The Effect of Self-revision on the Quality of Texts Translated by Trainee Translators

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates whether the number of self-revisions affects the quality of texts translated by translator trainees. The research was conducted with nine translator trainees who translated texts of intermediate difficulty in Translog II from English to Croatian. Translated texts were evaluated using the TAUS DQF model. These results showed no correlation between the number of self-revisions and the evaluation score and suggest that editing the text more does not necessarily mean that the quality will improve since not all revisions might be necessary. The findings carry important implications for translator training, i.e., more emphasis should be placed on training to recognise the self-revisions required to raise the quality of the product, so the trainees learn how to balance time restrictions and quality requirements that accompany any professional translation task.

KEYWORDS: evaluation, quality assessment, self-revisions, translation, translator trainees

1. Introduction

A crucial part of any written translation is self-revising the draft of the translated text. For each translator, this process might differ. For instance, for some translators, this is an action they perform as they translate phrase-by-phrase or sentence-by-sentence. Some might have a different, more holistic approach, where they translate the entire text or bigger blocks of text and then go back and edit (Dragsted and Carl 2013). For instance, Brian Mossop (2020: 191) notes that while

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there are some recognised phases (pre-drafting, drafting, post-drafting) in translation production, different translators might do them differently. Apart from different translation styles and habits (Koby 2007; Pavlović and Antunović 2011; Dragsted and Carl 2013), translators might also differ in the type of self-revisions they might do, and sometimes, they also might over-think their drafted text and make changes that are not necessary. These different factors might lead to translated texts of varying quality. This study focuses on one of these factors: how the number of self-revisions relates to the quality of the text translated by translator trainees.

Previous studies investigating self-revisions cover a variety of research methods, including eye-tracking, thinking-aloud protocols, keylogging, screen-recording and other methods (e.g. Englund Dimitrova 2005; Shih 2006; Kourouni 2008; Malkiel 2009; Whyatt and Naranowicz 2020). They have focused on topics such as describing and naming types of self-revisions, the relation between the time it took to revise the text and the translation quality, transferability of the skills of self-revision, styles of translations, etc.

Several small-scale pilot studies (Sofyan and Rosa 2015; Sofyan and Tarigan 2016) implied the need to test the relation between the number of self-revisions and the translation quality. On the one hand, one might predict that having many corrections will result in an excellent translation product since more attention has been directed to it, and it has been thought through in a more detailed manner. On the other hand, it might be that a bigger number of self-revisions might mean that fresh translation mistakes are introduced (see, e.g., Künzli 2007; Nitzke and Gros 2021), and already-good translation choices are replaced with less appropriate choices due to over-thinking and insecurity. Additionally, as Pavlović and Antunović (2021) conclude in their study done on machine translation and post-editing, translation trainees and experienced translators alike do not intuitively seem to possess the ability to distinguish what needs to be edited in the MT output which may lead to introducing unnecessary edits. Another result might be loss of time, crucial in translation (Englund Dimitrova 2005), since a larger number of corrections usually leads to spending more time on the translation without necessarily improving the quality of the text.

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Testing this relation may help predict translators' actions and guide educators when training new translators. As Kyriaki Kourouni (2008) suggests, a deeper insight into the revision process could be helpful in translator training since the trainees can become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and, in turn, more confident translators. For instance, this can bring about positive changes in the way translators organise their time and in the choice of methods they use to deliver a translation as efficiently as possible, which is something that trainee translators might especially struggle with, including the decision on how and when they need to self-revise.

The aim of this paper is to investigate to what extent the number of self-revisions affects the quality of the text translated by translator trainees. In this study, nine translator trainees translated one of the three newspaper excerpts from English into Croatian. The experimental part of the study consisted of translating a text using the keylogging software Translog II (Jakobsen 1999, 2006), and the translations were evaluated using the TAUS Dynamic Quality Framework (2010). The study explored how the number of self-revisions correlated with the evaluation score. While the main focus of this paper is on the final product of the translation and its quality, the process of translation also plays a role since self-revisions were analysed using the recording of the translation and the process itself was used to inform the interpretation of the results. The results concerning the previous findings on self-revisions are discussed, with particular emphasis on how these findings might be used in translator training.

2. Previous research

2.1. Self-revisions

Text revision is a crucial part of writing, especially in written translation, where the writer/translator makes additions, deletions, or changes to the text. These actions are usually called self-revisions (e.g., Pavlović and Antunović 2011; Whyatt and Naranowicz 2020) or self-corrections (e.g., Malkiel 2009). Scholars (e.g. Mossop 2001, 2007; Allman 2007; Robert 2012) have argued that the diversity of terms usually used to discuss the revision and self-revision of the text is problematic. Silvia Parra Galiano (2016: 39) states that a variety of terms is used to describe the process of revision, including, but not limited to, *checking, editing, proofreading, reviewing, revising, revision, review,* and *self-revision.* In translation research, the difference

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between revision and self-revision is often emphasised, the former being done by someone who is not the author of the translation and the latter being done by the translator while working on the draft of the translated text (Mossop 2020). It should also be noted that in BS EN ISO 17100:2015, revision is defined as "bilingual examination of target language content against source language content for its suitability for the agreed purpose" (BS EN ISO 17100:2015, 2.2.6). In the current paper, self-revision encompasses the work done by the translator on their own draft translation.

