

Is it so different? Competences of teachers and students in L2 translation classes

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates two issues. First, whether the argument that teaching staff should only teach translation into their native language is valid and supported by factual evidence. Previous research on this issue is reviewed: based on the transcriptions of video recordings of the lessons conducted by 6 translation teachers (2 bilingual, 2 native, 2 non-native speakers of the TL), it is argued that each of these three groups can contribute to the teaching process in L2 translation classes. The second aim of the article is to investigate whether there is any correlation between student performances when they translate into L1 and when they translate into L2 and L3. The grades of 580 final exams consisting of translation into languages L1, L2 and L3 at an MA programme in translation were surveyed. It has been established that on average students tend to perform slightly better when translating into L1 than when translating into L2 or L3. However, there is a strong correlation between the grades an individual student receives for translation into L2 and those for translation into L1. It is therefore tentatively concluded that directionality is not the defining factor influencing graduates' performance and the acceptability of their output.

KEYWORDS

Translation into a foreign language, L2 translation, directionality, translator education, translator-trainer profile.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article will focus on the issue of directionality in educational settings. The practice when translators or interpreters work into their foreign language has been described by a plethora of expressions in Translation Studies (TS), including “le theme” (Ladmiral, 1979), “service translation” (Newmark, 1988), “inverse translation” (Beeby, 1996), “reverse translation”, “translation into the second language” (Campbell, 1998), “translation into the non-primary language” (Grosman et al., 2000), “translation into a non-mother tongue” (Pokorn, 2005), “translation A-B” (Kelly et al., 2003: 33–42) and recently also “L2 translation”. In this article the expressions “L2 translation” will be used.

The article has two aims. First, it reviews the question whether the courses in L2 translation should be taught by native speakers of L2 only. Second, it investigates whether proficiency in the target language is the decisive factor that influences the student performances when translating away or into their first language. Student performance is going to be observed in the teaching environment where the evaluation of translation tests and teaching methods are constantly discussed and consolidated among the teaching staff. Since in the observed education institution different levels of language proficiency of the target languages are the most prominent difference between the L2 translation classes and the translation classes where students translate into their first language, it is argued that if students perform considerably better when translating into their first language than when they translate into their second languages, this result would indicate that proficiency in L2 or L3 is a decisive factor defining the quality of the output in L2 or L3 translation class.

The article consists of 5 sections besides the Introduction: Section 2 shows that translation into L2 is a common phenomenon on the translation market today and that this practice has gained an increased scholarly attention lately. In Section 3 the term competence is defined and the EMT competence wheels for translator graduates and translator trainers are described. Section 4 reviews previous empirical studies focusing on the profile of translator trainers in L2 translation classes. In Section 5 results of 580 final exams in translation at the University of Ljubljana are compared, and conclusions are drawn in Section 6.

Translation into L2 is very common, sometimes even predominant, in peripheral linguistic communities, i.e. in communities using a language that only a few speakers use as their second language (see Linn, 2006, for “core” and “peripheral”). For example, a survey conducted by Nataša Pavlović (2007) among 193 full-time translators and/or interpreters in Croatia in 2005 showed that L2 translation was a regular practice for more than 70% of them. L2 translation is also found in the core linguistic communities where it was traditionally used in communication with ethnic minorities or recent migrants (Campbell, 1998). However, recent surveys of translation markets show that translation into L2 is also becoming very common in other contexts. For example, the Europe-wide OPTIMALE survey of translation agencies and companies in 2011¹ revealed that 24% of 534 surveyed employers of translators from 27 countries considered the ability to translate into the translator’s second language as an essential or an important skill of newly-employed translators. And finally, a survey by the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI)² from 2014 has also shown that more than 50% of 780 free-lance translators working in 80 states translate into L2. Similarly, simultaneous interpreting into B has also been widely practised as a response to a genuine need on both the institutional and private markets (cf. Donovan, 2005).

