Collaborative Text Revision in Translation: Insights from the International Collaborative Translation Research Centre

Revisión colaborativa de textos en traducción: reflexiones del Centro Internacional de Investigación de la Traducción Colaborativa

Silvia VELARDI
IULM University
silvia.velardi@iulm.it

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the collaborative text revision practices in translation, focusing on the activities and outcomes of a workshop held at the International Collaborative Translation Research Centre at IULM University in Milan. The workshop, aimed at students of the Master's Degree in Specialist Translation and Conference Interpreting, has been running for two years, providing a platform for experimental techniques to improve text revision in a collaborative setting. The research presented in this paper highlights the methodologies employed, the collaborative processes implemented, and the results achieved, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of collaborative text revision in translation education.

KEYWORDS: translation, collaborative text revision, workshop, new methodologies, outcomes, translation education.

ABSTRACT: Este artículo explora las prácticas de revisión colaborativa de textos en la traducción, centrándose en las actividades y los resultados de un taller celebrado en el Centro Internacional de Investigación en Traducción Colaborativa de la Universidad IULM de Milán. El taller, dirigido a estudiantes del Máster en Traducción Especializada e

Interpretación de Conferencias, se celebra desde hace dos años y ofrece una plataforma para experimentar con técnicas de mejora de la revisión de textos en un contexto colaborativo. La investigación presentada en este artículo pone de relieve las metodologías empleadas, los procesos colaborativos implementados y los resultados obtenidos, ofreciendo valiosas perspectivas sobre la eficacia de la revisión colaborativa de textos en la formación en traducción.

PALABRAS CLAVE: traducción, revisión colaborativa de textos, talleres, nuevas metodologías, resultados, enseñanza de la traducción.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized world, the practice of translation plays a pivotal role in bridging cultural divides and fostering mutual understanding among diverse communities. Translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a complex cultural negotiation that involves the transfer of meanings, values, and ideologies from one language to another. This paper explores the intricate relationship between translation and cultural sustainability, focusing on the challenges that arise in maintaining the cultural integrity of source texts and the innovative approaches that are emerging to address these challenges. Translation and text revision are critical components of the translation process, impacting the accuracy, readability, and overall quality of translated texts. With the increasing importance of collaborative practices in professional and educational settings, the International Collaborative Translation Research Centre at IULM University has initiated a workshop aimed at exploring and enhancing collaborative text revision techniques. This paper aims to document the methodologies, processes, and outcomes of this workshop, providing a comprehensive analysis of collaborative text revision in translation.

1.1. *The Role of Translation in Cultural Preservation*

Translation serves as a vital tool for cultural preservation, enabling the dissemination of literature, historical documents, and other cultural artifacts beyond their original linguistic boundaries. As Venuti (1995) posits, translation has the power to shape cultural identities and influence the reception of cultural products in different contexts. However, the process of translation often involves choices that can either preserve or alter the cultural nuances of the source material. These choices highlight the tension between fidelity to the original text and the need to make the translated text accessible and relevant to the target audience (Bassnett 2002). One of the primary challenges in translation for cultural sustainability is the risk of cultural homogenization. The dominance of certain languages, particularly English, in global communication can lead to the marginalization of less widely spoken languages and cultures. Nida (1964) underscores the importance of preserving linguistic diversity as a means of sustaining cultural diversity. Translators must navigate the delicate balance between adapting texts to global audiences and preserving the unique cultural elements that characterize the source material. Another significant challenge is the translator's subjectivity and the influence of their own cultural

biases. As Lefevere (1992) notes, translation is an act of interpretation that is inevitably shaped by the translator's perspectives and assumptions. This subjectivity can result in the imposition of the translator's cultural values on the source text, thereby distorting its original meaning. Addressing this challenge requires a heightened awareness of the translator's role as a mediator between cultures and a commitment to ethical translation practices.