Different classifications of self-revisions can be found in the literature. For instance, in a data-driven approach, Birgitta Englund Dimitrova (2005: 113-115) categorises them into syntactic, lexical, morphological, content, orthographic and other revisions. This categorisation tells us more about the linguistic nature of the change that was made. On the other hand, other categorisations focus more on the revision process itself. Sofyan and Tarigan (2016: 126) classify self-revisions into eight categories: (1) word deletion, (2) word substitution, (3) spelling correction, (4) return, (5) word addition, (6) meaning correction, (7) capitalisation, and (8) grammar correction, mainly based on the data they collected. Furthermore, self-revision can either involve revising the target text without much observation of the source text or comparative revision, with the reviser frequently checking both source and target texts. This distinguishes revision from proofreading or editing, which are one-language exclusive (Konttinen et al. 2021: 1-2).

How one proceeds during self-revision can be a matter of a particular translator style. According to Claire Yi-yi Shih (2006: 296), in translation process research, revision usually includes self-monitoring or self-editing, which mostly happens at a later stage of the translation process. Shih's findings suggest that, in general, translators revise their translation straight after producing the first draft unless they can revise the translation the next day. Many translators are already aware of the potential issues, and they know what to look out for in the text. This revision process is usually repeated twice until the translator is satisfied with the product, although some translators do not feel the need to self-revise at all. Shih's study focused on the time it took to revise, the number of revisions, and some additional variables. However, it did not closely investigate the number of self-revisions and how it relates to the quality of the translated text, which is relevant

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since, contrary to what trainees intuitively might believe, more self-revisions do not have to directly imply a better quality of the text. This study is directly relevant to the current study as it challenges the myth that translators always see revision as a crucial part of the translation process, which may be relevant in interpreting the relation between the number of self-revisions and the quality of the translation product. The difference between translators' styles is also emphasised by Goranka Antunović and Nataša Pavlović (2011) who investigated how translator trainees perform self-revision. They conclude that the way trainees perform self-revision might be connected to their translation styles – making the style of self-revision one of the prominent characteristics of one's translation style in general.

Other studies focused more on self-revision characteristics, especially their quantity and type. Brenda Malkiel (2009) investigated how translator trainees translated texts from Hebrew to English using Translog, focusing on self-revisions and whether they were aimed at grammar and meaning or if they were instances where students substituted expressions with very similar expressions. Malkiel (2009) concluded that most corrections were revisions that were not necessary – it seems that trainees spent a lot of time revising and refining the text, i.e., on decision-making, when this might not affect the *correctness* of the translation. Similarly, in a preliminary small-scale study (n=2), Sofyan and Rosa (2015) investigated the quantity of self-revisions. Using Translog, the authors detected seven types of self-revisions that their participants made while translating from English into Indonesian with the help of online dictionaries and other online resources. The most frequent type of self-revisions was word deletion, and it was hypothesised that this type of self-revision is aimed at improving the translation quality. Whether these corrections contributed to the quality of the translated text was not examined. However, the authors suggest that the frequency of certain types of self-revisions may indicate a better quality of the translated text.

Similarly, in another small-scale study, Sofyan and Tarigan (2016) investigated types of self-revisions done by three translator trainees and their contribution to the quality of the translation product. Authors used the following categories for quality assessment: (1) accuracy, (2) finding equivalent, (3) translation skill, (4) grammar and ST style and (5) shifts, omissions, additions, and

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awarded points which, when counted, were sorted into categories of average, good and very good. The authors did not include an explanation of how the points were awarded and what their marks represent. In their study, the most frequent type of self-revision was word substitution. The findings showed that spending more time on self-revisions improves the quality of the translation; however, the relation between the number of self-revisions and the quality of the translation product was not addressed in this pilot study. It must be noted that these pilot studies had a very small number of participants and were not published in edited volumes (to the best of our knowledge). Therefore, this could be why there are certain differences in findings, but also because word substitution and deletion can be challenging to tease apart in certain contexts.

