



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree

in

Interpreting and Translation for Publishing and Special Purposes

Final Thesis

**Translation teaching: from undergraduate degree
programmes to a challenging working environment**

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Giuseppe De Bonis

Assistant supervisor

Ch. Prof. Maria Elisa Fina

Graduand

Sarah Bossio

Matriculation number

975478

Academic Year

2021/2022

Abstract

The aim of the present work is to examine the teaching of translation, first from a historical perspective and then within today's undergraduate degree programmes, finally leading to an analysis of how translation fits into the working environment, always struggling to assert its own identity, as occurs at the educational level as well. Firstly, through a historical overview, the aim is to illustrate the evolution of the concept of translation as a discipline in its own right and no longer as a mere extension of linguistics or literature. Furthermore, this overview helps to understand the role that translation played within the various methods of foreign language teaching, offering an insight into how translation was more a means than a teaching purpose. Secondly, an analysis is carried out on the role played by translation in today's language-driven undergraduate degree programmes. Progress was made in defining translation practice and the role of the translator, but as far as the position of translation in teaching is concerned, has anything really changed? This question is attempted to be answered by means of a preliminary analysis of the syllabuses of both the undergraduate degree course in linguistic and cultural mediation and the undergraduate degree courses with a foreign language focus, more generally. The analysis finally shifts to the working environment pertaining to translation, with a focus on two case studies both related to the issue of recognition of the translator profession. To conclude, the present work provides a preliminary reflection on the potential relationship between translation teaching and the translation profession.

Table of contents

Abstract.....	i
Table of contents	iii
Introduction	1
1. A short journey through the history and the stages of translation teaching	3
1.1. Translation studies in a nutshell	3
1.2. Historical overview of translation teaching in second language education.....	5
<i>1.2.1. The Grammar-Translation Method</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>1.2.2. The post Grammar-Translation method period: the individual reformers' approaches</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>1.2.3. The late nineteenth century: the Reform Movement</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>1.2.4. The twentieth century: the Direct Method.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>1.2.5. Harold E. Palmer and the Oral Method.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.2.6. Albert S. Hornby and the Situational Language Teaching.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>1.2.7. The American counterpart: the Structural Language Teaching</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>1.2.8. The Audiolingual Method</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>1.2.9. Interaction as a means and a goal: the Communicative Language Teaching ..</i>	<i>23</i>
1.3. Conclusions	24
2. The role of translation in undergraduate degree programmes	27
2.1. From structuralism to functionalism	27

2.2. The current status of translation teaching.....	30
2.2.1. <i>Two major issues</i>	30
2.2.2. <i>Translation teaching: what should be considered</i>	32
2.3. A preliminary analysis of translation teaching in Italy.....	34
2.3.1. <i>The case of Linguistic Mediation</i>	34
2.3.2. <i>Preliminary qualitative analysis on the role of translation in nine undergraduate degree programmes</i>	38
3. The challenging working environment of translation: two case studies	53
3.1. Becoming a translator at the European Commission: inclusiveness or devaluation?	53
3.1.1. <i>A glimpse into the history of European Commission</i>	53
3.1.2. <i>The definition and role of the European Commission</i>	54
3.1.3. <i>The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)</i>	55
3.1.4. <i>How to become a DGT translator</i>	58
3.1.5. <i>A case of devaluation of translation training?</i>	62
3.2. An Italian case: the lack of a register and AITI.....	65
3.2.1. <i>The nature and functions of a professional register</i>	65
3.2.2. <i>Translators in Italy</i>	66
3.2.3. <i>AITI: role and membership requirements</i>	68
3.2.4. <i>The other side of the coin</i>	76
Conclusions	79

References	81
Appendixes	85
Appendix 1. Questions for the respondents.....	85
Appendix 2. Answers of the respondents	86
NON-LM students	86
LM students	93
Appendix 3. Informed consent form (in Italian).....	104

Introduction

The present dissertation aims to find a common thread linking translation teaching and the translation working environment, since both seem to encounter several difficulties claiming the individuality of translation over language teaching and competence. The idea of writing my thesis on this topic came to me when, during a job interview last year, I was told that translation competence was not enough and had to be complemented by other skills. Eventually, I was not hired and a guy with a Bachelor's degree in Economics was hired instead, despite the fact that the job required, as the main task, the translation of marketing content for the sale of Italian window frames abroad. From that moment on, I started to reflect and, helped by the fact that I was taking a course in translation theory and technique at university at that time. Finally, I decided that I would discuss my dissertation on the difficulty of translation to stand as a discipline. My work does not claim to enshrine what is right and what is wrong, it is a merely preliminary analysis of the critical areas and what might be their cause. Drawing on the bibliography, webliography, and feedback of nine of my fellow students, I structured my work into three chapters, organised as follows.

In the first chapter, a historical overview of all methods applied to teach foreign languages will be traced and, in parallel, the consequent role of translation within these teachings will be considered. The analysis is introduced by a brief description of the nature of Translation Studies and then leads to the historical framework provided. The latter starts from the mid-nineteenth century with the development of the Grammar-Translation method and reaches the Communicative method, developed around the 1970s. In other words, reference is made to the shift from a structuralist view of language, in which two languages were considered to be perfectly overlapping, to a functionalist view, namely the acceptance of the differences between languages and of the communicative context as the *commissioner* of the linguistic

act itself.

The second chapter attempts to answer the question “what about translation as a discipline?”. After a brief introduction aimed at explaining the concepts of structuralism and functionalism which are also present in the field of translation, an attempt was made to understand to what extent the former is actually to be considered eradicated. Indeed, after brief reflections on the sore points in the perception of translation, the focus will shift to Italy, thus moving from a general to a specific framework. By means of a qualitative analysis of nine Italian language-based undergraduate degree programmes (conducted through nine interviews available in the *Appendix 2. Answers of the respondents*), the role played by translation within these and the corresponding method employed were examined. Thus, this will lead to draw a preliminary picture of the degree of structuralism still present in the perception of translation and its implications.

In the third chapter, finally, two case studies are presented, namely the prerequisites needed to work as a translator at the European Commission and the lack of a professional register for translators in Italy. These two cases are intended to corroborate the thesis according to which the social, academic, and consequently occupational, perceptions of the translator are distorted and, sometimes, non-existent, as confirmed by the lack of register. As a matter of fact, as will be better explained in the conclusions, a red thread is perceivable between the issues of translation didactics and its inclusion into the working environment.

1. A short journey through the history and the stages of translation teaching

1.1. Translation studies in a nutshell

Before understanding how translation teaching has evolved historically, I would first like to take a small step back and explain the role of translation studies and its evolution. The reason why I want to do so is because if we can talk about translation teaching currently, it is owing to the scholars who first worked on translation studies, giving the discipline a voice to be heard and the importance it deserved. It was James S. Holmes who first used the term “translation studies” in 1972¹; this took the form of a real response to the need of scholars of that period to give a name to a disciplinary area that had finally become autonomous and freed from its old position of subordination to linguistics and comparative literature. The need to find a name stemmed from the need to break away from the structuralism of the 1960s and the need to leave no room for the denomination “science of translation” to be coined. Indeed, “science of translation” would have been too close to structuralism, whose main purpose was to start from Noam Chomsky’s deep structure², extrapolate from it the idea of the existence of universal linguistic properties, and shape it in order to affirm that translation is always possible. Furthermore, structural linguistics, according to Mary Snell-Hornby, significantly hindered the development of a conceptually acceptable translation theory, as it placed too much emphasis on constants and on the level of individual words or sentences (Snell-Hornby, 1988, repr. 1995, p. 67). In a nutshell, the 1960s were dominated

¹ James S. Holmes coined the term “translation studies” in his 1972 paper “The name and nature of translation studies”, which is widely recognised as founding of the discipline.

² Concept used in linguistics, the deep structure is a consistent potential generated by structural rules and underlying every linguistic expression. In other words, it is the abstract representation which identifies the ways a sentence can be analysed and interpreted.

by the desire to make translation a systematic process founded on a scientific basis. One of the scholars who most believed in this approach was J. C. Catford who defined translation as a process of transposing a text written in one language (source language) by means of an equivalent text written in another language (target language). Thus, the focus of his thinking was precisely the concept of equivalence, which enshrined the primacy of the original text over the translated text and gave the illusory idea that symmetry could exist between different linguistic systems. When it comes to a source text (ST) and its corresponding target text (TT), namely its translation, it is inevitable to talk about equivalence in terms of comparison of texts in different languages. However, what Catford argued leaked water if one thinks that he considered ST and TT to be equivalent when they were interchangeable; this perspective was much criticised because it reduced translation to a mere linguistic exercise and did not take into account the textual, cultural, and situational aspects of the translation process. Indeed, translation had to be conceived as an act of intercultural communication, or rather, a *cross-cultural event*, in which translation problems did not depend on the ST but on the impact of the TT on the readers. (Snell-Hornby, 1988, repr. 1995, p. 39). A significant branch of translation studies arising from the need for a change of course was precisely the descriptive translation studies (DTS), namely the one that leads us back to the figure of James S. Holmes, who defined translation as an empirical discipline. As a matter of fact, the core of this line of thought, which was to characterise the whole of the 1970s and also influence the following decades, was to define translation studies through its dual purpose: describing the phenomena of translating in the world of our experience and establishing general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted (Holmes, 1988/2000). The DTS paved the way for a very important group of scholars, who, during the 1970s, proposed a new paradigm for the study of translation, especially literary translation. Among them we should mention André Lefevere, Gideon

Toury, José Lambert, Susan Bassnett, and Theo Hermans³, who, under the influence of Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory⁴, developed a much more descriptive and less prescriptive approach to translation. In other words, the translator was no longer told how to translate - almost if there were a universal mathematical rule - the translated text was analysed as it had been produced, and hypotheses were then formulated. Their approach was pragmatic and defined translation as the process a given cultural community recognised as such at a given historical moment; thus, the focus was on the role the translated text played within the target culture, how it was received, and how it influenced a cultural system other than the one that has requested and shaped it. This target-oriented approach then took the form of the so-called "cultural turn" in the 1980s, carried out mainly by André Lefevere, Mary Snell-Hornby, and Susan Bassnett. This turn is nothing but an extension of the new paradigm we mentioned above; translation is now no longer the illusory symmetry between different languages but an act of intercultural communication in which translation problems do not arise from the ST but from the impact of the TT on its addressed readers. The cultural turn represented a major step forward for the development of the discipline, and even today's translation studies are its legacy.

1.2. Historical overview of translation teaching in second language education

In this section, I will analyse the evolution of the position held by translation in foreign

³ From the school of Antwerp, Tel Aviv, Leuven, Warwick, and London, respectively.

⁴ The polysystem is a system of heterogeneous and interdependent systems. Each of the systems is composed of elements in a hierarchy that struggle with each other to gain the central position. The hierarchy is not fixed and changes according to the time and culture to which it belongs.

language teaching. The reason why I speak of “role” and not of translation itself is that translation has always been used as a tool for foreign language acquisition in many academic environments around the world. The period I will examine ranges from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, and I will carry out this historical analysis by looking one by one at the teaching methods in which translation has been involved over the years.

*1.2.1. The Grammar-Translation Method*⁵

The Grammar-Translation Method originated in Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century and developed during the nineteenth century, thus becoming the predominant foreign language teaching method in Europe. This method consisted of presenting the learners with grammar rules in their native language (L1) and then offering them specifically created examples to make them better understand the rules. Moreover, examples were given for each grammar rule in the language students were learning (L2), and alongside was the literal translation into their L1. In order to understand this even better I provide an example from “New Practical and Easy Method of Learning the German Language” by Franz Ahn dated 1869 and quoted by (Laviosa, 2014, p. 5):

<i>Singular.</i>	ich bin, I am; du bist, thou art; er ist, he is; sie ist, she is;
<i>Plural.</i>	wir sind, we are; ihr seid, you are; sie sind, they are.

⁵ “Method” should not be confused with “strategy”. A method is a process, a procedure, through which teaching is carried out or implemented. A strategy, instead, is a set of actions or plans to achieve a teaching purpose.

As far as vocabulary is concerned, it was usually provided in a bilingual list of lexical items and then placed within short, simple sentences presented first in the L2 and then in the L1. The following example is taken from the same textbook by Franz Ahn and quoted by (Laviosa, 2014, p. 5):

Gut, good; groß, great, large, big; klein, little, small; reich, rich;
arm, poor; jung, young; alt, old; müde, tired; krank, ill, sick.

Ich bin groß. Du bist klein. Er ist alt. Sie ist gut. Wir sind jung. Ihr
seid reich. Sie sind arm. Bin ich groß? Bist du müde? Ist er krank? Ist
sie jung? Sind wir reich? Seid ihr arm? Sind sie alt?

I am little. Thou art young. We are tired. They are rich. Art thou sick?
You are poor. Is she old? Are you sick? Are they good? He is tall (groß).
Am I poor?

What characterised this method of learning was the presence of individual and invented short sentences, unconnected to each other. Moreover, these sentences were presented from and into the learners' native language, thus causing the medium of instruction to be the L1 and its continuous comparison with the L2 (Laviosa, 2014, p. 5,6). Since the two-core focus of this method were reading comprehension and written production, the oral production was marginal and involved a series of questions and answers that were to be translated by the learners from the L1. Based on the above, it can be stated that the grammar-translation method was based on the belief that translating into another language simply meant having a good grammatical and lexical knowledge, without even taking into consideration the cultural aspect underlying the discipline. Both grammatical and lexical knowledge, besides, were acquired through specifically constructed sentences and new sentences built on a word-

for-word basis. The harshest criticisms against the Grammar-Translation method arose between the 1960s and the 1970s, and mainly focused on the fact that translation as a discipline could not be used to teach any of the four skills defining language competence⁶ because of its independence from them. Moreover, the literal translations typical of this method gave the learners the erroneous idea that to a concept in the source language (SL) corresponded exactly the same concept in the target language (TL), thus making the relationship between two languages a one-to-one and, I dare say, one-dimensional exchange (Peverati, 2014, p. 8).

1.2.2. The post Grammar-Translation method period: the individual reformers' approaches

Many were the scholars who wanted to reform the way foreign languages were taught since the grammar-translation method had received a lot of criticism and proved to be ineffective. Among them were Jean Joseph Jacotot, Claude Marcel, Thomas Prendergast, and François Gouin, who developed techniques which differed meaningfully from the method mentioned so far. Jacotot developed a new way of approaching the teaching of a foreign language, French in this case, to Flemish-speaking university students. What represented a real novelty for that time (i.e., the early years of the nineteenth century) was the fact that Jacotot was French, and his monolingual teaching method was addressed to students without the same L1 as his own. But why is this method recognised as one of the earliest monolingual types of teaching? Since this method consisted in analysing a text in French, learners were prompted to reflect on how the foreign language worked, through hypothesis formulation and critical observation. The class was structured as follows:

⁶ Reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

1. The French text alongside the Flemish translation was presented to the students;
2. The teacher read the first sentence of the text, repeated it, and asked students to look for the same words found in that sentence throughout the rest of the text;
3. The teacher then returned to the initial sentence and added the next one, and so on until the end of the text, so that the students could memorise the whole text.

All this was then complemented by questions and other exercises that helped students understand the mechanisms of the L2. Indeed, Jacotot's method consisted of leaving students free to understand, hypothesise, and generalise, without any prior explanation, thus giving them the opportunity to develop their individual abilities.

With regard to Marcel, it is impossible to talk about his method without mentioning the dual distinction he made between impression and expression, and analytical and synthetical method. Impression is the process through which the mind comes into contact with the idea, the concept, even before understanding it through the graphic sign that represents it. Expression, on the other hand, occurs when language is used to convey a concept whose meaning is already known, as well as the form of the words expressing it. Hence, understanding the meaning should precede the knowledge of form and the graphic sign representing the concept itself (Howatt, 1984, p. 152,153). The other side of the same coin is the distinction Marcel made between analytical and synthetical method. The analytical method is inductive, which means that it is a bottom-up approach whereby students understand the rules of the language through practical examples. Conversely, the synthetical method is deductive – also known as a top-down approach – meaning that students are presented with general rules from which they should be able to draw specific conclusions about how the L2 works. Therefore, Marcel's language teaching method is known to most as the "rational method", an effort to build a method of language teaching based on the

conjunction of reason, experience, and nature. Marcel asserted that a proper method wisely combines all the above-mentioned components without excluding any of them, and blends established rules with the fruits of the learner's personal experience and formulated hypotheses (Tickoo, 1984, p. 240). Whether expression or impression, analytical or synthetical method, the way these techniques are implemented depends on the learners' characteristics⁷ and the relationship between learning activities and learning objectives⁸. However, a study conducted on a sample of students of all ages showed that younger students preferred classes in which the teacher expressed him/herself in the L2 using non-verbal language and tone of voice, rather than translation into the L1. On the contrary, older students needed translation as a means of understanding the L2, in other words, they needed a continuous comparison between the two languages, thus allowing them to encounter the foreign language via their mother tongue (Laviosa, 2014).

