

# Opposites interact: Translation and non-translation in selected South African blogs

**Elri Marais**

*University of the Free State*

Reine Meylaerts

*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*

Caroline Mangerel

*University of the Free State*

Translation studies normally focuses on translation projects that were actually carried out and resulted in texts that can be analysed. Very often, these kinds of studies also focus on one particular level (e.g. the linguistic, the cultural or the ideological). In contrast, something that has not yet been given a great deal of attention, but could provide a different type of insight into the role of translation in a society and into the various relationships (e.g. between languages and between cultures) in that society, is what is *not* translated and why – for translation always also implies non-translation – and at what levels.

South Africa is a multilingual country where one may expect to find various examples of the interplay between translation and non-translation. This interplay may be particularly evident in recent language policy-related changes at various universities and in the discourse surrounding these changes. This topic has been explored in fields such as language policy and sociolinguistics as well as in non-academic environments such as blogs, often focusing on the issue of multilingualism, but not specifically in terms of translation/non-translation.

This paper explores how translation and non-translation function as opposing but complementary practices in blog posts about language policy changes in South African higher education. Using what Edgar Morin calls a paradigm of complexity (specifically his dialogical, recursive and holographic principles), and considering non-translation as both a practice and a topic, blog posts of South African origin and their translations are analysed to see, at various levels from micro to macro and back again, how (or whether) they have been translated/not translated. Observations from each level are related to those from higher and lower levels, covering aspects from the level of word choice to each blog as a whole to the South African higher education system more generally.