While some studies focus on identifying and categorising self-revisions (e.g., Malkiel 2009), Hella Breedveld (2002: 92) emphasises that greater attention should be paid to the cognitive activities during the process of revising and the resulting translation products afterwards. As writing situations change, so do writing processes, and the distribution of processing activities during the revision affects qualitative aspects of the translation product (Breedveld 2002). When it comes to the relation between revision (both by others and self-revision) and the quality of the text, it is usually assumed that a well-structured revision process is necessary for a good-quality translation product (Mellinger 2018). However, it has been found that not all revising might have the same result on the final translation product. Jean Nitzke and Anne-Kathrin Gros (2021) studied *over-editing*, which refers to the process of going beyond the guidelines to improve the text, which might result in a degraded quality of the translated text. Even though this study focuses on post-editing machine translation output, the findings can be related to the phenomenon of self-revisions in written translation. Nitzke and Gros found it likely that the translator's own quality standards and stylistic preferences led them to over-edit, even when the guidelines did not require them to. Therefore, self-revisions in written translation may not only result from adding the missing pieces of information or omitting redundant ones, but it may be a purely stylistic choice. It can be predicted that translator trainees might be especially prone to this since their experience in decision-making that will get them to the best translation product might be limited. Interestingly, hyper-revision and over-revision are also found in the work of professional translators. Alexander Künzli (2007) found that as much as one-third of all self-revision is

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unnecessary over-editing. These are important results as they might suggest that the number of self-revisions might not necessarily correlate with the quality of the translation, that is, if over a third of all revisions can be classified as over-editing, then quality might not rise with the number of revisions. Almeida and O'Brien (2010) show that such preferential changes often clash with post-editing guidelines as translators, who are trained to polish the text, are not always expected to do so for machine translation, causing a discrepancy between the translating practices and client expectations.

Translator trainees, according to Isabel Mizón and Isabel Diéguez (1996: 82-83), can become aware of their own language and knowledge competencies and gradually develop translation competencies through self-revisions. Such gradual development is facilitated by revising, rephrasing and editing techniques of the provisional target text. In addition, self-revision activities functionally develop L1 and L2 competencies, which involves expanding trainees' linguistic resources in each language. However, when translating a text, one needs to be aware of the available time and resources – which is why it could be beneficial to make the translator trainees aware of the possible benefits and drawbacks of overly editing a text. For instance, Englund Dimitrova (2005) emphasises that the speed with which the translation is finished is an important aspect of being an experienced translator.

2.2. *Evaluation of the target text*

Since translation is a complex linguistic, social and cultural process, the literature on the quality assessment of the translated text is rich and often conflicting (Görög 2014; Koby et al. 2014; House 2016; Moorkens et al. 2018). Despite the amount of research conducted on this topic, translation quality assessment has proved difficult to operationalise and measure. With the adoption of machine translation, evaluating translation quality has become an increasingly important concept.

On the one hand, there is some disagreement on quality measurement, e.g. Juliane House (2016: 16) disagrees with Wolfram Wilss' (1974) suggestion that translation should be evaluated according to whether native speakers find it to be adequate in a given cultural situational context.

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House believes that, because of the nature of the language, there will always be several possible expressions in a given situation, and that it is left to the translator to choose between these variants. On the other hand, most sectors of the industry apply 'one-size-fits-all' error typology models that give quantitative indicators of quality. These approaches provide standardisation, but also make the adaptability to each specific translation project difficult (Moorkens et al. 2018: 12–15).

Due to the conflicting positions presented above, The Translation Automation User Society (TAUS 2010), a translation industry think-tank, attempted to develop benchmark indicators for translation quality assessment, with the consideration of many variables such as communicative function, end-user requirements, context, mode of translation, profiling and quality estimation (Moorkens et al. 2018: 16). TAUS has developed the Dynamic Quality Framework (DQF)[1] which contains a rich knowledge base, many tools to help profiling and evaluating translated content, as well as many different resources for quality evaluation. The basis of this dynamic framework is the belief that the type of evaluation should always match the content: type, purpose and communicative context. DQF stands in opposition to the aforementioned one-size-fits-all approach to translation quality assessment (Görög 2014: 155). TAUS DQF falls under linguistically oriented approaches (House 2016), and it was used to assess quality of translation in this study, due to the assumption that a linguistically oriented approach is the most fitting for the purposes of this study and most measurable. Since TAUS also provides an evaluation table with detailed instructions on how to penalise errors in end-product translation, it was assumed to be more reliable than other approaches and views described above.

In education, students are sometimes assessed in the same way professionals are assessed, despite such practices being unrealistic since students did not yet have the chance to build their expertise. Therefore, having in mind the pedagogical aims of a certain course, evaluation grids, e.g. TAUS DQF, can be used to communicate translation quality criteria to students (Vandepitte 2017: 21). On the other hand, quality assessment in the industry is related to a greater extent to the client's requirements, while in translator training the emphasis is on certain linguistic characteristics.

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[1] https://www.taus.net/resources/blog/category/dynamic-quality-framework (accessed August 2024)

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Dorothy Kelly (2005) notes that, when training translators, teachers formulate learning outcomes for each unit thus creating the need to evaluate those same outcomes. Evaluation may be conducted by utilizing formative and summative assessment types. Alternatively, teachers may also use translation portfolios as a form of assessing their student's learning outcomes. When talking about assessment, Amparo Hurtado Albir and Paul Taylor (2015) define competences as communicative and professional competence that can be assessed. Apart from linguistic competence, translation competence also requires extralinguistic knowledge, documentation skills, ability to use tools and transfer competence. Hurtado Albir and Taylor (2015) also suggest ways in which these competences can be assessed, which is by utilizing different texts, questionnaires, reflective diaries, reports, translation process recordings, student portfolios, and rubrics (which indicate how marks are to be assigned).

