Translation editor training: The recent past and current efforts

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Abstract

The article explores the training or education of translation editors in Slovakia. It presents partial results of a survey of literary translation editors conducted in 2022 and of a related focus group discussion. The survey was conducted on a sample size of 22 (n=22) with the intention to map the demographic aspect of the editing of literary translations in Slovakia (e.g., the demographic structure, education, economic conditions, etc.). The article also presents the syllabus and the content of the *Translation Editing* course that has been introduced by the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra as part of its translation studies study programmes as well as student feedback to it. The design of the course attempts to reflect the results of the survey and focus group in terms of what practising editors themselves consider to be useful for their professional practise and for editor training. The rationale behind the inclusion of the course in this article is to open a discussion on how to train translation editors effectively as similar courses may exist at other universities, but they exist in relative isolation and there is a lack of literature regarding such courses.

1. Introduction

As Siponoski (2015) points out, the focus of translation studies has traditionally been placed on translators and translation texts, which Siponoski claims "*can be explained by turning to the individual-centred understanding of literary authorship as well as by taking into account that literary translations have traditionally been studied on the basis of published texts. The availability of, for example, drafts and manuscripts – that represent the earlier, incomplete stages of text and that may also contain concrete documentation of other agents' input – has been poor.*" As the quote already suggests with "other agents' input", this focus feels a little reductive. Especially in the field of literary translation (but in other contexts as well), the translator does not just spontaneously spurt out a finished translation in a vacuum; other agents work alongside the translator to produce the final translation (cf. Mossop 2014). However, these other agents are largely invisible not only in the eyes of the general public, but also of translation studies as a field as they seem to be rarely mentioned despite the often significant and indispensable (although not always positive (cf. Paloposki & Pokorn 2021)) contributions they bring, be they editors, proofreaders, publishers, and others. There are, of course,

exceptions, e.g., Siponoski (2015), Paloposki and Pokorn (2021) who also focus their research on the editors' work. At times, translation criticism and even the general public can also note that an editor participated in the translation's creation, but as editors themselves notice, such attention seems to follow the model of "good book = good translation, bad book = bad editing and proofreading"[1] (Martinkovič 2022, 88).[2] Such surface-level takes, however, suggest that there is relatively little awareness of who editors are or what they do.

When discussing the work of translation editors, it is important to note that the relevant terminology does not seem to be standardised. At least in Slovakia, the context being explored in this article, what activities an employed person called an editor performs at one publishing house can drastically differ from the activities of a different person called an editor at another publishing house which can be different still from a freelance editor and so on. As such, for the purposes of this article, we shall define the editor as a participant in the translation communication process (cf. Popovič 1983) who approves, adjusts, and corrects the language of a translated text and who is neither the author nor the recipient of said translated text (cf. Martinkovič 2022). The editor's adjustments and corrections serve to ensure "the text […] conforms to society's linguistic and textual rules and achieves the publisher's goals" (Mossop 2014, 18). The editor's main focus lies in the content and style aspects of the text and the "macro" level of language, and their work is followed by proofreaders whose chief concern is the formal language aspect (e.g. typos, punctuation, etc.) (cf. Halová 2022), although that is not to say there is a rule saying an editor will not or cannot correct e.g. typos when they notice them and a proofreader will never suggest e.g. a style improvement (cf. Martinkovič 2022). To these ends, an editor needs to be an expert in regard to grammar and stylistics of various genres in the target language and they need to be able to grasp a text from the point of view of content as well (ibid.). While this suggests similarities between editors and translators – and in Slovakia they are indeed viewed as closely related (cf. Hegerová 2010) – the editor is first and foremost an expert on the target language and culture while the translator is closer to the figurative border between the source and the target language and culture (cf. Martinkovič 2022).

Having defined the role of the editor, let us turn our attention to the main topic of this article which is the editor's training, especially university training, but also very briefly in their professional practise itself

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[1] Author's translation.

[2] While such perceptions may be unfair, they are understandable; it is difficult if not impossible to assess what the editor's contributions are without access to a manuscript without already accepted revisions and it is then easy to assign issues, particularly formal issues, e.g., grammar, typos, etc. – to the editor's responsibility.

in Slovakia. The article consists of two main sections. The first section explores partial results of a focus group discussion and of an anonymous online survey of editors, both conducted in 2022 as a part of our PhD dissertation (Martinkovič 2022) in order to map the current demographic situation of Slovak literary translation editors as editing practise is critically under-researched in Slovak translation studies. Five editors participated in the focus group discussion and they were selected to represent different demographic groups of Slovak editors of literary translation in terms of e.g., experience and form of employment (employed internally by a publishing house or externally freelancing for publishing houses). The results of the focus group then informed the design of the survey that was then distributed to our contacts in the editing industry and to official contact points of 17 Slovak publishing houses large and small with the request to disseminate the survey to editors they work with. The survey was further distributed via specialised editing and translation groups on social media and with the help of the civic organisation DoSlov that represents and counts among its members translators and – more importantly to our research – editors. The only condition for survey participation was that the respondents actively work as literary translation editors. As for the sample size, 22 editors (n=22) provided valid answers. Representativeness of the relatively small sample size, it is impossible to determine as the overall population of editors is essentially unknowable – there are no legal limitations to who can edit and there is no central register of editors.