As far as Prendergast is concerned, he developed the so-called Mastery System, based on the observation of children's L1 acquisition. Since children learn their mother tongue by observing the adults' non-verbal language and by imitating "chunks of language", Prendergast determined that the best way to learn the L2 would be to memorise model sentences, known as mastery sentences. Therefore, he decided to draw up a list of the most frequently used English words and create model sentences for English syntax; the students were required to memorise some of these model sentences (about five or six) with the same pronunciation as the professor to develop fluency and correctness in speech. Indeed, in Prendergast's method the meaning of these sentences was taught using translation into the

⁷ This refers to the learners' learning style. There are four types of learning styles: visual, auditory, reading & writing, and kinaesthetic.

⁸ Difference between learning activities and learning objectives: the former are the resources which help in achieving the learning objectives, while the latter are the goals of the learning program and the competencies the learners have to achieve at the end of the course. The latter determines the former.

mother tongue while grammar, instead, was not taught nor explained but grasped unconsciously.

To conclude the overview of the methods which characterised the post Grammar-Translation period, it is important to mention Gouin and his Series Method. As with Prendergast, Gouin also based the development of his teaching method on his observations of how children actually use their mother tongue. Thanks to his nephew, Gouin understood that language is a reflection of the experience it describes and that experience, itself, can be perceived in terms of a sequence. From this consideration, Gouin developed the idea that every event can be divided into smaller events and built his language teaching method around this concept, which he also brought to Geneva, where he founded his own school. Therefore, his method consisted in providing the students with a series of sentences, each of which presented an action as part of a larger event. The repetition of the same subjects and complements actually helped learners to memorise and learn the correct pronunciation, giving them the opportunity to focus on verbs which were, instead, always different (Howatt, 1984, p. 162).

The methods listed above took shape as the precursors of the orientation that shook the foundations of the grammar-translation method: the Reform Movement.

1.2.3. The late nineteenth century: the Reform Movement

The reform movement of the late nineteenth century led to a revisiting of the hitherto predominant grammar-translation method, which began in 1882 with Wilhelm Viëtor's pamphlet entitled "Language teaching must start afresh!". Members of this movement included such phoneticians as the aforementioned Viëtor (Germany), Otto Jespersen (Denmark), Paul Passy (France), and Henry Sweet (England), whom we will discuss in more detail since he raised several issues. The main focuses of this new orientation were oral

communication, carried out through phonetics and correct pronunciation, as well as the use of texts containing the grammar being taught, and the active use of the foreign language during class. Translation was no longer the way to come into contact with the foreign language, but rather a more spontaneous and immersive way was used: free composition in the L2 on subjects taken from the texts already studied, and thus to which the students were already accustomed (Sweet, 1964, p. 203). Nevertheless, within the same group of scholars there were still disagreements; the psychologist Felix Franke, for instance, proposed teaching the vocabulary using pictures that would allow students to associate the word with the actual concept to which the picture referred. This method, called the picture-method, allowed learners to establish a direct association between the foreign word and its idea without undergoing the complicated psychological process of moving from the SL word to the TL word and then to its corresponding idea (Sweet, 1964, p. 199). On the other hand, according to Sweet, pictures did not provide learners with an all-encompassing idea of the word, because the picture was only a part of that word and merely supplied one piece of information. Therefore, a German who was learning French would better understand the connection between *hut* and *chapeau* because the latter is a word that embodies both the aesthetic characteristics of a hat and its functions, unlike its picture only, which displayed nothing but its appearance (Sweet, 1964, p. 199). Furthermore, Sweet raised another issue, that of the use of translation, which, during the reform movement, was rejected by most scholars. He, on the contrary, proposed a new scheme for the use of translation within foreign language teaching:

1. Translation into the L1 is used to make it easier for the learner to understand certain information such as terms and phrases of the L2;
2. The role of translation is then reduced, and the learner comes into contact with the meaning by means of context, thus using reasoning;

3. Idiomatic translation⁹ is used to bring to light the differences between the L1 and the L2.

Lending credibility to Sweet's perspective was Hermann Klinghardt who, through an experiment conducted on the syllabus of an elementary English course, demonstrated that, at the end of the year, students not only had good grammar but also skills in the spoken language. The latter was exactly what the reformists accused the grammar-translation method of lacking with a lack of a real communicative function of the language, merely reduced to disconnected sentences. However, Klinghardt managed to overcome both these shortcomings by developing a method consisting of several steps (Howatt, 1984, p. 173-175):

1. Introduction to English pronunciation through listening and speech exercises;
2. Analysis of a text, one sentence at a time and phonetic analysis of each sentence (consisting of transcribing the sentences phonetically on the blackboard, reading it aloud by the teacher, and repeating by the students);
3. Students copied the transcript from the blackboard, and the teacher explained the meaning to them through a translation placed just below the individual words (interlinear translation);
4. The teacher selected a difficult grammar topic and explained it: the selection was made according to the students' language proficiency;
5. Oral communication was taught later in the syllabus through copying, writing answers to comprehension exercises, and reformulating concepts from narrative-type texts (much longer and more structured than the disconnected sentences of the

⁹ Idiomatic translation: a type of translation which achieves a target text (TT) that sounds natural in the target language (TL).

grammar-translation method).

Therefore, Klinghardt can be regarded as the bridge between the reformists - who criticised the grammar-translation method for its neglect of the spoken language and its communicative nature - and Sweet, with his stages and his revisiting of the role of translation. Furthermore, this hybridity in Klinghardt's method paved the way for what would later turn out to be the exact antithesis of the grammar-translation method: the Direct Method.

1.2.4. The twentieth century: the Direct Method

The twentieth century was predominantly characterised by the desire to dissociate completely from the grammar-translation method and its use of translation in foreign language classes. The direct method was born as an extension of the Natural Method, the origins and main characteristics of which I will explain below. To talk about the natural method, it is first necessary to explain Pestalozzi's method since the latter inspired Gottlieb Heness¹⁰ to use and develop it to teach German as a L2 to American learners in a private language school (Howatt, 1984, p. 198). Pestalozzi developed his method inspired by Rousseau's educational ideas: children should be encouraged to follow their own interests, to be spontaneous, to create their own ideas, and to arrive at their answers through reasoning and judgement. Furthermore, this method firmly believed in the effectiveness of practical activities and the use of physical, tangible objects instead of just spoken words. The key point was to leave the child free to observe how words were used to describe objects, so that

¹⁰ Heness first used Pestalozzi's method to teach High German to children in southern Germany. In 1841, Heness came to the United States thus also exporting the natural method.

(s)he would then be able to use the words once he had gained confidence in their actual use. Building on the Pestalozzi method, Heness, together with Lambert Sauveur, developed the so-called natural method, based on real conversations in the foreign language between the teacher and the students. These conversations, which took the name of *causeries* (a French word for “informal talks or chats”), were developed around, for instance, the description of objects or body parts. This is, in brief, the path that led to the development of the Direct Method, founded by Maximilian D. Berlitz¹¹ and whose main purpose was to provide beginners with the basics of conversational skills, just like the natural method. Besides, Berlitz provided teachers with several textbooks containing clear instructions on his method and its characteristics:

- Translation is not a core skill of linguistic competence nor is it an activity covered within the foreign language teaching;
- The main focus of the foreign language programmes is on oral competence;
- No grammatical explanation at the beginning of the course, only afterwards;
- Question-and-answer type conversations between teacher and student.

On the other hand, arguments against the use of translation included:

- Translation is a time-consuming activity, time that should be used to focus fully on the foreign language;
- Translation causes interference from the learners’ L1 while learning the L2;
- Translation makes students mistakenly believe that there is a one-to-one equivalence between languages (and cultures).

¹¹ The other name by which the direct method is known is “Berlitz Method”.

The direct method thus took the form of a veritable revolt against an obsolete way of teaching foreign languages, namely the grammar-translation method, heir to the methods used to teach Latin and ancient Greek. Nevertheless, the direct method did not seem to be the right choice according to many teachers and scholars in the field of language teaching in secondary school. The reason for this lied in the fact that it was a method that, if used, required native-speaking teachers as well as an emphasis on conversational skills, which were considered marginal for the average (American) secondary school student. As far as European school system was concerned, instead, the method was considered unusable in secondary school because the comparison between L1 and L2 was regarded as useful for the learners' understanding of the foreign language (Laviosa, 2014, p. 12). Therefore, the direct method was used in foreign language courses for adult learners.

1.2.5. Harold E. Palmer and the Oral Method

Before describing the oral method, it is important to emphasise that this did not exclude nor stood in opposition to the direct method; they were simultaneous and had two different scopes. Indeed, as mentioned above, the direct method was designed for adult learners while the oral method was more suitable for secondary school students.

Harold Edward Palmer was born in London, studied in France, then moved to Belgium, and started teaching English at a Berlitz school¹². However, the real breakthrough for him came in 1922, when he was invited by Masataro Sawayanagi, chairman of the Imperial Educational Association, to come to Japan as a linguistic adviser to the Japanese Department

¹² There were several Berlitz schools (over 200 worldwide). The first one opened in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1878. Then Berlitz opened additional schools in Boston, New York, New Jersey, Germany, and Britain.

of Education. Indeed, it was thanks to and based on his experiences that he succeeded in developing a teaching methodology suitable for foreign language teachers in British secondary schools. This method was conceived by him as being divided into three stages (Howatt, 1984, p. 239)

1. The Introductory Stage, designed to last one term and focused on providing students with a good grounding in pronunciation and phonetics;
2. The Intermediate Stage, designed to give students the basics of spoken language and introduce them to the most frequent patterns of speech through oral and question-and-answer exercises. Then, tracing the patterns already acquired, students would extrapolate and come up with new examples;
3. The Advanced Stage, designed to focus on reading, writing, and oral interaction. In this stage literature was introduced.

The aforementioned method was given the name of Oral Method, precisely because of the absolute predominance of spoken language over written language and grammar. Palmer's research and method laid the foundations for the development of a new way of teaching English as a foreign language, known as the Situational Language Teaching, which I will discuss below.

1.2.6. Albert S. Hornby and the Situational Language Teaching

At the beginning of the 1950s, Albert Sydney Hornby, an English grammarian and lexicographer, decided to take sentence patterns as a starting point to demonstrate that the most appropriate way to teach them to students was to act them out as if they were to be performed on stage either by the teacher or the students. Besides, according to Hornby another effective way to teach these patterns was to show them to students through pictures,

realia¹³, wallcharts, flash cards, and stick figures (Laviosa, 2014, p. 14). Building on the method developed by Gouin, in which each event was divided into smaller events and each sentence represented an action of that larger event, Hornby decided that the best way to teach the patterns was to divide them into sequences. For instance, a future tense sentence constructed using the “be going to” form was staged in several parts, namely while the agent was about to perform the action, in the actual act, and at the end of the action itself. Moreover, this was done while the student uttered the sentences corresponding to the action (s)he was performing. This method, known as the situational language teaching (SLT), acted as a bridge between a translative approach to grammar (typical of the grammar-translation method) and the communicative approach to language teaching, which we will discuss last. Additionally, it was precisely the introduction of a revolutionary way of teaching L2 grammar and vocabulary that made this approach so important. Indeed, L2 was taught through natural situations of everyday life, and the focus was on the development of oral and aural skills. As far as the learners’ L1 is concerned, Hornby’s standpoint was explicit and inferred from his own experience of teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. According to him, indeed, all teachers called upon to teach English in a non-English-speaking country whose mother tongue they do not know, can easily and satisfactorily teach, without using their students’ L1. Nevertheless, Hornby was not totally against the use of translation in foreign language teaching and, instead, acknowledged the advantages of a bilingual methodology (Laviosa, 2014, p. 15).

¹³ “Objects or activities used to relate classroom teaching to the real life especially of peoples studied” (Merriam-Webster).

1.2.7. The American counterpart: the Structural Language Teaching

The US counterpart of the British situational approach was the Structural Language Teaching, a method developed by the linguists Leonard Bloomfield and Charles C. Fries, and which gained popularity between the 1940s and 1950s. When Bloomfield published “Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages” in 1942, his intent was made public: Americans had to understand and speak various languages, and for some a valid instruction was provided, while for others less so. Therefore, it was necessary to write a booklet to help the learners cope with these languages. In this booklet, Bloomfield stated that every teaching of a new language had to begin with a clean slate; the learners had to abandon all preconceptions about the language and all influence from other languages they knew, especially from their own. Once all other languages and preconceptions were left out, learners could concentrate on learning the new language that would have different sounds, constructions, and meanings from the others. Hence, they needed a figure other than the usual teacher with their same mother tongue, namely a native speaker of the language they wanted to learn, known as “informant”, so that they could listen to him and imitate him (Bloomfield, 1942, p. 2). The informant never used English, the learners’ L1, but chose a student to read the translation of the sentences he uttered into English.

With regard to Fries, his contribution was crucial in the field of foreign language teaching because he introduced the concept of contrastive analysis between the L1 and L2. The concept of contrastive analysis did not aim at literal, word-for-word translation as Fries considered the attempt to find equivalent words in different languages clumsy and inefficient, since two words belonging to two different languages and cultures would never cover the same areas of meaning. An example of this was provided by Fries himself, who

noticed the difference between the word *mesa* in Spanish and *table* in English. Although the literal translation is correct, the Spanish word is not used in the same situations and contexts as the English one and vice versa (e.g. *table of figures, table of contents, timetable*) (Laviosa, 2014, p. 17). In contrast to the above, contrastive analysis aimed to understand the linguistic and cultural differences between the two languages in order to understand the exact nature of the difficulties encountered by the students. Thus, the situational approach took the form of a combination of Bloomfield and Fries' approaches, carrying characteristics of both thoughts and methods. The situational approach, indeed, was based on the following principles:

- The foreign language had to be heard, spoken, written, and read in realistic situations or imagined real situations;
- Language skills were learnt effectively if they were presented orally first;
- The meaning of a word did not depend on the meaning found in the dictionary, but on the situation in which that word was used and subsequently learnt by the student;
- The meaning of a word could be learnt only in a linguistic and cultural context;
- Identifying which similarities between the L1 and L2 and which patterns led students to make mistakes when learning the L2, would help correct those mistakes and better organise learning materials.

1.2.8. The Audiolingual Method

The audiolingual method owes its name to the recognition that around the late 1950s there was towards language as an act of communication and, consequently, towards teaching the skills of listening and speaking. It all began when President Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which then became law from that time, which led to the

investment of funds for conferences, studies, and analyses on modern foreign languages, and to the development of teaching materials in order to pave the way for a new method. Therefore, this new method arose from the need to expand and further develop the way of teaching foreign languages, and the goal became to teach the language so that it would be used as native speakers used it. The audiolingual method was the outcome of the historical period in which it was born; indeed, there were three main circumstances that led to its origin and influenced its characteristics:

1. The structural approach developed by Bloomfield and Fries, discussed in the previous section, which influenced its focus on oral language;
2. B. F. Skinner's behaviourism, which influenced its system of responses, reinforcement, and environment, which will be further explained below;
3. The outbreak of World War II, which led to the need to send American soldiers all over the world, who thus had to possess a minimum of communication skills in the foreign language, mostly obtained through a method of observation and repetition.

As for the second point, it is appropriate to further explain the extent to which the audiolingual method drew on Skinner's behaviourism (Howatt, 1984, p. 270). Briefly explained, behaviourism arose to understand the behaviour of humans and animals and assumed that behaviour originated either from certain antecedent stimuli in the environment or from individual's history, including the reinforcement and punishment circumstances. Reinforcement means that a behaviour is increasing, while punishment means that a behaviour is decreasing. Reinforcement can be either positive or negative and both types have the potential to increase the likelihood of a behavioural response. Similarly, but also conversely, punishment can be either positive and negative and, in both cases, it decreases the likelihood of a behavioural response. Back to the point, the audiolingual method drew

from behaviourism to define verbal behaviour as a behaviour that had been reinforced through the verbal contribution of other people; through other people's verbal performance, learners understood whether what they were producing was correct or not. Furthermore, precisely as with behaviourism, audiolingualism focused more on stimuli from the environment. Indeed, the main idea was that learners came to produce both verbal and non-verbal responses as a result of stimuli provided to them through experiments, lectures, texts, and demonstrations (Skinner quoted by (Laviosa, 2014, p. 19)).

