PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSLATION IN FLANDERS: ON THE CONTINUOUS EFFORTS TO EVOLVE FROM PARAPROFESSIONALISM TO PROFESSIONALISM. / TRADUCCIÓN EN LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS EN FLANDES: LOS ESFUERZOS CONTINUOS POR EVOLUCIONAR DESDE LA PARAPROFESIONALIDAD A LA PROFESIONALIDAD.

Ula Idzikowska
Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering[1] *, Belgium*
ula.idzikowska@kruispuntmi.be

Abstract: Public service interpreting and translation have received increasing attention during the last decades. Particularly, public service interpreting has been the object of a considerable number of research. However, research on public service translation (*PST*) still remains scarce. This article contributes to PST studies by providing an overview of the steps taken towards its *professionalization* in Flanders (Belgium) such as delineating the *PST's competency profile* and the refinement of the *certification* exam. Moreover, it outlines the background of PST in Flanders and discusses the future challenges concerning the topic, including the continuous quality control and assurance.

Keywords: Public Service Translation; Professionalization; Flanders.

Resumen: La traducción e interpretación en los servicios públicos ha recibido mayor atención en las últimas décadas. Concretamente, la interpretación en los servicios públicos ha sido objeto de numerosas investigaciones en el campo. Sin embargo, la investigación sobre la traducción en los servicios públicos (TSP) sigue siendo escasa. Este artículo contribuye al desarrollo de estudios sobre la traducción en los servicios públicos, proponiendo un resumen de los pasos tomados hacia su profesionalización en Flandes (Bélgica), la descripción del perfil y las competencias del traductor en los servicios públicos y la mejora del examen de certificación. Además, expone el contexto de la TSP en Flandes y analiza los retos relacionados con este tema, incluyendo la garantía de un continuo control de calidad.

Palabras clave: Traducción en los Servicios Públicos; Profesionalización; Flandes.

1. Background

Belgium emerged from an emigration to an immigration country at the end of the nineteenth century (Caestecker: 24-31). In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century Belgium faced successive migration waves. The foreign laborers were even encouraged to settle in Belgium to supplement the huge shortages in the labor market. The growing awareness of the need for structural reception of immigrants resulted in the emergence of the first local welcoming initiatives in the 1960s. However, the contemporary immigration policy was not

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[1] Junction Migration-Integration in the past (until 2015)

to be established until 1980. Nowadays, integration is regulated by the autonomous regions. This articles deals with the situation in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region.

2. Public service translation in Flanders

The 2009 Flemish Integration Decree[2] recognized PST as a crucial instrument to enable written communication between public social welfare organizations and non-Dutch speaking immigrants. In this manner, the access to public social services is enhanced for all Belgian citizens. As a result, the immigrants would meet their obligations and would have their rights guaranteed on the basis of translated documents. Thus, if e.g. a school wants to convey a message to non-Dutch speaking parents, it will engage a PST translator to render a message in a foreign language (FL). An immigrant cannot directly contact a translator since all translation jobs are requested by a public social welfare organization itself. An ultimate goal of PST is to further the civic integration of immigrants. According to the PST agencies, this particular mission distinguishes PST from other forms of translation that are profit-oriented. The concept of PST in Flanders differs from the general definition of PST that encompasses various settings: public and social services, police, the courts, asylum procedure (Final Report of Interest Group on Translation and Interpreting for Public Services year?). PST in Flanders exclusively covers translation for social services with an element of civic integration (Decreet 2013). The translation jobs consist of (i) translating official documents (such as birth certificate, marriage act, diplomas) from the foreign language (FL) into Dutch and (ii) the translation of informative documents (such as leaflets or letters) from Dutch into FL. They are assigned to the public services translators (PSTs) by regional PST translation agencies (Decreet 2013). Certified PSTs can receive assignments from PST agencies. However, if there is no certified translator available, it is allowed to engage a non-certified translator (Decreet 2013). As a result, legal translators and graduates holding a master degree in Translation are sometimes engaged for the job since the demand for certified PSs is bigger than supply. However, some of them do not always provide the expected quality.

To strengthen the uncertain position of the PSTs on the Flemish translation scene, the Flemish government entrusted the PST training and certification center (PST T&CC)[3] with the task to enhance the quality of PST through training, certifying and research and assisting PST agencies.