However, not all competences are assessable by every method, nor are they suitable for every focal point of assessment. Translation which is deemed appropriate in one context may not be so in some other circumstance. The general opinion is that the same set of criteria cannot be applied uniformly to all different kinds of translation. Translation trainers; however, offer both a grade and constructive feedback. Often, trainers rely on personal experience when judging student translations, but ideally, they should be equipped with the vast array of knowledge and experience. Trainers therefore require a type or resource that would help them in delivering objective feedback that would be suited for various kinds of translations that students are exposed to during their training (Bowker 2001: 347). What is important here then is exploring what might and might not be crucial factors in creating an excellent product: for instance, how to balance attention to detail and the time it takes to finish a translation.

3. Aims

This study investigates the relation between the number of self-revisions and the quality of texts translated by trainee translators using Translog. To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies that looked at the connection between the number of self-revisions made by translator trainees and the quality of the text by closely examining the translation process (i.e., number and type of self-revisions) and then relating it to the evaluation score (i.e., the quality of the text). In

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this study, we explore texts translated by nine translation trainees. We predict three possible outcomes:

(1) There is a positive correlation between the quantity of self-revisions and the quality of the text. This result would imply that paying more attention to the text and revising it thoroughly results in a better overall product.

(2) There is a negative correlation between the quantity of self-revisions and quality of the text. This result would imply that self-revising does not always have a positive outcome since it might introduce additional problems that were not initially present.

(3) There is no correlation between the quantity of self-revisions and the quality of the text. This result might be caused by over-editing or big individual differences between the participants, including different levels of proficiency and different translation styles.

In the study, we also aim to explore the connection between the time it takes the participants to translate the text, the quantity of self-revisions, and the quality of the text. We expect to confirm that the time it takes to finish and the amount of self-revisions correlate positively. In addition to this, we will explore whether texts that took longer to translate resulted in better quality. On the one hand, one might expect that if a lot of time is put into the translation, the texts will be of better quality; however, on the other hand, over-editing might cause no improvement in the quality of the texts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

Nine participants who were enrolled in a graduate programme specialising in translation and familiar with translating from English into Croatian language participated in the study. We acknowledge that the low number of participants reduces the possibility of making strong generalisations based on the results; however, many translation studies (e.g. Hyönä et al. 1995 (n = 9); Vottonen and Kujamäki 2021 (n = 8); Koby 2007 (n=8); Antunović and Pavlović 2011 (n=10); Künzli, 2007 (n=10), Robert et al. 2023 (n=11)) have a low number of participants mainly because the complexity of the task that needs to be performed during the experiment but also due to specific requirements participants need to fulfil.

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The participants were given class credit for their participation in the study. The ethics approval for this study was obtained through the Ethics board of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, Croatia where the experiment took place (UR. BROJ: 2158-83-02-22-3). The participants were informed of the details of the experiment via a participant information sheet and gave their consent via a written consent form. The requirements that the translator trainees had to meet were the following: (1) they had to be native speakers of the Croatian language, (2) they had to be students of English Language and Literature – Translation and Interpreting Track graduate program, (3) had to be between 18 and 40 years old, (4) with normal vision or corrected-to-normal vision, (5) and no known language/neurological/hearing disorders. Before the main part of the experiment, participants were tested with the software LexTale, a lexical decision test of vocabulary knowledge that determines the language proficiency of the participant and is a valid measure of English vocabulary knowledge of medium- to high-proficient learners of English (Lemhöfer and Broersma, 2012). In LexTale, scores between 80% and 100% correspond to upper and lower advanced/proficient users in QPT (a test of general proficiency level). The average LexTale score for participants in this study was 85%, with the lowest scoring participant scoring below 80% (78.75%, upper intermediate QPT) and the highest scoring participant scoring 96.25% (Lemhöfer and Broersma 2012: 335).

At the time of the testing, all participants were enrolled in a master's programme that specializes in teaching translation and were familiar with translation and revision basics, and various types of texts (legal, technical, literary, etc.) whose properties were covered in their coursework. All participants previously graduated from an undergraduate programme in English Language and Literature.

4.2. *Procedure and materials*

The experiment was conducted on desktop computers with Translog II installed. The direction of the translation was from English (L2) into Croatian (L1).

