Directionality in Translation: Qualitative Aspects of Translation from and into English as a Non-Mother Tongue

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a translation experiment investigating directionality in translation between Czech and English. A set of 80 translations (of two text types – promotional and legal –, produced by two groups of translators – translation students in the second year of their MA studies and professionals with at least 7 years of practical experience –, in two directions) was analysed to explore various aspects related to the quality of translations from and into the translators' mother tongue. The overall quality of translations into Czech, i.e. the translators' mother tongue, was generally better than the quality of translations done in the opposite direction. Legal texts turn out to be more compatible with non-native translation than promotional texts. A positive influence of the translators' previous experience was only observed in translations into Czech. Data on error types confirm the assumption that translation from a non-mother tongue involves more comprehension problems; stylistic errors were the most frequent type in all four sets of translations.

Key words: directionality; translation quality; competences; Czech; English; text type; translation expertise

Resumen

La direccionalidad en traducción: Aspectos cualitativos de la traducción directa e inversa entre el checo e inglés

El artículo presenta los resultados de un experimento traductológico llevado a cabo para investigar el fenómeno de direccionalidad en traducción entre el checo e inglés. Se analizó un total de 80 traducciones (de dos tipos de texto – publicitario y jurídico, producidas por dos grupos de traductores – profesionales y estudiantes, en las dos direcciones) para describir distintos aspectos asociados con la calidad de la traducción directa e inversa. Los resultados indican que la calidad de la traducción directa es, por lo general, superior a la calidad de la traducción inversa. Los textos jurídicos parecen más compatibles con la traducción inversa que los textos publicitarios. Solo en la traducción directa se ha observado un efecto positivo de la experiencia previa del traductor. Los datos sobre tipos de errores confirman la hipótesis de que la traducción inversa presenta más problemas de comprensión, mientras que los errores estilísticos son la categoría más frecuente en ambas direcciones y ambos tipos de texto.

Palabras clave: Direccionalidad; traducción inversa; traducción directa; calidad; competencias; checo; inglés; experiencia del traductor

1. Introduction

The term "directionality" refers to whether the translation is done from the translator's first language (throughout the article referred to as L1, meaning the language most readily available to the translator, usually, but not necessarily, his/her mother tongue) into a second language (referred to as L2, i.e. a language that has been mastered to a relatively high level of competence) (cf. Pavlović 2007a, 2007b), or vice versa. Many theoreticians as well as translation practitioners still believe that translators should only translate into L1, as is reflected in the policies and recommendations of professional and international organisations (Translation – Getting it right 2002, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Legal Protection of Translators and Translations and the Practical Means to improve the Status of Translators).

However, in everyday practice, this "mother tongue principle" is far from being applied consistently, especially in smaller cultures, i.e. in countries using "languages of limited diffusion" that are seldom studied as a second language by native speakers of languages like English, French or Spanish. This issue has been addressed by various translation scholars. Pavlović (2007a) discovered that more than 70% of full-time translators/interpreters working in Croatia translate into L2 on a regular basis, and one third stated that they preferred this direction. A survey conducted in the Czech Republic (Svoboda 2011) showed that 61% of Czech translators work in both directions. The situation is similar in other European countries speaking languages of limited diffusion, such as Denmark (Hansen et al. 1998) and Finland (McAlester 1992).

Nevertheless, translation into L2 is not a rare occurrence in large cultures either. For Spain, this has been documented by Kelly et al. (2003: 76), who confirmed that most Spanish translators regularly translate into L2. A study by Roiss (2001) showed that, for 23% of the Spanish respondents, translation into L2 represents 26% of their work, and for 13%, this figure is as high as 50%. Campbell (2005) has studied the situation in Australia and other countries, emphasising the fact that the position of English is not symmetric to that of other languages and suggesting that we, therefore, need to systematically question the notion that only a native speaker should translate into English. Similarly, Adab (2005: 227) believes that "the view that translators should work into their mother tongue is a meme which is fast becoming unenforceable and impractical." The decreasing marginality of L2 translation is also reflected in several publications exploring different aspects and methods of L2 translation training (Beeby 1996, Kelly et al. 2003).

In the last two decades, the impact of directionality on the translation process and product has been investigated by several researchers, with special focus on translation into English. In another part of her research work, Pavlović (2007b: 187) analyses the ways in which novice translators approach translation problems when translating into L1 vs. L2 and concludes that the problems encountered and actions taken to solve them are similar regardless of the direction of the translation. Jakobsen (2003) investigates translation into L1 vs. L2 in terms of working speed, number of revisions, and

segmentation and concludes that L2 translation is slower and involves more translation segments. Fonseca (2015) investigates the impact of directionality on the editing procedures applied by translators.

The relation between directionality and translation quality has been addressed by various scholars from different perspectives. Pokorn (2005) suggests that the quality of translations produced by non-native speakers need not be lower than that of native translations. Rogers (2005: 27) presents a case study where the most successful non-native translations from German into English outperformed the weakest translations of the same text produced by native speakers of English, especially because they were more "informatively reliable". Wagner (2005) argues that the degree of acceptability of non-native translations is closely related to the type and specific purpose of the given text and emphasises the role of reviewers.

This article presents the results of an experimental research investigating different aspects of directionality in translation between Czech and English. Translations of two types of texts (legal and promotional) produced by two cohorts of participants (10 students and 10 professionals) in two directions (from English to Czech and vice versa) were analysed with the aim of comparing the quality of the translations depending on the direction, level of the translator's expertise, and text type. We investigate whether it holds true that translation into L1 yields generally better results than translation into L2, whether professionals perform better than advanced students, and whether and how the quality depends on the type of the translated text. Translation quality was assessed first at the global level (overall translation quality) and then at the local or micro-textual level. The data collected have been correlated with the information provided by the participants in a set of questionnaires that included questions monitoring their personal attitudes to native and non-native translation and process-oriented questions addressing the problems encountered and methods and tools employed to solve them. [1]

2. Methods

2.1. Study Population

A total of 20 participants were asked to take part in a translation experiment in which they had to translate four texts under specified conditions. The participants were divided into two groups - one was composed of 10 students of the Translation Studies Department of Charles University who were in the second year of their MA studies with specialisation in translation between Czech and English at the time of the experiment. The second group consisted of ten professional translators, i.e. persons who earn their living as translators and received their degree from the Translation Studies Department in the period between 2003 and 2007. The mother tongue of all the participants was Czech, and English was one of their working/study languages. Seven out of these ten professional translators reported that they had taken a course in legal

translation organised by the Faculty of Law of the Charles University. In the group of students, one respondent said that he/she attended training for translation interns at the ECB in Frankfurt, and one of them was attending the course for legal translators organised by the Faculty of Law.

