



Korean Literature and Culture

Dec 11, 2019 (Wednesday) 6-8pm, Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

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Translation, Transcoding, Code Switching?

Linguistic interfaces in Korean poetry of Chosŏn times

Abstract:

The language situation in Chosŏn times has been notoriously difficult to describe. The term diglossia which had provided the framework for the study of the relationship between the written medium of Literary Sinitic and the spoken and written Korean vernacular for many years has been “ditched” by Ross King with very good arguments, with no more suitable replacement having come forward yet. We observe equally chronic difficulties in understanding translation processes between the different linguistic codes available to Chosŏn literati. This presentation will attempt to add to the understanding of the purpose and function of such intertextual and interlinguistic practices, based on a hermeneutical distinction between the terms (and processes of) “translation”, i.e. making a text available to non-speakers of the source language; “transcoding”, i.e. transpositions from one linguistic code to another with conscious use of the codes’ properties; and “code switching”, i.e. making use of different linguistic codes within the same text. The sources used will be (vernacular) sijo and (Literary Sinitic) hansŏ that have been treated by modern scholarship as either “translation” or as “original work”, a distinction that will become blurred in the process.

Marion EGGERT (marion.eggert@rub.de) is professor of Korean Studies at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany (since 1999). She has published on Chinese and Korean thought and literature of late imperial and modern times, her topics including poetry and poetics, dream culture, travelogues, and the production and circulation of knowledge in pre-modern Korea. She received the Max Weber Award from the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities and is member of the Academia Europaea.