



L2 translation practice in Spain: Report on a survey of professional translators

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Abstract: Recent research has shown that L2 translation —translation from the first language (L1) into the second language (L2)— is a regular practice in many countries where languages of limited diffusion are used. But is L2 translation an unusual task in major-language cultures? Is there an L2 translation market for these languages? This paper aims to report on a survey-based study that explores current L2 translation practice in Spain: a survey of over 200 L1-Spanish translators was conducted to gather information about their professional practice and their attitudes regarding directionality. Data collection method used consisted of a web-based questionnaire partially based on Roiss (2001) and administered directly on an Internet site. Multimodal methods of survey advertising and recruitment of respondents were used. Preliminary findings show that over 75% of translators, to a greater or lesser extent, engage in L2 translation, and that almost 20% do it more than half of their time, with English being by far the most widely translated L2. Additionally, responses suggest that more than half of the translators support L2 translation education in university settings.

Keywords: directionality, translation into the second language, L2 translation, translation into non-mother tongues, inverse translation.

1. Introduction

In popular belief, professional translators' linguistic competence in their working languages is symmetrical, which makes them sufficiently capable of translating texts from a foreign acquired language (L2) into the language they were born into and/or educated in (L1), or vice versa. In other words, it is vox populi that translators have no difficulty translating in both directions (Beeby Lonsdale, 2009), i.e., L1>L2 and L2>L1. This belief, however, contradicts the assumption held by many translation scholars and industry stakeholders (particularly in Western cultures) that the legitimate direction is from the translators' L2 into their L1.

According to Stewart (1999:41), translation into a second language (L2 translation) as a professional activity has been outlawed by renowned authorities in the field. Ladmiraal (1979:40-50), for instance, regards it only as a pedagogical exercise and even claims that this does not exist in professional practice: "*le thème n'existe pas*". Further, Newmark (1988:3) recognises that, in fact, most translators do translate out of their L1, but he refers to them as 'laughing stock of the industry' due to their unnatural and inaccurate renditions.

Likewise, not long ago the UK-based ITI¹ published a guide to buying translation services with the support of many other national professional bodies such as ASETRAD, ATA, and SFT². According to the ITI document, professional translators work into their L1, and those who do not obey this rule are “likely to be ignorant of other important quality issues as well” (ITI, 2012:16). Besides, in a section dealing with style, the reader is warned that non-native speakers, who are caricatured “struggling away with a grammar book in one hand and a dictionary in the other” (p. 8), will end up producing the same output as raw machine translation.

However, despite explicit opposition to L2 translation, empirical evidence suggests that this is a regular practice. This is especially true in the case of countries where so-called languages of limited diffusion are used (see, for example, Pavlović, 2007; Whyatt and Kościuczuk, 2013; Ličko, 2014; Piróth, 2016). But what is the situation in translation markets where languages of limited diffusion are not involved? Is L2 translation an unusual practice for professional translators whose L1 is a major language (e.g., Spanish)?

In this paper, we present the results of a survey-based study of directionality practice in Spain. First, we look at the findings from previous survey-based studies that have been conducted over the last two decades in Spain. We address the current status of L2 translation education at universities and analyse the codes of professional conduct of a number of Spanish associations of professional translators. Then we describe the methodology used for data gathering and present the findings from a survey conducted between the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. Finally, we draw some conclusions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. L2 translation in the Spanish translation sector

Although a growing number of studies have been conducted over the last twenty years, it can be claimed that the data available is not sufficient to accurately determine if at present L2 translation is a regular practice for Spanish translators. There is nevertheless some evidence suggesting that it is not unusual for translators whose L1 is Spanish to translate into their L2. What follows is a review of survey-based studies exploring L2 translation in Spain (for a more extended discussion on directionality in translation and interpreting, see Grosman et al. 2000, and Kelly et al. 2003).

Roiss (2001) conducted a survey of 230 professional translators and members of APETI³, 50 graduates from the University of Salamanca, and 50 translation agencies, and received 100 responses. Although she does not disaggregate the results for each group, of the total respondents who were surveyed, 84.4% claimed that they translate into their L2 languages to a greater or lesser extent. 41.1% of these stated that L2 translation represents about 10% of their workload, meanwhile 23.3% indicated that this translation direction accounts for about 25% of translation jobs completed. A small number of respondents (13.3%) expressed that L2 translation is equivalent to 50% of their

¹ Institute of Translation and Interpreting.

² *Asociación Española de Traductores, Correctores e Intérpretes*, American Translators Association, and *Société française des traducteurs*, respectively.

³ *Asociación Española de Traductores e Intérpretes* (APETI) was the main professional association for the whole of Spain at the time this study was conducted.

total income. Interestingly, 6.6% of professional translators reported translating more frequently into their L2 than into their L1.

Navas and Palomares (2002) investigated the situation of the Spanish translation sector in the digital context of the Internet. For that purpose, they surveyed 211 Spanish translation companies that at the time of the study offered their services online. 43 respondents returned the survey. Their responses showed that, on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always), L1 translation (3,9) and L2 translation (3,73) were the most in-demand professional services. In line with such evidence, both L1 and L2 would have a similar prevalence in the Spanish market. However, data about the background of translators who performed such tasks (especially in the case of L2 translation) was not described in this study. In this survey, English and French (72%) scored as the most demanded target languages, followed by German (69.7%) and Spanish (67.4%).

A study by Zimmerman (2007) recruited a sample of 54 translation students from five Spanish universities that at the time of the survey were taking or had taken a module on specialised translation practice (Spanish-German). In her analysis, she found that more than 50% of the respondents had provided L2 translation services during their internships in companies and external institutions, even before completing their translation degrees and graduating.