The second section then explores the design and syllabus of the new *Translation Editing* course aimed at training translation editing at the Department of Translation Studies of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and how both were influenced by the results discussed in the first section.

The aim of the article is to utilise results of the above survey and focus group discussion to shed light on how currently practising editors have been trained with an emphasis on university training, and to use the presentation of the pilot design of the *Translation Editing* course to open a discussion on how to train translation editors effectively as similar courses may exist at other universities.

2. The studies of practising editors in modern Slovak history

There are several ways to divide and categorize "modern" Slovak history; for the purposes of this article, by modern we mean the latter half of the 20th century up to now and it is this period that we explored in our survey of editors, since it coincides with the emergence of professional editors of literary translations in Slovakia after 1945 (cf. Vilikovský 2010). The most common or significant demarcation point in this range is the year 1989 when the Czechoslovak democracy was restored and the country moved away from socialism. This brought significant changes to essentially all areas of Slovak life, editing of literary translations included (cf. Gromová 2010). Before the fall of socialism, Slovak publishing houses

were few in number and they were controlled by the state. We will not extensively contrast the realities of editing practise before and after 1989 here; we will merely mention the relevant aspects of how editors were educated and trained before 1989 as it still significantly impacts the current situation. Under the socialist rule from 1948 to 1989, there were no university programmes specialising in the training of editors; even the first translation programme appears only in the 1970s (cf. Müglová 2018) and other translation programmes do not truly start to proliferate until the 1990s. Nevertheless, editors needed to be trained and since it was not being done at the university level, training naturally moved to the professional environment – the publishing houses themselves where editors worked as internal employees. New editors would begin as proofreaders under the supervision of more experienced editors and they would train for years until they would themselves be promoted to editors proper (cf. Mládeková 2013, Hegerová 2010, Šikulová 2014 in Šuňavská 2014). With the fall of socialism, the turn to market economy and market reorientation to the West instead of Russia, the majority of editors were no longer internally employed by publishing houses, but instead they worked with publishing houses externally as freelancers, significantly stunting training efforts within publishing houses to this day (cf. Martinkovič 2022). This created demand for perspective editors to be trained before they entered professional life, but a specialised study programme called *Editing and Publishing Practice* only emerged in 2010 at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and it currently represents the only such study programme in Slovakia.

The relatively late appearance of translation study programmes and the rather recent establishment of an editing programme is reflected in the results of our survey of editors (Martinkovič 2022) in terms of the study programmes they graduated from. Of the 22 editors surveyed, 72.73% (16 respondents) have attained their highest academic degree – most commonly a master's degree, with PhD being the second most common – from language-oriented university study programmes[3]. Of these, most surveyed editors (8 respondents, i.e., 36.36% of the overall sample) gained education from language programmes not specialised in either translation or editing. The second most frequent were translation studies programmes with 27.27% (6 respondents), followed by editing study programmes with 4.55% and journalism study programmes also with 4.55% or one respondent each (journalism is included here as the programme puts significant emphasis on the study of Slovak language). While the first and most frequent category is the broadest, which may skew the results in its favour, it does nevertheless paint a picture when paired with the respondents' age. In the group aged 46 and up, language programmes not specialised in translation nor editing have a clear majority, whereas in the group aged 45 and below, i.e., among

[3] Language oriented here includes single language studies, philology, pedagogy of languages, translation studies, editing, etc.

respondents who would have studied in the 1990s when translation studies programmes proliferated and later, it is the translation studies programmes that have the majority. Towards the lower end of the scale, at age 30, we may also find the respondent who has studied editing. It is, however, worth emphasising again that an editing study programme was only introduced in 2010 at a single university and thus the number of graduates from it will naturally be limited when compared to older study programmes taught at multiple universities. For a detailed overview of the examined language programmes in relation to respondent age, see table 1.

