

BAAHE 2024 CONFERENCE

(TRANS)PORTABLE: ENGLISH IN THE WORLD



13 DECEMBER 2024

Hoek 38 | Leuvenseweg 38 | 1000 Brussels

CONTENTS

CONFERENCE THEME	3
PROGRAMME	4
KEYNOTE LECTURES	6
ABSTRACTS & SPEAKERS	8
ORGANISING COMMITTEE	27

CONFERENCE THEME

The 2024 edition of BAAHE explores the portability, or transportability, of the English language and its historical and contemporary manifestations in a broad range of socio-political, literary, cultural and educational contexts. As (trans)portable good, it is both charged and charge, subject and object. Undeniably, the English language and the culture it references historically and in the present day is a composite object that has expanded through myriad additions and alterations, so that scholars have come to speak of “Englishes” in the plural and accordingly have developed a pluralised conception of the “cultures” and “literatures” of the English-speaking world. The term “(trans)portable” signals a range of dimensions: as transportable good, English has frequently become an instrument of large-scale expansionist projects and of political oppression; as portable entity it has served as convenience, as a home from home for the exile, as a welcome place of refuge, or as a vehicle of access. English has been imported and exported, carried in a range of containers (textual, aural, multimedial) and by a multitude of individuals and groups. The flexibility and malleability gained through these acts of travelling is evidenced in a multitude of sociolects, regional variants, English-based Pidgins and Creoles, which are employed in everyday parlance as well as in canonised literary and dramatic works.

As colonial language beyond the heydays of the British Empire, as lingua franca and international globalised language, English continues to convey not only governmental and administrative structures in many places but also ideologies and epistemologies, thus raising questions about the ways in which it functions as a mobile scaffolding for certain ideas “we live by” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) or even serves as a framework for a “whole way of life” (Williams 1960). Kenyan writer and language critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has eloquently drawn attention to the impact of language as a problematic carrier of concepts and knowledge that can be as liberating as it can be oppressive. Especially in postcolonial contexts in the latter half of the 20th century, claiming ownership of the language and the liberty to adapt it as “nation language” became a powerful strategy in emancipatory movements (Brathwaite 1984), for politicians and literary creators alike. And yet, some writers have expressed ambivalence about the hegemonic status of the language that had to be mastered, loved even, for lack of access to a different, a lost, tongue (Derek Walcott, James Baldwin). Yet others, from Joseph Conrad to Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi or Petina Gappah, have creatively embraced English as a second language and some have invigorated it with their (m)other tongues, finding themselves in diverse states of translation while doing so (cf. Walkowitz 2015).

The ubiquity and dominance of English as the world’s only “hypercentral” language (De Swaan 2001) has profound repercussions on the way the language is learnt, used, taught, planned, experienced, and imagined across the globe. In the realm of language education, the (trans)portability of English prompts inquiries into issues of ownership, native-speakerism, and accuracy norms. It invites us to look at the creativity, adaptability, and negotiation of meaning among its multilingual learners/users. At the societal level, English language proficiency informs inclusion and exclusion at both ends of the global production chain, easing or complicating the process of acculturation and integration for international migrants. For if the (trans)portability of English disrupts conventional notions of language as foundational to the nation state, it also prompts questions about the language as a conduit for integration and sense of belonging within communities both real and imagined. Does the portability of the language render it culture-free, and as such resistant to emotional identification? Or does the global status and hegemony of English in our current postcolonial world make it an ideal canvas for learners/users onto which to project their desire for self-actualisation (Kramsch 2009), creativity, and imagination? The resulting tensions between liberation and control must be navigated by English language learners, users, educators and translators alike.

Anglicists at VUB, its Faculty of Languages and Humanities and its research groups: BLCS and CLIC, are happy to welcome speakers and participants of the 2024 BAAHE edition in Brussels and wish everyone a wonderful conference experience!

PROGRAMME

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 **Opening / Welcome**
Alex Housen, Dean Faculty of Languages and Humanities, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Bernard de Clerck, Director of the Belgian Association of Anglicists in Higher Education
Julie Deconinck & Eva Ulrike Pirker, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- 9:30 **Keynote**
Christian Mair
Global English for a Multilingual World
Chair: Jianwei Xu
- 10:30 **Coffee break**
- 11:00 **Parallel Panels A**
- A1: A TRAVELLING MEDIUM ACROSS REALMS AND EMPIRES: ENGLISH WRITING BEFORE 1900**
Chair: Maria Pace Aquilina
- Paul Arblaster*
Richard Verstegan's Response to the Tudor Myth of British Empire
Eloise Forestier
English as a Transcultural Language: Feminist Strategies in the Translation of *Hertha* (1856)
Marjolein Goethals & Maxime Honinx
'Beyond the Great Archway': Liminal Spaces in Lucy Atkinson's *Recollections of Tartar Steppes and their Inhabitants* (1863)
- A2: TRANSLATING SELVES/OTHERS: ENGLISH AS IMPOSITION OR POSSIBILITY (I)**
Chair: *Bénédicte Ledent*
- Dina Batii*
Virginia Woolf's English and its (Un)translatability into Russian
Sarah Voke
Etel Adnan: A Poetic Voice Constituted by Multitudes
Ceydanur Temurok
'I [...] Wore my English like a Mask' – English as an Ambivalent World of Possibilities in Post-Migrant Narratives: A Study of Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*
- A3: LANGUAGE CONTACT, VARIETY AND CHANGE: TRANSPORTABLE & TRANSPORTED ENGLISH**
Chair: *Ellen Simon*
- Yasmin Crombez*
American Flemish? A Mixed-Method Approach to the Dynamics between English and Belgian Dutch in 19th and 20th Century North America
Gil Verbeke, Holger Mitterer, Paola Escudero & Ellen Simon
Perceiving Vowel Variation in Regional Accents of English: Evidence from Dutch-speaking English as Foreign Language Learners
Chloe Ostiguy
The Perception of Irish Englishes for L1 and L2 Listeners
- 12:30 **Lunch break / BAAHE Assembly**

14:00 **BAAHE Thesis Award Ceremony**

14:30 **Parallel Panels B**

B1: ENGLISH OF THE 'MARGINS' AND IMMIGRATION: POSTCOLONIAL REWRITINGS – DECOLONIAL STRATEGIES

Chair: Jessica Maufort

Yanrong Wang

Black Aesthetics in Anglophone Writing: Austin Clarke's *They Never Told Me*

Isabella Villanova

Coming of Age and Migration in Twenty-first-Century Afrosporic Fiction

Carmijn Gerritsen

Decolonial and Literary Experiments in the Margins: (Re)presenting Black Britishness, Displacement and Self-Reflexivity in Momtaza Mehri's *Bad Diaspora Poems* (2023)

B2: TRANSLATING SELVES/OTHERS: ENGLISH AS IMPOSITION OR POSSIBILITY (II)

Chair: Birgit Van Puymbroeck

Delphine Munos

Jhumpa Lahiri's Bengali/English/Italian Triangle: Exposing the Prosthesis of Origin

Chiara Arcadio

Transparent Foreignisation: Aboulela's Literary Practice in *The Translator*

Izabella Wodzka

'Be Careful with your Accent'- Eastern European Migrants in British Cinema

B3: TRANSPORTING ENGLISH (CULTURE) ACROSS NEW MEDIA & TECHNOLOGIES

Chair: Ludovic De Cuypere

Lobke Ghesquière & Faye Troughton

What a Subtitle!: A Contrastive and Parallel Study of English, French and Dutch Exclamatives using OpenSubtitles 2018 data

Alexandra Sanchez

Transporting English Diversity: Colour-Conscious Casting in the Audio Descriptions of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*

Donata Lisaitė & Evelina Jaleniauskiė

Donata Lisaitė & Evelina Jaleniauskiė

English Writing Tasks in the Light of Artificial Intelligence: The Status Quo in Higher-Education Settings, 2023-2024

16:00 **Coffee break**

16:30 **Keynote**

Madhu Krishnan

(Trans)portability, Literary Networks and Infrastructure in the World Republic of Letters

Chair: Elisabeth Bekers

17:30-18:00 **Closing panel**



The programme at a glance:

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Lars Eckstein
University of Potsdam

Of Being Transported by Hone Tuwhare: Toward a Sentient Navigation of Anglophone Poetry

This paper sets out to rethink the ontology of literature, using Aotearoa New Zealander poet Hone Tuwhare's classic anti-nuclear poem "No Ordinary Sun" (1959/1964) as a case study. It starts from the premise that the received academic models for studying poetry often fail to offer a critical language that does justice to the complex life worlds inhabited by many poets and the socio- and ecopolitics of their art, especially in postcolonial contexts.

