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The Importance of Collaborative Discourse Analysis in the Training of Novice Translators

Eszter Ernst-Kurdi

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Abstract

This paper outlines the key aspects of effective translator training regarding content, method and assessment drawing on a growing field of research in Translation Studies. The training of translators—whether in the professional or in the Bible translation context—should be influenced by the demands of the field as well as the profile of the students and therefore focus on the most required and most often lacking competencies in novice translators. The author suggests that collaborative discourse analysis is particularly beneficial in the training of beginner translators as it hones their skills in self-reflection, in handling discourse level translation problems, in providing a contrastive analysis of the SL and the TL and in correcting their most common translation errors. In addition, this method provides the learners with the opportunity to grow in teamwork and interpersonal skills which are also crucial competencies for a translator.

1. Introduction

How does one learn to translate? How does one teach translation? Since the beginning of translator training these questions have been asked and revisited many times by numerous scholars. The goal of this article is to summarise the most important aspects of translation pedagogy based on current research and to show how collaborative discourse analysis can be an effective tool for training novice translators.

This article stems from two very different experiences from the field of translator training. As part of my university education, I had the privilege to study for a year at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation of the University of Mons, in Belgium, and experience first-hand the high-quality and high-pressure training of professional translators and interpreters in the European context. In the past few years, I also had the joy to live in a totally different reality by doing linguistic field research and mentoring of novice Bible translators in a minority language in Northern Cameroon. These two experiences led me to believe that even though the realities of national Bible translators in third-world countries are very different from that of professionals trained in more developed parts of the world, the two contexts have enough in common that the findings in both can lead to useful cross-fertilisation. My goal is to keep one foot in each context and to show how research and methodology in these two very different realities can enrich each other.

2. The realities of the field

Resources on the training of translators have increased exponentially in the twenty-first century. The discussion of issues related to the teaching of translation has evolved into a new field of research within translation studies and it continues to develop as it draws on findings from the domains of cognitive linguistics, comparative linguistics, corpus linguistics, psychology and pedagogy (Gile 1995; Kiraly 2000, Robinson 2003, Kelly 2005, House 2015, Gardy 2016).

The Bible translation movement that addresses the needs of minority languages around the world has also experienced a boom in the past few decades. As a result, reflections on how to train national Bible

[1] Institute for the Development of Languages and Translation in Africa.

translators well have multiplied in recent years, combining solid theoretical frameworks with practical advice (Wilt 2002, Wendland 2008, Hill *et al* 2011, Zogbo 2011, Kenmogne & Zogbo 2015).

The realities of the two fields – namely professional translators in Western countries and national Bible translators in minority language groups – regarding work and training are very different. The context of Bible translator training in less developed parts of the world presents unique challenges that are not known in other training programmes. Bible translator training is usually less institutionalised and is based on more informal training delivered in the form of workshops. The translators' backgrounds can vary significantly from primary school education to university level, depending on the context. There are considerable financial challenges that national Bible translators face, as well as a lack of adequate resources, dictionaries, glossaries, access to internet and sometimes even electricity. In the developing world, Bible translators are often agents of language development too and have to work with newly established orthographies. Frequently, they are the first ones to produce something in their language in writing, which means that they cannot rely on a large written corpus for reference. These translators are mother tongue speakers of minority languages who are learning from teachers and mentors who—although they are experts in Biblical languages as well as in the official and/or trade language(s) of the area—have not always had the opportunity to master the translators' target language. This is just to mention a few of the significant difficulties that make the training of national Bible translators in minority languages quite a unique challenge. A more extensive comparison of the realities of the two contexts based on my experience in Cameroon is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: A comparison of the contexts of professional translators in Europe and of national Bible translators in Cameroon in the domains of training and work

The Context of Training		
	Professional translators in Europe	**National Bible translators in Cameroon**
Format	Institutionalised	Only a couple of institutionalised training programmes; training is mostly informal based on intensive workshops held several times a year
Level	BA and MA level	Wide range, starting from high school level
Length	3-5 years of training before starting to work	Ongoing training while working under the supervision of a mentor/consultant
Resources	Can take advantage of many resources (software, dictionaries, databases, internet, laboratories etc.)	Have to make do with very limited resources
CAT tools	Covered (the extent may depend on the teacher/institution)	Covered with special emphasis on ParaTExt (the extent may depend on the teacher/mentor)
Finances	Can generate profit	Non-profit
Language of instruction	Involves the mother tongue of the translator to some extent	In the language of wider communication
Teachers	Highly qualified teachers with professional experience who master the TL	Highly qualified teachers with professional experience who sometimes do not master the TL
Corpus	Can rely on significant written corpus and a wide range of previous research in the SL and the TL	No substantial written corpus to rely on and often very limited previous linguistic research in the TL
Mentoring	Ongoing mentoring is not a priority	Ongoing mentoring is a priority

