



Universiteit
Leiden

Proposal Title

Investigating the translation of code-switching by language and translation students: a Dutch-Spanish, Dutch-Portuguese and Dutch-English comparison

Applicants

Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably with an interdisciplinary approach.

| Supervisor Name | Discipline |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Dr. Susana Valdez (LUCL) | Translation Studies, decision-making processes in translation, Portuguese |
| Dr. M. Carmen Parafita Couto (LUCL) | Corpus linguistics, code-switching, Spanish |

Project description

Provide a brief description of the project (max. 300 words)

The use of several languages/dialects in the same conversation or sentence (known as *code-switching*) poses particular problems for translation. How can code-switching be translated? How do translation students solve these translation problems? And to what extent does this process differ from that of language students?

Previous research comparing translators with different levels of experience translating different text types has shown that translation problems are solved differently (e.g., Englund Dimitrova 2005). Little research however has been conducted comparing how translation students and language students solve the specific problem of code-switching.

To answer these questions a corpus of how translation students and language students in the Netherlands translate code-switching will be built. Data will be drawn from (1) Dutch language students of Spanish (n=15), Portuguese (n=10) and/or English (n=25), and (2) Dutch translation students of Spanish (n=15), Portuguese (n=10) and/or English (n=25)¹. First, we will ask the participants to translate a text. Second, after the translation is finished, participants will answer a questionnaire about the reasons behind their translation solutions.

The findings will (i) contribute to our understanding of code-switching in translation by speakers with different profiles (translation students vs. language students) and (ii) have pedagogical implications for the design of translation exercises.

¹ Target numbers reflect the testing possibilities, given the student numbers for each language at Leiden University.

Three novel aspects of this project are:

- (1) the study of the translation of code-switching;
- (2) the comparison of the production of translation students with language students in the Netherlands;
- (3) the investigation of translation production in the understudied pairs Dutch-Spanish and Dutch-Portuguese.

Works cited:

Englund Dimitrova, Birgitta. 2005. Expertise and Explicitation in the Translation Process. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Research Trainee Profile

Each proposal requests two Research Trainees. Describe the general tasks of the research trainees, how these tasks are academically challenging to the research trainees, whether they need any preliminary knowledge (regarding the topic and/or research methods) and which skills the research trainees should have. Also specify which type of students are eligible to apply (3rd year Ba, Ma, ResMa).

Eligible applicants should have knowledge of at least one of the source and target languages. Applications by both BA and MA/ResMA students are welcome.

The research trainees will be involved in all the steps of the project: design, recruitment of participants, data collection, data analysis and write-up of findings/research report. The trainees should be willing to learn how to work with different software, including software used for corpus analysis and questionnaire design. The trainees will also learn transferable skills such as project coordination and workshop organization.

Collaboration

If applicable: Describe how your research improves collaboration and cross-pollination between the disciplines involved (max. 300 words)

For the purposes of this project, the expertise in Portuguese and Spanish will be crucial to investigate the translation production of language pairs rarely studied -- Dutch-Spanish and Dutch-Portuguese--, the latter only available in the Netherlands at Leiden University. This collaboration also allows us to join theoretical and methodological expertise in two complementary but different fields of research: Corpus Linguistics and Translation Studies. Hence, the co-applicants (Valdez and Parafita Couto) are complementary empirically and theoretically. Valdez brings expertise in Translation Studies. Her research focuses on translators' decision-making processes, and how these are influenced by the expectations of the (linguistic) community. She investigates different text types and various translation agents with different levels of expertise using multi-method approaches, including product- and process-oriented methods. Parafita Couto's main line of research focuses on uncovering the linguistic patterns and strategies used by multilinguals as they switch seamlessly between their languages. She studies various types of multilinguals, differing in ages of acquisition and proficiency, using a variety of methodologies-- from conversational corpora to behavioural and electrophysiological measures. She has worked and supervised projects on code-switching across language pairs, including Spanish-Dutch and Portuguese-Dutch.

This interdisciplinary collaboration will strengthen the profile of Leiden University in the use of corpus linguistics to study translation and language acquisition. The proposed project will also offer trainees an unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in cross-disciplinary research in linguistics and translation.

Deliverables

Enumerate intended project results: papers, research proposals or otherwise. (max 200 words)

- (1) Joint paper in an international translation journal such as *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* (St. Jerome) or *Target: International Journal of Translation* (John Benjamins). Both trainees will be included as co-authors.
- (2) Online Workshop, part of the online series *Leiden Translation Talks*, on the translation of code-switching in Dutch-Spanish, Dutch-Portuguese and Dutch-English (<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/events/2019/series/leiden-translation-talk>).
- (3) The built corpus will be made available to the network of partner universities of the ongoing MUST project for comparative purposes with other language pairs (<https://uclouvain.be/en/research-institutes/ilc/cecl/must-partners.html>).
- (4) Links between Translation Studies (Valdez) and Latin American Studies (Parafita Couto) will be developed, and the possibility of a shared course on translation (Spanish/Portuguese/Dutch) to be offered for both degrees will be explored.
- (5) The results may also serve as a springboard for a funding application to the NWO PhD in the Humanities.

Planning

Provide a breakdown of the project into phases with tentative timing (max 150 words)

Months 1-2: Literature review, translation task design and questionnaire design

Month 3: Data collection (i.e. translations and questionnaires)

Month 4-6: Coding of corpus composed of the translations, and analysis of corpus and questionnaires

Month 7: Results write-up and online workshop

Student Application

Provide information on how to apply e.g. required documents for application (resume, motivation letter etc.) and an email address where student applications should be sent to.

Interested students should send an academic resume, indicating relevant courses they have taken, as well as a short motivation paragraph (max 100 words) to s.valdez@hum.leidenuniv.nl and m.parafita.couto@hum.leidenuniv.nl.