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**Evaluation of Translation Processes:
Applying research techniques to professional development
programs**

1. Introduction

The realities of non-literary translation have changed dramatically over the last two decades, making it difficult for many professionals with tight schedules to keep up with developments. They may focus on commercial tools that seem to meet immediate needs rather than take the time to reflect on how they are doing what they do and why. Because recent developments in translation studies, new media, translation tools, and research are reflected in the curricula of most degree programs in translation offered by universities and other institutes of higher learning, younger cohorts of students are presumably acquiring various competences in their undergraduate and graduate courses that many older professionals may not yet have had a chance to develop. One of the goals of professional development programs for practicing translators must therefore be to meet the needs presented by new technologies and sources of information.

Such a professional development program in Specialized Translation is offered at our institute, the ZHAW Institute of Translation and Interpreting in Winterthur, Switzerland.¹ Since the focus of teaching in this program is on fostering translation competence, the question of translation evaluation – whether of products or processes or both – is of particular relevance. Rather than focusing solely on the products, we would argue that insights from translation process research can be used to help evaluate the translation practices of course participants. The multi-method approach that we are using to analyse translation processes at our institute in research projects can also allow us to capture various aspects of the translation processes of participants in the professional development program in order to exploit them didactically.

In the following, the goals, theoretical foundations, didactic concept, and admission criteria of the Specialized Translation professional development program are presented before the special challenges of evaluating translation competence are addressed. Issues associated with evaluation are typical of any translation program but may be accentuated in courses for practising professionals. The application of translation process research techniques to the translation processes of two participants from a recent cohort of the program illustrate how some of these issues can be addressed.

¹ CAS Fachübersetzen (<http://www.ined.zhaw.ch/en/applied-linguistics-1/ined/continuing-education/courses-offered-in-continuing-education/cas-fachuebersetzen.html>)

2. Description of the professional development program

The Specialized Translation professional development program offered by our institute is designed to be completed on a part-time basis within a year and leads to a Certificate in Advanced Studies (CAS). There are 160 contact hours of course work in the fall and spring semesters and a final paper, for a total of 15 ECTS credits². The course work consists of theoretical input with exercises as well as translation seminars, which are led by professional, practising translators and run as workshops with project work from industry partners under realistic conditions. In addition, the participants are expected to engage in guided self-study, make use of the material on the program's internet platform, and take advantage of the coaching offered for their final papers. German is the language of instruction for all of the modules in the program except for the translation workshops.

The goals of the program include: updating and deepening domain knowledge, training or improving technical skills, developing and extending research techniques and information literacy, optimizing translation competence, expanding professional networks, and establishing practical relevance in order to maximize transfer. These goals map onto the PACTE (2003, 2007, 2009) extra-linguistic, instrumental, and strategic sub-competences of translation competence, although the CAS in Specialized Translation was originally based more on the functionalist perspective (e.g. Nord 1997; Reiss/Vernier 1991) as well as practitioner knowledge (e.g. Aparicio/Durban 2003). The conception and modules of the Specialized Translation CAS have been adapted as translation studies and the market have developed (see Hofer 2009).

In the present form, the components of the CAS program are very similar to the competence profile recommended for the European Master in Translation (EMT expert group 2009):

- input on law, economics, life sciences, technology (thematic competence)
- CAT, terminology, and other translation tools (technical competence)
- information literacy (research competence)
- source-text and language-specific components (intercultural competence)
- strategic components (translation service competence)

The only component mentioned in the EMT that is not explicitly included in the Specialized Translation CAS program is language competence, since it is a prerequisite of participation in the program (see below).

The admission criteria for the program are two-fold: (1) a university degree (preferably but not exclusively in translation and/or interpreting) or proof of several years' experience as a translator and/or interpreter and (2) high compe-

tence in German (native speaker or C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference³) and at least one other language.

In the seven years since the program began, roughly half of the participants already had a university degree of some kind (agriculture, medicine, linguistics, engineering, etc.) before starting the program and many of the others, accepted based on their dossier and experience, had had some university education but had not necessarily completed a degree. Part of the motivation for accepting participants with various backgrounds has been to increase the awareness in the marketplace that professional translation is a complex process based on a number of interacting competences and not, as is still all-too-commonly believed, simply on the knowledge of two languages.

Although the majority of participants have German as their active working language (A), 45% have other languages. The latter group all have German as their second working language (B), whereas the group of German native speakers have a variety of European languages as their B language (see Table 1).