2.2. Experiment

The participants were asked to translate two pairs of texts, each of a different type (promotional – websites of kitchen manufacturing companies – and legal – conditions of use of a web server). In each pair, they translated one page from English into Czech and one from Czech into English, each containing approximately 1800 characters. As we wanted to simulate a real-life situation, we used authentic texts produced and used by the companies. The texts in each pair were comparable, which means that they share similar characteristics in terms of their content, style, function, and amount of terminology.

The translators worked in two three-hour sessions (one for each pair), having a maximum of 90 minutes for each direction (while being allowed to hand in their translation earlier if they wished). Although we wanted to simulate a real-life translation assignment, we set up a time limit to make the translations more comparable and also to reflect the economic aspect that would be relevant in a real-life situation. At the beginning of each session, a member of the investigation team sent the text to be translated from English into Czech to the translator by e-mail. When the translator returned the completed translation, he/she was sent the second text to be translated into English. The participants worked in their usual environment using their own computers, dictionaries, online resources, etc. They were not allowed to communicate with anyone, except for the research team member.

2.3. Assessment and evaluation

All translations into Czech were evaluated by three native speakers of Czech (one of them being the author of this text), and all translations into English were evaluated by two native speakers of English. All evaluators are professional translators or translation teachers. The evaluation was performed according to a set of pre-defined criteria at two levels 1) a lower-level evaluation aimed at detecting and classifying translation errors and 2) a global evaluation resulting in an overall grade for each translation (Martínez Mateo 2014; O'Brien 2012). The grades on a scale from A to F were defined as follows:

- A: excellent, fully meets the criteria for a professional translation or requires a revision of a small number of segments
- B: good, meets the criteria for a professional translation with minor reservations, some segments require revision

- C: borderline, partially meets the criteria for a professional translation, substantial revision is necessary to achieve a professional level

- (F)AIL: unacceptable, it would be necessary to substantially re-write the translation to achieve a professional level.

The evaluators were asked to evaluate the translations against the "optimum quality of a commercial assignment taking into account the translation brief" (see Annex 1). Despite the effort to ensure maximum objectiveness, the evaluation process always involves a certain degree of subjectivity. It should always be remembered that translation quality is a relative concept (Mossop 2001). An evaluation done by two experts (in the case of translations into L2) and three experts (in the case of translation into L2) should reduce the effects of subjectivity. The degree of concordance between the evaluators in terms of the global grade given for each translation can be expressed by the Pearson correlation coefficient[2], whose value was 0.82 (strong positive correlation) for translations into Czech and 0.48 (weak positive correlation) for translations into English (cf. Duběda in print).

The local-level assessment consisted of identifying translation errors and their categorisation into the six types defined in Table 1. The term "error" is used for translation solutions that were considered inappropriate by at least one of the evaluators for each direction of translation.

Table 1. Micro-textual assessment. Categories of translation errors.

Symbol	Type of error
MM	A serious error in meaning. Omission of a unit of meaning (an idea/sentence). Conveying meaning contrary to that in the source text. Serious shifts in meaning. Lack of coherence affecting large segments.
M	Error in meaning. Minor omissions and shifts in meaning. Ungrounded adding of new units of meaning.
T	Terminological error. Inappropriate use of a term; lack of terminological consistency.
S	Stylistic error. Unnaturally sounding phrases. Cohesion. Inappropriate collocations. Inappropriate degree of expressiveness.
G	Grammatical error. Punctuation.
F	Formal error. Spelling and typographic errors. Formatting.

2.4. Questionnaires

The participants were asked to complete three questionnaires – one before producing the translations and one after handing in each pair of texts. The first questionnaire contained questions about the participants' background, professional experience and attitudes towards translation into Czech vs. into English (difficulty, preference, share of non-native translations in total workload, see Annex II). The post-translation

questionnaires included questions related specifically to the translation assignment, addressing methods of work, problems encountered during the translation process and strategies used to find a solution.

3. Results

3.1. Questionnaires

This section summarises the answers gathered by means of the pre-translation questionnaires. They provide information on the position of L2 translation in the Czech market and on how translators themselves perceive directionality. The first question addresses the proportion of L2 translations in the respondents' workload. In this case, we only asked the group of professional translators as we assume that students have not actually entered the translation market yet. The replies confirmed that working in this direction is not uncommon for our participants. The percentages are shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Proportion of non-native translation in translators' workload
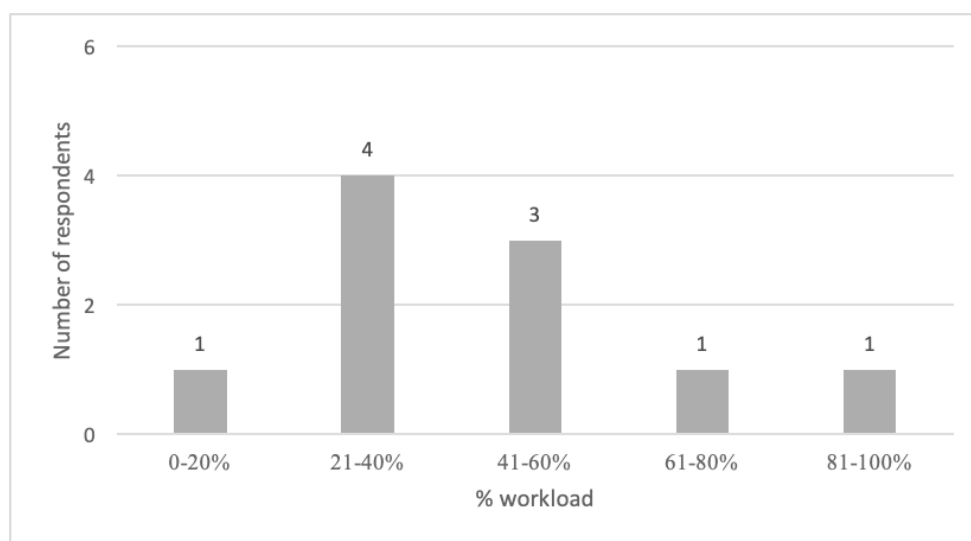
The numbers show that, for 9 out of 10 respondents, L2 translation makes up more than 20% of their workload, and for 5 of them, it is more than 40%. For two respondents, L2 translation represents most of their work assignments.

The replies given to other questions (students and professionals counted together) revealed that 18 respondents consider translation into L2 more difficult than translation into their mother tongue, one respondent sees no difference, and one thinks that L2 translation is easier. As for preference, 11 respondents reported that they prefer to translate into their mother tongue, four do not have a preference, four said that their preference depends on various factors, and one respondent prefers translating into English (i.e. her/his non-mother tongue).

