

# The trainee translator a ‘translaborator’? A study on translation quality, trainee and team behaviour

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Collaborative translation is gaining momentum in the academic debate on translation as well as in real-life practices (e.g. Alfter 2017, Jiménez-Crespo 2017). Whereas in the past, translation was seen as one man’s rendition of another man’s work, it is now considered a process that is firmly embedded in social and organisational structures. Some pioneers in the field of ‘translaboration’ have shed new light on the effects of socially and organisationally embeddedness of practices on translation quality. For instance, Jiménez-Crespo (2013) has shown that more “natural” translations can be obtained through collaborative processes, since teams can draw upon “mental corpora” (see also Hoey 2005). We will observe the process of translaboration from a somewhat different angle by zeroing in on simulated professional practices. We contend that translation practices at the workplace are also collaborative practices.

In this presentation, we will report on an experiment that has been conducted with translation students in 2018-2019. Building on some exploratory research on trainee translation quality and trainee behaviour (Van Egdome et al. 2018a, Van Egdome et al. 2018b, Verplaetse et al. 2018), we have tried to find out whether teams of trainee translators truly do produce better translations than peers who work on a task individually. To this end, we have evaluated 54 trainee translations and 11 team translations of a source text on health economics. Quality assessment was based on the Preselected Items Evaluation (or: PIE) method. This method requires a careful selection of source text items that are likely to produce errors in target texts. Evaluators draw up a list of correct and incorrect solutions and single out items that have a good p-value and an acceptable d-index score - these items are called docimologically justified items. PIE evaluation was partly performed in the evaluation module (alpha version) of translationQ.

For good measure, we have decided to enrich our textual data with logfiles of the translation processes of individual students and skills labs. Inputlog has been our tool of choice: this tool registers keystrokes, mouse movements and clicks, and provides invaluable information on writing and translation processes. Students were asked to log their translation processes and hand-in the log files along with their translation. Inputlog data were used to retrace the decision-making steps that were considered crucial in the genetics of each translation.

By combining product and process data, we hope to throw light not only on differences in output quality, but also on factors that can be considered drivers of translation quality.

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