TRANSLATION ERRORS ACROSS GENRES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *Even if there may be types of translation errors which have a rather general character, in most of the cases they are closely related to the genre that the text to be translated represents. The paper offers an analysis of the translation errors contained by the assignments of 30 MA students in Translation Studies from the West University of Timisoara, Romania. The assignments consist in the translation from English into Romanian of texts belonging to three different genres: travel guides, legislation, and medical case reports. The errors are analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, with a view to arriving at conclusions of relevance for the improvement of the training process.*

Keywords: *functionalist approach, genre, translation error, translator training*

1. Introduction

The basic purpose of any translator training programme is that of providing the students with a level of knowledge and skills which is likely to ensure their status as professionals on today's globalized translation market. During the training activity, errors must be given special attention by the trainer, because they are closely related to the actual manifestation of the translation competence, as it will be detailed later in this paper. In other words, teachers are supposed create an atmosphere in which translation errors are regarded as essential learning steps, because they point, on the one hand, to the problems with which the translator may be confronted in a certain situation of translation, and, on the other, to the appropriate behavior that he/ she should adopt in order to avoid or to solve them.

The starting point of the present endeavor is represented by the assumption that, if the trainee translators have an appropriate representation of the concept of translation error, they are more likely to employ techniques meant to avoid errors, by rationalizing their decision-making processes in an objective way, and, in close relation to that, by acquiring the ability to discuss translations in an objective manner. Moreover, knowledge and awareness of the level of expectations to which their work must rise on the real translation market would certainly get future translators closer to the status of professionals in that field.

It stands to reason that the manner in which translator trainers approach errors during the training process will exert a major influence on the way in which their students relate to this concept. But how can translation teachers actually help the trainees perceive the concept of error as a tool which proves to be useful not only during the formal training itself, but also beyond it? It is obvious that the answer to this question is very complex and it has to do with the quality of the climate that the teacher creates in relation to the whole process of evaluation. However, in this paper, I will focus on two courses of action that translator trainers can follow in this respect. Firstly, the trainer should make it clear to the students what a translation error represents in the context of professional translator training, especially in contrast to the concept of error in foreign language learning, a concept which, almost surely, dominated their perception on evaluation for many years. Secondly, the translation teacher should involve the trainees in activities which

point to the close relation between error and the genre to which the target text belongs. These two aspects will be discussed in detail in what follows, taking into account both theoretical and research data.

2. The concept of translation error in professional translator training

The view which is offered by the foreign language teaching methodology – a view which, unfortunately, is sometimes applied in the case of translator training, too – is generally focused on the word or phrase as an isolated unit and mainly takes into account the student's competence as a foreign language learner. The problem is that this type of evaluation heavily penalizes the cases in which the grammatical rules are ignored or the basic vocabulary is not known, but does not take very much into account the communicative function that words and phrases are meant to fulfill in the particular passage, text, situation and culture in which they are used.

Being aware of these shortcomings, the representatives of the functionalist approaches to translation propose a professional translator's perspective on errors and evaluation, a perspective centered on the communicative function that a particular phrase and utterance is supposed to achieve in a given situation. Thus, if in the foreign language teaching pedagogy, the translation error is perceived as a deviation from a system of norms or rules, in functionalism it is defined in terms of the purpose of the translation process or product. In this context, inadequacy is no longer considered as a feature inherent in a particular expression, but as a feature ascribed to that expression from an evaluator's point of view. Consequently, it is suggested that the deviation from a grammatical rule or the distortion of meaning must be seen within the text as a whole and in close relation to other elements, such as the translation assignment and the translation recipients.

Christiane Nord, one of the main proponents of functionalism, defines translation error in the following terms: "If the purpose of a translation is to achieve a particular function for the target addressee, anything that obstructs the achievement of this purpose is a translation error" (Nord 1997: 74). It is obvious that errors are not defined on intrinsic criteria such as correctness, but are identified by the recipient in relation to features of the translation that do not meet a given standard. More specifically, a translation error occurs when the recipient's expectations are frustrated because the translator has failed to follow the task instructions in some way. In Nord's (1997) view, such a definition of errors is useful for the translator trainer in that s/he can formulate the translation brief in such a way that even the students with a more modest linguistic competence can fulfill the task. As she illustrates, the translation brief may state that the target text will be revised stylistically by a native speaker, in which case certain grammatical and lexical mistakes can be tolerated as long as they do not block comprehension. At the same time, if the students do not know exactly the situation for which they are translating, they will completely focus on the surface structures of the source text, thus being more likely to make various translation mistakes (Nord 1997:74).

