

# **Subtitle revision in translator training: a case study of revisional modifications in TED translation crowdsourcing**

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## **Abstract**

Revision training and audiovisual translation have recently become an essential part of translator training in Hungary (Robin and Zachar 2020, Horváth 2011). This article intends to combine the two areas and analyse audiovisual translation revision of student translators. Although scientific research has already moved also into the field of examining the revision process of scientific and technical documents and the post-editing process of machine-translated texts, thorough research into the revision process of audiovisual texts, and especially crowdsourced subtitles, is still scarce. The main aims of this paper are, firstly, to investigate the types of revisional interventions student revisers (i.e. non-professional revisers) perform, secondly, to describe the cooperation processes between translators and revisers and finally, to examine whether the audiovisual translation mode influences the revisional modifications of the revisers. My case study in this paper is conducted by analysing the translations and revisions of three TED Talks. The TED Talks translations of translation studies university students (i.e. non-professional translators) were subject to in-house revision. The findings show that a more efficient cooperation between translators and revisers could significantly improve the quality of the translations. In order to achieve this goal, the translator training programmes should draw the attention of the students to the importance of the revision process, provide them with the necessary theoretical background to revision and familiarize them with the genre-specific and translation mode-specific norms.

## **Introduction**

In one of his recent articles, Mario Bisiada (2018) emphasised the importance of raising awareness for the role revision plays in the translation process. According to Bisiada (2018), the object of translation research should not be limited only to published texts since they cannot be regarded as the only source of information for describing the language of translated texts. Investigating the contribution of editors and revisers to the final version of the translated texts can provide researchers with a deeper insight into the process of creating a new text, i.e. the translation itself. My paper is based on this research principle of Bisiada (2018) and aims to draw light on the role of the reviser in the process of one type of audiovisual translation, i.e. subtitling. In my paper the work of non-professional revisers, i.e. translation students, are examined with a view to the revisional modifications they used and how cooperation between revisers and translators was performed.

# 1 Theoretical background

## 1.1 Terminological considerations: editing and revising

There is no common scientific consent on the exact definition of revision. Mossop (2014) regards *revision* and *editing* as two separate activities during the translation process. The underlying difference is that the editor focuses only on the target language text while the reviser also compares the translated text with the source language text.

Bisiada (2018) and Kruger (2017) discuss *editorial interventions* in their articles on translation revision. Although Bisiada (2018) does define the term *editing* as the monolingual review of the target text, he claims that the editorial interventions can be examined not only on non-translated texts written originally in the target language but also on translated texts. He states that the final quality of translated texts is not only the responsibility of translators and revisers, who deal with bilingual corrections, but also of editors dealing with monolingual corrections since their modifications have a major impact on the final target text. Kruger (2017) also investigated the impact of editorial interventions on the final quality of texts, but the object of her research was non-translated texts. Her major finding was that the linguistic features found to be characteristic of translated texts (the so-called *translation universals* – e.g. increased explicitness, conventionalization, simplification) are similar to those of edited texts. It can therefore be deduced that editors and revisers do perform overlapping tasks and their activities have a major influence on the quality of target language texts – either translated or non-translated.

In her lecture on South-African translation workflow, Feinauer (2017) revealed that in real life situation revision is a complex process and it is far from being a linear activity with the translator being on one end and the reviser/editor being on the other end of the string. Instead of defining binary oppositions between revision and editing, or self-revision and other revision, it has to be acknowledged that the revision process forms a very complex loop with the continuous feedback of the translator, the reviser, the editor, the proofreader, and all agents involved in the translation process. She suggests that the term *revision* be used as the umbrella term describing this complex process.

The Hungarian translation scholar Edina Robin (2018b: 78) also proposes the use of the umbrella term *revision* (*lektorálás* (HU)). She claims that the broadest category among the group of activities linked to the revision process could be *full revision* made up of a series of intertwined subsets containing the individual activities of correcting and improving translated texts.