The study had three parts: the LexTale test, training text translation in Translog, and the main experiment in Translog. After the LexTale test, participants were instructed on how to use

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Translog and translated a shorter text to familiarise themselves with the software (training). They were also instructed to stop the recording and save the log file after translating the text. The participants were not allowed to use the Internet and any kind of online dictionaries or translation resources (in line with previous research such as Dragsted and Carl, 2013). We acknowledge that translating without using the internet might not be the natural environment for translation, but this decision was made to keep the translation processes as similar as possible. If online resources were allowed, the trainees could have used different resources, which might affect the quality of the text.

In the main experiment, the participants were randomly given one of the three prepared texts. Hence, each participant only translated one of the texts, and each text was translated by three participants. Three different texts were chosen to get reliable results which could be generalised to a certain extent. The texts contained between 330 and 350 words and were of intermediate difficulty (according to the researcher's judgement). The texts were taken from *The Times* online newspapers.[2] Each of the texts was judged suitable for advanced users of the English language, and then the content was cut to approx. 300-350 words, which was thought to be the optimal length in order to get enough self-revisions and complete it within an hour. Topics of the texts differed: text A had a true crime topic, text B was on business management, and text C was on flooding in the UK. The experiment took 14 to 33 minutes to complete.

4.3. Analysis

4.3.1. Data processing

After the end of the experiment, the log files were extracted and replayed to count the self-revisions manually. They were categorised into five categories: word deletion, substitution, spelling, addition and grammar. These categories were adapted from but were not identical to Sofyan and Tarigan's (2016). This was done because the type of self-revision was not part of the main research question, and its purpose was to inform the interpretation of the results. Still, it was not considered a variable included in the final analysis. Word deletion refers to the participant

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[2] The texts are available here: https://osf.io/spkfh/

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deleting a word without retyping or substituting it. In contrast, word substitution refers to the participant deleting and substituting a word with another or a cluster of words. Spelling referred to participants correcting typos and capitalisation, and grammar was any revision that included changing the word order, prefixes, suffixes and punctuation. Finally, addition refers to the participant adding words without deleting or substituting other words. While the focus of the study was on the number of revisions, we categorised them to have a fuller picture of the type of revisions that were done, which might help with the interpretation of the results.

After identifying the self-revisions, the texts were evaluated in line with the TAUS Dynamic Quality Framework. In this framework, errors are divided into four categories: (1) neutral errors (changes that need to be made but that do not count as errors; they reflect the revisor's preference), (2) minor errors (those which do not lead to a loss of meaning and would not mislead the reader), (3) major errors (those which confuse and mislead the reader), and (4) critical errors (those that may carry health, safety, legal or financial implications, or could be seen as offensive). The number of penalty points that the framework suggests for each category was: 0 for neutral errors, 1 for minor errors, 5 for major errors and 10 for critical errors. Therefore, the highest scoring translations are of the lowest quality, while lowest scoring ones are of the highest. Two evaluators (Gajić and Werkmann Horvat) performed the evaluation, and each decision resulted from a joint judgement. Both evaluators were native speakers of Croatian and second-language speakers of English. One of the evaluators holds a PhD in Linguistics, while the other is a graduate student specialising in translation and interpreting.

A single factor ANOVA was conducted to test for differences between the three texts with respect to self-revisions and evaluation scores. The texts did not differ significantly in the number of self-revisions with $F(2,118) = 0.22$, $p = 0.8$, nor in the evaluation scores assigned to them by the evaluators with $F(2,1980) = 0.78$, $p = 0.46$. These tests were run to assess the possible differences between evaluations and texts, since one of the limitations of this study may be a certain degree of evaluators' subjectivity in assessing the quality of the translated text. In addition to this, different evaluators may have different stances on what is considered good quality

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translations, i.e., some might be more, and some might be less lenient in their judgements, though this risk was mitigated to some extent by the discussion between the two evaluators.

5. Results

The overall number of different types of self-revisions can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Types and number of self-revisions

Participant	Time/min	WD	WS	SPELLING	ADDITION	GRAMMAR	Total no. of revisions
1	21	8	30	27	4	14	83
2	33	10	39	59	15	8	131
3	21	4	17	45	6	7	79
4	20	5	36	40	10	7	98
5	18	0	4	20	9	3	36
6	29	8	20	52	8	6	94
7	23	2	16	11	8	3	40
8	17	2	9	18	3	7	39
9	14	4	18	20	4	2	48

The number and type of errors found can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of errors, category of errors and total penalty points

Participant	Number of Errors	Neutral errors	Minor errors	Major errors	Total points
1	33	8	24	5	29
2	13	1	9	15	25
3	34	0	32	10	42
4	24	0	22	10	32
5	18	0	15	10	25

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6	27	1	26	0	27
7	20	0	8	15	23
8	17	0	11	30	41
9	41	3	31	35	69

The data were analysed, and then visualised with the ggpubr package, version 3.3.5 (Kassambara, 2020) in R, version 4.1.0 (R Core Team, 2021). To answer the main research question, whether the quantity of self-revisions is related to translation quality, a Pearson correlation test was conducted. It is important to emphasize the limitation of the test and the subsequent interpretation of the results due to the small number of observations; however, the test can be useful in identifying tendencies and directions of correlations despite the small cohort of participants. The results of the test showed that the number of revisions and the evaluation score were not significantly correlated with $p = 0.44$, and a correlation coefficient of -0.29.[3] It can be seen in Figure 1 that the line is just slightly inclined downwards, with participants greatly differing in numbers of self-revisions and evaluation scores. Still, no correlation is detected, which is visible from the result and the plot.