3.2. Overall quality of translations into L1 and L2

The first part of the analysis focuses on the distribution of the four grades (A to F) assigned by the evaluators to the translations produced in the experiment, comparing the two directions. The percentages, based on the sum of the grades given by all the evaluators in each direction, are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentages of grades given for translations into Czech (mother tongue, L1) and English (non-mother tongue, L2)
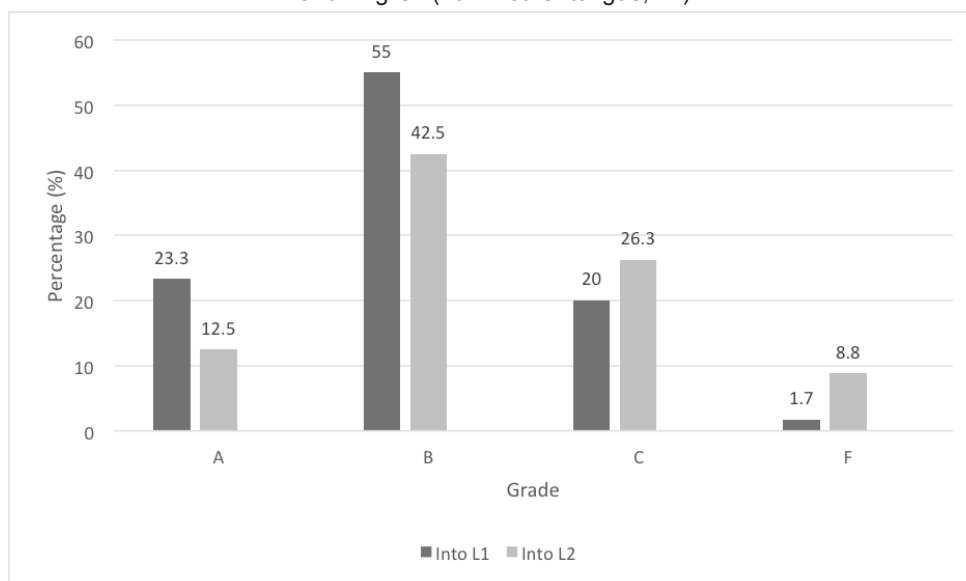
The data show that the most frequent grade for both L1 and L2 translation is B (55% and 42.5% respectively). Grade A was more frequent in translations into L1 (23.3%) than in those into L2 (12.5%), while translations into L2 obtained more Cs (26.3% vs. 20%) and Fs (8.8% vs. 1.7%).

Converting the grades into numbers (A-1, B-2, C-3, F-4), we receive an average overall grade equal to 2 (B) for L1 translation and 2.4 (B-) for L2 translation (calculated for both text types together); the difference is statistically significant.[3]

The percentages and average grades shown above indicate that the quality of L1 translations analysed in our experiment was generally better than that of L2 translations. This implies that L2 translation is more difficult than translation into L1, which has been subjectively confirmed by our participants in the pre-translation questionnaire, where only one respondent said that translating into L2 is easier for her/him and one finds both directions equally difficult. Interestingly enough, one of the two translations into English produced by the translator who believes that L2 translation is easier was evaluated with an F by both reviewers.

Looking at the translation competence of our participants, it is interesting to see whether the participants who achieve good results when translating into their mother tongue perform equally well in the other direction. The coefficient of correlation between the quality (expressed by the average grade) of L1 vs. L2 translation is 0.09, which means that there is practically no correlation; hence the assumption that com-

petence for translation into L1 and L2 will be balanced has not been confirmed. Calculating the correlation coefficient separately for each group of participants, we get $r = 0.20$ for students (weak positive correlation) and $r = -0.29$ for professionals, i.e. in the latter group the correlation is negative, though weak.

Although the overall quality of L2 translations was generally lower than that of L1 translations, comparing the 40 pairs of texts (20 translators x 2 text types), we find that 12 participants (6 students and 6 professionals) obtained a better average grade for L2 translation of the given text type. Most of these cases (9) were translations of legal texts. Interestingly, in the group of students, one half of the legal translations into L2 obtained a better average grade than translations into L1.

3.3. Quality vs. text type

This part summarises the results obtained by our participants comparing the two text types. The translations of the legal texts were generally evaluated as only slightly more successful than those of the promotional texts (average grade 2.1 vs. 2.3). The average grades obtained for translations of promotional and legal texts in each direction are shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Average grades for each text type
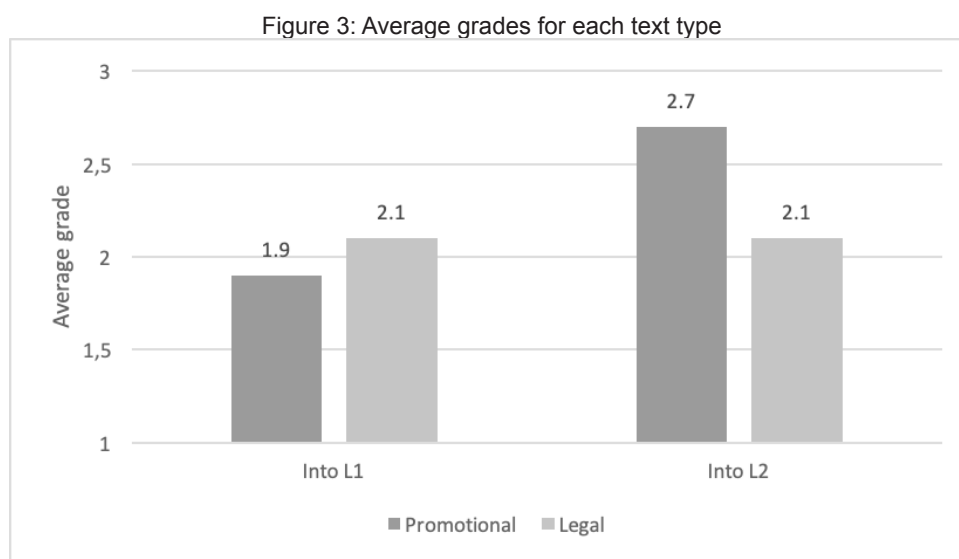
The numbers shown in the graph reveal that, in the case of promotional texts, the average grades were 1.9 (B) for translation into L1 and 2.7 (C+) for translation into L2; the difference of 0.8 grade is statistically significant.[4] The average grade obtained for translations of legal texts was the same for both directions (2.1, i.e. B). In other words, the quality of both L1 and L2 translation of the legal text was comparable, while the quality of L2 translations of the promotional text was much lower. This is also reflected in the fact that all the Fs for L2 translation (see Figure 1 above) were obtained by translations of the promotional text. The difference between the results achieved by L1 translations of each text type was only small (1.9 for the promotional text as compared to 2.1 for the legal text, without statistical significance).[5]

The evaluation results summarised above suggest that text type is an important factor determining the quality of translation into L2. The data confirm the assumption that non-native translation is more compatible with specialised texts with a predominantly informative function that contain less expressive elements and are generally more conventionalised, as is argued by several translation scholars discussing non-native translation (Snell et Crampton 1989; Beeby 1998, Wagner 2005). When translating this type of texts, translators may rely on a number of lexicographic and other resources (comparable texts and other) that efficiently help them solve certain problems (cf. Adab 2005). On the other hand, L2 translation of texts whose main function is conative with a number of expressive elements, involves translation problems that are difficult to overcome, such as finding naturally-sounding and idiomatic equivalents of unconventional structures and difficulties associated with pragmatic aspects.

