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## Towards a definition of transcreation: a systematic literature review

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### ABSTRACT

'Transcreation' has appeared in the last decade as a translation-related activity consisting in the creative reinterpretation of texts to suit the characteristics of an intended audience. However, the scientific literature surrounding transcreation does not offer a homogenous definition of the term. Given these disparities, the main objective of this work is to create a reliable source of reviewed scientific information about the topic. A sample of scientific works regarding the topic 'transcreation' has been compiled from databases and repositories of recognized reliability and has been analyzed with a qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). Findings show that research on transcreation expanded significantly between 2015 and 2019 and that most studies are of a qualitative nature. A critical analysis of the content connects transcreation with other fields of research: translation, communication, advertising and poetry. Following a concept-centric approach, this Systematic Literature Review has permitted the formulation of definitions for transcreation and the landscape of academic research on the topic to be outlined.

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### KEYWORDS


Transcreation; systematic literature review; translation studies; qualitative analysis; critical analysis

## Introduction

'Transcreation' can be defined as a translation-related activity that combines processes of linguistic translation, cultural adaptation and (re-)creation or creative re-interpretation of certain parts of a text. The balance between these three elements will depend on, among others, the characteristics of the text, the instructions provided in the transcreation brief or by the client, the linguistic and cultural traits of the audience receiving the text, and the purpose and objective of the text. In the last two decades, transcreation as a professional practice within the language service industry has gained prominence, and even international standards such as ISO:17100 (AENOR, 2016) recognize it as an added-value translation service.

Previous research defines transcreation as the creative inter-/intra-lingual re-interpretation of texts in order to suit the characteristics of an intended audience

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(Benetello, 2018; Gaballo, 2012; Pedersen, 2017). Evidence shows that it can be present in a wide range of fields: literature, marketing, advertising, video-games, websites, information materials, mobile applications, etc. (Katan, 2016; Morón & Calvo, 2018; O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013; Ruvalcaba et al., 2019). It is not only a linguistic translation of the content, but also a cultural adaptation (Fernández Rodríguez, 2019). This is why, in recent years, transcreation has played a role in marketing and advertising, as it has been a popular way for companies to tailor their marketing campaigns to international markets. Some of the typical projects that may require the use of transcreation are web campaigns aimed at attracting clients from other markets (Ray & Kelly, 2010).

As this is a current discussion in academia, inconsistencies are present in the scientific literature on transcreation and, so far, it has not provided a homogenous definition. As a consequence, many authors, researchers and professionals disagree on issues such as the origin of the activity, its main features or the fields of specialization it can be applied to. In fact, some authors do not even consider it as an area of specialization in itself nor a professional practice, and consider it as another label for translation (Gambier, 2019). Conversely, some other authors argue that transcreation is a different practice from translation, but do not base this difference on the 'creativity' that may be implied in the word 'transcreation'. On the contrary, this difference is attributed to the emphasis of cultural relevance and fitness for purpose (Gaballo, 2012; Ray & Kelly, 2010), which places transcreation halfway between translation and copywriting (Benetello, 2018). In this context, concepts such as 'translation error' or 'text inadequacies' would not apply to transcreation contexts. Thus, the discussion on the differences between translation and transcreation would move away from the traditional debate on 'translation vs. free translation'.

In the academic context, it is suggested that the term transcreation was introduced by the scholar and translator Purushottam Lal, who described the translation of ancient Sanskrit texts into the modern language as a task in which 'the translator must edit, reconcile and transmute; his work in many ways becomes largely a matter of transcreation' (Pedersen, 2017). At the same time, it is also noted that the term was proposed by the Brazilian poet and translator Haroldo De Campos in reference to a poetics of translation based on Oswald de Andrade's 1928 *Manifesto Antropófago* (O'Donnell-Smith, 2017; Vitra & Queiroz, 2018).

There is a wide range of areas in which transcreation is present, as accounted for by previous research. For example, it is present in different domains such as literature translation (Gaballo, 2012; Katan, 2016), audiovisual translation (Chaume, 2018) and other creative industries like marketing and advertising (Pedersen, 2014). In the latter, transcreation plays the role of transferring the message from a marketing or advertising campaign to make it more attractive to a different audience and marketplace while respecting the identity of the brand (Pedersen, 2014; TAUS, 2019). Thus, transcreation has found its way into the field of persuasive texts (Benetello, 2018; Fernández Rodríguez, 2019). This variety of fields of application supports its transdisciplinary character as an area of specialization.

Given its creative nature, transcreation would be located halfway between translation and copywriting (Benetello, 2018). In this regard, transcreation would be different from marketing translation (a translation that aims to evoke an emotional reaction and that goes beyond a faithful representation of a descriptive text) and from multilingual copywriting (the process of creating texts in multiple languages from scratch, with reference to brand and campaign requirements) (TAUS, 2019).

However, transcreation is also present in fields that are not creativity-related, such as healthcare. In this domain, transcreation refers to the adaptation of health education materials for improved understanding and cultural relevance to specific language and ethnic groups (Nápoles & Stewart, 2018). In fact, in the last decades, many researchers have addressed the potential of transcreation as a means of disseminating healthcare information among audiences with different linguistic and cultural characteristics (Díaz-Millón et al., 2020), and notably, among the Spanish-speaking population in the United States (Macario & Montealegre Boyte, 2008; Piñeiro et al., 2018; Ruvalcaba et al., 2019; Santoyo-Olsson et al., 2019; Simmons et al., 2010).