3. Professionalization of PST, steps taken in the past

Since its establishment in 2004, the PST T&CC has taken several steps towards professionalization. Ingersoll, R. M., Alsalam, N. and National Center for Education Statistics (1997: 3) define professionalization as follows: [It] "is a *process* whereby occupations seek to upgrade their status by adopting organisational and occupational attributes and traits". In the first phase of this complex process, called market disorder (Tseng 1992: 44), the unskilled practitioners compete with each other. The provided service is not trustful and of low quality. PST in Flanders used to be characterized by features listed above as it was initially performed by immigrants who provided informal services for relatives, friends and members of the same community. The vast majority of them lacked professional

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[2] The 2009 Decree was revised in 2013. However, the passages concerning PST remained unmodified. Al the later reference mentions the renewed version of the Decree.

[3] PST training and certification center was a part of Junction Migration Integration in the past. Currently it is a part of *Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering*.

training. Furthermore, the professional attributes such as professional certification, centralized quality control or formal code of ethics were absent.

3.1 Controlling admission to the profession

An important step to improve the quality of PST was the development of a certification exam (CE) to control the admission to the profession. The first examinations were held in 2008 and they tested candidate's translation skills in 1 language direction at a time (FL to Dutch or Dutch to FL). The exam was a summative evaluation of two competences: (i) the comprehension of written messages in the source language and (ii) the reproduction of written messages in the target language, both at the C1-level of the Common European Framework of Reference from Languages (CEFR). Thus, focused on measuring transfer skills, the exam did not test other translator competencies such as complying with a code of ethics. The evaluation was carried out anonymously by two evaluators, if available, to increase the evaluation's objectivity. However, for some less common languages, it was difficult to find a competent person in the language combination with Dutch. As a result, the evaluation was carried out by one evaluator. The evaluation procedure consisted of two readings. During the first reading the compliance with the features of a text written at the level C1 of the CEFR was estimated. Furthermore, the target text was checked for omissions and general intelligibility. Once a candidate passed the first reading, a second reading was carried out. Following aspects were evaluated: accuracy, correct register and transfer of information, grammar, cohesion, coherence and technical aspects (spelling, accents, punctuation, conversion of dates, names). The result was expressed by means of three categories: fail, pass or excellent. The candidates who passed the exam were allowed to enter the Flemish Register of the Certified Interpreters and Translators (Decreet, 2013), managed by Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering.

In 2009 the PST T&CC organized a Master Class during which experts in translation assessment made some recommendations for refining our CE. Some of them were implemented the same year. The following two criteria needed to be clarified as they were perceived as vague: (i) C1-level of the CEFR and (ii) the notion of general intelligibility. Experts indicated that CEFR is a general framework for validating language ability; however, this is not adjusted to language assessment. Moreover, less experienced assessors acknowledged experiencing difficulties while estimating whether a target text was written at C1-level. Hence it was necessary to establish clear, objective criteria for assessing language skills during the first reading that were adapted to translation context. The term general intelligibility, on the other side, was open for interpretation as there was no clear definition. Instead of providing a detailed description of the intelligibility, we chose to determine its opposite so that the difference between a comprehensible text and an incomprehensible text became evident. Our definition was as follows: unintelligibility occurs when the reader of a text has to speculate the meaning of a text or whether a text contains obvious contradictions which can have serious consequences, such as taking a wrong decision or draw wrong conclusions based on the information derived from the target text. Furthermore, experts advised us to replace minor and major errors with new categories: a fatal error and a nonfatal error. Fatal errors were translation errors or mistakes that might result in great deformation of the message and hence, serious consequences to end users. It was stated that a candidate would fail the exam when one fatal error occurs or in the event of numerous non-fatal errors. The last recommendation regarded establishing a common framework for professional practice which would set up a standard for technical aspects of translation such as converting data or placing a foot-note. This change was not introduced since there was no agreement between PST agencies on the matter.

Later on, in 2011, it turned out that some evaluators (especially for less common languages) were still facing difficulties while assessing the language skills in target texts. Moreover, we noticed that translations into Dutch did not always meet the criteria for C1-level whereas an assessor claimed that the text was indeed written at that level. We decided to analyze some target texts in Dutch. Our impression was that less experienced assessors focused more on the transfer skills rather than on the level of the language skills during the first reading. We believed that there were two factors which played a role: (i) assessors were in possession of source texts from the beginning, (ii) assessors did not always meet all criteria to assess language skills. Therefore, we decided to introduce some changes in the evaluation procedure that is currently still valid: assessors will not receive the source text anymore while evaluating language skills. They will only receive target texts so they can fully focus on language skills. The assessment of language skills is to be carried out by a native speaker or someone with an academic background. Assessors are to be provided with both source and target texts during second reading to assess the correctness, faithfulness, and completeness of the transfer.