The current version of the ISO 17100: 2015 standard issued by the International Organisation for Standardisation is recommended to be applied by every translation service provider and it divides the revision process into various subsets in accordance with the operations of the translation industry (Table 1).

| PROFESSION   | WORK PROCESS                  | LANGUAGE DIRECTION | DEFINITION  |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| translator   | checking                      | monolingual        | examination of TL content   |
| reviser      | revision<br>bilingual editing | bilingual          | examination of TL content against SL content for its suitability for the agreed purpose |
| reviewer     | review<br>monolingual editing | monolingual        | examination of TL content for its suitability for the agreed purpose                    |
| proof-reader | proof-reading                 | monolingual        | examination of the revised TL content and applying corrections before printing          |

**Table 1: People and tasks in the revision process – based on ISO 17100: 2015**

The ISO guidelines and provisions for translation service providers (TSPs) are in line with the currently formulating principle in translation studies that the umbrella term used for the corrections and modifications performed on the text by the translator or another party before publication should be *revision*. The revisional tasks are then divided into various smaller activities all playing an important role in the quality of the final text.

According to Mossop (2014) being a reviser is not a separate profession since revision is an inherent element of the translation process and is inseparably linked to it. The trainings in Hungary offered for future revisers do not contradict this statement since both postgraduate courses and qualifying exams (Vermes 2017) that provide trainings or offer exam opportunities in revision, are combined with specialized translation: postgraduate course in business and legal translation and revision (offered by Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Department of Translation and Interpreting); qualifying exam in specialized translation and revision (offered by Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Department of Translation and Interpreting). Although a strong link is forged between translation and revision, the hard and soft skills necessary for these professions are only similar but not identical: translation students should be endowed with both translation competence and revision competence (see Robin 2016) in order to enhance efficiency in real-life translation context.

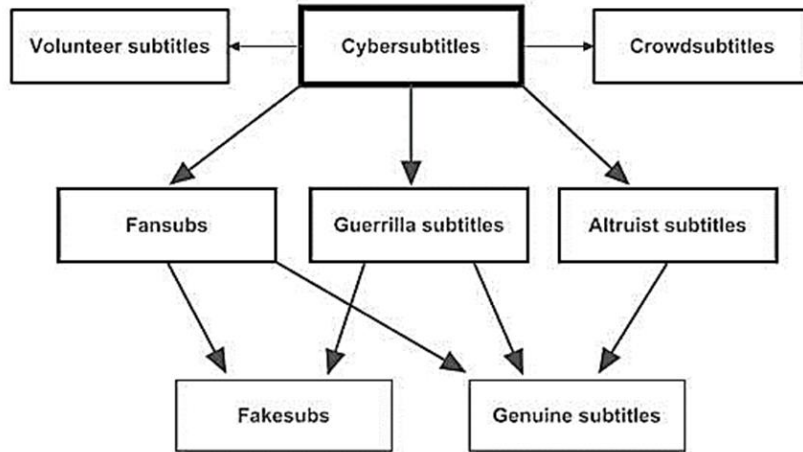
## 1.2 Revision in audiovisual translation

Audiovisual translation (AVT) differs from traditional translation modes in various aspects. The most significant differences were brought into the attention of researchers by Díaz-Cintas (2012, 281) who wrote critically about early audiovisual translation research since the studies “have concentrated unduly on the linguistic dimension solely ..., forgetting not only the semiotic complexity of the audiovisual production but also the fact that technical considerations must be part of the equation”. Compared to the traditional translation mode (i.e. written material is translated into written material), in AVT the linguistic challenges of translation are supplemented by semiotic and technical issues that audiovisual translators have to deal with.

Nowadays, a significant number of studies deal with the technicalities of audiovisual translation (Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón 2019, Manchón and Orero 2018) and the link between the verbal and non-verbal visual elements. The focus, therefore, seems to have shifted in recent years from the more linguistic-oriented studies to those that deal with the technical or multimodal specificities of AVT. In this paper I will endeavor to return to the linguistic investigation of AVT and compare my findings with those revealed during the analysis of the traditional translation mode.

It is not just the focus of AVT research that has changed in the past years but studies tend to investigate even narrower topics. AVT, as a type of translation mode, in fact, contains various subcategories (Pérez-González 2014, Orero and Braun 2010): i.e. subtitling, revoicing (dubbing, voice-over, narration) and assistive forms of AVT (audionarration, SDH, respeaking, audio subtitling). These subcategories of AVT have established their own research methods.

Even within subtitling (which is one audiovisual translation form), translator decisions might depend on the given subtitling method used. Studies, therefore, should clarify to which subtitling method their findings are applicable. In my paper I will use the subtitle categories created by Díaz-Cintas (2018). He has introduced the term *cybersubtitle* which can be used as an umbrella term for the new forms of subtitles created by using online subtitling platforms in the age of digital media (Figure 1.).