Therefore, the fact that transcreation is so prolific and has become a professional activity makes it, likewise, an interesting area of research present in a wide variety of fields. The processes that form part of it, the agents involved, its origin and evolution, the skills that need to be acquired to carry it out, etc.: all these questions are of interest and have been dealt with by different authors (Benetello, 2016; Fernández Rodríguez, 2019; Katan, 2013, 2016; Pedersen, 2014).

Maybe due to its burgeoning appearance in the professional market of translation, some universities around the world have been recently introducing transcreation training in Translation and Interpreting higher studies, for example the University of Roehampton (2020) and University College London (2020) in the United Kingdom, and the Pablo de Olavide University in Spain (Morón & Calvo, 2018), to name a few.

Given the disparities on the definition of transcreation and its role and potential in the professional and the academic field, this work aims to review scientific literature on transcreation to answer the following research questions:

1. How is 'transcreation' defined in the scientific literature?
2. To which fields can it be applied?
3. What are the core concepts related to transcreation?
4. What kind of studies about transcreation have been carried out in the last decades?

Thus, the main objective of this work is to create a reliable source of scientifically reviewed information about the topic 'transcreation'. This main objective is divided into two specific objectives: SO1) To compile a source of scientific works regarding the topic 'transcreation' from reliable databases and repositories, and SO2) To rigorously analyze said works in order to answer the research questions stated above. This study will address these questions following a meticulous methodology: the systematic literature review (SLR).

## Materials and methods

### *Sampling*

An SLR was conducted in order to compile the essence of discussion about how transcreation has been defined and applied by scholars specializing therein. A systematic review is a scientific investigation of the literature and procedures that limits bias and random error (Denyer & Neely, 2004).

The following steps were taken to detect the relevant studies compiled in well-known information retrieval systems:

1. The keywords were identified, as well as any possible synonyms or replacement terms.
2. The query was constructed from the keywords and the possible replacement terms.
3. Several online databases for searching were selected.
4. The search string was applied to titles, abstracts or keywords whenever possible.
5. A CSV file containing title, abstracts, authors, publication and date was exported.
6. The search results were managed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo.

Given the research questions for this study, and to avoid documentary noise the selected keyword was ‘transcreation’. Two possible replacement terms were identified in the existing literature: ‘trans creation’ and ‘trans-creation’. The query used to search on the titles, abstracts or keywords of documents was:

TITLE+ABS+KEY(transcreation OR “trans creation” OR trans-creation)

The search string was then applied to different online databases to ensure that relevant studies were not missed. No limitation of time of publication was applied as the aim of this paper was to outline the transcreation research landscape. The final selection of databases was motivated by two characteristics: interdisciplinarity and volume of indexed items.

- a. Web of Science ([www.webofknowledge.com](http://www.webofknowledge.com)): A multidisciplinary platform compiling regional, specialty, data and patent indexes. It includes millions of records from thousands of impactful scientific journals.
- b. Scopus ([www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)): A platform indexing content from over 20,000 titles. It includes millions of documents from multiple scientific disciplines.
- c. ProQuest ([www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)): A multidisciplinary search tool including academic and non-academic documents from 48 databases.
- d. Sage Journals (<https://journals.sagepub.com>): A multidisciplinary search tool offering content from 1000 journals published under Sage Publishing.
- e. Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com)): A freely accessible web search engine indexing the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across a wide range of disciplines.

In this review, all publications on the topic ‘transcreation’ published and collected in the above-mentioned databases by 1 July 2020 have been included, the day in which the sample was compiled. The sample included works published between 1995 and the first half of 2020.

A total of 346 works were extracted. Then, a series of guidelines and criteria were applied to screen the sample and increase the quality of the works analyzed. The next step was to exclude duplicate works. Then, in order to ensure that the final study sample would be constituted by validated scientific knowledge, some quality exclusion criteria were applied. These criteria were: (1) for journal articles, only those placed in the top two quartiles of the SCImago Journal ranking (SJR) were included; (2) for book chapters, only those placed in the first half of the general ranking of the Scholarly Publishers Indicators (SPI) were included; (3) full books were excluded; (4) conference

proceedings were excluded; (5) for dissertations, only doctoral theses were included; (6) any non-academic or non-scientific work was excluded; (7) any works for which the abstract and the full-text version were not available online were excluded.

Finally, all irrelevant works extracted due to poor performance of the search databases and works written in a language other than English were excluded. This process resulted in a final sample of 64 works meeting the highest quality standards. The initial search and selection process is summarized in [Table 1](#).

## Analysis

Whenever possible, the full text of the paper was analyzed. However, when it was not available for copyright reasons, only the abstract was analyzed.

The qualitative data analysis program NVivo was used. This software helped to codify the studies around core concepts present in the analyzed studies. A concept-centric approach was followed to determine the structure of the literature review, that is, concepts determined the organizing framework of the review (Webster & Watson, 2002).

A series of thorough steps were followed for the processing of the data. First, using the search tool of the program, a list of the 25 most frequent words in the overall number of files was extracted. For this purpose, a combination of the derived forms of a stem word was used. For example, words such as ‘transcreation’, ‘transcreator’, ‘transcreate’, ‘trans-created’ or ‘transcreational’ were grouped together.