It seems, therefore, that a clear formulation of the translation brief is of central importance for the achievement of high-quality work in professional translator training. First of all, the students are supposed to compare the translation brief with the results of the source-text analysis. In this way, they will identify the various translation problems raised by the text in question, and, then, will try to find appropriate solutions. It is the adequacy or inadequacy of the solutions offered by the trainee translators that represents the basis for the evaluation of a target text. During the process of evaluation, translation errors can be categorized, in close relation to the translation problems, as: *pragmatic translation errors*, caused by inadequate solutions to pragmatic translation problems such as the lack of receiver orientation; *cultural translation errors*, due to an inadequate decision with regard to the adaptation of culture specific conventions; *linguistic translation errors*, caused by an inadequate translation in the case of language structures; and

text-specific translation errors, which are related to a text-specific problem and can usually be evaluated from a functional or pragmatic perspective (cf. Nord 1997: 75-76).

Another representative of the functionalist approaches to translation, Paul Kussmaul (1995), supports the same idea: in professional translator training, the evaluator should take into account the communicative function of a particular word, phrase or sentence. In this context, the distortion of meaning or the ignorance of grammatical rules must be considered within the text as a whole and in relation to the translation assignment and the receptors of the translation. Like Nord, Kussmaul refers to the interrelation between detecting errors and noticing problems, and considers that the analysis of the problematic text passages should form the basis for the teachers' evaluation of their students' translations. He discusses the following categories for evaluation: the *cultural adequacy* of the translated text, its *situational adequacy*, the various *speech acts* that it contains, the *meaning of its words*, and its *grammatical accuracy* (Kussmaul 1995: 130-145).

It seems, therefore, that, in the functionalists' view, the translator trainer is no longer interested in finding out the source of a student's mistake (as it happens in the case of foreign language teaching), but is only interested in the effect that the error has on the target reader. But, as suggested earlier, this is not a very easy task for the teachers who want to objectively evaluate their students' translation mistakes, because, in each individual case, they must ask themselves: What are the effects produced by that particular error? Does it affect the meaning of a sentence, of a passage, or of the whole text? Does it distort communication in any way, or does it weaken the psychological effect? In other words, as Kussmaul (1995: 130) explains, teachers must be aware that, in certain situations, what seems to be a simple semantic error may actually distort the meaning of the whole sentence, or even the whole text, and that they are supposed to approach these errors accordingly.

This perspective on errors and evaluation is in line with an idea which was very much emphasized by the functionalist approaches to translation, namely that the professional translator training should produce a new understanding of the translator's task. A learning context in which the students are faced with an ideal situation and are offered the linguistic tools meant to help them in any kind of circumstances is not of great help in this respect. Instead, the translator training process should try to reproduce various real-life situations whose role is to turn the students into professionals. During this process, if the students are made aware of the criteria that their translations must meet in order to be considered functionally appropriate by the evaluator, they will gradually learn to take responsibility for their own work.

3. A competence-based approach to translation errors

One of the most important conclusions revealed by the previous section is that, in professional translator training, the concept of translation error goes far beyond instances of breaking rules of grammar, or incorrect renderings of semantic and stylistic features of the texts to be translated. This happens because, as mentioned in the Introduction, there is a close relation between translation errors and the concept of translation competence, which, in very general terms, can be defined as a complex of knowledge and skills that a person needs in order to be able to translate well. More specifically, my conviction is that an error occurs when there is a failure in the manifestation of the translation competence, an idea also expressed by other theorists and researchers in the field of translation studies, such as Hatim (2001) or Martinez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001). Consequently, identifying the exact elements which make up the general competence of the translator might represent a good starting point for the categorization of the possible errors made by the future translators.

The problem is that the field of translation studies does not provide a unitary view on the concept of translation competence, because ever since the beginnings of this discipline, there have been

numerous attempts at naming and defining this concept, as well as at identifying its sub-types and organizing them into comprehensive models. Such models were proposed either by individual researchers, such as Bell (1991), Hatim and Mason (1997), Neubert (2000), or in the context of research projects like PACTE (Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation), carried out at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (PACTE 2003) and EMT (European Master's in Translation), funded by the European Commission (EMT 2009).