It is not surprising, then, that this practice has lately received a great deal of scholarly attention. Contemporary research into directionality focuses on various aspects of L2 translation: first, empirical research has shown that “native-speakerness” does not guarantee greater quality in interpreting (Bajo et al., 2000) or in translation (Pokorn, 2005); traditional theoretical assumptions have been questioned; the history of L2 translation in various cultures and historical periods has been described (e.g. in China (Chi Yu, 2000; Wang, 2011) or in the ancient Mediterranean between Hebrew and Greek (Crom, 2011)). The need to train future translators to work into their second language has been recognised (Prun, 2000) and different methods of teaching translation (Beeby, 1996; Campbell, 1998; Kelly et al., 2003; Pavlović, 2007) and interpreting into B (e.g. Rodrigues and Schnell, 2012) have been investigated in TS literature. Cognitive difficulties of interpreting into B, the quality of the output (see e.g. (Godjins and Hinderdale, 2005; Dose, 2014) and different strategies used by the interpreters (Bartłomiejczyk, 2006; Chang and Schallert, 2007), including those used by sign-language interpreters (Nicodemus and Emmorey, 2015) when working into B have been

- 1 https://euatc.org/images/Optimale_WP4_Synthesis_report.pdf (last accessed on January 17, 2016)
- 2 https://www.iapti.org/files/surveys/2/IAPTI_non-native_report.pdf (last accessed on January 17, 2016)

studied. All these different aspects of scholarly interest show the diminishing marginality of the practice.

3. TEACHING TRANSLATION INTO L2

In view of the fact that translation into L2 is so often demanded on local markets, it is not surprising then that the curricula of many translator- and interpreter-education institutions contain also courses in translation into L2. Despite this widespread presence of L2 translation in translator education, however, very few TS publications deal with the possible different or additional areas of competence required in order to be a qualified teacher or trainer in an L2 translation class. In fact, only few TS works focus on requirements and competences needed to become a qualified translator teacher in general. There are some notable exceptions: for example, work by Sonia Colina (2003), Dorothy Kelly (2005; 2008), Daniel Gouadec (2002), the project paper by the Consortium for Training Translation Teachers (CTTT) and *The EMT Translator Trainer Profile: Competences of the trainer in translation* (2013). The profile and competences of translator trainers in L2 translation class have attracted even less scholarly attention: they have been discussed up to now only by Dominic Stewart (2008) and by two articles (Pokorn, 2009; 2010) that are going to be reviewed below.

The term competence in this article is used as it was defined in the EMT document *Competences for professional translators, experts in multilingual and multimedia communication* (2009) where it was described as “the combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behaviour and knowhow necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions”.³

When referring to the competences of students, this article will use the names of the competences as they were defined in the EMT list of six interdependent professional competences which every translation graduate needs to acquire and master in order to function in the professional world:

1. Translation service provision competence (including customer relationship management).
2. Language competence (proficiency in source and target languages, text summary skills).
3. Intercultural competence (ability to understand information containing cultural allusions).

3 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/programmes/emt/key_documents/emt_competences_translators_en.pdf (last accessed on January 17, 2016) The EMT document was drafted by Yves Gambier and then finalized by a group of experts working under the auspices of the Directorate General for Translation at the European Commission (consisting of Yves Gambier, Daniel Gouadec, Natalie Gormezano, Dorothy Kelly, Nike K. Pokorn, Christina Schäffner, Peter Axel Schmidt, Elzbieta Tabakowska).

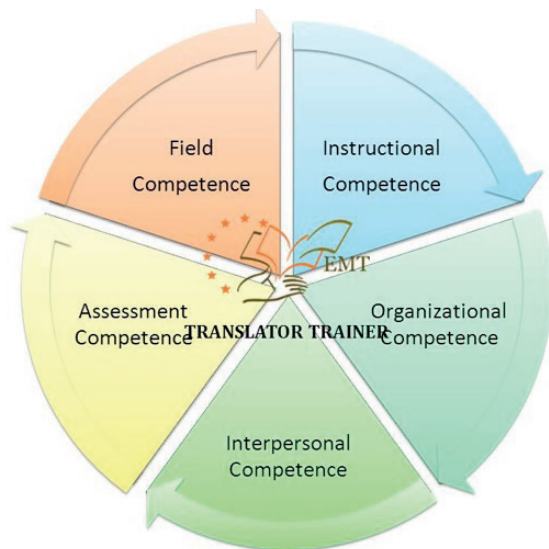
4. Information mining competence (ability to search for information, by looking critically at various information sources).
5. Technological competence, especially in handling translation memories and terminology management.
6. Domain-specific competence (knowledge in a specialist field for professional translation practice).