A small-scale study by Rodríguez-Inés (2008) surveying 35 self-employed professional translators whose L1 was Spanish found that 100% had been asked to provide translation services into English. Only 5% of those surveyed claimed that they had declined the offer. It is interesting to note that in this study, the clients who sought to buy L2 translations mainly comprised non-translation companies (48.3%) and individuals (40%), although they also included translation companies (8.3%) or institutions (3.3%). These results match the assumption that the general public might not be aware of translators' potential asymmetrical competences in their working languages.

The White Paper on Institutional Translation and Interpreting by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RITAP, 2012), regarded as an authorised reference for consultation on the status of translational activities in the public sector, drew on the input of 136 translators employed by a number of Spanish government ministries and agencies. This survey-based study found that more than 75% (106) of the respondents reported translating into their L2.

With the aim to track market variances, Lozano (2011) administered a survey based on the tool previously developed by Roiss (2001) to 160 translation agencies and 15 self-employed translators. Her final sample was composed of 32 (63%) self-employed translators, 6 (12%) salaried translators, and 13 (25%) owners and/or managers of translation companies. She found that around 75% of respondents provided L2 translation services, with 17% reporting that this translation direction accounts for more than 50% of their workload. The results match previous studies.

Another study based on a survey of 6 Spanish translation companies (Masseau, 2013) showed that 5 of them benefited most from translation services provided from Spanish into other languages rather than the reverse scenario. It is of interest that 2 out of these 6 translation companies acknowledged sporadically using the services of translators whose L1 do not always match the target languages of translation projects.

More recently, Gallego Hernández (2014) conducted a survey of around 4500 sworn translators. The final sample of L1-Spanish sworn translators consisted of 326 respondents. A Likert-type scale was used to measure the frequency of L2 translation services. Only 31% (93) of those who responded almost never or never translate into their L2. This means that around 70% of

translators translate into their L2 in different ranges of frequency (from sometimes to always). These results are consistent with the provisions of the Spanish Official State Gazette (BOE, 2020). Accordingly, sworn translators appointed by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Relations, European Union and Cooperation, who have normally passed a state exam in a specific language pair, are expected to translate into both their L1 and L2.

Lastly, a more recent study by Pérez Macías (2017) focused on L2 translation from Spanish (L1) into German (L2). The author found that 6 respondents out of a sample of 10 translators claimed translating into German as their L2, while 4 translated into German as their L3.

The most significant observation to emerge from these studies is that, contrary to most translation service providers claims that they “only work with carefully selected native speakers of the target language”, L2 translation is a task performed by both self-employed and salaried translators whenever circumstances demand it.

2.2. L2 translation in Spanish universities

In the last ten years, Spanish universities and translation education institutions alike have engaged in a process of curricular reform whose main goal was creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Translation Studies in Spain have witnessed the implementation of new Bachelor’s degrees —4-year undergraduate programmes—, and Master’s degrees —1-year postgraduate programmes— in accordance with the provisions of the Royal Decree 1393/2007 (BOE, 2007), which establishes the organisation of new official university studies adapted to the EHEA. Henceforth, higher education institutions have more autonomy to design and offer a certain degree without there being a prior catalogue established by the Spanish Government. As a result, university-degree programmes in Translation have established their own curriculum, thus leading to differences from one programme to another.

In one co-authored work (Horcas-Rufián and Kelly, 2020), we recently carried out a study that explores the extent to which provision has been made for L2 translation across new university curricula. Our analysis shows that because there is no legal requirement anymore to include a component devoted to developing translation students’ L2 translation competence, many programmes no longer provide training in this translation direction.

At the undergraduate level, 6 out of 28 Bachelor’s degree programmes do not provide any education in L2 translation, while 10 out of these 28 offer a minimum exposure to this direction, i.e., 6 compulsory ECTS credits. This would mean that more than 50% of current curricula offer no L2 translation training or the bare minimum.

At the postgraduate level, about half of Master’s degree programmes (12 out of 25) offer some sort of training in L2 translation, although the type and number of ECTS credits vary considerably. As a rule, L2 translation course units are elective. Exceptionally, 4 curricula include compulsory course units with a credit load that ranges from 2 to 8 ECTS. However, in most cases, this figure can be explained because L2 translation is normally a content of course units focusing on L1 translation, or course units offering both L1 and L2 translation practice.

In terms of working languages, the target languages taught at undergraduate level are English in every programme, French in 13, and German in 6. Only the University of Granada offers Arabic as a L2. It is interesting to note that half of degree programmes offer English as the only L2. Furthermore, English is the most prominent language at postgraduate level; it is not only the

sole L2 in a third of Master's degree programmes, but also the only one offered as a working language in all of them. It is followed by French (in 15), German (11), Arabic (5), Italian (4), Chinese (3), and Portuguese (2).

Being mindful of the data presented in the previous section, the fact that L2 translation education and training is scarce at Spanish universities appears to be at odds with the expectations of the translation sector in Spain.

2.3. L2 translation in Spanish codes of professional conduct

In recent years, translators' codes for professional practice have become a must-have document for associations of professional translators. Most associations now have a code that members are expected to follow, although translators who do not belong to a professional association may as well apply these codes' principles designed to aid translators in their daily work. Below we analyse how the so-called 'mother tongue principle' for translating has been incorporated in the codes of conduct of the six Spanish associations of professional translators that granted us access to survey their members (see survey-based study presented later in this paper).