**Figure 1: Cybersubtitle types according to Díaz-Cintas (2018, 133)**

Using the categories created by Díaz-Cintas (2018), the subtitling of TED Talks belongs to *altruist crowds subtitles* since the aim of the volunteer translators is to create interlingual subtitles in order that those who are not familiar with the language of the presenter could also understand the presentations that are mainly about recent scientific achievements in various fields of research. Moreover, TED interlingual subtitles are *genuine subtitles*, i.e. these subtitles strive to be honest to the original message. This characteristic feature makes TED subtitling similar to traditional translation allowing the researchers to compare the findings of these types of translation but differentiates it from fakesubs where the divergent translation aims hinder comparability.

Knowing that TED interlingual subtitles are genuine subtitles created for altruistic purposes is vital for translation research since it can be deduced that the linguistic dimension in this translation process will presumably be more important than in other subtitle types. This statement is supported by the fact that the non-verbal visuals (as e.g. in films) do not play a major part in the subtitling process since TED Talks are individual presentations where basically the body movements of the presenter and the accompanying slides serve as visual elements. Moreover, although the technical side of subtitling is present, the conversational style of the presenters and the speed of the talks that is set to foster understandability, generally do not trigger major reductions or omissions.

The quality of TED Talks subtitles is ensured and maintained by the workflow that can be described by a 4-tier model. The translation process starts with the *intralingual transcription* of the presentation followed by the *interlingual translation*, which is finally *revised* and *approved* before publication.



**Figure 2: The 4-tier model of TED Talks translations**

The revision of the draft translation is performed by the *reviewer* who carries out monolingual and bilingual revision and mentoring tasks. The main tasks of the reviewer are ensuring that the translation is accurate (i.e. the target text (TT) message is equivalent to source text (ST) message), the translation is grammatically and stylistically correct (i.e. conforms to TT norms), the translation follows the technical guidelines and the structure of the subtitles is also correct (i.e. conforms to the technicalities of AVT) and the reviewer provides constructive feedback to the translator. It seems therefore evident that the reviewer of translated TED Talks performs both bilingual revision and monolingual editing so TED reviewers undertake different types of revisional tasks but all of them fall into the umbrella category of *revision*. (see TED Translators Wiki: *How to Tackle a Review* – section title: What is the job of a reviewer?)

TED reviewers do not work alone in their ivory towers. It is stipulated that one of their main tasks is to cooperate with the translators: they provide constructive feedback and they discuss any arising issue with the translator until they reach a final consensus and accept the final version to be submitted for approval (see TED Translators Wiki: *How to Tackle a Review* – section title: Recommended workflow). This cooperation must be based on common ground, i.e. a mutually understood and accepted revision process that facilitates smooth workflow between translators and revisers. My paper aims to reveal how this smooth cooperation can be reached.

Only experienced TED translators can become TED reviewers, which means that TED volunteer translators have to translate at least 90 minutes of talks before being eligible for the position of reviewer (see TED.com. *Get started*). In this real-life example, similarly to translator training programmes, translation and revision tasks are not separated but built upon each other. The quality of the subtitles is therefore maintained by both the reviser and the translator. It is even stated among the TED guidelines for revisers that “the quality of the translation lies in your [the reviewers’] hands just as much as in the hands of the translator” (see TED Translators Wiki: *How to Tackle a Review* – section title: What is the job of a reviewer?).

In line with the statement of Jiménez-Crespo (2018), the quality of volunteer translations – among them TED Talks translations – is guaranteed by the clearly defined workflow on the one hand and the common responsibility of translator and reviser on the other.

### **1.3 Revision process: chain, loop, spiral**

One of the main tasks of TED revisers (reviewers) is to maintain a continuous flow of communication with the translators. According to Klaudy (2003, 134) editors/revisers represent the last stage before the consumer is reached. Editors/revisers can be found at the end-point of a linear process, they are the last link in the long *chain* of the translation and revision process supervising the material before the client receives the final version.

In certain translation environments, however, the modifications proposed by the reviser are sent back to the translator to make the

necessary corrections in the draft version. This process is described by Horváth (2011, 86) in his monograph on the revision of technical translations. Demonstrating the revision process taking place at the Hungarian Office for Translation and Attestation (OFFI), he talks about *revision loops*, which means that the translator receives the text after revision twice for the corrections to be inserted into the draft version. In this case the translation and revision process does not resemble a chain, rather a stretched spring with two loops in the middle.