The Context of Work		
Clients	Wide range: individuals, firms, NGOs, governments, EU, etc.	The language community and the church
Pressure	Highly demanding, competitive, great time pressure	Non-competitive, less time pressure
Responsibility	High	High – especially if one considers the "pressure" that comes with translating the most fundamental document of Christianity
Employment	Employed or free-lance, usually with competitive salaries	Often volunteers, usually with very low salaries or no compensation at all
Status	Claim to have low-status (Dam & Zethsen 2009) but becoming more and more appreciated (Pym *et al*. 2013)	Status depends on what other profession/education they have
Translation brief	It is usually in place and the client can be expected to take responsibility for communicating his/her expectations and ideas about the translation fairly clearly	It is becoming more and more common, however the client (the language community represented by the language committee) needs significant help and coaching to be able to choose from the available options and to pinpoint and articulate the expectations of the community
Working with others	Mostly individual translation work but often within some kind of team setting	Mostly collaborative translation work in a team
Feedback	Limited feedback because of time pressure	Several compulsory feedback mechanisms are built into the process: peer-feedback, testing naturalness in the language community, feedback from a linguist, feedback from an exegete, verse-by-verse feedback from a translation consultant
Corpus	Can rely on significant written corpus	No substantial written corpus to rely on, so translators work with transcripts of a limited oral corpus
Spelling in the TL	Well-established spelling rules in the TL	The spelling rules of the TL are often fluid as the given language is often still being developed or has only recently been developed
Specialised glossary	Specialised glossaries exist	Specialised glossaries and key term lists do not exist in the TL and have to be developed by the translators

While the challenges that Bible translators of minority languages and professional translators in Western countries face are very different, teachers and researchers in both contexts have recently shown a growing interest in reflecting on the way translators are trained, and in encouraging a more up-to-date and student-centred translation pedagogy (Kelly 2005, Muthwii 2006, Wendland 2008, Kiraly 2012).

3. Key aspects of effective translation didactics

Based on research and literature in the field of translator training as well as on personal experience, I suggest that the most important aspects of translation pedagogy can be summed up in the following five points.

3.1. Translator training should be process-centred

The training of translators should be process-centred as opposed to product-centred, especially in the case of novice translators. Learning to reflect on one's own work is an essential skill for translators. Self-reflection and the analysis of translation problems should be encouraged right from the start of the training so that translators will be better equipped to deal with translation difficulties in the future. Reflection on action is a fundamental element of learning that engages not only cognitive but also affective processes (Bray *et al.* 2000:9). Simply correcting the errors in a translated text is a less effective way of teaching than having the translation students reflect on the process of translation starting from understanding the meaning expressed by the source text, going all the way to the re-expression of it in the translation. Teaching about the recent findings in the field of cognitive linguistics (for example, how we understand meaning, how we process discourse) can be particularly interesting and beneficial for novice translators. It can enable them not only to reflect on the often automatic, internal processes that are involved in translation, but also to be able to describe these processes using appropriate vocabulary.

This approach requires more time, which is at a premium in institutionalised training programmes. However, it offers skills to the translators that will enable them to continue developing professionally after their training is completed.

Process-centred translation training can be a particular challenge for Bible translation organisations where the end product, the translated Bible, is held in the highest esteem. It can be tempting for translation consultants to try to save time by focusing more on making sure that the translation is accurate, clear and natural than to invest energy in teaching the translators to reflect on the process of translation and the decisions they make. I believe that the training of Bible translators needs to be product-based but process-centred. In other words, the exercises should always relate to the translation of a Biblical passage, but they should be focused on the whole process of translation and not merely on correcting the errors. The process-centred approach is especially crucial in contexts where Bible translation organisations aim at providing only the translation of the New Testament and leave the responsibility of translating the Old Testament to the local church. In these settings, it is all the more important to put in place a translator training programme that equips national Bible translators to handle future translation projects by themselves.

Another reason for process-centred translator training is that it encourages self-reflection and self-evaluation, helping the students to take responsibility for their own learning. In shame-honour cultures, such as Cameroonian cultures, giving feedback on someone's work can be a delicate matter. Direct feedback is hardly ever given, especially in front of others, in order to avoid shaming. Those members of the society who are considered to have a higher status—such as pastors, supervisors, teachers and other educated or powerful people—will usually not be challenged or questioned on their work or views. It would not be culturally appropriate. Therefore, teaching techniques for reflecting on one's own work is especially important for novice translators in such shame-honour cultures.

3.2. Translator training should be participatory and collaborative

Participatory approaches have become popular in Bible translator training in recent years and are slowly gaining more attention in professional training programmes in Europe too (Kiraly 2012). Collaborative learning lends itself to be used in group-oriented, oral cultures where learning usually takes place within a social setting. However, experience has shown that even in Western cultures participatory methods are more effective in teaching/learning than traditional teacher-centred lectures (Kelly 2005:102, Kiraly 2001:53).

