

Institution: University of East Anglia		
Unit of Assessment: 27 - English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: The Translator as Creative Writer: Transforming the Training, Professional Practice, and Public Status of Literary Translators		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Between 2006 and 2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Clive Scott Jean Boase-Beier Cecilia Rossi	Emeritus Professor Emerita Professor Senior Lecturer	1967 to present 1991 to 2015 2006 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Between 1 st Aug 2013 and 31 st July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>UEA's British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) has been instrumental in transforming the role of the literary translator from that of linguistic technician to creative writer who is publicly recognised by literary prizes such as the Man Booker International. An innovative model of translator training developed by researchers at the BCLT transforms participants' understanding of their role, emphasising the development of creative writing skills and a distinct professional identity. The model has achieved a global reach through collaboration with international cultural organisations, BCLT training events in countries from China to Mexico, and the publicly funded European framework for literary translator training, PETRA-E. The BCLT training programme and Emerging Translator Mentorships, delivered in partnership with the National Centre for Writing (NCW), have led directly to the publication of newly translated novels, poetry, and non-fiction by highly regarded publishers, increasing readerships for world literatures.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) was founded by W.G. Sebald in 1989 to combat a widespread lack of recognition for literary translation as a distinctive intellectual activity and professional practice. BCLT researchers identified a lack of training opportunities for literary translators as a major barrier to the publication of translated literature. This neglect was the result of translators' marginal academic and professional status, which has limited reflection on the specific knowledge and creative skills that literary translation requires. Cecilia Rossi has built on a history of research at UEA by Clive Scott and Jean Boase-Beier that addresses this situation, generating new insight into the writing processes and professional competences of the literary translator.</p> <p>Scott and Boase-Beier focus new attention on the translator's 'creative interference' (3.2, p. 53) in the translation process. For Boase-Beier, the translator's initial reading of the source text 'is itself a creative act' (3.2, p. 53), an activity that Scott views from a phenomenological perspective as an 'ongoing psycho-physiological, psycho-perceptual relationship' (3.3, 3.4 & 3.1, p. 34). Between 2015 and 2018, Rossi has made significant advances on this research, shifting attention from the translator as reader to the translator as writer. Drawing on authors' and translators' accounts of their practice (3.5), she interrogates the roles of creativity and subjectivity in the translator's production of language, generating new understanding of the mental activities that inform language choice in translation: memories of past experience and reading, empathy, imagination, and problem-solving (3.5 & 3.6).</p> <p>The BCLT created the first ever UK literary translation Summer School in 2000, which continues to be a leader in the development of innovative research-based training. Since 2015, as BCLT Postgraduate and Professional Liaison (2012 –) and Interim Director (2018), Rossi has applied her research insights into translation process to create a new programme of literary translator training at the Summer School. She has addressed two obstacles that prevent aspiring literary</p>		

translators from publishing their work: a lack of confidence in writing skills; and a lack of knowledge about how to advocate for those skills in a professional environment. Rossi introduced creative writing workshops to the Summer School in 2015 (3.6, pp. 50 & 53) in which participants are presented with a source text in English and then invited to analyse its verbal construction before writing their own text in response to it. These workshops focus on 'the dynamics of text-making', fostering understanding of the translator's practice as a form of creative problem-solving rather than as linguistic replication of a prior source (3.6, pp. 53 & 50). Since 2012, Rossi has also devised editing workshops that provide experience of a professional scenario where translation decisions must be articulated, defended, and negotiated.