Year	A languages (in order of frequency)
2003/04	German, French
2004/05	German, Italian, Arabic, French, English, Russian, Spanish
2005/06	German, Italian, French, Russian
2006/07	German, French, English, Japanese, Croatian
2007/08	German, Italian, English, French, Russian
2008/09	German, Italian, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian
2009/10	German, English, French, Italian, Croatian, Russian
	B languages (in order of frequency)
2003/04	French, German, English, Russian, Spanish
2004/05	French, German, English, Italian
2005/06	German, English, Italian
2006/07	German, English, French, Italian, Russian
2007/08	German, English, Italian
2008/09	German, English, French
2009/10	German, English, French

Table 1. Working languages in the Specialized Translation program

² In Switzerland, 15 ECTS credits correspond to approximately 450 hours of work.

³ http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?M=/main_pages/levels.html

The possibility of such a broad range of languages and versions is justified because the focus of the program is not on improving bilingual competence. The professionals participating in the program are assumed to have enough self-competence to accurately assess their ability to understand the input in German and to produce translations in their respective versions. However, this linguistic diversity has produced some interesting challenges for evaluation, which will be considered in more detail in the next section.

3. Evaluation challenges in professional development programs

In the Specialized Translation program at our institute, participants are expected to submit translations for evaluation to meet the requirements of the translation seminars and self-study components of the program. The challenge of evaluating translations of diverse language combinations has been addressed by including professional translators with those language versions in the translation workshops: a type of peer review similar to the process of revision specified by the European norm for translation services (BS EN15038 2006).

However, the main evaluation is based on a final paper that they complete in their A language, which can take one of three forms: (1) an annotated translation, (2) an annotated language technology project report, or (3) a theoretical paper, including about terminology, in an area that has been dealt with in the program and is relevant to translation practice. Since the majority of participants in the professional development program choose the first option, this is the only form of the final paper that will be discussed in more detail.

Completing an annotated translation allows a program participant to prove that he or she is capable of correctly understanding a demanding specialized source text (approx. 25,000 characters including spaces) in their B language and of translating it appropriately into their A language. The commentary should prove that the participant recognizes the most important translation problems and can justify the solutions in a self-reflective way. The 30- to 40-page paper must consist of an introduction, the translation brief, an analysis of the source text, the translation, a detailed commentary which includes the theoretical considerations, general issues, specific problems, translation strategies as well as the target audience for the translation, and a conclusion.

The annotated translation is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- theoretical basis in translation studies and/or the respective topic
- appropriateness of translation solutions with respect to the pragmatics of the communication situation (i.e. completeness, deviations from source text, adaptation of culturally-specific features, treatment of deficits in the source text, abbreviations)
- accuracy with respect to domain, terminology, and linguistic features of target text
- comprehensibility of target text

- evidence of research and implementation of new technologies
- terminological consistency of the target text and the commentary
- observation of the formal guidelines
- amount of coaching and support needed from the supervisor

Despite these relatively clear criteria, there are numerous issues associated with evaluating the annotated translations that are produced to meet the final requirements for the Specialized Translation program. Some of those issues are common to any education program that employs this form of evaluation (e.g. comparability of source texts, heterogeneity of language versions, plagiarism). Others such as level of difficulty and relevance to market needs are more specific to professional development programs. Because of market demands, it has become increasingly clear to us that a program such as ours, which is designed to be directly relevant to professional practice in specialized translation, must also include evaluation of improvements to the efficiency of the process and not just the quality of the final translation products and the ability to reflect on the metalinguistic considerations involved in the translation process.

As Lee-Jahnke (2005) also points out in her argument for process-oriented translator training, translation studies has moved from an almost exclusive focus on products towards processes and the effects of those processes on the quality of the target texts. Translation products are the result of the interaction between societal expectations of what translations should be and professional translators' practices and competences that allow them to produce acceptable translations within temporal and economic constraints. Various translation process models (e.g. Bell 1991; Gile 1995; Höngig 1997; Krings 1986) have suggested what the cognitive decision process of translation might involve, and translation competence models (e.g. Göpferich 2008; Kiraly 1995; PACTE 2003; Risku 1998) have outlined the expert knowledge and cognitive components assumed to be necessary for effective translation work.

Recently, various ways of specifically including explicit input on the translation process as an element of translation degree programs have been proposed (e.g. Massey 2005). The transfer of process research techniques to evaluation of undergraduate students' translation performance has also been explored in the case of retrospective methods (cf. Hansen 2006) and screenshot recordings (cf. Kujamäki 2010). In the following section, we outline how methods that have been used to investigate the translation process can profitably be applied to evaluating performance in professional development courses.

4. Applying research techniques to evaluation

Scholars working in the area of translation process research have developed and exploited various techniques to try to access the "black box" of the translator's mind (see Asadi/Séguinot 2005; Hansen 2003; Jakobsen 2002; Krings 2005,

among others). In the *Capturing Translation Processes* project at our institute,⁴ we are monitoring translation students and professional translators over various periods of time. The data allow comparisons between the same students at the beginning of their translation degree program, the end, and 2 years post-graduation as junior professionals; between professionals with different levels of experience; between students and professionals; and between different language versions and translation directions (cf. Ehrensberger-Dow/Massey 2008; Ehrensberger-Dow/Perrin, 2009; Ehrensberger-Dow/Kinzhi 2010).