This is not only a problem of (the portability of) language – in Tuwhare's case, of his poetic English that does not always easily translate Māori or, more generally, Pacific Islander ways of being in and relating to the world. I argue that there is also something amiss in the ways many of us read (and teach) poetry in the Western academy, in the sense that the objectification and (neo)formalist dissection of literatures of the world can be very violent. My suggestion is to instead reconceptualise poetry – whether printed or performed – as events that may be investigated for the assemblages they potentially sustain and create, between and across human, yet also non-human and more-than-human presences. In the context of Oceanian poetry in particular, one starting point for such a project is to model the ways in which we read literature on the conceptual frameworks which allowed Polynesian navigators to transport people, goods and value across the Pacific Ocean, long before Europeans could.

Prof. Dr. Lars Eckstein received his PhD (2004) and 'Habilitation' (2008) from the University of Tübingen. Since 2009 he has lived in Berlin and has been Chair of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at the University of Potsdam. He has published widely, primarily in postcolonial literary and cultural studies. He is spokesperson of the Research Training Group minor cosmopolitanisms, a programme focussing on PhD training conducted in close collaboration with partners in South Africa, India, Australia and North America. From 2025, he will be part of a new Research Unit funded by the German Research Foundation, running a project on Oceanian Poetic Collaborations. His main research project over the past ten years or so has focussed on the figure of Tupaia, a Polynesian master navigator who joined the crew of Captain James Cook on his first voyage to Oceania.



Christian Mair (University of Freiburg)

Global English for a Multilingual World

In the course of the late 20th century, English developed from one of several competing world languages into the single dominant global language. The resulting unipolar World Language System (de Swaan) is taken for granted in a wide range of communicative domains – from the finance sector to global discourse on climate change and human rights – and we often tend to forget how recent this historically new and unique constellation actually is. In my talk, I will explore two challenges posed by global English in the 21st century.

1. The *global-language paradox*: English is a global language because it serves a multilingual world. In contrast to other world languages, such as Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, non-native users represent the largest group of habitual speakers in the case of English. In a world dominated by English, two groups of people are therefore in danger of being left behind: those who have no access to English, and those who remain monolingual in English.
2. The *standardisation paradox*: Global English is becoming more homogeneous and more heterogeneous at the same time.

By and large current models of World English assume a gradually expanding pluricentric constellation in which two global reference standards (BrE and AmE) are being complemented by more and more emerging national standard varieties. I will argue that this narrative of postcolonial emancipation is in need of revision because it does not account for the boom in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), currently clearly the most important booster in the spread of English, and the increasing presence of selected nonstandard varieties in public discourse. Moreover, both standardisation and de-standardisation are no longer exclusively promoted by human agents, but partly outsourced to technologies and algorithms. On the one hand, language technologies, from simple grammar checkers to Large Language Models, promote further homogenisation and standardisation, usually along American English norms. On the other hand, they also facilitate diversification, giving public visibility to selected nonstandard varieties, especially if they happen to be associated with pop-cultural or subcultural trends. This standardisation paradox will be illustrated by the fact that Standard British English is being superseded by American English online (and to some extent even offline), whereas varieties such as African American English, Jamaican Creole or Nigerian Pidgin seem to be doing comparatively well in cyberspace.

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Christian Mair obtained his PhD and ‘Habilitation’ at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and was appointed to a Chair in English Linguistics at the University of Freiburg in Germany in 1990. His research has focused on the corpus-based description of Modern English grammar and on variability and change in Standard Englishes world-wide. Mair’s current research focusses on the role of global English in a multilingual world, on multilingual and nonstandard language practices in computer-mediated communication, and on the sociolinguistics of diaspora and migration, where he is advocating the use of corpora and digital tools to complement existing approaches.

PARALLEL PANELS

A1: A TRAVELLING MEDIUM ACROSS REALMS AND EMPIRES: ENGLISH WRITING BEFORE 1900

Richard Verstegan's Response to the Tudor Myth of British Empire

Paul Arblaster

(UC Louvain)

The myth of an Arthurian “British Empire” in early medieval Europe was one of the ideological and rhetorical underpinnings of the imperial theme in late-Tudor propaganda, as voiced by such influential figures as the mage, John Dee and the geographer, Richard Hakluyt. The first serious historical challenge to this myth came from Antwerp’s Richard Verstegan; a Londoner of Dutch ancestry who had become a religious refugee in the Low Countries in the 1580s. In exile, he became a prolific author in both English and Dutch. He was an early proponent of the view that both English and Dutch were offshoots of a Proto-Germanic language that he named the ‘old Teutonic tongue’. His first developed statement of this theory was in *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities* (1605), later reworked in his *Nederlandtsche Antiquiteyten* (1613). This was central to his rewriting of early British history, in which he made the English not descendants of the Trojan Brutus and heirs to an Arthurian British Empire, but of a population of migrants from Continental Europe. Far from being an island people set apart, the majority population of Britain shared common ancestry, and in essence a common language, with their European neighbours in the Low Countries, Germany, Scandinavia and Normandy.

In recent years the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ has become controversial — particularly in the United States — for its association with the imperial rhetoric of nineteenth-century British colonialism and American expansionism, as well as its continued racially-coded use by figures on the far right of American politics. In 2019 this prompted the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists to change its name to the International Society for the Study of Early Medieval England. Furthermore, in May 2024 Cambridge University Press rebranded the journal *Anglo-Saxon England* under the title *Early Medieval England and its Neighbours*. Ironically, while ‘Anglo-Saxon’ did undoubtedly come to carry racist and imperialist overtones in the nineteenth century, its first modern conceptualisation as ‘English-Saxon’ in the writings of Richard Verstegan was intended to weaken — and not advance — the late Tudor conceptualisation of Empire as an inheritance from mythic British forebears, Brutus and King Arthur.

Dr. Paul Arblaster teaches courses on English, translation, and the cultures of the English-speaking world at the Marie Haps Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, UCLouvain Saint-Louis Brussels, and the Louvain School of Translation and Interpreting. His doctorate at Oxford University was on seventeenth-century journalism from Antwerp and Brussels in comparative European perspective. He has published on different aspects of early-modern translation, communication, exile and martyrdom, primarily in England and the Low Countries.

English as a Transcultural Language: Feminist Strategies in the Translation of *Hertha* (1856)

Eloise Forestier

(University of Ghent)

In this paper, Eloise offers to reassess Mary Howitt's (1799-1888) English translation of the feminist novel, *Hertha* (1856) by Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer (1801-1865). Based on a study of the correspondence of Bremer and Howitt and a close reading of both the Swedish and English text, Eloise's research distinguishes itself from scholarship on *Hertha's* translation by looking at the text from an Anglophone perspective and arguing that Bremer and Howitt's collaborative translation is an early practice of feminist translation. This is a rather bold claim. The study of women's movements, transnationalism, and translation in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century usually focuses on meetings, travel, and general interconnectedness rather than feminist activism in translation. Feminist translation was first theorised in Francophone Canada in the 1980s (Von Flotow 1991 & 1997; Simon 1996). It refers to an active practice of reinscribing femininity in language. It also points back to earlier examples of how gender has been translated in already published books. Luise von Flotow identifies four feminist strategies: supplementing, prefacing, footnoting, and hijacking (von Flotow 1991). In contrast to late twentieth century practices of feminist translation, Bremer and Howitt did not endeavour to make gender matter but focused rather on the advancement of women's rights. With this distinction in mind, von Flotow's three first strategies will serve as a methodology for my exploration of the text.

This paper is inspired by the first chapter of Eloise's forthcoming monograph, in which she shows how Bremer and Howitt were part of the early women's movement and worked collaboratively on *Hertha* to convey a feminist message across borders and languages. In line with current translation scholarship, Eloise's argues that Howitt's English translation of Bremer's text is not a mere reproduction of the source language (Swedish) but a creative re-writing of meaning (Batchelor 2007) in another cultural context. In her presentation, she takes this analysis a step further by looking at the translated text through the lens of Feminist Translation. This proposal is the starting point of a project on Anglo-Swedish translation partnerships that seeks to broaden the field of Feminist Translation Studies, which focuses almost exclusively on post 1945 practices.