The code of conduct of ASATI (*Asociación Aragonesa de Traductores e Intérpretes*) states that command of the working languages—including the mother tongue, which shall be the preferred target language—is prerequisite to any translation task and related activities, either spoken or written (ASATI, n.d.).

Meanwhile, ATRAE (*Asociación de Traducción y Adaptación Audiovisual de España*) advises that the translator shall be a master of the language into which they translate (known as target language), which should be their mother tongue or a language they use at a native level. If this is not the case, they shall commit to working closely with a native speaker of the target language (ATRAE, n.d.).

In the same vein, ASETRAD (*Asociación Española de Traductores, Correctores e Intérpretes*) similarly asserts that the translator shall possess an adequate knowledge of the language from which they translate and should, in particular, have excellent command of the language into which they are translating. In general, they shall neither seek nor accept work under conditions that fail to meet this standard, except if they can ensure optimum quality of the final product with the support of other professionals, such as qualified revisers (ASETRAD, n.d.).

Also, APTIC (*Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes de Cataluña*) recommends translation professionals to undertake work which they are competent to perform and in the languages for which they are qualified or have been trained to translate. In addition, APTIC's code of conduct further develops that both translators and revisers shall only accept assignments they can complete. This refers primarily to both their languages and fields of specialisation, but also to the resources they have, skills, level of comprehension and fluency. Additionally, the code determines that translation products should be revised by an individual who possesses suitable knowledge and qualifications—this shall be either provided by the contracting agency or outsourced (APTIC, n.d.).

Further, according to APTIJ (*Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados*), translators shall only render their services in the languages for which they have professional skills and may not do any translation work if they lack skills. Translators shall continuously improve their skills and knowledge and shall promote professionalism through activities such as continuous professional development (APTIJ, n.d.).

Finally, the professional standards published on the website of AGPTI (*Asociación Galega de Profesionais da Traducción e da Interpretación*) do not contain any reference to translation directionality. AGPTI's position on this matter, thus, remains unknown.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

An observational, descriptive, cross-sectional survey-type study, in the form of a self-administered questionnaire was conducted from November 2018 to January 2019. The purpose of this study was to investigate the current practice of professional L2 translation in Spain as well as professional translators' attitudes regarding translation directionality. The survey was built using Google Forms because of the software's ease of use, accessibility, and functionality. A total of 12 questions built upon the set of questions initially asked by Roiss (2001) were included in the survey. These questions cover demographic parameters (such as age, sex, education level, occupation, and years of experience), target L2, type of texts frequently translated, most common translation fields of specialisation, revision methods and procedures, and attitudes towards L2 translation in both translation education and professional practice. The survey questions are shown in the Appendix⁴. Data were registered in the Google Forms database server and analysed using Microsoft Excel.

3.2. Sampling methods and procedures

A multi-modal method of Internet-mediated survey advertising and recruitment of respondents in this study included: (1) survey invitations distributed via electronic email and/or newsletters of Spanish associations of professional translators. Table 1 highlights the number of members to whom survey invitations were sent as reported by 6 associations (additional associations⁵ were contacted via email, but they did not respond to our requests for survey invitation distribution to members). These figures were obtained through personal communication (February 2019). Information regarding recipients' membership to multiple associations is unknown given that the researcher did not have direct access to mailing lists. Consequently, a degree of overlap among members of these associations is likely, which means it is unclear how many translators were reached.

Bearing in mind that not all translators are members of professional associations, the following sampling method was adopted: (2) survey invitations placed on the social media networking website Twitter, using a targeted social media strategy. To minimise costs, an entirely cost-free approach was employed. Generic invitations and individual personal invitations were extended via the researcher's social media account. The free version of the computer application Followerwonk was used to identify the social media

⁴ The language used in the survey was Spanish, meaning that the translation into English presented in the Appendix is only provided for information purposes. The author would like to acknowledge with gratitude the good work done by Eleanor Staniforth, the translator.

⁵ ACE Traductores, ATIJC (*Asociación de Traductores e Intérpretes Jurados de Cataluña*), EIZIE (*Euskal Itzultzaile, Zuzentzaile eta Interpreteen Elkartea*), and XARXA (*Red de Traductores e Intérpretes de la Comunidad Valenciana*).

profiles of potential respondents likely to meet the eligibility criteria, searching the biographical data provided on Twitter users' profiles for the keywords 'translator' ('*traductor*'/'*traductora*'/'*traductores*' for the Spanish masculine, feminine and plural forms of the noun) and 'translation' ('*traducción*'), and the location 'Spain'. A list of relevant accounts of individuals was created and these became recruitment targets for this study. Tweets to potential participants were targeted by mentioning the targets' username —e.g., @username— in the tweet. Both general and individual personal invitations specifically included the request to share and further disseminate the invitation with further suitable professional networks. All the tweets sent contained a link to the survey website and used informal and friendly language. Thus, although survey invitations consisted of a brief outline of the study and who was required to answer the survey, one clear drawback is the total lack of control over which individuals or communities of interest would respond once the set of invitations was sent. Therefore, the figures presented below should be viewed as giving a general indication of current L2 translation practice in Spain rather than being numerically meaningful.

Table 1. Number of members by association of professional translators

Association	Members
APTIC - <i>Associació Professional de Traductors i Intèrprets de Catalunya</i>	400
APTIJ - <i>Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados</i>	92
ASATI - <i>Asociación Aragonesa de Traductores e Intérpretes</i>	61
ASETAD - <i>Asociación Española de Traductores Correctores e Intérpretes</i>	1087
ATRAE - <i>Asociación de Traducción y Adaptación Audiovisual de España</i>	300
AGPTI - <i>Asociación Galega de Profesionais da Traducción e da Interpretación</i>	100

Equally, sampling strategies did not target a particular segment of the Spanish translation sector but rather aimed to reach as many translators as possible. Inclusion criteria, as outlined in survey invitations, were that participants declare professional translation as their main occupation and participants' L1 be the variety of Spanish as spoken in Spain (as opposed to the Spanish spoken in the Americas).