Since my intention in this study is not to clarify the concept of translation competence, but to make it useful in the context of translator training, I will focus only on those sub-competencies that can be clearly correlated with the errors present in my students' translations. Starting from the various sub-constituents of the translation competence proposed by the models mentioned above, and in close connection to the functionalist approaches to error discussed in section 2, I have designed a set of 18 criteria for identifying translation errors that can be used in the context of professional translator training. These criteria are divided into 5 broad categories, which correspond to the areas of competence that the various translation errors may regard. The criteria in the categories from 1 to 4 are formulated from the perspective of the translation product, while category number 5 involves the perspective of the translation process:

NO.	AREA OF COMPETENCE	CRITERIA
1.	LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grammar (e.g. tenses, agreement, choice of word class, word formation, etc.) - general words and word combinations (collocations, set expressions) - mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capital letters)
2.	CULTURAL ADEQUACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - treatment of culturally-embedded words and phrases - respecting the target conventions for the genre to which the translation belongs - appropriate and consistent use of officially accepted target language terminology
3.	DISCOURSAL ADEQUACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cohesion and coherence (e.g. correct use of connectives, pronouns, lexical reiteration, lexical chains, etc.) - style and register (e.g. figurative meanings, formal vs. informal register, etc.) - structure awareness (at the level of text, paragraph, sentence)
4.	METHODOLOGICAL ABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the translation is either too free or too literal - omissions - additions - distorted message - indecision (e.g. several synonyms) - miscopied figures or names
5.	PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observing the instructions given in the translation task - ability to justify the translation decisions - use of various documentation and technological resources

Table 1. Criteria for identifying translation errors

This set of criteria is partly based on the checklist of translation assessment resulted from earlier research (cf. Cozma 2013), a checklist which was further improved and developed. I must stress that, in line with the functionalists' view on translation assessment, the importance of each of these criteria does not have an absolute nature, as it may depend on the particular skill or area of expertise that the translation teacher intends to highlight at a particular stage of the training process. Thus, it is possible that criteria regarding linguistic knowledge may weigh more at the beginning of the instructional process, while, towards its end, the criteria regarding professional expertise should become predominant.

4. Translation errors across genres: a research study

After pointing to the specific character of the error in the context of translator training, and after establishing a set of criteria for identifying the translation errors, in what follows I will use the information revealed so far with a view to determining the relationship between translation and genre. To that purpose, I will discuss the findings yielded by the analysis of the errors contained by the translation portfolios prepared by 30 students in the MA of Theory and Practice of Translation offered by the West University of Timisoara, Romania, portfolios which contain the translations from English into Romanian of texts belonging to three different genres: travel guides, legislation, and medical case reports.

4.1. Research methodology

The students were required to prepare a portfolio including the English into Romanian translations of six texts belonging to three different genres: two online travel guides (one presenting the advantages of visiting London as a family and one advertising three Italian road trips), two texts belonging to the European legislation, and two medical case reports from the field of cardiology. Each genre is represented by texts which are comparable from the point of view of their length, having about 1500 words. The task of the students was to translate those texts as if they were to be included in the Romanian variant of the journal or of the site from which the source was taken. This means that the communicative function and the intended audience of the target texts were similar to those of the originals. The students did not provide their translations anonymously, but their names are not revealed in the discussion of the research findings. The source of the examples offered in this paper is indicated by means of a code consisting of two letters and a number from 1 to 30: the letters indicate the genre to which the target text belongs (TG = travel guides, EU = European legislation, and MR = medical case reports), while the number identifies the portfolio including that particular translation. The identification of the linguistic forms which can be labelled as translation errors was made by two teachers with a long experience (14 years and 11 years) in the field of translator training.

I must mention that the criteria that I used in the analysis of the translation errors are only those formulated from the perspective of the translation product, namely those related to the areas of linguistic knowledge, cultural adequacy, discoursal adequacy, and methodological ability. The decision to restrict my analysis to these criteria has two main justifications: on the one hand, it is my conviction that the level of the translator's competence is very well reflected by the quality of the target text, while, on the other, there is the fact that the data collected in this way can be easily used for training purposes. This does not mean that the fifth category of criteria, the professional expertise, which involves the perspective of the translation process, cannot be used in the context of translator training. In fact, it represents the starting point for further research, as it will be explained later.

4.2. Findings

For a detailed view on the problem of translation error across genres, the interpretation of the data provided by my subjects is made in both quantitative and qualitative terms. From a quantitative perspective, the study aims at identifying the frequency registered by a certain type of translation error across the three genres under analysis. The percentages corresponding to the error types revealed by my students' translations are presented synthetically in the table below:

AREA OF	TYPES OF ERRORS	PERCENTAGE OF TRANSLATION ERRORS
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COMPETENCE		TRAVEL GUIDES	EU LEGAL TEXTS	MEDICAL CASE REPORTS
LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE	- grammar	2 %	2 %	2 %
	- lexical items	15 %	11 %	14 %
	- mechanics	3 %	2 %	1 %
CULTURAL ADEQUACY	- cultural items	27 %	2 %	8 %
	-genre conventions	7 %	21 %	4 %
	- terminology	cf. cultural items	10 %	24 %
DISCOURSAL ADEQUACY	- cohesion and coherence	2 %	13 %	2 %
	- style and register	7 %	2 %	6 %
	-structure awareness	5 %	16 %	13 %
METHODO-LOGICAL ABILITY	- too free or literal	14 %	5 %	7 %
	- omissions	13 %	5 %	2 %
	- additions	-	2 %	2 %
	-distorted message	2 %	9 %	15 %
	- indecision	3 %	-	-
	-miscopied elements	-	-	-

