

# A corpus-based study of loan words in original and translated texts<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The use of loan words has long been a theme surrounded by controversy. In monolingual settings, speakers of one language may use words belonging to another language when they fail to retrieve an equivalent way of expressing the same concept in their own language, or they may use loan words on purpose, to evoke meanings that go beyond the mere propositional content of the words used. While the former is seen by purists as a sign of language impoverishment and loss, the latter is frequently associated with erudition and language enrichment. Going beyond individual opinions, different language communities also have different attitudes towards the use of loans. In France, for example, there have been attempts to legislate against the use of English: Loi Bas-Lauriol (1975) and loi Toubon (1994). In the Netherlands, however, English words are generally not seen as a threat (Booij 2001).

Leaving monolingual settings aside, in translation the use of loan words is generally associated with strategies for dealing with culturally-bound concepts that are difficult to translate, and with deliberate ways of showing respect for the source-text language culture. There is some disagreement, however, on the extent to which loans should be used. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) refer to *emprunts* as a way of filling in a semantic gap in the translation language or of adding local colour to the translation text, and classify it as the easiest (though not necessarily the best) way of dealing with culture-specific concepts. Newmark (1988:82) advises trainee translators to borrow words from the source language (a procedure which he calls *transference*) judiciously, reasoning that "it is the translator's job to translate, to explain". Venuti (1995), who argues that in the present Anglo-American tradition translated fiction is judged acceptable when it is "domesticated" to the point that it does not read like a translation, specifies that one of the factors that makes translations more domesticated

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is the avoidance of foreign words. Notwithstanding this tradition, Venuti adopts a position similar to Schleiermacher (1813) in that he is in favour of emphasizing the foreign quality of translated fiction and encourages other translators to follow suit.

Another factor that might affect translators' individual decisions as to whether or not they should borrow words from the source text is the relative prestige or hegemony of the language and culture from which they are translating. For Toury (1995:278), the tolerance of interference – and we can include the interference of foreign words here – is likely to be greater "when translation is carried out from a 'major' or highly prestigious language/culture".

Irrespective of the extent to which translators' decisions to borrow words from another language are influenced by the relative status of the language and culture of the source text, and whether these decisions are intentional or a last resort for want of a better solution, it is important to remember that the use of foreign words is not a prerogative of translational language. When analysing the use of foreign words in translation, it therefore makes sense to bear in mind how foreign words are used in texts that are not translations. There do not seem to be any studies, however, that compare how loan words are used in translations and in texts that are not translations. Is there a tendency for there to be more loans in translations than in source texts? Is the superimposition of languages in source texts effaced by translation? Does the relative status of the source-text language and culture affect the use of loan words in translation?

Without the help of a corpus, any attempt to address questions such as these systematically would be practically impossible. In the present study, the COMPARA corpus (available at <http://www.linguateca.pt/COMPARA/>) was used to examine the use of loan words in original and translated extracts of published fiction in English and Portuguese. The analysis focuses on the frequency of use and on the language distribution of loans in translational and non-translational fiction in English and Portuguese. This is an exploratory study, and it is hoped that the results may contribute to our understanding of the relationship between loan words and translation.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Text selection

COMPARA is a parallel, bidirectional corpus of English and Portuguese. The corpus is extensible and the present study was based on version 6.0, which contained over two million words of published fiction from 56 pairs of (randomly selected) text extracts of unequal lengths. Although all translations but one in version 6.0 of COMPARA were published less than thirty years ago, the source texts in the corpus cover a wide span of publication dates, with the oldest text dating from 1837. Rather than use all texts in the corpus, it was deemed important to restrict the corpus to more recent texts only. Because the use of loan words is bound to change over time, with some being accommodated into the borrowing language and others being replaced by vernacular forms, only texts published in the last thirty years (from 1975 onwards) were utilized in the present study.