Among the words in this list, four stood out as they represented fields of application for the activity ‘transcreation’: ‘translation’, ‘communication’, ‘advertising’ and ‘poetry’. Using the software NVivo, the scientific works analyzed were coded around these four fields of application and text references about them were extracted. In this manner, the four main fields of application (Application Field Code or AFC) referenced in scientific literature for transcreation were identified.

To maximize the precision of the analysis, other words from the list of the 25 most frequent words in the overall of studies were also converted into codes (Frequent Word Code or FWC). Irrelevant words (e.g., stop words such as ‘was’ or ‘has’) and the main topic of the analysis ‘transcreation’ were excluded. The objective of this step was to group the references extracted for those new codes (FWC) as sub-codes for the four above-mentioned AFCs. For the purpose of this work, ‘reference’ will be understood as any of the text fragments retrieved by NVivo program in which a code or sub-code appears.

**Table 1.** Summary of the search and sampling process.

Online database	Number of works
Web of Science	66
Scopus	70
ProQuest	102
Sage Journals	8
Google Scholar	100
Total retrieved documents	346
Total after duplicates were removed	229
Total after quality exclusion criteria were applied	77
Total after irrelevant and non-English works were excluded	64
FINAL SAMPLE	64

To group the new codes as sub-codes, hierarchy charts of intersecting codes were produced. These charts compare the extracted text references for each AFC and identify with which codes they share a larger number of references.

Thus, each new FWC was aggregated under the AFC with which it shared the largest number of text references. For example, for the word ‘voice’, 415 text references were extracted. The chart of intersecting codes showed that the code with which it shared the largest number of references was ‘poetry’. So, ‘voice’ was considered a sub-code for ‘poetry’ and its references were aggregated to those for ‘poetry’. After this process, all the texts were classified according to the main subject or subjects they dealt with. A summary of the final coding scheme is shown in [Table 2](#).

The following steps included adding attributes to classify the studies according to a series of characteristics: type of academic work, year of publication, author country affiliation, and applied research methods (descriptive analysis). The final part of the analysis (thematic analysis) was carried out employing the text search tool of the NVivo program looking for: (1) interactions between AFCs and the studied documents; (2) most frequent words/concepts present in each AFC; and (3) definitions of the concept ‘transcreation’.

## Findings

As the approach of this review is concept-centric, findings around the content analysis of the works will be offered in relation to the main concepts and fields of application identified in the sample. First, a quantitative descriptive analysis of the scientific works sampled will be conducted. Finally, a qualitative thematic analysis containing the results found will be presented.

### Descriptive analysis

#### Main fields of research

Files were coded around the main fields of application (AFC) for transcreation mentioned in the texts. All 64 studies were coded around the topic ‘translation’, that is, the

**Table 2.** Coding scheme summary.

AFC*	FWC**	Studies	References	% over the total of retrieved references
translation		64	6657	36.23
	culture	54	1036	5.64
	language	53	938	5.11
	text	52	1872	10.19
	inform	45	566	3.08
	copy	22	340	1.85
	term	49	611	3.33
	origin	46	545	2.97
communication		48	887	4.83
	health	22	315	1.71
advertising		45	1796	9.78
	product	40	710	3.86
	market	30	497	2.71
poetry		38	1188	6.47
	voice	27	415	2.26

\*AFC (Application Field Code); \*\*FWC (Frequent Word Code).

word ‘translation’ was mentioned in every paper, with a total of 6657 references. Furthermore, the field ‘communication’ was present in 48 works, with 887 references; the word ‘advertising’ was mentioned in 45 studies, with 1796 references and the field ‘poetry’ was present in 38 files, with 1188 references (see [Table 2](#)). In the scientific literature analyzed, transcreation is thus most frequently associated with translation and, in descending order, with communication, advertising and poetry.

### *Type of publications*

This review includes 45 journal articles (70.3%), 13 book chapters (20.3%), and 6 doctoral theses (9.4%) dealing with the concept ‘transcreation’. All of them address the subject in terms of its relationship to ‘translation’.

### *Publication frequency*

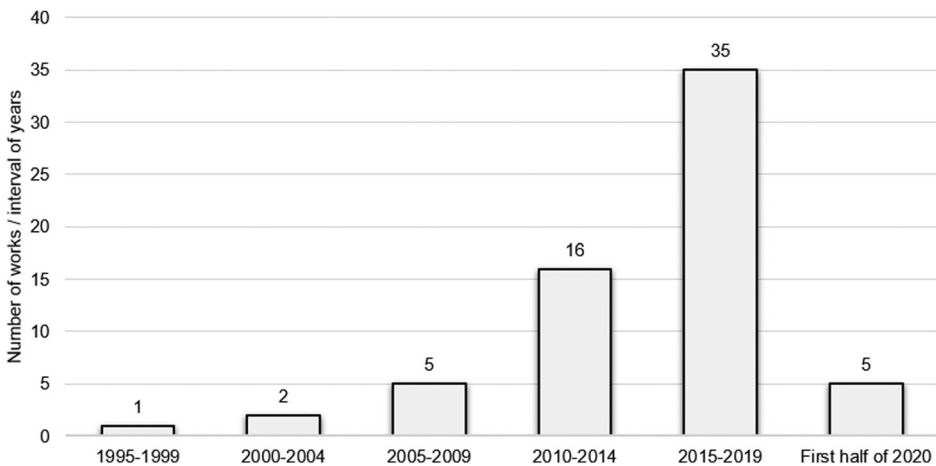
After the first publication was released in 1995, the frequency of scientific works on transcreation increased steadily, with a notable peak between the years 2015 and 2019, when 35 works on transcreation were published. A summary of the frequency of publication is available in [Figure 1](#).