3.2 Code of ethics

As a new profession, PST needed a clear ethical standard. "The enforcement of the code of ethics is crucial because it functions externally as one of the bargaining chips to earn public trust and internally as an indispensable tool for internal control" (Tseng, 1992: 49). The PST code of ethics is the result of a multi-stakeholder process including PST providers, PST TC&C and a lawyer. The latter one researched the juridical issues regarding translation such as retention of the target texts, privacy of the immigrants and the liability of PSTs in case of translation errors. Since 2004 all PST must agree to endorse this code of ethics before they are engaged by a PST agency.

3.3 First PST training

In 2008, PST training center developed a curriculum for PST training in co-operation with the translation colleges in Flanders. This curriculum ought to prepare translators for the CE and the profession. The PST agencies opted for a short language free course. This means, the candidates were to work on their language skills on their own as we decided not to offer separate languages classes. Exclusively translation techniques and strategies were taught. In addition, students perform translation tasks under the guidance of a tutor. The PST training lasted 45-hours and was to be attended by the candidates without sufficient translation experience or academic training. It consisted of four modules: theory, practice, code of ethics and computer skills. Both tutors from the translation colleges and experienced PSTs were engaged to teach.

3.4 More focus on the competences

Starting from the second half of the twentieth century the value of competences more than diplomas or certificates has been recognized. In the United States of America, for example, it was claimed that more focus on competencies is essential if the quality of public education ought to be improved so that graduates are to compete on the world labor market with its fast economic and social changes. Minimum competency tests were introduced to measure the required skills (Superfine, 2013: 24). A competence-based approach has also been more and more on the agenda in Europe since the creation of a common European labor market. It resulted in i.e. the establishment of the European Qualification Framework to increase the

transparency and enable the transferability of qualification (Brockmann et al., 2008: 228). Equally, the Flemish government issued a 2004 Decree concerning the acquisition of a title of professional competency. This decree ratifies a system to validate and certify a person's competencies regardless of whether these competencies were developed formally or informally (Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2004: 22). The Social Economical Council of Flanders (SERV) was issued by the Flemish Government to delineate job descriptions for several professions. Then they developed competency profiles consisting of a short job description, the working condition of a profession and the required competencies (Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2004: 22). Each competence comprises (1) a definition and explanation about the importance of a particular competence for pursuing the profession; (2) behavioral indicators stating which behavior is expected from a professional if he is to master a particular competence; (3) underlying knowledge indicating the essential expertise to master a particular competence; (4) underlying skills and attitudes which enables a professional to display the required behavior. A professional competency profile (PCP) has various functions: (i) an instrument for professionals to be aware of the expectations on the labor market and (ii) a reference point for the employers while recruiting. Thirdly a PCP can serve as a basis for a valid and objective CE and a competence-based training. Besides the PCPs, the Standards were developed to indicate which indispensable competences were to be tested during the CE. These competences were derived from the PCPs. The Standards also depicted assessment guidelines for the test centers, established by the government to test the adequate competences.

3.5 PST Competences

Since the SERV ceased to develop PCPs at a certain point, the PST T&CC and the PST agencies developed a PST translator PCP and a PST Standard in 2012. Both are based on the SERV's PCPs and its Standards. The development was preceded by a comparative research of various translation competency models[4]. The PST PCP mentions 7 competencies describing translation skills, such as comprehension of the source language and writing in the source language (both at the C1-level of the CEFR) and other competencies such as complying with the ethical code, mastering relevant translation software and Internet and planning and organizing. The PST Standard contains the first four of the above mentioned competences. These are perceived as essential to conduct the profession and are to be tested during the CE. Each tested competency consists of several success criteria which are derived from the PCP's behavioral indicators. Exclusively observable indicators are measured to ensure the objectivity of the exam. Hence, exclusively the required skills and the underlying knowledge are tested, but no attitudes.

3.6 Towards a competence-based CE

Test development starts in 2012 with a clear definition of what is to be measured, i.e. the test construct, as Angelelli (2009: 14) states. In our case, the Standard formed a construct for the optimized CE. Following competences were measured:
(1) Comprehension of source language.
(2) Production in target language.
(3) Adherence to the code of ethics for PSTs.
(4) Mastering relevant translation software and Internet.

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[4] Inter alia PACTE competency model, the model of EMT expert group, models used at the Flemish university translation colleges, International Standard ISO 2384 on presentation of translations, EN (European Norm) 15038.