Tables 1 and 2 indicate the texts in the corpus that satisfied this criterion and were used in the analysis: 15 original Portuguese fiction extracts, 13 original English fiction extracts<sup>2</sup>, 15 extracts of Portuguese fiction translated into English and 15 extracts of English fiction translated into Portuguese<sup>3</sup>. Although all texts analysed were published in the last thirty years, not all them are set at this period of time. For example, the plot of PPMC1 takes place in the third century, EURZ1 is set in the sixteenth century and EBJB2 begins with the story of Noah's Ark. Also, although all source texts were originally written in English or Portuguese, not all stories take place in English and Portuguese-speaking worlds. PBPC1 takes place in Spain and North Africa, EBJT2 is partly set in Spain, and most scenes of EBJB1 are in France. Although these factors may naturally affect the way loan words are used, they are also typical of fiction. It wouldn't make sense to exclude these texts from the analysis simply because they are not set in contemporary English or Portuguese speaking worlds: what matters here is that they were written by modern English and

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<sup>2</sup> Two of which (EBDL1 and EBDL3) are aligned with two different translations each.

<sup>3</sup> One pair of texts published in the last thirty years (EURZ2) had to be excluded from the analysis because the translation was based on a different, earlier version of the source text; the two were so different that it was not possible to compare them fairly.

Portuguese-speaking writers and that they are read by English and Portuguese-speaking readers of today.

Having said this, it must nevertheless be noted that while the English side of the sample includes the work of five authors and ten translators, the Portuguese side contains texts by twelve authors and eleven translators. It is therefore likely that the Portuguese part of the sample reflects more individual differences than the English one.

Another factor that needs to be mentioned is that Portuguese from Brazil, Portugal, Mozambique and Angola, and English from the United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States are unequally represented in the sample (details about language variety are available at <http://www.linguateca.pt/COMPARA/Contents.html>).

Although it is recognized that it is not only possible but also likely that different varieties of English and Portuguese may use loan words differently, it fell beyond the scope of this study to extend the study to such a level of detail.

Provided one does not lose sight of the above issues, it is felt that an analysis based on the data available can shed some light on some of the broader differences regarding the use of loans in original and translated contemporary fiction in English and Portuguese.

<b>Text ID</b>	<b>Author/Source Text</b>	<b>ST date</b>	<b>Translator/Translation Text</b>	<b>TT date</b>
PBAD2	Autran Dourado <i>Os Sinos da Agonia</i>	1975	John Parker <i>The Bells of Agony</i>	1988
PPCP1	Cardoso Pires <i>Balada da Praia dos Cães</i>	1983	Mary Fitton <i>Ballad of Dog's Beach</i>	1986
PBCB1	Chico Buarque <i>Benjamim</i>	1995	Cliff Landers <i>Benjamin</i>	1997
PPJS1	Jorge de Sena <i>Sinais de Fogo</i>	1978	John Byrne <i>Signs of Fire</i>	1999
PPJSA1	José Saramago <i>Ensaio Sobre a Cegueira</i>	1995	Giovanni Pontiero <i>Blindness</i>	1997
PAJA1	J.Eduardo Agualusa <i>A Feira dos Assombrados</i>	1992	Richard Zenith <i>Shadowntown</i>	1994
PBMR1	Marcos Rey <i>Memórias de um Gigolô</i>	1986	Cliff Landers <i>Memoirs of a Gigolo</i>	1987
PPMC1	Mário de Carvalho <i>Um Deus Passeando pela Brisa da Tarde</i>	1994	Gregory Rabassa <i>A God Strolling in the Cool of the Evening</i>	1997

PMMC1	Mia Couto <i>Vozes Anoitecidas</i>	1987	David Brookshaw <i>Voices Made Night</i>	1990
PMMC2	Mia Couto <i>Cada Homem é uma Raça</i>	1990	David Brookshaw <i>Every Man is a Race</i>	1993
PBPM1	Patrícia Melo <i>O Elogio da Mentira</i>	1988	Cliff Landers <i>In Praise of Lies</i>	1999
PBPC2	Paulo Coelho <i>O Diário de um Mago</i>	1987	Alan Clarke <i>The Pilgrimage</i>	1992
PBPC1	Paulo Coelho <i>O Alquimista</i>	1988	Alan Clarke <i>The Alchemist</i>	1993
PBRF2	Rubem Fonseca <i>A Grande Arte</i>	1983	Ellen Watson <i>High Art</i>	1987
PBRF1	Rubem Fonseca <i>Vastas Emoções e Pensamentos Imperfeitos</i>	1988	Cliff Landers <i>The Lost Manuscript</i>	1997