1.1.1. New Avenues in Translation Studies

In response to these challenges, new avenues in translation studies are emerging that emphasize cultural sensitivity and sustainability. The concept of «cultural translation», as discussed by Bhabha (1994), advocates for a more nuanced approach that acknowledges the fluid and dynamic nature of cultures. This approach encourages translators to engage deeply with the cultural context of the source text and to consider the socio-political implications of their translation choices. Technological advancements also offer promising solutions for promoting cultural sustainability in translation. Machine translation tools, augmented by artificial intelligence, are becoming increasingly sophisticated in handling cultural nuances. However, as Pym (2010) argues, the human element remains crucial in ensuring that translations are culturally resonant and ethically sound. Collaborative translation platforms and community-based translation projects further democratize the translation process, allowing for greater participation from native speakers and cultural insiders.

2. METHODOLOGY

The workshop held at the International Collaborative Translation Research Centre at IULM University in Milan included 75 hours of work, and was conducted both in person and remotely, involving students from the Master's Degree in Specialist Translation and Conference Interpreting. The primary text used for the workshop was the volume *Translating: Histories, Theories, Practices from Antiquity to the 19th Century*, divided into four sections. Four groups were formed, each assigned to work on a specific part of the text. The fourth group received the material developed by the other three groups and was tasked with making the content more homogeneous.

2.1. *Collaborative Revision Process*

The collaborative revision process was initiated with units of two persons per group, allowing internal self-review within the unit. These units were then combined into larger units, represented by two pairs, to compare and contrast their revisions. The process involved the following steps: Initial Revision: each student pair worked on their assigned text, proposing revisions using the «Comments» mode in a Word file. One student made a proposal, and the other accepted or rejected the revision, providing explanations if they did not accept; cross-Referencing: pairs cross-referenced their revisions with another pair, ensuring multiple layers of review and validation; final Check: the final check involved

cross-examination between professors if students did not suggest a valid review, ensuring high-quality revisions.

2.1.1. TOOLS AND PROTOCOLS

A Google Drive file was created to document suggestions for protocol improvement and ideas for refining the collaboration process. At the end of each chapter, two fact sheets were created, outlining tools for experts. Pair work was planned to determine the content of these fact sheets.

3. RESULTS

The collaborative revision workshop yielded significant improvements in the quality of the translated texts. Key results include: Reduction of Redundant Repetitions: The chapter on the Toledo school and collaborative translation was checked for redundant repetitions. Decisions were made on whether to keep or eliminate repetitions based on their necessity; Adaptation of Bibliographic Citations: In the chapter on collaborative translation practices during the Middle Ages, bibliographic citations in the footnotes were adapted to match the format used in the rest of the book; Inclusion of Missing Texts: Texts that were not included in the final bibliography were identified and added, with their bibliographical entries adapted to the editorial rules; Streamlining Content: Redundant sentences and overly specific concepts were reduced, particularly in the chapter on collaborative practices during the Middle Ages; Revision of Chapter Titles: Alternative solutions were proposed and implemented for the titles of chapters on the 19th century.

This section presents in particular the findings from a detailed comparative analysis of the two editions of *Tradurre: Storie, teorie, pratiche dall'antichità al XIX secolo* by Arnaldo Editore. The first edition, published in 2015, and the second edition, published in 2023, exhibit significant differences in content, structure, and scholarly apparatus. This analysis focuses on identifying and discussing these differences to understand the evolution of the book over eight years.

3.1. *Structural Differences*

Expanded sections: The 2023 edition is described as «new, revised, enlarged» indicating substantial additions and revisions. Key sections that were expanded include:

Histories of Translation Practices: The historical overview of translation practices from antiquity to the 19th century was enriched with additional examples and case studies, providing a broader context and deeper insights into the evolution of translation techniques and philosophies;

Theoretical Frameworks: The theoretical sections saw significant expansions, incorporating contemporary theories and emerging trends in translation studies that were not present or were only briefly mentioned in the 2015 edition.

New chapters: The 2023 edition introduced new chapters that were not part of the 2015 edition. These additions include:

Collaborative Translation Practices During the Middle Ages: This chapter explores the collaborative efforts in translation during the medieval period, highlighting the communal aspects of translation work that were pivotal during that era;

800 Italian Translators: This chapter provides a comprehensive list and analysis of prominent Italian translators, their contributions, and their impact on the field of translation up to the 19th century.