	Study programme			
Respondent age	**Editing**	**Translation studies**	**Other language programmes**	**Journalism**
29		4.55% (1)		
30	4.55% (1)			
31			4.55% (1)	
35		4.55% (1)		
36			4.55% (1)	
39			4.55% (1)	
40		4.55% (1)		
42		4.55% (1)		
44		4.55% (1)		
45		4.55% (1)		
46			4.55% (1)	
50				4.55% (1)
55			4.55% (1)	
67			4.55% (1)	
72			4.55% (1)	
77			4.55% (1)	
Overall	**4.55% (1)**	**27.27% (6)**	**36.36% (8)**	**4.55% (1)**

Table 1. Age and study programmes[4]

The establishment of a dedicated editing study programme may seem to be the ultimate solution to editor training, but there are some caveats. Slovak translation studies consider the ideal editor of translated texts to have translation experience of their own (cf. Hergerová 2010, Ferenčík 1982). When it comes to the Editing and Publishing Practice

[4] Note that the percentages shown are relative to the full sample size of 22, not the smaller subsection of editors with language education.

programme mentioned above, translation is but a small part of it. Furthermore, editing, is not easily taught. Several respondents in the mentioned survey claimed that editing can only be learned through (years of) real practise. One participant in the focus group discussion that accompanied the survey comments directly on the graduates of the editing programme as she works with several of them. She says that they can work very well with a given text, but that they nevertheless enter professional life unable to truly edit a translation (cf. Martinkovič 2022).

2.1 Editing courses as part of TS study programmes

The above may suggest that the training of editors would perhaps be better addressed not by specialised editing study programmes, but rather by specialised courses within other, ideally translation studies programmes. The survey shows practising editors consider courses already taught under translation studies programmes to be useful for their work, although the answers provided tended to not be overly specific and could even be extremely general (one of the answers reads "all of them" (Martinkovič 2022, 64); the respondent who provided this answer has graduated from a language related programme), they are unified by a common theme; they are related to language, its study and use. Some mention courses such as morphology, lexicology, syntax, and stylistics, others talk of courses where they had to write essays, i.e., create texts, and others still discuss translation seminars. Some respondents even reported they had courses that at least partially dealt directly with editing (one respondent in the survey mentioned having a lesson that covered editing signs), but with the exception of the respondent who studied Editing and Publishing Practice, the insight offered was only cursory. We believe that such courses can only be beneficial to future editors, but the survey results indicate that editing was far from their main focus (cf. Martinkovič 2022). This leaves open a space for specialised translation editing courses. Their introduction under translation studies programmes seems only logical, considering the significant share of practising editors who have graduated from translation studies, and that our survey shows 72.73% of respondents (16) also work as literary translators, 27.27% (6) as specialised, 4.55% (1) as audio-visual translators, and 4.55% (1) as interpreters[5].

Literary translator	72.73% (16)
Specialised translator	27.27% (6)
Audio-visual translator	4.55% (1)
Interpreter	4.55% (1)

Table 2. In addition to editing, respondents work as

[5] Categories in this question were not exclusive, i.e., respondents could choose more than one supplemental activity.

Nevertheless, the results of such courses may still be limited in terms of the editing of translations itself; let us mention again that multiple respondents as well as participants in the focus group discussion felt that editing skills beyond the basics can only be acquired via years of practise.

The respondents work varies not only in terms of their supplemental activities, but also in what literature they edit. As the survey conditions set out, 100% of respondents (22) edit literary translations, but the majority also edits translations of literature of fact (72.73%, i.e., 16 respondents) and/or original Slovak literary texts (59.29%, i.e., 13 respondents), and almost a third edits original Slovak literature of fact (31.82 %, i.e., 7 respondents). These results suggest that the activities of respondents are highly varied and many editors do not specialise in just one kind of literature.

Literary translations	Literature of fact translation	Slovak literary literature	Slovak literature of fact
100% (22)	72.73% (16)	59.09% (13)	31.82% (7)

Table 3. Editor specialisation

The last researched aspect of editing practise are editing signs. These are various signs or marks used by editors when editing on paper; a technique one could assume was primarily used in the past prior to the advent of computers and editing functionalities such as tracking of changes. Our survey supports this assumption with 20 of the surveyed respondents (90.91%) editing using a computer and tracked changes functionality and only 2 respondents (9.09%) reporting they use editing signs. The latter two respondents were aged 54 and 72 with 25 and 50 years of editing experience respectively. This suggests that it is primarily more experienced editors who likely began their editing practice before computers became omni-present, and hence it is editing on computers that needs to be prioritised in modern translation editor training.