Once the construct was defined, an analysis depicting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the existing CE was carried out by the assessors, PST agencies, academics and experts in translation. The PST agencies were also interviewed to verify which skills should be tested to achieve the best outcomes in a vocational context. At the same time we conducted a literature research to analyze existing assessment methods. At a later stage, we also determined which behavioral indicators can be measured by means of these methods and which methods can be applied within a short limit of time. We opted for three various assessment techniques to make the indispensable competences observable and assessable: (1) reading comprehension test to measure the comprehension in the source language, (2) translation test to measure writing in the target language, complying with the code of ethics (complying with the professional practices framework in particular) and mastering relevant translation software and lastly (3) a case study to test complying with the code of ethics. During the CE, a PST candidate has to prove that he masters all abovementioned competences to pass. If a candidate fails for one of the competences, he cannot receive the PST certificate.

The exam procedure is composed as follows:

1. *Standardized translation test* (120 min). The candidates are provided with a genuine and relevant source texts as "it is important that test tasks be as authentic as possible so that a strong relationship can be claimed between performance on the test and the performance in the target situation" (Angelelli 2009: 21). The candidates are assumed to translate three or four various text types of maximum length of 400 to 420 words in a complete, neutral and reliable manner. A translation test FL-Dutch consists of three or four official documents which are used during a particular procedure (for instance diplomas, refugee story, birth certificate), whereas a translation text Dutch-FL contains three or four informative documents (such as brochures, house rules, letters from school to parents). Both translations tests contain various text types. However, the focus is on the most common text types within a particular translation direction. For instance, a candidate taking a FL-Dutch translation might have to translate merely one letter and three various certificates since the most frequent documents in foreign language are official documents.

Authenticity of task

The test is taken on the computer as "the handwritten nature of the response format is seen as being fairly inauthentic for most contemporary translation workplaces" (Angelelli 2009: 22). In this matter, the candidate's skills in text editing and adapting the layout of the source text are observable. In her article *Using a rubric to assess translation ability*, Angelelli (2009: 22) touches upon the security and fairness issues while allowing the candidates producing their translation on the computer. The certification center solved this problem by clearly stating in the examination regulation and before the start of the translation test that using e-mails and any social network sites is strictly prohibited. Consulting these pages during the exam might lead to failing the exam. Moreover, the source texts are not sent by e-mail to candidates to avoid spreading the test material. The paper versions are used instead.

Objectivity

All candidates receive an individual code consisting of the translation direction and an individual number that is mentioned on each page of the translation. This is done to guarantee the objectivity as some evaluators may know the candidates. This is particularly the case within small language communities in Flanders.

The evaluation

The evaluation is carried out in two phases by two evaluators independently. Once the CE has taken place in Brussels (in an exam room of the *Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering*), the evaluators are provided with the anonymized target texts of the candidates through e-mail. During the first reading the two readers independently evaluate the writing skills in the target language. This implies that they are not provided with the source text yet. The estimating if the target language is written at the C1-level of the CEFR is based on several criteria derived from the description of writing competency from the CEFR. The following aspects are graded:

- Vocabulary and vocabulary usage
  o Text occurs naturally for a native speaker.
  o Correct vocabulary is used.
  o Correct idiomatic expressions are used.
  o The appropriate style is applied consequently.
- Grammar
  o Parts of speech are applied correctly.
  o The syntax is correct.
- Correct usage of spelling and punctuation
- Coherence
  o The conjunction that supports the coherence between the sentence units and text units are used correctly.

The evaluators are provided with an evaluation grid to structure their evaluation. The document mentions the expected behavior per category. The evaluators note down all aberrations (like translation errors, wrong usage of grammar etc.) and its frequencies. Whether a candidate passes for a particular category depends on the kind of error and frequency of this error. For instance: a candidate fails if one critical error occurs or many errors within the same category are observed. A candidate only passes for the first reading if he passes for all above mentioned categories.

During the second reading the evaluators do receive the source texts to evaluate the translation skills. Moreover, professional practices framework is also provided to control if the guidelines concerning translation in the PST context are applied correctly. The following aspects are graded:

- completeness of transfer
- faithfulness
- correctness of transfer
- coherence and cohesion

The evaluation grid was developed after consulting various evaluation grids applied at the universities, by other testing centers or researchers[5].

If a candidate passes for all the categories, he receives the PST certificate.

