

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

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Moving Texts, Migrating People and Minority Languages

 Springer

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Introduction

In an age of globalization, migration, growing cultural homogenization, increasing intercultural dependencies and in a world deeply divided through cultural differences and ongoing efforts to preserve national and regional traditions and identities, the issues of language and translation are becoming absolutely vital. At the heart of these complex, intercultural interactions are various types of agents, intermediaries and mediators, including translators, writers, artists, policy makers and publishers involved in the preservation or rejuvenation of literary and cultural repertoires, languages and identities. Inspired by the 1st International Translingua Conference, held at Kazimierz Wielki University, Bydgoszcz, Poland, between 24 and 25 September 2015, this volume brings together representatives of various academic perspectives reflecting upon these issues. The major themes of this book include language and translation in the context of migration and diasporas, migrant experiences and identities, the translation from and into minority and lesser-used languages, but also, in a broader sense, the international circulation of texts, concepts and people. Adopting a cross- and inter-disciplinary approach, the volume is divided into three parts: Translation, Minority Languages and Multilingualism, Language, Translation and the Migrant Experience, as well as Texts, Concepts and People on the Move. The chapters in these sections refer to a wide spectrum of minor and major languages such as Basque, Turoyo, Crimean Greek, French, Ukrainian, German, Chinese, Dutch, Hungarian, Albanian, Austrian, Italian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin, Polish, English and Arabic. Many of the contributions in this volume shed light on the historical and current movements of migrants within and between Europe, Asia and America.

The chapters in the first part of the volume mainly concentrate on the role of language policies, translation initiatives and the power of artistic expression in the context of minority languages and multilingualism. They discuss “moving texts” assumed to play a role in social change with regard to strengthening minority languages or disadvantaged communities. In the opening chapter, Naroa Zubillaga discusses the translation from and into Basque, a minority language spoken by about one million people. The chapter focuses specifically on the translation of children’s literature, which is of special importance to the Basque culture in the

context of language promotion and planning. It is not a coincidence that nearly one third of all publications in Basque per annum are books for young readers. Zubillaga's contribution also sheds light on the notions of self-translation, indirect translation, and the translation of expressive language in the context of minority languages. Sebastian Bednarowicz, on the other hand, examines the Neo-Aramaic minority language Turoyo with between 20,000 to 100,000 speakers, predominantly Christians belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church. Bednarowicz demonstrates in his chapter that while the homeland of the Turoyo language is the mountainous massive of Tur Abdin in south-eastern Turkey, it is now the language of immigrants most of whom are bi- and multi-lingual and scattered across Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. The chapter discusses a collaborative translation project initiated by a group of enthusiasts of Turoyo, which involved translating *The Little Prince* with the aim of preventing this language from extinction. In a similar vein, Nataliya Hrytsiv describes the collaborative project of translating culturally significant literary texts from Mariupolitan Greek, a severely endangered language with about 20,000 native speakers inhabiting the Donetsk region and the suburbs of Mariupol, into Ukrainian. The chapter foregrounds the figures of literary translators who aimed at stimulating the development of Mariupolitan Greek literature and strengthening the cultural status of this endangered minority language. The final chapter in this section is Michał Moch's discussion of French and Arabic diaspora hip-hop performers, who make use of this globalized medium of artistic expression in concrete local circumstances in order to describe their immigrant and post-immigrant experience. The analyzed passages, glossed in translation, constitute a fertile ground for comparative, cross-cultural research, reflecting differing perspectives with regard to immigrants' assimilation into European societies, the adaptation of Arab/Islamic values in the Western reality, as well as the current refugee crisis in Europe.