3. Editing course as a part of the translation studies programmes at CPU in Nitra

Following the connection between editors and translators, editors and translation studies programmes, in the winter semester of the 2022/2023 academic year, the *Translation Editing* course was introduced at the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra as part of its translation studies programmes. The course is non-compulsory, and it is intended for first-year master's students, that is fourth-year students overall who have already gained a bachelor's degree, in the vast majority of cases from translation studies. As part of their bachelor's studies, these students have already been trained in the grammar and use of Slovak

language as well as in general translation. This should equip them with the Slovak language and translation skills and knowledge necessary not only to work as a translator, but also an appropriate basis to begin forming translation editing expertise as well. The course is available to all master's students regardless of their studied language combination – each student at the Department of Translation Studies in Nitra studies in a combination of two of the following languages: English, Spanish, German, Russian, and Slovak. Finally, the course has a single 90-minute lesson dedicated to it on a weekly basis for the entire 13-week duration of the semester.

We were given the opportunity to pilot this new course, to reflect our survey findings in its design and test the viability of various approaches to the design and content of the course. Our findings guided our initial course design perhaps most significantly in regard to the overall focus on practise over theory since the presented survey and focus group discussion results suggest practice is of the highest importance in editor training. Thus, the pilot course design prioritised practical editing of texts. The survey results also influenced some of the details of the design; the weekly editing of texts was to be done electronically via the track changes and comments functionalities of word processors, but editing signs were not entirely omitted and students had an opportunity to practice their use in a dedicated exercise. Survey respondents also pointed to courses where they studied and worked with language and texts as being the most useful university courses for their practise which guided us in tasking students with exercises aimed at these aspects, i.e., at working with grammar or even text structure, but these exercises shall be described in more detail later. Last but not least, the research results presented here and in our broader research (Martinkovič 2022) impacted our choice of topics to be discussed within the theoretical portion of the course as they enabled us to discuss up-to-date overview of for example editors' rates for editing or types of contracts between editors and publishing houses, editors' work modes, etc.

While the predominant focus of the first part of this article is editing of literary translations, scope of the course is much broader – as we show in the first section, it appears few practising editors edit only literary texts – and it explores the editing of a variety of text types, not just literary translations. Its pilot phase can be divided into two parts: theory focused and practice focused lessons. Three theory focused lessons took place early in the semester and they explored the theory of and about editing and editors; the various types of editing ranging from editing proper to proofreading, explored the editing process and the role and position of editors in the translation communication process, and the evolution or history of editing in Slovakia. The aim was to provide students with basic practical knowledge required or in some way useful in regard to editing practise (e.g., economic conditions of editing based on our broader research (cf. Martinkovič 2022)), as well as to form a base of theoretical knowledge upon which they can build as they expand their knowledge of

editing. However, even these theory-focused lessons were not lacking some practical aspects; they always included a simple editing exercise[6], e.g., find and correct typos or simple grammar errors in a provided text[7], or at least a discussion on a given topic.

After these lessons, the focus of the course shifted to practical editing of various texts as our research results suggest practice is the key to learning how to edit. For these lessons, students were assigned texts on a weekly basis, and they were given a week to edit each text using review functionalities of word processors on computers, i.e., tracked changes and comments in accordance with the dominant form of editing as suggested by our survey.