With reference to the revision process of literary translations, the study of Feinauer (2017) revealed that revision is not a linear process since it rather resembles a colourful string of balls. She claims that the agents taking part in the revision process are not limited only to the translator and the reviser, but the proofreader, the editor and all involved in the publishing of the book participate in the revision process who create an inextricable web of modification proposals.

In the TED revision process the modifications proposed by the reviewer can either be accepted or rejected by the translator after justifying their decisions. There is a continuous communication taking place between the translator and the reviewer from that time on. This invisible revision process resembles the form of a spiral. The starting point is the TL draft translation and the end point is the revised and approved TL text. Between the starting and the end point there is a continuous revisional feedback process between the translator and the reviser. Their subsequent reactions to each other's modifications continuously modify and develop the TL text until it reaches its final version. I propose a new term for this invisible process, the *revision spiral*, that forms an important and integral part of translation. In my view, the revision spiral is not only characteristic of the volunteer TED translator community but it might arise in every translation mode. Translator training programmes therefore should put an emphasis on making students be aware of the complexity of the revision process and practice the cooperation between the various agents involved in the whole revision process.

#### **1.4 Revision improvement: typology of revisional modifications**

Revisional modifications have a major influence on the final text, therefore the task of the revisers forms an integral part of the translation process. In this way, a new research path is open for translation scholars: it is not just the translation universals but also the revisional universals are to be searched for. Robin (2018b, 2018c) has realized the common characteristic features of translated and revised text and she devised a new typology of revisional modifications (Table 2).

| <b>Revisional modification</b> | <b>Prescriptive force</b> | <b>Basis of intervention</b>                               |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| rule-based                     | compulsory                | TL linguistic rules, translation brief                     |
| norm-based                     | optional                  | conformity to TL norms                                     |
| strategy-based                 | optional                  | processability and readability of the text for the readers |
| preference-based               | unnecessary               | reviser's own preference                                   |
| defective                      | erroneous                 | not correcting errors or committing new errors             |

**Table 2: Typology of revisional modifications based on Robin (2018b)**

It is compulsory for the revisers to perform the rule-based modifications in order that the TL text be in harmony with the rules of the target language system. Norm-based modifications are only optional procedures that make the TL texts more compliant with TL norms. Strategy-based modifications are also optional and they aim at preserving the contextual effect of the SL text. Preference-based modifications are not necessary since they do not improve the text. The category of defective modifications contains errors in the TL text that are not corrected or new errors committed unintentionally by the revisers. These defective modifications can ruin the linguistic and contextual effect of the TL text.

In this paper I intend to explore the use of the above modifications in the Hungarian–English subtitling work of non-professional student translators and revisers.

### **1.5 Revision improvement: differentiated marking**

Robin (2018a) proposed to use differentiated marking during the evaluation of translated texts in translator training. This evaluation system allows teachers to use different feedback solutions to help students differentiate between compulsory and optional modifications in the TL text.

If the translation is corrected on the computer, the compulsory rule-based and norm-based corrections can appear in the running text, while the optional modifications that translators can choose to accept or reject can be inserted into the comment bubble. If the translation is corrected on paper, the teacher can opt for choosing different colours, e.g. red and green, to show whether the modification proposed is a compulsory correction or an optional improvement.

In this way the reviser clarifies for the translator which modification proposals are most likely to be accepted since they are deemed compulsory and which are the ones that await further decision-making on the part of the translator since they are only optional solutions. The use of differentiated marking might lead to a more efficient cooperation between



the translator and the reviser since the categorization of the proposed modifications eases understanding and aims at justifying the decisions.

Since this differentiated marking might be used not only for didactic purposes but in real-life situations as well, my study also aims at revealing whether the student translators and revisers could exploit these benefits.

## **2 Research design**

In this study I analysed the work of translation students pursuing their MA studies at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, Hungary. They are regarded in this case study as non-professional or volunteer translators taking part in the translation and revision of three TED Talks presentations from Hungarian into English, i.e. doing inverse translation from their mother tongue into their second, i.e. B language. For translators of minor languages - like Hungarian - it is almost a common task to undertake inverse translation since the number of translators in these languages is limited compared to the number of translators in major languages.