The audiolingual method was similar to the direct method because both believed that the foreign language should be taught without the use and influence of the learners' native language and translation from the latter¹⁴. As a result, errors, where present, were perceived as consequences of L1 interference. However, unlike the direct method, the audiolingual method focused on learners' correct use of grammar, which was thus learnt most of the time orally. This method was based on some basic steps in L2 learning, namely:

1. At the beginning, learners were presented with dialogues and drills in the foreign language, in order for them to develop memorisation and then repetition of correct pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation;
2. After memorising the dialogue, learners were asked to repeat aloud, and immediately after the teacher, the grammatical patterns (s)he has previously selected from the dialogue;
3. During the second stage, learners were required either to copy sentences and then devise and write variations of the grammatical patterns found in those sentences or

¹⁴ In this regard, Brooks stated that during L2 learning the L1 had to be "switched off", except for a certain type of advanced exercise. This exercise consisted first of reading a text in the L2 until it was completely memorised, then rewriting the text alongside the text in the L1, dwelling on the similarities and differences between the two languages.

to write an essay with the help of questions to guide their narrative and argumentative skills.

1.2.9. Interaction as a means and a goal: the Communicative Language Teaching

In the late 1960s, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) developed in England to meet the needs and demands of both Commonwealth residents and overseas students, who sought a specific English education before entering college (Laviosa, 2014, p. 21). This new focus on the communicative aspect of the foreign language owed its birth to the British linguists John Rupert Firth and M.A.K. Halliday, among others, who considered language as a social system and shifted their linguistic research to the level of functionality. In other words, according to this perspective, which took the name of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), communication requires choices on the part of the speaker and language itself changes and evolves driven by the communicative functions that require its manifestation. Moreover, the birth of CLT was influenced by sociolinguists such as John Gumpertz, Dell Hymes and William Labov, who, through the variationist sociolinguistics founded by Labov himself, brought to light the concept of language linked to the surrounding context that generates it. In simple terms, their research focused on how the linguistic context promoted or discouraged the use of certain language structures. Therefore, CLT employed communication as both a means and the ultimate goal of language learning, through an overriding priority given to learners' communicative and interactive skills. By means of drills involving both student-to-student interaction and student-to-teacher interaction, learners were able to learn to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

To be as schematic as possible and referring to what Johnson and Johnson summarised, the main features of the communicative approach are:

1. The indissoluble bond between language and context, in which the latter generates and requires the former, which in turn needs to be appropriate and faithful to the contextual situation provided;
2. The learners' resourcefulness, which means that they should learn to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. Mistakes are nothing but ways of learning what is correct and what is not;
3. The integration of various skills that the learner practises simultaneously, such as reading, writing, and speaking. For instance, the student could be asked to watch a video, write his/her opinion about it, and then discuss it with others. Besides, this could also lead to the learner's ability to multi-task.

These features were then incorporated into a syllabus involving specific activities mainly focused on pair or group work, as collaboration between students led them to practise without feeling isolated or judged. In this way, students became fluent in the L2 by learning from one another and enjoying simulating real-life situations which very often led to group discussions and reflections (Howatt, 1984, p. 279).

Regarding translation, the communicative approach, just like other methods dealt with in previous sections, used it occasionally to help learners in case they did not understand what was being talked about. Nevertheless, translation has never since been an integral part of foreign language teaching programme since the grammar-translation method, a method deeply rooted in its origins but equally criticised and distanced.

1.3. Conclusions

The historical overview provided in this chapter contributes to understanding the path taken

by foreign language teaching towards a functional approach and the consequent role played by translation within these teachings. Beginning with the Grammar-Translation method of the late 18th century and going through the Reform Movement of the late 19th century, this led to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) of the late 1960s. This “journey” made by language teaching led to thinking in terms of structuralism and functionalism, where the former belongs to the grammar-translation method while the latter is typical of the communicative approach. Indeed, the grammar-translation method originated from the belief that there is an equivalence between languages such that an element of language A (the learner’s native language) corresponds to an element of language B (the language being learnt). According to this view, these elements are hence overlapping and perfectly equivalent in their structure, thus making the translation of single sentences an effective tool for determining and testing this equivalence. However, when a more functionalist view which considered the communicative function of language as the core of learning emerged, things became more complicated for translation. As a matter of fact, the more one focused on learning language in the form of effective communication, the more one sought to distance the learners’ L1 from the curriculum, as it was considered an interference in learning as well as a cause of errors. This shift made the role of translation within language teaching marginal, or even absent, as it was preferred to communicate in the L2 during the class.

The above is all part of a historical overview which, as will be shown in the next chapter, has strongly influenced the role that translation plays in language teaching today. From the issue of L1 interference to the opposition (and in the case of translation, sometimes even coexistence) between structuralist and functionalist approaches, one will notice how the path taken by language teaching has left its mark on the translation discipline.

2. The role of translation in undergraduate degree programmes

2.1. From structuralism to functionalism

Before delving into the delicate subject of the role of translation in undergraduate degree programmes, it is only fair to understand how the definition of translation evolved and what the turning point was because, although there is still a lot of work to be done, a lot has already been achieved.

One can simplistically distinguish two macro approaches to the definition of translation and, consequently, to its teaching: the structural and the functional approach. According to the structural approach translating meant transposing a text from one language to another; this was a linguistic-based approach that is still widespread and endorsed by many people today. From this perspective, translation depended completely on knowledge of two languages, SL and TL, and therefore its teaching was associated and integrated with language teaching. Languages were taught by making learners memorise words and grammatical rules, starting with minimal units such as phonemes and then moving on to complex sentences and general rules, thus employing a bottom-up type of teaching and learning. Consequently, translation was also taught in the same way, first by understanding the forms of the ST and its contents, and then by transposing them into the TT, relying on a merely linguistic equivalence achieved by using the dictionary (Baker, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 1998, p. 61). The question is, how can one think this is enough to produce a good translation? The underlying assumption was that a text could already be understood on the surface, and that simply by imitating this surface and using a correct grammar of the TL, one could produce a TT with the same contents as the ST. Thus, following the concept of equivalence, it was thought that translation could be taught by comparing two languages and their grammatical constructions.

The main reaction to this approach was the rise of the functional approach in the second half of the 20th century, which took into account aspects that until then had not even been mentioned. In this regard, Lawrence Venuti stated that even those theories of translation that favoured the concept of equivalence would sooner or later have to come to terms with discrepancies between ST and TT (Hodges, 2009, p. 3), thus making equivalence appear as a concept in decline. The German translator Hans Josef Vermeer can be considered the pioneer of the functional approach, as he developed the so-called *Skopostheorie* in 1978. According to this theory, the process of translation was determined by the function that the target text had to fulfil in the target culture and by its communicative purpose (*skopos*). Thus, the focus was on the intentionality of the translational action, which was then carried out taking into consideration interdependent factors such as situation, communicative text function, commissioner, producer, and recipients (Baker, Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, 1998, p. 61). When one speaks about situation it means the circumstances of commission (i.e., what is required), the text production and reception, and the aspects of the cultural environment in which all this is placed and on which the translation itself depends. Indeed, the nature of the translation no longer depended on the ST, but it was the target cultural environment that required and shaped the translation, which thus had the ability to function effectively in specific situations and contexts. Hence, the most important shift: from translation as a mere transfer from the SL to the TL, based on the concept of linguistic equivalence, to a TT translated in such a way that it could function in a different cultural context.

Considering the premises on which functionalism was based, the consequences of this approach at the educational level were obvious: translation could no longer be taught by means of linguistic exercises such as transferring linguistic units from one language to another. Linguistic skills were undoubtedly a starting point, but this then had to be

supplemented with the learners' ability to handle and mediate between the source and the target culture (Baker, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 1998, p. 62). When it comes to culture, however, it is very difficult and challenging to decide how to teach it, because culture is something that is so steeped in the social fabric but, at the same time, so unconscious that it cannot even be defined precisely. Therefore, as pointed out in the *Routledge Encyclopedia*, cultural competence had to be preceded by a theoretical model and supported by examples. Hence, foreign culture competences were, according to this view, introduced at a later stage of teaching because both the theoretical model and the functional competences gave the learners the necessary tools to understand the foreign culture. The following stage was the most important one: comparing various textual types produced in one language and in another by paying attention to how cultural elements were inserted according to the language in which they were expressed. This subsequently led to the production of texts by the learners who, completely independently, reproduced in the TL the meaning of a text originally written in the SL. At this stage of learning, learners understood that it was the essence of the text, in other words its deepest meaning, that had to be preserved during the translating process, while its form inevitably underwent a change.

This moment was crucial because for the first time the translator was no longer a mechanical conveyor of meanings from one language to another, but a true creator and shaper of texts as well as a mediator between different cultures. In this context, the translator was, for the first time, a real player in the translation process with an active and proactive attitude, deciding what to edit from the ST and how to do it in order to make the TT usable for the target audience. However, the translator still had to understand when changes from the ST were dictated by necessity and when, instead, they were optional. This can be summarised by the concepts of "servitude" and "option" developed by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet (Hodges, 2009, p. 3), according to whom these concepts were part of the

translator's life. Indeed, (s)he, on the one hand, had to submit to the mandatory changes between ST and TT and, on the other hand, could decide which translation strategies to employ, freely and creatively.

2.2. The current status of translation teaching

2.2.1. Two major issues

Despite the revolution brought about by functionalism in the second half of the 20th century, structuralism seems to be hard to die and this is particularly noticeable in foreign language teaching. Indeed, even today translation is perceived by some as a language exercise, a means of consolidating the language, and a formal activity whose aim is to achieve equivalence to the ST. Two main issues might be identified as causing translation to be to some extent confined to a mere tool in foreign language teaching, namely the legacy of language teaching in translation teaching (Colina, 2014, p. 7) and the perception of translation as an art and therefore imperceptible and elusive (Boylan, 1999, p. 3). The legacy left by language teaching in translation teaching manifests itself through some traces which can be found in the approach to the translation discipline. The first trace is visible in translation students' fear of L1 interference, which prompts them to voluntarily ignore TL forms that are more similar to that of the SL, even if they are suited to the context to which the TT belongs. This is typical of language teaching which always warns students against false friends and demonises the interference of the L1 on the L2, leading them to focus more on the single word and less on the effectiveness of the communicative act. The latter leads us to another trace left by language teaching in the translation discipline, namely the focus on grammatical correctness rather than on communicative correctness (Colina, 2014, p. 8). In other words, errors are seen as failures in linguistic competence rather than failures in

understanding the communicative functions of the single word or the whole text in the receiving cultural fabric. Come to think of it, is not this view an offspring of structuralism as well as the view that most likely led to the development of the grammar-translation method? Yes, if one considers that the exercises of the grammar-translation method had the sole purpose of testing the students' grammatical competence, they were *ad hoc* constructed sentences devoid of context and disconnected from each other, whose only aim was to improve the memorisation of grammatical forms. The perception of translation as art, on the other hand, is more of a problem than a positive feature since attaching the label of "art" to it dispenses anyone from the trouble of recognising its science. Indeed, translation is a science since the translator's primary skill, which must therefore be cultivated before any other skill, is a strong knowledge of the linguistic-cultural characteristics of the two communicative situations (Boylan, 1999, p. 2). For some types of translation, such as literary translation, it is obvious that the translator needs creative writing skills to be able to recreate the same atmosphere of the SL in the TL. However, it is necessary to realise that it is not just a matter of artistic skills: underlying all these skills is the science that enables the translator to maintain the communicative intention of the ST while adapting the TT to the receiving audience. To merely talk about "art" only makes a discipline like translation, already little known and recognised, even more mysterious and intangible, as well as difficult to teach. Indeed, if one thinks of translation as a discipline which, in addition to formal knowledge of two languages, requires such empathy that one can recreate the existential state (Boylan, 1999) of the ST, the result is that either everyone can translate or only an elite can do it. This erroneous view of translation, together with the great influence of language teaching mentioned above, results in the discipline put in a corner of foreign language courses. In addition to these two macro issues, let us not forget the social component which plays a fundamental role in the perception of translation in a given culture at a given time. We are

children of the society we live in and social norms, although unwritten, hover above us and influence our thinking. Hence, if at a given time the majority of people have a view of translation as a mere language exercise, as they themselves have been exposed to this view, it is very likely that students, as members of that society, will also develop this view (Colina, 2014, p. 7).

2.2.2. Translation teaching: what should be considered

Related to the above, the best thing to do in order to successfully detach translation teaching from language teaching would be to firstly make students realise that translation, while seemingly an automatic mechanism resulting from formal knowledge of a source and target language, requires training in its own right. In this regard, the comparison that Boylan makes between the marathon runner and the translator is interesting (Boylan, 1999, p. 6); just as walking is something we perform without thinking about it, so is communicating or translating once we know the languages in question. However, what distinguishes an ordinary person walking from a marathon runner is the fact that the latter knows in depth the action (s)he is performing, and has a selective control of his/her muscles. Similarly, a professional translator is aware of the mechanisms that (s)he puts in place and is able to recognise, control and perfect them. This is precisely what degree courses should focus on in the first place: the education of the translator, which means nothing other than giving him/her the necessary tools to develop the cognitive skills needed in the long term. This would mean, to go back to what was said in *2.2.1. Two major issues*, educating translators to develop their ability of analysing different linguistic-cultural systems, whatever they may be. Afterwards, degree courses might move on to training, namely the acquisition of knowledge and procedures (Bernardini, 2004, p. 19), which for translation would mean

studying the areas and acquiring the specific languages of the texts to be translated. The distinction that Bernardini makes between education and training is very important when considering a possible reform of translation teaching, as in this case there would be educational priorities to be addressed over a longer time span, such as during an undergraduate degree course. On the other hand, there would be more specific training-related aspects which could be addressed in a postgraduate degree course.

The truth is that when it comes to education everything seems blurred as it is a concept which is as much debated as it is difficult to grasp. In this regard, Bernardini herself identified three priorities in a translator's education and she labelled them as awareness, reflectiveness, and resourcefulness. However, in my opinion, these are too abstract concepts to be included within translation courses as it would be too complicated to turn them into university subjects to be taught, despite their importance in the education of the professional translator. Therefore, I would rather reckon that a potential translation course should be designed from the translation sub-competences identified by the PACTE GROUP's model (PACTE GROUP, 2003), since, being a schematic model, it would be easy to identify for each sub-competence the appropriate way of teaching it. Six sub-competences were identified, namely the bilingual competence, the extra-linguistic competence, the transfer competence, the instrumental competence, the strategic competence, and the psycho-physiological competence. This model stems from the realisation that translation competence is much more procedural than declarative, i.e., much more focused on knowing how to translate than on theoretical knowledge and the conscious verbalisation of that knowledge. Furthermore, these competences are inter-related and hierarchic, with the strategic sub-competence occupying a dominant position (PACTE GROUP, 2003, p. 18). The latter is an essential procedural competence because it plans the process, carries out the translation project, identifies translation problems and applies procedures to solve them. Concerning the other sub-

competences, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of extra-linguistic competences, namely those that deviate from the ability to communicate in two different languages, and transfer competences. The former includes general world knowledge and knowledge about translation, as well as bicultural, encyclopaedic and specialist knowledge (which can be activated according to different translation situations). The latter, on the other hand, is characterised by the ability to deeply understand the ST and re-express its meaning in the TT, maintaining the communicative purpose of the ST but activating creativity in the TL (Beeby, 2004, p. 44). The instrumental and psycho-physiological competences, instead, concern the material resources, i.e., tools, and the cognitive means employed by the translator, this latter relating to aspects such as memory, attention span, creativity, and logical reasoning (Beeby, 2004, p. 44). As Beeby herself points out, the PACTE model might be used to set priorities when designing a translation-related syllabus taking into account the students' level, their degree course (e.g., if it is an undergraduate or a postgraduate degree course) and consequently their educational/training needs. As a matter of fact, coming back to the concept of declarative and procedural competences, it could be stated that the latter should follow the former when education gives way to training. This might occur, for instance, when moving from a bachelor's degree programme to a master's degree programme or, to refer to the PACTE model (PACTE GROUP, 2003, p. 4), during the transition from novice knowledge, typical of the early stages, to expert knowledge, in which *knowing what* becomes *knowing how*, implemented automatically.