### *Author country affiliation*

Papers from 20 different author country affiliations were identified. For works with more than one author with different country affiliations, only the affiliation of the first author has been considered. Notably, the country from which most researchers are producing scientific knowledge on transcreation is the United States, followed by the United Kingdom and Spain. A summary of the author country affiliations is included in [Figure 2](#).

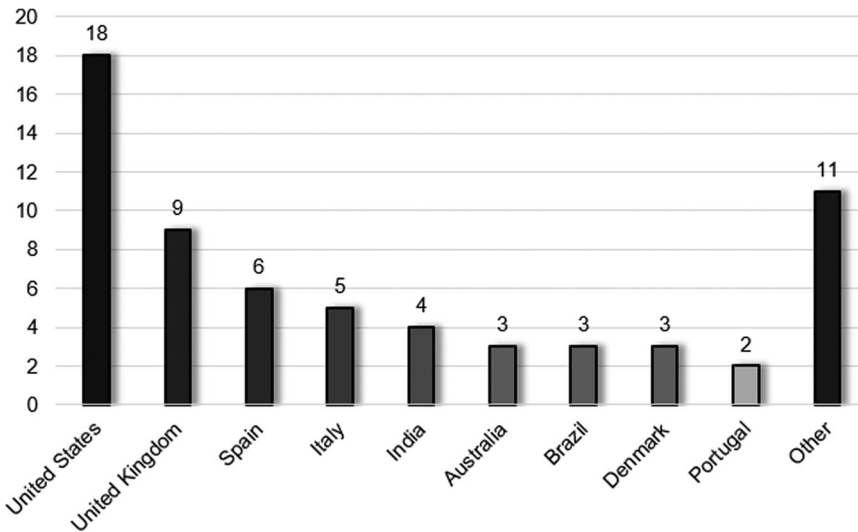
### *Applied research methods*

Scientific works included in the sample were classified according to applied research methods. Three kinds of research were identified: theoretical discussion, qualitative



**Figure 1.** Publication frequency for scientific works on transcreation.





**Figure 2.** Number of works by author country affiliations.

analysis and quantitative analysis. More than half of the works (33; 51.6%) were conducted through qualitative analyses; approximately a third of the works (22; 34.4%) were theoretical discussions, and, a small portion (9; 14.1%) involved research conducted through quantitative analysis.

### *Thematic analysis*

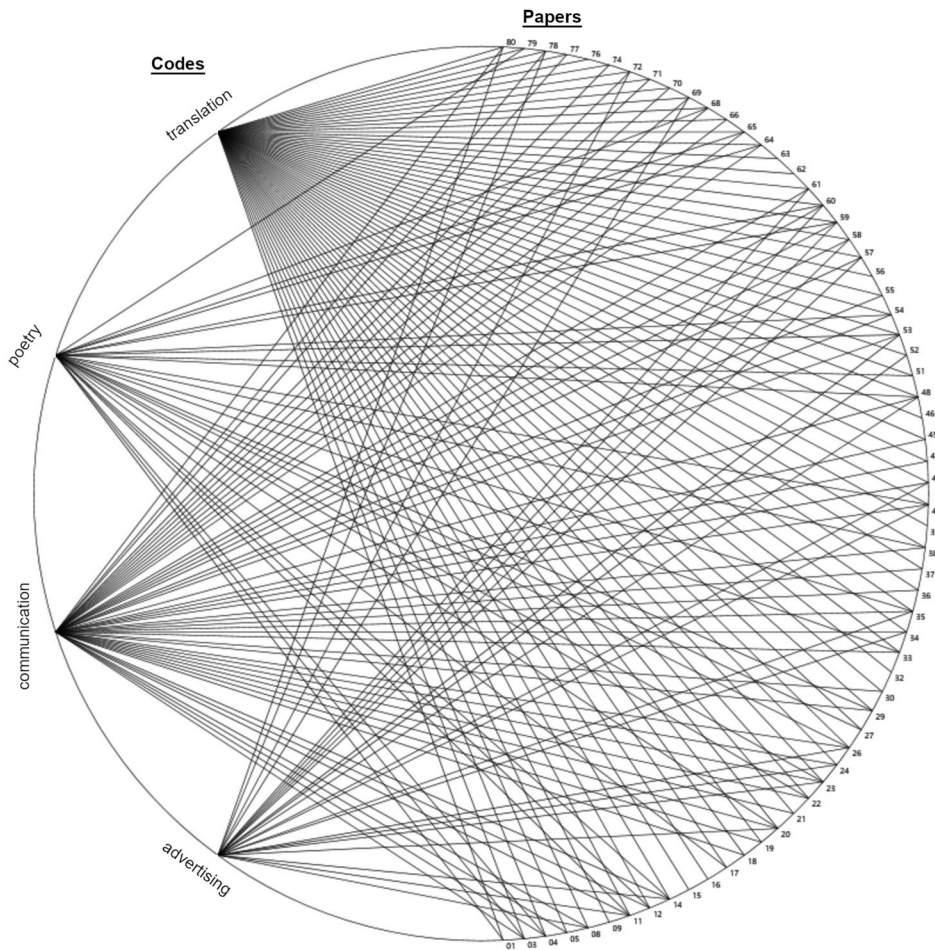
As mentioned in the Materials and Methods section, the analyzed papers were coded around four main topics (AFC) connected to transcreation with the software NVivo. Those topics are not mutually exclusive, as it is possible for a single paper to discuss several topics and study the applications of transcreation in different professional and academic fields. In fact, most of the analyzed studies were coded around several topics.