The rather complex methodology that we have chosen for this research makes it possible to examine translation processes from different perspectives to gain more insight into the competences and resources that translators draw on as they work. It also has the advantages of being ecologically valid (i.e. investigating real workplace practices rather than experimentally-induced behavior) and relatively non-invasive for the translators involved. It is based on progression analysis, a multi-method approach developed by Perrin (2003) to investigate the writing processes of journalists. The methodology combines: observation of the workplace situation; semi-structured preliminary interviews and questionnaires to obtain information about linguistic background, previous education, and translation experience as well as to determine self-reported practices; screenshot recordings of everything that happens on the computer screen; retrospective viewings and commentaries about those recordings (so-called cue-based retrospective verbal protocols or RVPs); and analyses of intermediate and target texts. Additional data collection techniques such as keystroke logging and eye-tracking are also used in controlled settings. The data we obtain allows us to observe translation practices, deduce strategies, and gain insight into the cognitive processes involved in translation work.

We have begun applying some of these research techniques to evaluating the processes of participants in the Specialized Translation professional development program. For example, one participant (CAS101) is an American English-speaking (his A language) man in his 50s who started learning German (his B language) at the age of 18 and French (his C language) at the age of 23. He must have become very competent in German, since he completed his first degree at a university in Switzerland where German was the language of instruction, and he must have solid domain competence in business and economics, since he had two degrees in this area (*lic. oec. publ.* and an MBA). As part of one of the industry-initiated projects for a translation seminar, he was expected to translate a German information sheet from the website of "Young Enterprise Switzerland" into English.

The very long orientation phase (13 min. 30 sec.) captured in the screen recordings and his comments in the RVP as he viewed the recording afterwards

made it clear that CAS101 was using that time to try to compensate for a lack of certain aspects of instrumental competence. He seemed to want to set up his desktop with translation aids, because he first located a translators' search portal⁵ that he had learned about in one of the Specialized Translation seminars ("I decided to use this program [sic]"). After finding the search portal, he used the reverse button and returned to the MSN site he had started from, although he said in his RVP that he had intended to put the window with the search portal next to the source text and his target text file. He apparently tried to do this, opening a pdf version of the source text and performing numerous operations (i.e. he made the document window smaller within Adobe, moved it around within the larger Adobe window, tried to open other files from Adobe Reader, etc.) before finally opening an empty Word document on top of the pdf file and beginning to write his target text. He commented that he "was able to open [the files] but couldn't move them or get them to appear on the screen at the same time" and that "it was actually a technical problem".

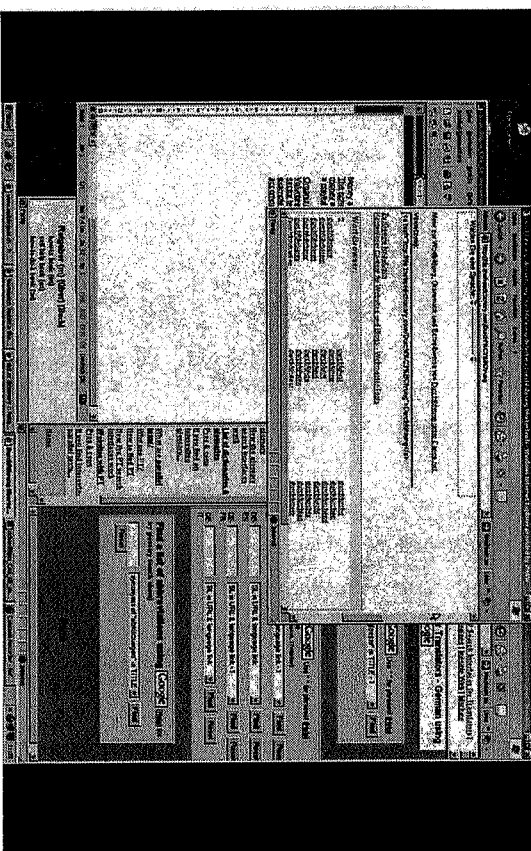


Figure 1. Screenshot of CAS101's desktop during the translation phase

During the translation or drafting phase, CAS101 ended up working from the paper version of the source text and switching laboriously back and forth between numerous open windows. Figure 1 shows a typical screenshot of his desktop during the translation phase: several tabs are open; windows overlap each other; and no parallel texts are in evidence. The target text is quite small,

⁴ Funded under the DORE program by the Swiss National Fund. For further information, see http://www.zhaw.ch/fileadmin/php_includes/popup/projekt-detail.php?projekt=395.