In the context of Bible translator training, I would suggest that the trainer needs to take on the role of facilitator rather than that of teacher as he/she often does not master the minority language (target

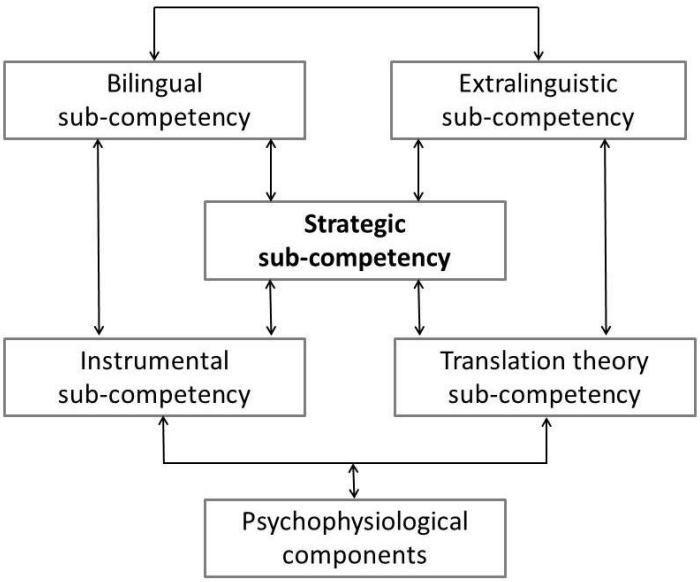
language) in question. In a participatory and collaborative workshop setting the facilitator becomes a co-learner where mutual learning takes place through discovery. Facilitators, based on their extensive experience, ask questions that can guide the trainees in their research and reflections. They may make tentative suggestions to stimulate the thinking of the experts in the language, but they do not unilaterally provide the final solutions to the translation problems.

Translation requires humility, because creating something new is easier than translating. Translation requires the acceptance of limits, of being "bound" by the original and "bent forward in front of it" in a position of respect. In the classroom, by creating a collaborative learning experience, no-one is better placed to model the humility necessary for a translator than the facilitator.

Collaborative learning also has the advantage of improving the translators' interpersonal skills. The ability to work as part of a team is one of the most essential skills in the community of translation practice. However, providing the opportunity for growth in this area through designing collaborative learning experiences is not enough in itself to hone the interpersonal and teamwork skills of translators. More explicit teamwork training is necessary (Barros 2011), preferably at the beginning of the training cycle.

3.3. Translator training should focus on the competencies most required by the field

In his article on competency based translator training, Hurtado Albir (2008) presents the sub-competencies that make up translation competence. He argues that the description of this competency is more complicated than first anticipated, because it is essentially not about knowledge (*savoir-quoi*) which is fairly easy to verbalise, but rather about a procedural know-how (*savoir-comment*) which is difficult to articulate, especially as most of it happens subconsciously. The interesting part of Hurtado Albir's research is that not only does he describe these sub-competencies in detail but he ranks them, too, and shows how they are connected to each other.

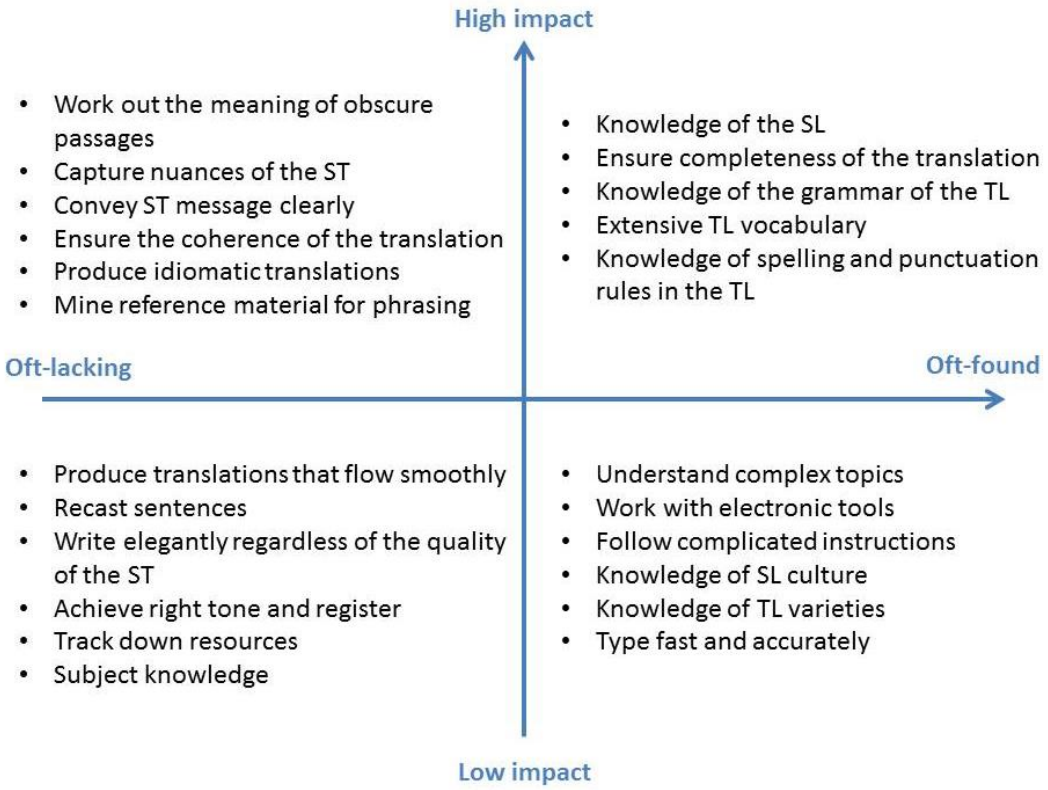


Translation Competency according to the holistic model of PACTE 2003 (Hurtado Albir 2008:29)