Dr. Eloise Forestier obtained her PhD in 2020 at Ghent University. She is currently an FWO postdoctoral researcher at the same university. Her project focuses on the study of Swedish periodicals of the late 19C and traces the British and French roots of Swedish feminism. She also specialises in British and Scandinavian literature and periodical studies in the long 19C. She has published several articles on women editors from Britain, France, and Sweden. Her first monograph, *Transnational Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Swedish Literature and Periodical Culture: Entangled Dreams and Cross-Cultural Encounters* has been published in September 2024 (Brill). Eloise is also part of the editorial team of *JEPS* (Journal for European Periodical Studies) and is currently guest editing a Special Issue for *DiGeSt* (Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies) based on the 2023 conference *Feminism(s) in the Media (Ghent)*.

“Beyond the Great Archway”: Liminal Spaces in Lucy Atkinson’s *Recollections of Tartar Steppes and their Inhabitants* (1863)

Maxime Honinx & Marjolein Goethals

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Little research has been done on Lucy Atkinson’s travel writing, and if so, has almost always treated her *Recollections of Tartar Steppes and their Inhabitants* as an accessory to her husband’s accounts of the same travels. Moreover, most existing research has been ‘a compendium of factual information’ (Offord 5), attempting to reconstruct Thomas and Lucy Atkinson’s life and travels, notably in Nick Fielding’s studies (including his and Marianne Simpson’s introduction to *Recollections*), as well as by other researchers (Stewart, McVicker 10-12). Explorations within Siberian Studies, on the other hand, have tried to investigate British encounters with Russia in Atkinson’s writing to pinpoint cultural relations between the two nations (Collins 43-68, Cross 245-255). Consequently, multiple aspects of her travelogue have not yet been studied. This paper aims to lay bare how Lucy Atkinson self-positions as a British and female traveller in her *Recollections*. Drawing attention to how female travellers create a liminal perspective in their writing (Lawrence 23), this paper studies how Atkinson negotiates ethnicity and nationality, her own and others’, and concepts of gender as in-between entities. More specifically, she interprets her own national and ethnic identity, as well as that of the peoples she encounters, initially as distinctly English versus ‘Other’ through antitheses, later as liminal when she allows herself to relate to the Siberian peoples yet invents western, even English names for them. Secondly, by employing Romantic rhetoric in the style of Byron, she looks for the sublime experience in unexplored places – not unlike other, often male travellers (Lawrence 25; Thompson 122) – and subsequently establishes herself as a ‘proper’ explorer who would go where no “man had never set his foot” (Atkinson 339). However, rather than adopting a male perspective, she upsets the very idea that adventurous travel in the nineteenth century should be seen primarily as a male endeavour and proves that ‘respectable’ women were equally up to the task, notably acknowledging her femininity. Interestingly, her self-created liminality on both fronts comes to fruition in her son, Alatau Tamchiboulac Atkinson, who receives an upbringing that mixes Siberian and English customs and elements. His name alone, a reference to both Siberian nature and culture and his British heritage, is testament to this. Thus, he sits on the threshold of Britain and Siberia, as well as of Lucy Atkinson’s attempts to reconcile her drive to explore on the one hand and her feminine, maternal identity on the other.

Maxime Honinx holds a BEd in History and English from UCLL (2018) and an MA in English Literary Studies from Durham University (2020). While at UCLL, she spent a semester abroad at the University of Worcester through the Erasmus exchange programme. In October 2024, she joined the MERLIT research group at VUB as a PhD student under the supervision of Eva Ulrike Pirker and Suzanne Scafe. The spotlight of her research is on nineteenth-century travelogues written by women whose self-fashioning through travel questioned the frontiers of womanhood and the meritocratic *status quo*.

Marjolein Goethals holds a BA in Linguistics and Literature: Dutch and English (2018), an MA in Comparative Modern Literature (2019), and an MA in Teaching: Dutch and English (2020). She obtained all three degrees at University of Ghent. During her bachelor’s degree, she briefly studied at The University of Sheffield as an exchange student. As part of her master’s degree, she interned at the ERC Starting Grant project “Agents of Change: Women Editors and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Europe, 1710-1920”, directed by Marianne Van Remoortel, who also supervised her thesis on Victorian ghost stories’ critical engagement with gender roles. She is currently a teacher at a secondary school, has a keen interest in Women’s Travelogues and is associated to the MERLIT research group.

A2: TRANSLATING SELVES/OTHERS: ENGLISH AS IMPOSITION OR POSSIBILITY (I)

Virginia Woolf's English and its (Un)translatability into Russian

Dina Batii

(University of Ghent)

Each writer crafts a unique language from their national tongue. When referring to “the language of Charles Dickens” or “the language of Virginia Woolf,” we denote distinct variations of English, expressed through style and deviations from the norm. This paper examines Virginia Woolf’s distinctive English and the challenges of translating it into Russian. Virginia Woolf’s works were neither translated into Russian during her lifetime nor for 30 years after her death. Despite this, Soviet critics discussed her work, often criticising her complex language, accusing her of formalism “wrapped up in self-contained rhythms and sublimated from the world of reality to a world of aesthetics” (Mirsky quoted in Reinhold 2004). According to socialist realism, art had to be clear and accessible (Azov, 2013), and Woolf’s intricate style was seen as a mark of bourgeois elitism. It is partly because of her English that she was not translated into Russian for so long.

In the 1970s, translations of Woolf’s texts into Russian began, followed by scholarly studies, critical articles, and paratexts exploring the peculiarities of her language and the translation difficulties (Reinhold 2004, Denisova 2009, Nabokova 2010). Still, some of Woolf’s texts remain untranslated or unpublished. In 2023, Dina Batii translated “On Being Ill” into Russian for the first time. This paper provides an overview of Russian-language paratexts about Woolf’s language and presents Batii’s own analysis of translating Woolf’s essay “On Being Ill” into Russian. Translators must carefully consider Woolf’s stylistic deviations, which define her language (Ehrlich, 1981). This includes syntactic features like separating subjects and predicates with multiple subordinate clauses, violating word order, omitting subjects, and mixing direct and indirect discourse. Woolf’s prose rhythm is created through alternating long and short sentences, repeating syntactic structures, pairing homogeneous elements, anaphora, inversion, and parenthesis. She also uses words similar in sound and rhythm. Moreover, translating Woolf’s work involves not just linguistic but cultural transference, as her texts contain hidden quotations from William Shakespeare, Arnold Bennett and Augustus Hare. All her stylistic peculiarities and linguistic deviations must be taken into account in translation, to recreate the effect that Woolf’s English has on native readers.

Azov, A. (2013). *Poverzhennye bukvalisty. Iz istorii hudozhestvennogo perevoda v SSSR v 1920-1960-e gody* [Defeated Bukvalists: From the History of Literary Translation in the Soviet Union in 1920-1960]. Moscow: Izdatelskii dom Vysheyshkoly ekonomiki.

Denisova I. (2009) The representation of gender in translation from English into Russian (based on the example of v. Woolf’s novel “Orlando”). *Bulletin of Chelyabinsk State University. Philology*. Vol. 38.

Ehrlich S. (1981). The function of syntactic deviance in Virginia Woolf’s prose. *Toronto Working Papers in Linguistics*. Vol. 2.

Nabokova N. (2010). Lexical-syntactic means of providing emotionality of a modernist text. Doctoral Dissertation.

Reinhold N. (2004). Virginia Woolf’s work in Russia: A success story of 2,5 million copies // Woolf across cultures / Ed. by Reinhold N. - N.Y.: Pace univ. press.

Dina Batii is a PhD researcher at University of Ghent, focusing on “Gender Norms in Translation: An Analysis of Translations of Virginia Woolf’s essays in late Soviet and modern Russia.” She earned her master’s degree in Philology from the Higher School of Economics in 2023, where she was awarded the HSE University Scholarship for students’ academic achievements. She contributed to a collaborative research project with HSE and Gorky Media on the history of Russian-language translations of English writers and, based on the results, published an article on Russian translations of Elizabeth Gaskell’s novel “North and South”. Dina also holds a bachelor’s degree in Literature-Art Criticism from the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University. Alongside her academic pursuits, she works as a translator of fiction and non-fiction from English and French into Russian.