As shown in [Figure 3](#), each work has been identified with a number and is connected to the topic or topics it deals with. IDs are not necessarily correlative as the identification was made in early stages of the sampling process. As represented in the image, most papers are coded around two or three different topics and only a few were around one single topic. This is, the majority of the analyzed scientific papers dealt with transcreation related to several different professional and research fields.

### *Core concepts*

When the papers included in the review were classified, a concept-centered search was carried out in order to identify the core concepts present in the scientific works. This search was conducted through a word frequency analysis in each of the four AFCs. A list of the most frequent words was extracted for each code and were pinpointed as the core concepts discussed in the papers coded around them.

For the works coded around ‘translation’, the main core concepts identified were: ‘translation’, ‘culture’, ‘text’, and ‘language’. These findings are not surprising given that, as stated by previous literature, transcreation is a translation-related activity that



**Figure 3.** Diagram of AFCs coding each paper.

considers elements such as language and culture in order to creatively re-interpret a text to be received by an audience different from that originally intended (Benetello, 2018; Gaballo, 2012; Katan, 2016; Pedersen, 2017). Thus, the core concepts present in the scientific papers are in line with this vision of transcreation.

In the case of the code ‘communication’, the top five concepts in the word frequency list were: ‘communication’, ‘product’, ‘culture’, ‘appeal’ and ‘health’. Interestingly, papers connecting transcreation with communication seem to place a great importance on the role of culture and appeal in the process. In addition, the concept ‘product’ appears quite frequently, which points to a product-oriented approach present in these works. The presence of the ‘health’ concept is connected to the use of transcreation strategies for adapting health information materials that has been the subject of study in the recent years by various authors (Díaz-Millón et al., 2020; Macario & Montealegre Boyte, 2008; Piñeiro et al., 2018; Ruvalcaba et al., 2019; Santoyo-Olsson et al., 2019; Simmons et al., 2010). Critical analysis of the texts coded around communication also reveals the importance of cultural inclusion and cultural relevance in the process of adaptation

for new communities of text receptors (Baltrusch, 2010; Chan, 2003; Chatterjee, 2002; Theocharous, 2015). This perspective especially comes from conceptualizations associated with transcreation tradition in India.

For the code ‘advertising’, the main core concepts identified were: ‘advertising’, ‘product’, ‘marketing’, and ‘culture’. The presence thereof is in line with the scientific literature on the role played by transcreation in the advertising industry. Transcreation has usually been associated with the adaptation of marketing and advertising campaigns to introduce products in new markets (Morón & Calvo, 2018; Pedersen, 2014, 2017; Ray & Kelly, 2010; TAUS, 2019). In this process, cultural characteristics of the intended audience are crucial to effectively adapt, or transcreate, such advertising texts. Therefore, the core concepts present in the papers coded for advertising can confirm this previous definition of transcreation.

Finally, for the code ‘poetry’, the five top concepts identified were: ‘voice’, ‘poem’, ‘poetry’, ‘work’ and ‘text’. The concept of ‘voice’, related to the poetic voice expressed in a text or work by an author and the transmission of this voice by the translator/transcreator, has been present in previous works dealing with the transcreation of poems or poetic texts (Echauri Galván, 2019; Fausto & De Vienne, 2014).

### Definitions of transcreation

Text search queries were carried out to discover how ‘transcreation’ is defined in scientific literature. Using the NVivo text search tool, the following query was introduced to obtain exact matches: ‘transcreation is’.

A list of all the files including clearly stated definitions of transcreation was obtained (see Table 3), as well as text references in which the term was defined. The text references extracted were then synthesized and classified following a concept-centric approach through a critical analysis of the content.