**Table 1.** Portuguese originals and English translations analysed

TEXT ID	Author	ST date	Translator	TT date
EBDL1T1	David Lodge	1995	M. Carmo Figueira <i>Terapia</i>	1997
EBDL1T2	<i>Therapy</i>		Lídia C-Luther <i>Terapia</i>	1995
EBDL3T1	David Lodge	1975	Helena Cardoso <i>A Troca</i>	1995
EBDL3T2	<i>Changing Places</i>		Lídia C-Luther <i>Invertendo os Papéis</i>	1998
EBDL5	David Lodge <i>Paradise News</i>	1991	Carlos G. Babo <i>Notícias do Paraíso</i>	1992
EBDL2	David Lodge <i>Nice Work</i>	1989	M. Carlota Pracana <i>Um almoço nunca é de graça</i>	1996
EBDL4	David Lodge <i>How Far Can You Go?</i>	1980	Helena Cardoso <i>How Far Can You Go?</i>	1997
EBJT1	Joanna Trollope <i>Next of kin</i>	1996	Ana F. Bastos <i>Parentes próximos</i>	1998
EBJT2	Joanna Trollope <i>A Spanish Lover</i>	1993	Ana F. Bastos <i>Um Amante Espanhol</i>	1999
EBJB1	Julian Barnes <i>Flaubert's parrot</i>	1989	José Lima <i>O papagaio de Flaubert</i>	1990
EBJB2	Julian Barnes <i>A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters</i>	1984	Ana M. Amador <i>A História do Mundo em 10 Capítulos e ½</i>	1988
ESNG2	Nadine Gordimer <i>Burger's Daughter</i>	1979	J. Teixeira Aguilar <i>A filha de Burger</i>	1992
ESNG3	Nadine Gordimer <i>July's People</i>	1981	Paula Reis <i>A Gente de July</i>	1986
ESNG1	Nadine Gordimer <i>My Son's Story</i>	1990	Geraldo G. Ferraz <i>A História do Meu Filho</i>	1992
EURZ1	Richard Zimler <i>The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon</i>	1998	José Lima <i>O Último Cabalista de Lisboa</i>	1996

**Table 2.** English originals and Portuguese translations analysed

## 2.2 Counting loans

COMPARA's Complex Search facility allows users to retrieve foreign words from specific texts in the corpus automatically. It must be noted, however, that "The boundaries dividing what an author or translator (not to mention a corpus maker) considers or not to be foreign is by no means clear-cut." (Frankenberg-Garcia & Santos, 2003:79). In COMPARA, only words and expressions in a language other than the main language of the corpus text that have been highlighted (usually in italics) by the author or the translator are marked foreign. This means that in an English text where words like *coupé* and *décolletage* are not highlighted but *manqué* and *passé* are, only the latter are marked foreign. The automatic analysis of foreign words is therefore based on what the author or translator (or their publishers) – and not the corpus maker or user - considered foreign enough to deserve highlighting.<sup>4</sup> This procedure means that it is possible to find the same word marked foreign in some texts in the corpus but not in others. The originally Czech word *robot*, for example, is marked foreign in the Portuguese texts in the corpus but not in the English ones, where it appears to be fully integrated. It is particularly important to point out that there may be words marked foreign in some texts but not in others even when these texts are in the same language. The word *jeans*, for example, is marked foreign in ten Portuguese texts (nine translations and one source text), but is left unmarked in three of them (one translation and two source texts). While the former are considered to have used the word as a loan, the latter are regarded as having accommodated it into Portuguese. This non-trivial example illustrates the existing divide between what different members of a given a language community consider to be a loan, and emphasizes the fact that, instead of using external parameters to establish which words should be considered loans, the present study reflects the opinions of the authors and translators (and the editorial policies) represented in the corpus.

It must also be noted that although it is common practice not to translate the titles of literary works, plays, films, songs, names of institutions and so on that do not have a recognized translation in the target language culture (Newmark 1988), the present study is not about whether or not such things have a recognized translation in the

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the older texts in COMPARA contain no highlighted foreign words because they were obtained from the Gutenberg Project in text format. As these texts were published more than thirty years ago, none of them were included in the present analysis.

target language culture. Thus untranslated titles like *L' année dernière à Marienbad* and named entities – i.e., names of people, places, products, organizations - such as *Radio One* and *Snakes and Ladders* (left untranslated in the Portuguese texts) were not counted as loans. In other words, only the words in a language other than the main language of the text that do not qualify as titles or named entities were taken into account. Concordances containing words marked as foreign in the texts selected for this study were therefore retrieved automatically but then had to be filtered manually so as to exclude named entities and titles from the analysis.