“I [...] Wore my English like a Mask” - English as an Ambivalent World of Possibilities in Post-Migrant Narratives: A Study of Ocean Vuong’s *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*

Ceydanur Temurok

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

As a global lingua franca, the English language traverses geographical, cultural, and socio-political boundaries. Since the colonial period, it has continuously expanded and evolved and this process has been facilitated by channels of communication, by migration, and by globalisation. In the context of migration, the English language has frequently served as a tool in processes of integrating, translating, and transforming a wide spectrum of experiences and has accommodated a wide range of identities and modes of speech. Ocean Vuong’s *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* (2019) is a novel that explores the versatility and hospitality of the English Language by constructing language as a transforming mechanism for individual, intergenerational, and collective experiences of displacement, pain, and trauma. This paper will analyse how English serves as a tool for navigating personal and historical trauma in *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*, through Little Dog’s attempt to bridge cultural and generational gaps via letters written to his mother. In them, he uses English as a medium for enunciating the Vietnamese American migrant experience. Little Dog’s first encounter of language barriers and his decision to master the English language to such a degree that he can speak for his mother and grandmother, display the transportability of English on an intergenerational level as he says, “I took of our language and wore my English, like a mask, so that others would see my face, and therefore yours” (Vuong 32). Vuong’s use of language further initiates the dual nature of this experience, showcases that language can both empower people to express their identities and impose hegemonic pressures. These pressures are related to the societal expectations for migrants to translate themselves and integrate, which might cause internal and external struggles. In discussing the status of English, this study will show how the transportability of English intersects with meritocratic values, demonstrating that for migrants, language acquisition is a prerequisite to achieve social mobility, visibility, and recognition in their new contexts, yet it is also a burden and pressure arising from the need to translate themselves. Homi K. Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity and third space, and Emily Apter’s concept of the translation zone will provide a crucial framework for comprehending the interaction between languages and identities in Vuong’s novel. The paper will explore the capacity of the English language to convey complex layers, offering an ambivalent world of possibilities for post-migrant narratives.

Vuong, Ocean. (2020). *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*. Vintage, Penguin Random House UK.

Ceydanur Temurok received her bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature with a specialisation in Comparative Literature from Yeditepe University and Philosophy as a minor (2019). After her graduation from Yeditepe University, she continued her studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where she received her master’s degree in the Greek Elements in Anglophone Literature (2021). Ceydanur’s areas of interest include diaspora studies, postcolonial literature, comparative literature, cultural studies, identity discourses, migration, multiculturalism, classical literature, revisionist myth making, romantic literature, Victorian literature, and Shakespeare. She is an American Literature Representative of South-Central Modern Language Association and a member of CLIC. Ceydanur is currently a PhD student and a member of the MERLIT research group at VUB. Her research focuses on meritocratic narratives in post-migrant novels, under the supervision of Eva Ulrike Pirker.

A3: LANGUAGE CONTACT, VARIETY AND CHANGE: TRANSPORTABLE & TRANSPORTED ENGLISH

American Flemish? A Mixed-Method Approach to the Dynamics between English and Belgian Dutch in 19th and 20th Century North America

Yasmin Crombez

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

In recent decades, linguistic research has increasingly focused on language variation and change driven by English. This research spans both weak contact situations, referring to indirect contact with English (see Androutsopoulos 2012), and intense contact situations, covering direct contact with English (see Wolf & Polzenhagen 2009). Within the field of heritage language linguistics, which investigates the development of minority languages, numerous studies have explored the latter scenario, particularly the dynamics between English and Western languages in North America. These studies have extensively described varieties such as ‘American Italian’ (e.g., De Fina & Fellin 2010), ‘American Norwegian’ (e.g., Allen and Salmons 2015), ‘American German’ (e.g., Litty 2019), and many others, from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives (cf. Brown 2019). In contrast, the language use of Flemish emigrants and their descendants remains virtually unexplored. However, language contact between English and Belgian Dutch in North America presents a compelling case study, especially in the early stages during the 19th and 20th centuries, because of the complex sociolinguistic history between French and Belgian Dutch. Brown and Bousquette (2018) emphasise that pre-migration sociolinguistic contexts are often overlooked in heritage language research, despite their importance for understanding language change and variation in contact situations more thoroughly.

As such, this paper proposes to study the interaction between English and Belgian Dutch in North America during the 19th and 20th centuries. Specifically, a quantitative analysis is performed examining the frequency of English lexical borrowing in relation to a set of social, linguistic and pragmatic variables. To do so, this study utilises the Flemish American Letters and Newspapers (FALN) corpus, comprising 324 ego-documents from Flemish emigrant writers. To ascertain whether certain socio-demographic groups display a greater inclination toward incorporating English material, Yasmin investigates factors such as duration of residence in North America, sex, neighbourhood of living, and level of English proficiency. In addition, the study explores the loan process, loan type, level of integration and part of speech to identify specific types of English borrowings within the linguistic repertoire of the Flemish emigrants. Finally, examining the semantic domain and level of necessity of the English lexemes provides insights into how they were used. The quantitative study is complemented with a qualitative in-depth reading of the ego-documents to gain a full understanding of the use of English material in the language use of Flemish emigrants.

- Allen, B., & Salmons, J. (2015). Heritage language obstruent phonetics and phonology. *American Norwegian and Norwegian-American English. Germanic Heritage Languages in North America*, 97.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. (2012). English ‘on top’: Discourse functions of English resources in the German mediascape. *Sociolinguistic studies* 6(2). Equinox Publishing Ltd., 209–238.
- Brown, Joshua R. & Joshua Bousquette. (2018). Heritage Languages in North America: Sociolinguistic Approaches. *Journal of Language Contact* 11(2). 201–207.
- Brown, Joshua R. (2019). Historical heritage language ego-documents: From home, from away, and from below. *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*. De Gruyter Mouton 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1515/jhsl-2019-0023>.
- De Fina, Anna & Luciana Fellin. (2010). “Italian in the USA.” In Kim Potowski (ed.), *Language Diversity in the USA*, 195. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Joo, H., Schwarz, L., & Richard Page, B. (2018). Nonconvergence and Divergence in Bilingual Phonological and Phonetic Systems: Low Back Vowels in Moundridge Schweitzer German and English. *Journal of Language Contact*, 11(2), 304–323. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19552629-01102006>
- Wolf, Hans-Georg & Frank Polzenhagen. (2009). *World Englishes: A cognitive sociolinguistic approach*. Vol. 8. Berlin & Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

Yasmin Crombez graduated in 2018 from the University of Ghent in Literature and Linguistics. She is currently working at Vrije Universiteit Brussel as a PhD student on her project entitled “From the Promised Land: A Historical Sociolinguistic Study on the Language Use of Flemish Emigrants.” For this project, she was awarded an FWO fellowship for fundamental research in 2021. Her main research interests lie in (historical) sociolinguistics, contact linguistics, and heritage language linguistics.

“Perceiving Vowel Variation in Regional Accents of English”: Evidence from Dutch-speaking English as a Foreign Language Learners

Gil Verbeke (Ghent University), Holger Mitterer (University of Malta), Paola Escudero (Western Sydney University), Ellen Simon (Ghent University)

Listening in a second or non-native language (L2) is known to be more difficult than listening in a first or native language (L1). Many L2 learners, even those who are highly proficient in the target language, often report frustration at how hard it can be to understand the non-native language they have been learning for many years (García Lecumberri et al., 2010). Additional difficulties may arise, for example, when a speaker has an unfamiliar regional accent, in which the realisation of vowels deviates from the expected pronunciation (Adank et al., 2009). This study investigates to what extent vowel variation in regional accents of English impacts speech perception for L2 listeners. Specifically, this paper focuses on how accurately vowels produced by speakers with General British, Northern British and Australian English accents are perceived by Dutch-speaking learners of English.

Most previous studies selected English vowel contrasts that have been identified in the literature as difficult to perceive for these learners (e.g., /æ/–/ɛ/; Escudero et al., 2012). Instead, this study compares the acoustic properties of all L1 and L2 vowels to quantitatively predict which (pairs of) vowels in each regional accent are difficult for these L2 listeners (cf. L2 Linguistic Perception model; Van Leussen & Escudero, 2015). A major advantage of this innovative method is that it moves beyond the level of individual contrasts and focuses on the entire sound inventory, resulting in more accurate predictions (see Georgiou, 2023). To make predictions, formant and duration values for L1 and L2 vowels, obtained in a series of previous studies, are used as the input for our statistical model (Adank et al., 2007; Elvin et al., 2016; Williams & Escudero, 2014). The output of the statistical model will predict to what extent concrete vowel realisations in regional accents of English affect speech perception, and which vowels or vowel contrasts are difficult for Dutch-speaking listeners.