4. Findings

4.1. Sample

A total of 232 responses were returned within a span of three months. 25 were discarded as not valid because they did not declare professional translation as their main occupation⁶ and, therefore, did not meet the eligibility criteria. Therefore, the sample for this study consisted of 207 professional translators. Respondents were primarily female (70%) over male (30%). The higher survey

⁶ Responses not included in this analysis reported foreign language/translation teaching as main occupation, as well as other activities such as client service involving translation and/or interpreting among other tasks.

response rate for women than men is in line with research on the employability of graduate students (see, for example, Ladrón Andrade, 2017).

Regarding work experience, most survey participants have been active for more than 5 years (over 70%), indicating that a high number of participants should be able to provide a clear statement of L2 translation demand. Participants who have between 6 and 10 years of translation work experience are a fairly large group as well, representing 24% of the overall sample

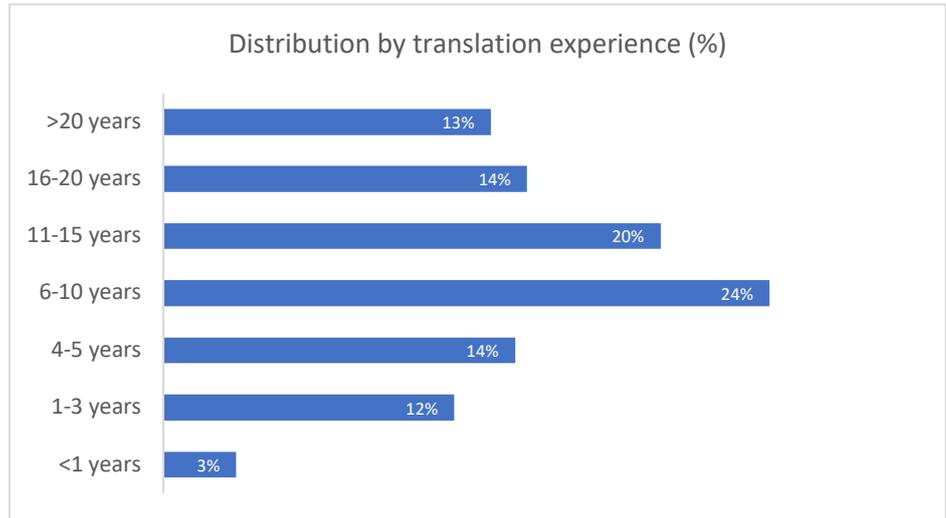


Figure 1. Sample distribution by translation experience (%)

Almost all the survey participants are highly educated: 99% hold at least one university/higher-education degree. The sample is heavily dominated by respondents with a university degree in Translation, who account for over 80% of total responses. Other respondents are also from a variety of different fields: Philology (8.70%), Law (1.93%), Business Sciences, History, Modern Languages or Journalism and Media (0.97% each) (Figure 2).

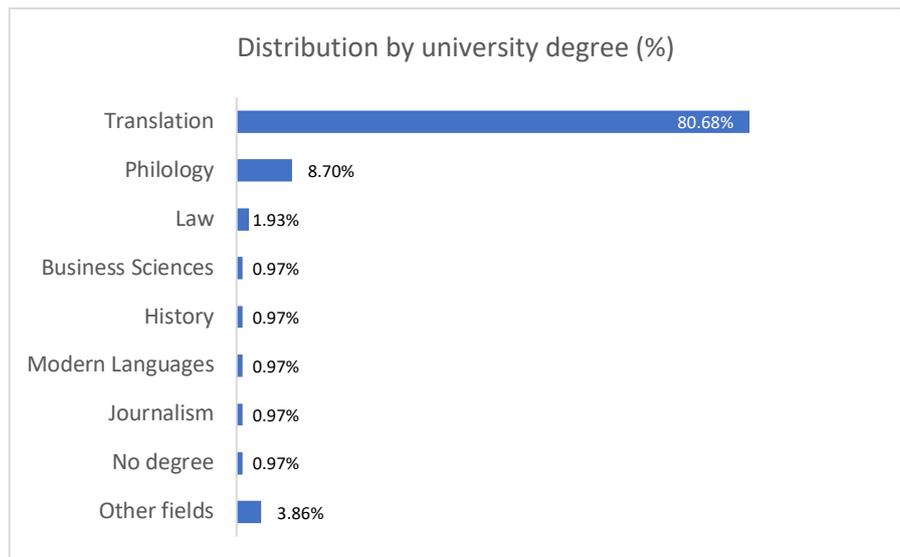


Figure 2. Sample distribution by university/higher-education degree (%)

In the sample, 99% of respondents said that they work as professional translators. The analysis showed that the vast majority 84.54% described themselves as being self-employed. Also, while 5.80% of them reported being employed by a government agency, a similar number (5.31%) indicated being in-house translators in a translation company. This percentage is slightly lower (3.38%) for the in-house translators employed in a non-translation company. The remaining almost 1% refers to linguists or computational linguists who claimed engaging in translational activities. The fact that our sample consists of respondents from different occupational backgrounds, working in a variety of settings and contexts (private (non-)translation companies as well as government departments, agencies or public bodies), means that the findings are not limited to a specific occupational status (Figure 3). Nevertheless, the main pattern that emerges in these data is that the majority of translators in Spain are self-employed. These results are in line with previous studies (for an analysis of self-employed entrepreneurs in the Spanish translation sector, see Gieure Sastre, 2016).