Expressions consisting of more than one foreign word were counted as a single loan in the same way as an isolated word. For example:

EBJB2  
 ...he was going to get the best **quid pro quo** out of God in the forthcoming negotiations.  
 = 1 loan

EBJT2  
 `I shall bring **tapas** also,´ José said, moving towards the door.  
 = 1 loan

EBDL4  
 Between the chicken **alla cacciatore** and the **zabaglione** he reached across the table and covered her hand with his.  
 = 2 loans

Quotations in a foreign language were also counted as a single loan:

EURZ1  
 ...a weedy boy with pale-green eyes yells at her in a prideful voice, « **Vai-te foder, vaca!** , fuck off, cow!»  
 = 1 loan

EBJB1  
 ...he found himself constantly irritated by a parrot which screamed, `**As-tu déjeuné, Jako?**´ and `**Cocu, mon petit coco .**´  
 = 2 loans

However, sequential lists of foreign words were counted as separate loans. For example:

PBPM1  
**Urutus , jararacas , cascavéis , jararacuçus , surucutingas , cotiaras** -- I saw these and many other serpents in the slides that Melissa projected during her talk.  
 = 6 loans

Repetitions were also counted separately:

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EBJT2
`The little eggs of the codoniz , what is the codoniz ?`
= 2 loans
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### 2.3 Sorting loans

The loans identified in the texts selected for the analysis were first counted and then sorted by language. When sorting by language it was crucial to take the co-text of the loans into account. Thus a word like *lei*, which at first sight appeared to be Italian, ended up being classified as Hawaiian once the co-text enabled one to establish that it referred to the flower necklace used in Hawaii. Likewise, the word *querida*, whose meaning and spelling is exactly the same in Spanish and Portuguese, could only be classified as Spanish after the co-text indicated that the fictional character using it was a Spaniard speaking his native language in Spain. It is also important to note that the criterion used for sorting the loans by language was the origin of the word rather than how the word entered the language. Thus in a Portuguese text the word *robot* was classified as Czech, even though it may have been indirectly borrowed from French. Words which were used in italics despite widespread accommodation into the borrowing language were classified according to their origins – thus the word *moussaka*, which has become generalized to the point that it appears in several English language dictionaries, was catalogued as Greek. This last example draws once again attention to the fact that different members of a given a language community have different opinions on what is to be considered a loan, and that the present study is based on these opinions rather than on other, external criteria.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Distribution of loans in original and translated Portuguese and English

The distribution of loans in the Portuguese and English originals and translations analysed are presented in tables 3 to 6. As the extracts in analysis are not all of the same length, the number of words in each extract is also provided.



<b>Portuguese words originals</b>	<b>words</b>	<b>loans</b>
PPJS1	42471	1
PBRF2	31058	0
PBRF1	27451	1
PBMR1	18466	22
PPMC1	20833	0
PBPC2	18341	1
PMMC2	9925	0
PBPM1	12401	10
PPCP1	14892	7
PPJSA1	29227	0
PBPC1	9933	0
PMMC1	6076	0
PBCB1	10605	0
PAJA1	1803	0
PBAD2	23761	0
Total	277243	42
<b>Loans per 10,000 words</b>		<b>1.5</b>

**Table 3.**  
Distribution of loans  
in Portuguese originals

<b>English words translations</b>	<b>words</b>	<b>loans</b>
PPJS1	52128	3
PBRF2	33609	26
PBRF1	31099	16
PBMR1	21669	16
PPMC1	23532	0
PBPC2	20310	0
PMMC2	12789	10
PBPM1	14206	20
PPCP1	12837	14
PPJSA1	33276	0
PBPC1	11124	0
PMMC1	12789	14
PBCB1	11806	0
PAJA1	1860	2
PBAD2	19288	7
Total	312322	128
<b>Loans per 10,000 words</b>		<b>4.1</b>

