Developing Translators' Skills: A Diachronic Case Study

Nermeen Al Nafra
University of Birmingham
Birmingham, UK
alnafra.nrm@gmail.com

20

ABSTRACT

One of the main concerns in current approaches to translation training is to provide translators with the skills necessary for them to take responsibility for their decisions whilst translating. In light of this, this study investigates the effect of following a translation training programme at postgraduate level on the way trainee translators perceive translation problems and justify their decisions. The Translation Studies (TS) programme at the University of Birmingham (UoB) is used to undertake this qualitative research. The trainee translators completed a translation task which involved filling in forms to comment on translation problems and translation strategies. This task, preceded by a questionnaire, was repeated at three stages throughout the academic year (2012-2013). This paper reports on a part of the preliminary findings resulting from the data analysis. It suggests that translation training, in particular theoretical knowledge of translation acquired throughout the programme, develops the trainees' understanding of translation problems and ability to justify translation strategies.

Keywords: translation training, translation problems, translation strategies, justification, translation decisions.

1. Introduction

Translator training at university level is a recent phenomenon dating from the second half of the twentieth century (Pym, 2009: 1). Since the emergence of academic translation institutions, there has been a conflict between the world of academia and the requirements of the real world market. Academic standards are based on the assumption of providing students with general theoretical knowledge rather than specific vocational skills, which can be taught at specialized technical colleges. Therefore, there has been a challenge in integrating practice within the realm of academic intellectualism (Kelly, 2005). On the other hand, professionals have not considered academic translation training programmes to be useful for trainee translators on the basis that the theoretical modules included in these programmes as too abstract and remote from real professional translation practice (Gile, 2009). Growing economic and social changes, including the increase in travel and international communication, and the number of people interested in reading, have accelerated the need for translation services and simultaneously more qualified translators (Dollerup, 1996). These changes have affected the debate between the world of academia and that of the translation profession. Consequently, more translation training institutions have opened and the debate

between the theoretical and vocational aspects of translator training has been crystallized in the everlasting dispute over the nature and role of translation theory courses in developing the translators' skills in translator training programmes (cf. Chesterman & Wagner 2002).

Many researchers (e.g. Chesterman, 2000; Ulrych, 2005; Lee, 2006) have called for integrating both theoretical knowledge and vocational practice while training translators to better meet real life criteria. Bartina (2005: 178), for example, states that "any translation choice, any translation judgment reveals a theoretical position", and hence the importance of providing students with a theoretical basis of translation. These researchers have also acknowledged that a significant part of learning takes place in the job market, emphasising the importance of including practice and internships in academic programmes. Consequently, many approaches to translation training are introduced with the purpose of developing trainee translators' skills, calling for the coexistence of practice and theory in the academic translator training context. This study will hopefully provide empirical evidence concerning the effect of following an academic translator training programme on the trainee translators' translation competence. This article starts with providing an overview of the major approaches to translator training and various models of translation competence which constitute the basis of these approaches. This is followed by a description of the general design of the current study and the research methods employed. The findings of this study are then presented.

2. Major approaches to translator training and translation competence

Many approaches to translator training have been introduced and applied within translation training classrooms, such as the Cognitive approach (Kiraly, 1995), Functionalist (Nord, 2005), Social Constructivist (Kiraly, 2000), Holistic (Robinson, 2003) and Interpretive (Gile, 2009). These approaches differ concerning their emphasis on developing the trainee translator's social competence and the degree of student involvement in the teaching/learning process which help in preparing autonomous and lifelong learners. For example, the Cognitive and the Functionalist approaches appear to neglect the importance of developing the trainees' social and communicative skills and seem to be more teacher-centred. However, the Social Constructivist approach and Holistic approaches tend to emphasize the translator's social active role and encourage trainees to develop their communicative and interdependence skills by engaging them in authentic translation tasks within groups.

Despite their different views, these approaches share many principles. For example, all of these approaches agree that translator training programmes should integrate both theory and practice which can assist in developing learners' translation skills. This was a consequence of the increasing demands of stakeholders (students, parents and employers) on universities to develop their curricula in order to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and vocational skills to enable them to meet market requirements. Gile (2009: 5) notes that translation as a profession is far from being homogenous and can instead be considered as a hypernym covering many occupations. Therefore, these approaches

emphasize separating language classes from translation classes, and insist on including courses which develop different aspects of the trainees' translation competence, such as intercultural, interlingual and technological skills, world knowledge and subject area knowledge in translation training programmes. They thus call for developing the necessary skills required by the current market and emphasize the multi-componential nature of translation competence formulated by the complexity of the real life profession.

Numerous models of translation competence, indicating its multi-componential nature, are suggested by many authors in TS, attempting to outline its components, such as Adab (2000), Kirally (2000), Neubert (2000), Orozco (2000), Presas (2000), Robinson (2003), Mackenzie (2004), Kelly (2005), Nord (2005) and Gile (2009), to list but a few. Although these models agree on the multi-faceted nature of translation competence, there does not seem to be an agreement among these models on the sub-competences constituting translation competence, as also observed by Waddington (2001: 18). It may be possible to note that it is difficult to set criteria which can define the components of translation competence since the translation profession, and furthermore market requirements, change over time along with the rapid economic and social developments worldwide. All these models agree on the importance of possessing bilingual (communicative and linguistic) and extralinguistic competences (general and specialized, cultural and intercultural knowledge). However, only a small number of models (e.g. Robinson, 2003; Gile, 2009) stress the importance of possessing an instrumental competence (documentation skills and the ability to use information sources and the latest technological tools), theoretical knowledge about translation and aspects of the profession (e.g. Orozco, 2000; Mackenzie, 2004; Nord, 2005) or psycho-physiological cognitive abilities such as creativity, memory and attention, (e.g. Presas, 2000; Kelly, 2005) and interpersonal skills (e.g. Mackenzie, 2004; Kiraly, 2000).