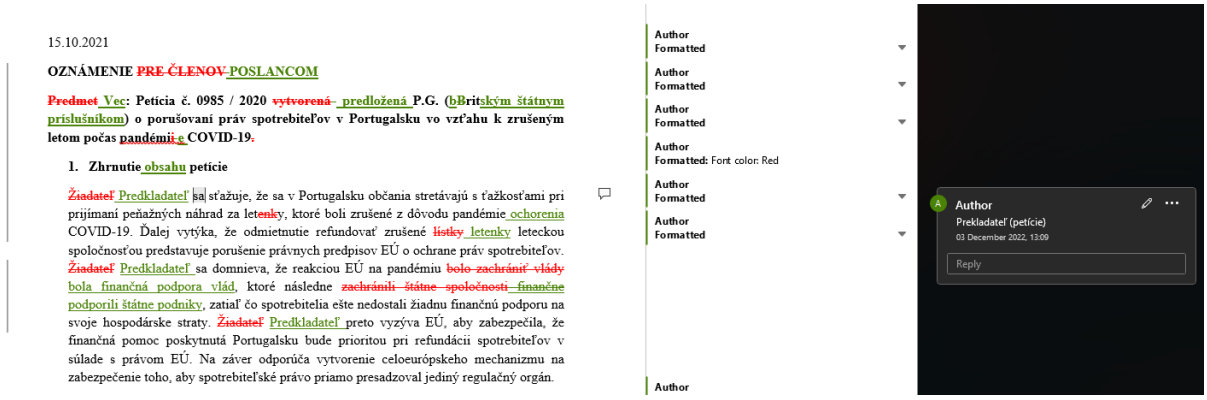


Figure 1. Example of student edited text

The briefs for these weekly assignments focused on stylistic editing according to text genre conventions and specificities. For example, when editing a literary text, students needed to keep in mind the dynamic nature or "smoothness" of the provided texts – to a degree appropriate for the selected texts – or they needed to maintain/improve clarity of a scientific text, etc. When the students were provided with a source text in addition to a translation (more on this later), they also needed to consider the translation's adequacy in terms of not only the style, but also content. Regardless of whether the students were provided with a source text or not, proofreading or grammar corrections were also encouraged, e.g., corrections of wrong prepositions, incorrect words, punctuation, etc., as well as corrections of typos. Although it is stylistic and content editing that lies at the core of editing proper and proofreading is primarily the task of dedicated proofreaders, editors may correct proofreading issues when they encounter them (cf. Martinkovič 2022). Additionally, students

[6] A good source of exercises and inspiration for them is Brian Mossop's *Revising and Editing for Translators* (2014).

[7] A good source of texts for these exercises seems to be online news articles as they frequently include genuine and real errors and thus require minimal to no introduction of "artificial" errors by the teacher.

practised proofreading through other dedicated exercises allowing us to focus the weekly editing exercises on editing itself.

During the subsequent lessons, up to three students per lesson took turns presenting their work on these assignments and the changes they made were discussed with the rest of the class. Students, both the presenters and their classmates, were also frequently asked to argue for why any given change was justified and required or why it may have been unnecessary or even incorrect. There are several reasons for this lesson design: it is intended to encourage students to truly consider how and why they are working with a text rather than make changes purely on instinct and improve their ability to argue in favour of their changes and explain them to the translator/whoever else should the need arise. The discussions also reinforced interactive elements of the lessons and helped ensure active participation of the students on the assigned tasks.

The range of assigned texts was rather wide. Per the syllabus, students worked with two journalistic (one taken from at the time current political news and one entrepreneur interview from the field of specialty coffee), two popular-scientific (National Geographic article on an anthropology discovery and introduction to a book on the human immune system), two literary (two modern short stories), one institutional (an EU petition), and one scientific text (an excerpt from an unfinished manuscript on editing practise in Slovakia/our PhD dissertation) in order to acquaint them with an array of issues and text types and conventions they may encounter in practise. The texts, however, were not differentiating only by their genres. The journalistic and scientific texts were for the most part original Slovak texts due to limited availability of translations of such texts into Slovak. As we piloted this course design, we have experimented with having students translate a journalistic text and then edit each other's translation to provide them with an opportunity to edit authentic translation manuscripts. However, students attending the course study different languages, hence not all can translate the same text. This can be resolved by different students working with different texts, significantly increasing demands on lesson preparation and possibly lowering student engagement if a text a student did not work with is discussed instead of one they have edited/translated themselves Alternatively, students who for example do not study English can merely edit someone else's translation without translating themselves, thus having less work than their translating classmates; they would also have lesser knowledge of the source text compared to translating students. Furthermore, the translating students would in the translation process attain knowledge of the given text from the translator's perspective which is knowledge an editor typically will not have in practise. Last but not least, the translation phase significantly increased effort and time requirements on the students' part and we found non-presenting students participated more actively when they were familiar with the presented translation, i.e., when they themselves edited the same translation as

the presenting students. For these reasons, we have abandoned the idea of first translating and then editing after one lesson.[8]

As for the assigned translated texts, we did not always provide students with the original text. The reasoning here is twofold: on the one hand, our research shows a practising editor may encounter translations from languages they do not speak (cf. Martinkovič 2022) and thus we simulated such situations when students did not have access to the original (we even used a literary translation from Russian which most students in the pilot semester did not speak – only 3 out of 18 students attending the course studied Russian), and on the other hand it limited the degree to which students may have been influenced by the source text to believe a solution unnatural to Slovak was adequate because it e.g. matched the original syntax.

Finally, the assigned texts varied in quality. Some of them were of rather low quality with many mistakes while others offered only a couple of places where improvements were warranted and included even fewer outright mistakes. However, students invariably attempted to correct elements that already were correct. This offered an opportunity to teach students that their changes should be limited and not be based purely on preference as the editor is not the translator and they should not try to replace the translator (cf. Ferenčík 1982) but rather enhance the translator's work.

To further enhance the lessons and provide students with up-to-date information from the practise, practising guest speakers were invited. In the pilot phase, guest lectures with experts from several fields, e.g., institutional, specifically EU text translation and editing, were offered and we intend to invite more speakers in the future, particularly for the lessons on literary translation.