Hurtado Albir believes that the strategic sub-competency is the most important of the six as it encompasses the overall procedural know-how that is needed for producing a translation. In addition, the strategic sub-competency has an effect on all the other sub-competencies. It is responsible for the control of the whole translation process, for planning, for problem-solving as well as for other operations. It can also make up for some deficiencies in other sub-competencies. It is therefore wise to give enough space and time to the development of the strategic sub-competency in the training of novice translators.

According to Kelly (2005:22), learning objectives in translation training should be based on professional standards and considerations, social needs, the industry's needs and student/trainee profiles. Lafeber

(2012), based on her research conducted among translators and revisers working at inter-governmental organisations, proposes a weighted list of skills and knowledge most necessary for translators working in such a setting. She organises her findings along two scales: high vs low impact skills and oft-found vs oft-lacking skills, resulting in four distinct categories that are useful when reflecting on the training of translators. To summarise her findings, I present the skills that are ranked highly on her lists in the form of a graph that is organised along the above-mentioned two scales.



Translator skills according to their impact and frequency among novice translators who work in inter-governmental organisations, based on Lafeber's data (2012:122–124)

Lafeber also provides a list of the most desired additional skills needed on the job where communication skills, the ability to look for answers or elicit assistance, the ability to work well in a team, and an openness to receiving feedback are interestingly rated higher than other skills such as language skills, critical thinking skills, knowledge of translation theory and practice, flexibility, and the ability to work independently (2012:116). She found that the additional skills that are most often found lacking among novice translators are: general knowledge, organisation and time management, quality management skills, and knowledge of translation and terminology theory. In additional comments, revisers identified the problem of producing too literal translations and a tendency to translate words rather than meaning as the most common errors among beginners.

Such empirical research has several advantages. The findings can influence the shaping of translator training programmes and provide insight into the specific requirements of the different contexts that translators work in. The findings can also help identify candidates with the right profile for a given job. To my knowledge, such empirical research has not yet been done in the domain of Bible translation. It would be a worthwhile study in the future that could greatly benefit Bible translation organisations, language committees and trainers of Bible translators. Wendland (2008) touched upon the needed competencies and skills of Bible translators and invited reflection by asking a couple of key questions. A well-designed survey among Bible translators and consultants working in major Bible translation agencies would constitute an interesting further research project that could provide a unique and valuable insight into the most needed and most often lacking skills among Bible translators.

In addition to the advantages that such skill lists bring to translator trainers and organisations, discovering the most needed skills for the translation work in a specific context is an extremely important process for the students themselves. Whatever the students perceive as the most-needed knowledge for their future work will motivate them to acquire that piece of knowledge or skill more than any other set of requirements imposed on them by their teacher (Duffy, cited in Kiraly 2012:93).

3.4. Translator training should be authentic and experiential right from the start

Most teachers insist that professional realism is essential in the training of translators. Unfortunately, it is often only manifest in the training of advanced students. This can seriously decrease the motivation of beginners because the professional context seems too far away from and irrelevant to their learning experience. Kelly (2005) encourages the use of authentic texts but warns teachers to make sure that the texts are presented according to the students' progression in the learning process.

Kiraly (2012) believes that an authentic project setting is the key to translator education. He describes his approach to translation pedagogy as "holistic, experiential, emphasising the proactive role of learners in coming to know through (inter-)personal experience" (Kiraly 2012:85). The great value of Kiraly's work lies in the fact that he acknowledges the extreme complexities of the translators' work in our postmodern era where "adaptable heuristics are far more useful for their work than rigidly applied rules" (Kiraly 2012:87). However, he admits that this emerging method of learning/teaching can create stress for teachers who have been used to being in charge of every minute of their class time. In an authentic project-based class "chaos reigns—at least initially [and is a] welcome and in fact essential ingredient for learning to deal with complexity" (Kiraly 2012:92).

In the context of Bible translator training, the workshop/project based approach is well-established. This less-institutionalised context lends itself to flexible training. However, in my experience, trainers of Bible translators greatly benefit from collaborative, contextualised learning. This is in line with recent findings and recommendations of the cognitive and socio-constructivist approaches in education. This shift was already encouraged by Wendland (2008) when he suggested seven guidelines towards a more setting-sensitive Bible translation pedagogy that is interactive, inductive, indigenized, communal, developmental, comparative and applied.