In reference to translator trainers, the document *The EMT Translator Trainer Profile: Competences of the trainer in translation*⁴ will be used, which provides a list of 5 competences:

- a) Field competence (language proficiency, intercultural competences, translation-service provision competence and knowledge of the professional field).
- b) Instructional competence (besides general instructional competences, also knowledge of the findings of translation didactics and the ability to integrate these findings into training).
- c) Organizational competence (e.g. ability to understand students' needs in relation to the whole programme and ability to design and update the existing curriculum or the course).
- d) Interpersonal competence (e.g. ability to work in a team, critically assess and use codes of ethics, manage stress, etc.).
- e) Assessment competence (e.g. ability to assess students' level of attainment and evaluate the curriculum, syllabus and lesson, etc.).

4 The document was drafted by Daniel Goudec, Nike K. Pokorn, Federico Federici and Yves Gambier.



4. TEACHER PROFILE

Let us first look at the native language of the translator trainer in an L2 translation class and its influence on teaching. Today, some translator-education institutions employ only native speakers of L2 for L2 translation classes, while others hire also native speakers of L1 who are competent speakers of L2 but share the native language with the majority of the students in such classes. Despite this considerably widespread practice, there is a rarely disputed assumption in TS literature that teachers in translation classes should only be native speakers of the target language. For example, Peter Newmark argues that not only students should not be trained to translate into L2, but also that non-native speakers of the TL should never teach translation into their L2:

A foreigner appears to go on making collocational mistakes however long he lives in his adopted country, possibly because he has never distinguished between grammar and lexicology. (...) For the above reasons, translators rightly translate into their own language, and *a fortiori*, **foreign teachers and students are normally unsuitable in a translation course** (Newmark, 1981: 180; emphasis added).

Similarly, Dorothy Kelly (2000: 190) reports that an unpublished internal document of the official policy of the discipline in Spain insists that teaching staff should always teach translation into their A language and should never be involved in translation classes into a language that is not their mother tongue.

On the other hand, Dominic Stewart in his article from 2008 challenges this position and argues that teachers who do not share the language with the students may not fully appreciate the extent of the difficulties they encounter, since

“[w]hat is self-evident to the native speaker can be anything but self-evident to the non-native speaker” (Stewart 2008).

The question that arises is therefore whether the insistence that teaching staff should always teach translation into their language A and should never be involved in translation classes into a language that is not their mother tongue is valid and supported by factual evidence. Are non-native speakers of the TL really the final resort and should they be replaced by native speakers of the TL as soon as possible? Does the native language of the teacher influence the way s/he teaches and, if yes, in what way? And what about bilingual teachers?

I tried to find answers to the questions above by conducting two empirical studies (Pokorn 2009; 2010). Based on observation of four translation teachers working at the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Ljubljana (2 native and 2 non-native speakers of the target language (TL; in this case English)), and two bilingual teachers (one a Slovene/French bilingual and the other a German/Slovene bilingual), typical features of teaching strategies in course units of translation into language B were investigated.

All observed teachers were experienced teachers with 7 to 17 years of experience in teaching L2 translation. They were asked to use in their L2 translation class the same SL text, consisting of 229 words. Prior to the experiment, the teachers and all students were informed about the experiment, and were asked to sign a consent form allowing the lesson to be recorded. The consent form also briefly described the aim of the research project. After obtaining the signed consent forms from all involved, all six teachers were recorded during their class on a digital camera between 2008 and 2009, without the presence of the researcher. The recordings were then transcribed. The teachers also responded to a post-questionnaire in which they were given the opportunity to provide some additional comments regarding the recorded lesson and the teaching of translation in general.

When analysing the data, I focused on code switching (i.e. whether the teacher used both languages in the same conversation), on reliance on translation tools (i.e. the time spent on strategies for investigating relevant information and consulting various translation tools in the classroom), and on the fact whether the teachers imposed themselves as the arbiters of proper language use.