**Table 3.** Publications defining the concept of transcreation.

ID	Reference
20	Neves, J. (2012). Multi-sensory approaches to (audio) describing the visual arts. <i>MonTI. Monografías de Traducción e Interpretación</i> , 4(4), 277–293.
24	Rike, S. M. (2013). Bilingual corporate websites-from translation to transcreation? <i>The Journal of Specialised Translation</i> , 20, 68–85.
40	Pedersen, D. (2016). <i>Transcreation in marketing and advertising: an ethnographic study</i> [Aarhus University].
42	Risku, H., Pichler, T., & Wieser, V. (2017). Transcreation as a translation service: Process requirements and client expectations. <i>Across Languages and Cultures</i> , 18(1), 53–77.
48	O'Donnell-Smith, D. (2017). <i>Vox Ex Machina: Towards a Digital Poetics of the Disembodied Voice</i> . University of London.
53	Pedersen, D. (2017). Managing transcreation projects. <i>Translation Spaces</i> , 6(1), 44–61
55	Nápoles, A. M., & Stewart, A. L. (2018). Transcreation: An implementation science framework for community-engaged behavioral interventions to reduce health disparities. <i>BMC Health Services Research</i> , 18(1), 710.
56	Vitra, L., & Queiroz, J. (2018). Intersemiotic translation: Transcreation and diagrams. In P. Chapman, G. Stapleton, A. Moktefi, S. PerezKriz, et al. (Eds.), <i>Diagrammatic Representation and Inference, Diagrams</i> (pp. 825–828). Springer.
57	Malenkina, N., & Ivanov, S. (2018). A linguistic analysis of the official tourism websites of the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities. <i>Journal of Destination Marketing and Management</i> , 9, 204–233
60	Benetello, C. (2018). When translation is not enough: Transcreation as a convention-defying practice. A practitioner's perspective. <i>The Journal of Specialised Translation</i> , 29, 28–43.
61	Chaume, F. (2018). Is audiovisual translation putting the concept of translation up against the ropes? <i>The Journal of Specialised Translation</i> , 30, 84–104.
69	Huertas Barros, E., & Vine, J. (2019). Training the trainers in embedding assessment literacy into module design: a case study of a collaborative transcreation project. <i>Interpreter and Translator Trainer</i> , 13(3), 271–291.
78	Al-Omar, N. (2020). Ideology in Advertising: Some Implications for Transcreation into Arabic. <i>Hikma</i> , 19(1), 43–68.

Thus, in the end four different definitions of transcreation were identified depending on the professional and academic perspective from which it was outlined: translation, communication, advertising or poetry.

First, the definitions dealing with transcreation as a translation-related activity focus on the process of recreating a text in a different language. Here there are some examples:

- a. Transcreation is used to make sure that the target text is the same as the source text in every aspect: the message it conveys, style, the images and emotions it evokes and its cultural background. (ID 20)
- b. Transcreation is taking a text in one language and recreating it in another. (ID 24)
- c. Transcreation is an intra-/interlingual re-interpretation of the original work suited to the readers/audience of the target language which requires the translator to come up with new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs to make up for the lack (or inadequacy) of existing ones. (ID 40)
- d. Transcreation is also seen to some extent as a reintroduction of the well-proven notion of cultural adaptation. (ID 42)
- e. Transcreation is the process of transferring a brand and/or message from one culture to another. (ID 57)
- f. Most definitions of transcreation seem to place great emphasis on cultural relevance and fitness for purpose. (ID 60)
- g. Transcreation comprises both the concept of faithful transmission as well as that of creation. (ID 61)
- h. Transcreation can be considered a form of user-centered translation. (ID 69)

Second, definitions of transcreation in the field of communication focus mainly on the adaption of health information materials for communities of speakers who do not speak the majority language. Some examples of communication-related definitions are:

- a. Transcreation in the health arena has had a narrower scope, referring to the adaptation of health education materials for improved understanding and cultural relevance to specific language and ethnic groups. (ID 55)
- b. We define transcreation as the processes of planning and delivering interventions to reduce health disparities so that they resonate with the targeted community, while achieving intended health outcomes. (ID 55)

Third, papers defining transcreation in the advertising field connect it quite frequently to marketing purposes. Most of them consider transcreation as a tool for adapting advertising campaigns to reach customers in international markets. The idea of internationalizing a product to enable it to reach local markets is present in most reviewed works. Here there are some examples of transcreation in the advertising sector:

- a. Online marketing and branding services (...) use the term to mean adapting a sales or branding message from one language to another whilst retaining the style or tone of the original copy. (ID 48)
- b. In a marketing context, transcreation is usually concerned with the adaptation of advertising material into several different languages or for different markets. (ID 53)

- c. Transcreation is considered an indispensable linguistic tool for the internationalization of the destinations. (ID 57)
- d. Evidence suggests that transcreation is the only possible way to ‘translate’ marketing and advertising copy. (ID 60)

Papers discussing the role of transcreation in the translation of poetry place their main perspective on the origin of the term. Also, authors seem to agree on the fact that, in poetics, transcreation is intersemiotic translation. Some examples of these definitions are:

- a. Transcreation is frequently perceived as intersemiotic translation in the Jakobsonian sense. (ID 40)
- b. Transcreation is a term invented by de Campos in reference to a poetics of translation based on Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* from 1928. (ID 48)
- c. We associate Jakobson’s concept of intersemiotic translation with De Campos’ notion of transcreation. (ID 56)
- d. In the Indian tradition, transcreation is understood as the interpretation of the original work to suit the TL audience in a particular time and space. (ID 78)

This wide variety of possible definitions confirm that transcreation is a concept with blurred boundaries, so, it seems logical to offer different definitions depending on its field of application. However, this study will endeavor to compile all the academic conceptualizations of transcreation presented above. As such, a single definition of the concept will be provided. The objective is to offer a broad definition, encompassing the distinct characteristics that have been identified to date in the scientific literature. This is not to offer a prescriptive definition as such, but rather to bring together the different perspectives from which the term has been approached and synthesize them to create a single definition that can be applied to the different areas in which this concept is used. The aim of this definition is to add value to the debate surrounding transcreation, in which, as can be seen in the definitions collected in this review, apparent contradictions are present. Consequently, the following definition of transcreation is proposed.