3.5. Assessment in translator training should be as objective and formative as possible

Translation is not an exact science, which makes the objective evaluation of translations a major challenge in the field of translation pedagogy (Bowker 2001). House (2015) claims that translation quality assessment is at the core of any theory of translation, so the approach taken to translation will greatly influence the assessment methods used to evaluate students. She provides a brief overview of the major translation theories from the past few decades and also elaborates on different approaches to translation quality assessment. Traditionally, assessments in translator training programmes have the tendency to be summative—marking the end of a completed learning cycle—and based on a more-or-less subjective evaluation. However, thanks to the input of recent research from the field of pedagogy, translator trainers have been challenged to improve their assessment methods to be more formative—making the learning experience of the student to be the primary goal of the evaluation—and to be more objective by providing clear guidelines as well as measurable, useful and extensive feedback, especially in the first few months of the training (Collombat 2009, Gardy 2015, Gardy 2016).

Gardy's (2016) empirical research from eight Canadian universities shows that the evaluation of translations is a major stress factor for translator trainers (taking up between 37% and 55% of their total work time) that they prefer not to discuss with their colleagues. This research also revealed that at the moment, still only about 40% of translation teachers view assessment as a pedagogical tool.

According to Gardy's findings, 81% of teachers use a correction grid for evaluating the quality of the students' translations. This number seems to decrease with teachers who have more than 5 years of experience. Interestingly, 28% of teachers claim to not use any kind of evaluation grid. For those who do use it, the evaluation grid tends to be centred on the analysis of errors that are grouped into "language

related errors" and "translation related errors." Some teachers further differentiate between the two types by classifying them as grave or minor errors.

The unique part of Gardy's research is the discussion of how translation students view assessment. More than 84% of students appreciate a good evaluation as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when they receive detailed feedback. However, they feel that they often receive minimal feedback on their work. As the students progress in their studies, they seem to question increasingly the objectivity of the assessments. A direct correlation can be observed between the quantity and quality of the feedback received and the student's perception of the subjectivity/objectivity of the assessment. Receiving more feedback with detailed explanations seems to help students to view the assessment as objective and helpful for their learning (Gardy 2015).

These empirical studies from the professional translator training context can serve as good examples to Bible translator trainers and consultants. To my knowledge, no such empirical study has been done on the different methods of quality assessment and feedback in the context of Bible translators of minority languages. It would lead to helpful insights about how consultants and national Bible translators view the written and oral feedback given during the process of training and translation checking. It would also be interesting to measure how much time is spent on formative, process-centred assessment as opposed to product-centred error correction. In Bible translation, there is a justifiable emphasis on the product, but that can sometimes hinder the didactic role of the evaluation/checking sessions. Such an empirical study as Gardy's would be quite a complex challenge in the context of Bible translators as it would have to take into account the realities of the field with all its cross-cultural intricacies.

In summary, current research indicates that students will reach higher levels of understanding as well as a better approach to learning when the teaching/learning environment encompasses the following: intrinsic motivation, active involvement in realistic learning tasks, independence and choice, cooperative work, a challenging but supportive and low-threat environment, frequent and constructive feedback, practice and reinforcement (Cannon & Newble 2000:9).

After having presented the most important aspects of effective translation pedagogy, in the following section I would like to describe a method that fulfils the above-mentioned criteria and has been found very beneficial in the training of novice Bible translators. I believe that it is a tool that could be adapted in professional translation training programmes as well. Lafeber's findings have shown that many of the most needed and most often lacking skills among novice translators—such as achieving coherence, recasting sentences, not translating words but meaning, producing idiomatic translations, etc.—relate to an applied understanding of discourse level issues in translation. In addition, the ability to work well together with others has been mentioned as crucial and often missing (Lafeber 2012). These findings indicate the areas where translator training has not been effective enough in the past and where trainers could be more intentional about honing the skills of their trainees. The method described here addresses these major needs right at the beginning of the training.

4. Collaborative discourse analysis for novice translators

Discourse analysis has been getting increasing attention among researchers from the fields of linguistics, psycholinguistics, social studies, political studies and epistemology. In the following, the term discourse analysis is used to describe the linguistic study of texts that investigates the role of syntactic structures within multi-sentential texts.

The description of this method is based on a pilot workshop that was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 2016 under the leadership of Dr Ginger Boyd, linguistics consultant with SIL Cameroon, with which I had the privilege to participate as a linguist.

4.1. Description of the method

National Bible translators are invited to a three-week intensive workshop where they work in teams doing guided, collaborative discourse analysis on authentic texts written in their mother tongue as well as on Biblical texts that they have already translated. The workshop is facilitated by a linguistics consultant, and

each team is accompanied by a linguist. Formal teaching is kept to 20–30 minutes per day and is mainly used to introduce the task assigned for the day. At the end of each day, the teams present their findings to the whole group and ask for feedback as well as for help to resolve outstanding questions.