2.3. A preliminary analysis of translation teaching in Italy

2.3.1. The case of Linguistic Mediation

Before 1999, the year of the reform promoted by Ministerial Decree No. 509, university

degree programmes in Italy lasted between four and six years, depending on the discipline. Since 1999, however, there has been a shift to an entirely new articulation of university programmes, namely the so-called *3+2 formula*, which means a three-year degree course at the end of which one may decide to enrol in a degree course lasting a further two years. Whereas the old system of degree programmes provided for a single cycle of studies, at the end of which a degree was obtained, the 3+2 formula provides for two different degrees, a bachelor's degree at the end of a three-year or undergraduate degree programme and a master's degree at the end of a two-year or postgraduate degree programme. Nevertheless, there are some degree courses which have retained the old system, such as Medicine, lasting six years, and Law, lasting five years. As far as degree courses in foreign languages are concerned, they have undergone reform and switched from lasting four years to the 3+2 formula, which has also led to a renaming of the three-year degree course. Indeed, as Lorenzo Blini states (Blini, 2008, p. 125), the decision to name the three-year degree course *Linguistic Mediation* (LM) was influenced by the intention to reserve the words *translation* and *interpreting* for the master's degree courses. When one speaks of LM, however, one is speaking of a denomination that since its very beginning has raised doubts and discussions as it lacked not only an academic but also a professional heritage. Indeed, not only was it a new name for a degree course, but also a professional role which is still not recognised today as a professional figure for social purposes in the national reference framework published by the European Union, the Ministry of Labour and the Isfol¹⁵. Besides, the denomination is very often accompanied by the adjective *cultural*, thus turning it into *Linguistic and Cultural Mediation* and combining the two levels or even confusing them (Blini, 2008, p. 131). The attempt to redefine the perception of translation from the very title of the degree course by

¹⁵ The public research body in the field of social and labour policy development.

referring, with the term *mediation*, to the translator's role of intermediary between two different linguistic and cultural systems is admirable, but nevertheless insufficient. The result is, indeed, unsatisfactory with respect to the objective, as two different professional figures are mixed, creating even more confusion and giving the erroneous impression that they may be trained with a three-year degree course. The two professional figures (that of the linguistic mediator and that of the cultural mediator), however, have merged because in a strongly multi-ethnic social context characterised by continuous migration flows, it is pointless to talk about language without talking about culture. Indeed, even the definition provided by UNICEF is clear: *a linguistic and cultural mediator is someone who facilitates communication between one person or a group of people and a service provider or an institution, including cultural elements (both verbal and non-verbal), and can give support to both parties regarding cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviours* (UNICEF, p. 5). The strong cultural dimension of the mediator's work differentiates him/her from that of the translator and interpreter, who have space and time constraints such that they cannot dwell on culture-related explanations. This does not mean that translators and interpreters should not master the cultures of the languages from and into which they translate; on the contrary, it is a prerequisite, but a linguistic and cultural mediator certainly has much more space and time to provide cultural information for his/her clients. As a matter of fact, many times the mediator has to deal with situations in which the clients are refugees and migrants whose situations need professional cultural framing especially for the host culture. In this regard, UNICEF identifies two main differences between an interpreter and a mediator (no mention is made of a translator because only the oral channel is taken into account), namely that the latter provides cultural context, as mentioned above, and liaises with communities, collects information, and feeds it back to relevant parties (UNICEF, p. 6). Nevertheless, one always speaks of translators and interpreters, recognised professional figures as opposed to

mediators, although actually referring to mediators (Blini, 2008, p. 124), and even the three-year degree course in LM seems to be a prerequisite to access master's degrees in translation and interpreting (Bernardini, 2004, p. 25). Not being part of any legislation or official documents, the designation LM has given and still gives rise to diverse interpretations by the various departments which offer it as a three-year degree course (Blini, 2008, p. 136). Consequently, as it will be analysed in more detail in the following section, the various interpretations lead to as many different educational offers (the set of courses on offer and the teaching methods adopted). However, as part of the L-12-degree class¹⁶, common educational objectives may be identified for LM degree courses, namely (Bernardini, 2004, p. 25):

- solid linguistic and cultural, written and spoken competencies in, at least, two languages, which also includes a knowledge of the structure of natural languages and methods of linguistic analysis
- basics in economics, law, history, politics, literature, and social anthropology
- a good command of communication and information technology tools
- the development of socio-cultural skills
- the capacity to work autonomously and to adapt easily to variable working situations

These points demonstrate that in modern society, mediators (as well as translators and interpreters) are required to complement their language skills with scientific, ethical, socio-political, and intercultural expertise. In other words, the aim is to train language experts who know how to be part of the world and recognise its facets, as well as to have a marked

¹⁶ A degree class brings together courses with the same educational objectives, namely the body of knowledge and skills which characterise the cultural and professional profile of the degree programme.

intercultural sensitivity (Blini, 2008, p. 131). This is a noble intent, but is it possible to train such figures with a three-year degree course? It is difficult to think of acquiring such complex competencies in three years, while also having to take care of the linguistic part and bearing in mind that if one intends to continue with a master's degree course, the training offer will shift towards translation and interpreting.

2.3.2. Preliminary qualitative analysis on the role of translation in nine undergraduate degree programmes

The analysis now shifts to the field through a qualitative investigation of the responses obtained from nine of my fellow students enrolled in the Master's degree programme in Translation and Interpreting about the bachelor's degree programmes they attended (the full transcript of the interviews can be found in the *Appendix 2. Answers of the respondents*). Before getting to the core of the interviews¹⁷, it is appropriate to emphasise that their purpose is not to discredit either the bachelor's degree courses taken into consideration or the master's degree course in which my colleagues and I are enrolled. Indeed, this is a purely qualitative analysis, as already stated, which serves to reinforce what has been discussed so far. The aim is, in fact, to analyse the role played by the teaching of translation and the method employed, in order to understand whether structuralism can really be considered obsolete and how much the educational offer can affect the perception of the working environment. Hence, the analysis will be developed on the basis of three factors: the mere number of translation courses offered by the degree courses, the method of teaching

¹⁷ The interviews were conducted in October 2022 via Zoom. During these interviews, I took note of the respondents' answers and then transcribed them, with the consent of the interviewees (see *Appendix 3* for the informed consent form).

translation and the consequent role that it plays in students' education, and, finally, the marketability of the degree courses in the translation-related working environment. The interviewees were divided into two groups: on the one hand, those who attended an undergraduate degree course in LM¹⁸ (students E, F, G, H, and I), and on the other hand, those who attended an undergraduate degree course with a foreign language orientation, without being part of the L-12 degree class (students A, B, C and D), in order not to exclude the possibility of different answers. Furthermore, if one looks at question four in the *Appendix 1. Questions for the respondents*, two different questions were formulated for the two different groups of students because it was assumed at the outset that non-LM students did not have courses with the word *translation* in the title¹⁹. With regard to the criterion applied in choosing the students to interview, this was the variety they could offer, especially in terms of where they attended their bachelor's degree courses. As a matter of fact, at least as far as LM is concerned, a variety was achieved since L-12-degree courses from five different Italian cities belonging to five different regions were surveyed while for non-LM degree courses only one out of four students came from a university other than Ca' Foscari²⁰.

With regard to the number of translation courses attended by each student, what emerges is what is shown in Figure 1:

¹⁸ In this case, the designation LM is used to summarise the five undergraduate degree programmes belonging to the L-12-degree class examined. All five, however, carry the term *mediation* in their titles, although in different forms.

¹⁹ Students attending a bachelor's degree course not belonging to the L-12 class receive language instruction which focuses more on foreign languages and literatures, as well as on the intercultural dimension of language, rather than on the translative dimension. Indeed, the students interviewed who did not attend an LM degree course instead attended degree courses belonging to the L-11 degree class, which focuses much more on foreign languages and cultures.

²⁰ Among the students who made themselves available for the interview, only four attended an undergraduate degree course not belonging to the L-12-degree class. Nevertheless, even among the three female students who attended Ca' Foscari there is a variety: one enrolled in 2017, the other two, both enrolled in 2016, however, chose to study at least one different language from each other.

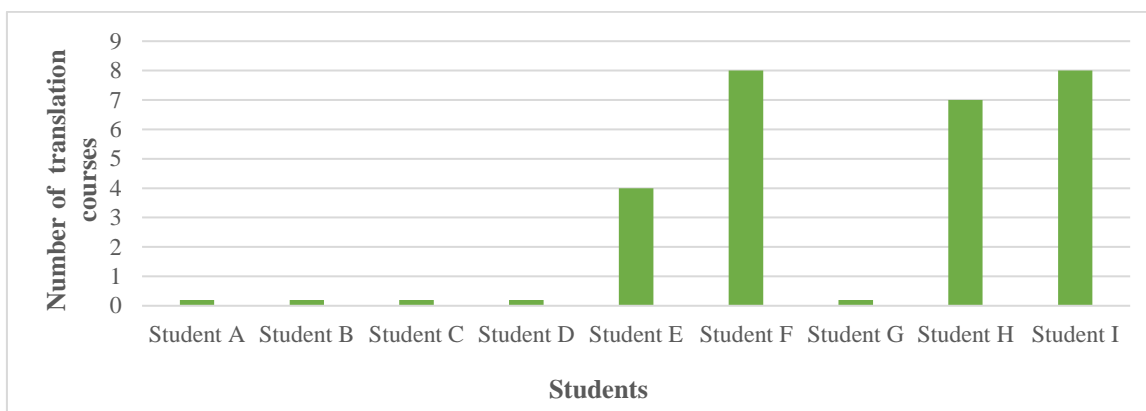


Figure 1: number of translation courses attended by each respondent.

Students A, B, C and D, namely students who did not attend a degree course in LM, did not participate in any translation courses. In contrast, students who took an undergraduate degree in LM attended translation courses, in particular student E attended four, student F eight, student H seven and student I eight. However, an exception among former LM students is student G, who did not attend any translation courses. Nevertheless, if one looks beyond the surface, it emerges that the names of the language courses are mostly a matter of form because when interviewing the students more closely, it turned out that even those who did not attend a LM degree course approached translation, although to a small extent. Indeed, all four of the students who did not attend a LM degree course in their third year took at least one translation course in the form of a module incorporated into the foreign language course. As regards student G, although no course had the word *translation* in its title, in her second year she approached translation in both languages of study, albeit in a different manner. There is, however, a greater tendency among LM degree courses to include courses labelled *translation* in their syllabus, possibly in order to regain some of what has been lost since the 1999 reform, namely the wording *translation and interpreting* as a degree course title. Another reason might lie in the intent to emphasise that the Bachelor's degree in LM serves as a prelude to the Master's degree course in Translation, as highlighted in 2.3.1. *The case of Linguistic Mediation* Either way, whatever the reason behind this choice, the word

translation, in all cases analysed, is preceded by the word *language*, and this might suggest that in these courses translation is treated as a tool and not as the ultimate goal of learning. This is precisely what will be discussed in the following sub-section.

The preliminary analysis of both formal and informal number of translation courses taken by the interviewees leads to a deeper investigation of the methods employed to teach translation. In this regard, Figure 2 below depicts the number of times, for each of the languages studied by the interviewees, in which translation was approached as a discipline in its own right rather than as a means of consolidating the forms of the foreign language, thus using the grammar-translation method (1.2.1. *The Grammar-Translation Method*). The analysis is conducted by taking into consideration the methods used for each language since, instead of finding particular differences between the methods used in non-LM and LM degree courses, differences were detected depending on the language being studied.

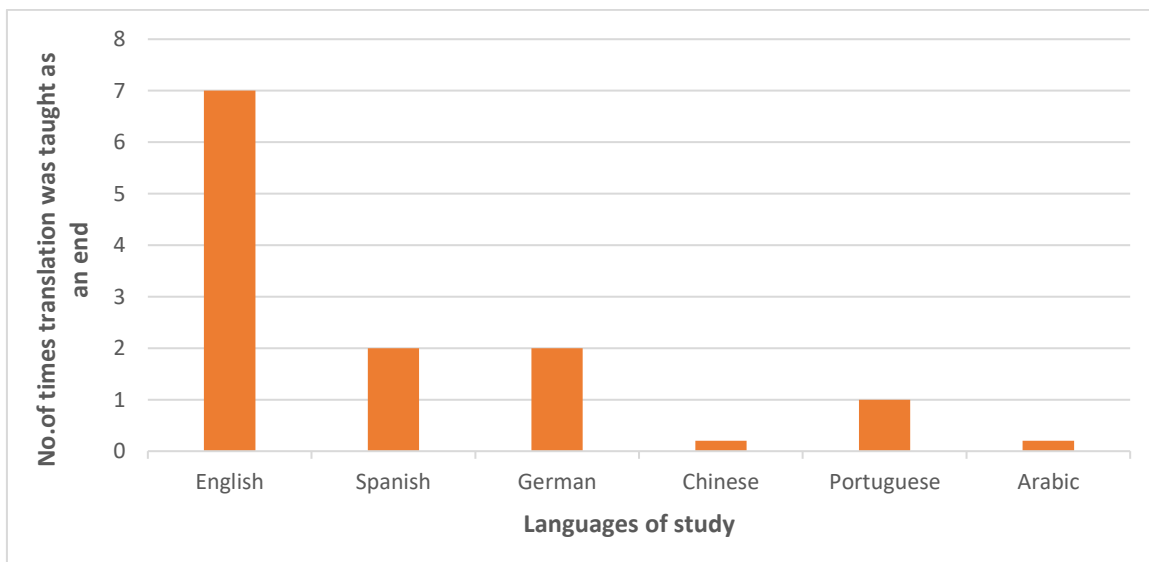


Figure 2: number of times in which translation was taught as an end for each language studied.

All the students interviewed, apart from student A who chose to study Spanish and Italian sign language, studied English during their undergraduate degree programme. Therefore, as shown in Figure 2, out of nine students, eight studied English and of these, seven approached translation as a discipline and not as a tool for learning the language in at least one of the

courses attended. In all cases mentioned above, the method used by the professors was pragmatic, namely assigning translations either at home or in class and the subsequent discussion between professor and students on translation choices. Thus, round tables between students and professor, where everyone had freedom of speech and where they did not speak in terms of “best translation”, were preferred. Furthermore, in most cases, translation theory emerged in the form of spontaneously implemented translation techniques during the act of translation or during the analysis of previously done translations, as in the case of student G, without a course or amount of hours explicitly dedicated to theoretical teaching. Two cases are exceptions to this trend: student H who addressed translation studies through a dedicated textbook and student I who, in his second and third year, studied translation theory and techniques. However, in neither case was space taken away from the pragmatic activity of translating, although in the case of student I, a certain lack of translation practise emerged in the two years mentioned above. Hence, it may be stated that translation within most of the analysed English classes was taught with a method similar to the direct and communicative method employed in language teaching (1.2.4. *The twentieth century: the Direct Method* and 1.2.9. *Interaction as a means and a goal: the Communicative Language Teaching*). The similarity with the direct method may be found in the emphasis placed on the pragmatic approach, which, in the specific case of the teachings examined, results in translations assigned to the students, thus supporting the so-called *learning by doing*. Another legacy, so to speak, of the direct method is undoubtedly the focus on conversations and open discussion between professor and students. Besides, never speaking of correct translation in absolutist terms and leaving room for class discussion, these teachings seem to draw on the communicative method insofar as they argue that there is a

more appropriate translation for the textual type to be translated²¹, as well as for the cultural and communicative context involved. In these cases, one may therefore speak of a more functionalist than structuralist approach (2.1. From structuralism to functionalism, but this does not mean that the above-mentioned courses are only functionalist without carrying traces of structuralism. Indeed, as in the case of student G, the two natures can coexist in the same LM degree course for the same language of study, but in two different academic years. In the case of student F, on the other hand, the approach to the teaching of translation was completely structuralist and taken over by the grammar-translation method since translation was used to help students grasp complex grammatical and lexical concepts. As a matter of fact, this method resulted in translations of scattered sentences not placed in a textual context, as will be seen in other cases by analysing other languages of study. The Spanish case, for instance, is useful to carry out this kind of reflection. Out of seven students who studied Spanish during their bachelor's degree course, only one (student D) did not approach translation, the other six did but only in two cases was translation addressed as a stand-alone discipline. As in the case of English, the distinction between non-LM and LM students is not relevant here, since a mostly structuralist tendency in the teaching of translation was also noticed in three cases of LM students (students F, G and H). In the two cases in which Spanish translation was approached as a stand-alone discipline as depicted in Figure 2, the method used was similar to that used in the English translation classes. Specifically, in the case of student E the method was the same as that used for English and the text typologies were also the same (newspaper articles, literary and technical texts), whereas in the case of