All of these models emphasize the significance of acquiring strategic competence defined by PACTE group (2011, unpaginated) as: "procedural knowledge to guarantee the efficiency of the translation process and solve problems encountered". It involves the ability to manage and execute translation tasks, choose the appropriate strategies to solve translation problems confidently and make appropriate decisions. Various terms have been used to describe this *strategic competence*, for example Robinson (2003) uses the term *intelligence*, while Mackenzie (2004) and Gile (2009) refer to *management competence* and *procedural knowledge*, respectively. Many other scholars, such as Orozco (2000) and Nord (2005), have used the term *transfer competence* to refer to the same concept of *strategic competence*. It also seems that there is a great difference between the models concerning the relation of this *strategic competence* to other competences. PACTE group's experiment indicates that this strategic competence, which enables translators to manage translation problems and complete translation assignments, controls and activates all other sub-competences (2011). Many other authors (e.g. Robinson, 2003; Mackenzie, 2004; Gile, 2009) have pointed out that this competence integrates other sub-competences required by the translator such as the linguistic and intercultural competences. Other scholars, such as Neubert (2000) and Orozco (2000), have also believed that strategic competence dominates

22

or integrates all other sub-competences. Only a few authors have considered it as a separate skill which complements other sub-competences that are parts of the overall translation competence, such as Adab (2000), Kiraly (2000), Presas (2000) and Kelly (2005). Thus, due to its significant role in carrying out the translation process, as the models of translation competence show, this study will focus on the effect of following an academic translator training programme on the trainee translators' strategic sub-competence. It may indicate the role of combining both theoretical knowledge and practice in these programmes, as recommended by the major approaches to translator training, in developing the trainees' ability to evaluate translation problems and justify their answers. In this regard, the following study attempts to answer the following main research questions:

- How does following a translator training programme at postgraduate level affect trainee translators' perception of translation problems?
- How does following a translator training programme at postgraduate level affect trainee translators' ability to justify their decisions?

3. The MA in TS programme at UoB as a case study

A case study was used to answer the research questions posed in the present study since this research method allows us to explore the question of *how* variables are connected (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013). It helps us to investigate the "phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009: 18) and also "make contributions to knowledge beyond the particular" (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013: 209) which is in this case the translation training community. Therefore, the present case study focused exclusively on the one-year master's degree in TS programme at UoB in order to obtain relevant and detailed information regarding formal translation training at academic level. Even though it is difficult to generalize from one case study, hopefully the present case study offers interesting data which may potentially contribute further knowledge to the wider translation training community.

Universities in the UK offer different types of degrees in TS at different levels: Diploma, MSc, MA, and PhD. Concerning masters-level programmes, some universities focus on translation alongside other types of studies (comparative literature, interpreting, subtitling, TESOL, linguistics and intercultural communication), such as the MA in Translation and Linguistics at the University of Westminster. Other universities offer programmes in specific language pairs (MA in Chinese – English Translation at The University of Bristol) or context (MA in Translation in a European Context at Aston University). Training in MA-TS programmes, such as the MA in TS at the Universities of Aston, Birmingham and Durham in the UK are based on practice and theory. Although these generalist programmes may differ in terms of the way the modules are organized throughout the academic year and their focus, they share many characteristics. For example, they offer students training which involves the theory and practice of translation, as recommended by many of the major approaches to translator training as previously discussed. The two modules 'Introduction to Translation' and 'Contemporary

Translation Theories' in the TS programme at UoB are designed to provide trainee translators with a theoretical basis of translation. Other modules such as 'Translation and Professional Communication Skills' and 'Translation Project', which are more practice-oriented, aim at providing students with practical skills in translation. These generalist programmes also aim at developing a range of translation-oriented skills, consequently reflecting the multi-componential nature of translation competence, highlighted by the different models of translation competence. For instance, the purpose of modules such as 'Translation Technology' and 'Research Methods in Applied Linguistics' in the TS programme at UoB is to help students improve their instrumental, research and documentation skills.

3.1 Research methods

A combination of a variety of research methods were employed for the purposes of collecting data and increasing the validity of the research findings by overcoming the inherent limitations of approaches which utilize each method separately (Dörnyei, 2007). A questionnaire was initially used in order to collect background information about the trainee translators taking part in the TS programme at UoB, to define the context of the study and the variables affecting translator training. A set of open and closed questions were employed to gather background information concerning the participants' age, gender, linguistic, educational and professional experience which was used to describe the participants' profiles in the current study.