Transcreation is a type of translation characterized by the intra-/interlingual adaptation or re-interpretation of a message intended to suit a target audience, while conveying the same message, style, tone, images and emotions from the source language to the target language, paying special attention to the cultural characteristics of the target audience. This re-interpretation of the message may imply adaptations that move away from the original text to a greater or lesser extent to fit the original purpose, transmit the original message and overcome cultural barriers. For such reasons, it is present in persuasive and communicative contexts.

The implications of this definition will be further discussed in the sections below.

## Discussion

Research on transcreation seems to be quite international, with authors from twenty different countries of affiliation identified in this SLR. This accounts for the global interest raised by this activity, which has given rise to multiple research projects and studies

that have contributed to the definition and conceptualization of the concept within Translation Studies.

Four main fields of application have been identified as the focus of discussion. These are the principal domains or professional areas that transcreation is most related to according to the literature analyzed. In order of frequency, these four areas are: translation, communication, advertising and poetry.

Among these fields, translation is the most transversal: all the analyzed works mention it and address transcreation from this perspective. The premise present in the scientific literature examined to date that transcreation is a translation-related activity, is therefore confirmed, at least from an academic perspective. Multiple authors have pointed in this direction in recent years (Benetello, 2018; Gaballo, 2012; Katan, 2016; Pedersen, 2017; Rike, 2013; Risku et al., 2017). The works analyzed dealing with transcreation in relation to the other identified fields always connect it to translation.

A large number of the articles included in this review associate transcreation with communication. The papers that address this topic do so from the perspective of cultural adaptation of texts to reach communities of speakers other than the original recipients. Within this field, the subgenre of adaptation of health information products to include speaker communities is included (Díaz-Millón et al., 2020). Especially in research carried out in the United States, there are examples of the use of transcreation techniques to adapt health information products (notably booklets, but also IT tools) to address Spanish-speaking audiences and Latino communities (Nápoles & Stewart, 2018; Ruvalcaba et al., 2019). This may be due to the clear role played by cultural awareness and cultural adaption mentioned frequently in academia when defining transcreation (Benetello, 2018; Malenkina & Ivanov, 2018; Risku et al., 2017).

Papers related to advertising discuss the adaptation of products (considering ‘product’ as any kind of text, including multimodal texts, that can or could be transcreated) aimed at local markets to be used by audiences in other markets with different cultural characteristics (Mavis Ho, 2021; O’Donnell-Smith, 2017). In fact, some authors consider it a cornerstone in internationalization processes (Malenkina & Ivanov, 2018). Most works emphasize the creativity needed to adapt marketing and advertising-related products, and some of them even argue that transcreation is the only possible way to do this successfully (Benetello, 2018). These data confirm what has been claimed so far about transcreation being present above all in the creative industries and especially in marketing and advertising (Pedersen, 2016, 2017) for its capacity to contribute to the localization (making local) of products for local markets and to help the internationalization processes (projection to international markets) of companies.

Poetry is the least common field. These papers address the adaptation of the author’s ‘voice’ to be received by speakers of languages other than the original. These articles focus more on the origin of transcreation, since it seems that it is in poetry where the birth of this activity is found. Some authors (Al-Omar, 2020; Katan, 2016; O’Donnell-Smith, 2017; Vitra & Queiroz, 2018) point to its origins in India by P. Lal in the 1970s to refer to his English translation of Sanskrit works, and its use by the Brazilian poet and translator Haroldo de Campos in the second half of the twentieth century, whereas other authors highlight the role of transcreation in literature as a tool for cultural vindication, especially of minority languages and cultures (Kadenge, 2012; Wakabayashi, 2012). Again, we find examples in scientific research of the relationship between

culture and transcreation. The works that connect poetry and transcreation coincide with the presence of creativity as a central part of the transcreation process, which seems to be closely linked to claims by previous authors.

The synthesized definition of transcreation offered in this study tries to overcome the present contradictions in the debate around transcreation and add value to that very same debate. Indeed, these apparent contradictions are to be expected if the wide variety of applications of transcreation is considered. Even if this review corroborates previous assertions placing transcreation within the creative industries (Pedersen, 2017), it also confirms the blurred boundaries of the concept. Moreover, what this review shows is that ‘transcreation’, as an area of specialization, a professional practice and a field of research, needs to be further conceptualized. In this sense, this study aims at providing further understanding of the concept and contributing to academic research on this new emergent area of specialization.

## Limitations

Nevertheless, this work is not exempt from limitations. First, papers have been classified according to an identification of the most frequent terms. Although this identification has been made through a qualitative analysis software program, this classification in typologies can limit the knowledge extracted from the analyzed works. Second, maintaining a balance between an exhaustive review and achieving a manageable sample has led to the application of filtering criteria. For example, the exclusion of works classified in Q3 or Q4 from the SJR index may have led to the omission of works that would have provided interesting perspectives to the study. Finally, some of the databases used (e.g., Sage Journals) offered a very limited number of results, which suggests that some relevant works published in recent years may not have been included.