3. References to the research

- 3.1** 'Translation and the Spaces of Reading',
Clive Scott, in *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies*, ed. by Manuela Perteghella and Eugenia Loffredo (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 33-46. ISBN: 9780826487933
- 3.2** *A Critical Introduction to Translation Studies*
Jean Boase-Beier
(London: Continuum, 2011) ISBN: 9780826435255
- 3.3** *Literary Translation and the Rediscovery of Reading*
Clive Scott
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) ISBN: 978-1107022300
- 3.4** *Translating the Perception of Text: Literary Translation and Phenomenology*
Clive Scott
(London: Legenda, 2012). ISBN: 9781907975356
- 3.5** 'Translation as a Creative Force',
Cecilia Rossi, in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Culture*, ed. by Su-Ann Harding and Ovidi Carbonell Cortés (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 381-397. ISBN: 9781138946309
- 3.6** 'Literary Translation and Disciplinary Boundaries: Creative Writing and Interdisciplinarity',
Cecilia Rossi, in *The Routledge Handbook of Literary Translation*, ed. by Kelly Washbourne and Ben Van Wyke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 42-57. ISBN: 9781138699298

4. Details of the impact

Transforming Professional Literary Translation

The BCLT model of translator training has transformed understanding of the translator's role from that of linguistic technician to creative writer, leading to impacts on professional practice in the UK and across the world, the publishing industry, the public status of literary translators, and readerships for translated literature.

1) UK Impact of the BCLT Translator Training Model

a. BCLT Summer School:

Since 2015, the BCLT International Literary Translation and Creative Writing Summer School has attracted 376 attendees translating from 17 different languages, producing impacts on translation practice, professional translation careers, and publishing outcomes. It has received funding totalling GBP185,494 from the National Centre for Writing and 15 international partners (5.1).

In a survey of participants from between 2015 and 2019 (115 responses; 5.1), 87% stated that the Summer School had been important or very important for their literary translation work. Rossi's research presents the creative writer as a paradigm for the professional literary translator. She has applied this understanding to a training programme at the BCLT that addresses two core requirements for a successful career in literary translation: a practice that incorporates creative writing skills, and an ability to participate in professional networks. The majority of the respondents stated that Rossi's workshop programme had produced impact on their writing practice, enhancing

their editing skills and transforming the ways that they think about creativity in translation: 'It was a huge inspiration for me to come to understanding of translation as creative writing', according to one (5.1). Rossi's creative writing workshops enabled participants to 'better understand' their 'own personal style of writing', to allow themselves 'greater freedom', and to 'think like a creative writer – something that is more and more essential to the development of the translator's craft' (5.1 & 5.2).

Participation in professional networks provides vital support for translators to promote their writing practice in the literary marketplace. The BCLT training model has led to increased confidence and a sense of professional identity, with 84% of participants stating that the Summer School had helped them to feel part of a community of translators (5.1). This sense of community has a continuing impact: 91% have stayed in touch with their cohort, creating what they describe as a 'support network' for advice, professional collaboration, and access to commissions (5.1). [REDACTED], Co-Chair UK Translators Association and winner of the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize 2017, describes the Summer School as 'the springboard for my career as a literary translator' (5.3, p. 7).

b. Emerging Translator Mentorship Scheme:

In response to the beneficial professional impact of the community produced by the Summer School, the BCLT created a mentorship programme in 2010 to formalise support networks for translators. Managed by NCW from 2016, the Emerging Translator Mentorship Scheme pairs early career translators with professionally established practitioners. Since 2016, the scheme has overseen 35 mentorships translating from 18 languages. In a survey of mentees from between 2010 and 2020 (36 responses; 5.1), 100% said the scheme had benefitted their translation work, 97% said it had improved their confidence, and 91.6% credited the scheme with developing their professional identity while it had helped 83% to develop networks as literary translators. As a direct result of participation, 78% of mentees have had translations published or have received commissions since 2014.

The scheme was described as 'invaluable in opening doors and being taken more seriously by bigger players', such as agents, publishers, and cultural organisations. For one mentee, 'The mentorship program laid the foundation of my literary translation career. I would not be a professional literary translator today without it.' For another, 'Three years since the programme, I have published three book-length translations and have five contracts in the pipeline, along with a portfolio of shorter translated works' (5.1).