First, let us look at teachers who were native speakers of L2 and those who were native speakers of L1. Both profiles revealed some positive and some negative aspects. On the one hand, teachers who are native speakers of the TL generally seemed *not* to pay enough attention to the situation the students were in – that is, to the situation of translators into their second language who do not have internalised knowledge of appropriate language use and genre conventions. For example, they sometimes tried to draw on students’ presumed innate knowledge of the TL, even though very often such efforts might be better expended on building up this knowledge. The observation of the teachers confirmed Stewart’s (2008) assumption that the role of teachers who are native speakers of the target language in an L2 translation class and who do not consciously attempt to

avoid traditional teaching techniques often risks being reduced to that of an arbiter. On the other hand, the observed teachers who are native speakers of the SL tended to express insecurity in the appropriate use of the target language, could make grammatical mistakes, and tended to be more dogmatic as far as grammatical rules were concerned. The positive aspects were also numerous. Whereas native speakers of the TL could provide additional cultural input not found in documentary and terminological aids and had broader insight into various genre conventions, native speakers of the SL were in the same position as the students and could provide them with information on how and where to access the most suitable parallel texts and appropriate terminology (Pokorn 2009). Thus, the field competence of the observed teachers who are native speakers of the TL was highly developed, while their instructional competence seemed to have been lacking, and vice-versa: the native speakers of the SL showed a well-developed instructional competence, but lacked in field competence.

Bilingual teachers seemed to share more characteristics of the teachers who are native speakers of L2 than of those who are native speakers of L1. Like native speakers of L2, the observed bilingual teachers also very rarely used terminological and documentary aids and often imposed themselves as the arbiters of good use. On the other hand, the language proficiency in the TL in the observed subjects was very high and they were also able to provide additional cultural information regarding the source and target cultures (Pokorn 2010).

If we compare the minutes spent on consulting various translation tools, such as dictionaries, the internet and corpora, the difference between teachers who are native speakers of L1 and those who are native speakers of L2 is remarkable:

	Dictionaries	Internet	Corpora	TOTAL
English native speaker 1	/	00:00:30	/	00:00:30
English native speaker 2	00:02:25	00:02:30	/	00:04:55
Slovene nat. speaker 1	00:01:21	00:03:24	/	00:04:45
Slovene nat. speaker 2	00:05:57	/	00:07:01	00:12:58
Bilingual speaker 1	00:00:43	/	/	00:00:43
Bilingual speaker 2	00:00:35	00:00:24	/	00:00:53

Native speakers of Slovene spent much more time consulting different translation tools than teachers who were either bilingual or native speakers of the target language. Only one English native speaker spent some time consulting the dic-

tionary, but he referred to the tools only to show how faulty they were. Let us look at the transcript where he consulted the dictionary with the students:⁵

Teacher: Ah, you are all looking in the bilingual dictionary? What does it say?

Student: **XXX Serried ranks.**

Teacher: Yeah. "Serried ranks" is a collocation. Serried ranks. It is usually when you are talking about people, standing like soldiers and so on, like in rows. You may see it referring to houses. But, *it just shows you how... what strange things you find in this dictionary.* (emphasis added)

English speaker 2 thus referred to a bilingual dictionary only to warn the students of the uncritical use of those tools. The students, however, were not instructed what to do and where else to look in order to find a more suitable solution. Instead, the teacher imposed himself as an arbiter and provided the solution:

Teacher: I would suggest "concentrated" or maybe "compressed". It is just to get this contrast. You could say that Slovenes are concentrated or are compressed. Obviously, you wouldn't use "live", you wouldn't say "they live concentrated", it would just have to be "are", "they are concentrated in the Republic of Slovenia".

The results of this experiment have thus shown that native speakers of the SL are not necessarily in an inferior position compared to that of native speakers of the TL in course units of L2 translation, and should therefore not be avoided in educational settings. The ideal situation would be, as Stewart argues (2008), if financially sustainable, to have two teachers in the classroom, a native speaker of the SL and a native speaker of the TL, contributing their own strong points to the teaching process. If that is not possible, it seems advisable to use native speakers of the SL in the course units at the beginning of translator education. In this way students will be introduced to different translation strategies and techniques for finding parallel texts, appropriate terminology and becoming familiar with the particularities of the underlying discourse structures and textual conventions (cf. Beeby, 1996; 2003). At the advanced level, however, bilingual teachers and native speakers of the TL are extremely valuable because the students need to learn how to work with stylistic advisors for the TL that can provide additional cultural information that cannot be (at least not easily) found in the available documentary and terminological aids. They are also better placed to assess the validity of the translation product (Stewart 2008). All in all, native language does influence the way teachers teach translation, but it seems that all (bilingual teachers, teachers that are native and those that are non-native speakers of the TL) can be usefully used for different educational goals or at different stages of translator education.