Table 2. The percentage representation of the various types of translation errors

In qualitative terms, the various categories of errors are illustrated with relevant examples revealed by the translations of the genre texts under analysis. I must mention that the examples basically belong to those categories which have registered a high frequency. Additionally, I will also offer examples of error types which, even if not so frequent, are worth mentioning due to the effect that they have on the quality of the target text.

4.2.1. Translation errors in travel guides

In the case of the travel guides, most of the errors made by my subjects involve the inappropriate treatment of the cultural items (27 %), which coincide with the terminology of the field to which the two texts belong. In the case of the text about London, the cultural items are represented, in the vast majority of cases, by names of tourist destinations. A correct translation solution for the London destinations is represented by the use of their Romanian official equivalents. Instead of that, some of the students decided to preserve the English names of the places in question: e.g. “to visit ... the *Science Museum* and *The Natural History Museum*” – “pentru a vizita ... *Science Museum* și *The Natural History Museum*” (TG8, TG17, TG 26). In some cases, it was obvious that my subjects had no idea about the name of the place referred to in the original text and the preservation of the English variant was perceived as an easy translation solution: e.g. “to visit the *V&A*” – “pentru a vizita *V&A*” (TG23). This Romanian translation is very likely to be confusing for the target readers, who would need some extra information in this case (for example, “V&A, Muzeul Victoria și Albert”). There were also situations when my subjects tried to translate names that are better left in their original form: e.g. “in a roomy apartment at *Native Hyde Park*” – “într-un apartament spațios la *Parcul Nativilor Hyde*” (TG13). The preservation of the original name, to which the explicitation element “hotelul” is added (that is, “Hotelul Native Hyde Park”) is clearly a more felicitous translation solution that was used by numerous subjects (e.g. TG4, TG18, TG24).

In the the text about Italy, the errors are related to the manner of treating other types of culture-bound elements, such as “*trattorias*” – “*restaurante*” (TG5, TG13, TG27)/ “*localuri*” (TG20) or “*biscotti*” – “*biscuiți*” (TG2, TG5, TG10, TG18, TG22, TG27, etc.)/ “*fursecuri*” (TG9, TG28). Since the role of these Italian terms in the original guide is that of introducing the reader into the atmosphere of the region presented there, the translator should try to produce a similar effect in the Romanian variant of the text. Consequently, the preservation of these terms,

maybe accompanied by an explanatory phrase, represent good translation solutions in this case: “trattorias, restaurantele sale specifice” (TG19) or “biscotti, celebrii biscuiți italienești” (TG16).

A high percentage (15 %) is also registered by the errors involving the use of the more general lexical items. This category of errors is illustrated, on the one hand, by Romanian words which fail to render the meaning of the original lexical items: e.g. “hire a *pedalo*” – “a închiria un *pedalier*” (TG28), “check out the mighty, rainforest-like Palm House and climb the ... staircase to look down over the *canopy*” – “vizitați Casa de Palmieri, asemănătoare cu pădurile tropicale și urcați scara ... pentru a privi în jos peste *baldachin*” (TG26), “road trip” - “*excursie*” (3)/ “*călătorie*” (16)/ “*drumeție*” (17). On the other hand, the errors involve inappropriate combinations of words as translation solutions for the collocations contained by the English original text: e.g. “to have a *picnic*” – “pentru a avea un *picnic*” (TG13), “while *absorbing* educational *stories*” – “în timp ce *acumulează povești* educative” (TG5), “fields ... that *line the roads*” – “câmpii ... care *întind drumurile*” (TG25).

Two categories of errors which have to do with the sphere of the methodological ability present similar percentages: too free or literal (14 %) and omissions (13 %). The texts under analysis provide numerous instances of translations which are too literal, and which tend to produce a rather humorous effect: e.g. “leaving you *child-free*” – “lăsându-vă *fără copii*” (TG6), “you can start by *hopping* on a double decker bus” – “puteți începe prin a *sări* într-un autobuz ...” (TG23). Similarly, some examples of translations which omit relevant information from the source text are: “a *year-round* wonderland of sensory attractions” – “o zonă minunată de atracții senzoriale _” (TG9), “home to *realistic* wax works” – “casa figurilor de ceară _” (TG11).