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[3] With p significant at 0.05, and the correlation coefficient showing negative correlation peak at -1, and with positive correlation peaking at 1.

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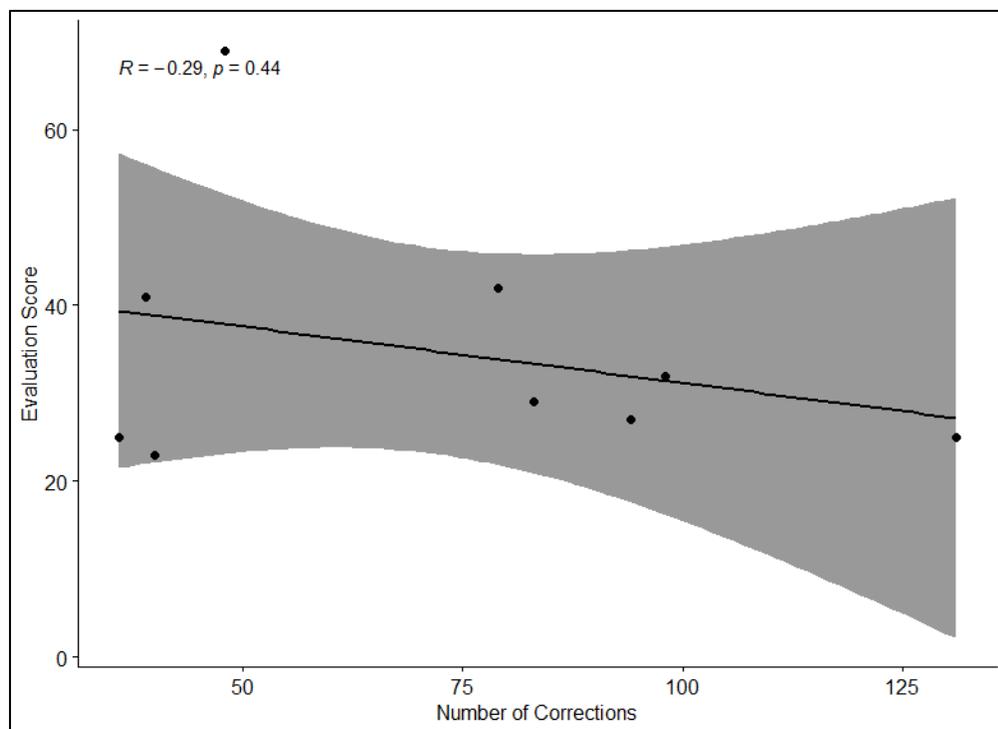
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Figure 1. Correlation between the evaluation score and number of self-revisions

A Pearson correlation test was conducted to explore the data further and to see whether the amount of time it took the participants to translate the text is correlated with the number of self-revisions. The test results showed that the number of self-revisions and the amount of time it took to translate the text are correlated with $p = 0.01$ and a correlation coefficient of 0.76. In Figure 2, we can see that the line is tilted upwards, signifying that the time and number of self-revisions were correlated, that is, the more time someone spent on the text, the more self-revisions they made.

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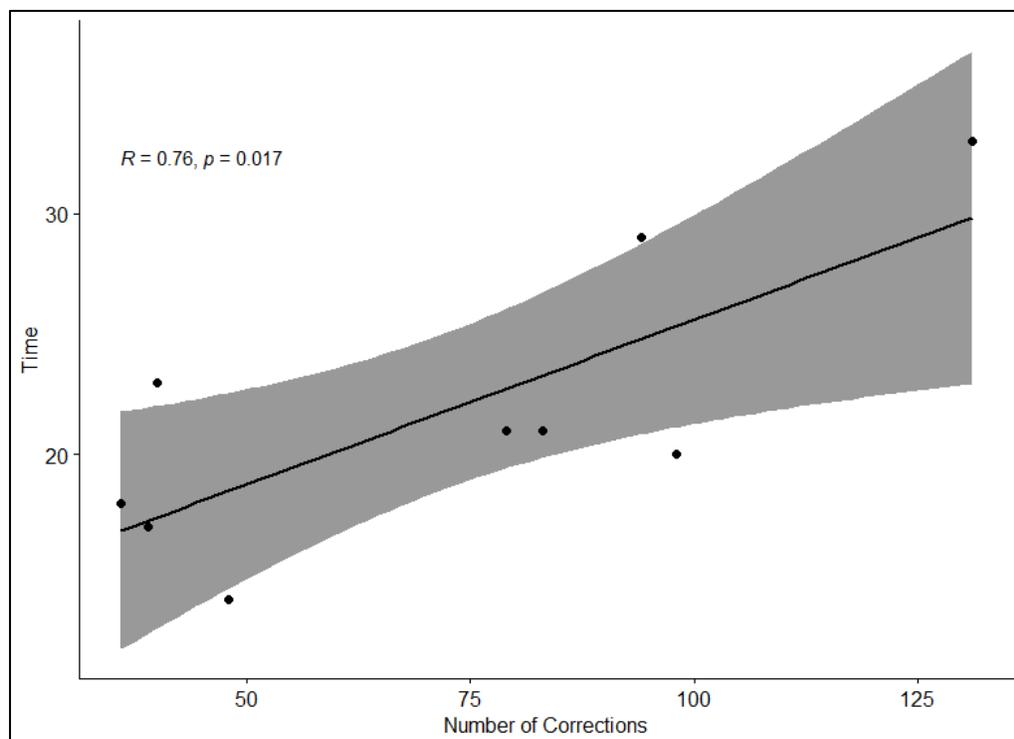
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Figure 2. Correlation between the time and the number of self-revisions