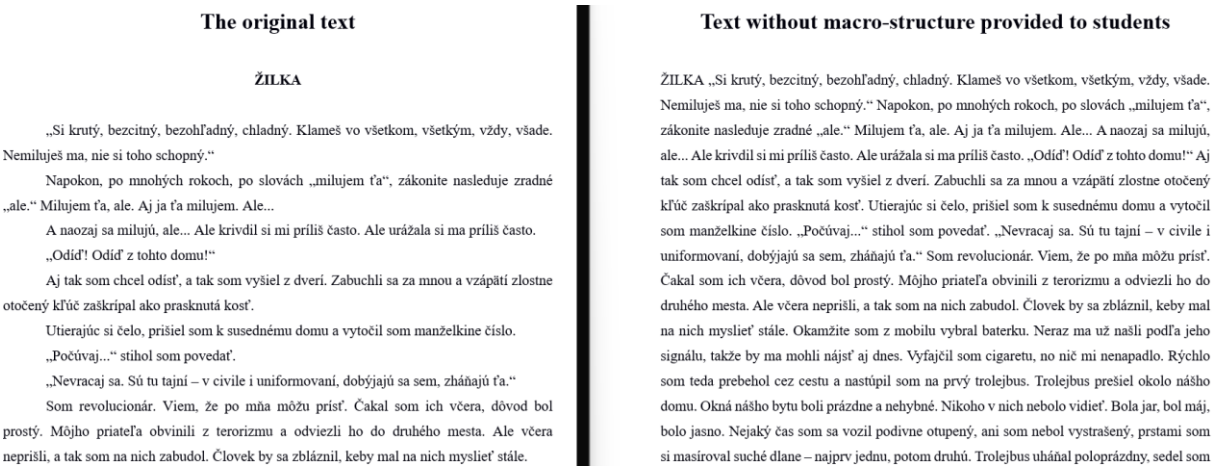
3.1 Exercise types

Much like the theory-oriented lessons, the practical lessons tended to include different exercises. Throughout the pilot phase, the exercises were most frequently aimed at correcting the use of commas and punctuation in general in provided texts. The form of these exercises varied; the students may have been provided with a text with various

[8] Although we do apply a similar translate-edit process once per semester in our courses on literary translation with two differences – all students there study English and students will typically have one week to produce a translation and another week to edit a classmate's translation assigned to them; we plan this exercise around either guest lectures or cancelled lessons e.g. due to holidays to provide students with this two-week window. We use this exercise to both acquaint students with basics of editing if they do not sign up for the Translation Editing course and to help them view the text being translated from a different point of view.

comma or other punctuation related errors, e.g., the use of incorrect type of a dash, incorrect use of a semicolon, etc. The students' task was then to correct such errors and argue for why the corrections were made in order to encourage students to consciously consider Slovak grammar rules rather than rely on instinct. These specific exercises were introduced based on our teaching experience as we frequently encounter such issues in student translations and in Slovak texts in general and based on the provided roles of editors and proofreaders (Halová 2022), students need to be prepared to correct them. Furthermore, offering exercises focused on grammar corresponds with the survey results indicating the importance of courses with the same focus.

Other tested exercises included providing students with a text that had its macro-structure removed, i.e., paragraphs, headings, etc. were all merged into a continuous text (Figure 2), and the students were then tasked to provide the text new macro-structure.



The original text

ŽILKA

„Si krutý, bezcitný, bezohľadný, chladný. Klameš vo všetkom, všetkým, vždy, všade. Nemiluješ ma, nie si toho schopný."

Napokon, po mnohých rokoch, po slovách „milujem ťa", zákonite nasleduje zradné „ale." Milujem ťa, ale. Aj ja ťa milujem. Ale...

A naozaj sa milujú, ale... Ale krivdil si mi príliš často. Ale urážala si ma príliš často.

„Odíď! Odíď z tohto domu!"

Aj tak som chcel odísť, a tak som vyšiel z dverí. Zabuchli sa za mnou a vzápätí zlostne otočený kľúč zaškrípal ako prasknutá kosť.

Utierajúc si čelo, prišiel som k susednému domu a vytočil som manželkine číslo.

„Počúvaj..." stihol som povedať.

„Nevracaj sa. Sú tu tajní – v civile i uniformovaní, dobýjajú sa sem, zháňajú ťa."

Som revolucionár. Viem, že po mňa môžu prísť. Čakal som ich včera, dôvod bol prostý. Môjho priateľa obvinili z terorizmu a odviezli ho do druhého mesta. Ale včera neprišli, a tak som na nich zabudol. Človek by sa zbláznil, keby mal na nich myslieť stále.