The translations were done in the Amara subtitling software that TED uses in its crowdsourced translation activity. The revision of the translated subtitles, however, was done in Microsoft Word to ease communication between the translator and the reviser. The computer-based revision process enabled the use of differentiated marking by either using in-text comments or the comment bubbles.

My main focus was examining the revisional modifications - based on the typology of Robin (2018b) - performed during the revision process and whether the special characteristics of AVT had an influence on the modification types used. A further aim was to monitor whether the translators and revisers could cooperate in an efficient way.

## **3 Research questions and hypotheses**

The main research questions my study intended to answer were the following:

1. How does the translation and revision process affect the number of words and the number of characters in the final TL text?
2. How did translators and revisers cooperate during the revision process in order to ensure that the reasons for their modifications are understood more easily?
3. What is the frequency of the revisional modifications used? How does AVT change the typology of revisional modifications?
4. What type of revisional modifications are accepted by the translators?

On the basis of the special characteristics of AVT and the translation workflow of TED Talks my hypothesis for the first question is that the number of characters will decline. On the one hand, the subtitles have to conform to the TED subtitling guidelines that might require compression or omission, e.g. while adjusting to 21 characters/second and 42

characters/line rules (see TED.com. *TED Translate Guidelines*). However, I expect a reverse tendency in the number of words since the agglutinative Hungarian language might use fewer but longer words compared to the inflective English language.

For the second research question I assume that although student translators and revisers will strive for cooperation, the extent of the justification of their decisions will vary depending on how much effort they put into searching for the best translation solutions especially in reverse translation. In case they deem the cognitive effort too high, they might opt for non-differentiated marking or the acceptance of the modification proposals without further scrutiny.

For the third research question, I assume that potential changes in the modification typology might arise since audiovisual translation has various characteristics that differ from traditional (written to written) translation and might make typological changes necessary. These differences can be the use of the visual elements appearing in TED Talk presentations as a supplement to the subtitles or adjusting to reading speed and line length requirements since both might allow for compression or omission.

My hypothesis for the fourth question was that there will be continuous communication and feedback provided between the translator and the reviser due to the existence of the revision spiral in the translation workflow.

#### **4 Research corpus**

Corpus-based revision research is generally performed on a tripartite parallel corpus (Bisiada 2018, Kruger 2017, Robin 2018b). In this study I worked with four versions of the TED Talks texts: the original SL text, the draft translation, the revised draft translation and the published version. During the translation and revision process of TED Talks, there are several revised translation versions emerging due to the existence of the revision spiral. While Klaudy (1996) called for the importance of creating revisional corpora already back in the 1990s, the question in 2020 is rather how many versions of the translated text should the revisional corpus contain (Kruger 2017).

The creation of revisional corpora is not an easy task since the translators and the TSPs are far from being eager to share with the public the draft translated and revised versions that evolve during the translation process. Even in the best cases only closed corpora are allowed to be created for a given research topic. For research purposes the most feasible solution seems to be using didactic corpora that contain revised texts created in translator training programmes. Future research is most likely to put emphasis on analysing the texts in these didactic corpora.

My research corpus contains the work of three volunteer translators (translation students) and revisers (experienced translation students). (See the Reference section for the three TED Talks – TED 1, TED 2, TED 3). The overall number of words in the SL texts is 3432 words while the final TL texts

contained 4096 words (Table 3). The analysis based on the changes in the number of words will be shown later in this paper.

| Number of words in the analysed TED Talks |                            |                   |                                       |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
|   | Original Hungarian SL text | Draft translation | Revised and published English TL text |
| TED 1                                     | 1488                       | 1714              | 1718                                  |
| TED 2                                     | 1212                       | 1504              | 1435                                  |
| TED 3                                     | 732                        | 936               | 943                                   |
| Sum                                       | 3432                       | 4154              | 4096                                  |

**Table 3: Number of words in the analysed TED Talks**

The overall number of characters in the SL texts is 20746, while this number in the final TL texts has slightly reduced to 19510 (Table 4). The analysis based on the changes in the number of characters will be shown later in this paper.

| Number of characters in the analysed TED Talks (without space) |                            |                   |                                       |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
|  | Original Hungarian SL text | Draft translation | Revised and published English TL text |
| TED 1  | 8540                       | 8247              | 8247                                  |
| TED 2  | 7268                       | 6834              | 6518                                  |
| TED 3  | 4938                       | 4730              | 4745                                  |
| Sum  | 20746                      | 19811             | 19510                                 |

**Table 4: Number of characters in the analysed TED Talks**

The length of the audiovisual materials used is: TED1 – 12 minutes and 46 seconds, TED2 – 9 minutes and 20 seconds and TED3 – 8 minutes and 31 seconds.