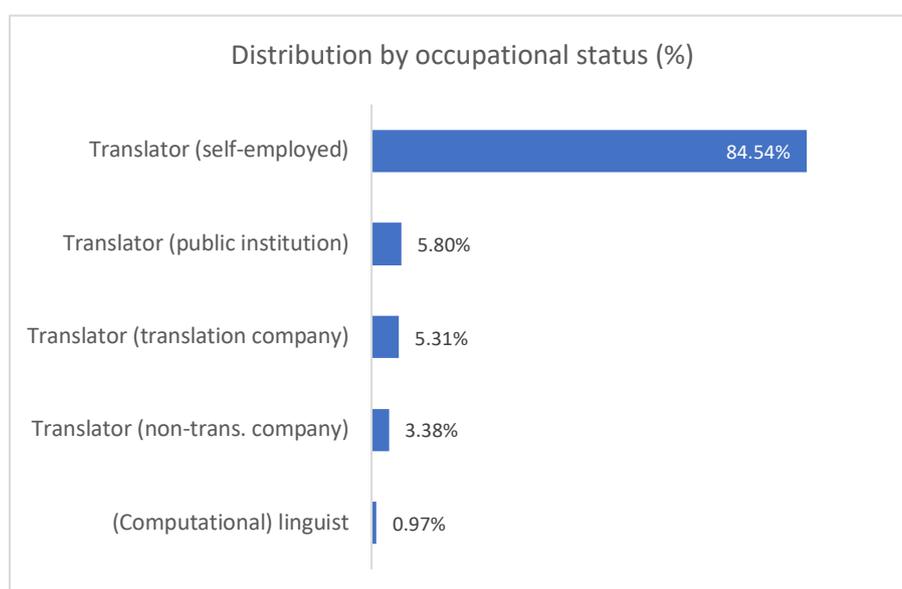


Figure 3. Sample distribution by occupational status (%)

4.2. L2 translation practice (%)

As presented in Table 2 below, almost 25% of the survey respondents reported that they never engage in L2 translation. However, over 75% said that they translate into their L2 to a greater or lesser extent. Of these, as many as 57.49% claimed that L2 translation accounts for 1-50% of their total workload. Translators who fall within this group can be subdivided into those who indicated that: (1) L2 translation accounts for 10% or less of their workload (34.30%); (2) L2 translation accounts for 10-25 % of their workload (9.66%); (3) L2 translation accounts for 26-50 % of their workload (13.53%). Another 17.87% of translators say that L2 translation represents more than 50% of their total workload.

The first two columns of Table 2 show a detailed account of the respondents' workload for L2 translation. The figures in the second column indicate the number of participants who reported working into their L2 the percentage of time stated in the first column. Columns 3 and 4 show collapsed

figures for the three groups (0%, equal or less than 50%, and greater than 50%, respectively).

Table 2. Sample distribution by L2 translation workload (%)

L2 translation workload (%)	No. of survey respondents	Collapsed figures (%)	
0%	51	0%	24.63%
≤10%	71	≤50%	57.49%
>10%	20		
>25%	28		
>50%	37	>50%	17.87%
Total answers	207		

Importantly, L2 translation seems to be a common practice especially among in-house translators in both non-translation companies and government agencies: for more than half of the survey respondents who reported working in a non-translation company or government agency (57.14% and 58.33%, respectively), L2 translation makes up more than 50% of their total workload.

4.3. Target L2

The respondents reported the following L2 as languages they most frequently translate into when their source language is Spanish: English (80.77% of survey respondents), French (15.38%), German (9.62%), Arabic (5.13%), Catalan (5.13%), Galician (2.56%), Russian (2.56%), Italian (1.92%), Portuguese (1.92%), Modern Greek (1,28%). Basque, Czech, Dutch, and Romanian were mentioned once each. As highlighted by Figure 4, English is by far the most intensive L2, followed by French and German. In addition, it is interesting to note over 15% of respondents reported translating into more than one L2, and over 6% said that they translated into at least two L2. Of these, 90% indicated that English was one of the L2 they normally translate into. This is probably because English is the L2 most frequently taught in translation curricula at Spanish universities (Horcas-Rufián and Kelly, 2020).

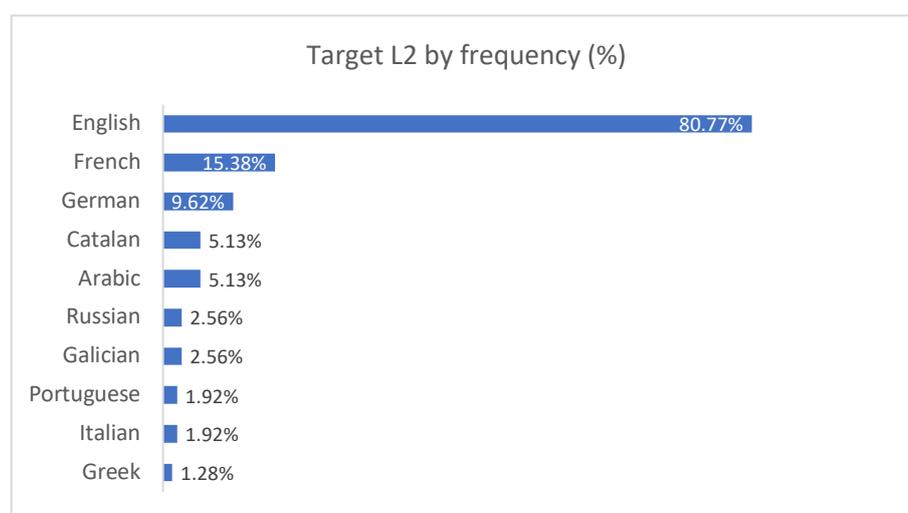


Figure 4. Target L2 by frequency (%)