[REDACTED] (CEO, National Centre for Writing) states that the Summer School and Mentorship Scheme are 'national exemplars of good practice and have spawned copies from other places and institutions, including Literary Translation Summer Schools at Warwick University, City University (London) and Bristol University. The American Literary Translation Association (ALTA) has also used the model to develop provision for translators in the US' (5.4). Collaboration between the BCLT and NCW on these projects has generated 'artistic and financial benefit' for NCW and 'brought new work to readers and increased the diversity of the UK publishing market' (5.4).

c. Publishing Outcomes and Prizes:

The Summer School and mentorships lead directly to publishing outcomes, greater visibility for literary translators, and increased representation in prize culture. Participants attribute 49 book-length translations with publishers such as Vintage, Hodder and Stoughton, Quercus, MacLehose, Arc, Scribe, and Pushkin Press to their involvement in these training schemes between 2015 and 2019. Susan Harris, editorial director of the international literary magazine *Words Without Borders*, states that the BCLT Summer School and translation mentorships have 'produced dozens of qualified translators, from whom we've commissioned pieces in numerous languages' (5.3, p. 25).

[REDACTED] (Translator, International Booker Judge 2017, former BCLT director, OBE) reports that in the past two years, four graduates of BCLT programmes have been shortlisted for the Translators Association First Translation Prize (2019 – 20), two for the U.S. National Book Awards (2020), and two for the International Booker (2019) (5.4). A further two were shortlisted for the

Vondel Translation Prize (2020). Hahn states that ‘given the scale of the Anglophone publishing industry, the impact of BCLT [...] on the translators that work in that industry is remarkable’ (5.4).

2) International Impact of the BCLT Translator Training Model

a. *Collaboration with Cultural Organisations:*

Since 2015, the BCLT has extended the international reach of its programme, addressing the lack of specialist literary translator training in countries that are underrepresented in the global literary market. Cultural institutes in Japan, Korea, Argentina, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have drawn on BCLT expertise to discover new translators, improve translation quality, and create networks, building capacity for the more extensive production of translation (5.5). They have funded translation workshops at the Summer School, placed translators in the ‘Training the Trainer’ workshops, which Rossi organised from 2018 to disseminate the BCLT model of literary translator training, and have held events in their home countries under the BCLT’s guidance (5.5 & 5.6). Since 2014, the BCLT has also held further training events in China, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Brazil, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Georgia, Germany, and Mexico.

These collaborations have had a direct impact on the creation of translation infrastructure outside the UK. [REDACTED] states that when she first attended the BCLT Summer School in 2011, ‘In Argentina or Latin America there was no further training of any sort for literary translators’ (5.3, p. 12). She organised the *Lenguas Vivas / AATI Autumn School of Literary Translation* in Buenos Aires in 2015, based on ‘the core of the BCLT Summer School’ (5.3, p. 13), which has led in turn to the creation of a *Literary Translation and Translator’s Copyright Committee*, which protects translators’ rights, promotes their visibility, and offers further training and networking opportunities (5.5). [REDACTED] invited Rossi to run workshops on the translation of cultural memory between 2017 and 2019 in order to bring Rossi’s ‘input into crafting literary translation as creative writing’ to the Autumn School’s programme (5.3, p. 13). According to [REDACTED], the BCLT ‘has had an impact not only on the literary translator’s own practice, but also in the way translation is taught in Argentina’ (5.5).

According to [REDACTED] (International Network Team, Nippon Foundation), collaboration with the BCLT has created ‘a positive stimulus to the existing system of the translated publication industry in Japan’ (5.5). Cultural organisations have named 17 publications that have arisen from their work with the BCLT, involving highly regarded publishers that include Granta, Pushkin Press, Norvik Press, and Vagabond Voices. These publications offer a vital means of delivering their mission to increase international recognition of their respective cultures (5.5).

b. *Creativity in the European Framework for Literary Translator Training - PETRA-E:*

The focus of Rossi’s training model on translator creativity has been incorporated in the European PETRA-E framework for the education and training of literary translators, produced by a consortium of eight European institutions in 2016 and funded under Erasmus+ (5.7). PETRA-E draws together diverse academic and non-academic approaches to translation teaching, providing a systematic map for use by instructors and practitioners of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that make up the competences required by the literary translator at different stages of her career. The consortium sought Rossi’s expertise as both academic researcher and organiser of the BCLT’s training programme, her presentations in Budapest (16 – 17 October 2015) and Antwerp (21 January 2016) establishing ‘literary creativity’ as one of the framework’s key competences, defined as the ‘ability to find solutions and make choices beyond learned procedures and methods’ (5.7).