The statistical model is currently being built by the researchers. Based on its output, they will then set up a vowel identification task, in which 40 L1 British English and 40 L1 Belgian Dutch listeners will be asked to identify which English vowels they hear. The results of this task will allow the researchers to empirically validate if the predicted vowels and vowel contrasts are indeed difficult for these listeners to perceive. The results will also show how flexibly listeners can adapt to regionally coloured vowel productions in their L2.

- Adank, P., Evans, B. G., Stuart-Smith, J., & Scott, S. K. (2009). Comprehension of familiar and unfamiliar native accents under adverse listening conditions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human perception and performance*, 35(2), 520–529.
- Adank, P., Van Hout, R., & Velde, H. V. D. (2007). An acoustic description of the vowels of northern and southern standard Dutch II: Regional varieties. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 121(2), 1130–1141.
- Elvin, J., Williams, D., & Escudero, P. (2016). Dynamic acoustic properties of monophthongs and diphthongs in Western Sydney Australian English. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 140(1), 576–581.
- Escudero, P., Simon, E., & Mitterer, H. (2012). The perception of English front vowels by North Holland and Flemish listeners: Acoustic similarity predicts and explains cross-linguistic and L2 perception. *Journal of Phonetics*, 40(2), 280–288.
- García Lecumberri, M. L., Cooke, M., & Cutler, A. (2010). Non-native speech perception in adverse conditions: A review. *Speech communication*, 52(11-12), 864–886.
- Georgiou, G. P. (2023). Comparison of the prediction accuracy of machine learning algorithms in crosslinguistic vowel classification. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 15594.
- Van Leussen, J. W., & Escudero, P. (2015). Learning to perceive and recognise a second language: The L2LP model revised. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6(1), 103694.
- Williams, D., & Escudero, P. (2014). A cross-dialectal acoustic comparison of vowels in Northern and Southern British English. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 136(5), 2751–2761.

Gil Verbeke is a doctoral researcher at the Linguistics Department of Ghent University. His research interests include second language acquisition, speech perception and phonology/phonetics. As a predoctoral researcher, he worked on a BOF research project (October 2021 – September 2022), in which he focused on how Flemish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners deal with variation in spoken English. From 1 November 2022 onwards, he is working on a project funded by the *Flemish Research Foundation* (supervisors: Prof. Dr. Ellen Simon and Prof. Dr. Holger Mitterer), aimed at examining how phonetic variation in native and non-native English accents affect intelligibility for EFL learners.

Prof. Dr. Paola Escudero is a Professor of Linguistics and Director of Research at The MARCS Institute. She started at Western Sydney University in January 2011, after a research position at the University of Amsterdam and a Visiting Assistant Professorship at the University of California in Los Angeles. Her work focuses on speech and visual processing in diverse populations, including monolingual and multilingual infants, young children, and adults as well as zebra finches.

Prof. Dr. Holger Mitterer is a Professor of Cognitive Sciences at the University of Malta. His research focuses on various aspects of spoken word recognition (e.g., the recognition of phonological variants caused by sound reductions or deletions). Additionally, he is also interested in second language acquisition, phonology, and phonetics, particularly in the nature of phonological representations in both the native and second/foreign language. Currently, he is co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Language and Speech*.

Prof. Dr. Ellen Simon is an Associate Professor of English Linguistics at Ghent University. Her research areas include phonology, phonetics, and second language acquisition. She has conducted research on various processes of connected speech (such as assimilations and elisions) and the perception and production of segments in a second language by young and adult second language learners. She is particularly interested in the development of phonological representations, the relationship between perception and production, and more recently, the connection to listening skills and intelligibility.

The Perception of Irish Englishes for L1 and L2 listeners

Chloe Ostiguy

(University of Ghent)

Interviews indicate that migrants to Ireland find Irish English accents difficult to understand (Amador-Moreno, 2010; Diskin-Holdaway, 2024; Migge, 2012). However, quantitative studies have yet to produce conclusive evidence regarding the intelligibility of these accents (Edensor, 2010; Ikeno & Hansen, 2007; Lopez-Soto & Barrera-Pardo, 2007; Pinet et al., 2015). Additionally, while we may anecdotally expect Irish listeners to easily distinguish between Northern and Southern Irish English varieties (Hickey, 2024; Maguire, 2024), this capability may not extend to learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Lopez-Soto & Barrera-Pardo, 2007).

The primary goal of this study is to understand how Irish English(es) are perceived by groups with differing degrees of familiarity with and proficiency in Irish English. These three groups comprise native Irish English speakers, native American English speakers, and non-native Belgian Dutch speakers. Particularly, this paper will investigate their ability to understand varying Irish English accents (i.e., intelligibility, in task #1) and discriminate between them and other accents (i.e., phonological discriminability, in task #2).

In two perceptual tasks, listeners hear four female speakers of four different native English varieties: Belfast, Dublin, General American (GenAm), and Standard Southern British (SSB). Here, the GenAm and SSB speakers serve as controls, as all listening groups have long-term familiarity with them, which may benefit their perceptual performance in these varieties compared to Irish English(es) (Adank et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2006; Smith et al., 2014; Sumner & Samuel, 2009; Zhang, 2022). In the first task, listeners transcribe 20 short sentences from each variety and provide comprehensibility judgements. In the second, listeners hear the same passage read aloud by two randomised speakers in each trial and decide whether the speakers sound like they have the same accent. Finally, the participants complete a questionnaire, which will include rating their familiarity with each variety.

With data collection and analysis to be completed in early autumn, it is predicted that, while the Irish listeners will likely understand and discriminate Irish English accents better than other listener groups, none of the groups will perform better in Irish English(es) over GenAm or SSB. This prediction is based on a study by Smith et al. (2014), which found that Glaswegian English (GE) listeners were equally accurate at listening tasks in their own accent and SSB. This phenomenon might be expected in Irish English listeners, who have similarly high familiarity with their own variety and SSB.

Chloe Ostiguy is a PhD student in English linguistics at University of Ghent. Her research interests include phonology, speech perception, language variation, and dialectology. Before pursuing a doctorate, she completed a bachelor's in linguistics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (2023) with an honour's thesis constructing a corpus of Massachusetts dialects. During this time, she worked as a research assistant under Prof. Lisa Green (July 2021- October 2023), where she completed a statistical (syntactic) analysis of children's acquisition of African-American English and presented the results. She also worked on a project organised by Prof. Joe Pater (January-December 2023), which looked at the history of Western Massachusetts phonology. Her current doctoral project, funded by the Flemish Research Foundation (FWO) and supervised by Prof. Ellen Simon and Dr. Bastien De Clercq, focuses on the intelligibility of regional accents for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

B1: ENGLISH OF THE 'MARGINS' AND IMMIGRATION: POSTCOLONIAL REWRITINGS – DECOLONIAL STRATEGIES

Black Aesthetics in Anglophone Writing: Austin Clarke's *They Never Told Me*

Yanrong Wang

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

This paper adopts the concept of Black aesthetics to explore the artistic expression of Black experiences in Austin Clarke's short story collection, *They Never Told Me: And Other Stories* (2013). Black aesthetics, as a product of the Black Arts Movement, is explained by Paul C. Taylor (2016) as not merely a political and cultural practice of artistic values created by Black people but more a philosophical practice of appreciating the beauty of Black culture. Clarke's collection uses diverse literary strategies to depict the marginalised experiences of Barbadian immigrants in Canada and trace their past to the days of slavery. These strategies range from the use of Bajan (an English related Creole language spoken by Barbadians), to the integration of lyrics of varied genres and styles of African-American music referring to the slave trade and the colonial history of Barbados. Firstly, Clarke interweaves languages of the colonised and the coloniser by merging Bajan with Standard English to challenge the authority of dominant discourse and rewrite the erased history of the marginalised. The use of Bajan is especially prominent in stories *Galaxie* and *On the Midnight Train*. The former story, for instance, uses the Bajan to depict a Barbadian immigrant who works hard for a living in Toronto and dreams of owning a motorcar but ends up injuring a white woman in a car accident when he drives the motorcar "Galaxie" on the "white man road" (Clarke 2013: 21). Secondly, references to lyrics, styles and genres of African-American music include, for instance, Jamaican singer Bob Marley's *Redemption Song* and its lyric "old pirates, yes, they rob I" which occur in several stories to allude to slavery and racial discrimination. In addition, sonic culture's counter-cultural potential is foregrounded in stories that invoke the Caribbean music style calypso and other Black genres such as jazz, blues, spirituals, and minstrels as well as recordings of John Coltrane to allude to the 'unspeakable' (Morrison 1988) and silenced history of the stories' Black characters. To sum up, this paper argues that Clarke uses Black aesthetics (especially Bajan and Black music) to recover the history and experiences of Black culture. Choosing to use Standard English in Caribbean and Canadian contexts reinforces historical and contemporary systems of oppression and privilege. However, by incorporating resistant forms of Black expression, such as the Bajan and Black music, into his English writing, Clarke's collection challenges the global dominance of English/Anglophone culture in the world, as well as the privileged position of English within literature.