2. *Pause* (20 min). A monitor supervising the course of the translation test saves the translation on a USB stick and removes the target texts from the computer.
3. *Standardised reading comprehension test* (25 min). The American Translation Association defines criterion for comprehension of the source text as "translated texts reflects a sound conceptual understanding of the material presented" (http://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_presentation.php). However, PST certification centre opted for an separate comprehension test as the PST providers

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[5] Some sources that have been consulted: ATA certification exam evaluation grid, evaluation models of Certificate Dutch as a second language, marking criteria of Diploma in Translation (Handbook for candidates), evaluation grid of Nederlandse Letterfonds, Angelelli's model, NAATI evaluation grid.

indicated a lack of capacity for logical reasoning among some of the translators, which sometimes resulted in poor translation performance. Moreover, the comprehension of the source text is not observable while analysing the target text: the translation error may also be caused by insufficient mastering of terminology or other factors. Hence, the validity of such a test is compromised.

The Standard stipulates that a PS translator is to understand texts written at the C1-level of the CEFR, that are "demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning." (https://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/LanguageCentre/CEF.pdf).
To define more clearly how long the text should actually be to fulfil CEFR's criteria, various comprehension reading test within language testing were analysed. Also the length of the tests has been compared. The standardised comprehension test lasts 25 minutes whereby the candidate is to read a text of approximately 700 words about the social sector and answer 10 standardised multiple choice questions. All texts are genuine texts, originally written in the source language. The questions reflect main principles of discourse analysis. Hence they endeavour to examine whether the candidate is able to identify the scope of the text, grasps the main idea of the text or understands the structure of the text and the goal of the connections between text passages.
The candidate shall score 70% to pass the test. The test is paper-based and evaluated by a PST test centre's staff member on the basis of a correction grid.

4. *Case study* (20 min) measures adherence to the code of ethics. The test consists of two descriptions of real situations which could take place while performing a translation task. A candidate analyses them and describes how he would deal with a particular ethical pitfall and motivates his choice of behaviour. It is allowed to consult the code of ethics. This test is also paper-based and evaluated by a PST test centre's staff member on the basis of a correction grid.

In the beginning of 2013 we conducted an experiment to measure the objectivity and validity of a new CE format and to gather feedback from the participants. Receiving positive feedback and some suggestions to improve the template, we implemented the optimized CE for the first time in March of 2013. The new format is being continuously evaluated and refined. Since 2008 almost 400 certification exams have been conducted with 131 certificates issued. Before the optimization the success rate was 33%. The introduction of a new format in 2013 resulted in its declining to 10%. It should be analyzed in the future which steps can be taken to increase the pass rate.

3.7 Competence-based PST training

As mentioned earlier, PST training's goals are twofold: preparing candidates not only for the CE but also to the profession. Since the CE was thoroughly improved in 2012, it was essential to optimize PST training as well. Furthermore, the PST training center opted for a competence-based training (CBT), emphasizing the importance of developing additional translator competences except transfer of linguistic skills (Kiraly, 2000: 13). This innovation was essential if the candidates were to be prepared for "real-life translation in a vocational context" (Klein-Braley, 1996: 23). Pym, Perekrestenko and Starink (2006) also acknowledge that "the labor market requires more than mere translation" . Furthermore, "the idea of training in competences is not new to Translation Studies trainers who have, for some time now, used different models of translator competence (Krings, 1986; Ammann, 1990; Hurtado, 1995, 2007; Gile, 1995; Neubert, 1994, 2000; PACTE, 1998; Kelly, 1999, 2002,

2005) to develop objectives and learning outcomes for their translation programs" (Way, 2009: 131). Hence, the idea to focus more on the holistic translator competence, rather than exclusively on text production in other language.

3.8 Curriculum design

While designing a new curriculum, Gabr's cycle of translation program design and development was followed (Gabr, 2001).
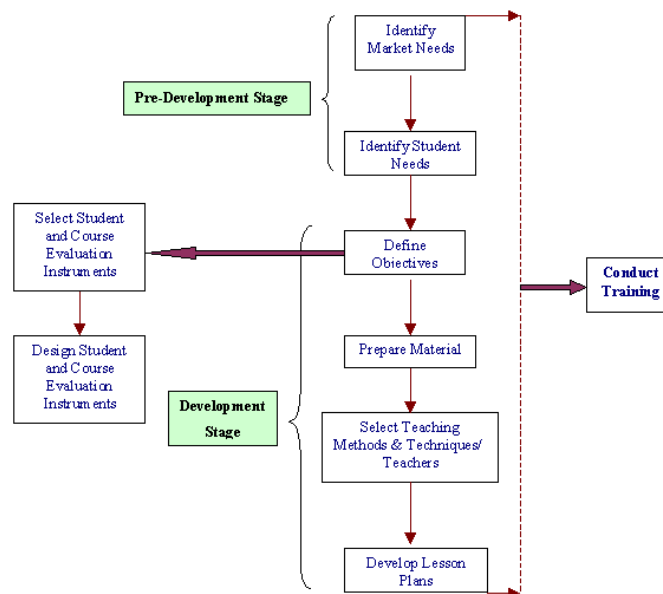