Text without macro-structure provided to students

ŽILKA „Si krutý, bezcitný, bezohľadný, chladný. Klameš vo všetkom, všetkým, vždy, všade. Nemiluješ ma, nie si toho schopný." Napokon, po mnohých rokoch, po slovách „milujem ťa", zákonite nasleduje zradné „ale." Milujem ťa, ale. Aj ja ťa milujem. Ale... A naozaj sa milujú, ale... Ale krivdil si mi príliš často. Ale urážala si ma príliš často. „Odíď! Odíď z tohto domu!" Aj tak som chcel odísť, a tak som vyšiel z dverí. Zabuchli sa za mnou a vzápätí zlostne otočený kľúč zaškrípal ako prasknutá kosť. Utierajúc si čelo, prišiel som k susednému domu a vytočil som manželkine číslo. „Počúvaj..." stihol som povedať. „Nevracaj sa. Sú tu tajní – v civile i uniformovaní, dobýjajú sa sem, zháňajú ťa." Som revolucionár. Viem, že po mňa môžu prísť. Čakal som ich včera, dôvod bol prostý. Môjho priateľa obvinili z terorizmu a odviezli ho do druhého mesta. Ale včera neprišli, a tak som na nich zabudol. Človek by sa zbláznil, keby mal na nich myslieť stále. Okamžite som z mobilu vybral baterku. Neraz ma už našli podľa jeho signálu, takže by ma mohli nájsť aj dnes. Vyfajčil som cigaretu, no nič mi nenapadlo. Rýchlo som teda prebehol cez cestu a nastúpil som na prvý trolejbus. Trolejbus prešiel okolo nášho domu. Okná nášho bytu boli prázdne a nehybné. Nikoho v nich nebolo vidieť. Bola jar, bol máj, bolo jasno. Nejaký čas som sa vozil podivne otupený, ani som nebol vystrašený, prstami som si masíroval suché dlane – najprv jednu, potom druhú. Trolejbus uháňal poloprázdny, sedel som

Figure 2. Side-by-side view of the original text and the same text with its macro-structure removed

Although it is not translation editor's job to alter the text's macro-structure, they can encounter cases of a translation altering macro-structure either accidentally (we have encountered cases of accidentally merged or split paragraphs in our teaching practise) or perhaps even on purpose. Another intention of this exercise is to encourage students to consider the relationship between the content and the structure of a given text (cf. Mossop 2014), to grasp the text in a more comprehensive manner.

We have also piloted providing students with a list of phrases and sentences that included common mistakes in Slovak (see Table 4 for examples); students were given only the leftmost column), many made under the influence of foreign languages (a source for these errors was Branko 2014). Students were told each phrase or sentence contained a mistake and were asked to correct them.

Incorrect	Correct	Error Type
Pripusťme, že Fitzgeraldovi **vrátime rukopis**…	Dajme tomu, že Fitzgeraldovi **rukopis vrátime**…	Incorrect word order
Zdravotný stav sa bude dať posúdiť, až keď si sadne na **svoju** posteľ...	Zdravotný stav sa bude dať posúdiť, až keď si sadne na posteľ...	Incorrect use of a possessive pronoun
Moskva akúkoľvek účasť na vražde Litvinenka **odmieta**.	Moskva akúkoľvek účasť na vražde Litvinenka **popiera**.	Incorrect verb
Ján **záporne** pokrútil hlavou; Ján **nadšene** prikývol hlavou	Ján pokrútil hlavou; Ján nadšene prikývol	Redundant use of adjectives

Table 4. Incorrect phrases and their corrected versions

In the last exercise we will mention, students were provided a text and a list of editing signs. While as we have discussed previously, editing signs are not used commonly any more as editing is generally done electronically with track changes functionality, some editors still work on paper and use the signs (cf. Martinkovič 2022). As such, students were asked to edit the provided text using the signs from the list to familiarise themselves with the signs in case they ever encounter them either as editors or translators.

3.2 Student feedback and future outlook

At the end of the semester, students were asked to provide general feedback via a short anonymous online form consisting of one scale question and three open questions:

- "Were you satisfied with the course?" – scale question with the options "Yes", "Mostly yes", "Mostly no", and "No".
- "What did you like about the course?" – open question
- "What did you dislike about the course?" – open question
- "How would you improve the course?" – open question

It is also worth noting that none of the questions was marked as required, i.e., students could choose to answer only some of the questions.

Of the 18 students who attended the course, 10 (i.e., 55.56%) of the students provided us with feedback; the lower rate of participation can easily be explained by the fact that the feedback form was provided to students online after the last lesson (although they were told they would receive the form ahead of time during the last lesson) and providing feedback was voluntary.