⁵ www.multilingual.ch

and it is not formatted, since he is producing it in an empty document rather than using the Word version of the source text (available to him, although he only opened the pdf version). All of the words in the target text are underlined in red, presumably because he did not set the language to English, which might explain why he missed a spelling mistake in the first line and a German word left untranslated in the 156-word target text he submitted for evaluation. Not long after these recordings were made, CAS101 decided not to complete the Specialized Translation program because the modules dealing with new technologies were moving too fast for him. In retrospect, it might have been more valuable to have used the research techniques mentioned above to determine and offer remediation for this participant's technical needs before letting him begin the Specialized Translation program.

A second participant from the same year of the program, another man in his 50s (CAS102), is from the French-speaking (his A language) part of Switzerland. He started learning German (a B language) at the age of 12 and English (a second B language) a year later. He took some courses in liberal arts at university (*lic. phil. D*) although he did not complete a degree. As part of the same industry-initiated project mentioned above, he had the brief to translate the German information sheet into French.

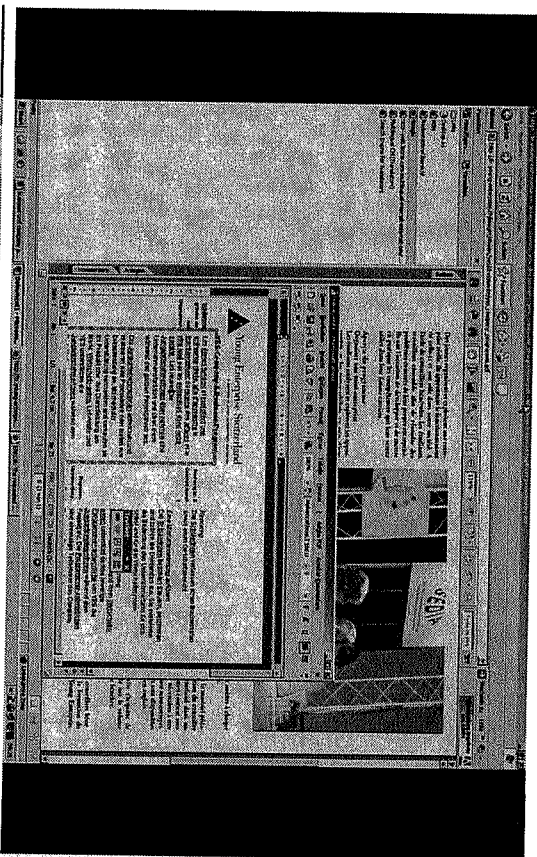


Figure 2. Screenshot of CAS102's desktop during the translation phase

In his orientation phase, CAS102 set up his desktop (20 sec.), opened the source text in Word and read through it quickly (1 min. 30 sec.), opened Google, set the language and search parameters to French, and proceeded to look for and find a parallel text from a Swiss website and then a French website. He commented in

his RVP that the French version was obviously based on a previous version of the German source text he had been given but that he would save it to refer to for "certain terms". He also mentioned that it was "quite poorly translated, quite awkwardly worded". He spent about 3 minutes looking at parallel texts before returning to an empty Word document.

A typical screenshot from the beginning of CAS102's translation phase is shown in Figure 2. A parallel French text is open in the background at the relevant place, and his target French text is emerging on top of the formatted German source text that he has copied into his new Word document. The words of the target text are all underlined in red, presumably because he has not changed the language setting from German to French. He failed to so anytime in his process, which might have prevented the handful of spelling mistakes in the 534-word target text that he submitted for evaluation. Other than this, some of this participant's processes seem to have come out of a textbook. Not surprisingly, he has done well in the Specialized Translation professional development program.

5. Conclusion

As stressed in this paper, practical aspects are important in the Specialized Translation professional development program but theoretical background is just as important. The latter provides participants with the opportunity to learn to reflect on their own and their colleagues' translation work and with the metalinguistic competence to be able to justify their translation solutions and decisions in their careers as translators. Once the various competences involved in professional translation are recognized, it becomes clear that the focus has to be on the translation process and not only on the products.

The research techniques outlined in the previous sections make the translation process much more transparent to both evaluators and participants, providing them with insights into search behavior, integration of thematic and linguistic material from parallel texts, revision, and efficiency. This transparency facilitates much better coaching than traditional evaluations of translation products can, since many of the considerations in reaching translation solutions can be observed and do not just have to be assumed. Another important aspect is the possibility of evaluating individual translating capacity, which is especially important in professional development courses in which participants have very different backgrounds.

A focus on the translation process is also relevant in courses in which several language combinations are involved. The challenges of ensuring fair evaluation and an equivalent level in all translation versions could be overcome by applying the research techniques described above, which can cover translation processes on most computers in all languages. These techniques can become an

integral part of the curriculum, complementing other teaching methods as well as supporting the assessment of translation competence. Above all they can foster the self-empowerment of the participants, which is the foremost aim of professional development.

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