Figure 1. Gabr's cycle of translation program design and development

3.8.1 Pre-development stage

First, the market needs were determined by interviewing PST agencies. Particularly the need for improving translators' comprehension was signaled during this survey. Moreover, PST agencies stressed the importance of providing different modules specifically for official documents and informative documents since other competences are involved during translating in these domains. While translating e.g. a birth or a marriage certificate there is more focus on the layout, that is to say indicating numbers, places and personal data in a correct manner and consistent usage of the juridical terminology, translating a leaflet, in contrast, requires more creativity to find a right equivalent for the description of an expression that is specific for Flemish or Belgian culture.

Former students were not interviewed as the last training was organized in 2011. Hence, we found it irrelevant to conduct a survey three years later.

At a later stage, an intern evaluation of the existing PST training was carried out. The following weaknesses were highlighted:

- Insufficient amount of relevant source texts;
- Limited training opportunities;
- Inability to provide structural feedback on the translation tasks into foreign languages.

During the optimization, abovementioned weaknesses were eliminated. To enable candidates to work with genuine source texts, the PST agencies provided authentic material that had been translated by PSTs in the past. Documents containing personal data were anonymized. These authentic texts, also refer to as texts-in-situation by Nord (1991: 14) or warm texts by Jakobsen (1994: 147-148), play a significant role in preparing learners for real-life translation situation and are beneficial from a motivational point of view (Nord 1994: 66).

Training opportunities were expanded by introducing blended learning in the practice module. In this manner, part of the translation workshop does not take place in the classroom but is managed online. As a result, students have the opportunity to perform more translations tasks than before.

The PST training remains language free, making it impossible for tutors to provide students with feedback on their translation in the foreign language. However, a peer-review system was introduced to guarantee evaluation of an end product. In this system, students mastering the same target language also receive the task to control the performance of other students. They are first introduced to the mechanics of revising and editing during a separate lesson. This is how the future PSTs become acquainted with the methodology of revising and editing, referring both to revising their own work as to the performance of other translators. Furthermore, the aim of this lesson is also to encourage critical sense, constructive criticism and openness for feedback since PST agencies indicated during interviews that a lot of translators do not know how to deal with negative feedback in a constructive way.

3.8.2 Development stage

Our objectives and learning outcomes are based on the PST PCP. The training center made a selection of indispensable skills, knowledge and attitudes and delineates learning objectives per lesson. The list was later reviewed by tutors from translation university colleges. Since the CBT as a pedagogical approach involves (…) "transparency in terms of professional profile in study programmes" (Rodríguez-Inés in Hubscher-Davidson, 2012: 98), PST candidates in Flanders are briefed about the purpose and the content of PST PCP at the beginning of the training. They are also provided with a list of learning objectives. In this manner, they can perceive their strengths and weaknesses and design an action plan to refine their skills and expand their knowledge.

Rodríguez-Inés (2012: 97) also states that CBT requires more flexibility. Hence, the structure of our PST training was adjusted. We opted for a modular structure. Our current training consists of a theoretical module and two practice modules: one for translation of official documents, one for informative documents. This flexible training design allows a candidate to follow the whole training at once or spread it in time. It is also possible to choose between two practice modules or follow both of them (at the same time or spread in time). Especially working students benefit from this flexibility. In the past, some students were not able to invest a lot of time in the training because of their career or family life. The holders of master diplomas in Translation gain an advantage as well: they are exempt from taking theory classes as they already mastered this knowledge during their studies. They do have an opportunity to follow the practical modules to increase their familiarity with PST.

The theoretical module (28 hours) provides the candidates with sufficient background regarding translation models, translation processes, theory on terminology management and translation technology since "the demand is increasingly for professional competence in a range of new technologies. Translators now need professional competence for translation memories, terminology management" (Pym, Perekrestenko and Starink, 2006: 1). In addition, all students receive a handbook before the training starts. It was developed on the basis of set

learning objectives and written by experienced tutors from translation departments of Flemish universities.

During the practical modules, PST candidates acquire more specific knowledge regarding the social sector with its institutions, structure and procedures. This background is indispensable to guarantee a faithful transfer. The study material is provided as handouts via e-mail which are prepared by the candidates at home.

