

Boase-Beier, Jean (2006). *Stylistic approaches to translation. Translation Theories Explored*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing, pp. viii, 176, £19.50. ISBN 1-900650-98-3

This is volume 10 in the series *Translation theories explored* whose aim it is to provide a comprehensive and accessible explanation and critical assessment of innovative theories in their intellectual and historical context, illustrating key ideas with examples and case studies. Boase-Beier's discussion of style achieves these aims admirably. Although she is primarily concerned with literary translation and how cognitive approaches to stylistics can "help us understand more about what style is, what its effects are, how it works and how it becomes transformed in the translation process" (147), she also brings in examples from non-literary texts and considers how different stylistic figures function in them.

More importantly, Boase-Beier is concerned throughout with the question of what defines literary texts and translation from their non-literary counterparts. Her distinction is a cognitive one, drawing on Relevance theory: in non-literary texts, the reader operates on the mini-max principle, that is s/he invests the minimal effort required to produce maximum meaning. In literary texts, on the other hand, the reader operates according to a max-max principle where maximum effort is expended to produce maximum meaning; the more effort the text's stylistics figures require from the reader in untangling them, the more pleasure s/he experiences. In other words, in literary texts, the search for ambiguous or even contradictory meanings is the main function of the text, producing a cognitive state in the reader which mimics the textual indeterminacy and allows them to hold multiple meanings in their mind. Boase-Beier links the development of style, stylistics and finally cognitive stylistics to formalism, structuralism and post-structuralism, reader response and relevance theories, tracing through them fundamental questions such as the relationship of universality to cultural particularity, how we define meaning and where it is located (in the text or constructed by the reader), the role and nature of the author and authorial intention and the role of agency in the act of reading to explore how they shape our understanding of translation and the translator.

The theoretical concepts in their different contexts and backgrounds are explained primarily in chapters 1 – 3 but despite Boase-Beier's gift for lucid explanation, supported by helpful summaries and cross-references throughout the book, and the very welcome summary lists of questions or aspects relevant for a particular topic, this is dense reading.

Chapter 1 looks at historical understandings of style, how different definitions developed over time, and how studies of style relate to and impact on translation. A fundamental feature of style has always been that it involves choice and as such it is seen to reflect a writer's characteristic

form of expression and attitude, his/her thumb print or mind style. Chapter 2 further develops the link to translation, focusing on the style of the ST and, using reader-response theories, how it is interpreted by the reader. What is the impact of style on the reader and does the translator read differently when reading for translation? Literary texts are written for open-ended meaning. Reading is seen as a dynamic, open-ended process, where the translator as reader constructs the meaning of the ST and co-produces the meaning of the TT, which is then, in turn, constructed by the TT reader. Chapter 3 turns to the TT and translational choices, discussing the constraints and influences which shape the translator's recreation of the ST style. Three aspects of style are particularly important for translation: its "formal, linguistic characteristics, its contribution to what the text means, and the interplay between universal stylistic possibilities (such as metaphor or ambiguity) and those rooted in a particular language ... or culture." (58) Such stylistic figures create implicatures which the reader needs to interpret, using communicative clues which point towards possible meanings but do not determine them. What is important in the translation of style is that implicatures are preserved so that the reader of the TT has an interactive engagement with the text in the search for meanings and is exposed to a similar cognitive state. Chapter 4 and 5 focus on cognitive stylistics and how individual figures such as semantic and structural ambiguity, textual gaps, foregrounding, metaphor and iconicity (where the linguistic form echoes the meaning) function to produce particular cognitive states, such as the five levels of uncertainty which Boase-Beier identifies in a short poem by von Törne and which the reader holds in their mind, more or less simultaneously. It is this mind-altering quality of literature which the translator must preserve and aim to create in the TT, and it is the knowledge of theory, of stylistic possibilities and devices which allow such a stylistically aware translator to recognise particular effects and recreate them.

Any review is necessarily reductive but this is particularly so in the case of a rich and rewarding book of such breadth and scope. I can only recommend reading it to appreciate the full impact of its wide-ranging consideration of theory and illuminating analysis of examples.

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