Clarke, Austin. (2013). *They Never Told Me: And Other Stories*. Exile Editions Ltd.

Morrison, Toni. (1988). Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature. *Michigan Quarterly Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 1–49.

Taylor, Paul C. (2016). *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*. Wiley Blackwell.

Yanrong Wang joined the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies and the Centre of Literary and Intermedial Crossings (CLIC) in September 2022 as a PhD fellow. She obtained an MA in English Language and Literature in 2022 from Hainan University, China. Her doctoral research at VUB is fully funded by the CSC and reflects her interest in postcolonial settler literatures as well as in questions of gender, race and ethnicity. It is entitled "Towards Hybridization: Multiplicity and Heterogeneity of Black Experiences in 21st-century Black Canadian Literature" (supervisor: Janine Hauthal) and focuses on contemporary black Canadian writing by, e.g., George Elliott Clarke, Wayne Compton, Dionne Brand, Austin Clarke and Esi Edugyan.

Coming of Age and Migration in 21st Century Afrosporic Fiction

Isabella Villanova

(University of Bayreuth)

This paper focuses on migration, affect, and coming-of-age issues in 21st Century African women's fiction set in Africa and the United States. Specifically, *NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names (2013)* and *Bisi Adjapon's Daughter in Exile (2023)* will be analysed as case studies. These novels deal with the *Bildung* and migration processes of their female protagonists, who both move from their home countries in Africa—Zimbabwe for Darling and Senegal for Lola—to the United States.

Firstly, the concept of "Afropolitanism" (Mbembe 2007; Selasi 2005) will be examined as a reaction to the Eurocentric concept of cosmopolitanism and discuss it in relation to the two novels mentioned above. Significantly, this paper will attempt to answer the following questions: How does the relational definition of Afropolitanism affect spatial connections? What kind of knowledge production about Africa arises from Afropolitanism, and what is its relationship with the Anglophone world?

Secondly, the two aforementioned novels will be analysed as what Joseph Slaughter terms "dissensual Bildungsromane" (2007), as they chronicle their protagonists' struggles against societal constraints and portray the defeat of their ambitions for self-fulfilment and emancipation, thereby questioning the premises of development and self-determination typical of the Western/English Bildungsroman genre.

Thirdly, the paper will engage with Ahmed's thesis about the circulation of emotions (2004; 2008) and happiness paradigm (2010) to focus on integration and cultural assimilation issues in the United States. It will be suggested that emotions such as fear and hate help reinforce existing power structures, contributing to fostering psychological models of racism. Simultaneously, women's unhappiness, frustration, and nostalgia inform their stories and disclose their refusal to accept passivity and helplessness, showing their willingness to react against the forms of discrimination they often face and the circumstances in which they are forced to live. This paper will ultimately demonstrate how Bulawayo and Adjapon's narratives voice African women's political and ethical demands for reparation and redress.

Dr. Isabella Villanova is a Research Fellow at the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence of the University of Bayreuth (Germany) as of 1 October 2024. Previously, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institut für Afrikawissenschaften of the University of Vienna (Austria), an Adjunct Professor of English literature at the University for Foreigners of Perugia (Italy), and a visiting scholar at the University of Leeds (United Kingdom). In 2021, she earned a PhD in Anglophone African women's writing from the University of Padua (Italy). Her first monograph, titled *The Politics of Gender in Nigerian and Zimbabwean Women's Fiction: Agencies and Strategies of Resistance*, will be published by Peter Lang in 2025. Isabella is also an editorial assistant for the international peer-reviewed journal *From the European South*. Her research interests include contemporary women's writing, Black African and diaspora literature, postcolonial and decolonial thinking, and gender, queer, and affect studies.

Decolonial and Literary Experiments in the Margins: (Re)presenting Black Britishness, Displacement and Self-Reflexivity in Momtaza Mehri's *Bad Diaspora Poems* (2023)

Carmijn Gerritsen

(Radboud University)

The proposed paper will trace how Somali-British poet and essayist, Momtaza Mehri experiments – both critically and aesthetically – with the (trans)portability of language and decolonial discourses in her poetry collection *Bad Diaspora Poems* (2023). It aims to highlight the socio-political and cultural affordances of literature, as well as its ability to disrupt exclusionary messages. The role of self-reflexivity, and its impact on the author's written prose, is placed centre stage here. In particular, Mehri's deconstruction of the English language raises questions about the representation of topics that are both personal and political at once, such as Black Britishness, migration and displacement. In turn, the poet questions who can speak out against injustices, and in what ways. As noted in the collection at hand, "the diaspora poet is born an antagonism."

More specifically, a versatile collection of poetry such as *Bad Diaspora Poems* will be shown to cover a wide range of lived experiences, transnational histories and figures. In doing so, the text explores contemporary issues of race and displacement by underscoring the power and meaning of language. Language is namely found to transcend borders and bring together diverging and multicultural communities, enabling Mehri to reconfigure diasporic identities across both time and space. This is done through a variety of forms, ranging from lyrics and prose to text messages. Literature here becomes a multifaceted space of representation, as the poet notably employs the English language in order to experiment with decolonial discourses. As Mehri indicates, "A grammar/of difference we liquefy and scatter, in the name of our borderless love. [...] With everything which killed us, still kills us, we are artfully enmeshed." By focusing on the intersection between language, aesthetics and politics in content and form, this paper shows how Mehri (re)claims ownership over the language by using it as a powerful tool for disrupting discussions around identity politics and belonging in Britain. She deconstructs the English language, and its various idiosyncrasies, in order to reflect on pertinent socio-political debates. As a result, it will be argued that Mehri provides a provocative perspective on the (trans)portability of English and its contemporary manifestations in light of literary and diasporic communities. This facilitates a reflection on the ways in which the broader politics of literature by Black British women writers, intersects with shifting approaches to understandings of the self.

Carmijn Gerritsen is an interdisciplinary Research Master's student in Literary Studies at Radboud University in Nijmegen, whose current research focuses on identity politics, cultural memory and postcolonial studies in contemporary Black British literature – from fiction and poetry to theatre. She is particularly interested in the critical and aesthetic ways in which writers engage with, and reflect on, socio-political discussions concerning race-related events in Britain. She has recently published on the counter-hegemonic connection between Black Britishness and celebration in *FRAME Journal of Literary Studies* (37.1) and is currently working on the politics of representation in literature and post-Brexit theatre. From September 2024 to January 2025, she is conducting an individual research internship at the Centre for Literary and Intermedial Crossings at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, focused on the politics and aesthetics of representing multicultural identities in contemporary Black British women's writing.

B2: TRANSLATING SELVES/OTHERS: ENGLISH AS IMPOSITION OR POSSIBILITY (II)

Jhumpa Lahiri's Bengali/English/Italian Triangle: Exposing the Prosthesis of Origin

Delphine Munos

(University of Liège)

Following her having been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for her literary debut, the short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, the Bengali American writer Jhumpa Lahiri was ushered into the paradoxical position of an ethnic 'mainstream' figure, and the scholarship on her early (English-language) work was overwhelmingly framed by presuppositions of "biographical connection" (Sarah Brouillette) between her life as a child of Bengali immigrants and her Bengali American characters.

In 2015 though, Lahiri pulled the rug out from under critics who read her work via the well-trodden optics of assimilation and ethnic retention by publishing *In Altre Parole (In Other Words)*, 2016, a generically hybrid collection of essays and short stories written in Italian, a language with which she had "no familial, personal or professional connection." More recently, Lahiri's reimagining of herself as a writer who has always been "linguistically orphaned", took an even more complex turn when she translated her own Italian-language novel *Dove mi trovo* (2018) and some of her Italian-language stories (included in *Racon; Italiani*, 2023) into English. Because her Italian-language work appeared to follow a Beckett-like "logic of abstraction", critics such as Núria Codina Solà (2023) suggested that the Bengali-American writer was turning self-translation into a practice of "untranslation," thereby escaping "biographical readings of the multilingual condition." Taking stock of the scholarship on Lahiri's English-and Italian-language work and drawing on Jacques Derrida's musings on language in his "Monolingualism of the Other; or The Prosthesis of Origin", this paper will explore Lahiri's relationship with her "triangle", i.e., Bengali, English, and Italian, and argue that her self-translated 'Italian' work problematises the association between language and notions of origin, authenticity, and authorship.