The differences in the translation of the two text types are also reflected in some of the answers given by the participants in the questionnaires. When asked which direction they prefer, four respondents (all of them professionals) replied that their preference depends on the type of text they are supposed to translate. In the post-translation questionnaires, our participants were asked to name the most difficult aspects of each translation. Style was the most frequently mentioned aspect in L2 translation of the promotional text (45.5% of all aspects mentioned), while syntax and terminology were considered to be the most difficult aspects of L2 translation of the legal text (32.2% and 29.0% respectively).

Text type also seems to be an important factor for the time spent on each of the translations (recorded by the coordinators as the span between the time of sending the original and the time the completed translation was handed in). The numbers summarised in Figure 4 indicate that, on the average, our participants spent significantly more time on the translation of both promotional texts (about 80 minutes) than on the translation of legal texts (about 70 minutes). Therefore, text type had more influence on translation speed than the direction of translation, as the overall difference between L1 and L2 translation was only small (74.5 minutes for L1 vs. 76.25 minutes for L2).

Figure 4: Time spent on each translation
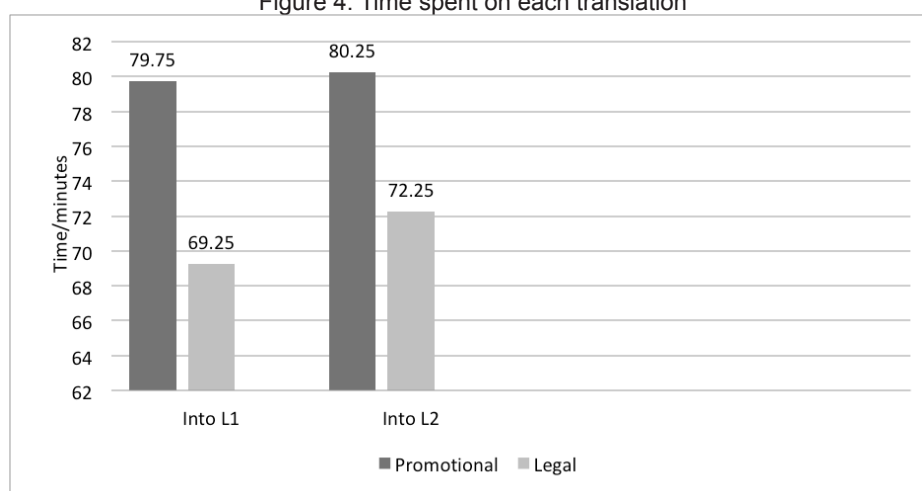
3.4. Quality vs. level of expertise

The results suggest that the length of professional experience influences the quality of translation into L1: the overall average grade obtained by professionals in this direction was 1.8 (B+), while that obtained by students was 2.2 (B-), the difference being statistically significant. [6] The average grades for translations into L2 were 2.4 for professional translators and 2.5 for students, i.e. the difference is equal to 0.1, which indicates practically zero influence of professional experience. The grades obtained by both groups for each direction and text type (see Figure 5) show that the tendency outlined above applies to both text types. For L1 translations, the average grades obtained by professionals and students were 1.6 vs. 2.1 respectively for the promotional text and 1.9 vs. 2.3 respectively for the legal text, while for L2 translation the results were 2.7 vs. 2.8 for the promotional text and 2.1 vs. 2.2 for the legal text.

Figure 5: Average grades obtained by students and professionals for each translation
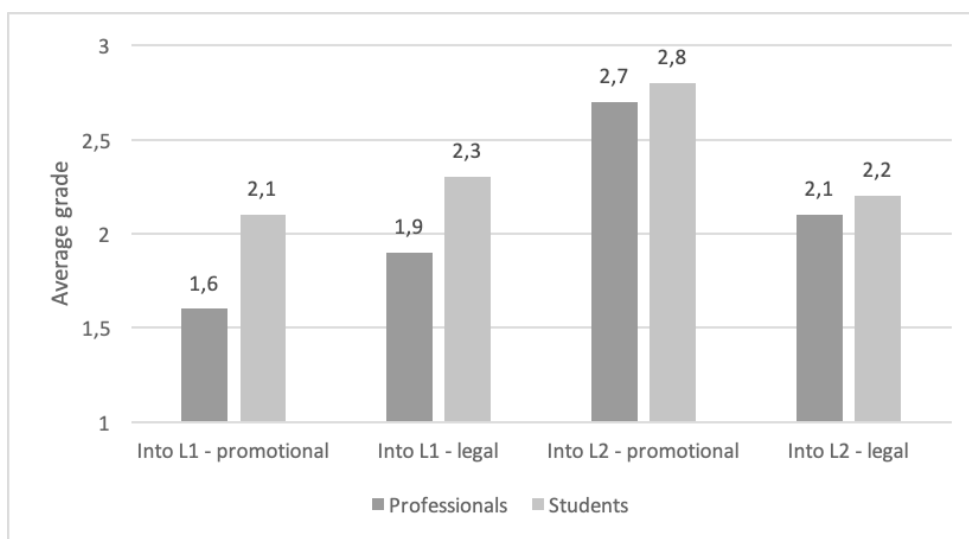
A possible explanation of this somewhat surprising result would be that translators acquire a certain level of competence at the end of their MA studies which does not improve further with years of professional experience, possibly because of a lack of feedback on their work. Another explanation would be that current graduates in translation studies have a better level of English than those who graduated 8 to 15 years ago, and their competence may further improve.

The average grades obtained by students are generally more balanced (from 2.1 to 2.8). The only translation where they obtained significantly worse results (as compared to the other three translations) was that of promotional text into English. Interestingly, student translations of the legal text into English scored slightly better than those done into Czech (2.2 vs. 2.3 respectively). In the case of professionals, the difference between the results for L1 and L2 translations of legal texts is not very large either, though they scored slightly better in translation into L1 (1.9 and 2.1 respecti-

vely). The relatively good grades obtained by legal translations into English may be partly explained by the fact that the English evaluators were not specialists in law and might have been less strict about terminology and perhaps also about certain subtleties in meaning. Another reason why the average grades obtained by translations of legal texts in both directions are quite balanced may be better comprehension of the source text (supported by the good availability of high-quality linguistic resources) that is specifically important in legal translation.

