

SETH J S AYCOCK

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PhD Candidate in Translation and Multilinguality with LLMs ◦ he/him

EXPERIENCE

PhD Candidate - University of Amsterdam

November 2023 - November 2027

ILLC & LTL; Supervised by Christof Monz and Khalil Sima'an

4 years FT

- Research focus: Low-resource translation with large language models (LLMs) and its relationship with human reasoning.
- **Grammar books for Translation:** Prompting with low-resource language grammar books. **ICLR 2025, Spotlight.**
- **CoT for Translation:** Showing chain-of-thought underperforms self-refinement for translation. **EMNLP Main 2025.**
- **Metalinguistic knowledge:** Testing how metalinguistic abilities and implicit linguistic competence transfer across tasks.
- *Teaching:* MSc AI. NLP 2 (2024, 2025, 2026) - translation research project; NLP 1 (2024) - Python & NLP theory.
- *Grants:* UniDive COST Action (€3000) for research visit to University of Helsinki for metalinguistic reasoning research.

Machine Learning Scientist Intern

June 2025 - September 2025

Booking.com; Supervised by Aleksandr Umnov

3 months FT

- Analysing merging of monolingual pre-trained models against mixed multilingual pre-training. **Under Submission.**

Research Engineer - Natural Language Processing (NLP)

August 2023 - October 2023

ALMAnaCH lab - Inria, Paris; Supervised by Rachel Bawden

3 months FT

- Topic-based method for in-context translation example selection. **Presented at EAACL 2024 Student Research Workshop.**

Research Assistant - NLP

March 2023 - June 2023

City, University of London; Supervised by Pranava Madhyastha

3 months FT

- Generating adversarial instructions, tuning LLMs, and quantifying stability/degradation in NLP task performance.

Computational Linguistics & NLP Researcher

February 2022 - March 2023

UK Government, Cheltenham

1 year 1 month FT

- Applied research on authorship identification and verification, text summarisation, and machine translation.

FIRST-AUTHOR PUBLICATIONS

- [How Important is 'Perfect' English for Machine Translation Prompts?](#)
Schmidtová*, Bafna*, **Aycock***, Vico, Kamzela, Hämmerl, & Zouhar. EAACL Findings 2026. *Equal First Authorship
- [Please Translate Again: Two Simple Experiments on Whether Human-Like Reasoning Helps Translation](#)
Wu*, **Aycock***, & Monz. EMNLP Main 2025
- [Can Large Language Models Really Learn to Translate a Low-Resource Language from One Grammar Book?](#)
Aycock, Stap, Wu, Monz, & Sima'an, ICLR 2025 (**Spotlight**)
- [Topic-guided Example Selection for Domain Adaptation in LLM-based Machine Translation](#)
Aycock & Bawden, EAACL-SRW 2024
- [A Third-Factor Account of Locality: Explaining impenetrability and intervention effects with minimal search](#)
Aycock, Cambridge Occasional Papers in Linguistics 12(1), 2020

SKILLS

Programming	Python (Proficient, 5+ years), R (Intermediate, 1+ year)
Software	Shell Scripting - Bash ; Version Control - Git ; Cloud - AWS, Google Cloud ; VSCode, Slurm, \LaTeX .
Libraries	PyTorch, HuggingFace Transformers , vLLM, NumPy, Pandas, Jupyter, Conda.
Languages	Native (CEFR - C2): English ; Proficient (B2/B1): French ; Familiar (A2/A1): Spanish, German, Dutch.

EDUCATION

Speech and Language Processing MSc - University of Edinburgh

September 2020 - August 2021

School of Informatics; School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences

1 year

- Grade: **Distinction**; averaged **81.5%** - 2nd highest overall.
- *Dissertation* (85%) - Incorporated syntax via CCG supertags into low-resource translation model.

Linguistics BA (Hons) - Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge

October 2017 - June 2020

Dept of Theoretical & Applied Linguistics

3 years

- Grade: **Class I with Distinction**; averaged **75.5%** - 2nd highest overall. Awarded TH Scholarship (2019, 20).
- Dissertation in Theoretical Syntax* - Unifying word order rules under Minimal Search principle. **Published in COPiL.**