5 The following transcription conventions were followed: normal font for teacher's utterances in English; bold print for students' utterances; the notation "XXX" for a word or phrase that is unintelligible.

To answer the question whether trainee translators need to acquire an additional set of competences in order to be able to translate into their L2, let us look more closely at the situation at the Department of Translation at the University of Ljubljana and its two-year MA Programme Translation. The students enrol on the MA course after finishing a three-year BA programme, most often a BA in Linguistic Mediation, which focuses primarily on acquiring language and cultural competences. Each student chooses three working languages, i.e. two obligatory languages (Slovene, or language A, and English, or language B) plus a second foreign language, which may be French or German or Italian (language C). Students are supposed to master Slovene at native-like level, and the presupposed mastery of languages B and C is of at least level C1: 'Competent use of language (Effective Operational Proficiency)', as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.⁶ Throughout their studies, students are trained to translate also into their L2 (English and the second foreign language of their choice, which is German or French or Italian). The programme ends with a final exam in which students have to translate in four directions:

- Translation B>A (English>Slovene).
- Translation A>B (Slovene>English).
- Translation C>A (German/French/Italian>Slovene).
- Translation A>C (Slovene>German/French/Italian).

The exams are carried out by 12 different teachers:

- Translation A > B (from Slovene into English).
- The exam is conducted by 2 teachers (one native speaker of English, one native speaker of Slovene); they are in charge of the exam in turns.
- Translation B > A (from English into Slovene).
- The exam is also conducted by 2 teachers, who are both native speakers of Slovene and who are in charge of the exam in turns.
- A > C - 4 teachers (two native speakers of language C; two native speakers of language A).
- C > A - 4 teachers (all native speakers of language A).

Since the exam is carried out by different teachers, assessment and grading criteria have been defined and consolidated at departmental level: the length of the text has been defined, students have to be given a translation commission with a detailed brief, and all teachers use the same evaluation and grading sheet, an adapted version of the evaluation sheet used in the accreditation tests for work in the EU institutions. The students are aware of assessment and grading criteria, which are not norm-referenced (i.e. establishing compulsory statistical distribu-

6 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1__en.asp (last accessed on March 16, 2016)

tion of grades), but criterion-referenced (i.e. dependent on learning and based on the degree of attainment of the intended outcomes).

All students, regardless of the language combination they choose, have received training in the use of translation memory tools and management of translation projects, where they have acquired technological and information mining competences. They have had courses in comparative genre analysis for all the languages they study (intercultural competence), in L1 stylistics (language competence), and have taken 12 practical translation seminars focussing on different domains, acquiring translation service provision and domain specific competences. In addition to that, they are introduced to different translation strategies and translation theories.

We introduced the new MA Programme Translation at the Department of Translation Studies at the University of Ljubljana in 2007, which meant that the first students took these final exams in December 2010. In order to see how the students performed at these exams, all final exams from 2010 to November 2015 were reviewed. In that period we have conducted 580 final exams, and the distribution of the exams regarding the direction of translations was the following:

- Translation B>A (English>Slovene), 168 exams.
- Translation A>B (Slovene>English), 135 exams.
- Translation C>A (German/French/Italian>Slovene), 121 exams.
- Translation A>C (Slovene>German/French/Italian), 156 exams.

Let us see, first, whether there is a marked difference in performance if students were translating into an L2 (B or C) or into the L1. The University of Ljubljana allows students to take each exam up to 6 times. Some students avail themselves of this opportunity and take the exam several times. In fact, out of 580 exams, only 475 students got a positive grade and 105 a negative grade.