For professional translators, we have correlated the grades obtained for L2 translation with the data on the share of L2 translation in their total workload (see Figure 1). The correlation coefficient is equal to 0.04 (no correlation), which means that the overall volume of work done into L2 has practically no influence on L2 translation quality. Calculating the correlation coefficient for each text type separately, we obtain r = 0.22 (a weak negative correlation suggesting that the average grade tends to worsen with increasing experience) for L2 translations of the promotional text and r = -0.24 (indicating a weak positive correlation as 1 was the best grade and 4 the worst) for L2 translations of the legal text, which suggests a slightly positive impact of L2 translation frequency in the case of legal texts. However, we have only worked with a limited number of participants and the results are influenced by certain extreme values achieved in individual cases (the only participant who reported an 81% – 100% share of L2 translations in her total workload scored particularly low in L2 translation of the promotional text).

In the post-translation questionnaires, our translators were asked about how often they translate the given text type. The question was asked separately for each direction and the possible answers were: *never, seldom, sometimes, often*. The replies were converted to numbers (0, 1, 2, 3) and correlated with the average grade obtained. In this case, we included both professionals and students, although students are not expected to accept commercial assignments on a regular basis. Their answers, therefore, reflect how often they translate each text type/direction at school or as occasional job assignments. The correlation coefficients summarised in Figure 6 imply that previous experience with the given text type and direction has a positive impact on translation into L1, and especially in the case of the promotional text (r=-0.51 for the promotional text and -0.26 for the legal text; given the order of the grades, the correlation is positive in both cases despite the negative values). On the other hand, the volume of previously translated texts has practically no impact on the average grade of translations into L2, as the correlation coefficients obtained are r=0.23 for the promotional text and -0.08 for the legal text. The former actually indicates that there is a weak negative correlation, suggesting that persons without previous experience with translation of the given text type tend to translate better. The numbers shown in Figure 6 thus confirm the positive impact of previous experience on translation into L1, while the effect on L2 translation is disputable.

Figure 6: Correlation coefficients between the average grade and previous experience
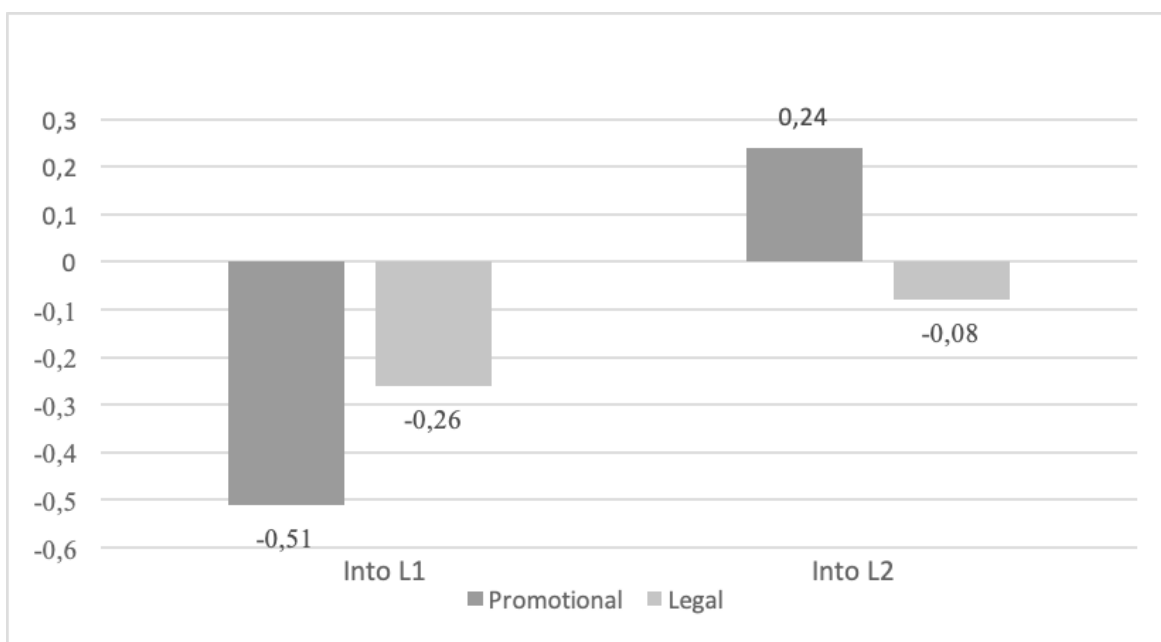
3.5. Error rate and types of translation errors

This section summarises data on the numbers and types of errors (see Table 1 above) identified by the evaluators in the translations produced within the experiment. As L1 translations were assessed by three evaluators and L2 translations by two evaluators, we calculated the average number of errors of each type encountered in each of the translations. Summing up the values, we receive the average total number of errors per translation for each direction and text type:

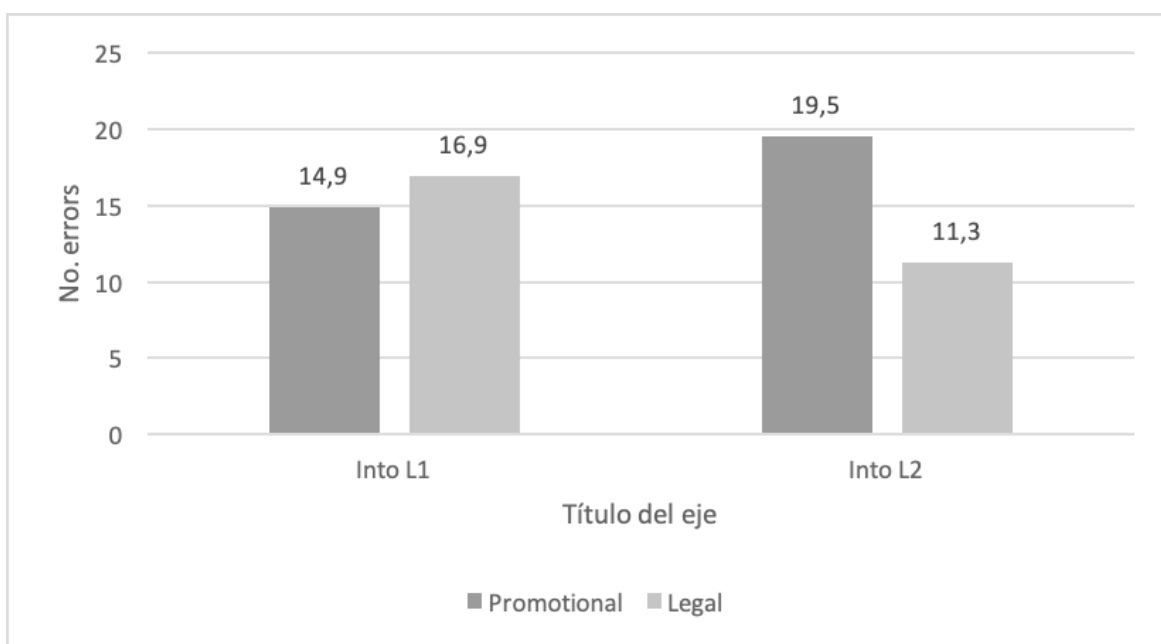Figure 7: Total average number of errors per translation