4.4. Types of texts

Types of texts commonly translated as part of L2 translation assignments may be a very significant matter for translator education, however, research on these has often been neglected by previous studies on the practice of L2 translation in Spain. The list depicted in figure 7 is a starting point: it presents a summary of the types of texts that have been translated in the past by our sample of L2 translators. Our analysis shows that certificates rank as the most frequent type of text in L2 translation (as reported by over 50% of the 156⁷ respondents who said that they translate into their L2 to a greater or lesser degree). Contracts, agreements, corporate statutes, meeting minutes and other legal instruments (e.g., judgments, court rulings, police statements, indictments, summons, criminal accusations, complaints, or letters rogatory) also seem to be frequent types of texts as stated by 20% to 37% of the answers). Correspondence and internal communication is also regarded as another frequent type of text in the L2 direction (over 30%). Other relevant types of texts are those belonging to the advertising (e.g., brochures and prospects, product descriptions, catalogues) and technical domains (e.g., annual accounts and financial statements, data sheets, accounting documents such as invoices, payslips, payment documents, and budgets).

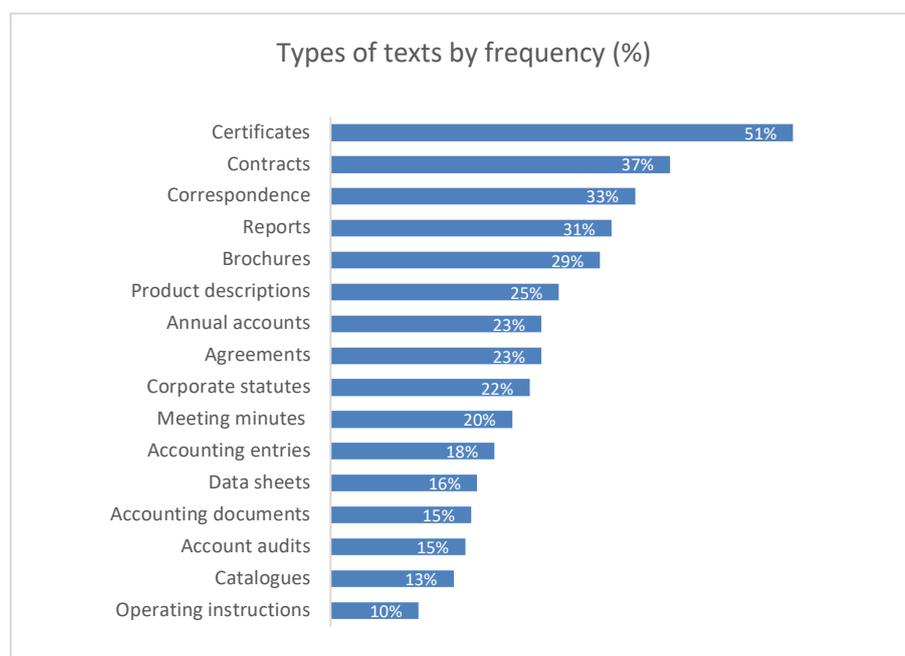


Figure 5. Types of texts by frequency (%); for brevity, percent values <10 are not shown

Despite the low frequency, it is worth mentioning that audiovisual texts were reported by some respondents (6%). This category was coded during the analysis: as per these respondents, certain audiovisual products such as scripts or subtitles are translated into English as a *relais* language. Later, this translation is into multiple target languages. This is a case where L2 translation is used to produce a semi-elaborated product, i.e., a suboptimal translation in Prunč's (2003) terms.

⁷ This is the total number of translators who reported engaging in L2 translation.

4.5. Translation fields/specialties

Survey respondents were also asked about the fields of specialisation they most frequently worked in when translating into their L2. The most demanded fields reported are listed from the most frequent to the least frequent in Figure 6. Up to over 30% of the respondents said that they regularly translate texts that belong to legal areas such as Civil Law (32.05%), Administrative Law (26.92%), Commercial Law (20.51%), Financial and Tax Law (17.31%), Criminal Law (16.67%), Procedural Law (14.74%), and Intellectual Property Law (8.97%). Other specialties that show a high observation frequency are Education (25%), Travel and Tourism (16.67%), Economics and Finance (16.03%), Banking (12.18%), and Building (10.26%). It should be noted, however, that translation fields mentioned are many and varied.