Lastly, a Pearson correlation test was conducted to check for a correlation between the evaluation score and the time it took to complete the translation. The results of the Pearson test showed that the evaluation score and the amount of time it took to translate the text were approaching significance at $p = 0.06$ and a correlation coefficient of -0.63. In Figure 3, we can see that the line is inclined downwards, indicating that a higher number of penalty points usually resulted from translations completed in a shorter amount of time, meaning that lower quality texts are generally the ones that are produced in a shorter period.
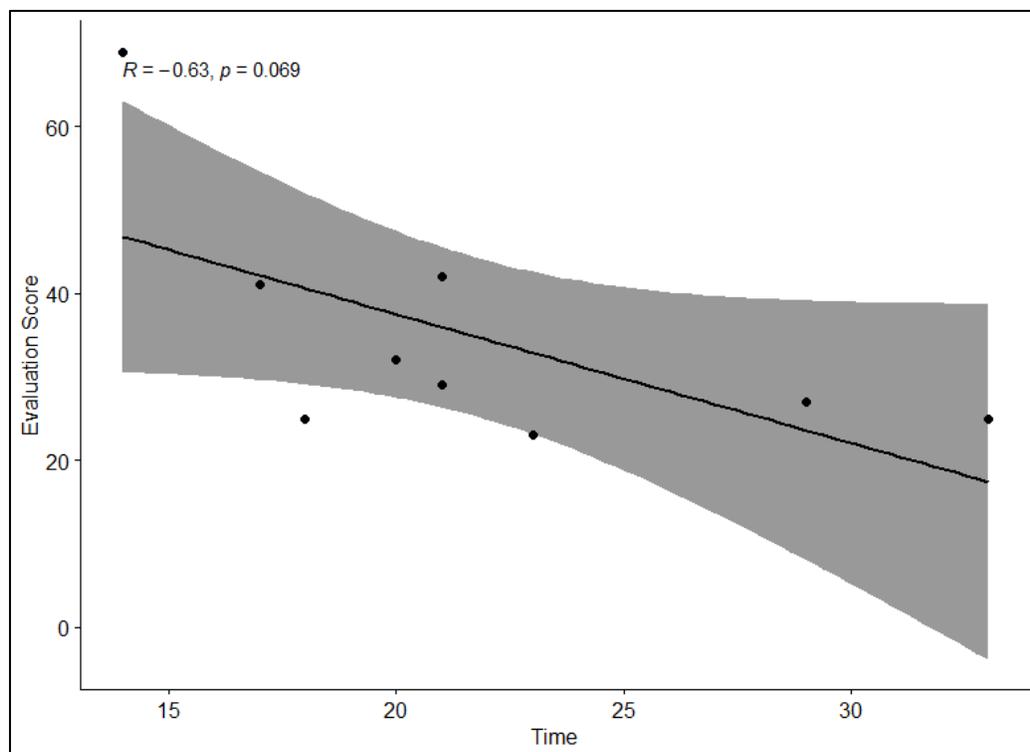
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Figure 3. Correlation between the evaluation score and time

6. Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore whether the quantity of self-revisions affects the quality of the translated text. The data that was collected also provided insight into the correlation between the time it takes to translate the text, the number of self-revisions, and the correlation between the evaluation score and time.