Figure 7 shows that the highest error rate was identified in L2 translations of the promotional texts (19.5 errors per translation), followed by L1 translations of the legal text (16.7 errors per text) and L1 translations of the promotional text (14.9 errors per translation). These numbers roughly correspond to the average overall grade obtained by the respective set of translations (2.7, 2.1 and 1.9 respectively). The lowest average number of errors (11.3) was found in L2 translations of the legal text, which, however, was not the most successful one in terms of the average overall grade (2.1). Although this discrepancy might seem paradoxical at first sight, we have to bear in mind that the overall grades were meant to evaluate the adequacy of the translations to their purpose rather than to simply reflect the number of errors, which are not equal in terms of their negative impact on the function of each translation. Typically, one error seriously affecting the meaning in a legal translation would probably lead to an increase in the overall grade despite a low number of errors identified at other levels (such as style or grammar). Nevertheless, the assessment of the L2 translation of the legal text yields somewhat controversial results in other aspects as well, as will be discussed below.

The average error rates per translation calculated for students and professionals separately are summarised in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Total average number of errors per translation: students vs. professionals
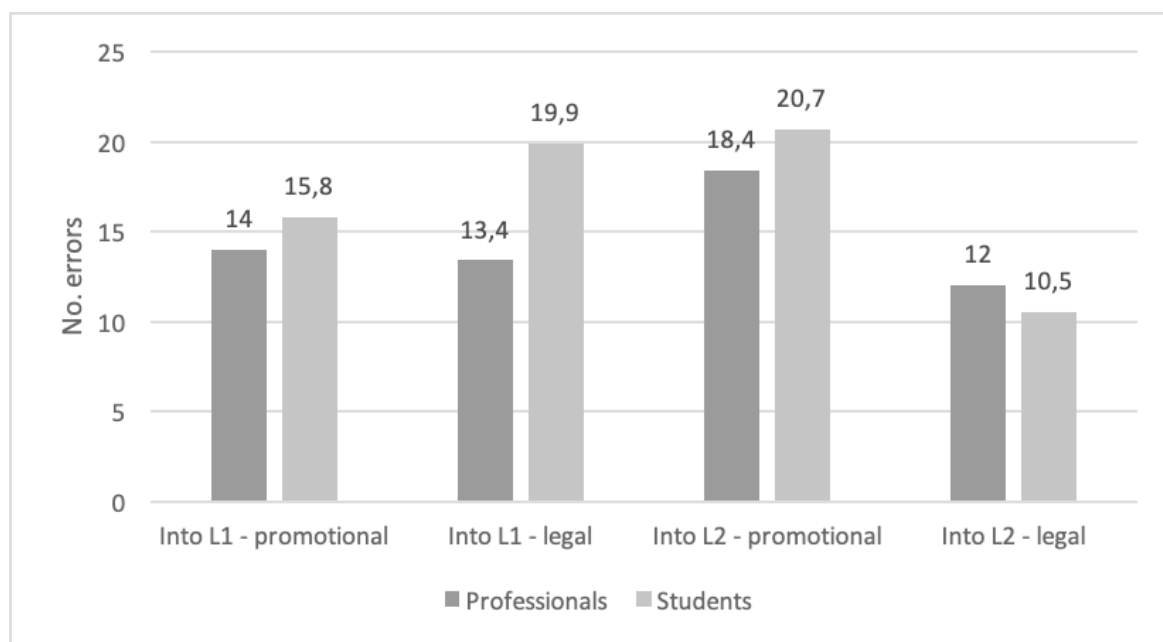

A comparison of the values shows that the average total number of errors identified in student translations was higher in three sets of translations, the difference being statistically significant only in one case – L1 translation of the legal text (difference of 5.8 errors) [7]. L2 translation of the legal text was an exception once again, as the error rate of students was slightly lower (by 1.5 errors) than that of professionals. Comparing the numbers of errors with the overall grades shown in Figure 5, we see that the relation is not directly proportional, which can be accounted for by the varying degree of negative impact of the individual error type in each text type.

Finally, we have compared the average number of errors of each type (MM = a serious error in meaning, M = a less serious error in meaning, T = terminology, S = style, G = grammar, F = formal errors, see also Table 1) identified for each text type and direction of translation, as summarised in Figure 9, showing the absolute number and percentage from the total number of errors per translation:

Analysing the numbers obtained, we must take into account that there may be differences in the categorisation of errors by each of the evaluators; hence the data shown are interpreted only as an illustration of general tendencies. Stylistic errors were the most frequent category in both types of texts and both directions, accounting for more or less one half of all errors identified in all four cases. The highest absolute number of stylistic errors was detected in L2 translations of the promotional text (10.1), while in L2 translations of the legal text, the number of stylistic errors was the lowest (6.1), which further confirms the assumption that translating the former text type requires a greater stylistic effort (cf. section 3.2 above).