**Table 4.**  
Distribution of loans  
in English translations

<b>English originals</b>	<b>words</b>	<b>loans</b>
EURZ1	36045	117
EBJT2	32302	19
EBDL1	37675	18
EBJT1	28106	0
EBDL3	25488	6
EBDL5	27516	17
ESNG2	35211	6
EBDL2	24547	14
EBJB2	28146	66
EBDL4	29425	12
EBJB1	18524	32
ESNG3	14517	13
ESNG1	14027	4
Total	191913	324
<b>Loans per 10,000 words</b>		<b>16.9</b>

**Table 5.**  
Distribution of loans  
in English originals

<b>Portuguese translations</b>	<b>words</b>	<b>Loans</b>
EURZ1	37166	150
EBJT2	29636	37
EBDL1T2	39112	155
EBDL1T1	38980	130
EBJT1	27171	54
EBDL3T1	24295	28
EBDL3T2	26262	42
EBDL5	28075	75
ESNG2	37198	58
EBDL2	24432	62
EBJB2	29933	82
EBDL4	27613	40
EBJB1	17777	40
ESNG3	15044	57
ESNG1	12996	2
Total	415690	1012
<b>Loans per 10,000 words</b>		<b>24.3</b>

**Table 6.**  
Distribution of loans  
in Portuguese translations

Before having a closer look at the use of loans in corresponding source texts and translations, the results obtained allow us to compare, in a more general way, the extent to which loan words were used in translational and non-translational English and Portuguese.

### **3.1.1 Portuguese and English (non-translational loans)**

All but one of the original English text extracts examined contained at least one loan, whereas more than half the Portuguese originals examined did not contain any loans at all. Together, the original English texts exhibited comparatively over eleven times more loans than the original Portuguese texts. The sample suggests that original English fiction might be more permeable to loans than fiction originally written in Portuguese.

### **3.1.2 Portuguese and English (translational loans)**

While all translated Portuguese text extracts examined contained at least one loan, one third of the translated English texts contained no loans at all. Collectively, the Portuguese translations had almost six times more loans than the English translations. This could be an indication that, when reading translated fiction, Portuguese readers tend to be more exposed to loans than English readers.

### **3.1.3 Portuguese (translational and non-translational loans)**

The translated Portuguese texts analysed contained on average over 16 times more loans than the original Portuguese texts. This suggests that Portuguese readers might notice the differences between original and translated texts very clearly with respect to the use of foreign words, with translated texts having a distinctively foreign feel.

### **3.1.4 English (translational and non-translational loans)**

The original English texts analysed contained on average over four times more loans than the translated English texts, suggesting that, unlike Portuguese readers, English readers might actually be more exposed to loans when reading originals. The amount of loans present in the English translations shouldn't add a particularly foreign ring to the way they read.

## **3.2 Comparing loans in source texts and translations**

The overall findings so far suggest that loan words tend to enter the Portuguese language more through translated fiction than through original fiction, and that the opposite occurs in English. It would be tempting to say that Portuguese literary translators tend to foreignize translations by exposing readers to loans, while English translators tend to domesticate translated fiction by sheltering readers from loans.

However, it is not possible to make these assumptions without comparing the loans introduced in translations with the ones already present in source texts. Tables 7 and 8 focus on how the number of loans in the texts analysed varied from source texts to translations.

Text ID	Total ST loans	Total TT loans	Net loan diff.	Loans in common	Loans added	Loans removed
EURZ1	117	150	33	98	52	19
EBJT2	19	37	18	13	24	6
EBDL1T2	18	155	137	17	138	1
EBDL1T1	18	130	112	16	114	2
EBJT1	0	54	54	0	54	0
EBDL3T1	6	28	22	6	22	0
EBDL3T2	6	42	36	4	38	2
EBDL5	17	75	58	15	60	2
ESNG2	6	58	52	6	52	0
EBDL2	14	62	48	12	50	2
EBJB2	66	82	16	65	17	1
EBDL4	12	40	28	9	31	3
EBJB1	32	40	8	31	9	1
ESNG3	13	57	44	13	44	0
ESNG1	4	2	-2	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>1012</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2.7</b>