This preliminary approach was then followed by a translation task, where the students were required to perform a translation task which included translating a text and simultaneously commenting on the translation according to a pre-prepared form. The source text was an excerpt of a brochure targeting tourists. The choice of a tourist information brochure was meant to address the respondents' cultural diversity through texts that are interesting, and which may contain some cultural specific references that tend to present problems in translation while having limited syntactic complexity since they are meant to be read by a general audience, including speakers of English as a second language. The text was also short to encourage students to participate in the study as otherwise the task would have been too time-consuming. The text was written in contemporary English, since English is one of the trainee translators' working languages in this programme (either the trainees' first, second or third language). Students were required to translate the text into another language as they speak different native languages. They were asked to assume that the target audience profile was the same as that of the source text. Students were informed that they were free to use dictionaries or reference material and discuss their translation with whoever they wish and no time frame was given.

The trainees were asked to complete a form whilst translating which provided them with a systematic way of recording all information related to their decision-making processes whilst completing the task. This form included six sections which allowed the participants to record the translation problems identified, the types of these problems, the information sources used, the solutions, the strategies

applied and justification for these strategies. Literature on translation problems indicates that there is no agreement on a clear definition of what a translation problem is (cf. Toury, 2012: 38-46). Therefore, no specific definition of translation problems was given to the students in order to examine the way they perceive these problems. They were not provided with any specific classification of translation problems, information sources or strategies to avoid offering a list of predefined categories that would force them either to select a category, which may not reflect their actual response, or skip filling in sections of the form since they did not find an appropriate answer. However, in order to direct the respondents to what they were expected to do, as it is essential that they understand the instrumental concepts included in the study in the same way used by the researcher, they were provided with definitions of the terms *information resources* and *translation strategies*. The information sources were defined as hard copy documents (such as dictionaries), electronic sources or human sources (e.g. a fellow student) (Gile, 2009). Since the focus of the present study is on how trainee translators justify the translation strategies used in the formulation of a translated text, and the forms were designed with this purpose in mind, Chesterman's (2000) definition of strategies was adopted because he focuses on textual strategies, rather than on the cognitive procedures occurring in the human mind while encountering translation problems (cf. Moulin & Hurtado Albir, 2002). Thus, the definition of strategies was introduced to the trainee translators as: the way you manipulate the linguistic material in the text in order to produce an appropriate target text, such as literal translation, paraphrase or information change, etc.

The data for this case study was collected at three stages throughout the academic year (in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms) and the analysis involved a comparison of data between the three periods. During the three stages of the data collection process, the participants were provided with texts of a similar genre (tourist texts) and length to translate (no more than 200 words). The purpose of replicating the data collection process was to examine and explain the trainee translators' progress throughout the programme. This longitudinal type of research is useful to "describe patterns of change, and to explain casual relationships" (Dörnyei, 2007: 79) and can be used to examine dynamic processes in human learning or development in relation to different types of variables (Menard, 2002).

4. The participants' profiles

Twelve students (four male and eight female) participated in the study. It seems that the participants had many common characteristics: they had little/no translation experience, belonged to the same age group (21-29 years) and were educated to BA level. On the other hand, these participants seem to have come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The respondents who took part in all the three stages of the study were given codes according to their gender (male students were given the code 'M' whereas female students were assigned the code 'F'), in addition to a numeric value added to each of these codes. The two letter code system of languages (ISO 639-1) was also used to indicate the language of the target text. Most of the participants translated the text from English into their first

language (Chinese: ZH, Spanish: ES, Greek: EL, Arabic: AR and German: DE) as English was their second language. Only three of the students were native English speakers and therefore translated the text into their second language (French: FR, Portuguese: PT and Spanish: ES). Although directionality might affect the perception of translation problems, a current study by Pavlović (2014) indicates that novice translators encountered the same number and types of problems when translating from and into their L1. Although directionality might also affect the strategies used by the students to solve translation problems, many other factors including the language involved, the translators' translation competence, personal preferences and social and environmental conditions have an effect on their translation decisions (ibid.).

26

5. Procedures of data analysis

The fact that the concept of *translation problem* had not been defined and therefore the students' answers were subjective and highly different from one another led to significant difficulties in terms of analysing the data in a systematic manner. Many students used different expressions to refer to the same types of problems. For example, many expressions were used to refer to terminology problems: "terminology" (F1EL); "vocabulary" (F7PT); and "lexis" (F5ZH). Many other expressions were employed by the students to describe cultural problems: "culture" (F5ZH); "how do I translate the title since there is no similar museum in TL?" (F1EL); and "there is no equivalent in the TL" (M2DE). Additionally, many translation problems were not also classified at all during the three stages.

Finding myself unable to derive a coherent typology to reflect the students' answers, I attempted to interpret and classify the problems according to PACTE group's typology of the translation problems (2011) and found that the correspondences between PACTE's categories and students' responses were sufficient to allow for a reasonably systematic description. Based on cognitive views, PACTE group in their empirical study (2011: 328) argues that "a translation problem exists when "automatised" solutions, i.e. spontaneous and immediate solutions, are not found for the source text segments in translation and different strategies are then put into effect to solve them." In their typology, PACTE group (2011: 327) divides translation problems into five main categories:

• Linguistic problems: lexis and morphosyntax, including problems of comprehension and re-expression.
• Textual: coherence, cohesion, text type, and style, involving problems of comprehension and re-expression.
• Extralinguistic: cultural, encyclopaedic and subject-domain knowledge.
• Problems of intentionality: comprehension problems related to intertextuality, speech acts, presuppositions and implicatures.
• Translation brief or target reader oriented problems: (TB and TR) problems related to the function which affects the reformulation of the text.