In the area of the discursal adequacy, the errors are mainly related to the criterion of style and register (7 %) and to that of structure awareness (5 %). In the case of the errors of style and register, the translations either fail to render the figurative meaning inherent in the original formulation: e.g. “London is *overflowing with* ...” – “Londra e *plină de* ...” (TG2, TG11, TG30), or are too informal in comparison to the English variant: e.g. “Cram in some more culture” – “Umpleți-vă capul cu și mai multă cultură” (TG8)/ “Înghesuiți-vă să aflați mai multe informații culturale” (TG21). Some Romanian variants reveal the translators’ lack of structure awareness: e.g. “at Madame Tussauds, home to ... wax works” – “la casa Doamnei Tussauds ...” (TG26), “meandering roads” – “drumuri meandre” (TG30).

Errors regarding the translator’s observance of the genre conventions are also present in my students’ translations (7 %), but are mainly restricted to cases of rendering the English verbs in the Imperative mood by Romanian similar forms in the 2nd person singular instead of the polite 2nd person plural: e.g. “Disembark and head to Tower Bridge” – “Debarchează și pornește către Podul Londrei” (TG21, TG29), “cruise past crumbling monasteries” – “treci pe lângă mănăstiri în ruină” (TG1, TG14).

In the case of the errors with a lower representation (3 % and below), I only want to offer a few examples. Firstly, there are the errors caused by indecision (3 %), which are worth mentioning because, as Table 2 shows, they occur only in the texts representing this particular genre: e.g. “a surprisingly *good* playground” – “un loc de joacă *bun/ favorabil*” (TG14), “connecting all nine *decks*” – “care leagă toate cele nouă *punți/ etaje*” (TG6). Secondly, I will illustrate a few errors related to the use of the mechanics (3 %), because, again, they have an even lower representation in the other two genres: e.g. “a 3-minute walk” – “o plimbare de 3-minute” (TG22), “Guests aged six and over can dress up ...” – “Oaspeții în vârstă de 6 ani și peste, se pot îmbrăca...” (TG24). Finally, another error type which is rare in all the genres under analysis is that related to grammar (2 %), like the one in this example: “Hintze Hall’s ceiling” – “tavanul Hintze Hall” (TG3), where the translator failed to render in Romanian the relationship of possession expressed by the original noun phrase.

4.2.2. Translation errors in EU legal texts

In the two EU texts that my subjects translated from English into Romanian, the errors characterized by the highest percentage are those which involve some disregard of the genre conventions (21 %). Most of these mistakes are caused by the translators' lack of knowledge concerning the standardized expressions and formulations which are closely related to the stereotypical character of any type of legal discourse. Some examples in this respect are: "*having regard to*" – "*în concordanță cu*" (EU4)/ "*cu referire la*" (EU10), "*terms and conditions*" – "*modalitățile și condițiile*" (EU10)/ "*termenii și circumstanțele*" (EU21), "*has adopted this regulation*" – "*a adoptat legea*" (EU19)/ "*a adoptat următorul regulament*" (EU30). In such cases, the correct translation is the one which displays linguistic forms which are used in the legal texts originally written in Romanian, and which represent the norm for this genre: "*având în vedere*", "*termenii și condițiile*", "*adoptă prezentul regulament*". Other mistakes related to the genre conventions involve the mistranslation of the modal verb *shall*, which represents the norm for expressing the obligatory character of the law in English: e.g. "*the amounts described in Article 2 shall be transferred*" – "*sumele indicate în articolul 2 trebuie transferate*" (EU1), "*any interest ... shall be calculated on a daily basis*" – "*dobânzile ... trebuie calculate zilnic*" (EU8). The norm for the Romanian documents of this type is represented by verbs in the Present Tense of the Indicative Mood, so the correct forms for the examples above are "*se transferă*" and "*se calculează*". The disregard for the genre conventions was also illustrated by the manner in which reference is made to various parts of the legal document(s): e.g. "*Article 2(2)*" – "*articolul 2(2)*" (EU2, EU8, EU20), "*Article 36(2)*" – "*articolul 36(2)*" (EU2, EU8, EU20, EU25). The norm for the cases illustrated above is "*articolul 2 alineatul (2)*" and "*articolul 36 alineatul (2)*".