The knowledge gained during the theoretical module and through self-study is applied during practical modules (42 hours including 30 hours of distance learning). The candidates take part in translation workshops during which they are confronted with genuine source texts with examples of authentic translation problems provided by PST agencies. These meaningful tasks are of great importance as they increase the motivation of the candidates. Translations are first performed in the classroom under the guidance of a tutor. The second and third translation workshop is held online. The candidates receive the source texts individually via e-mail and they decide themselves when they perform translation tasks and they work in an authentic environment. This solution allows an even greater flexibility and authenticity of the tasks. At the end of the training the candidates look back at their portfolios to clearly see whether and what kind of learning progress took place. This series of independent learning activities results in the increase of a candidate's autonomy who gradually gains self-confidence. This empowering process is a great preparation for a latter career and life-long learning (Kiraly, 2000: 194).

The language free character of the training does make it impossible for the tutor to revise the end product. Therefore, a process-oriented approach is adopted. In this manner, the role of the trainer changes. Instead of pointing out what is good and what is wrong, he "attempts to identify problems in the process followed by the students, raises their awareness of problems and suggests good Translation principles, methods and procedures" (Gile et al. 2009: 14). This is how the candidates master suitable strategies and tactics which leads to achieving greater professional autonomy.

The new training format was implemented for the first time in November 2014 and is to be evaluated in the spring of 2015. Due to the limited number of training sessions (merely two per year), the PST training center organizes additional theoretical sessions that inform the candidates about the competences needed to attain the certificate, the certification exam itself and the preparation for it.

3.9 A framework for professional practices

All PSTs are obliged to sign the code of ethic before they are to perform translation jobs for a particular PST agency. This implies that they bear ethical obligations but also follow professional guidelines. The latter concerns some practical arrangements between a translator and a PST agency about, for instance, the way and the deadline of accepting a translation job. Each PST agency is free to establish its own arrangements since they work independently and with different resources. Nevertheless, there was also an urgent need to create a uniform framework of translation practices to provide PSTs with clear guidelines regarding technical aspects of translation such as mentioning stamps in translation or transcribing correspondence addresses into a language with a different writing system. In this manner, the PSTs' career would be significantly facilitated as translators will not be henceforth obliged to apply different frameworks, depending on the agency they are engaged by. In 2012 all PST agencies endorsed the idea of creating this standard and initiated a project group to delineate the guidelines. The development was a result of a multi-stakeholder process whereby the PST agencies provided realistic case studies which functioned as basis for the framework. The PST TC&C was also involved in the process. We conducted some research and interviewed

our partners from the translation colleges in Flanders whenever in doubt. Once the draft was finalized, it was submitted to the PST community on a wiki page where all PSTs were given an opportunity to anonymously provide feedback on the proposal or suggest new guidelines. The gathered feedback was analyzed by PST TC&C and PST agencies. On this basis, the proposal was enhanced and new guidelines were added to the wiki. Currently, all new PSTs are provided with the link so that they have access to an updated version.

In this manner, the code of ethics currently contains three elements: ethical principles, separate practical arrangements of PST agencies and a common framework for professional practices.

4. Professionalization of PST, steps currently being taken

4.1 Quality control

As Mossop (2001: 23) states, "people who use the services of translators do not ask for an accurate translation; they just assume that it will be accurate" . However, it is not always the case. Some think-aloud experiments reveal that "sometimes translation students or inexperienced bilingual succeeded at the experimental task, while those deemed professional translators failed at it (e.g., Gerloff 1988; Jääskeläinen, 1990: 199)" (Jääskeläinen in Shreve, 2010: 215). Hence the revision after translation is essential if one is to provide qualitative source texts. However, revisers are not always sufficiently prepared for this task since there exists no separate certification exam for this specific task (Darwish, 2006: 69). Mossop (2007: 6) states that "the revision of the work of other translators may become increasingly important, at least in Europe, with the publication in 2006 of the new standard EN 15038 Translation services – Service requirements". PST agencies in Flanders also acknowledge the importance of the quality control. Currently three types of quality assurance are applied: editing, proof reading and revision. There is notwithstanding need to harmonize the quality control procedures since each PST agency applies another approach at the moment.