## **5 Research methodology**

According to Klaudy (2007, 122) research on the work of revisers can be done within the paradigm of descriptive translation studies by comparing the translated text with the original one and also within the paradigm of cognitive translation studies. The aim of the earlier methodology is to map the revisional modifications while that of the latter is to reveal the causes of the revisional decisions. Robin (2018b, 2018c) merges these two research methods by creating her revisional modification typology. During the descriptive analysis of the revisional modifications it is the various types of modifications that in themselves try to explain the causes of the revisional decisions.

Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) also claim in their comprehensive book on translation research methodology that there is no clear dividing line between descriptive and explanatory research since "[a]ny research that

attempts to place a certain phenomenon in context, even though its main aim may be descriptive, will inevitably establish links between different factors influencing that phenomenon” (2013, 205).

In this study I will use the typology of revisional modifications devised by Robin (2018b) in order to identify the operations made in the revision process of TED translations. The aim of the study is both the descriptive analysis of the revisional modifications and the search for the explanatory forces that drive the decisions of the revisers. The typological categorization of the revisional modifications was executed by double coding.

Firstly, I compared the number of words and characters in the parallel corpora in order to explore whether the quantitative changes can be linked to the translation or the revision process. Secondly, I checked whether the revisers used differentiated marking before sending the revised text back to the translator to clarify the underlying causes of their decisions.

The next phase included a multi-stage comparative analysis (Saldanha–O’Brien 2013, 219). As a first step, the comparison of the Hungarian intralingual subtitles with the oral presentations intended to unveil any textual differences. The next step involved comparing the SL text with the revised TL translation to see what type of modifications the revisers proposed. A further aim here was to explore whether AVT as a special translation mode necessitates any changes in the typology used. This phase, all in all, investigated the responsibility of the reviser in the translation process and the special revisional types due to the unique characteristics of AVT.

The final phase of the analysis intended to examine which modifications were accepted or rejected by the translator and whether there remained any errors in the text after the modifications of both the translator and the reviser. This phase investigated the responsibility of the translator in the revision process.

## **6 Research findings**

The intralingual subtitles contained only minor differences compared to the oral SL presentations. These minor differences occurred because the transcribers omitted some linguistic elements that are characteristic features of orality, like sentence restarters and slips of the tongue.

The difference in the number of words and characters (Table 3 and Table 4) show that translation from Hungarian to English resulted in a rise in the number of words but a decline in the number of characters. The earlier is likely to be an evident result of the different language systems of Hungarian and English, one being an agglutinative, the other being an inflected language. The latter result can be the effect of the special characteristics of AVT since the technical constraints (amount of time and space allotted for subtitles) do not make room for redundancies.

Table 5 and Table 6 intends to clarify whether it is the translation or the revision process that is rather responsible for the changes in the number of words and characters. Data show that revisional modifications had only

a minor effect on the volume of the texts investigated in this corpus (0,3%, 0,75%).

| Difference in the number of words (%) |                                |                                      |                             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                       | Original and draft translation | Draft translation and published text | Original and published text |
| TED 1                                 | +15,2%                         | +0,3%                                | +15,5%                      |
| TED 2                                 | +24%                           | -5%                                  | +19%                        |
| TED 3                                 | +27,25%                        | +0,75%                               | +28%                        |

**Table 5: Difference in the number of words during the translation and revision process**

| Difference in the number of characters (%) |                                |                                      |                             |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Original and draft translation | Draft translation and published text | Original and published text |
| TED 1                                      | -3,4%                          | 0%                                   | -3,4%                       |
| TED 2                                      | -5,9%                          | -4,5%                                | -10,4%                      |
| TED 3                                      | -4,3%                          | +0,3%                                | -4%                         |

**Table 6: Difference in the number of characters during the translation and revision process**

Significant revisional modifications only appear in TED2 translation (-5%). A closer analysis of the text, however, reveals that this reduction was not the result of the modifications of the reviser. It was eventually the deliberate decision of the translator to omit parts of the text even after receiving the revised text.