Another type of errors with a high frequency in the Romanian variants of the EU texts is related to the translators' lack of structure awareness (16 %). Due to the structural complexity characterizing the texts of any legal genre (e.g. Bhatia 1993), the translators of such texts must pay great attention to the manner in which the corresponding target variants are formulated, because, otherwise, the results might be at least confusing, if not meaningless for the target reader, like in these examples: "*To this effect, each NCB shall, by virtue of this Article and without the need for any further formality or act, be deemed to have either transferred or received with effect from 1 January 2019 the share in the ECB's subscribed capital ...*" – "*În acest scop, fiecare BCN, în temeiul prezentului articol și fără a mai fi necesară nici o altă formalitate sau act, se consideră că au fost fie transferate, fie primite cu efect de la 1 ianuarie 2019, cota din capitalul subscris al BCE ...*" (EU23), "*The fishing quota allocated to the Member State referred to in the Annex to this Regulation for the stock referred to therein for 2018 shall be deemed to...*" – "*Cota de pescuit alocată Statelor Membre la care se face referire în anexa acestei legi pentru rezerve cu referire la aceasta pentru 2018 este considerată ...*" (EU27)/ "*Cota de pescuit alocată anului 2018, a Statului Membru menționat în Anexa la prezentul regulament pentru stocul raportat în aceeași anexă se consideră...*" (EU29).

The same feature of structural complexity, on the one hand, and the students' lack of experience with this type of texts, on the other, can be considered as possible sources of the translation errors related to cohesion and coherence, which, as Table 2 shows, are characterized by a relatively high percentage (13 %) as compared to the translations belonging to the other two genres. The failure to render the connections between the various sentence elements in a logical and appropriate manner has led to target text formulations which are ambiguous: e.g. "*for transfers of capital shares ... in order to ensure that the distribution of these shares corresponds to ...*" – "*de transfer al cotelor de capital ... pentru a se asigura că distribuția acestor acțiuni corespunde ...*" (EU10), "*it shall be prohibited to retain on board ... fish from that stock caught by those vessels*" – "*se interzice menținerea la bord ... a peștelui din respectivul stoc capturat de _ nave*" (EU22). In the first example, the source of the ambiguity is represented by the fact that

the translator rendered the noun “shares” by two different Romanian words in the context of the same sentence, while in the second one, the problem is that the translator ignored the demonstrative “those” and, as a consequence, the noun “nave” has acquired a very general meaning.

The correct use of the lexical items, be they general or specialized, has proved to be problematic in the texts belonging to this genre. Thus, the errors related to the terminology of the field (10 %) are caused by the subjects’ failure to use the Romanian established equivalents for a series of terms which belong either to the EU domain, or to the field to which the law in question applies: e.g. “*Regulation*” – “*reglementare*” (EU8)/ “*lege*” (EU27) instead of “regulament”, “*rules*” – “*legi*” (EU14) instead of “norme”, “*paragraph 1*” – “*paragraful 1*” (EU17) instead of “alineatul (1)”, “*shares*” – “*acțiuni*” (EU10)/ “*pondere*” (EU29), instead of “cote”, “*capital key*” – “*grilă de capital*” (EU13), instead of “grilă de repartitie pentru capital”. The words and the word combinations of general use also represented the source of numerous errors (11 %) in the texts under analysis: e.g. “*prohibiting ... activities*” – “*interdicția activităților*” (EU26), “the amount of the ECB's *capital* that each NCB shall *pay up*” – “*valoarea capitalului BCE pe care fiecare BCN o plătește*” (EU28).

Finally, I will refer to the errors which have to do with the translator’s methodological ability, which are relatively numerous in the EU texts under analysis. The translator’s failure to render the relationships between the various elements of the original utterance in an appropriate manner at the level of the target text is also responsible for the numerous instances of distorted message (9 %). A few examples in this respect are: “the latest available marginal interest rate” – “ultima rată marginală disponibilă a dobânzii” (EU13) (instead of “cea mai recentă rată a dobânzii marginale disponibilă”) and “using the actual-over-360-day method of calculation” – “utilizând metoda reală de peste 360 de zile de calcul” (EU14)/ “prin aplicarea metodei de calcul cu 360 de zile” (EU26) (instead of “metoda de calcul <număr de zile/360>”). The message is also distorted in some cases of omission (5 %): e.g. “according to the information *received by* the Commission” – “conform informațiilor _ Comisiei” (EU5), “for *ensuring* compliance with the rules” – “cu scopul de a _ respecta reglementările” (EU25). The same percentage (5 %) is registered by the instances when the translation is too free or literal. One example in this respect is: “*flying the flag of Greece*” – “*care navighează sub steagul Greciei*” (EU5), which represents a relatively free rendering of a collocation whose equivalent should be “a arbora pavilionul”. Another example is: “Council Regulation ... *establishing* a Union control system” – Regulamentul Consiliului ... *stabilind* un sistem de control al Uniunii” (EU17), where the English participle is literally rendered by a Romanian form with a similar value, which, however, sounds awkward in this context.