## Conclusion

After processing all the information compiled in this study, the landscape of scientific research on transcreation has been outlined. Throughout this work, 45 journal articles, 13 book chapters and 6 doctoral theses have been analyzed. This SLR revealed that research on transcreation started around 1995 and that the U.S. stands out as the country where most research has been developed, followed by the United Kingdom and Spain.

The research questions posed at the beginning of the work have been answered. First, for the question ‘How is “transcreation” defined in the scientific literature?’, four perspectives of transcreation according to the field of research from which it was defined have been proposed. This leads to the second research question ‘To which fields can transcreation be applied?’, and, with the help of the NVivo qualitative analysis software, the identification of keywords, led to the selection of the four research topics with which transcreation was most frequently connected.

The third research question suggested was ‘What are the core concepts related to transcreation?’. Some of the most common key concepts are ‘culture’, ‘text’, and ‘product’ and, together with other key concepts such as ‘language’, ‘appeal’, ‘health’ or ‘voice’, they seem to confirm and complete the above-mentioned definitions of transcreation and help to improve the understanding of this concept.

Finally, the question ‘What kind of studies about transcreation have been carried out in the last decades?’ was answered. In this review it has been concluded that most of the papers published so far have been of a qualitative nature (33 papers, 51.6%) and theoretical reflections (22 papers, 34.4%). Quantitative studies are the least frequent among the papers reviewed (9 papers, 14.1%). Thus, the review concludes that the least explored lines so far have been the quantitative studies.

The transcreation research landscape offered by this SLR outlines four main lines of research taken to explore transcreation. This opens the way towards studying transcreation by considering new perspectives and frameworks of research to continue producing innovative investigations on this subject. This review has aimed to delimit the broad concept of ‘transcreation’, which will lead in future studies to expand on the knowledge obtained about it thus far.

This review reveals how transcreation has been conceptualized in the last two decades in scientific literature since its first appearance in 1995. It accounts for its transdisciplinary character and, for this reason, for its potential in translation research. The steady increase of scientific research and the peak identified between the years 2015 and 2019 indicate a rising interest in recent years, and suggest that transcreation is a field to be further explored in forthcoming years.

As identified in this review, most studies carried out on transcreation have been of a qualitative or theoretical nature. The scarcity of quantitative studies may be due to the difficulty of systematically measuring or evaluating an activity that has, as defined by the analyzed research, an important creativity/creation component. This lack of quantitative knowledge may bias the existing vision of transcreation. However, it also opens the door to conducting more quantitative studies in future lines of research.

In conclusion, the information collected throughout the review may be useful for researchers and practitioners and for guiding future research on transcreation.

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## Appendix. Summary of descriptive analysis

Data collected	Translation	Communication	Advertising	Poetry
Number of works	64	48	45	38
Publication type	Journal articles (45), Book chapters (13), Doctoral thesis (6)	Journal articles (40), Book chapters (4), Doctoral thesis (4)	Journal articles (34), Book chapters (6), Doctoral thesis (5)	Journal articles (29), Book chapters (4), Doctoral thesis (5)
Year	1995 (1), 2002 (1), 2003 (1), 2005 (1), 2006 (1), 2008 (2), 2009 (1), 2010 (4), 2011 (2), 2012 (3), 2013 (4), 2014 (3), 2015 (3), 2016 (5), 2017 (8), 2018 (11), 2019 (8), 2020 (5)	2002 (1), 2003 (1), 2005 (1), 2006 (1), 2008 (1), 2009 (1), 2010 (1), 2011 (2), 2012 (3), 2013 (4), 2014 (2), 2015 (3), 2016 (4), 2017 (5), 2018 (8), 2019 (8), 2020 (3)	2002 (1), 2003 (1), 2005 (1), 2006 (1), 2008 (1), 2009 (1), 2010 (2), 2011 (2), 2012 (1), 2013 (4), 2014 (1), 2015 (3), 2016 (3), 2017 (4), 2018 (10), 2019 (6), 2020 (3)	1995 (1), 2002 (1), 2003 (1), 2005 (1), 2006 (1), 2008 (1), 2009 (1), 2010 (2), 2012 (2), 2013 (4), 2014 (1), 2015 (3), 2016 (2), 2017 (4), 2018 (7), 2019 (5), 2020 (1)
Author country affiliation	United States (18), United Kingdom (9), Spain (6), Italy (5), India (4), Australia (3), Brazil (3), Denmark (3), Portugal (2), Republic of South Africa (1), Norway (1), Austria (1), Finland (1), France (1), Indonesia (1), Bulgaria (1), Sweden (1), Israel (1), Jordan (1), Poland (1)	United States (15), United Kingdom (6), Spain (5), Italy (5), India (1), Australia (2), Brazil (3), Denmark (2), Portugal (2), Republic of South Africa (1), Norway (1), Austria (1), Finland (1), Bulgaria (1), Israel (1), Jordan (1)	United States (10), United Kingdom (8), Spain (5), Italy (5), India (1), Australia (2), Brazil (3), Denmark (3), Portugal (1), Norway (1), Austria (1), Indonesia (1), Bulgaria (1), Sweden (1), Israel (1), Jordan (1)	United States (8), United Kingdom (5), Spain (4), Italy (5), India (2), Australia (2), Brazil (3), Denmark (2), Portugal (1), Norway (1), Austria (1), France (1), Bulgaria (1), Israel (1), Poland (1)