

Institution: University of East Anglia
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Literary Translation: Theory into Practice
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The present case study describes the impact of research at the University of East Anglia (UEA) on the practice, publishing and public understanding of literary translation. W.G. Sebald founded the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) at UEA in 1989 to promote and encourage the translation of literary works, to support practising translators and to foster the study of translated literature. BCLT is a thriving international public cultural institute whose ethos and programme are shaped and informed by researchers working between the Centre and its academic home, the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing (LDC). Via workshops, publishing initiatives and a range of local, national and international events, the work of these researchers has had a significant impact on the public perception and understanding of literature in translation, and on the market for this literature within the UK and beyond.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Research into literary translation in BCLT and LDC is concerned variously to understand the ways in which translation theories, rather than merely <i>describing</i> translation practice, can have an <i>influence</i> on it, both direct and indirect. This influence occurs most obviously in the course of translator training, but it happens also and more broadly through the raising of public awareness of the literary, linguistic and ethical issues involved in the act of literary translation. BCLT was established in order to put this understanding of the theory-practice relationship to practical use. The research in question has been carried out in particular by four theorist-translators.</p> <p>Jean Boase-Beier's (UEA: 1991-) work considers the relevance and potential benefits to the practising translator of theories from outside the realm of translation studies conventionally conceived (stylistic theory; elements from poetics, neuroscience and psychology). Her work explores the ways in which 'stylistically-aware' translation can capture the voice and style of the original text more effectively than more conventional 'content-based' translation (Boase-Beier 2006). Since 1991, Boase-Beier has been involved in shaping BCLT's policy on translator training and public events for publishers and readers. Her work since 1995 on the importance of poetic style (Boase-Beier 2011), especially in the translation of Holocaust poetry and other poetry with a basis in historical events (Boase-Beier 2004), resulted in the establishment in 2000 of a new bilingual poetry series, <i>Visible Poets</i>, with Arc Publications. Her research on the translation of Holocaust poetry led to core membership of the AHRC <i>Network on Holocaust Writing and Translation</i> and forms the basis for her current AHRC Fellowship on <i>Translating the Poetry of the Holocaust</i>.</p> <p>Clive Scott (UEA: 1967- (Emeritus 2008)) was one of the founders of BCLT, along with W.G. Sebald. Through his many works in general and <i>Channel Crossings</i> in particular, Scott has argued that the practice of literary translation is essentially creative, an art based on a detailed, open and at times unconventional engagement with as many as possible of the meanings of the source text (Scott 2002). Literary translation thus conceived is an art of creative close reading – an art of interpretation – one potentially available to specialist and non-specialist alike.</p> <p>Valerie Henitiuk (UEA: 2007-2013; Associate Director and then Director of BCLT, 2007-13) investigates the reasons for the success or otherwise of world literature in translation. Her work considers the ways in which an understanding of the history and writing practices of source cultures influences translator choice, potentially opening the translated text to a foreign audience and enabling it to flourish in a global context (Henitiuk 2008).</p> <p>B.J. Epstein (UEA: 2009-; Schools and Libraries Liaison for BCLT) investigates ways to use</p>

translation theory to educate translators and readers regarding aspects of foreign and minority cultures. In particular, Epstein is concerned to show the extent to which translation can unintentionally manipulate perceptions of these cultures, and to develop strategies translators can use to avoid this (Epstein 2012).

3. References to the research

- Scott, C. (2002) *Channel Crossings: French and English Poetry in Dialogue*, Oxford: Legenda
- Boase-Beier, J. (2004) 'Knowing and not-knowing: style, intention and the translation of a Holocaust poem', *Language and Literature* 13.1, 25-35
- Boase-Beier, J. (2006) *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*, Manchester: St Jerome Publishing
- Henitiuk, V. (2008) 'Going to Bed with Waley: How Murasaki Shikibu does and does not become World Literature', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 45.1, 40-61
- Boase-Beier, J. (2011) *A Critical Introduction to Translation Studies*, London: Continuum [Listed in REF2]
- Epstein, B.J. (2012) *Translating Expressive Language in Children's Literature: Problems and Solutions*, Oxford: Peter Lang

Grants and awards

BCLT has since 2008 alone received over £1,000,000 from external sources. Major funders include the Arts Council of England (£1,141,560 between 2008 and 2013), the Nippon Foundation (£182,600), the Foyle Foundation (£45,000), the Charles Wallace India Trust (£29,621), and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (£15,000).