4.2.3. Translation errors in medical case reports

In the medical case reports, the most numerous errors are clearly those related to the terminology of the field (24 %). The examples offered here are illustrative of the cases in which the subjects resorted to a translation solution which is erroneous simply because it differs from the word or the word combination available in Romanian for the same concept: e.g. “*files of patients*” – “*fișiere de pacienți*” (MR4, MR21), instead of “fișe medicale/ foi de observație”, “*echocardiography*” – “*Eco cardiogramă*” (MR18), instead of “cardiografie”, “*Student’s t-test*” – “*testul-t al studenților*” (MR2, MR8, MR25), instead of “testul t Student”, “*heart failure*” – “*deficiența inimii*” (MR4), instead of “insuficiență cardiacă”, “*ejection fraction*” – “*fracționarea ejectoare*” (MR14), instead of “fracția de ejectare”, “*control subjects*” – “*subiecții controlați*” (MR19, MR23), instead of “subiecții de control/ din grupul de control”.

The very specialized character of the medical case reports is also responsible for the high percentage (14 %) of errors regarding the lexical items of general character present in these

texts: e.g. “*systemic*” – “*sistematică*” (MR28), “*global burden of ... deaths*” – “*povara globală de decese*” (MR1), “*rheumatic disease which occurred*” – “*boli reumatice care au avut loc*” (MR11), “*the patient was awake and oriented*” – “*pacientul a fost trezit și instruit*” (MR6). In such cases, the translator has to deal with words and collocations which, even if not specific to the medical field, are, still, rather rare in the everyday language use.

Another linguistic feature of the medical texts, namely the complexity which often characterizes their noun phrases, can be considered responsible for the numerous translation errors involving distorted message (15 %). The following examples illustrate the manner in which the meaning is affected if the translator changes the originally intended relations between the various constituents of the noun phrase: “*preoperative risk stratification model*” – “*model de stratificare a riscului preoperator*” (MR20), instead of “*model stratificat de risc preoperator*”, “*carotid artery intima media thickness measurement*” – “*măsurare cu ultrasunete a grosimii intime medii a carotidei*” (MR9), instead of: “*măsurare cu ultrasunete a grosimii medii a intimei arterei carotide*”.

A relatively high percentage is also registered by the errors of structure awareness (13 %): e.g. “*the thrombus was partially dislocated ... by the inferior vein cannula*” – “*trombul a fost dislocat ... parțial de o canulare venoasă inferioară*” (MR18), instead of “*prin canularea venei inferioare*”, “*we sought to determine the clinical outcomes ... and to assess whether ...*” – “*am solicitat determinarea rezultatelor clinice ... și să ne dăm seama dacă ...*” (MR5), instead of “*am solicitat determinarea rezultatelor clinic ... și evaluarea posibilității ca ...*”, “*study design and setting*” – “*studiul de proiectare și stabilire*” (MR16), instead of “*descrierea/ structura și cadrul studiului*”. Lack of structure awareness can also lead to methodological errors which involve a very literal rendering of the original text elements (7 %): e.g. “*GDM mothers*” – “*mame DZG*” (MR10), instead of “*mame cu DZG/ diabet zaharat gestațional*”, “*CVD deaths*” – “*decese BCV*” (MR2), instead of “*decese cauzate de BCV/ boli cardio-vasculare*”, “*intensive care*” – “*îngrijire intensă*” (MR26), instead of “*terapie intensivă*”.

In addition to the wrong use of terminology, the errors in the area of cultural adequacy are also related to the treatment of the cultural items (8 %). Such mistakes generally involve inappropriate translation solutions for the names of medical institutions or organizations used in the English texts. Quite frequently, these names are preserved in their original forms, instead of being replaced by the official Romanian equivalents: e.g. “*Centre in Sub-Saharan Africa*” – “*centru ... din Sub-Saharan Africa*” (MR30), “*guidelines from the American Heart Association*” – “*directivele din partea American Heart Association*” (MR13, MR22, MR27). There are instances when the translators do offer Romanian equivalents, but they are not correct either, being combined with errors from other areas of competence, such as omission: e.g. “*European Society of Cardiology and European Respiratory Society*” – “*Societatea Europeană de Cardiologie și Respiratorie*” (MR3), or lack of structure awareness: e.g. “*St Elizabeth Catholic General Hospital Cardiac Centre*” – “*Spitalul General Centrul de Cardiologie a Spitalului St Elizabeth*” (MR17).

Finally, I will illustrate a few errors regarding style and register (6 %), which are caused by the use of lexical items that, even if correct in meaning, are too informal for the category of texts in which they are used: e.g. “*collapse*” – “*leșin*” (MR17, MR29), while the more appropriate variant would be “*lipotimie*”, “*kidney injury*” – “*vătămarea rinichilor*” (MR14), instead of the more appropriate “*lezarea/ traumatizarea rinichilor*”.