The different types of problems outlined by PACTE group seem to be interconnected which makes it hard to find clear demarcation lines between them. However, the overall context of the data turned out to be helpful in categorising the problems identified by the students. In addition, the problems which were perceived by the students as belonging to more than one category were classified as multidimensional.

The students also explained their justifications in many ways which included a great overlap between the different answers. The variety in the language used necessitated classifying their answers into one defined set of criteria. While attempting to classify their justification, it was clearly noticeable that the justification of the strategies applied by the students reflected certain translation norms. Therefore, the justification of the solutions offered by the students was discussed within the framework of Chesterman's model of translation norms (2000). Chesterman's model of translation norms was selected as the focus is on the translation norms which affect the translators' decisions while translating and Chesterman' model focuses on the textual norms which guide translators' work after the translation task has been commissioned. Thus, for the purpose of this study, translation norms as those preceding the process, such as norms related to publishing policy in a given culture which were extensively discussed by Toury (2012), are not considered. In Chesterman's (2000: 76-77) model, the norms which explain the translators' acts can be divided into four main categories :

a) The expectancy norms which are related to target language acceptability and appropriateness norms.
b) The communication norms which refer to achieving clarity and readability while producing the target text.
c) The relation norms which govern the relation between the source and target text as in trying to retain the same meaning or function of the source text.
d)   The accountability norms are related to ethical principles which translators should respect.

As there are also no clear demarcation lines between categories and it is more likely to be hard to fit one justification unambiguously into one category, the justifications presented by the students were interpreted and classified according to these normative norms in addition to three other categories: "combined norms", "unsuccessful justification" and "no justification" which were added in order to reflect the data provided by the students. When more than one norm was reflected in the participants' answers, their answers were classified under 'combined norms'. 'Unsuccessful justification' groups the answers of those who failed to provide a justification and offered instead responses such as "[I] have not found a solution" (F6ZH), while 'no justification' refers to the problems for which the students provided no justification at all.

The chi-square statistical test was used to examine whether there is a significant difference in the data provided by the students across the three stages. If the calculated value of the chi-square is more than the probability value of 0.05, the difference is not significant and the null hypothesis (H_0), which indicates that any

variation in the data could be due to chance, is supported. If the calculated value of the chi-square is less than or equal to the probability value of 0.05 and the difference is significant, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is supported, which indicates that there is some reason other than chance behind the difference, which in the case of this study is most probably the training followed by the students in the TS programme at UoB.

6. Translation problems as perceived by the students

In each of the three stages of the study, the students identified translation problems belonging to the five main categories defined by PACTE group (2011), as is evident in figure 1. In addition, when a problem was perceived by the students as belonging to more than one category, it was classified as being multidimensional.
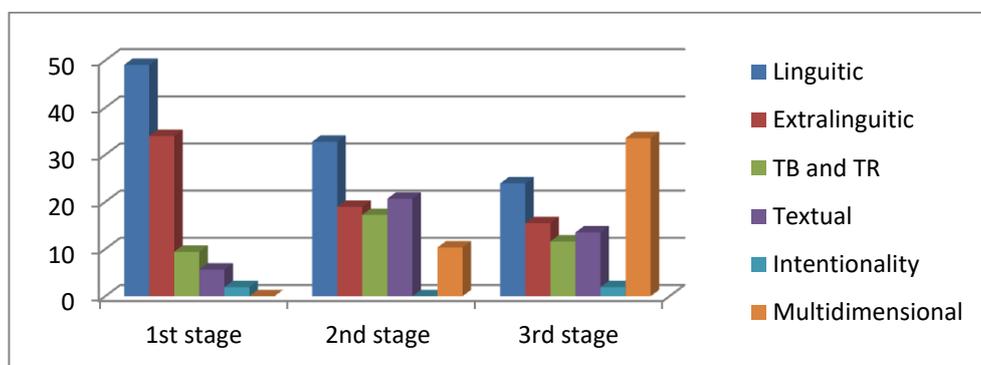

Figure 1: Translation problems as perceived by the students during the three stages

During the first stage, most of the problems identified by the students (49.05%, 26 problems) were described as linguistic. The students described problems in terms of re-expressing or comprehending certain lexical items or syntactic structures. It would seem that the students who took part in this research considered literal translation as a default strategy, and as a consequence every segment within the text was problematic if it could not be translated literally, as is the case in example 1, where student F1EL encountered a problem translating the verb "stock" because she could not find a literal translation for this verb in Greek.

- Example 1: F1EL: "No verb equivalent [to stock] in [the] TL."

The second most common category in the first stage was extralinguistic problems. 33.96% of the problems identified by the students (18 problems) were either cultural or related to the subject domain during the first stage of the type illustrated in example 2: student F2ZH encountered a subject-domain related problem while translating the text into Chinese.

- Example 2: F2ZH: "Lack of background knowledge, so quite hard to understand the context."