The second part of the volume is primarily concerned with language, translation and migration. Some of the chapters tackle the notion of translation in a broad and metaphorical sense. Translation is not only perceived as linguistic transfer from one language into another, but as a form of linguistic and cultural expression, negotiation and transformation resulting from the tensions between conflicting identities of migrating people, a perspective potentially enlarging the understanding of translation as a new concept. In the opening chapter of this part of the book, Cristina Peligra focuses on the Dutch 'literature of repatriation', that is the literature by Dutch colonial settlers from the East Indies and their descendants. After WWII about 300,000 Dutch settlers and mixed-race people, many of whom were born and raised in the East Indies, today's Indonesia, were repatriated from their tropical 'homeland' to the Netherlands, which for many of them constituted a 'foreign' country and led to violent identity crises. In her chapter, Peligra compares the impact of target cultures on the paratextual elements in the Italian and English translations of the historical novel by Hella Haasse, a displaced, repatriated Dutch writer born in the East Indies. Another displaced writer, Agota Kristof, a Switzerland-based Hungarian author, has become the focus of Magdalena Roguska's chapter. After the suppression of the Hungarian anti-communist uprising

in 1956, Kristof, who was 21 at the time, illegally crossed the border with Austria, which changed her life irrevocably. For some time she lived in a Viennese refugee camp and finally settled in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, which became her new home for the rest of her life. Analyzing Kristof's autobiographical novel *L'Analphabète (The Illiterate)*, Roguska describes the painful and dramatic process of a language shift and an identity crisis in a new cultural milieu. Tiziana Nannavecchia, on the other hand, concentrates on migrant authors of Italian-Canadian literature, a group comprising over one hundred authors in three generations who either experienced migration first-hand or indirectly as descendants of migrating people. Nannavecchia treats translation as an "open concept", which extends beyond the process of linguistic transfer, emphasizing the common denominators of migration and translation, and describing the literary representations of exile, nostalgia, estrangement, search for roots as well as translational, transcultural and translingual identities. In the final chapter in this part of the book, Chloe Fagan describes the attempts of an unnamed Albanian immigrant to integrate into Viennese society in order to become an accepted Austrian citizen, which is the subject of one of the stories written by the Albanian-Austrian author Ilir Ferra. In her contribution, Fagan reflects upon Ferra's criticism of literary migrant discourse, which is often incapable of reflecting the experiences of migrant people, imposing on them an identity which either rejects their difference or exoticizes and excludes them.

The final part of the volume concentrates on texts, concepts and people on the move. Yong Zhong describes how Yan Fu, the father of the translation profession in China, translated for the purpose of bringing about social change in the Chinese Qing Empire, sometimes referred to as the indomitable "Mountain" due to its enduring resistance to the outside world. As Zhong points out, with the elegant language of his translation Yan Fu wanted to emotionally and aesthetically "move" the pillars to the Qing Empire, that is the literate Chinese elite hostile to Western influences, in order to, in effect, move the "Mountain". Discussing the problems that she encountered in her translation of Peter Ackroyd's *The Death of King Arthur*, a modernized version of Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Dorota Gutfeld offers in her chapter a relatively rare insight into the literary translator's decision-making process. Gutfeld describes her translation commission as a complex process of negotiating between, effectively, two different source texts, several potential target readerships, as well as various professional players involved in the publication process, demonstrating which layers of the original text(s) were eventually prioritized in translation. Sabina Folnović Jaitner, on the other hand, focuses on the difficulties encountered in the translation of philosophical texts, dealing with the translation from a major language such as German, which holds a central position in Western philosophy, into Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin. By examining how the concept of *Dasein* was rendered in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin translations of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, Folnović reflects upon the impact of concrete translation decisions on the reception of Heidegger's thought in this language area. Finally, Michał Borodo concentrates on selected twentieth century children's literature authors, translators and publishers who emigrated from Eastern Europe to Britain and

America. He discusses the case of Stefan and Franciszka Themerson, Polish authors of innovative children's books, who migrated from Warsaw through Paris to London, where they established the avant-garde publishing house Gaberbocchus, as well as Edith and Sidney Sulkin, who created the first English-language translation of the Polish children's classic *Król Maciuś Pierwszy* (*King Matt the First*). The latter, by the way, was published in New York by Roy Publishers, an American publishing house also established by a migrant from Eastern Europe.