The analysis showed that the evaluation score and the number of self-revisions were not correlated. One of the possible explanations for such a result may lie in over-editing, which might have led to many stylistic changes and high amounts of self-revisions, but without affecting the translation quality itself, as over-editing is mostly preferential and subjective (Nitzke and Gros, 2021). This is supported by the finding that word substitution is the most frequent type of self-revision. For instance, among the self-revisions that were categorised as word substitutions, there are examples such as changing "u trošnoj kolibi" ('in a squalid shack') into "u trošnoj nastambi" ('in a squalid dwelling'); "molimo da pratite savjete" ('please follow advice') into "molimo da

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slijedite savjete" ('please follow advice'); "nakon što je izmicao vlasti" ('after eluding authorities') into "nakon što je izmicao policiji" ('after eluding police'), where the participant would often self-revise by substituting a word for its synonym or a word close in meaning in a particular context, even when there was no need for it, thus making more revisions without improving the quality. This is in line with the previous literature. For instance, Malkiel (2009) found that students focus on refining their drafts merely by replacing words with their synonyms. These substitutions might also be connected to the general insecurity (i.e., inability to decide about a translation choice) exhibited by translator trainees, which is supported by many previous studies (Jääskeläinen 1989; Fraser 1996; Kussmaul 1997). Spelling was the second most frequent revision, and it entailed typos, which were most likely caused by the participants' low focus or simply by being dependent on the spellchecker that usually helps with translation but which is not available in Translog.

The limited number of participants could have also contributed to this result; in this case, individual differences might have played an influential role. For instance, different translation styles might result in a different approach to self-revision (Antunović and Pavlović 2011; Carl and Dragsted 2013). This is also related to the possibility that the trainees lack experience outside of educational context and coursework, so they rely heavily on their personal preferences in translating. For instance, a professional translator might already have the experience necessary to know when revisions are needed since more experienced translators might have to make compromises to not spend too much time on a certain text. However, this claim is not entirely supported by the literature since Künzli (2007) found that even professional translators over-edit while not being aware of doing it.

Time was an additional variable collected by Translog. The quickest participant completed the translation within 14 min, with most participants taking around 20 min to finish, except for two participants; one took 29 min, and the other took the longest at 33 min. The participants who took the longest time had the largest number of self-revisions (131). On the other hand, the participant who took 20 min had 98 self-revisions, which is the second highest amount, and the participant who took the shortest time had a small number of self-revisions (48). The lowest amount of self-

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revisions was found with participants who made 36 self-revisions in 18 minutes. The analysis showed that the time it took to complete the task and the number of revisions correlated, aligning with previous studies (e.g. Gerloff 1988; Jensen and Jakobsen 2000; Englund Dimitrova 2005). One might also claim that this finding is rather self-evident since it can be assumed that a person spending more time on their translation would correct themselves more often and vice versa since revision takes extra time. As previously mentioned, Englund Dimitrova (2005) emphasises the importance of time in the translation process, mainly due to the commercial nature of translation (Künzli 2007). However, the question remains: if the number of self-revisions does not necessarily improve the quality of the text, are they worth spending more time on?

We also explored the relation between the evaluation score and time, which was non-significant. However, the participants who took more time to translate tended to have a lower (i.e., better) score, as seen in Figure 3. This finding is interesting since it seems that spending more time on the text could be beneficial. However, the other results might also suggest that the quality is achieved by the overall focus on the text rather than by the number of revisions. For translator trainees, this could be connected to their proficiency and self-confidence since it seems that making many revisions does not necessarily have to imply that the text will be of good quality. However, it is possible that ensuring one makes the appropriate choices in general, meaning having confidence in your decisions right from the start, could be beneficial.

Regarding the implications these results might have for training future translators, trainees can benefit from guidance on prioritising translation quality, avoiding excessive revisions, addressing insecurity in decision-making and managing time effectively. In other words, awareness should be raised that more time and revisions do not always equal a better final translation product. This might be done through exercises in which translator trainees correct their own or their peers' translations while focusing on the types of self-revisions and whether the change was necessary to improve the quality of the final text.

7. Conclusion

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Assessing the quality of translation is important due to recent rapid developments in contemporary life, which have created a demand for messages to be mediated to wider audiences quickly and efficiently. However, it might be difficult to create high-quality texts without much time and many edits. Our study aimed to explore whether extra time and substantial editing are needed to create texts that would then be assessed as high-quality texts. In our study, we tested whether the quantity of self-revisions affects the quality of the texts translated by translator trainees.

The correlation between the evaluation score and number of self-revisions, between time and number of self-revisions and between evaluation score and time was investigated. No correlation was found concerning evaluation score and time, as well the number of self-revisions and evaluation scores. One of the possible reasons why the number of self-revisions and the evaluation score were not related may be due to over-editing the text, but also due to significant individual differences in the experience or translation styles of the translator trainees. Word substitution was one of the most frequent types of self-revision, in line with the suggestion that participants edited their texts more than necessary. As expected, a correlation was found between time and quantity of self-revisions, which aligns with previous findings. However, concerns were raised about whether spending more time revising the text is always necessary since revising more does not always mean the text will be of better quality. Finally, due to the small number of participants in this study, the interpretation and strength of the results remain fairly limited. Nevertheless, the study raises important questions about tendencies emerging from these results, and opens up space for future studies in which these issues could be explored in experiments with a larger sample of participants.

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