Figure 9: Types of translation errors
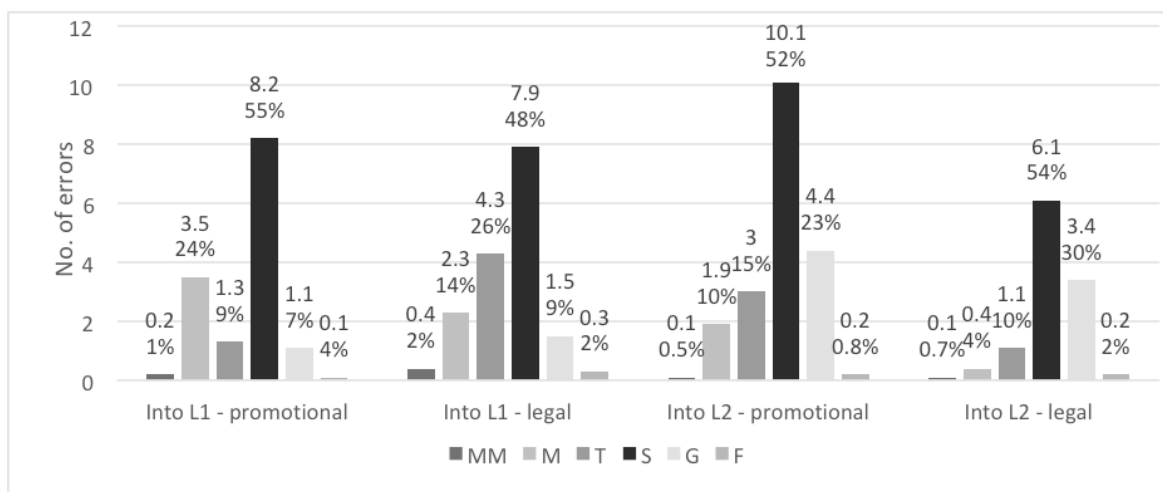
Comparing the two directions of translation, the data confirm the assumption that translation into the mother tongue involves more comprehension problems, which is reflected by a relatively high number of errors affecting the meaning in both translations into L1. Summing up the two categories of shifts in meaning (more and less serious ones), we get an average number of 3.7 (25%) errors per translation for the promotional texts and 2.7 (16%) for the legal text. However, the average number of errors in meaning was also relatively high in L2 translation of the promotional text (2, i.e. 10.5%). Judging from the answers given by our participants in the post-translation questionnaires (cf. Obdržálková 2016), this can be partly accounted for by the quality of the original Czech text, which contained certain formulations that were difficult to interpret. It should also be noted that some errors in meaning, specifically in translation into L2, may result from inappropriate language constructions used by the translator in the target language rather than from deficiency in comprehension. In L2

translations of the legal text, the average number of errors in meaning was only low (0.5, i.e. 4.7% of all errors). In this case, it hence applies that a good understanding of the original is indeed an advantage of translators working into their L2, as has been suggested by various researchers (cf. Campbell 1998, Rogers 2005).

The category of grammatical errors was more frequent in translations into L2 (4.4 errors per translation, i.e. 23%, in the promotional text, and 3.4 errors per translation, i.e. 30% of all errors, in the legal text) than in translations into Czech (1.1 errors, i.e. 7%, in the promotional text. and 1.5 errors, i.e. 9%, in the legal text), which is also quite unsurprising. The numbers in the category of terminology are in some ways contradictory. The highest average number of terminological errors was identified in legal translation into L1 (4.3 errors per translation, 26% of all errors identified, i.e. the second most frequent category in this translation), which seems logical as the legal text contained a higher total number of terminological units than the promotional one. On the contrary, in the other direction, there were more terminological errors in the translations of the promotional text (3 per translation, 15% of all errors identified), while the number of terminological errors in legal translations was relatively low (1.1 per translation, accounting for 10% of the total number of errors), despite its higher terminological density. This may have several explanations. First, the terminology contained in the promotional text was very specific and therefore more difficult to look up in external resources, such as dictionaries, corpuses, etc. Second, as has already been mentioned, our English reviewers are not specialists in legal translation and may have been less sensitive to inappropriate terminology used in the legal translations.

To conclude this part of our analysis, we will summarise the most important differences between the two groups of participants. The overall distribution of error types in both directions and both text types is generally similar in both groups, and the number of errors of each category identified in student translations is generally only slightly higher than in professional translations, which corresponds to the data on overall error rates summarised in Figure 7. However, there are two exceptions to this overall trend. First, student translations of both texts into Czech contain significantly more errors in meaning than professional translations. Summing up both categories of errors affecting meaning (abbreviated as MM and M), we get an average rate of 4.43 errors per translation for the promotional text and 3.42 for the legal texts, as compared to 2.91 and 1.98 errors respectively detected in L1 translations produced by professionals. This difference may at least partly explain why professionals obtained a better average grade for L1 translations in general – the results suggest that their comprehension competence develops and increases with the amount of texts translated.

On the other hand, student translations of both texts into English contain less grammatical errors, as was also shown by Mraček (2017), who concludes that, overall, the 20 students and professionals translating from Czech into English made many more stylistic errors than purely grammar mistakes, and the stylistic competence of students and professional translators shows no visible difference. This conclusion was documented by a detailed analysis of translation solutions (Mraček 2018).

4. Discussion and conclusions

Before summarising the main conclusions, we would like to comment on certain methodological aspects that should be taken into account when interpreting the data obtained. Although the design of the experiment simulated the conditions of a real commercial assignment as closely as possible, there were two restrictions that would not be present in the translators' real practice: the time limit and the fact that they did not have the possibility to see the text beforehand and refuse the assignment if they did not feel sufficiently competent to complete the task. It should also be noted that we have worked with a limited number of participants, and some of the results exposed above were only obtained for a group of ten respondents. As the central part of our analysis relies on the results of an evaluation performed by five evaluators, we must also take into account the influence of the personal attitude and sensitivity of each evaluator as regards the appropriateness of individual solutions. Such subjective factors on the part of the evaluators may partly explain several unexpected results arising from the assessment of one of the four sets of translations, namely that of legal translations into English. In this context, we may actually ask whether native speakers are the best option when it comes to revision of legal translations from Czech into English. We will highlight in the conclusions the most important and statistically significant findings.

The quality of translations into L1 in terms of the average overall grade was generally better than the quality of translations into L2 (2 vs. 2.4 respectively). The difference is not strikingly big and suggests that L1 translations contained a certain number of shortcomings as well. The same overall tendency regarding the difference in quality of L1 and L2 translations was shown in the research carried out by the PACTE group (Hurtado 2017), where the average scores of professional translators were 0.73 and 0.52 for L1 and L2 translation respectively, on a scale from 0 to 1 (1 being the best result); converting our results to the PACTE scale we obtain the value of 0.67 for L1 and 0.54 for L2 translation. However, the PACTE study used a different methodology, evaluating only five selected "rich points" in each translation.

Looking at the results obtained for legal and promotional texts separately, the difference in quality depending on the direction of translation can only be observed in promotional texts, while the overall grade for legal translations was the same in both directions. This conclusion confirms the assumption that highly conventionalised specialised texts with a low or zero degree of expressivity are more suitable for L2 translation than other text types. Based on the definitions established for each of the four grades used in the evaluation, we may say that L1 translations of both text types and L2 translation of the legal texts fall within the category "good, meets the criteria for a professional translation with minor reservations, some segments require revision", while L2 translations of the promotional text are more close to the category "borderline, partially meets the criteria for a professional translation, a substantial revision is necessary to achieve a professional level". L2 translation of the promotional text was

the most challenging option also in terms of the average total number of errors per translation. The decisive role of text type has been confirmed by the data on the time spent on each translation, as legal texts were handed in on average ten minutes earlier than promotional texts, regardless of the direction of translation.