The third most common category during the first stage was the type of problem related to the target readers or translation brief. 9.43% of the problems identified by the students (five problems) were related to the target text reader or translation brief, as was the case in example 3. In example 3, student F1EL found a difficulty in translating the word "queen" without adding a name such as 'Elizabeth' because she thought the text would not be clear to the Greek target audience.

- Example 3: F1EL: "Information missing for a foreign target group."

During the first stage 5.66% of the problems (three problems) encountered by the students were textual, i.e. related to text style, cohesion or coherence while 1.88% (one problem) was related to intentionality. In example 4, student M2DE explained the problem encountered with translating the sentence "models and recreated scenes provide a vivid illustration of how needles were once made and how Redditch came to dominate the world needle trade" literally into German as it would not have been stylistically correct. Student F6ZH (example 5) identified a problem related to the specific meaning of the word "needle" in the original text while translating into Chinese as she had a problem with comprehending the intended meaning by the word "needle" despite the fact that she knows the different translations of the same word.

- Example 4: M2DE: "'How' cannot be translated with German equivalent because of stylistic reasons."
- Example 5: F6ZH: "(…) the specific meaning of 'needle' in this text."

During the second stage, again most of the problems identified by the students were linguistic but there was nonetheless a decrease in terms of numbers assigned to this category: 32.75%, 19 problems. Textual problems became the second most common category (20.68%, 12 problems) with extralinguistic problems following closely afterwards (18.86%, 11 problems) and problems attributed to the target text reader or translation brief too: 17.24%, 10 problems. It is worth mentioning that a new category; multidimensional problems, seemed to have appeared for the first time during the second stage where the students tended to perceive problems from more than one perspective, while no problems were perceived as being multidimensional during the first stage. During this stage, 10.34% (six problems) were perceived as being multidimensional. The types of multidimensional problems identified by the students were linguistic and extralinguistic; linguistic and textual or linguistic and related to the function of the text, as in example 5.6. In example 6, student F1EL encountered a problem in translating "English heritage", an English organization for protecting historic sites, which she perceived as being extralinguistic (cultural) and related to the target text reader:

- Example 6: F1EL: "There is no exact equivalent in Greek. The target audience does not have the same background as the source audience."

During the third stage, most of the problems identified by the students were multidimensional rather than linguistic as it was the case during the first and second stages: 33.53%, 19 problems. These multidimensional problems were either linguistic and extralinguistic; linguistic and textual or linguistic and related to intentionality. Linguistic problems became the second most common category in the third stage: 23.93%, 14 problems. The third most common category was extralinguistic problems (15.46%, seven problems) with textual (13.53%, six problems) and the target text reader or brief-related problems (11.61%, five problems) following closely afterwards. Thus, there was a decrease in terms of numbers assigned to the categories of the linguistic, extralinguistic, textual and target text reader and brief problems in favour of the multidimensional problems during the third stage in comparison with the second stage. Similar to the first stage, one problem of intentionality (1.92%) was identified during the third stage.

A comparison of the three stages of data analysis indicates that although the majority of problems were linguistic at the second stage, the number of linguistic problems decreased by 16.3 percentage points during this stage in comparison with the first stage (39.85%). This number further decreased by 8.83 percentage points during the third stage in comparison with the second stage (31.12%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems perceived as being linguistic by the students among the three stages is statistically significant $\{x^2 = 6.03, df = 2, P = 0.049\}$. Thus, the results of the chi-square support the H_1 and suggests that the students begin to perceive translation problems from different perspectives rather than merely from a linguistic point of view, while following the translation training programme. In terms of problems perceived as being extralinguistic, the comparison also indicates that this type of problem decreased by 15.1 percentage points during the second stage (57.17%), only to further decrease by 3.4 percentage points during the third stage in comparison with the second stage (19.81%). However, the chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems perceived as being extralinguistic by the students among the three stages is not statistically significant $\{x^2 = 6.92, df = 2, P = 0.314\}$, supporting the H_0, which indicates that the difference in the data is due to a chance, and that there is no significance change in terms of their perception of extralinguistic problems, unlike linguistic ones.

The comparison across the three stages indicates that the number of problems related to the target text readers or brief increased by 11.25 percentage points during the second stage (74.72%), only to decrease by 9.07 percentage points by the end of the programme in comparison with the second stage (56.17%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems related to the translation brief or target text among the three stages of data analysis is not statistically significant $\{x^2 = 3.99, df = 2, P = 0.136\}$. Similarly, the number of textual problems increased by 11.58 percentage points during the second stage (101.13%), only to decrease by 3.71 percentage points by the end of the programme in comparison with the second stage (24.11%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems perceived as being textual by the students among the three stages of data analysis is not statistically significant $\{x^2 = 3.61, df = 2, P = 0.1645\}$. Therefore, the results support the H_0

and suggest that variation in the data is due to a chance. This also indicates that translation training does not seem to have an effect on trainee translators' perception of problems related to the target text readers or brief and textual problems.