During the workshop, the students learn to identify the different chunks of a text and start to analyse some key aspects of discourse that are especially relevant for Bible translation, such as participant referencing, the use of tense and aspect markers for backgrounding/foregrounding, the use of connectors, information load, subordination, the use of spacers and topic markers, etc. (Zogbo 1988, Longacre & Hwang 2012). The students chart their authentic texts as a team, first manually, then on the computer using FieldWorks Language Explorer, a versatile software tool developed by SIL. Then they focus on one aspect of discourse at a time and use colours to mark the various devices applied in the text concerning that given aspect. Once they have gotten a solid understanding of the discourse features of the authentic texts in their language, they analyse their translations and compare the results. This way, using participatory methods, they can collaboratively discover for themselves where their translations have not followed the natural discourse patterns of the target language. They come to see where they were too bound by the structures of the source text, which makes translations unnatural and sometimes even erroneous in the target language.

4.2. Advantages of collaborative discourse analysis for the training of novice translators

This method of collaborative discourse analysis has several advantages for the development of translators, especially in the beginning phase of their training.

4.2.1 It helps to deal with the most common translation errors

An important part of a translator trainer's job is to understand why the student has made those errors and to help him/her to avoid making them in the future (Bowker 2001). Pym (1992:283) goes even further and argues that the analysis of translation errors should lead to the analysis of translation teaching.

Some of the most common errors that novice translators struggle with have been identified by translator trainers and revisers as the following:

- The translation does not flow well in the TL.
- The translation follows the original too closely.
- The translator translates words or sentences instead of meaning in context.
- The translation sounds foreign because of the structure of sentences. (Thomas 1995, Lafeber 2012, House 2015)

All of these result from a lack of discourse level awareness of the source text and comparative knowledge about the discourse features of the two languages involved. Collaborative discourse analysis—even if it is based on a limited corpus—can focus the students' attention on the differences in discourse features in a concrete and quantitative way. This awareness of the discourse specific differences between the two languages will help students to produce more accurate and more natural translations.

An example from Mada from the workshop: connectors

The appropriate use of connectors is a challenge in translation because connectors usually have multiple functions and most of the time these functions do not transfer directly from one language to another. When Mada speakers are asked to give the equivalent of the French connector '*et*' in their language, they always say '*ka*' right away. However, even if superficially the two words can be considered as having the same meaning, they are not equivalent because '*ka*' in Mada is used in a much more restrictive way than '*et*' is in French. In addition, the overall number of connectors used in Mada texts in general is much smaller than that of connectors in French. Beginner Mada translators were not aware of this significant difference in usage between the connector '*ka*' and the French conjunction '*et*'. Every single time they came across '*et*' in the ST, they translated it by '*ka*'. Through a simple, statistical analysis of the number of occurrences of '*ka*' they themselves discovered that they used '*ka*' ten times more often in translated texts than in natural texts. Based on this statistical data, they were then able to further investigate the usage of '*ka*' in Mada and

came to realise that they have to be careful not to always render '*et*' with '*ka*' in their translations. This knowledge significantly improved the naturalness and accurateness of their translations.

Table 2: Comparative statistical data on the use of the connector 'ka' in one of the authentic and translated texts in Mada

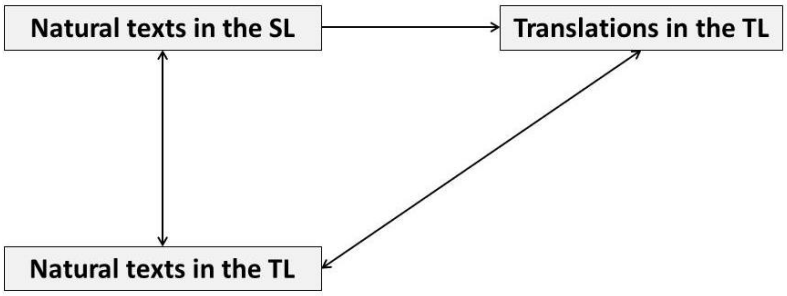
	An authentic narrative text in Mada	A Mada translation of a French narrative text
Number of propositions	104	87
Number of occurrences of '*ka*'	1	8
Percentage of '*ka*' relative to all propositions	0.9%	9.2%

Such comparative analysis aiming at uncovering the roots of the most common translation errors can help train novice translators to think further than just the word or the proposition that they are translating and to get into the habit of analysing discourse features in both languages, even before they start translating.

4.2.2 It is contrastive

Wendland (2008) argues that a comparative-contrastive approach that seeks to highlight the differences and the similarities of the SL and the TL is very helpful in translator training. Contrastive analysis and translation are tightly linked: translations provide data for contrastive analysis, while contrastive analysis provides possible explanations for translation difficulties (Baker 2003). The potential of such contrastive studies has increased with the growing use of digital corpora in translation studies where with the aid of computers it is now fairly easy to come up with quantitative data based on a large number of texts.

Using the collaborative discourse analysis method described above, students have several options to make use of corpora in order to do a comparative-contrastive study of the discourse features that are relevant to translation in their particular language pair. The arrows in the following figure present these options.

