td>y guardan toneladas de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asco [disgust]</td>
<td>hostilidad [hostility]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>por cada</td>
<td>por cada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milímetro</td>
<td>gramo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de</td>
<td>de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dicha</td>
<td>humanidad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recurrent changes

- Intensification (substitution - word - semantic)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Yo voy soñando caminos] by Antonio Machado (1907)</th>
<th>Voy soñando caminos by Carlos Cano (unknown)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“En el corazón tenía la espina de una pasión; logré arrancármela un día; ya no siento el corazón”. Y todo el campo un momento se queda, mudo y sombrío, meditando.</td>
<td>“En el corazón tenía la espina de una pasión; logré arrancármela un día; ya no tengo el corazón”. Y todo el campo un momento se queda, mudo y sombrío, meditando.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voy soñando caminos</td>
<td>[I can’t feel my heart]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tengo</td>
<td>[I lost my heart]</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Caveat

- Musical adaptations or adaptation of a musical adaptation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dice una voz popular:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Quién me presta una escalera, para subir al madero, para quitarle los clavos a Jesús el Nazareno?</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Saeta popular]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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The importance of similar adaptations

- Identical adaptations → preference of imitative transmediality (transforming a work to a different artistic medium trying to imitate the original cultural object, see Badía Fumaz, 2020)
- Have similar adaptations the same goal?
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The importance of similar adaptations

- Identical adaptations → preference of imitative transmediality (transforming a work to a different artistic medium trying to imitate the original cultural object, see Badía Fumaz, 2020)
- Have similar adaptations the same goal? For the most part, yes
  - Most textual changes are intrinsically motivated by the new medium
The importance of repetition

- Most frequent change
- Pop song as a formula based on repetition whose verbal content only gains relevance and is remembered by being immediately associated to a melody and a specific rhythm scheme (Abeillé, 2013: 167).
- Repetition as a memorization technique
- Structural changes: the creation of refrains and choruses

Source: SiOWfa15: Science in Our World: Certainty and Controversy
Textual changes and authorship

- What do additions and substitutions (and even omissions) entail in terms of authorship?
Hace algún tiempo en ese lugar, donde hoy los bosques se visten de espinos, se oyó la voz de un poeta gritar: “Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar...”
Golpe a golpe, verso a verso.
Golpe a golpe, verso a verso.
Murió el poeta lejos del hogar, le cubre el polvo de un país vecino; al alejarse le vieron llorar: “Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar...”
Golpe a golpe, verso a verso.
Golpe a golpe, verso a verso.
Cuando el jilguero no puede cantar, cuando el poeta es un peregrino, cuando de nada nos sirve rezar: “Caminante, no hay camino,
Future work

- Re-evaluate the different categories currently at use in the PoeMAS database
- Re-evaluate the different dimensions and categories needed to describe textual variants (e.g. split “word” into “lexeme” and “morpheme”; add new features such as “motivation/rationale”)
- Establish a classification of textual variants that go beyond a pairwise comparison to holistically include all the adaptations of the same poem
- Complete the analysis with more adaptations
- Attempt an automatic classification of textual changes?
Cited references


Thank you!

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