The comparison of the three stages of data analysis also indicates that the number of multidimensional problems which seems to have first appeared during the second stage increased by 23.19 percentage points during the third stage in comparison with the second stage (105.72%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems perceived as being multidimensional by the students between the second and third stages is statistically significant {$x^2 =$ 9.27, df = 1, P = 0.0023}. Thus, the results of the chi-square support the H_1 that there is a relationship between the data and the training followed by the students in the MA in the TS programme at UoB. Although the hypothesis that students about to complete their degree are able to recognise different translation problems and differentiate between them better than students beginning their degree in Gregorio Cano's study (2014) is neither confirmed nor refuted, the findings of the present study could allow us to hypothesise that the students' perception of the concept of translation problems changes from being unidimensional, either linguistic or extralinguistic, into being multidimensional while following the translation training programme. This could also indicate that the students began to look at translation problems from more than one angle after following the MA in TS at UoB. It is worth noting that the same patterns of development probably would not have been observed if the students were provided with a set of classification of problems to draw on. However, the fact that they were not given such a typology and hence the students were less constrained allowed us to obtain more reliable data in relation to the changes in the students' perception of translation problems.

7. The justification of translation strategies by the students

Figure 2 shows that during the first stage, most of the students' answers (30.18%, 16 problems) were related to the expectancy norms regarding the grammaticality and acceptability habits and rules of the target language.
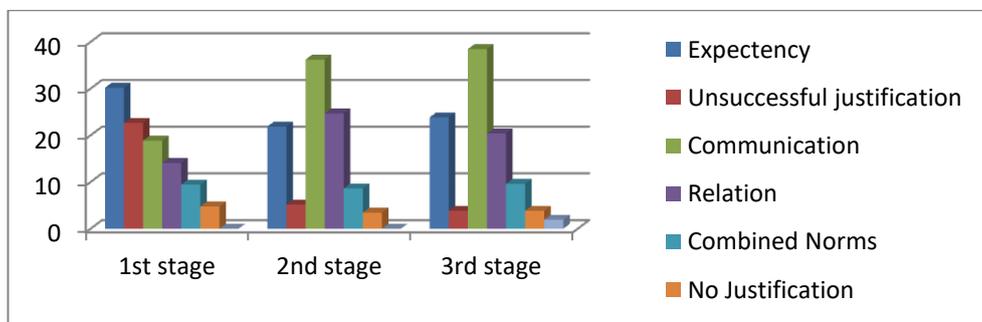

Figure 2: Justification of translation problems by the students

For example, whilst translating into Chinese (example 7), student F6ZH explained that she divided the sentence "the Mill is a listed building which houses

original water powered machinery" into two sentences in order to follow the habits of the target language.

- Example 7: F6ZH: "(…) adjust the sentence structure according to the habits of target language."

It is evident at this stage that the expectancy norm prevailed over the other types of norms which could be related to the trainee translators' perception of translation problems at this stage as being mainly linguistic, which was consequently reflected in the justification of the translation strategies used to solve these problems. The second most common norm was the communication norm; 18.86% of the problems justified (10 problems) reflected the communication norm where students tried to make the target text more readable or avoid redundancy and follow the maxims of relevance, quantity and quality. For example, student F1EL stated that she changed the structure of the title "the Forge Mille" to make it easier for the target reader to interpret the meaning.

- Example 8: F1EL: "(…) easier for the reader to understand what kind of museum it is"

During the second stage, the most common category was the communication norm rather than the expectancy norm as was the case during the first stage; 36.2% of the problems justified reflect the communication norm (21 problems) while 25.86% of the students' answers (15 problems) were related to the expectancy norms. During the third stage, the most common category was again the communication norm: 38.46% of the problems justified reflected the communication norm (20 problems) while 30.76% of the students' answers were related to the expectancy norms (16 problems).

Comparing the percentages of three stages of data analysis indicates that the proportion of problems justified according to the expectancy norm decreased by 5.68 percentage points during the second stage (15.41%) in comparison with the first stage, and then increased by 4.9 percentage points during the third stage in comparison with the second stage (17.30%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems justified in terms of the expectancy norm among the three stages is not statistically significant {x^2 = 0.39, df = 2, P = 0.8228}, thus supporting the H_0. This suggests that translation training does not necessarily affect the number of problems justified by trainee translators according to the expectancy norm. However, comparing the percentages of three stages of data analysis indicates that the number of problems justified according to the communication norm increased by 17.34 percentage points during the second stage (62.98%) in comparison with the first stage, to further increase by 2.26 percentage points during the third stage in comparison with the second stage (6.05%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems justified in terms of the communication norm among the three stages is statistically significant, albeit marginally {x^2 = 5.7, df = 2, P = 0.0578}. This supports the H_1 and indicates that the variation is not due to chance. The increase in the number of justifications in terms of the communication norms towards the end of the

programme suggests that students were increasingly focused on producing a coherent and clear target text. It is easy to see why students following the MA in TS may have led to this result, particularly considering the fact that they were exposed to theories that encourage students to prioritise a functional approach instead of one based on linguistic equivalence. House's typology of translation (1997), for example, argues that translating tourist brochures should be covert (as opposed to overt) in order to produce a text which sounds natural to the target text reader and consequently achieve the same function as the source text. This would allow us to hypothesise that the students seem to adapt the way they justify their decisions after following the translation training programme.

33

In terms of the relation norm, 15.09% of the problems identified by the students during the first stage were justified in terms of the relation norms; maintaining the relation with the source text; either to retain the same meaning or function of the source text (eight problems). For example (9), student M2DE explained that he needed to add more information to the phrase "attractive and well equipped area" in order to convey the same idea mentioned in the source text while translating into German.