Prof. Dr. Delphine Munos is a senior lecturer in Anglophone postcolonial literatures at the University of Liège, Belgium. She is co-editor, with Bénédicte Ledent, of the book series *Cross/Cultures* (Brill), and the author of *After Melancholia: A Reappraisal of Second-Generation Diasporic Subjectivity in the Work of Jhumpa Lahiri* (Brill/Rodopi, 2013). She co-edited *Minor Genres in Postcolonial Literatures* (Routledge, 2019) and Caryl Phillips's *Genealogies* (Brill, 2023) and she guest-edited journal issues for *South Asian Diaspora* (2014; 2018), *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (2018) and *CR: The Centennial Review* (2023). Delphine specialises in Anglophone postcolonial literatures and US ethnic literatures, with a special focus on 'minor-to-minor' interactions between different postcolonial places and minority histories.

“Transparent Foreignisation”: Aboulela’s Literary Practice in *The Translator*

Chiara Arcadio

(Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

This study revisits Leila Aboulela’s debut novel, *The Translator* (1999) in light of what it has to offer in terms of its engagement with multilingualism and cultural translation. As a novel of migration, it explores the journeys of the protagonist, Sammar, between Sudan and the UK, specifically Scotland, and her personal transformation. It is characterised by the effort to reconcile her cultural and linguistic identity with the specificities and expectations of her new environment, where her Islamic faith continues to be a marker of difference. Hence, the cultural negotiations which the novel explores through the story of Sammar, a Sudanese widow, and her relationship with Rae, a Scottish professor, are fraught by linguistic complexity in the shadow of the hegemony of English.

In this paper, it is argued that Aboulela’s poetics offers a “successful” formal strategy to break with the premises of monolingualism. Situated in Yildiz’s “post-monolingual tension,” Aboulela employs multilingual practices of foreignisation; not only by providing a stage for various characters who have a complex relationship with the hegemony of English, but by using the English language creatively as her literary language. It is proposed that *The Translator* should be read as a “born-translated” novel, that uses the English language to problematise cultural negotiation. This paper shows how the paradox of multilingualism within the monolingual condition is given space, how writing in one language can suggest, or signal, the presence of others. Ultimately, it is contended that Aboulela’s work reflects on a new process of social formation that engages in new “affective paths” through language practices not tied to ethnic and geographic identity.

Chiara Arcadio holds both a Bachelor’s and master’s degree in Translation Studies from IULM University in Milan. She has recently completed a second master’s degree in Linguistics and Literary Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Beyond gaining extensive experience in translation, editing, and proofreading while working as an editor and translator for the Italian publisher *Il Saggiatore*, Chiara is currently a PhD researcher at KU Leuven, collaborating with Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the University of Bern, and the University of Turin on the project “MovIT: Moving Italian(s): Standard Language Change Among Moving Italians.” This research investigates the evolution of the Italian language within migration contexts, focusing on the social and cultural dynamics involved. Her broader research interests encompass translation and language contact in multilingual environments, exploring how these interactions shape cultural, social and linguistic landscapes.

“Be Careful with your Accent”: Eastern European Migrants in British Cinema

Izabella Wódzka

(Independent Scholar)

This paper focuses on two films narrating migration stories, (post) Brexit tensions and unequal power relations between the new Eastern European immigrants and the English-speaking population. While different in genre and style, *God's Own Country* (dir. Frances Lee, 2017) and *My Friend the Polish Girl* (dir. Ewa Banaszekiewicz & Mateusz Dymek, 2019) share the themes of linguistic and cultural isolation, and in both the use of English plays an essential role in the story and character development. This is true especially in the case of *My Friend*, which takes the form of a mock documentary realised by the fictitious young American filmmaker, Katie. Although she was meant to direct a film 'about immigrants, Brexit, and how people are used and disposed of,' she instead, 'focused on Alicja as a Polish immigrant in London.' The film is mainly carried out in English, with Katie, the filmmaker, providing most of the monologue off-screen. The dominance of the colonial lingua franca, whether in US or UK form, combined with Alicja's accented speech, reflects the shifting power balance between the ambitious filmmaker and her subject. Despite her repeated claims to 'uncover the truth' and superficial slogans about helping and caring, Katie's relationship with Alicja is deeply unequal. She manipulates and uses Alicja to create a film that could kickstart her career as an arthouse director. As the movie progresses, the question of Alicja's career in an English-speaking film industry emerges (she is constantly refused roles due to her accent). Simultaneously, the relationship between the two women grows increasingly intimate, dropping any pretence to a healthy distance between the subject and the director/filmmaker.

Similarly, the sexual and intimate relationship is the story's central focus in *God's Own Country*. A box office hit and film critics' favourite, the drama received numerous accolades. Its main character, Johnny, who lives unhappily on a remote Yorkshire farm, enters a sexual relationship with a hired seasonal worker from Romania, Gheorghe. Gheorghe's portrayal as a quiet but tender young man who rescues Johnny from mental (and physical) self-destruction aligns with the stereotype of the 'good, hard-working Eastern European' migrant. His accented English marks him as audibly different, and his Romanian heritage prompts racial slurs, but the film's happy ending and little reflection on the actual treatment and social standing of Eastern Europeans in the UK, begs questions about deeper reflection on the domination of English in mixed partnerships and the resulting dominance of the Anglo-Saxon/Western vision of the world shown on screen. In both films, the characters engage in queer relationships with Eastern Europeans; in both, the dominance of English is prevalent, and the migrant characters are constantly forced to communicate in a foreign language with those close to them. However, only *My Friend* addresses these issues, *God's Own Country* remains blind to its Western-centric bias, giving little space for Gheorghe to develop as a significant character beyond the stereotypical queer foreign love interest (cf. Feldmann 2021). Drawing on two contrastive examples, this paper argues for the urgent need to scrutinise representations of Eastern European characters in the Western cinematic imagery.

Dr. Izabella Wódzka is a visual culture researcher. She obtained her MA and then PhD in Film Studies at University College London (thesis titled *Spaces of Exclusion, Places of Inclusion. Representing Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Identities in Contemporary European Cinema*) and her undergraduate degree in Scandinavian Studies and MSc Translation Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Her research has been published in both academic and popular outlets, most recently in *Third Text*, and she has contributed to various collected editions and student handbooks. Izabella's primary interest areas are visual representations of marginalised identities (including social media and art), space and place in moving images, and cinematic and other depictions of post-Soviet and post-Communist cultures and peoples.

B3: TRANSPORTING ENGLISH (CULTURE) ACROSS NEW MEDIA & TECHNOLOGIES

“What a Subtitle!”: A Contrastive and Parallel Study of English, French and Dutch Exclamatives using OpenSubtitles 2018 data

Lobke Ghesquière & Faye Troughton

(University of Mons)

Exclamatives have been widely studied, both from a monolingual and crosslinguistic perspective, and in European and non-European languages. The translation of exclamatives, however, has received much less attention. This study aims to contribute to filling this gap through a corpus study of English, French and Dutch exclamatives and their translations into those languages. Using Sketch Engine (Kilgariff et al., 2014), random samples of 100 instances of two core exclamative constructions from each language were extracted from the English, French and Dutch sub-corpora of OpenSubtitles 2018 (Lison & Tiedemann, 2016), together with their corresponding translations into the other two languages under scrutiny, making for 1800 exclamatives in total. These data sets will allow us to contrast the English, French and Dutch source text exclamatives as well as look into how these are rendered in the target languages.

Out of the three languages under scrutiny, English is the one for which there is most consensus on the prototypical realisations of the exclamative, namely *what a* and *how + adjective* exclamatives, as in *What a surprise to see you!* and *How big my contribution was!*. These constructions serve as the starting point for our English data set. For Dutch and French, data sets featuring the corresponding exclamatives and their translations were extracted: for Dutch 100 *wat (een)* and 100 *hoe* exclamatives (*Wat een idioot!* ‘What an idiot!’; *Hoe gek!* ‘How crazy!’), for French 100 *quel* and 100 *comme* exclamatives (*Quelle traduction!* ‘What a translation!’; *Comme il est beau!* ‘How beautiful he is!’).