²¹ The text types most frequently approached by the students interviewed during their English translation courses were newspaper articles (four out of seven students), literary texts (three out of seven students) and technical texts (three out of seven students). Only in one case (that of student G) was audio-visual translation approached, but the students had to analyse already completed translations.

student I, mostly newspaper articles were translated, while in English he translated political, economic and commercial texts. The method, however, as mentioned before, was the same as in English translation classes, namely the open discussion between professor and students on the translation choices involved. In the remaining four cases, translation was used as a tool to consolidate what was studied at the linguistic and lexical level, through *ad hoc* constructed sentences containing the more complex forms that had to be translated into Italian to facilitate comprehension. This strongly structuralist tendency based on the erroneous quest for linear equivalence between different languages cannot even be attributed to the position that Spanish language occupied within the respondents' curricula. To be more precise, every student enrolled in a degree course in foreign languages, apart from certain instances in which at least the first language is established by the degree course itself, can choose which languages to study, among several possibilities, and to what extent. This means that the student can decide which language to study as his/her first language, as his/her second and, in the case of LM students, also as his/her third. Consequently, the first language tends to be taught differently and cover more complex topics than the second, and the same happens with the second as opposed to the third. However, this does not seem to apply to Spanish since, even though for student A it was the first language (out of two) and for students F and G the second (out of three), the translation module was still approached using the grammar-translation method. Therefore, a question springs to mind: were they really translation modules or foreign language modules approached using translation as a tool and test of language competence? As previously stated, my aim is not to criticise but to initiate a preliminary reflection which, if pursued, could benefit degree courses in the future as there is clearly a flaw in the naming of courses and consequently in the educational and training expectations of the student. In this regard, the distinction between non-LM and LM students may be useful. Indeed, the only non-LM student (student A) who approached Spanish

translation did so using it only as a means of language learning, yet one could object by stating that neither the course title nor the degree class to which the degree course belongs conveys the impression that translation should be taught as a stand-alone discipline. The objection is valid and even during the interview, when asked what they would like to change about their translation teaching, Student A emphasised that since it was a degree course in foreign languages and cultures, she would not change anything. Nonetheless, the outlook changes if one looks at the bachelor's degree course as the piece of a larger mosaic belonging to the 3+2 formula and taking into consideration that the Bachelor's degree in Language, Civilisation and the Science of Language attended by Student A may, in fact, prepare the ground for a Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation. In order to enrol for the master's degree, indeed, student A did not have to take any Spanish translation courses, and in hindsight, given her intention to continue her studies with a Master's degree in Translation, she would have preferred to spend more hours on translation and translating whole texts. Shifting the focus to German, the situation seems to change slightly as out of two students (student B and H) who chose to study German (as a second language in both cases) both were taught German translation as a self-standing discipline. Student B, however, brought out a particular aspect, namely the fact that with the same method, the teaching of German resulted in a different effect: there was much more shyness and hesitancy on the part of the students who, therefore, did not intervene as much as in English. This could be due to the fact that German is, in the perception of many, an extremely complex language that, therefore, causes a certain reticence when it comes to put it into practise. In the case of Student H, on the other hand, no reticence was perceived, probably because she had been on Erasmus in Germany during her second year, thus consolidating both the purely linguistic aspect of the language and her own confidence in speaking it. In this case, the method used was the same as in English, namely the open discussion between all the students and the

professor on their translation choices, while the text types were different. Indeed, in German they translated art and tourism texts but also localisation content; the latter could also be described as a glimpse into a current way of working in the field of translation. Different from all cases analysed so far is the case of the last three languages discussed in the interviews, namely, as shown in Figure 2, Chinese, Portuguese and Arabic. It is appropriate to put these three languages in the set of languages chosen as a third language and/or languages never studied before and approached for the first time in the undergraduate degree programme. As a matter of fact, in the case of Chinese, student C, had never studied it before, in the case of Portuguese, students F, G and I chose it as a third language, while in the case of Arabic, it was student E's third language and she had never approached it before. With regard to Chinese, there were no courses labelled *translation* since student C attended a three-year degree course focusing on foreign languages, literatures and cultures (belonging to the L-11-degree class). Besides, Chinese being an extremely complicated language and different from Italian, and assuming that no one has studied it in high school up to that point, it was predictable that there would be no translation courses as translation requires a solid linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language. Nevertheless, Student C had the opportunity, after his bachelor's degree, to take single Chinese language courses²² belonging to a three-year degree course and comprising two translation modules, namely one from Chinese to Italian and the other from Italian to Chinese. In the former instance, as reported by the interviewee, the translation of scientific texts was approached pragmatically, while in the latter instance only single sentences were translated, thus being totally disconnected and devoid of any context. This could always be attributable to the fact that Chinese is a highly

²² Probably more than *opportunity* it is better to speak of *necessity*. Indeed, Student C had to take these courses in order to access the Master's degree in Interpreting and Translation and study Chinese in that degree course as well.

complex language and therefore active language competence (from one's native language to Chinese) may take longer to achieve than the reverse (from Chinese to one's native language). Furthermore, it should be considered that these courses belonged to a bachelor's degree course, which hence probably applied the same argument as the degree course that Student C had previously attended. As far as Portuguese is concerned, all the cases analysed concern students who chose it as a third language and attended a three-year degree programme in LM. More specifically, out of three students who studied Portuguese, only one (student I) approached translation separately, albeit less thoroughly and with fewer text types than in English, which he had chosen as his first language. Indeed, the method employed during the second year of Portuguese consisted of having the students translate literary texts written by both Portuguese and Brazilian authors and then discuss them in class, with an emphasis on the cultural aspect of the translations themselves. This is a taste of translation, so to speak, aimed at giving students a preliminary opportunity to experience translation practice first-hand. This is likely to be the major difficulty with the languages chosen as third languages: they usually begin in the second academic year of a LM degree course and, therefore, it is even more challenging than with the other languages to achieve a good linguistic level (if one has never learned the language before) and then to approach translation. The case of Arabic, in this respect, differs from that of Portuguese, since, although it was chosen by student E as a third language, it began in the first year as the other two languages. Nevertheless, Arabic translation was not approached and even the titles of the Arabic courses did not refer to translation, thus not creating any false expectations on the part of the students. As mentioned above, for Chinese and Arabic, other factors must be considered, such as the complexity and gap, with respect to Italian, of their linguistic and cultural systems, as well as the fact that a new alphabet must also be learnt. Besides, although many high schools in recent years have included non-European languages in their curricula,

most students have never approached these languages before, also bearing in mind that not all university language students come from a Foreign Language High School (*Liceo Linguistico*). Therefore, for these languages, other factors are obviously taken into consideration when designing three-year language degree courses.

The third and last factor taken into account in my analysis is the marketability of the undergraduate degrees examined in the translation working environment. By *marketability* is meant, in this instance, the ability of a degree course to provide students with useful tools to enter the labour market and take their first steps there. In this case, unlike the other two factors analysed thus far, the answers helped to paint a picture which, although preliminary and resulting from qualitative research, leaves no room for doubt or grey areas since the answers were remarkably similar to each other. Indeed, what emerges from the overwhelming majority of the interviews is that none of the respondents felt ready for the working environment after graduating with a bachelor's degree, whether from an L-11 or L-12-degree class. After graduating, each of the respondents felt good in a certain aspect of the language, since some had received a more cultural imprint (very useful for translation practise) while for others the imprint was more linguistic (grammar, vocabulary), but all of them felt a certain uncertainty with regard to the preparation needed to work in the field of translation. Thus, they opted to enrol in the master's degree, with the expectation of deepening translation (in the case of those who had already approached translation) and, in most cases (except for student E) starting to study interpreting. Besides, everyone expected to approach the use of CAT-tools²³ as they are a widely employed instrument by translators

²³ The term CAT tool stands for Computer-Assisted Translation Tool. CAT-tools split large multilingual documents into segments (phrases and paragraphs) which are stored in a database. This is called translation memory which means that previously translated material can be reused at any time (Memoq. *What is a CAT Tool?* Available at: <https://www.memoq.com/tools/what-is-a-cat-tool> (Last accessed 02/02/2023).

nowadays, so much so that both translation agencies and companies looking for translators require the ability to use them. The respondents' expectations may thus be summarised in two words: *specialisation* and *professionalisation*. The first term refers to the willingness and expectation on the part of the respondents to approach as much translation of specialised texts as possible, with a focus on technical, commercial and legal texts, namely the types of translation most required in the working environment. The second term, on the other hand, refers to the respondents' expectation not only to approach the use of CAT-tools but also to learn more about the rates to be charged if they wanted to start a freelance translator's career and to undertake internships related to what they would study. Therefore, none of the interviewed students hesitated when it came to deciding whether to start working or to continue studying and enrol in the master's degree programme. One could object by stating that the 3+2 formula envisages two years of specialisation alongside the previous three years, or rather, to use two terms that have been used in 2.2.2. *Translation teaching: what should be considered*, two years of training alongside three years of education. The objection would be fair if it were not for the fact that the two years following a bachelor's degree are not compulsory and that not all students have the intention and/or can afford to attend a master's degree course. Indeed, leaving aside the participants' willingness to deepen their knowledge of translation (for which two additional years were necessary), they still did not feel ready for the working world at the end of their bachelor's degree. The purpose of the analysis of this third factor, as in the previous two cases, is not to discredit in any way the degree courses considered but, based on the responses received, it seems that something in the naming of the degree courses and in the educational offerings did not go according to plans. When I speak of *naming*, I am referring to the fact that most students enrolling in a three-year LM degree course, for instance, do not even know what a linguistic and cultural mediator is, this is not their fault, but rather due to the fact that this professional figure is not even legally and

socially recognised as stated in 2.3.1. *The case of Linguistic Mediation* As a result, these students are, in fact, enrolling in a bachelor's degree programme which will not guarantee that they will be acknowledged as professionals, as is the case, for example, after a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. As far as non-LM students are concerned, the situation does not seem to change except that, as emerges in more than one interview, the titles of the degree courses did not lead them to think that they could become mediators/translators. Nevertheless, after a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages and Cultures, one can enter a Master's degree in Translation without having to take extra exams, except for a few cases such as that of student C who had to make up Chinese courses before enrolling²⁴. Despite the above, non-LM students, just like LM students, did not feel ready to enter the world of work at the end of their three-year cycle. The analysis concludes with a reflection related to the current situation²⁵ of the students involved since, although the focus is not on the master's degree that they chose, it is evident that the latter has impacted on their perception of the translation-related working environment. In this regard, the master's degree course undoubtedly made students aware of the difficulty of entering the translation job market and of the next steps to be taken towards this goal. On a positive note, none of the respondents excludes working in the field of translation in absolute terms. Nevertheless, everyone does not feel specialised enough to start working in this field, as there is a widespread awareness that in today's fast-paced and competitive society, the more specialised and skilled one is, the better. More specifically, students A, B and F would like to specialise in literary translation and, aware of the fact that this implies enrolling in a postgraduate course, neither

²⁴ A clarification is necessary here: the student did not have to take translation courses but generic Chinese language courses that carried the same code as the courses required for admission to the master's degree course. It was a coincidence, albeit an extremely useful one, that the Chinese language course included a translation module.

²⁵ It is necessary to emphasise that the situation of the students reported in the interviews refers to October 2022. Any possible changes in occupation and/or job expectations are not included in the analysis.

student A nor B preclude working as teachers, in order to at least exploit their language skills. Students G and H, on the other hand, would like to specialise in audio-visual translation and therefore intend to enrol in a postgraduate course, not excluding a transfer abroad, especially student H. Student C, instead, would like to become a Chinese interpreter, because he knows that translation would be less profitable in comparison. As regards students D and E, they seem less convinced than the others to continue their path in the field of translation both because they speak in hypothetical terms and because, even more than the other, they perceive the world of translation work as inaccessible. Lastly, student I decided to direct his translation skills towards a field other than translation, which he deems saturated, namely customer care, which allows him to deal with foreign clients, languages, and cultures. Furthermore, this last student provides an insightful food for thought as to how translation is perceived in the labour market, namely the fact that in Italy, for the same job, an engineer is more likely to be trained to acquire translation skills than a translator is to be trained to understand how a machine works. This perception, while seeming extreme in words, will be encountered, albeit in different terms, in the third chapter when discussing the prerequisites for becoming a translator at the European Commission. Coming back to the fact that even after a master's degree the respondents do not feel ready for the professional world, it is not the master's degree itself to be blamed but rather a system that takes it for granted that translation skills can be acquired in just two years. The underlying assumption that translation can be "handled" easily and rapidly after language skills have been acquired is precisely what is wrong and also affects the workplace, as will be discussed in chapter three.

3. The challenging working environment of translation: two case studies

The issues related to translation teaching encountered so far also seem to have an impact on the working environment. Indeed, the lack of proper recognition of the discipline in undergraduate degree programmes and, in general, the hard path translation had to undergo to be recognised as an autonomous field of study seem to reverberate in the professional sphere as well. It seems that translation still cannot totally detach itself from the difficulties that marked its history, making it a discipline now acknowledged more in words rather than deeds. Hypotheses can be put forward as to why the translation lies in this situation, but first it is necessary to frame what such a situation is. Therefore, to facilitate this overview, I chose to analyse two different situations that contribute to the complexity of translation employment and, more generally, recognition. Firstly, I will analyse the case of the European Commission translation team and afterwards the issue concerning the lack of a professional register for Italian translators.

3.1. Becoming a translator at the European Commission: inclusiveness or devaluation?

3.1.1. A glimpse into the history of European Commission

What we know today as the European Commission was founded in 1951 by the Treaty of Paris under the name of European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), to regulate the coal and steel industries after World War II. The foundation of this body was proposed by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman, and it first included France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. At the core of the ECSC was the idea of the High

Authority, namely the executive branch of it, which was to be independent and supranational, meaning that power and authority transcended national boundaries and governments²⁶. In 1958, the above-mentioned six countries signed the Treaty of Rome, at the end of which two new communities alongside the executive structures of the ECSC were established: the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The three bodies, named the European Executives, co-existed until 1967 when, through the Merger Treaty, they were merged into a single administration known as the Commission of the European Communities (EC), whose main objective was to establish cooperation to deal with economic and agricultural affairs. Furthermore, between 1973 and 1995 nine more countries joined the EC, including Denmark, Ireland, the UK, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Finland, and Sweden. In 2002, fifty years after the establishment of the ECSC and year of the expiry of the Treaty of Paris, it was decided that all activities and heritage belonging to ECSC would be transferred to the Commission. In other words, ECSC ceased to exist, and its activities fully absorbed by the EC²⁷.

3.1.2. The definition and role of the European Commission

The European Commission is the politically independent executive arm²⁸ of the European

²⁶ UNIC. *History of the European Commission*. Available at: <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/history-european-commission-ec> (Last accessed: 16/12/2022).

Wikipedia. *European Commission*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Commission (Last accessed: 16/12/2022).

²⁷ UNIC. *History of the European Commission*. Available at: <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/history-european-commission-ec> (Last accessed: 16/12/2022).

²⁸ The executive belongs to the branch of government that is charged with such powers as diplomatic representation, superintendence of the execution of the laws, and appointment of officials and that usually has some power over legislation (Merriam-Webster).

Union²⁹. It is based in Brussels and proposes new legislation that then requires analysis and approval by both the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, based in Brussels and Strasbourg respectively. Furthermore, the European Commission, again in cooperation with the Council and Parliament, determines which expenditure has priority and how best to use the funds, as well as drawing up annual budgets to be approved by the two bodies. Another important role, which it exercises together with the Court of Justice, is to ensure that EU law is correctly applied in all 27 member states. Finally, the European Commission represents all EU countries when it comes to international relations, such as trade policy and humanitarian aid. Everything is carried out under the guidance of the President, who is currently Ursula von der Leyen, acting as an internal organiser. Indeed, the President distributes the fields of activity among the members of the Commission so that each Commissioner is responsible for a specific policy area and has authority over the administrative departments concerned, namely the Directorates-General (DGs).

3.1.3. The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)

The Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) is the department of the European Commission which is responsible for the translation of written texts from and into the 24 EU languages and is headed by Christos Ellinides³⁰. The tasks of a DGT translator are diverse, first and foremost the translation of legislative texts, formal acts of agreement, correspondence, and reports drafted by the European Commission. More specifically, the types of documents to be translated are (Publications office of the EU, 2014):

²⁹ European Commission. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission_en (Last accessed: 17/12/2022).