**Table 7.** Distribution of loans in English source texts and Portuguese translations

Text ID	Total ST loans	Total TT loans	Net loan diff.	Loans in common	Loans added	Loans removed
PPJS1	1	3	2	0	3	1
PBRF2	0	26	26	0	26	0
PBRF1	1	16	15	1	15	0
PBMR1	22	16	-6	2	14	20
PPMC1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PBPC2	1	0	-1	0	0	1
PMMC2	0	10	10	0	10	0
PBPM1	10	20	10	10	10	0
PPCP1	7	14	7	5	10	1
PPJSA1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PBPC1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PMMC1	0	14	14	0	14	0
PBCB1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PAJA1	0	2	2	0	2	0
PBAD2	0	7	7	0	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>

**Table 8.** Distribution of loans in Portuguese source texts and English translations

Looking at the total number of loans in source texts and translations, it can be seen that on average both the Portuguese and the English translations tripled the number of loans originally present in their respective source texts in English and Portuguese. Looking at individual texts, these overall results show that 14 out of 15 Portuguese translations had more loans than their respective source texts (only one Portuguese translation contained fewer loans), and that 9 out of 15 English translations also had more loans than their corresponding source texts (4 translations had the same number of loans and two contained fewer loans). These figures seem to deny that English translators tend to shelter readers from loans, even though the translated English fiction texts analysed exhibited fewer loans than the original English fiction texts. It is apparently the small number of loans in the Portuguese source texts that makes the use of loans in translated English seem scant by comparison.

Having looked at these overall results, if one analyses the loans that the source texts and translations had in common, the loans added by translators, and the loans they removed, in both language directions there seems to be a tendency for translators to preserve the loans originally present in source texts, add a few more loans of their own, and remove very few of them. However, there are two translations in the sample - EURZ1 and PBMR1 - that stand out in that they are the only texts where a substantial number of loans originally present in the source texts disappeared in the translations. A closer analysis of those texts reveals that the source text of EURZ1 contained a number of loans from Portuguese, and that the source text of PBMR1 contained many loans from English. In both cases, loans from the translation language originally present in the source text ended up being effaced in the process of translation. More details about the language distribution of loans will be seen next.

### **3.2 Language distribution of loans**

A more complete picture of the use of loans in original and translated texts in English and Portuguese can be obtained by analysing the distribution of the loans in terms of language. Tables 9 to 12 describe the results obtained.

Text ID	Loans languages in original Portuguese			
	Fr	En	Lt	De
PPJS1	1			
PBRF2				
PBRF1	1			
PBMR1	1	21		
PPMC1				
PBPC2		1		
PMMC2				
PBPM1			10	
PPCP1	1		5	1
PPJSA1				
PBPC1				
PMMC1				
PBCB1				
PAJA1				
PBAD2				
Total	4	22	15	1
No. texts	4	2	2	1

**Table 9.** Language distribution of loans in original Portuguese

Text ID	Loan languages in original English													
	Fr	Lt	Es	It	De	Gr	Af	He	Pt	Haw	Jp	Zh	sa*	ob*
EURZ1			5					98	14					
EBJT2	1		18											
EBDL1	11	1	1	3		2								
EBJT1														
EBDL3	4				1						1			
EBDL5	2									14				1
ESNG2	1				1		2					1	1	
EBDL2	10	3				1								
EBJB2	55	10		1										
EBDL4	4	4		4										
EBJB1	28	2	1	1										
ESNG3	1						1						11	
ESNG1		2		2										
Total	117	21	25	11	2	3	3	98	14	14	1	1	12	1
No. texts	10	6	4	5	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1

sa\* = unspecified language from South Africa

ob\* = word of obscure origin

**Table 10.** Language distribution of loans in original English

TEXT ID	Loan languages in translated Portuguese														
	En	Fr	Lt	lt	Es	De	He	Af	Haw	Gr	Jp	Cz	Zh	Yi	sa*
EURZ1					5		145								
EBJT2	17	4	1		14								1		
EBDL1T2	129	14	4	5	1				2						
EBDL1T1	85	36	2	5					2						
EBJT1	27	19		1	1						1			5	
EBDL3T1	17	7	2			1					1				
EBDL3T2	34	6	1			1									
EBDL5	35	19		1				19				1			
ESNG2	25	5		1		1		23					1		2
EBDL2	33	19	7	1		1						1			
EBJB2	13	59	9	1											
EBDL4	15	17	3	4		1									
EBJB1	5	30	3	1	1										
ESNG3	40	3						1							13
ESNG1			2												
Total	475	238	34	20	22	5	145	24	19	4	2	2	2	5	15
No. texts	13	13	10	9	5	5	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2