4.2 Terminology

PSTs face a lot of translation problems throughout their careers. Mainly due to the wide range of text types with their specific terminology. A PST translator as a mediator between two cultures is assumed to bring a reader close to the meaning of particular concepts. Nevertheless, a lot of Flemish concepts do not exist in other countries. For instance, the term *vervolgschoolcoach* refers to a school employee who helps parents in finding a school for a child that followed a special course for children who do not speak Dutch yet and where the focus is on learning Dutch. A PST translator does need to possess a broad knowledge of Flemish context to retrieve the meaning of various terms as a poor translation precludes the communication between an immigrant and the public and social services. If not, the PST does not achieve its primary objective. However, this is not the only problem with PST terminology. The consistent usage within a particular source language throughout various target texts is still not the case due to lack of terminology databases and translation memories. Various experiments with terminology management software already took place in the past. Nevertheless, the experiments were interrupted due to unsure future of PST in Flanders. A study on PST in Flanders conducted by the *Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering* will reveal which steps will be taken in the future.

In 2013 an anonymous survey was conducted to find out how PSTs deal with terminology and determine their needs regarding PST terminology. We received 54

responses. 67% of the respondents declared creating terminology lists. Most of the time Microsoft Excel or Word is used. Thus, the acquaintance with terminology management software is deficient. Asked if they share their terminology lists, as much as 87% of respondents answered negatively. The two following reasons were given most often: "nobody asked for it" and "I do not know other translators". As we see, a community of practice (Wenger 1998) under PST practitioners is lacking: there is no network to share knowledge, exchange relevant sources or to cooperate, even though this system is beneficial for both experts and novices. "Not only does it have practical advantages in terms of solving translation problems and leading to work, but it also has considerable psychological benefits. The sense of belonging to a professional community reduces the feeling of isolation that translators have often faced in the past" (Wakabayashi in Hung, 2002: 49). In this perspective, it does not seem surprising that a great majority of the respondents would choose an Internet forum if they were offered help in dealing with terminology. 33% perceived a combination of a training, forum and networking most suitable. In addition, this survey revealed that translators are willing to contribute to a common PST glossary. Thus, it seems clear that translators are open to sharing, only a common platform is missing at this moment. These ideas should be explored further in the future.

In the meantime we establish some initiatives, aspiring to support PST translators in their daily work. A monolingual glossary with Dutch terms and definition from various PST disciplines (such as education, public services, medical terms, integration services, etc.) is being developed in co-operation with domain experts from our network, an expert on clear communication and PST agencies. Each subscriber for PST newsletter receives links to a google-shared document with a particular list. The link is also published on our website (http://www.kruispuntmi.be/thema/sociaal-tolken-en-vertalen).

PST covers a great variety of languages. However, there is an increasing need for qualified translators in languages of lesser diffusion such as Swahili, Tigrinya or Chechen. In addition, terminology sources for these languages are scarce. Not mentioning finding a competent assessor to evaluate transfer and language skills of a candidate. Realizing that, we attempt to support the candidates in their daily work by conducting research on reliable terminology sources. It is done through literature study, networking and interviews with domain experts. The results of the research also appeared in our newsletter on regular basis.

4.3 Translation technology

PST agencies intend to improve the PST quality by optimizing the translation process. Various experts (academics, terminologists, translation companies and consulting firms) were interviewed about the most relevant technology for the specific setting of the fragmented PST scene in Flanders. This survey brought to light that harmonizing the daily working of individual PST will be a hard nut to crack since some agencies use the same software but with different features and possibilities while other agencies perform most of the administrative tasks manually due to the insufficient resources. A project group got together to determine the indispensable features of this software so that the needs of the sector could be linked to relevant software at a later stage of the project. The results of two workshops have been published in the meantime. However, the experiments with relevant software are currently interrupted.

5. The future

Even though a significant effort has been made to professionalize PST through all the above-mentioned actions, the PST position on the Flemish translation scene remains insecure. PST is recognized by the Flemish government as an instrument to further the integration of immigrants. However, its relevancy is being questioned. In 2010 PST T&CC and the PST agencies issued an Advisory Note to the Flemish government to stress the non-profit character of PST that distinguishes the profession from profit translation (Kruispunt Migratie-Integratie and sociaal tolk- en vertaaldiensten, 2008). Moreover, relevant document types were clearly defined and the importance of quality control and specialized training was underlined. Nevertheless, the Note did not convince the authorities of the social necessity of PST and its relation to the profit translation. In the course of 2015, the *Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering* will explore whether the PST still will be organized in the future and how it will be arranged.

Moreover, several questions remain when considering its future:
- Currently, merely 10% of the candidates pass the PST CE. Which action should be taken to increase the success rate?
- How can the quality of each translation job be guaranteed when revision is an expensive process?
- Where to find competent revisers and assessors?
- Where to find suitable candidates for languages of lesser diffusion like Urdu, Persian, Nepali, Somali, etc.?

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