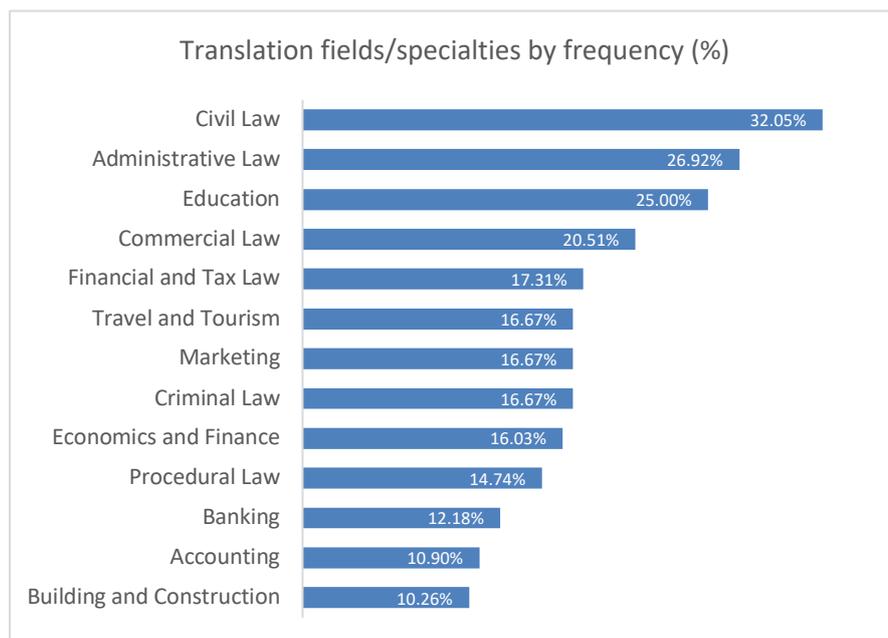


Figure 6. Translation fields/specialties by frequency (%); for brevity, percent values <10 are not shown

4.6. Revision and quality assurance methods

While firm opponents to L2 translation would generally agree that this practice may be tolerable provided that a second translator —i.e., a native speaker of the target language— revises the non-native speaker’s produced translation, it is also important to note that the translation standard ISO 17100 (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2015) specifies that all translation services must include both translation and revision. The translator will translate a text and they will self-revise their own work for possible semantic, grammatical and spelling issues, and for omissions and other errors, as well as ensuring compliance with any relevant translation project specifications. Then, a person other than the translator will revise. However, while the cross-check principle (the so-called ‘four-eyes principle’) is explicitly included in the standard, the native-speaker principle is disregarded.

We asked translators how they revised their L2 translations. 60% of the respondents who submitted an answer to this question (93 out of 156⁸) reported

⁸ This is the total number of translators who reported engaging in L2 translation.

that they normally read and revise their translations (i.e., self-revision). For about half of these, self-revision is the only quality assurance procedure before delivering a L2 translation. The other half said that they self-revise their translation and additionally have it checked by a third-party (a L2 (non-)native speaker, or an unknown third-party). On the other hand, revision by a L2 native speaker was reported by 47.44% of the respondents, either as a stand-alone procedure or in combination with self-revision, while revision by a third party who is unknown to the translator (normally, via a translation/non-translation company) or by a non-native speaker are used to a lesser degree by 17.95% and 10.9% of the respondents, respectively. Table 3 summarises the number of respondents who reported using each revision and quality assurance procedure, exclusively or in combination with other procedures.

Table 3. Revision and quality assurance procedures per respondents (%).

Revision and quality assurance procedures	Respondents (%)
Self-revision, i.e., the revision is conducted by the translator her/himself	60%
The translation is revised by a third-party, i.e., L2 native speaker.	47.44%
The translation is revised by a third-party (unknown)	17.95%
The translation is revised by a third-party, i.e., L2 non-native speaker.	10.9%

4.7. Attitudes towards L2 translation

Finally, our 207 survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the fact that some Spanish universities teach L2 translation: did they consider convenient to train translation students in this translation direction, or would it seem more reasonable to use these course units to improve their foreign language skills? Insights resulting from the only open-ended question in the survey are summarised as follows.

Of the 183 respondents who gave an answer to this question, 34% said that, overall, translators should not translate into a language other than their L1. They believe that L2 translation course units offered within university translation curricula should be intended as an aid to improving L2 skills and should never promote this direction in professional practice. Getting acquainted with translational strategies from ‘a different perspective’ was seen as the ‘silver lining’. Additionally, some respondents pointed out to the value of L2 translation course units for exchange students, whose L1, in some cases, match the target language of the class. Opposition to the L2 direction in professional practice was mainly based on economic grounds: it is not a cost-effective practice because the translation process is more demanding on time and resources (provided that the revision is outsourced to a native speaker of the L2).

However, respondents also acknowledged that, in some instances, L2 translation may have advantages e.g., due to the complexity of the source text. Other reasons such as client engagement or regular clients’ ad-hoc needs, including budget constraints, were mentioned too (e.g., even in today's globalised translation market, rates charged differ across language pairs and target languages). In the former case —source text complexity—, translators would deem appropriate to accept an L2 translation assignment for as long as they have a firm commitment to keeping a certain client content and are not able

to outsource the assignment to another colleague. In the second case, translators would provide a product that meets their client's needs (i.e., a 'fit-for-purpose translation', which does not mean faultlessly. Interestingly, many of these respondents recognised that they occasionally work into their L2.

In contrast, 66% of the respondents think that L2 translation is relevant for overall translator education. Most believe that, although not ideal, the practice of L2 translation responds to an existing demand in the translation sector, especially in language pairs including English. Therefore, L2 translation in university curricula should not be used as a simplistic tool to improve students' L2 skills. In fact, a number of respondents suggested that, if the market demands translators to be prepared for this type of task, there should be a minimum number of compulsory course units focused on this translation direction.

5. Conclusions

The aim of our study was to explore the current practice of professional L2 translation in Spain as well as professional translators' attitudes towards directionality in a translation sector that does not involve minority languages or languages of limited diffusion. For this purpose, a self-administered questionnaire partially based on Roiss (2001) was developed and a survey-based study was conducted for a 3-month period, from November 2018 to January 2019.

Although it is recognised that the data reported here may or may not be indicative of L2 translation practice in Spain due to shortcomings in the methodology used and resulting sample, our observations suggest that a substantial number of L1-Spanish translators, to a greater and lesser extent, engage in L2 translation practice in order to meet market demands. This is especially the case for in-house translators who work in non-translation companies or government agencies.