- Example 9: M2DE: "(…) to explain the idea, some additional information was included into the TL sentence. Thus extending the TL text."

More problems were justified by the students in order to conform to the relation norm during the second stage than the first stage: 12 problems, 20.68%. The percentage and number of problems identified in terms of the relation norms during the third stage was the same as the percentage and number assigned to this category during the first stage: eight problems, 15.38%. Comparing the number of problems identified according to the relation norm increased by 5.59 percentage points during the second stage (31.25%), only to increase by 5.3 percentage points by the end of the programme in comparison with the second stage (29.39%). The chi-square test indicates that the difference between the number of problems justified according to the relation norm is not statistically significant $\{x^2 = 0.78, df = 2, P = 0.6771\}$, thus supporting the H_0 and suggests that the variation in the data is due to chance. This also indicates that there seems to be no relation between translation training and the number of problems justified by trainee translators according to the relation norm.

In some cases, the answers provided by the students reflected more than one norm; 9.43% of the problems identified during the first stage (five problems) were justified in terms of conforming to two norms simultaneously. For example, student F8FR explained why she kept the name "Foley" in the phrase "the marble Foley monument" in English while translating into French by stating that it is a name and names in similar translations are kept in English. She also justified the addition of inverted commas to this name to clarify that it is a name to the target audience. In her justification, student F8FR followed the expectancy and communication norms, attempting to translate the name according to the expectancy rules of the target language and simultaneously clarify it to the target audience.

- Example 10: F8FR: "Foley is the name of the monument and so should be kept in its English form as is the case with the rest of translations." (…) "The addition of the inverted commas clarifies that it is the name of the monument that may otherwise have been unclear to a French audience."

Similar to the first stage, some of the justification provided by the students reflected more than one norm during the second and third stages. 8.62% of the problems identified during the second stage (five problems) were justified in terms of conforming to two norms simultaneously while 7.69% of the problems (four problems) were justified in terms of conforming to two norms during the third stage. The percentage of justifications which reflected more than one norm remained stable throughout the academic year, and the chi-square test indicates that the difference among the three stages of data analysis is not statistically significant $\{x^2 = 0.1, df = 2, P = 0.9512\}$, thus supporting the H_0. Thus, similar to the patterns of development of the relation norm, this result of the statistical test indicates that there is no relation between translation training and the number of problems justified by trainee translators according to more than one norm.

Unlike the first and second stages, the accountability norm was reflected during the third stage only in the answer of one student (F9ES) who tried to conform to ethical principles, consulting professional translators on the translation of the word "court" in the title "Witley Court" into Spanish:

- Example 11: F9ES: "I did not know whether to leave it in English and pretend it is the proper name for it or whether to translate it and then to have it identified by what it was so that was the problem so I basically went on the forum to ask advice."

The scarce mention of the accountability norm could possibly be because they are trainees not working in a professional environment, thus less inclined to consider their role in a professional context, added to their awareness of the fact that they were part of a study.

The students did not offer a successful justification for 18.86% of the problems identified (10 problems) while 7.54% of the problems (four problems) did not have any justification during the first stage. The students who failed to offer a successful justification mentioned that they could not find an equivalent because of their level of language proficiency and therefore applied another strategy to solve six problems or that they guessed how to solve two problems or. For example, student M3ZH justified his decision for translating the verb "house" into Chinese as "be equipped with" by expressing dissatisfaction with the solutions he offered rather than stating the reason for translating this verb in this particular way.

- Example 12: M3ZH: "maybe not accurate enough"

Unlike the first stage, the number of unsuccessful justifications and problems with no justifications dropped during the second and third stages; the students did not offer successful justifications for 5.17% of the problems (three problems) during the second stage while no justification was offered for two problems

34

(3.44%). During the third stage, the students did not offer successful justifications for 3.84% of the problems identified (two problems) while 1.92% of the problems (one problem) did not have any justification. Comparing the number of problems with no justifications among the three stages indicates that this number dropped by 4.1 percentage points during the second stage (74.68%), to further decrease by 1.52 percentage point towards the end of the year in comparison with the second stage (56.71%). However, despite this drop in the number of problems with no justification, the chi-square test indicates that the difference is not statistically significant, which supports the H_0 and suggests that the variation is due to chance $\{x^2 = 2.18, df = 2, P = 0.3362\}$. This indicates that translation training does not seem to have an effect on trainee translators' ability to describe their justifications for the strategies used to solve translation problems. Similarly, the number of unsuccessful justifications dropped by 11.32 percentage points during the second stage (113.94%), to further decrease by 1.33 percentage point towards the end of the year (29.52%). Unlike problems with no justification, the drop in the number of unsuccessful justifications is statistically significant $\{x^2 = 8.84, df = 2, P = 0.012\}$, which supports the H_1 and could allow us to hypothesise that the students develop their ability to justify their decisions after following the translation training programme.