sa\* = unspecified language from South Africa

**Table 11.** Language distribution of loans in translated Portuguese

	Loan languages in translated English								
	Fr	Pt	Es	Lt	mz*	De	lt	Yi	Ru
PPJS1	3								
PBRF2	4	7	1	3		2	7	2	
PBRF1	15								1
PBMR1	15	1							
PPMC1									
PBPC2									
PMMC2		5			5				
PBPM1		10		10					
PPCP1	5		2	6		1			
PPJSA1									
PBPC1									
PMMC1		5			9				
PBCB1									
PAJA1		1	1						
PBAD2	1	6							
Total	43	35	4	19	14	3	7	2	1
No. texts	6	7	3	3	2	2	1	1	1

mz\* = unspecified language from Mozambique

**Table 12.** Language distribution of loans in translated English

The above results can be summarized as follows:

### **3.2.1 Loan languages in non-translational Portuguese**

Loans from four foreign languages were represented in the Portuguese originals analysed: in order of frequency, these were English, Latin, French and German. However, the loans were used in very few texts and none of the loan languages seemed to prevail.

### **3.2.2 Loan languages in translational Portuguese**

The Portuguese translations in the sample contained loans from fifteen different languages. The most prevalent one was English, the language of the source texts. The second most noticeable foreign language was French. Also noticeable in at least one third of the translations were loans from Latin, Italian, Spanish and German.

### **3.2.3 Loan languages in non-translational English**

The English originals analysed exhibited foreign words in thirteen identified languages. There was a marked preference for loans from French, which appeared both more frequently and in a greater number of texts. There were also many loans from Hebrew, but they were all concentrated in just one text.

### **3.2.4 Loan languages in translational English**

The English translations analysed contained loans from eight languages. Surprisingly, most of the loans were not from Portuguese, the language of the source texts, but from French. Portuguese was nevertheless the second most frequent loan language in the translations.

When cross-comparing the above, it becomes evident from tables 9 and 10 that the texts originally written in English borrowed words from more languages than the texts originally written in Portuguese. Also, tables 11 and 12 show that the Portuguese translations were more permeable to loans from the source text language than the English translations. There were in fact 11.4 English loans for every 10,000 words in the Portuguese translations, but only 1.1 Portuguese loans for every 10,000 words in the English translations. Although English was the main loan language of the Portuguese translations, Portuguese was not the most frequent loan language of the English translations. What the two translational parts of the corpus had in common

was that the language other than the source-text language used most frequently in both translational English and translational Portuguese was French followed (not very closely) by Latin.

When comparing translational and non-translational language, tables 9 and 11 show that the Portuguese translations contained loans from more languages than the Portuguese originals. While no particular loan language prevailed in the originals, loans from English and from French were particularly noticeable in the translations.

The results in tables 10 and 12 show that although the English translations contained loans from fewer languages than the English originals, in both types of text the prevailing loan language was French. Another loan language that was noticeable both in the English translations and originals was Spanish. Portuguese, however, was considerably more noticeable in translated English, and was only present in one text originally written in English<sup>5</sup>.

Tables 9 and 12 show that in the process of being translated from Portuguese into English, the texts acquired not only more loan words, but also more loan languages: there were only four languages other than Portuguese in the originals, but the translations exhibited nine languages other than English. The Portuguese originals were also considerably frenchified in the process of translation, to the point of receiving more loans from French than from the source-text language.

Finally, tables 10 and 11 show that the Portuguese translations maintained the loan languages present in the English originals, and kept the texts anglicized by borrowing a substantial amount of words from English. The translations into Portuguese also resulted in an increase in the amount of French originally present in the English source texts. The only loan language that figured less prominently in the Portuguese translations than in the English source texts was Spanish.

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<sup>5</sup> Where the story happens to be set in Portugal.