³⁰ European Commission. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission_en (Last accessed: 17/12/2022).

- speeches and speaking notes;
- briefings and press releases;
- international agreements;
- policy statements;
- answers to written and oral parliamentary questions;
- technical studies;
- financial reports;
- minutes;
- internal administrative matters;
- information for staff;
- scripts and captions for films and other promotional material;
- correspondence with ministries, companies, interest groups, and individuals;
- all kinds of webpages and publications for opinion-formers and the general public.

As already mentioned, each of these texts is translated into all the languages that are part of the EU, thus making all documents accessible to the largest number of people, not only linguists and diplomats. Indeed, the strength of this choice is precisely to provide the opportunity for all citizens to inform themselves about European legislation in the language they are most familiar with, thus fully keeping to democracy and transparency (Publications office of the EU, 2014). Hence, each translation, after being carried out, is subjected to strict quality control divided into two different categories: revision and review. The first is an in-depth bilingual analysis of the content of both the ST and the TT to ensure that the communicative purpose of the former has been fulfilled, while the second is a monolingual analysis of the content of the TT to assess its adaptability to the receiving culture. Each text has its own quality control criteria according to the text category to which it belongs, namely

legal documents, policy and administrative documents, information for the public, or input for EU legislation, policy formulation and administration. However, there are general criteria which all translated texts within the DGT must comply with, such as respecting the purpose of the TT, respecting the linguistic conventions of the TL, and providing a service in accordance with the international standard ISO 17100³¹ (DGT, 2015, p. 3).

Besides, always adhering to the citizen-oriented approach, a DGT translator must also be able to offer language consultancy services to ensure that the Commission's communication is always effective and straightforward for citizens while employing the correct terminology found in the IATE³². Moreover, the DGT translator is also called upon to act as a proof-reader of texts previously drafted by Commission authors³³. In this case, the translation will not be integral, but the translator will have to identify the problematic parts of it and modify them while sticking to the style of the original text. This brief overview of the roles held by DGT translators provides us with an initial and interesting food for thought: these translators are not only confined to the translation from a ST to a TT but act as true communicators. Indeed, the professional vision within the DGT mirrors precisely what the role of the translator is nowadays: a professional of the language and its influence on the receiving culture. Increasingly, the role of the translator is expanding and adapting to the demands of the market in a world, the business world, which moves fast and, for the same reason, (s)he

³¹This standard concerns: a) compliance with specific domain and client terminology and/or any other reference material provided and ensuring terminological consistency during translation; b) the semantic accuracy of the target language content; c) the appropriate syntax, spelling, punctuation, diacritical marks and other orthographical conventions of the target language; d) lexical cohesion and phraseology; e) compliance with any proprietary and/or client style guide (including register and language variants); f) locale and any applicable standards; g) formatting; h) the target audience and purpose of the target language content (DGT, 2015).

³² IATE stands for **I**nteractive **T**erminology for **E**urope, and it is a database collecting all useful information about specific terminology employed in the EU. This allows DGT translators to quickly find information and standardise their vocabulary according to the context.

³³ European Commission. *Translation*. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/translation_en (Last accessed: 17/12/2022).

is now more and more becoming both a language consultant and proof-reader. The first role is due to his/her knowledge of the two cultures is required to work with - a knowledge which enables him/her to employ the appropriate words to the context and communicative purpose - the second is due to the ever-expanding role of machine translation.

3.1.4. How to become a DGT translator

We now turn to the analysis of the procedure required to join the DGT. Firstly, the applicant must be a national of an EU member state and then (s)he must create an account on the EPSO (European Personnel Selection Office) website, which is the body responsible for the selection of staff for all EU institutions as well as for the organisation of the calls for applications, by registering with his/her details. As far as education is concerned, at least a bachelor's degree is required but not necessarily in a language field; indeed, people with science and art degrees may also apply. However, language skills are necessary and, besides being fully proficient in one's native language, the applicant must have a thorough knowledge (minimum C1 level as per the CEFR³⁴) of at least two official EU languages including one language among English, French and German. Although translators usually work only towards their native language, proficiency in other languages constitutes an advantage since for some languages the ability to translate into a language other than one's own may be useful (Publications office of the EU, 2014). Moreover, the translator must be able to understand the text written in the SL and make it comprehensible in the TL, using a

³⁴ CEFR stands for Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User. These levels are defined through “can-do” descriptors (CEFR. *The CEFR levels*. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions> (Last accessed: 17/12/2022)).

style which is appropriate to the context and purpose of the TT. The whole thing must be done in a short time, and the translator must manage timelines and be able to work under pressure yet with a good ally: computer-aided translation. Indeed, the translator must know how to employ the computer tools at his/her disposal³⁵. Within the DGT, the translator will be called upon to translate complex administrative, economic, legal, and political texts, thus it is essential for the applicant to have general knowledge of politics, economics, foreign affairs, and legal issues, as well as to be familiar with the latest news. Hence, the main soft skills required are initiative, intellectual curiosity, and motivation³⁶. Assuming the translator meets the requirements just mentioned, (s)he may apply for the entrance test by filling out the application form in one of the three working languages of the EU to be chosen from English, French and German, and providing, if possessed, any certification attesting to language proficiency. Furthermore, during this stage, the translator must choose one of the three types of contracts provided by the European Commission between permanent, temporary, or fixed-term contract³⁷. The first test to which the applicant is subjected is a multiple-choice test with questions on verbal, numerical, abstract reasoning, and, for some competitions, also tests on field-related competences, all conducted in the candidate's native language³⁸. The applicants with the highest marks on the first test are then called for the next

³⁵ Besides IATE for terminology, DGT translators can employ Euramis and MT@EC. Euramis is a translation memory that connects all of DGT's electronic translation assistance tools. Therefore, every time a document to be translated is loaded, all previous translations of sentences or passages are extracted from its central memory. MT@EC is a machine translation system that relies on existing language resources, such as corpora, to solve statistical algorithms capable of creating a system which automatically generates a raw translation (Publications office of the EU, 2014).

³⁶ European Commission. *Translator profile*. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/jobs-european-commission/working-eu/translator-profile_en (Last accessed: 17/12/2022).

³⁷ Permanent staff are members of the EU civil service appointed for an indefinite time and they may fall into three categories: Administrators (AD), Assistants (AST), and Secretaries/Clerks (AST/SC). Temporary staff, instead, is recruited to fill vacant positions for a fixed amount of time. Finally, the contract staff works for the EU on a fixed-term contract basis; it carries out manual or administrative tasks for which there is an insufficient number of officials (EPSO, Staff categories, s.d.)

³⁸ EPSO. *EPSO tests*. Available at: <https://epso.europa.eu/en/selection-procedure/epso-tests> (Last accessed:

stage, namely two translation tests into the candidate’s native language and from both the languages (s)he applied for. Although the use of computer-aided translation tools (CAT tools) is not allowed, the translator may use paper format dictionaries during the tests. Assuming that the candidate applies for English and French as source languages and Italian as target language (this being his/her native language), (s)he has to translate from both English and French a text of about ten pages on economics, politics or law. For instance, if one looks at the samples on the EPSO website³⁹, one may notice that the texts from English and French are on contract law, agreements between parties, subsidiarity standard and unlawful regulations. Finally, the applicants with the best marks are invited to the EPSO assessment centre in Brussels and judged on the basis of eight general competencies, which I will show in Table 1 below (EPSO, *Gazzetta ufficiale dell’Unione Europea - Comunicazioni e informazioni*, 2017).

Competencies	Test	
1. Analysis and Problem Solving	E-tray exercise ⁴⁰	Group test
2. Communication	Written test	Interview based on general competencies
3. Delivering Quality and Results	E-tray exercise	Interview based on general competencies
4. Learning and Development	Group test	Interview based on general competencies
5. Prioritising and Organising	E-tray exercise	Group test

17/12/2022).

³⁹ EPSO. *Translators (AD)*. Available at: <https://epso.europa.eu/en/node/106> (Last accessed: 17/12/2022).

⁴⁰ An E-tray exercise is a computer-based simulation of a real work situation. It replicates an email containing information relating to a particular situation or issue, for which the candidate has to find solutions within a fixed amount of time.

6. Resilience	Group test	Interview based on general competencies
7. Working with Others	E-tray exercise	Group test
8. Leadership	Group test	Interview based on general competencies
Pass mark	40/80	

Table 1: the eight general competencies judged by the EPSO assessment centre.

After these tests, the judging panel decides who is hired and who, instead, will be placed on the reserve list, the latter is not a guarantee of employment but translators on this list may be called upon in case of need. Generally, it takes ten months for the results to be published after which the translators will be hired as Administrators (AD); the initial grade with which one is hired is 5 (AD5 is the entry-level grade) while the maximum grade is 16 (AD16 is reserved for Director Generals)⁴¹.

With regard to traineeships, the DGT offers graduates a five-month training period which may take place in Brussels or Luxembourg in order to gain profession experience alongside translation professionals. Therefore, trainees carry out the same work as DGT translators but always under their watchful eye, indeed, translations are then reviewed by senior staff (Publications office of the EU, 2014). As with the other roles, traineeships do not require a degree in the field of translation but at least a bachelor's degree and the ability to translate into one's native language from two official EU languages. As mentioned before for those applying for DGT positions, the first SL from which to translate must be one of the three working languages of the EU (English, French or German), and the second may be another

⁴¹ EPSO. *Staff categories*. Available at: <https://epso.europa.eu/en/eu-careers/staff-categories> (Last accessed: 18/12/2022).

of the official languages known at a minimum B2 level as per the CEFR. As clearly stated on the website⁴², extra points may be given for work experience, educational, work or volunteer experience in an international environment and rare fields of study. Regarding this last point, it is not specified what these fields are, but a quick Google search shows that they are fields such as viticulture and oenology, air transport, ethnobotany, animal behaviour and psychology, and so forth, thus making it clear that translation is not included. The fact that these fields constitute an added value might lead us to reflect that nowadays, as the working environment is extremely competitive, being specialised in a very narrow field may be a strong advantage to distinguish oneself from others, and thus represent a valid choice for recruiters.

3.1.5. A case of devaluation of translation training?

The case of the European Commission seems a paradox if one considers that it is an extremely important institution employing high-level professionals. Indeed, if one examines other job positions such as those related to communication on the official EPSO website under *EU Career profiles*, one can clearly notice that a degree in a related and relevant discipline is required for both the position of communication officer and communication assistant. The same applies to other positions such as external relations, information technology, and of course law and economics. However, I do not criticise the choice of requiring a relevant degree for all these fields, as I firmly believe that everyone has their own area of expertise for which years of study and training have been invested. On the contrary, I want to emphasise the choice of requirements needed to join the DGT, as it seems to me a

⁴² European Commission. *Traineeships*. Available at: <https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/how-to-apply> (Last accessed: 18/12/2022).

way of devaluing the training of a translator. Why is it that while other fields require a relevant degree, which I consider to be proper, for the field of translation this does not occur? Finding an explanation for this is not easy, but one may start by quoting the words of Yves Gambier reported by Silvia Bernardini (Malmkjær, 2004, p. 17): *Un sous-titreur et un traducteur médical sont aujourd'hui aussi différents qu'un ambulancier et un vendeur de glaces, même si tous les deux utilisent une voiture comme outil de travail.* In English this means that nowadays a subtitler and a translator in the medical field are as different as an ambulance man and an ice-cream man, despite the fact that they both use a vehicle as a work tool (translation by me). At first glance, this statement by Gambier is in defence of the translation profession and, above all, of the various branches within it, almost as if he wanted to specify that translation is not just one and that each field of it needs specific skills which are different from one another, and far removed from simply transferring words from SL to TL. However, Bernardini manages to look beyond this and lead us to think over another implicit aspect of this statement, namely the fact that translation competence is compared to a vehicle, to something that can, therefore, be acquired automatically. According to this view, indeed, translation skills can be learnt and set aside in order to later focus on specific skills such as subtitling or medical translation. It is true that translation has specific branches that consequently require specific training, which is why there are many postgraduate specialisations to meet the needs of both translators and the market for highly qualified language professionals. Nevertheless, this does not mean that general translation skills are to be underestimated as they are closely linked to both a good knowledge of at least two languages (the ST and the TT) and their respective cultures. As already explained in the previous chapters, translation is not merely the transfer of words from one language to another - this concept belongs to the erroneous belief that there can be equivalence between different languages and was discredited by scholars in the 1950s - but is a cultural exercise

which requires many sub-competencies⁴³ that are inter-related and subject to variations (PACTE GROUP, 2003, p. 6).

However, Gambier's position seems to be a legacy of the view of translation as an automatic transfer process and seems to summarise the European Commission's translation-related policies and attitudes as well (Malmkjær, 2004, p. 18). Indeed, despite being translation work positions, a linguistics-oriented or translation degree has the same weight as a degree in economics, science, or arts. Linguistic competence is required, but is this enough to be able to translate? The answer is no, of course, and this seems to be clear even to the European Commission, which also considers its translators to be communicators, since one their main roles is precisely to re-work already written texts and documents to render them effective in another language and to another culture. Besides, this seems clear even if one refers to the translation quality control criteria adopted by the DGT and mentioned in the section 3.1.3., since factors such as the communicative purpose of the TT, adaptability to the target culture, and the target reader are taken into consideration. It thus looks evident that emphasis is placed on extra-linguistic and transfer competencies, thus rendering the DGT translator not only a person who knows at least two languages, but also a person who has knowledge about the world, the ruling premises of translation, the cultures for which (s)he translates, and the way to effectively re-express the message of the ST in the TL (PACTE GROUP, 2003, p. 6, 7). Nonetheless, all this seems not to be considered when recruitment takes place, or rather, it seems not to be considered as belonging more significantly to translation degrees. Thus, on the one hand there is still an idea of translation as a skill automatically acquired if one knows different languages, on the other hand there is a devaluation of translation training

⁴³ See 2.2.2. *Translation teaching: what should be* .

always coming from the above-mentioned belief. This looks like an intricate mechanism in which the cause-effect relationship is unclear, but in which the overview is, ultimately, the one summarised by Bernardini (Malmkjær, 2004, p. 18): if this is the situation at one of the most prestigious European institutions, one should not be surprised when the same situation arises at national level.

3.2. An Italian case: the lack of a register and AITI

3.2.1. The nature and functions of a professional register

The professional register is an official document which publicly certifies that the subjects enrolled in it have specific competencies established by law, and that they are, therefore, eligible to carry out a certain activity. These competencies are ascertained by means of a qualifying examination upon passing which the public administration confers a status on the applicant. Once obtained, this status allows the individual to possess rights and duties towards both the professional register and the other members⁴⁴. Thus, after passing the qualifying examination the individual obtains the qualification to practise his or her profession and the possibility of entering the register. In Italy, registers are autonomous public bodies which are subject, by law, to the supervision of the Ministry of Justice and their main role is to guarantee quality professional services to citizens. However, the register not only protects citizens, but also serves as a reference point for members who thus receive recognition for their skills, as well as the possibility of training and continuing education through courses. In Italy, there are more than thirty registers to which access is gained not

⁴⁴ Treccani. *Albo*. Available at: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/albo/> (Last accessed: 20/12/2022).

only through examination, as already mentioned, but also through possession of specific qualifications (minimum a high school diploma) and a possible period of internship. Furthermore, it is necessary not to have a criminal record⁴⁵. In Italy, the professional registers recognised by law belong to the following areas: the technical area (e.g., engineers), the economic-social area (e.g., journalists), the tourism-sports area (e.g., mountain guide), the legal area (e.g., notaries), and the socio-health area (e.g., surgeons and psychologists). Although the word register (*albo* in Italian) is used as an all-encompassing word, in Italy there is a distinction between *ordine* (in English association, e.g., professional association of Engineers (WordReference)) and *collegio* (in English college (Collins)). The former is used for those professions for which a qualification of at least a bachelor's degree is required, while the latter is used for those professions for which a high school diploma is sufficient. However, there are exceptions such as the Association of Journalists, which can be entered even without a degree, and the College of Notaries, for which, instead, a law degree is required.