These findings are in line with the opinions of several theorists (Snell et Crampton 1989; Beeby 1998, Wagner 2005, see also section 3.2 above) who confirm that a lack of native linguistic competence is less problematic in the translation of factual texts with a high degree of formalisation. This assumption is also reflected in the translation market, where contracts, instruction manuals, and reports are translated by non-native speakers on a regular basis, while non-native translations of essays or fiction are less common. In a survey of the Slovak translation market, Ličko (2014) found that qualified translators are well aware of the difficulties involved in the translation of literary texts into a foreign language, and therefore tend to avoid this type of assignments, while professionals without translation training accept them, though only to a limited extent.

The overall average grade obtained by professionals (i.e. translators with 8 to 15 years of professional experience) for translations into L1 was approximately 0.6 lower than that obtained by students, which suggests a positive influence of the length of professional experience on the quality of translation into Czech. On the other hand, our data do not demonstrate a positive impact of professional experience on translation into English, where the results achieved by both groups were approximately the same. A similar tendency was observed when analysing the relation between translation quality and the volume of work done into L2 by professional translators, as there was practically no correlation.

The analysis of translation errors at the micro-textual level revealed that most mistakes identified in all four sets of translations fall in the category of style. Translations into Czech contained significantly more shifts of meaning, while grammatical mistakes were more frequent in translations into English. These two categories were also the only ones showing a difference between professional translators (with less errors in meaning in translations into Czech) and students (who made less grammatical mistakes in translations into English).

According to the replies given by our participants in the questionnaires, L2 translation from Czech into English is practiced on a regular basis in the Czech market, although translators perceive it as the more difficult option. The results of a translation quality assessment suggest that a large proportion of L2 translations do not meet the criteria of a product that is ready to be published and would require revision.

Acknowledgment

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Electronic resources:

- Recommendation on the Legal Protection of Translators and Translations and the Practical Means to improve the Status of Translators. http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13089&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html [Visited on 20 September 2017]
- Translation: Getting it Right. https://www.iti.org.uk/pdf/getting-it-right/english-uk.pdf [Visited on 20 September 2017]

Annex I – examples of source texts

Promotional text EN>CS

Translation brief: Translate the following text from the company's web page to be published as Czech version of the website.

Polaris Kitchens is a family run business with a passion for design, quality and excellent customer service.

The team has over 50 years experience in the kitchen industry both locally and in London and has drawn on this experience to come up with a truly customer focused business model. We work with some of the best suppliers in the industry as well as a number of high quality local suppliers, stonemasons and tradesmen and can bring you an extensive range of kitchen styles, granite and quartz, appliances and state of the art technology.

Every member of our team, as well as the suppliers we choose to work with, have been chosen for the quality of their skills, workmanship and experience in their profession. Polaris Kitchens aims to provide an industry leading experience for all of its clients.

Polaris Kitchens do not rely on pushy sales people, our customers recommend our services.

[…]

Legal text, EN>CS

Translation brief: Translate into Czech the following extract of the conditions of use of the services provided by the company. The extract will be published on the company's website.

The Photographer is the Author of the photograph.

The Client is the person or organisation to whom the invoice is addressed (whether or not the Client is acting for a third party).

The License to Use only comes into effect once full payment of the invoice has been made. No use may be made of the images until full and final payment – including any late payment charges that may have been levied – has been received by the Company.

Permission in writing may be granted for image use before payment, however this permission will be immediately revoked if payment of the invoice is not made by the timescale stated on the invoice.

Reproduction rights (if and when granted) are strictly limited to the use and period of time specified on the Company's invoice. An agreement must be reached with the Company before the pictures are used for a different purpose or after the licence to use has expired.

[...]

Annex II – Pre-translation questionnaire

(1) List all language combinations your study or work in (CS/EN, CS/FR…).

(2) What is your first language combination?

(3) In this language combination, what is the percentage of texts you translate out of your native language? Choose one of the following options: 0%–20 %, 21%–40 %, 41%–60 %, 61%–80 %, 81%–100% (STUDENTS DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.)

(4) In your language combination, do you see any difference between translation into Czech and translation into your foreign language in terms of difficulty? Choose one option: translation into the foreign language is more difficult – translation into Czech is more difficult – both directions are equally difficult

(5) If you see a difference in terms of difficulty, what makes one of the directions more difficult for you (language competence, terminology, style…)?

(6) In this language combination, do you prefer translating into Czech or into your foreign language? Choose one of the options: I prefer translating into my foreign language. – I prefer translating into Czech. – I see no difference. – It depends on the text type.

(7) Please give reasons for your answer to question 6.

(8) In this combination, do you charge a higher rate for translations into the foreign language? Choose one of the options: yes – no (STUDENTS DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.)

(9) If you do, how much more do you charge in per cent? (STUDENTS DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.)

(10) Are your translations out of your native language revised/proofread? Choose one answer: always/most of the time – sometimes – never – I do not know.

(11) Explain who the reviser/proofreader is (a native speaker or a Czech colleague), whether the revision/proofreading applies to the entire text or difficult sections only, whether you are able to see the revised/proofread text, and – supposing you have a say in the revision process – to what extent you accept the changes proposed?

(12) Do you consult native speakers when translating out of your native language? Choose one answer: always/most of the time – sometimes – never.

(13) Explain what issues are consulted (vocabulary, terminology and realia were offered by way of example).

(14) Has your attitude towards translations into your foreign language changed throughout your career? Explain. (STUDENTS DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.)

(15) Which of the following required elective courses have you already taken as part of the translation studies programme? Translation for International Institutions – Specialised Translation II –Translation of Journalist Texts – Literary Translation? (PROFESSIONALS DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION.)

(16) What courses and training in translation have you taken outside the Translation Studies Programme?

Notes

1. Research project also investigated translations between Czech and French; the overall results have been summarised in a separate article (Duběda in print)

2. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to measure how strong a relationship is between two variables. It has a value between +1 and −1, where 1 is total positive linear correlation, 0 is no linear correlation, and −1 is total negative linear correlation. In this work, we use the following ranges of values to express the degree of correlation: 0.00–0.19 very weak; 0.20–0.39 weak; 0.40–0.59 moderate; 0.60–0.79 strong; 0.80–1.00 very strong.

3. T-test ($p = 0.004$). Student's t-test is used in statistics to verify whether an average value obtained for a group significantly differs from the average value obtained for another set of data. The value of $p = 0.05$ is a generally accepted significance threshold. If the value of p obtained by the t-test is lower than 0.05, there is a high probability (95% or more) that the difference is not just accidental.

4. T-test ($p < 0.001$).

5. T-test ($p > 0.05$)

6. T-test ($p < 0.05$)

7. T-test ($p = 0.006$)