After having investigated what influence the revisional modifications had on the number of words and characters on the TL text, I turned to examine whether the revisers used differentiated marking during the revision process. The revisers had the opportunity to mark the compulsory corrections in the running text and the optional improvements in the comment bubble. This could have eased the work of the translators since it would have made a clear division between errors that are compulsory to correct and proposals that are optional to accept. The revisers, however, did not exploit the benefits of this opportunity. The reviser of the TED1 text used only the comment bubble for any modification type, while the revisers of TED2 and TED3 texts only used markings in the running text. Differentiated marking would surely assist translators in deciding which revisional modifications to accept in the final version. Since it was not evident which revisional modification was compulsory or optional, we will see from the analysis that the translators were inclined to accept all of the modification proposals of the reviser. Differentiated marking can not only make the work of the translators easier but that of the revisers as well, since they are forced to bring justifiable decisions on the type of

modification proposal they made therefore avoiding decreasing the number of new errors made.

As a third step I compared the original Hungarian SL transcriptions with the revised English translations. I examined what type of modifications the revisers proposed and what compulsory operations remained unchanged if any. My examination also intended to reveal whether the audiovisual translation mode could lead to changes in the original typology. Table 7 shows the modification types used by the revisers.

| Revisional modifications |       |      |       |      |       |      |
|--------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
|                          | TED 1 |      | TED 2 |      | TED 3 |      |
| Rule-based               | 33    | 42%  | 65    | 72%  | 22    | 63%  |
| Norm-based               | 15    | 19%  | 1     | 1%   | 0     | 0%   |
| Strategy-based           | 18    | 23%  | 2     | 2%   | 5     | 14%  |
| Preference-based         | 7     | 9%   | 7     | 8%   | 5     | 14%  |
| Uncorrected error        | 4     | 5%   | 15    | 16%  | 3     | 9%   |
| New error                | 1     | 1%   | 1     | 1%   | 0     | 0%   |
| AVT-specific             | 1     | 1%   | 0     | 0%   | 0     | 0%   |
| Sum                      | 79    | 100% | 91    | 100% | 35    | 100% |

**Table 7: Revisional modifications in the analysed translations**

The modification type used with the highest percentage by all three revisers was rule-based modification (43%, 72%, 63%). This high percentage in the case of inverse translation implies that more emphasis should be put in translator training on improving non-mother tongue, i.e. B language competence. To foster this type of language skill development, a typology of the most common errors should be created during the analyses of revisional modifications.

Norm-based modifications were only performed by one of the revisers with a higher percentage (19%). This result can be caused by the fact that the voluntary revisers revised subtitles that were translated into their B language and not into their mother tongue. An indispensable precondition for the use of norm-based modifications in inverse translation is the excellent foreign language knowledge and conscious language use. The low percentage of norm-based modifications might signify that the revisers were not confident in their language use therefore they were more lenient while correcting stylistic differences.

Strategy-based modifications were performed by two revisers with a higher percentage (23%, 14%). These modifications are linked to discourse-level corrections or improvements. In translator training institutions the translation students learn the use of computer-assisted translation environment tools since hands-on knowledge of these tools is one of the current market requirements. These tools divide whole texts into small segments that operate on sentence- or clause-level therefore they do not support the internalization and practice of discourse-level translation strategies. The low percentage of revisional modifications draw the

attention of the training institutions to the importance of deepening the knowledge of the students in discourse-level translation strategies besides teaching them the use of CAT tools.

Preference-based or unnecessary modifications have the same percentage figures in some of the analysed revisions as certain necessary modifications (9%, 8%, 14%). This percentage figure could be lowered if differentiated marking would make revisers reconsider all of their decisions. Since revisers are responsible for the quality of the text, they should be able to justify their revisional decisions in every case. Differentiated marking would also clarify for the translators which modifications are preference-based. It would therefore become apparent that the translators are in a decision-making position: the acceptance or rejection of the proposed modification is their responsibility.

Moreover, it is also the responsibility of the translators to identify and correct the errors the revisers failed to correct or that were made by the revisers themselves. The percentage figure of the uncorrected errors by the revisers in the three texts is 5%, 16% and 9% respectively and there appeared to be some new errors made as well. The correction of these errors is the responsibility of the translator.