3.2.2. Translators in Italy

What about Italian translators? As explained above, there are professions that possess a register to which professionals may enrol although members are not required to have a degree. Conversely, translators, who are instead required to possess as many specific skills as possible, do not have any register to which they may enrol. It is thus challenging to set standards to recognise the profession of translator. Indeed, some think it is a direct and

⁴⁵ Diritto.it. *Ordini professionali in Italia, disciplina giuridica e caratteri*. Available at: <https://www.diritto.it/ordini-professionali-in-italia-disciplina-giuridica-e-caratteri/> (Last accessed: 20/12/2022).

straightforward consequence of knowing at least two languages - as in the case of Italian business people interviewed during a survey on the translation market in Emilia Romagna cited by Bernardini in (Malmkjær, 2004, p. 18) - while for others the translator must not only be a translator in the common sense, but also a communicator, reviser and specialist of diverse complex text types, as in the case of DGT in-house translators. Therefore, this lack of standardisation may lead to the proliferation of self-styled translators who, although they know two or more languages, have neither the qualifications nor the experience to practise the profession. Furthermore, the lack of a register may also constitute a real danger if one considers that in some cases the role of translator is extremely delicate and not devoid of danger. For instance, let us consider the case of sworn translators, who in Italy are not professional figures officially recognised by the state and whose role, therefore, technically does not exist⁴⁶. Consequently, this represents a serious risk since, generally speaking, any individual may go to court and, by showing an identification document, may legally swear a translation; all this regardless of whether they are court judgements, passports, birth or death certificates, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, custody of minors, wills, medical records and so forth. Despite the fact that these are highly significant documents which, if mistranslated, may cause health, civil and financial damage, there is no legislation in this regard, and everything seems to rely on people's common sense. Indeed, people are assumed to rely on highly specialised translators, which is not always the case, especially for economic reasons. In Italy, a potential solution for a sworn translator to certify him/herself

⁴⁶ Espresso Translations. *Traduzione giurata: chi la può fare e a cosa devi prestare attenzione*. Available at: <https://www.espressotranslations.com/it/traduzione-giurata-chi-la-puo-fare/> (Last accessed: 21/12/2022).

is to enrol on the CTU⁴⁷ (*Consulenti Tecnici di Ufficio*) register of the court where (s)he wants to work, in order to appear on its lists once (s)he has passed the language proficiency exams⁴⁸.

3.2.3. AITI: role and membership requirements

When speaking of the lack of a register for translators in Italy, it is inevitable not to think about AITI, an acronym standing for *Associazione Italiana Traduttori ed Interpreti* (Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters). This was founded in 1950 as a non-profit organisation of professional translators and interpreters and is the first Italian association in this field both in terms of the year of its foundation and the number of its members (over 1200 as at October 2022)⁴⁹. Before delving into the characteristics and roles of AITI, it is necessary to first clarify what an association is. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an association is an organisation of persons having a common interest, WordReference, on the other hand, refers to common purpose instead of interest but the definition is the same. A more complete definition by the Treccani encyclopaedia considers an association as an organisation of several persons with the same non-profit purpose, i.e., an organisation in which the purpose is not to generate profits and in which these profits, if any, are reinvested for its own organisational purposes. Coming back to AITI, this association gathers technical and scientific translators, literary translators, legal translators,

⁴⁷ This is a professional figure specialised in a specific field from which the judge may receive assistance in both civil and criminal matters, divided into two separate registers. These consultants are sources of technical assistance for the judge on whom (s)he places considerable trust even throughout the whole duration of the trial (Ministero della Giustizia. *Periti e consulenti tecnici: come iscriversi all'albo*. Available at: https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_3_4_1.page (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

⁴⁸ Espresso Translations. *Traduzione giurata: chi la può fare e a cosa devi prestare attenzione*. Available at: <https://www.espressotranslations.com/it/traduzione-giurata-chi-la-puo-fare/> (Last accessed: 21/12/2022).

⁴⁹ AITI. *Corsi webinar ed eventi*. Available at <https://aiti.org/en>. (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

localisers⁵⁰, conference interpreters, business interpreters, legal interpreters, and public service interpreters. Furthermore, it actively fights for the recognition of the professional role of the translator and does what a register typically does, although it is not⁵¹:

- promotes the advancement in the legal status of professional translators;
- verifies the professional skills of its members;
- promotes the social, cultural, and economic standing of translators with customers and institutions;
- promotes the continuing education of translators (through suitable made-to-measure professional-development courses) as well as their observance of a code of ethics⁵².

Moreover, it not only provides assistance to professional translators but also to aspiring translators by organising career-oriented study days especially designed to guide university students towards the profession. However, initiatives vary depending on the region in which one is located. Indeed, AITI is divided into twelve regional websites (Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta, Apulia, Sicily, Tuscany, and Veneto and Trentino Alto Adige) and each of them offers the opportunity to find out about regional events closest to translators such as courses, webinars, and workshops. This allows AITI members to attend training courses free of charge, or at advantageous prices, and to increase the prestige and credibility of their profession. Indeed, as in any profession in an increasingly fast-paced world, translation also needs to be continually updated to keep up with both the advances in machine translation

⁵⁰ Linguistic and cultural adapters of digital content to the requirements and locale of a foreign market, and providers of services and technologies for the management of multilingualism across the digital global information flow (Baker, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2001, p. 157).

⁵¹ AITI. *Welcome to the Association*. Available at: <https://aiti.org/en> (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

⁵² A guiding set of principles intended to instruct professionals to act in a manner that is honest and beneficial to all stakeholders involved.

and the demands of a working environment that requires progressively more specialised and *on the ball* professionals. A few examples of courses, webinars and workshops may be found on the AITI official website, both in the national section of the association and in the individual regional sections. Below are just some of the events organised by AITI in the past, between November 2022 and January 2023⁵³ (translation by me):

- “Transcreation from English into Italian”. This was a four-hour online course on the adaptation of advertising and promotional texts from English into Italian, starting from an overview on persuasive communication and then moving on to industry practices;
- “Knowing electrical engineering to translate it”. This was a ten-hour workshop taking place in Arezzo that enabled participants (mainly technical and scientific translators) to gain a basic and terminological understanding of the electrical engineering disciplines and then apply it when translating;
- “All you need to know about sworn translation”. This was an eight-hour workshop held in Florence that allowed participants (mainly aspiring sworn translation professionals) to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge on the figure of the sworn translator.

Before listing other benefits that AITI provides to its members, it is right to understand how one enters this association and why it seems that it was founded to fill the void created by the lack of a translators’ register. Exactly in the same way as for enrolling in a register, AITI also requires future members both to meet basic requirements and to pass an entrance

⁵³ AITI. *Corsi, webinar ed eventi*. Available at: <https://aiti.org/it/eventi-aiti> (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

examination. As regards the prerequisites to become a regular member, AITI requires a Master’s degree in translation and/or interpreting (or an equivalent foreign qualification) or any bachelor’s degree; in both cases these degrees must be accompanied, however, by at least 24 months of documented professional experience in the translation and/or interpreting field. One may apply for membership even if one only possesses a high school diploma as long as this is accompanied by at least 60 months of professional experience in the field. Leaving aside what concerns interpreting, professional experience in the field must be attested by specific documentation containing various information, including the exact number of words translated, the period in which this experience took place, and the language combination (where Italian must necessarily be one of the two languages of this combination). In the case of a translator working for an employer, (s)he must present his/her employment contract with all the above-mentioned information included. In Table 2 below (translated by me), one may notice the translation-related professional requirements for aspiring regular members, both for those with a master’s or bachelor’s degree (left column) and for those with a high school diploma (right column)⁵⁴.

24 months	60 months
<p>Technical-scientific translation /legal translation/localisation.</p> <p>Minimum required: 1,400 folders (1 folder = 1,500 characters, spaces included) or 300,000 words.</p>	<p>Technical-scientific translation /legal translation/localisation.</p> <p>Minimum required: 3,500 folders (1 folder = 1,500 characters, spaces included) or 750,000 words.</p>

⁵⁴ AITI. *Regolamento ammissioni*. Available at: <https://aiti.org/it/regolamento-ammissioni#art3> (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

<p>Technical-scientific translation /legal translation/localisation may include:</p> <p>Translations for the courts – 4 folders.</p> <p>Proofreading and post-editing – 1 folder of proofreading/post-editing is equivalent to 0.5 folders of translation, while one hour of proofreading is equivalent to 2.5 folders of translation.</p> <p>Transcreation – one hour of transcreation is equivalent to 1 folder of translation.</p>	<p>Technical-scientific translation /legal translation/localisation may include:</p> <p>Translations for the courts – 4 folders.</p> <p>Proofreading and post-editing – 1 folder of proofreading/post-editing is equivalent to 0.5 folders of translation, while one hour of proofreading is equivalent to 2.5 folders of translation.</p> <p>Transcreation – one hour of transcreation is equivalent to 1 folder of translation.</p>
<p>Translation for publishers.</p> <p>Minimum required: 1,000 editorial folders (1 folder = 2,000 characters, spaces included) for fiction or non-fiction publications with an ISBN code, except for self-published works.</p> <p>This may include proofreading. 1 folder of proofreading is equivalent to 0.5 folders of translation.</p>	<p>Translation for publishers.</p> <p>Minimum required: 2,500 editorial folders (1 folder = 2,000 characters, spaces included) for fiction or non-fiction publications with an ISBN code, except for self-published works.</p> <p>This may include proofreading. 1 folder of proofreading is equivalent to 0.5 folders of translation.</p>

Table 2: translation-related professional requirements to become a regular member of AITI.

It is worth noting that the required work experience, with regard to specialised translation, does not only include translation in the strict sense - or interlingual translation - but may also

include proofreading, post editing and transcreation⁵⁵. This demonstrates, once again, how the role of the translator and his work go beyond mere translation per se and models itself to market demands, increasingly becoming work of refinement, dialogue with already made translations and creative work of cultural adaptation. Once verified that the applicant meets the requirements, (s)he may apply to take the entry test for one or more of the following professional qualifications (if only translation-related positions are considered): technical-scientific translator, legal translator, localiser, or translator for publishers. Depending on the language combination and the applicant's chosen branch of specialisation, the tests vary. Indeed, the text in question may be a text chosen by the NAC⁵⁶, or it may be a legal text, a technical text (technical data sheet, terms and conditions, web content, etc.) or a non-fiction text, each to be translated in four hours and approximately 3,000 characters long⁵⁷. Therefore, as appears evident from the above, the AITI selection, despite being a selection not aimed at recruiting staff, is taken extremely seriously precisely because it is AITI itself which firmly believes in the importance of the role and, above all, the proper recognition of the translator as a professional figure. Indeed, as is the case for professions with a register, AITI requires professionals to have an educational qualification relevant to the profession and where this is not strictly required, as with bachelor's degrees and high school diplomas, 2 to 5 years' work experience in the actual translation field is nevertheless required. Hence, the profession is enhanced, and translators gain recognition for their competencies at both

⁵⁵ Whereas proofreading deals with the checking of a text that has already been translated (by another translator or by the same translator who is carrying it out as the final step in the translation process), post-editing is the checking by a human translator of a text previously translated using machine translation, in order to make the text less raw and more nuanced. Transcreation, on the other hand, is a creative translation, in which the TT deviates from the ST to better adapt to the receiving culture.

⁵⁶ The National Admissions Committee of AITI. It examines and approves translators' applications for the entry tests, previously collected by the Admissions Desk.

⁵⁷ AITI. *Regolamento ammissioni*. Available at: <https://aiti.org/it/regolamento-ammissioni#art3> (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

national and international level. The latter because AITI participates in activities promoted by FIT-Europe (Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs - International Federation of Translators), as well as being a member of CEATL (Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires - European Board of Associations of Literary Translators), PETRA (Plateforme Européenne pour la Traduction Littéraire - European Platform for Literary Translation) and EULITA (European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association). In this regard, AITI also offers its members the possibility to obtain a certificate recognising the professionalism and quality of the services they provide to clients, in accordance with Law no. 4 of 2013. The latter was published to promote self-regulation of all those professions which do not have a register and for which, therefore, proving the quality of their services is quite challenging. Thus, as quality is an extremely difficult concept to prove especially if one is not enrolled in any register, the certificate issued by AITI to regular members is of utmost importance, as it attests the passing of the entire selection procedure, adherence to the code of ethics, and the completion of a continuous training programme through the acquisition of training credits.

On this subject, it is worth noting that the proper implementation of the AITI continuing education programme is one of the basic requirements for maintaining the status of regular member within AITI. Besides, it covers a three-year period, at the end of which members must have acquired 30 training credits. In Table 3 below, I have summarised the main activities and their respective credits⁵⁸ (translation by me).

⁵⁸ AITI. *Informazioni sull'acquisizione dei crediti formativi*. Available at: <https://aiti.org/it/informazioni-sullacquisizione-dei-crediti-formativi> (Last accessed: 27/12/2022).

Activity	Credits
<p>Participant or lecturer in courses, conferences, workshops on topics related to professional training for translators and interpreters, as well as to the enhancement of the skills needed to carry out the profession. These activities may be organised or sponsored by AITI, by other Italian and foreign associations and/or by professionals, universities, companies, institutional bodies, professional registers or similar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event up to 2 hours: 2 professional training credits • Half-day event (max. 4 hours): 4 credits • One-day event (5 to 8 hours): 8 credits • One-and-a-half-day event: 12 credits • Two-day or longer event: 16 credits
<p>Participant or lecturer at webinars or other online events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinars on topics related to professional training for translators and interpreters, as well as to the enhancement of the skills needed to carry out the profession with issuance of a certificate of attendance. • Online courses/MOOCs⁵⁹ on topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar: 1 credit per hour per event • Online course with material exchange and final certificate: max. 8 credits per event • MOOC: max. 8 credits per event

⁵⁹ MOOC stands for massive open online course. It is a model for delivering learning content online to any person who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance (Educause).

<p>related to professional training and to the enhancement of the skills needed to carry out the profession with exchange of material between lecturer and participant, and issuance of a certificate of attendance.</p>	
<p>Bachelor's degree in Disciplines of Linguistic Mediation, Master's degree in Translation and Interpreting, PhD in Translation and Interpreting, postgraduate courses in Translation and Interpreting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Disciplines of Linguistic Mediation, Master's degree and/or PhD in Translation and Interpreting: 20 credits. • Postgraduate course in Translation and Interpreting: 15 credits

Table 3: activities and corresponding credits for maintaining AITI regular membership status.

As evident from the third category in the table, a university course relevant to the profession is rewarded with 20 professional training credits. Therefore, this suggests that continuity between education and profession is significant to AITI and may also be considered as the association's giving credit to translation-related university courses. Degrees from other fields are also rewarded with professional training credits but in a different amount, since in this case four fewer credits are awarded than for translation-related degrees.

3.2.4. The other side of the coin

On several occasions AITI on its website reminds members, or aspiring members, that membership in the association is not synonymous with employment. As a matter of fact, AITI does not hire translators but offers them the opportunity to have their professional competencies recognised and, in addition to all the benefits mentioned above, provides them

with the possibility of being included in the online list of members. This list is visible to everyone and allows potential clients to find the translator (or interpreter) who best suits their needs by using filters to accelerate the research; (s)he may be searched by language combinations, areas of specialisation and region. Once the search is complete, all translators (or interpreters) relevant to it are displayed and by clicking on “member details” all the member’s information are shown, including the e-mail address at which (s)he may be contacted. Nevertheless, what emerges from the AITI’s 2018 translators and interpreters market survey⁶⁰ is that out of 543 respondents, 70.72% were translators and 60.48% were AITI members in the year the survey was conducted. Furthermore, among the respondents, 2.78% were enrolled in the past but no longer enrolled in 2018 and the main reason is precisely that membership did not bring them the benefits they hoped for, especially in terms of job opportunities. In this regard, out of 325 respondents to the question on how many direct job requests they received via the AITI website in the 12 months prior to the survey, 56% received no requests at all, 31.08% received between one and three requests, 9.54% between three and five, and 3.38% between five and ten job requests (AITI, *Indagine sul mercato*, 2018, p. 18). The most striking percentage, of course, is that of the translators who did not receive any request despite their association membership, professional experience, and qualification. Indeed, regarding work experience, 31.85% of the 540 respondents had between 16 and 25 years of experience, while regarding qualifications, the vast majority had a translation-related degree. More precisely, most respondents have a four-year degree (old system) in foreign languages and literature, and in translation and interpreting, a Master’s degree in Translation and Interpreting, and a Bachelor’s degree in Disciplines of Linguistic

⁶⁰ In 2018, AITI held a survey open to all translators and interpreters working with Italian as a source or target language. Prior to this there were two other surveys, in 2013 and 2007 (AITI, *Indagine sul mercato*, 2018).