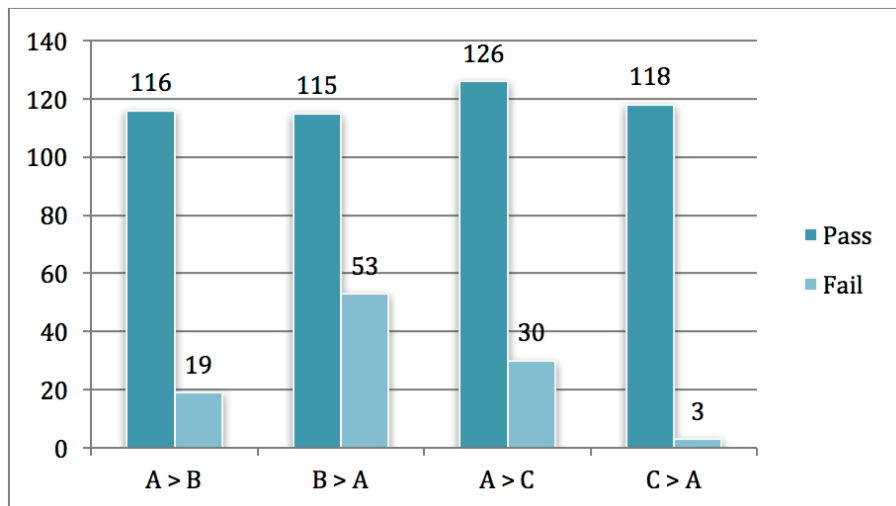


Figure 1. Success rate at final exams, according to translation direction

When looking at the success rate (Figure 1), the results are not conclusive as far as directionality is concerned: there is no marked difference between the performance that would depend on directionality. For example, more students fail when translating from English (B) into Slovene (A) than when they translate from Slovene (A) into English (B). On the other hand, students are more successful when translating from their second foreign languages (C) into Slovene (A).

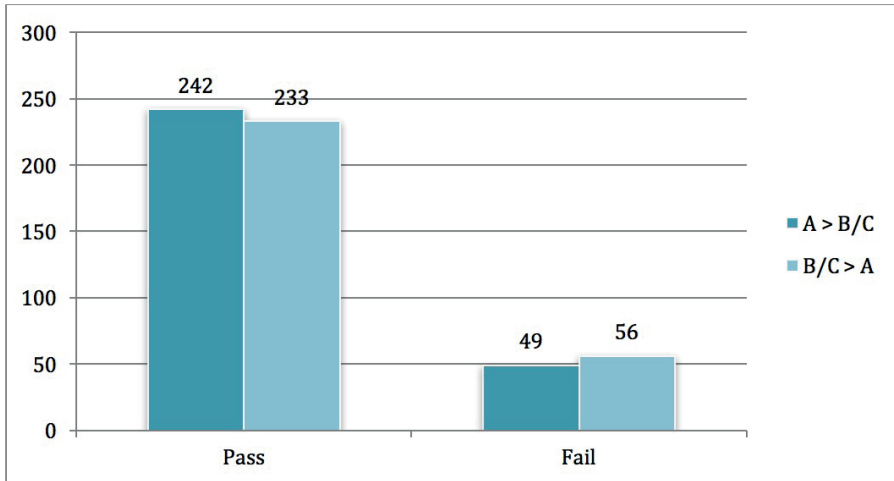


Figure 2. Success rate at final exams, according to translation into or from Slovene

If we put together the grades of translations from the students' native language to their first and second foreign languages and the grades of translations from their foreign languages into Slovene (Figure 2) and focus only on the number of failing and passing grades, we see that there is little difference. In fact, students seem to fail more often when they translate into their mother tongue, regardless of the language of the original text.

Let us now look at the average grade (Table 1). The grading system at the University of Ljubljana is from 1 to 10, where grades 1 to 5 are all negative grades, 6 corresponds to E, 7 to D, 8 to C, 9 to B and 10 to A.

English > Slovene	6.9 (D)
Slovene > English	7.5 (D-C)
Italian > Slovene	8.2 (C)
Slovene > Italian	6.8 (D)
French > Slovene	8.5 (C)
Slovene > French	7.5 (D-C)
German > Slovene	8.2 (C)
Slovene > German	6.5 (E-D)

Table 1. Average grade at final exams

The average grade did not reveal a considerable difference between the students: the grades ranged from C to D, with students getting higher grades when translating from their second foreign language into Slovene, but getting lower grades when translating from English into their mother tongue.

Since the average grade puts all students in one group, it does not allow us to see the difference between individual students and their performance in relation to the directionality of translation. In order to see that, I compared the grades all students that finished their final translation exams from and into language B (i.e. of 73 individual students): the grade of the test of a particular student when he or she translated from Slovene into English was compared to that he or she got when translating from English into Slovene.