Boase-Beier received an AHRC Fellowship of £92,141 in 2012-13 for *Translating the Poetry of the Holocaust*.

The *AHRC Network on Holocaust Writing and Translation* is based in Aberystwyth, Edinburgh and Norwich, with Boase-Beier as a core member. The Network received a total of £37,866 in funding for its first phase.

Henitiuk received a Leverhulme Research Fellowship of £33,286 in 2010-11 to pursue research on translation and world literature as a Harvard Visiting Fellow.

Evidence of quality

Scott's 2002 book won the R. H. Gapper book prize.

Boase-Beier's 2004 article formed the basis of successful applications for the 2010 AHRC *Network on Holocaust Writing and Translation* and the 2012-13 AHRC Fellowship *Translating the Poetry of the Holocaust*.

Boase-Beier's 2006 book has appeared in a Chinese edition and has been reviewed in England, Canada, Spain, China, Japan and the Czech Republic.

Henitiuk's 2008 article has been translated into Japanese, and formed part of the application for Henitiuk's 2010-11 Leverhulme Fellowship.

Epstein's 2012 book was supported by a peer-assessed grant from the Karin and Hjalmar Tornblad Foundation Fund, Sweden.

4. Details of the impact

A. Impact on translator training

The core activity of BCLT's annual Summer School since 2000, overseen by Henitiuk between 2007 and 2013, has been the training workshops. These bring together published and emerging translators from around the world to study intensively with experienced translators and researchers – Epstein included – for a programme of study based on the

theoretical work of Henitiuk, Boase-Beier and Scott. Each of the six language-specific workshops is run jointly by a translator and a published author, with the writing of the latter serving as the basis for the respective group's activities. Testimony to the transformative effect of the workshops is extensive (corroborating source i). The international sources of the over £30,000 of annual funding for the workshops mean that translators from many countries can benefit from the UEA training model. Funders include the Nippon Foundation, the Goethe Institute and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

BCLT has since 2008 developed a widely influential consultancy, running workshops in, first, China, and now also Egypt, Qatar, Japan and India. They have also developed a licensing arrangement with Monash University in Australia, and in Indonesia. The model here is that of the research-led workshops of the annual BCLT Summer School. Recognised as a world leader in innovative translator training, these BCLT programmes have transformed literary translation research at UEA into a series of sustainable international revenue-generating activities (corroborating source ii).

The strong reputation and international networks of BCLT underpin also the Mentoring Programme established in 2010. The Programme is run in collaboration with the Translators' Association and supported by an ever-increasing number of cultural embassies (corroborating source iii). As well as offering mentoring at all stages of the process of literary translation, the mentoring scheme links promising translators directly with major publishers. The impact of the Programme is evident in the number of full-length book commissions secured during mentorship – with Bloomsbury, Frisch and Co. and Virago for major literary translations from the Turkish, Italian and Swedish respectively (corroborating sources iii and iv).