#### **4. Discussion**

The analysis carried out in the present study suggests that loan words tend to be used very differently in original and translated fiction in Portuguese and English. The texts that were least receptive to loans were the Portuguese originals analysed, and the ones that used loans most liberally were the Portuguese translations. While the former made use of few loans from few languages, the latter were dotted with a huge amount of loans from fourteen different languages. The original and translated extracts of fiction in English analysed differed considerably less in this respect, and it was the English source texts rather than the translations that proved to be more open to borrowing words from other languages.

The contrast is not, however, indicative of two radically opposing translation traditions, for both the Portuguese and the English translators tripled the number of loans initially present in the source texts. However, the Portuguese translators borrowed more from the language of the source text than the English translators. The relative scarcity of Portuguese loans in the English translations and abundance of English loans in the Portuguese translations could indicate that the Portuguese translators were more intent on preserving the source-text language culture than the English translators, or were simply less apt at finding equivalent terms in the translation language. Leaving value judgements aside, however, another issue that comes into play is that Portuguese translators might not be as reticent about using loans from English because English is a well-known language among speakers of Portuguese. Because Portuguese is a comparatively exotic language among speakers of English, English translators may monitor the amount of loans from Portuguese they use more carefully. This seems to add strength to Toury's (1995) suggestion that a 'minor' language can tolerate a 'major' language more easily than the other way round.

The presence of Portuguese words in translational English might in fact be very conspicuous and confer a particularly foreign ring to the translations, for Portuguese does not seem to be a common loan language in English originals. In the Portuguese translations, it was the substantial presence of loans from Italian and Spanish that was striking, for the two languages did not figure at all in the texts originally written in Portuguese.

A curious feature that the English and the Portuguese translators had in common was that they both frenchified the texts they were working on by increasing the amount of loans from French that were present in the source texts<sup>6</sup>. Paradoxically, however, this frenchification brought the English translations closer to the texts originally written in English and distanced the Portuguese translations from the texts originally written in Portuguese, for while loans from French were common in the English originals, they did not appear as frequently in texts originally written in Portuguese.

A final interesting trend that emerged was the contrasting uses of Spanish made by Portuguese and English translators. The Portuguese translators either preserved or increased the number of loans from all loan languages represented in the source texts, but they cut down on the number of loans from Spanish. The English translators, on the other hand, introduced loans from Spanish even though it was not a loan language represented in the Portuguese source texts. A likely explanation for the reduction of Spanish in Portuguese translations is that the two languages are very similar. Because many Spanish words are orthographically the same in Portuguese, many loans from Spanish in an English original get to be effaced in a Portuguese translation. Two examples from the corpus are *querida* and *salmonetes*. In contrast to this, loans from Spanish that were not present in Portuguese source texts might be introduced in English translations because English readers are generally more acquainted with Spanish than with Portuguese.

## 5. Conclusion

Commentaries about how loan words are used by members of different language communities are often controversial and full of allegations based on anecdotal evidence. Without proper empirical investigation, it is not possible to make any claims about the use of loans. The present study examined some hard data on how loans were utilized in original and translated fiction in English and Portuguese.

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<sup>6</sup> Note that not all loans from French present in the source texts were preserved by the translators. The ones eliminated were however fewer in number than the ones inserted. The increase is based on the net result of loans from French added to and removed from the translations.

Thanks to a bidirectional parallel corpus and corpus techniques, it was possible to analyse data on the use of loans in an unprecedented detailed and systematic way. It is believed that the observations made can shed some light on a few of the broader differences regarding how loans tend to be used in translational and non-translational fiction in contemporary English and Portuguese. The present data suggested that (a) there is a general tendency for there to be more loans in translations than in source texts; (b) the superimposition of languages in source texts tends to be maintained in translations, although loans from the translation language tend to be effaced; and (c) it is not so much the amount of loans present in the translations, but the choice of loan languages used in them that tends to be affected by the relative status of the source-text language and culture. It is important to remember, however, that the sub-corpus used in the present study was made up of texts by a restricted number of authors and translators, and that no distinction was made between different varieties of English and Portuguese. To come to a better understanding of the relationship between loan words in original and translated texts, in the future it would be necessary to carry out additional comparisons of source texts and translations using more texts, different genres and other language pairs.

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