When it comes to the first question, not much needs to be said here other than that students seemed to perceive the course as a whole quite positively – 70% answered they were satisfied with the course and the remaining 30% were mostly satisfied. The overall positive perception carried over to the second question, where students wrote positively

mainly in regard to the practical orientation of the course as well as the variety of text genres and various exercises. Students were also appreciative of the fact they always received feedback on their assignments in a manner they perceived positively: "*I liked that we were not stressed about making incorrect changes when we were presenting our edited texts. Even when we did make a mistake, we simply explained to each other how it was wrong…*"

When it comes to student criticisms, they only really provided three points. One student felt there was too much theory in the beginning of the semester. While we do not agree in principle, it may be worth considering spreading out the theory from early lessons across more lessons as the syllabus may currently appear a little imbalanced with the first lessons focused on theory combined with some shorter exercises and later lessons being focused on practice with little theory. The same student also felt that some of the discussed solutions were left unclear or ambiguous. Addressing this criticism is a bit difficult with no examples provided. Nevertheless, translation and translation editing are not exact sciences and while there can be translation solutions and editing changes that are outright incorrect (e.g., grammatically), what is or is not adequate in each text is always at least partially subjective which may give rise to ambiguity. That being said, perhaps this and situations/solutions and changes where this applies need to be better communicated to students. Another student criticises at times monotonous checking of their classmates' edited texts which is a fair criticism despite our efforts. Especially when it came to texts that required few minor changes and when students edited them entirely correctly, the presentations and feedback to them could turn a little monotonous and we will need to attempt to address this in the future to increase student engagement.

As for improvements to the course, students suggest inviting a professional editor to show how they work and as already mentioned we intend to do so; in fact, we intended to do so even in the pilot semester, but it ultimately did not work out. Another good suggestion is providing students with a list of frequent mistakes made by translators which is an excellent idea and we are already considering implementing it with the help of an invited speaker, a professional editor, should they accept our invitation.

Let us also add our own future plans – most were essentially covered by the students' feedback, but we also intend to change how students present their edited texts a little. In the pilot semester, we at times felt much more focus ended up being put on the changes students have made and not enough on the changes they perhaps should have made but did not. One possible solution could be examining the texts in more detail during the lessons to keep a natural flow rather than simply comparing students' changes with our own and interrupting when the presenting student did not make a change we did.

4. Concluding remarks

Translation editing has long been situated at the fringes of translation studies and translator training. While it is true that editor training has a relatively long history in Slovakia, for much of it the training took place under the umbrella of publishing houses rather than more traditional educational institutions such as universities. Even when it has in fact moved to universities, it was dominantly within other linguistic and translation study programmes and it seems students were usually provided only general language education rather than being trained in editing-specific skills. Eventually, an editor-specific university study programme was created at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, but not until 2010 and even than it does not provide a definitive answer to the question of training editors of translations; the study programme may focus on editing and publishing of texts, but in turn it is the translation aspect that takes a back seat and the results of our focus group discussion suggest the results of the programme are limited when it comes to the actual editing of translations/texts. Furthermore, a single study programme for the entire country is bound to have limited reach. This might imply there is a need to open more such study programmes, but again, their results seem somewhat limited and the establishing of new study programmes is no small or easy task. Luckily, it is not the only possible way forward.

Slovak translation studies consider translation and translation editing to be closely connected and they posit that translation editors should possess experience as translators. Additionally, survey respondents (Martinkovič 2022) mention a multitude of courses already taught within translation studies courses, e.g., Slovak morphology, lexicology, syntax, stylistics or translation seminars as being useful for their practise. This would suggest that a less costly and more purpose-fit way forward is the inclusion of editing-specific courses within translation studies programmes. In fact, the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra now does offer a master's level *Translation Editing* course to its students. It has been piloted in the winter semester 2022. The main article body describes the pilot design of the course in more detail, but in short, the course covered what we consider to be the elemental theory of translation editing, but for the most part it focused on practical elements; students were tasked weekly with the editing of a new text with texts varying in terms of genre, type (original Slovak or translation) and quality. This design decision was made based on the survey and focus group discussion results presented in the first part of the article that indicate practice is of utmost importance in relation to editor training. Once students had edited a given text, they were asked to present their work and it was then discussed with the entire class. Course lessons were further enhanced with various exercises ranging from essentially proofreading given texts and correcting punctuation to working with text macro-structure. The proofreading or grammar focus of most exercises was also motivated by

our research results as respondents within the research considered language and grammar-oriented courses from their own studies to be highly useful.

Based on our own perceptions and student feedback described in the very last part of the article we conclude that the piloting stage of the course was successful and the overall design has been proven viable, although there is still room for improvement in terms of interactive elements of the lessons, of guest speakers from the practise, and of some exercises – e.g. an exercise that includes phrases and sentences containing frequent errors seems to need to be expanded with a list of frequent mistakes made by translators specifically.

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