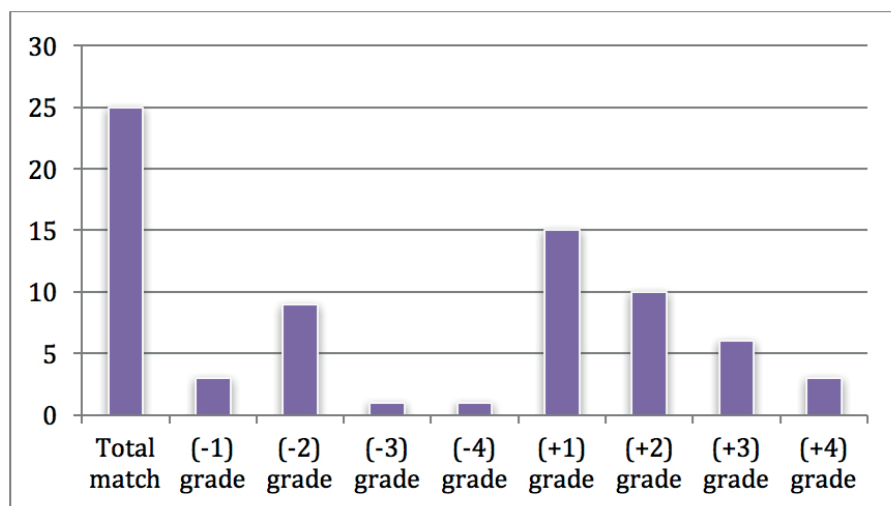


Figure 3. Individual students' performance (A>B vs. B>A)

If we compare the individual grade each of the students got in translation from English into Slovene to that he or she got when translating from Slovene into English, the results show that the majority of the students (25 or 34%) get the same grade (regardless of the directionality) or a higher grade (15 or 20.5%) when translating into English (see Figure 3).

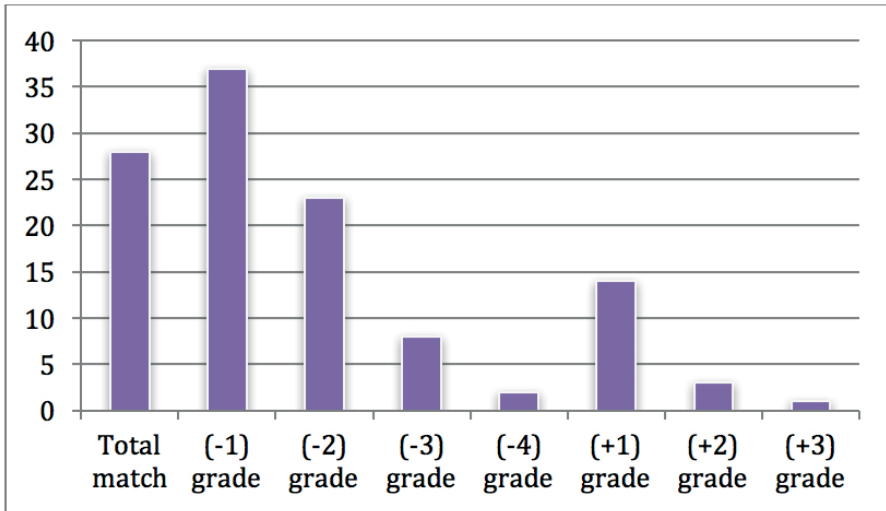


Figure 4. Individual students' performance (A>C vs. C>A)

Similarly, we can look at how individual students performed when translating into and from their C languages. The comparison of grades of 116 students who have passed the exam from and into their language C (French, Italian or German) shows, however, that the majority of the students either got the same grade (28 or 24%) or a lower grade (37 or 32%) when translating into L2 (see Figure 4).