At this stage, it is possible to discern the more significant changes in the students' patterns of development through the academic year. It would appear that the effect of the translation training can be perceived in the multidimensional nature of the explanation of problems and the tendency to focus on the communicative function of the text as students progress. It also seems that there is a basis for proposing a tentative hypothesis that initially students focus on linguistic equivalence, but when they are introduced to translation theory and when they involve in the analysis of translations, they start to pay more attention to how the target text reads in its own right, which is reflected in their focus on the communicative norm. It also seems that this change occurs in the first few months of the programme, remaining stable after that. This suggests that the most significant development occurs in the first months, and this development is then consolidated throughout the following months.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine - through the presentation of preliminary findings – the development of the trainee translators' translation competence, in particular with regard to their ability to evaluate translation problems and justify their decisions while translating. Despite the small sample size, it is possible to draw some tentative hypotheses concerning the students' ability to evaluate translation problems and translation strategies from analysing the data provided by the students. The decrease in the number of linguistic problems identified and the increase in the number of multidimensional problems as perceived by the students indicate that the participant students' perception of the concept of translation problems changes throughout the academic year, where the participants begin to look at translation problems from more than one perspective.

Regarding the justification of translation problems, the comparison between the three stages indicated that the expectancy norm prevailed at the first stage. This could be related to the trainee translators' perception of translation problems at this stage as being mainly linguistic. However, it was evident that the prevailing norm during the second and third stages was the communication norm. During the second and third stages, the students were more interested in producing a clear and coherent target text which can be a consequence of the change in the students' understanding of translation problems that occurred at these stages. This signifies that the trainees developed their ability to justify the decisions taken in the translation process and that they changed the way they justified their answers from trying to merely meet the target language rules into also attempting to produce a clear and coherent target text.

Thus these preliminary findings can confirm the calls for different approaches to translator training for integrating both theoretical knowledge and practice into translation training programmes. In this respect, future research can extend the context of the current case study and include more than one translation training programme. It is advisable to use a more homogenous sample of trainees within specific language pairs which would allow the researcher to also analyze the translated texts and examine the effect of following the translating training programme on their skills in translation. It is also recommended to provide students with a set of classifications to categorise translation problems, strategies and justifications while leaving for them the opportunity to add more categories if they thought that the existing ones do not reflect their answers in order to avoid a messy collection of data that is difficult to interpret. It could also include a comparison between the effects of different theories in translation on the trainee translators' decisions whilst translating to define the type of theories that tend to greater inform their translation decisions. Furthermore, future research may also involve a study of the way certain theories of translation inform the decisions made by translators; whether they tend to affect their skills in translation or the way they justify their decisions for example, to then be employed in developing translators' skills in translation training programmes.

References

Adab, B. (2000). Evaluating Translation Competence. In C. Schäffner, & B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Bartina, F. (2005). Theory and Translator Training. In M. Tennent (Ed.), *Training for the New Millennium*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Chesterman, A. (2000). *Memes of Translation*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamin.

Chesterman, A., & Wagner, E. (2002). *Can Theory Help Translators? A Dialogue between the Ivory Tower and the Wordface*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Dollerup, C. (1996). The Emergence of the Teaching of Translation. In C. Dollerup and V. Appel (Eds,), *Teaching Translation and Interpreting 3*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.

Gile, D. (2009). *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training.* Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

House, J. (1997). *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Kelly, D. (2005). *A Handbook for Translator Trainers*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Kiraly, D. (1995). *Pathways to Translation: Pedagogy and Practice*. Kent: Kent State University Press.

Kiraly, D. (2000). *A Social Constructivist Approach to Translator Education*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Lee, H. (2006). Translator Training: Beyond the Dichotomy of Theory vs. Practice. *Forum*, *4*(2), 41-51.

Mackenzie, R. (2004). The Competencies Required by the Translator's Roles as a Professional. In K. Malmkjær (Ed.), *Translation in Undergraduate Programmes*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Moulin, L., & Albir, A. H. (2002). Translation Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach. *Meta*, *47*(4): 498-512.

Neubert, A. (2000). Competence in Language, Languages, and in Translation. In C. Schäffner and B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Nord, C. (2005). *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation Oriented Text Analysis*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Orozco, M. (2000). Building a Measuring Instrument for the Acquisition of Translation Competence in Trainee Translators. In C. Schäffner and B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

PACTE. (2011). Results of the Validation of the PACTE Translation Competence Model: Translation Problems and Translation Competence. In C. Alvstad, A. Hild and E. Tiselius (Eds.), *Methods and Strategies of Process Research: Integrative Approaches in Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Pavlović, T. (2014). Exploring directionality in translation studies. *Explorations in English Language and Linguistics*, *1*(2), 149-165.

Presas, M. (2000). Bilingual Competence and Translation Competence. In C. Schäffner and B. Adab (Eds.), *Developing Translation Competence*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Pym, A. (2009). *Translator Training*. Retrieved December 28, 2013, from http://usuaris.tinet.cat/apym/on-line/training/2009_translator_training.pdf

Robinson, D. (1997). *Becoming a Translator: An Accelerated Course*. London: Routledge.

Saldanha, G., & O'Brien, S. (2013). *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*, Manchester: St. Jerome.

Toury, G. (2012). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Ulrych, M. (2005). Training Translators: Programmes, Curricula, Practices. In M. Tennent (Ed.), *Training for the New Millennium*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Waddington, C. (2001). Should Translations be Assessed Holistically or through Error Analysis? *Hermes*, *Journal of Linguistics*, *26*: 15-38.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

37