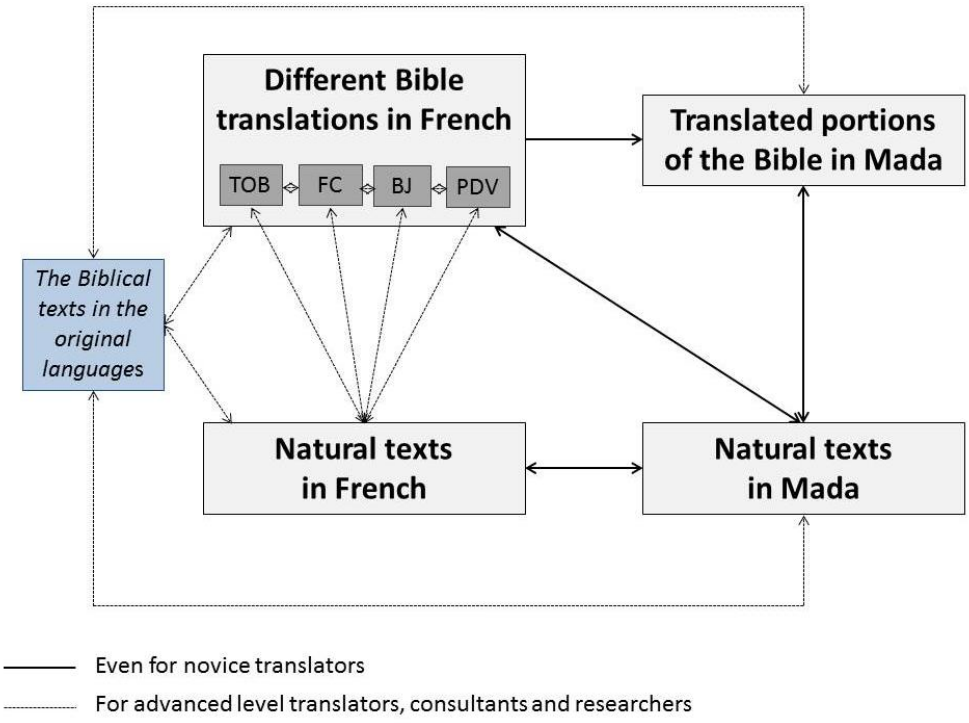


Comparable corpora when translating from one language to another

Comparing the authentic texts in the SL and the TL can give insight into language specific and genre specific devices. Comparing the translation with authentic texts in the TL can flag up potential problems in the translation and provide measurable data for self-evaluation and translation quality assessment.

In the context of Bible translation there are even more options to use comparable corpora. The texts in the original Biblical languages and the already existing Bible translations can help students get a more nuanced idea of the similarities and differences in discourse features as well as in vocabulary. However, some of these contrastive analyses are not suitable for beginner translators, given the realities of the field and the complexity of the data available. As Kenmogne and Zogbo (2015) admit, not all translators will be keen or successful in doing such analyses and will therefore need the assistance of linguistics specialists and scholars of Biblical languages. However, the more translators have an in-depth knowledge of the discourse features of their own language, the more likely they will produce a quality translation. The following

diagramme shows the wide range of possibilities for corpus-based, comparative-contrastive analysis in the context of Bible translation.



Comparable corpora in Bible translation (with the Mada context taken as an example)

An example from Mada from the workshop: participant referencing

By doing collaborative discourse analysis, the beginner translators realised that grammaticality does not mean acceptability. The context is of pivotal importance. Participant referencing in narrative texts provides a good example for illustrating the difference between grammaticality and acceptability.

In Mada, there are several ways to refer to participants in narrative texts: by using the proper name, a simple noun, a noun phrase, an independent pronoun, or by using a subject prefix attached to the verb. The underlying rules that define which device should be used when, and what kind of cognitive effect that particular device has in constructing the mental representation of the situation, are language-specific. Not being aware of this important information at first, the translators did not pay any particular attention as to which device they used in their translations. It was only after a quick statistical, comparative analysis that they noticed that there was a big difference between their translations and the authentic texts collected in their language regarding the number of times the independent pronoun was used. Table 3 shows the statistical evidence that first brought this translation problem to the translators' attention.

Table 3: The use of independent pronouns in a natural and in a translated text in Mada

	An authentic narrative text in Mada	**A Mada translation of a French narrative text**
Number of propositions	127	107
Number of occurrences of an independent pronoun used for participant referencing	4	19
Percentage of independent pronouns relative to all propositions	3.1%	17.8%

After the statistical data gathering, a more in-depth analysis was needed to understand the difference in cognitive effects that the use of independent pronouns and the use of subject prefixes create in Mada. The translators discovered that independent pronouns have an emphatic function and can only be used to mark focus or contrast. Even though grammatically-speaking using the independent pronoun is not incorrect, it is only acceptable in certain contexts. This new knowledge enabled the students to correct their previous translations and to sensitise them to avoid this particular translation error in the future.