3.1.1. CONTENT REVISIONS

The 2023 edition features updated and expanded bibliographic citations. The format of these citations was adapted to ensure consistency throughout the book. New references were added to reflect recent scholarship and contemporary studies that have emerged since the publication of the 2015 edition.

Streamlined sections: Several chapters in the 2023 edition were streamlined to reduce redundancy and improve clarity. For instance:

Reduction of Redundant Sentences: Redundant sentences and overly specific concepts in the chapter on collaborative practices of the Middle Ages were significantly reduced. This streamlining enhanced the readability and coherence of the text.

3.1.2. ENHANCED PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

The new edition places a stronger emphasis on pedagogical tools, designed to aid readers in their understanding and application of the material:

Fact Sheets for Experts: Each chapter now concludes with fact sheets that outline key tools and concepts for experts. These sheets were created through collaborative pair work among students, ensuring that they are practical and user-friendly.

3.1.3. REVISIONS OF CHAPTER TITLES

Alternative solutions were proposed and implemented for the titles of chapters on the 19th century, making them more descriptive and reflective of the content.

3.2. *Scholarly Apparatus*

Inclusion of missing texts: Texts that were previously missing from the final bibliography in the 2015 edition were identified and included in the 2023 edition. This ensures a more comprehensive and accurate representation of sources.

Improved Cross-referencing: Cross-referencing within the text was enhanced in the new edition. This involved ensuring that references to the same translators and translations were appropriately handled to avoid unnecessary repetition and to provide clearer links between related content.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. *Benefits of Collaborative Text Revision*

The workshop highlighted several benefits of collaborative text revision, including: Enhanced Accuracy and Consistency: Multiple layers of review ensured higher accuracy and consistency in the translated texts; Skill Development: Students developed critical revision skills, learning to evaluate and improve translations collaboratively;

Increased Engagement: The collaborative nature of the workshop increased student engagement and motivation, fostering a deeper understanding of the translation process.

4.2. *Challenges and Solutions*

Despite the benefits, several challenges were encountered, including: Coordination Issues: Coordinating multiple pairs and ensuring consistent progress required careful planning and management; Disagreements: Differences in opinions among students sometimes led to disagreements. These were resolved through structured cross-referencing and final checks by professors.

4.3. *Future Directions*

The success of the workshop suggests several avenues for future research and practice:

Expansion to Other Texts: The collaborative revision process could be expanded to other types of texts and translation projects, providing more diverse learning experiences;

Integration with Technology: Leveraging advanced translation and revision tools could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the collaborative process;

Longitudinal Studies: Long-term studies could be conducted to evaluate the impact of collaborative revision practices on students' professional development and career outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

The collaborative text revision workshop at the International Collaborative Translation Research Centre has demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative practices in enhancing the quality of translated texts. The methodologies and processes employed have not only improved the accuracy and consistency of the revisions but also provided valuable skill development opportunities for students. As the field of translation continues to evolve, collaborative revision practices hold great potential for improving translation quality and fostering professional growth.

The comparative analysis of the 2015 and 2023 editions of *Tradurre: Storie, teorie, pratiche dall'antichità al XIX secolo* reveals significant enhancements in the newer edition. These improvements include expanded content, updated bibliographic citations,

streamlined text, new pedagogical tools, and better cross-referencing. These changes reflect the ongoing developments in translation studies and the commitment to providing readers with a comprehensive, accurate, and user-friendly resource. The 2023 edition stands as a more robust and enriched version, offering deeper insights and broader coverage of the history, theories, and practices of translation.

The interplay between translation and cultural sustainability presents both challenges and opportunities. As the field of translation studies continues to evolve, it is imperative to develop strategies that respect and preserve cultural diversity while facilitating cross-cultural communication. By embracing cultural sensitivity, ethical practices, and technological innovations, translators can contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable global culture.

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