Peter Constantine (Director of the Program in Literary Translation, University of Connecticut) credits the framework as an innovative measure ‘to professionalize literary translation pedagogy’ that is yet to be matched in the United States (5.9). The framework has been adopted by 20 organisations worldwide, shaping international translation practice. Initiatives at the University of Salamanca to test the framework’s applicability found that students valued creativity as an important competence, which provided a means of approaching and assessing the translation of complex literary effects (5.8, p. 40; pp. 91-2). [REDACTED] (Ussher Assistant Professor in Literary Translation) states that the framework was the inspiration for his re-working of the MPhil in Translation at Trinity College Dublin, which led to the award of Grad Ireland’s *Postgraduate*

Course of the Year for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 2020 (5.4). ████████ has ensured that 'creativity runs throughout the course', an emphasis on Rossi's contribution to the framework that has encouraged translation companies, publishing companies, and translation-related agencies to work with his students (5.4).

The Landscape of Translated Literature Transformed

The BCLT's programmes have generated far-reaching impact on the production, recognition, and reception of translated literature. [Research commissioned by the Man Booker International Prize](#) found that UK sales of translated fiction grew by 5.5% to a total value of GBP20,700,000 in 2018. Citing this research, ████████ (Editor at Large: Fiction, MacLehose Press, OBE), states that 'BCLT has played its part in both creating a desire to read more widely and supplying the translators who enable it'. 'As a result of BCLT's work', he concludes, 'I would confidently say that the quantity and quality of translators in the UK has increased significantly in the last 20 years, and further that by empowering translators, who go on to champion their enthusiasms [...] BCLT has contributed to the recent strong interest among British readers for translated fiction' (5.4).

One of the most visible public manifestations of this increased interest is the Man Booker International Prize, which is shared equally between writer and translator. ████████ (Booker International Prize Judge 2021, former UEA Reader) affirms that 'the BCLT was - as the administrators of the Booker International acknowledge - one of the important stakeholders in the foundation of the prize' and that 'the status of translators has risen accordingly' (5.4).

For ████████, the BCLT has played a decisive role in the recent growth of the translation industry, leading to increased public recognition of literary translators as a professional body: 'The landscape of translated literature and the translation profession have been greatly transformed in recent years – publishers are publishing more translations, translated books are selling better, and, most dramatically to my mind, translators themselves have become more professionalised, better trained, more visible and more seriously appreciated.' ████████ concludes that 'every part of these changes has been at least partly a result of things that have happened at BCLT' (5.4).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Summer School and Emerging Translator Mentorship Scheme Surveys and Data.
- 5.2 Cecilia Rossi, 'In Our Own Words', *ITI Bulletin* (March-April 2020), 15-16.
- 5.3 *My BCLT: Celebrating 30 years of the British Centre for Literary Translation*, ed. by Duncan Large, Anna Goode and Johanne Elster Hanson (Norwich: BCLT, 2020).
- 5.4 BCLT Testimonials.
- 5.5 Cultural Organisations Questionnaire.
- 5.6 Contemporary Japanese Writing Impact Study: Final Evaluation Report (2017).
- 5.7 PETRA-E Framework of Reference for the Education and Training of Literary Translators (2016).
- 5.8 Carlos Fortea, ed., *El viaje de la literatura: Aportaciones a una didáctica de la traducción literaria* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2018).
- 5.9 Peter Constantine, 'Literary Translation Pedagogy in the United States: New Trends', *Translation Review*, 106.1 (2020), 10-14. DOI: 10.1080/07374836.2019.162583.