4.2.3 It is flexible

This method of collaborative discourse analysis is very adaptable. It can be done with a small corpus of a few texts or with a large one. It can be done with just one language pair or several language pairs together. It can be particularly beneficial if the languages are related, because the students will be able to share their findings more easily. Depending on the time available, this method can provide quick pointers to the translators through initial statistical data, but it also has room for in-depth study of discourse features in a given language pair.

Statistical analysis can be used effectively in linguistic research in various ways. Holmes and Hazen (2014) describe several ways in which quantitative analysis can be useful and illuminating for linguistic research. I believe that this principle applies to translation studies as well. As seen in the examples above, even a limited statistical analysis can set the translators on the right path to discover essential knowledge that has a lasting effect on the quality of their future work. However, quantitative analysis is often not enough in itself. It is a good first step that has to be followed by qualitative research. Bowker (2001) points out that the corpus-based approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods where the translator trainer has the responsibility to further explore and interpret the data in order to apply it to the translated texts. In the collaborative method described here, this responsibility belongs to the translation team who are supported and guided in their research and interpretations by their teachers/mentors.

4.2.4 It can help with objective quality assessment

Another significant strength of this method is that it can be used to help with translation quality assessment. House (2015) proposes a complete model of translation quality assessment grounded in the linguistic-textual discourse study of the original and the translated text. Her approach is based on thorough, qualitative, descriptive analysis of the original text and the translation, which she considers absolutely essential for any solid translation assessment. In my opinion, her revised model (2015:127) could be very useful in Bible translation quality assessment, too.

Hassani (2011) conducted a study to see whether giving corpus-based assessment and feedback to students over a period of time has an effect on the quality of the translations they produce. His results show that the quality of translations improved more in the group where students received feedback and corrections based on an established corpus, compared with the control group where feedback was given more intuitively. This research shows that it is important to give measurable, well-supported and extensive feedback to beginner translators. Quantitative analysis related to discourse can help support the teacher's intuitive remarks by providing tangible data. This becomes extremely important in the context of Bible translation quality assessment where translation consultants do not always master the target language and have to sometimes resort to giving feedback based only on intuition. In these situations, consultants also have to trust that their trainees' explanations are correct. Quantitative data on the average number of propositions in a sentence in natural texts or on the number of noun phrases used per proposition can indicate to the evaluator whether the translator followed the natural information rate of the target language or not.

House's concluding words on the topic of translation quality assessment are worth quoting here: "Judging without analysing is irresponsible, and analysing without judging is pointless. However, we must also concede that while judging is easy, understanding is infinitely more complex" (2015:143). This quote highlights the responsibility of the teacher/mentor, but at the same time appreciates how challenging and intricate the task of translation quality assessment is. Collaborative discourse analysis helps to make that task a little easier and more objective.

4.2.5 It is learner-centred, interpersonal and developmental

The collaborative and participatory approach to learning puts the students in a position where they can take responsibility for their own learning. The whole method is focused on enabling students to make their own discoveries, and reflect on, evaluate and improve their translations based on newly-acquired knowledge.

The collaborative setting allows the students to hone their interpersonal skills, to appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses and to learn to work together in a team. It also gives them the opportunity to practice explaining translation problems in a clear way, which is a crucial skill for Bible translation checking sessions. It familiarises them with the process of asking for and giving feedback to each other on translation difficulties in a non-threatening way. However, as mentioned above, in most cases, trainees will need some coaching from the teacher/mentor as to how to give constructive feedback in an appropriate way.

5. Conclusion

Collaborative discourse analysis can be a very effective method in translation teaching because it fulfils all five key aspects of translator training described in the beginning of this paper. It is process-centred; it is participatory and collaborative; it hones the most needed skills required by the field; it is authentic and experiential; and it provides a good basis for objective translation quality assessment.

Collaborative discourse analysis enables translation students to work on improving several sub-competencies of their translation competence in an interactive and flexible way. The simple method described in this paper helps novice translators become aware of the pitfalls of following the structure of the source text too closely, which is often at the root of the most common translation errors. It is a method that has been used in the Bible translation context to varying degrees in the past, and I believe that it would also be a beneficial tool in the context of professional translator training. Such discourse analysis in the professional context could be based on a much larger corpus which would yield more nuanced results. Students of common language pairs could benefit from each other's research. By doing some of the analysis themselves, they would automatically internalise their findings which would lead to a significant improvement of the quality of their translations in areas where they most often lack the most needed skills. The collaborative classroom setting would be a welcome change in many institutionalised training programmes where most classes are taught according to traditional methods. It would, however, require more preparation time, a more active presence and more flexibility from teachers who are often already overworked. Nevertheless, experiencing the freedom and the effective learning experience that this method offers might compensate the teachers for their greater efforts.

In addition to all the linguistic and professional benefits of discourse analysis, the collaborative approach provides a place for students to come to a healthy, professional self-confidence, to ask for and accept constructive criticism and to approach the translation task with a well-informed but humble attitude. In this setting translators are not just trained, they emerge as they grow in a holistic way to be a valued part of the community of translation practice.

Abbreviations

CAT	Computer Aided Translation
SL	Source language
TL	Target language
ST	Source text

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