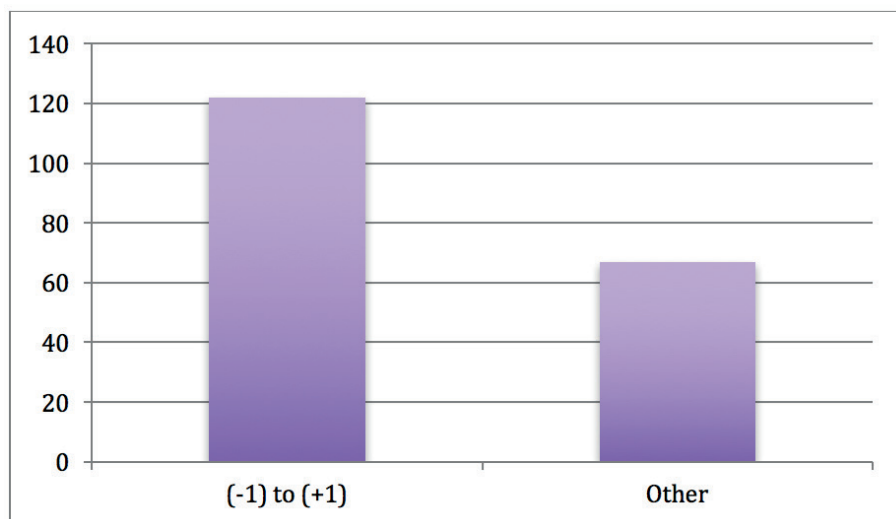


Figure 5. Individual students' performance (A>B/C vs. B/C>A)

In fact, if we look at the results obtained in both categories, i.e. at the grades of 186 exams where students translated into L2 or L3 (languages B or C) together, we see that in 64% (122 exams) the grades the students got when translating into B or C were either the same or one grade higher or lower (see Figure 5) from the grades they got when translating into their L1, which shows that there is a considerable correlation in performance when students are asked to translate in these two directions.

6. CONCLUSION

Translation into language B is not only widely practised in the markets of peripheral linguistic communities, it has lately also become common in core linguistic communities. Consequently, despite the fact that this practice has long been regarded as inferior to L1 translation in TS literature, L2 translation classes have been a very common feature in translator-education institutions in peripheral linguistic communities, and are not rare in the translator-education curricula in core linguistic communities as well. In view of that, TS research needs to focus more intensely on different issues regarding teaching translation into L2. In this article we focused on two issues: first, on the question of the profile of the trainer in the L2 translation class, and second, on the question whether directionality considerably influences the performance of individual students at the end of their studies.

On the issue of the translator trainer profile, it has been established that although some TS works advise against employing teachers who are not native

speakers of the TL to teach translation into L2, some initial research shows that this advice is not supported by empirical evidence. Based on the responses to questionnaires and transcriptions of video recordings of the lessons conducted by 6 translation teachers (2 bilingual, 2 native and 2 non-native speakers of the TL), we believe that, despite differences in teaching strategies, each of these three groups can contribute to the teaching process in an L2 translation class. While native speakers of the SL seem to be better equipped to teach students different translation strategies when translating into L2 and to critically assess and direct them to different resources that could help them with their task, native speakers of the TL are more reliable assessors of the acceptability of the target text and can provide additional cultural information that can sometimes be hard to find in the documentary and terminological aids available. It is therefore argued here that teaching in teams composed of one native speaker of the SL and one native speaker of the TL or a bilingual speaker would be ideal. If that is not financially sustainable, it seems advisable that education institutions should strive to engage teachers who are native speakers of the SL at the beginning of translator education, and bilingual teachers and teachers who are native speakers of the TL at more advanced levels of translator education.

As far as the L2 translation competences of students are concerned, we focused on the performance of students in translation exams at the end of their studies. Examining 580 final translation exams taken between 2010 and 2015 at the MA programme of translation at the University of Ljubljana, it has been established that, on average, students tend to perform slightly better when translating into their L1 (esp. when working to and from their second foreign language). Moreover, the comparisons of the test results show that there are very slight differences in average grades depending on directionality, and that there is a strong correlation between the grades an individual student gets for translation into L2 and those for translation into L1. It seems that the fact that the students' language competence in L2 or L3 is not native-like does not significantly influence the acceptability of their output when they translate away from their mother tongue. These results corroborate the findings in Interpreting Studies, where it has been found that the quality of interpreting depends mainly on the interpreters' familiarity with the topic and the context of the speech to be interpreted and not so much on the direction of interpreting (Dose 2014).

To sum up, based on the comparison of the final examinations in translation in an MA translation course a tentative conclusion could be made that students' performance at the end of their education does not depend primarily on directionality and consequently on the native or non-native mastery of their first and second foreign languages (i.e. language competence), but more on other competences (i.e. the domain-specific, intercultural, information mining and technological competences) which contribute to the formation of the translation service provision competence.

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