AVT-specific revisional modifications could only be identified in one instance in these texts. It could be explained by the fact that revision was performed in Microsoft Word and not in some subtitling software. The use of subtitling software could have enabled the swift recognition of AVT-specific translation errors since it shows through the use of another colour the deviation from the prescribed line length or reading speed. Moreover, the visual material (the TED Talks video recording) was not attached to the translated text in the Microsoft Word programme during the revision process although it could have influenced the decisions of the revisers. It is advisable, therefore, to practice AVT revision tasks both with and without the help of subtitling software to make the students be more aware of the differences existing between revising the translations of traditional and audiovisual texts.

After investigating the revisional modifications and the responsibilities of the revisers, I was also interested in the role of translators in the revision process. The focal point of this part of the study was to identify which revisional modifications were accepted by the translators (Table 8).

| Accepted (A) or Rejected (R) revisional modifications |       |   |       |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|
|   | TED 1 |   | TED 2 |   | TED 3 |   |
|   | A     | R | A     | R | A     | R |
| Rule-based  | 33    | 0 | 65    | 0 | 22    | 0 |
| Norm-based  | 15    | 0 | 1     | 0 | 0     | 0 |
| Strategy-based  | 18    | 0 | 2     | 0 | 5     | 0 |
| Preference-based                                      | 6     | 1 | 6     | 1 | 4     | 1 |
| Uncorrected error                                     | 4     | 0 | 14    | 1 | 3     | 0 |
| New error   | 0     | 1 | 1     | 0 | 0     | 0 |
| AVT-specific  | 1     | 0 | 0     | 0 | 0     | 0 |

|     |    |   |    |   |    |   |
|-----|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| Sum | 77 | 2 | 89 | 2 | 34 | 1 |
|-----|----|---|----|---|----|---|

**Table 8: Acceptance or rejection of revisional modifications**

As it is demonstrated in Table 8, all rule-based, norm-based and strategy-based revisional modifications were accepted by the translators. Accepting both the compulsory and optional revisional modifications proposed does not present a problem in itself, however, it implies that the translators trusted the decisions of the revisers without further considerations. Nevertheless, the fact that the translators also accepted all of the preference-based – unnecessary - modifications shows that the translators did not assume responsibility for the final quality of the translations but transferred it to the revisers. This statement is buttressed by the fact that the translators failed to identify and correct the errors left in the text by the revisers suggesting that no thorough revision is performed on the text by the translator after having received the modifications of the revisers.

On the basis of the above result, I find it important that translator training courses draw the attention of future translators to the fact that due to the existence of the revision spiral both translators and revisers bear responsibility for the quality of the final text.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of the study was to better understand the work of volunteer revisers in the subtitling process and to provide assistance for translator training institutions based on the findings of the analysis.

The findings show that the revisers of the subtitles in this study did not significantly contribute to modifying the number of words or characters in the text, implying that the technicalities of AVT (e.g. compression and omission) were mainly addressed by the translators. It means that the translators were aware of the requirements of this specific subtitling mode (reading speed, line length) and no further modifications were needed. However, this finding should further be studied since the revision was not done with the help of a subtitling software (but in a Word document) and the use of another platform could modify the results.

This study also revealed that an even more enhanced cooperation between the translator and the reviser could improve the quality of the translated text. The revisers in this study did not use differentiated marking which would clearly show the translators which modifications were compulsory (rule-based) and which were up for consideration (norm-based or strategy-based). The justification of the revisional modifications (i.e. categorising the modifications) on the part of the revisers could have possibly ruled out the appearance of preference-based, i.e. unnecessary modifications.

During the revision process of the translated subtitles, rule-based modifications were most frequently performed. It can imply that more



emphasis should still be put on improving non-mother tongue, i.e. B language competence. The significance of inverse translation for minor languages, e.g. Hungarian, might necessitate the creation of a typology for the most common language-specific errors committed during the translation/subtitling process.

Further studies might be needed to identify a trend for the other revisional modifications since the limited number of translated subtitles analysed in this study does not suffice to draw conclusions.

The findings of this study also revealed the importance of the common responsibility of the translator and the reviser(s) in the translation process. Since there was no differentiated marking used by the revisers, the translators seemingly accepted all modifications without further considerations. The concept of the 'revisional spiral' highlights the responsibility every agent participating in the translation process has towards maintaining the quality of the final text.

Finally, the analysis of the revisional modifications performed by the TED Talk revisers in this study does not support expanding Robin's (2018) revisional modification typology with AVT-specific categories. It might, however, be possible to slightly redefine the already existing categories with AVT-specific characteristics, but this statement needs further investigation.

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