In view of the gap between theory and practice in L2 translation, there seems to be a need for a less prescriptive approach to the regulation of translators' activities in codes of professional conduct, most of which are extensively based on the so called 'mother tongue principle', a golden rule of translation in many settings. Likewise, the issue of directionality in translation practice also touches on another important subject: the challenge to shift 'from rule to role' in translation education, i.e., from a paradigm centered on traditional axioms of L2 translation to an approach based in practice-oriented needs.

The results of our study are encouraging enough to justify further research into L2 translation practice in Spain and/or other similar contexts involving majority languages. We suggest that a potential better study should survey a larger, randomly selected sample of translators.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire: L2 translation from Spanish to a foreign language as a professional activity in Spain

The information that you provide in this questionnaire will be extremely useful in allowing us to achieve our research objectives: to understand and report on the current status of L2 translation from Spanish to other languages as a professional activity in Spain. This questionnaire is intended for translators only (interpreting is considered to be a different professional activity for the purposes of this study). For more information about this research project, please contact Sara Horcas-Rufián (PhD student at the Universidad de Granada) by email at shorcas@ugr.es.

1. Are you... ?

Tick one answer only.

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you?

Tick one answer only.

- Under 21
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- Over 70
- Other:

3. What did you study at university?

Tick all the answers that apply. If necessary, use the 'other' option to add a new category.

Please select all relevant answers.

- Translation
- Philology Studies
- Modern Languages
- Other:

4. What is your current main occupation?

If necessary, use the 'other' option to add a new category.

Tick one answer only.

- In-house translator (translation company)
- In-house translator (non-translation company)
- In-house translator (public institution)
- Translator (self-employed)
- Other:

5. How many years' professional experience do you have as a translator?

Tick one answer only.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- More than 20 years
- Other:

6. What percentage of your work is L2 translation?

If you answer 0%, please go to question 12 (open-ended question).

Tick one answer only.

- 0%
- ≤ 10%
- > 10%
- > 25%
- > 50%
- Other:

7. Which language(s) do you translate into when you do L2 translation?

Tick all the answers that apply. Use the 'other' option to add as many categories as you need to.

Please select all relevant answers.

- Arabic
- Aranese/Occitan
- Basque
- Catalan/Valencian/Balearic
- Chinese
- English
- French
- Galician
- German
- Greek
- Italian
- Japanese
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Other:

8. Based on their content, what types of texts do you translate from Spanish into a foreign language or languages?

Tick all the answers that apply. Use the 'other' option to add as many categories as you need to.

Please select all relevant answers.

- Administrative texts
- Humanities texts
- Journalistic texts
- Legal texts
- Literary texts
- Marketing texts
- Scientific texts
- Technical texts
- Other:

9. In which specialist areas do you translate from Spanish into another foreign language or languages?

Tick all the answers that apply. Use the 'other' option to add as many categories as you need to.

Please select all relevant answers.

- Accounting
- Administrative law

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aerospace engineering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anatomy and physiology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anthropology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aquaculture and fishing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Astronomy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Automotive technology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Banking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biochemistry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Botany
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chemical engineering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chemistry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cinema
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civil and hydraulic engineering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civil law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer hardware
<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer software
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction and public works
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cosmetics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Criminal law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dentistry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ecology and environmental science
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economics and finance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical engineering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial and tax law
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forestry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gastronomy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Genetics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geography and cartography
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geophysics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glass and ceramics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	History
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hunting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Immunology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial engineering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial relations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insurance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intellectual property law
<input type="checkbox"/>	International development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linguistics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Literary theory
<input type="checkbox"/>	Literature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Livestock farming
<input type="checkbox"/>	Machinery and tools

- Marketing
- Mathematics and statistics
- Mechanical engineering
- Medical equipment
- Metallurgy and steelmaking
- Microbiology
- Military and arms sector
- Mining
- Music
- Nuclear engineering
- Nutrition
- Oceanography
- Oil, gas, and coal
- Pharmaceuticals
- Philosophy
- Photography
- Physics
- Plastics
- Politics
- Procedural law
- Psychology and psychiatry
- Publicity and public relations
- Publishing
- Radiology
- Religion
- Sociology
- Sport
- Stock exchange
- Telecommunications
- Television and radio
- Textile and fashion sector
- Theatre
- Toxicology
- Transport
- Travel and tourism
- Veterinary science
- Video games
- Wood industry
- Zoology
- Other:

10. What types of texts do you translate from Spanish into another foreign language or languages?

Tick all the answers that apply. Use the 'other' option to add as many categories as you need to.

Please select all relevant answers.

- Accounts audits
- Advertising leaflets/brochures
- Agreements
- Annual accounts/financial statements
- Catalogues
- Certificates

- Contracts
- Corporate statutes
- Data sheets
- Instruction manuals
- Internal correspondence/communication
- Invoices/payslips/payment documents
- Meeting minutes
- Product descriptions
- Quotes
- Registry entries
- Reports
- Other:

11. How do you usually go about revising your L2 translation assignments?

Please select all relevant answers.

- Your translation (from Spanish to another language) is revised by a native speaker of the language you are translating into.
- Your translation (from Spanish to another language) is revised by a non-native speaker of the language you are translating into.
- Your translation (from Spanish to another language) is revised but you do not know who is responsible for revising the translation
- You revise your own translation.
- Other:

12. Almost all Translation degrees in Spain offer course units on translation from Spanish to one or more foreign languages. Do you believe that there is a need for these course units, or do you think that their only purpose is to improve students' foreign language skills as translators should not work into languages other than their native language?