4.3. Discussion of research findings

Both the quantitative and the qualitative findings regarding the translation errors made by my subjects in the case of the three types of genre texts under analysis support the idea

representing the starting point of this study, namely that errors are closely related to the genre in which the translator is working. I will just mention here the most important results.

In a genre whose texts make extensive use of concepts which are very deeply rooted in the culture in which they were created (cf. travel guides), it is very likely to have numerous errors derived from the inappropriate treatment of the cultural items. A genre with a very conventionalized character (cf. the EU legislation) will most probably raise translation problems related to the genre conventions: if these conventions are not respected, they will certainly turn into sources of translation errors. In a genre with a very specialized character (cf. medical case reports), it should come as no surprise that the incidence of the errors depends, to a very large extent, on the manner in which the translator deals with the terminology of the field.

I want to stress that the findings that emerged from my analysis are valid for the English into Romanian translation of the respective texts. A proof in this respect is the low percentage registered by the grammatical mistakes in all the three genres focused on in my study. If the starting point of the translation process were represented by Romanian travel guides, EU texts and medical case reports, I am sure that the grammatical errors present in the subjects' English translations would be more numerous, and, therefore, all the other percentages representing the subjects' translation errors would be somehow different. This means that the translator trainer must take into account the fact that translation errors depend not only on the genre, but also on the source language – target language pair in use at a particular moment of the teaching process.

Finally, I want to refer to the relevance that the findings of my study have with regard to the development of the translator's competence. The relation between the errors revealed by my subjects' translations and the areas of competence involving the perspective of the translation product are presented in the table below:

AREA OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE OF TRANSLATION ERRORS		
	TRAVEL GUIDES	EU LEGAL TEXTS	MEDICAL CASE REPORTS
LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE	20 %	15 %	17 %
CULTURAL ADEQUACY	34 %	33 %	36 %
DISCOURSAL ADEQUACY	14 %	31 %	21 %
METHODO-LOGICAL ABILITY	32 %	21 %	26 %

Table 3. Translation errors in relation to the four areas of competence

It is obvious that, no matter the percentage representing a certain category of errors, the training process should be based on a balanced approach, in which future translators are involved in activities addressing all the areas of competence. One of the findings revealed by my research study, namely that, sometimes, the translation errors belong to more than one category, represents one more argument for an integrated approach. However, the quantitative results of my study also suggest that certain areas of competence deserve special attention during the training process, as I will explain below.

One such area of competence is that of the cultural adequacy, because, in all the three genres under analysis, the various types of cultural errors rank first among the overall translation mistakes made by my subjects. What varies, however, from one genre to another is the frequency registered by the various types of cultural errors identified in the students' translations. Thus, if in the travel guides, most of the cultural errors involve the treatment of the cultural items, in the EU texts, the highest percentage of such mistakes is represented by cases of disregarding genre conventions, while in the medical case reports, cultural errors are mainly related to the use of the specific terminology. This points to the important role played by the activities meant to develop the translator's cultural sub-competence, and, at the same time, to the necessity that these activities should also focus on the specific character that the cultural problems present from one genre to another.

Another area of competence which represents the source of numerous translation errors is the methodological ability. In fact, the translator's methodological ability, which has to do with all the operations which ensure the transfer from the source language text to the target language one, is considered to be the sub-competence which is most specific to the activity of translation, and which integrates all the other sub-competences (cf., for example, Schäffner 2000: 148). It is obvious, therefore, that the training process must make future translators aware of the manner in which the various omissions, additions, indecisions, or message distortions will affect the quality of the target text. This purpose can be achieved, for instance, by activities which require the future translators to use various documentation and technological resources, or to justify the translation decisions they have already made. Such activities can also be used in the context of a possible extension of the present research study, one which adopts the perspective of the translation process and focuses on the subjects' professional expertise, with a view to finding some explanations for the errors contained by the portfolios analyzed so far.

5. Conclusion

The main idea put forward by this paper is that, in professional translator training, the assessment of the students' work has a role which consists in much more than just providing a basis for grading. Evaluation is very important because it represents one of the stages at which translator trainers have good opportunities of teaching their students how to behave like experts. More specifically, if the translator trainer always explains why a particular error has been assessed in a certain way, his/her students will know what kind of arguments to use when discussing the quality and appropriateness of the translated texts with their clients or employers, and, in this way, they will set certain standards for their own work. In this context, the separate assessment of the various features displayed by the translation work and the translator's behaviour does not only increase the objectivity of the evaluation process, but also represents a good means of raising the students' awareness of what exactly is required from a good translator.

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Online sources for the articles to be translated:

Travel articles and inspiration from Booking.com: <https://www.booking.com/articles.html>

EUR-Lex — Access to European Union law: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

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