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## A bibliometric study of co-authorship in Translation and Interpreting Studies



Researchers from the UAB Department of Translation, Interpreting and East Asian Studies, in collaboration with other institutions, have carried out a bibliometric study on co-authorship in Translation and Interpretation Studies (TIS). The study aims to analyze different aspects of the evolution and current situation of TIS, while offering a suggestive starting point for future research.

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This article presents a bibliometric study of co-authorship in Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS). With this aim in mind, our study attempted to answer five research questions. Firstly, do TIS have their own ecosystem of co-authorship practices? Secondly, is there a trend favoring co-authorship? Thirdly, does co-authorship vary in relation to document type or journal? Fourthly, does co-authorship have a citation advantage in TIS? Fifthly, which is the rate of international collaboration of TIS scholars? Finally, does co-authorship offer any advantage for the researcher beyond citation counts?

Firstly, TIS does have their own ecosystem of co-authorship practices when compared to closely related disciplines. In our corpus of over 64,000 TIS publications, only 16% are co-authored. The average number of authors in TIS publications has increased with time and is currently 1.3, while the average number of authors taking into account only co-authored documents is 2.6. This means that 2-3 is the usual number of authors per document in TIS. In relation to other neighboring disciplines, the percentage of co-authorship is higher, but not so the number of authors per document.

Secondly, the historical evolution of co-authorship in TIS shows a clearly rising tendency,

with a minimum of 7.4% in the 1960s and a steady increase since then, reaching 25.1% in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shows that this upward tendency is consistent. We have seen that the ratios of single-authored documents decrease over time, while the percentage of co-authored documents increases for all document types. At the same time, the percentage of citations accrued by single-authored documents also decreases over time, while the percentage accrued by co-authored documents increases.

Thirdly, co-authorship varies in relation to document type and journal. Co-authorship in TIS is still not the norm, but nowadays one fourth of TIS published works are co-authored. Books are the document type with a higher percentage of co-authored documents (27.8%), followed by articles (11.2%) and book chapters (9.0%).

Fourthly, a positive co-authorship citation advantage has not been detected for TIS documents as a whole. However, we have proved that generally speaking co-authorship is not a disadvantage for accruing more citations. Indeed, our data seem to indicate a trend towards a positive co-authorship citation advantage in the case of journal articles in the last period of analysis (2001-2015).

Fifthly, according to our data, international collaboration is a marginal phenomenon in TIS (below 10% on average in the last few years), and a positive citation advantage of international collaboration in the form of higher scientific impact of the journals in question cannot be proved.

Finally, from a qualitative point of view, we have seen that collaboration allows for people with complementary skills and knowledge to join forces to solve problems. Working with others provides support, feedback as you go or someone to work through your ideas with, so it is harder to get blocked when collaborating. However, collaboration poses some significant challenges, such as distributing and managing work, negotiating points of view and conflicts, being more time-consuming, as well as assigning credit.

This study represents an initial insight into the evolution and current status of co-authorship in TS, and hopefully it might prove inspiring and a valuable starting point for future research.

Sara Rovira-Esteva\*, Javier Franco Aixelá\*\*, Christian Olalla-Soler\*\*\*

\* Department of Translation, Interpreting and East Asian Studies, Transmedia Catalonia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

\*\* Departament de Translation and Interpreting, Universitat d'Alacant.

\*\*\* Department of Interpreting and Translation, Università di Bologna (Itàlia).

[sara.rovira@uab.cat](mailto:sara.rovira@uab.cat)

## References

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