“Subtitlers tend to keep in their translations the words that are very similar in both languages and to follow, as far as possible, the syntactic structure of the source text” (Díaz-Cintas, 2012). Given the availability of highly similar exclamative constructions in the three languages studied, any observed reduction, omission, or change, will have to be accounted for in terms of cultural or societal norms. The data will allow the uncovering of any ‘anglicised subtitles’; subtitling is known for “projecting English language features from the original dialogue to the translated discourse”, leaving “linguistic echoes of English in translated media” (Gottlieb, 2004).

Analysis of the data focuses on the syntax and semantico-pragmatics of the exclamatives in the three languages. Attention will go to the syntactic realisation of the exclamatives (embedded, full or verbless), the element modified, polarity, the presence (or absence) of performative elements, and, of course, the chosen translation (Krawczak & Glynn 2015). Given that all three languages studied have similar exclamatives, if translators do not opt for the corresponding construction in the target language, it will be interesting to see what alternative was chosen and what factors may influence this choice. A preliminary study on the English source text exclamatives has already shown considerable softening in the Dutch target texts and strengthening in the French translated subtitles. This more extensive study will allow comparison and may show if any attenuation or strengthening is language-specific or a result of the translation process; and whether English is (trans)portable and (trans)ported across subtitles.

Díaz Cintas, J. (2012). *Subtitling*. The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies Routledge.

Gottlieb, H. (2004). Subtitles and international Anglification. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*. 3(1). 219-230.

Kilgariff, A., Baisa, V., Bušta, J., Jakubíček, M., Kovář, V., Michelfeit, J., Rychlý, P., Suchomel, V. (2014). *The Sketch Engine: Ten years on*. https://www.sketchengine.eu/wp-content/uploads/The_Sketch_Engine_2014.pdf.

Krawczak, K. & D. Glynn. (2015). Operationalising mirativity: A usage-based quantitative study of constructional construal in English. *English Review of Cognitive Linguistics*. 13(2). 353-382.

Lison, P., Tiedemann, J. (2016) *OpenSubtitles2016: Extracting Large Parallel Corpora from Movie and TV Subtitles*. In Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC-2016), 2016.

Prof. Dr. Lobke Ghesquière is Associate professor and head of the English unit at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation (FTI-EII) of the University of Mons. Since 2022 she has been Applied Linguistics Editor of the Benjamins journal *English Text Construction*. Her early research was mainly concerned with grammaticalisation and (inter) subjectification phenomena in the English noun phrase, with a specific focus on intensification and focusing. More recently, her research has increasingly focused on corpus-based contrastive and translation research into subjectivity, including studies on degree and discourse-organisational adverbs and on exclamation marks.

Dr. Faye Troughton is currently working as a teaching assistant and researcher at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation (FTI-EII) of the University of Mons, Belgium. She recently defended her doctoral thesis on English and French exclamation constructions and their translation, and her current research interests include how translation studies can contribute to wider linguistic theory.

Transporting English Diversity: Colour-Conscious Casting in the Audio Descriptions of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*

Alexandra Sanchez

(Ghent University)

This paper explores the transportability of English language and culture in the realm of audio description, with a particular focus on the Netflix series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*. The series, set in a racially and ethnically diverse Regency-era England, offers a fresh perspective on historical events by highlighting the interracial marriage between Queen Charlotte and King George III. This “Great Experiment” in desegregation forms a central plot point, challenging conventional narratives of English identity.

Given the prominence of colour-conscious casting in the series, this study examines how the audio description provided by Netflix across different linguistic and cultural contexts either highlights or ignores the significance of the series’ casting choices. While the English audio description generally mentions the diversity of the cast, acknowledging its cultural and historical implications, non-English audio descriptions—in dubbed versions—tend to treat these choices as mere realia, failing to recognise their centrality to the plot.

Through a comparative analysis, this case study underscores the importance of incorporating cultural context into audio description, particularly in narratives where casting decisions hold broader socio-political significance. By neglecting to mention skin tones, physical features, or ethnicities, non-English audio descriptions risk overlooking the intricacies of identity politics, both in the universe of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* and beyond, perpetuating the erasure of English diversity that the series’ colour-conscious casting seeks to address.

This paper contributes to ongoing discussions about the transportability of English language and culture. By examining how socio-cultural nuances are dealt with in audio description, this case study sheds light on the challenges of conveying complex, culture-specific themes across linguistic boundaries. It underscores the need for greater sensitivity and awareness among audio describers, ensuring that diversity is accurately represented and understood by all audiences, regardless of their background.

Prof. Dr. Alexandra Sanchez is Assistant Professor of Audiovisual Translation at the Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication of Ghent University. She investigates audiovisual products as cultural artifacts, capable of translating a vast array of ideologies.

English Writing Tasks in Light of Artificial Intelligence: The Status Quo in Higher- Education Settings, 2023-2024

Donata Lisaitė & Evelina Jaleniauskienė

(Kaunas University of Technology)

At the end of 2022, the emergence of chatbots, powered by large language models, marked the start of considerable changes in a wide range of areas. As a result, many students and educators started to experiment with the use of generative AI tools in writing assignments. In addition to the discussion centring on academic integrity, AI bias and trustworthiness of the content produced by these models, the design and assessment of tasks are important aspects that also need to be reconsidered in the light of availability of AI tools. Aiming to inform university language educators and identify key characteristics of the design and assessment of writing tasks, this paper presents the results of a scoping review conducted to answer the following question: how are writing tasks designed and assessed in higher-education settings in the light of the emergence of various AI tools? Even though writing tasks in English are common across diverse subjects, the study's focus was limited to university courses related to English language education (e.g., English as a Foreign Language, English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, English as an Additional Language, among others). Following the PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018) guidelines for completing scoping reviews, research articles from Scopus and Web of Science databases were reviewed (in total, 141 full-text peer-reviewed articles published between 2023 and 2024 were retrieved at the start of the review). The data analysis is still ongoing, and the ensuing coverage of the research question will result in: (1) an in-depth state-of-the-art overview of a wide array of aspects pertaining to the design and assessment of writing tasks in the era of AI; (2) a varied selection of best practices in terms of how these aspects (e.g., types of task design, types of assessment, ways of implementation, tools used, assessment criteria selection, etc.) should be approached in an appropriate, adequate and relevant manner that can successfully accommodate the new reality that emergence of AI has contributed to. Importantly, it is anticipated that this study will not only be beneficial to both teachers of English and those who teach other subjects, but also integrate writing tasks in English in higher-education settings.

Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., ... & Straus, S. E. (2018). PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): checklist and explanation. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 169(7), 467-473.

Dr. Donata Lisaitė is a member of research group Educational Research at Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania. Furthermore, she is the head of the Centre of Educational Competence at the same institution. Her responsibilities involve co-design and implementation of continuous professional development (CPD) programmes aimed at secondary school teachers. Donata Lisaitė's doctoral research focused on the nexus among task-based language teaching (TBLT), translanguaging and the development of writing fluency in higher-education students in content-based instruction settings. In general, her research interests encompass academic writing, language teaching and translation education.

Dr. Evelina Jaleniauskienė is a member of research group Language and Technologies at Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania. Her doctoral research focused on merging the English as a Foreign Language Teaching with the development of problem-solving skills in university context. Her current research interests lie in the action-oriented approach, project-based language learning, the use of multimodal learning artefacts and artificial intelligence tools in language education, re-envisioning foreign language education and development of the 21st-century skills in higher education. Evelina Jaleniauskienė holds a certificate on conceptualising, designing and assessing project-based language learning (PBL) experiences from National Foreign Language Centre (University of Hawai'i at Manoa) and Second Language Teaching and Research Centre (University of Utah). She has organised a number of professional development seminars on designing PBL and action-oriented language learning projects for university language educators.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE AT VUB

Elisabeth BEKERS, Bastien DE CLERCQ, Ludovic DE CUYPERE, Julie DECONINCK, Carmijn GERRITSEN, Paula GRUPPELAAR, Janine HAUTHAL, Josephine OFEI, Tola OSITELU, Maria PACE AQUILINA, Eva Ulrike PIRKER, Cedric VAN DIJCK, Birgit VAN PUymbROECK, Yanrong WANG, Jianwei XU