B. Impact on publishing

The *Visible Poets* series published by Arc is a direct result of Boase-Beier's theoretical work on the translated literary text as *translation*, and an instance of the impact of her work on the publishing sector. The bi-lingual series, established by Boase-Beier in 2000 and edited by her since then, brings to the English-language reader a diverse range of world literature – currently 39 volumes – and is now one of the major promoters of poetry-in-translation in the UK and Europe (corroborating source v). The status as a translation of each volume is central to the series' constitution, apparent in the text themselves, in cover design and in publicity material. The influence of the series is enhanced by public readings and workshops focusing specifically on the work of the translator. Series organized through BCLT and Arc are supported by Arts Council and Lottery funding. These include the Arc Ventures tour, which held readings and associated workshops in translation for over 1000 participants in October and November 2012. According to Arc: 'That poetry in translation from all parts of the world is now taken much more seriously and is more widely read in the UK is in no small measure due to Boase-Beier's pivotal role in developing the *Visible Poets* series. Arc's current success in gaining Arts Council and Lottery funding of over £97,000 is exclusively for translated titles, over half of which appear in Boase-Beier's series' (corroborating source vi). Public recognition of volumes in the *Visible Poets* series includes the 2010 Scott Moncrieff Prize, shortlisted titles for the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2010 and 2011, and Poetry Book Society recommendations in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The success of *Visible Poets* has led to a further four bilingual series published by Arc, of which three are edited by Boase-Beier (*Classics, Anthologies, Arc Translations*). Publications include the only volume of poetry in English translation by an Armenian poet, the first by a Lithuanian poet, and many significant works of poetry from minority languages (e.g. Catalan) and cultures (e.g. Kurdish).

In terms of an impact on future developments in the publishing market, Henitiuk's research on the global circulation of world literature resulted in her working with partners, including the British Council and PEN, to establish the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair

in 2010. Now an annual event, the Literary Translation Centre brings together UK and foreign publishers with writers, translators and readers for a range of programming that has become a nerve centre of this major trade fair (corroborating source vii).

C. Impact on the public understanding of literature in translation

The International Fiction Reading Group, run by Epstein in her role as Schools and Libraries Liaison Office for BCLT, is a grass-roots initiative intended to counter the marginalisation of literature in translation, and to promote in a public forum the art of translation as understood in the work of Boase-Beier, Epstein and Scott. The group is based at the Norwich Millennium Library (corroborating source viii). It is, to our knowledge, the only such initiative in the UK dedicated exclusively to the reading of translations. Numbers vary from 10 to 40 per session, with around 100 members online. Epstein's group has won two Community University Engagement (CUE) East Awards (2011 and 2012).

Epstein directs an annual series of public Café Conversations in Norwich, funded by CUE (East) and attracting between 10 and 25 Norfolk residents. These events are hosted by UEA staff and postgraduate students, and include annually a number of sessions led by researchers working on literary translation. Research-based sessions in the series have included the role of stereotypes in translated children's literature (Epstein) and the reading of translated Holocaust poetry (Boase-Beier).

Epstein runs a translation blog, Brave New Words (<http://brave-new-words.blogspot.co.uk/>), to promote and debate issues that arise in her research, including in particular the understanding of national stereotypes in translated literature, and more generally to encourage greater awareness of literature in translation. It is consistently named one of the 100 best language blogs in the world, receiving over 120,000 hits per year (corroborating source ix).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

A. Impact on translator training

- i. BCLT Summer School, including extensive first-hand testimony from participants: <http://www.bclt.org.uk/summer-school/>
- ii. Summary document detailing BCLT workshop arrangements in Australia, Indonesia and India
- iii. Volumes 1 (2012) and 2 (2013) of *First Lines*, the publication that results from the BCLT Mentoring Programme. These include an overview of the scheme, details of participants and a list of funding bodies (<http://www.bclt.org.uk/mentoring/>)
- iv. 'Beginning in Translation: the 2011-2012 Mentoring Programme' (<http://www.bclt.org.uk/images/Mentoring-in-IOW.pdf>)

B. Impact on publishing

- v. Visible Poets series: <http://www.arcpublications.co.uk/series/visible-poets>
- vi. Testimonial can be obtained from the Managing Editor of Arc Publications
- vii. London Book Fair Literary Translation Centre, including 2013 programme: <http://www.londonbookfair.co.uk/en/Global-Elements/LBF-2013/Focus-On/Literary-Translation/>
<http://www.londonbookfair.co.uk/en/Global-Elements/LBF-2013/Focus-On/Literary-Translation/Sessions-from-the-Literary-Translation-Centre/>

C. Impact on the public understanding of literature in translation

- viii. Testimonial can be obtained from Norwich Millennium Library
- ix. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/translation/articles/top-translator-blogs.html>