Mediation (AITI, *Indagine sul mercato*, 2018, p. 11). The causes underlying these figures may be manifold, but the actual situation is that AITI firstly does not ensure employment for its translators, but recognition of their profession, and secondly it is an association and as such is not known by all potential clients. Unlike the register, which is nationally known and legally recognised, the association, however noble its intentions may be, cannot reach such a large percentage of potential clients. Moreover, added to this is the fact that contacting a professional translator always frightens people to some extent as they believe that the same service may be offered at a lower price by someone else; this is nothing more than the direct consequence of the widespread belief that anyone who knows at least two languages can automatically translate. While waiting for new market surveys by AITI, it may be said that the lack of translators' register, among other issues, creates a legislative vacuum in which chaos and a sense of precariousness lurk.

Conclusions

Considering everything discussed in this thesis, I finally understood the reason why I was not hired a year ago. The labour market is not to be considered as separate and detached from the world of education, especially university education. University teaching is, to all intents and purposes, a tool for personal and professional development leading to the pursuit of a particular profession. Besides, both university and working environment are, in turn, part of a social fabric which shapes, albeit imperceptibly, the mindset of the community. This is what happens with translation. The efforts made by Translation Studies certainly contributed to bringing translation out of the uncomfortable position of being a mere extension of comparative literature and linguistics. Nevertheless, this was not enough to completely reform its teaching and subsequent placement in the labour market. As a matter of fact, translation still appears on many occasions to be included in language courses, as if it were a straightforward consequence of language competence. This is perceptible even in the organisation of degree courses after the 1999 reform in Italy, which led to a distinction between Bachelor's and Master's degrees and to an entirely new naming of the former. Indeed, language-oriented bachelor's degree programmes became degrees in Linguistic and Cultural Mediation and degrees in Foreign Languages and Literatures, to quote those examined in 2.3.2. *Preliminary qualitative analysis on the role of translation in nine undergraduate degree programmes*, while the label of *translation* switched to master's degrees. These new designations have contributed to strengthening the belief that, once the necessary language competencies have been mastered, translation skills can be acquired within a couple of years. Therefore, in a social fabric which was already sceptical about the autonomy of the translation discipline for a number of reasons including an extremely entrenched Grammar-Translation method, these designations did not improve the situation.

Moreover, bearing in mind that the labour market is an integral part of the social fabric of a community, it was to be expected that cases such as that of the aspiring translators of the European Commission and the lack of a register described in Chapter three would occur. The role of translation in undergraduate degree programmes and its role in working environments thus seem to be two sides of the same coin, the former causing the latter, and both characterised by the same issues of subordination to linguistic competence.

This study, although preliminary, aims to emphasise that a reform of the role of translation in university foreign language courses might result in some significant changes in the perception of the professional figure of translator as well. If this happens and we move in this direction, an economics graduate would probably not be employed instead of a translation graduate in the future.

References

AITI. (2018). Indagine sul mercato.

AITI. (s.d.). *Corsi, webinar ed eventi*. Tratto da <https://aiti.org/it/eventi-aiti>

AITI. (s.d.). *Informazioni sull'acquisizione dei crediti formativi*. Tratto da <https://aiti.org/it/informazioni-sullacquisizione-dei-crediti-formativi>

AITI. (s.d.). *Regolamento ammissioni* . Tratto da <https://aiti.org/it/regolamento-ammissioni#art3>

AITI. (s.d.). *Welcome to the Association*. Tratto da <https://aiti.org/en>

Baker, M. (1998). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London and New York: Mona Baker, Kirsten Malmkjær.

Baker, M. (2001). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London and New York : Mona Baker, Gabriela Saldanha.

Beeby, A. (2004). Language learning for translators - Designing a syllabus. In K. Malmkjær, *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bernardini, S. (2004). The theory behind the practice. In K. Malmkjær, *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes*. John Benjamins Publishing Company .

Blini, L. (2008). Mediazione linguistica: riflessioni su una denominazione. *Rivista internazionale di tecnica della traduzione* .

Bloomfield, L. (1942). *Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages* (pp. 7-8). Baltimore, Md: Waverly Press.

- Boylan, P. (1999). La traduzione in un corso di laurea in lingue: basi scientifiche ed implicazioni didattiche. In P. Pierini, *L'atto del tradurre. Aspetti teorici e pratici della traduzione*. . Roma: Bulzoni.
- CEFR. (s.d.). *The CEFR levels*. Tratto da <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>
- Colina, S. (2014). Second language acquisition, language teaching and translation studies. *The translator*.
- DGT. (2015). DGT Translation Quality Guidelines .
- Diritto.it. (s.d.). *Ordini professionali in Italia, disciplina giuridica e caratteri*. Tratto da <https://www.diritto.it/ordini-professionali-in-italia-disciplina-giuridica-e-caratteri/>
- EPSO. (2017). Gazzetta ufficiale dell'Unione Europea - Comunicazioni e informazioni. Tratto da <https://epso.europa.eu/en/documents/anchors-related-general-competencies>
- EPSO. (s.d.). *EPSO tests*. Tratto da <https://epso.europa.eu/en/selection-procedure/epso-tests>
- EPSO. (s.d.). *Staff categories*. Tratto da <https://epso.europa.eu/en/eu-careers/staff-categories>
- EPSO. (s.d.). *Translators (AD)*. Tratto da <https://epso.europa.eu/en/node/106>
- Espresso Translations. (s.d.). *Traduzione giurata: chi la può fare e a cosa devi prestare attenzione*. Tratto da <https://www.espressotranslations.com/it/traduzione-giurata-chi-la-puo-fare/>
- European Commission. (s.d.). Tratto da https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/european-commission_en

European Commission. (s.d.). *Traineeships*. Tratto da <https://traineeships.ec.europa.eu/how-to-apply>

European Commission. (s.d.). *Translation*. Tratto da https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/translation_en

European Commission. (s.d.). *Translator profile*. Tratto da https://commission.europa.eu/jobs-european-commission/working-eu/translator-profile_en

Hodges, P. (2009). *Linguistic Approach to Translation Theory*.

Holmes, J. S. (1988/2000). *"The Name and Nature of Translation Studies"*. London/New York: Routledge.

Howatt, A. P. (1984). *A History of English Language Teaching* . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laviosa, S. (2014). *Translation and language education: pedagogic approaches explored*. Abingdon : Routledge .

Malmkjær, K. (2004). *Translation in undergraduate degree programmes* . Amsterdam/Philadelphia : John Benjamins Publishing Company .

Memoq. (s.d.). *What is a CAT Tool?* Tratto da <https://www.memoq.com/tools/what-is-a-cat-tool>

Ministero della Giustizia. (s.d.). *Periti e consulenti tecnici: come iscriversi all'albo*. Tratto da https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_3_4_1.page

PACTE GROUP. (2003). Building a translation competence model. *Triangulating translation: perspectives in process oriented research*.

- Peverati, C. (2014). *Translation in university foreign-language curricula: an analysis of teachers' attitude, with reference to vocational and transferability criteria*.
- Publications office of the EU. (2014). *Translation and multilingualism*. Luxembourg.
- Snell-Hornby, M. (1988, repr. 1995). *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Sweet, H. (1964). *The Practical Study of Languages: A Guide for Teachers and Learners*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Tickoo, M. L. (1984). *Claude Marcel and "Une méthode rationnelle" (Vol.3, No.4, pp. 240-244 of World Language English)*. Great Britain: Pergamon Press.
- Treccani. (s.d.). Tratto da <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/albo/>
- UNIC. (s.d.). *History of the European Commission* . Tratto da <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/history-european-commission-ec>
- UNICEF. (n.d.). The roles and responsibilities of linguistic and cultural mediators in supporting survivors.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. Questions for the respondents

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?
2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?
3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?
4. a) FOR LM STUDENTS: In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

b) FOR NON-LM STUDENTS: Even if not included in the course title, were there any translation lessons, including elective ones? If yes, how was the discipline approached and deepened? If not, did you have to take additional translation exams before entering the master's programme?
5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)
6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?
7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now, with regard to the working environment?

Appendix 2. Answers of the respondents

The answers you are about to read are based on interviews I conducted online with nine of my course mates, interviews during which I took notes, and which were transcribed entirely by me afterwards while retaining all the concepts they expressed. No students were recorded during these interviews and their anonymity was respected.

NON-LM students

Student A (F, 25 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

My bachelor's degree programme was part of the department of Languages and Cultures and was called "Language, Civilisation and the Science of Language". There were three curricula: a) International Politics b) Linguistics, Philology and Language Teaching Research c) Literatures and Culture. I attended the third curriculum.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2017 and I attended it in Venice (Ca' Foscari University).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied Spanish and Italian sign language and the language courses on offer were: Spanish language 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), and Italian sign language 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each). Each language course was annual and propaedeutic.

4. Even if not included in the course title, were there any translation lessons, including elective ones? If yes, how was the discipline approached and deepened? If not, did you have to take additional translation exams before entering the master's programme?

There were no translation classes but in the third year the Spanish teacher decided to include some translation in Spanish language 3. The translation classes the teacher offered involved translating from Spanish into Italian of mini dialogues or single sentences, without context. Regarding Italian sign language, on the other hand, no translation teaching was planned nor included by the professor. However, I did not have to make up any missing credits to enrol for the Master's degree in Translation and Interpreting; all my credits were sufficient to take

the entrance test.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

If I think about the fact that the degree course does not include any teaching of translation as it is a course focusing on foreign literature and culture, I cannot think of anything that would need changing. However, it is a three-year degree which gives students the possibility to enrol in a master's degree in translation without the need to take additional translation courses. Therefore, the hours dedicated to translation should be increased and the teaching method should be modified: more space should be given to the students' opinion on their translation choices and complete texts should be translated instead of mere sentences. I would have liked to translate literary and technical texts into Spanish as well.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

I enrolled in this master's degree because I like translation, and this was the only master's degree to offer a curriculum with both Italian sign language and Spanish. After having focused a lot on the cultural aspect of the language, during my three-year degree course, I wanted to enrol in the master's degree programme also in order to develop the more purely linguistic aspect, in which I felt most lacking. Moreover, after my three-year degree I did not feel ready for the world of work, as I was, and still am, passionate about translation.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled, I expected to explore the field of translation by translating various text types and to gain an insight into the world of work through an internship, courses on CAT tools (highly demanded in the working environment), meetings with professionals in the field and advice on rates as a freelance translator.

For me today, the working environment means uncertainty because one needs both skills that make a difference and work experience in the field, which I do not feel I have now. As far as Italian sign language is concerned, there is certainly more demand because there is a shortage of graduates, but the feeling remains the same. Indeed, one needs at least two years of experience in the field to enter the associations. I leave open the door of teaching, so that

I can have a job which can give me a fixed salary to which I would add translation and interpreting jobs. Literary translation and Italian sign language interpreting are my two greatest passions, I am not abandoning the idea, but I am keeping my feet on the ground.

Student B (F, 25 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

The department my three-year degree was part was Languages and Cultures and the degree course was Language, Civilisation, and the Science of Language. The curriculum I chose was International Politics.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2016 and I attended it in Venice (Ca' Foscari University).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied German, Anglo-American and in my third year I chose Italian sign language 1, while I attended Italian sign language 2 and 3 as single courses before enrolling for the master's degree programme. Apart from Italian sign language, the language courses on offer were: German language 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), and Anglo-American English 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each). Each language course was annual and propaedeutic.

4. Even if not included in the course title, were there any translation lessons, including elective ones? If yes, how was the discipline approached and deepened? If not, did you have to take additional translation exams before entering the master's programme?

Both English and German language in the third year included a translation module. In English, the translation module was assigned to a native English-speaking teacher whose teaching method involved translating several paragraphs of a fiction book from Italian to English. In each lesson the teacher gave us a paragraph to translate for the next one, and then in class we all discussed our translation choices together; everyone could suggest solutions to translation problems, under the guidance of the teacher who usually corrected the most incorrect forms in terms of grammar and text fluency. The approach was thus aimed at offering linguistic and translation solutions; neither translation theories nor techniques were

taught, and the approach was more linguistic than cultural. As for German language 3, on the other hand, the professor was Austrian and there was much less participation during the lessons, as well as less focus on the linguistic side of the language. In general, what I can say about this teaching is that I noticed much more shyness than in English on the part of the students. Apart from Italian sign language, which I had chosen as my third language, I did not have to take any additional English courses to enrol in the master's degree programme.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

If I think about the fact that it is a three-year degree programme which does not focus on translation, I do not think I would change anything. However, taking into account my interest in translation and the fact that even after this three-year degree programme one may enrol in a translation-focused master's degree, I would have liked to have been taught translation theories and techniques. In this way I would have delved into translation from a cultural point of view. Moreover, I would also have liked to have been taught how to use CAT tools.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

I enrolled in this master's programme because, apart from being interested in translation and not feeling ready for the working environment after my bachelor's degree, it was the only one which allowed me to continue studying Italian sign language while maintaining English.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

My expectations when I enrolled were that it could be a two-year degree programme focusing on the translator's profession. To be more precise: I expected that it would specialise me in the translation of different text types, the most demanded by the market, and that it would provide me with a firm basis in CAT tools, as well as a valuable work experience in the field through an internship.

At the moment, I feel insecure about my future, and I am aware that to work in the translation industry I need to specialise further, I am interested in literary translation, but I do not exclude the teaching career path, so that I can still use my language skills.

Student C (M, 28 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

The three-year degree I attended was Languages, Literatures and Intercultural Studies and was part of the department of Intercultural Literary Studies.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2013 and I attended it in Florence (Università degli Studi di Firenze).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English for three years, Chinese for two years and French for one year. The language courses on offer were: English language 1 (consisting of a language module and two courses with a native English-speaking teacher and weighting 12 credits), English language 2 (consisting of two courses with a native English-speaking teacher and weighting 6 credits), and English language 3 (consisting of a module of multimodal discourse analysis and a module of translation and weighting 12 credits). As for Chinese, there was Chinese language and literature in the second year and a Chinese language course in the third year.

4. Even if not included in the course title, were there any translation lessons, including elective ones? If yes, how was the discipline approached and deepened? If not, did you have to take additional translation exams before entering the master's programme?

In the third year of English there was a translation module involving translation from Italian into English with an American professor. His teaching method consisted of assigning us the translation of texts taken mostly from newspaper articles which were then discussed in class all together, thus giving room for students to compare translation choices and discuss the appropriate register to use. Neither translation theory nor translation techniques were taught but some American cultural notions were present during the lessons to facilitate the whole translation process. As regards Chinese, on the other hand, there was no translation module, not even as an elective course. Therefore, in order to enrol in the master's degree programme with the English-Chinese curriculum, I had to enrol in single courses to obtain 24 credits of Chinese language and 6 credits of Chinese literature. I took these courses at the Ca' Foscari University and the 24 credits of Chinese language included both Chinese to Italian and Italian to Chinese translation courses. In the first case the texts to be translated were scientific

articles while in the second one they were single sentences, without context.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

If I could have changed anything with regard to translation teaching, I would have improved the Italian to Chinese translation teachings, making them more similar to Chinese to Italian translation teachings. In this way I would have been able to engage in the translation of contextualised texts into Chinese as well.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

After my bachelor's degree, I did not feel ready to enter the working world, especially when it came to Chinese. My intention was therefore to enrol in a master's degree programme in foreign languages including Chinese. I chose this master's degree because it would allow me to study Chinese and to start studying interpreting, as well as deepening translation.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled in this master's degree programme, I expected it to provide me with a useful specialisation so that I could then enter the world of work, which means that I expected to translate and interpret a lot. In other words, I expected an extremely pragmatic approach to the two disciplines.

As regards the working environment, I would like to become a Chinese interpreter. I am also passionate about translation, but I am aware that it is less remunerated. I know what I want to do but I do not know when I will become a professional because nowadays society runs fast, there is always more to know, and the working environment is so competitive that one needs to specialise as much as possible. Maybe the secret is to find a sense of security within insecurity.

Student D (F, 26 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

I attended the three-year degree course in Language, Civilisation and the Science of

Language which was part of the department of Languages and Cultures. The curriculum I chose was International Politics.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2016 and I attended it in Venice (Ca' Foscari University).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied Anglo-American and Spanish, but I also had to choose another language among the many languages that my department offered (which I studied only for one year for extra credits) and I chose Portuguese. All language courses were divided into a main module plus practices with native-speaking professors and they were: Anglo-American language 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), Spanish language 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each) and Portuguese and Brazilian language 1 (12 credits).

4. Even if not included in the course title, were there any translation lessons, including elective ones? If yes, how was the discipline approached and deepened? If not, did you have to take additional translation exams before entering the master's programme?

In my courses there were very few classes of translation. I remember that only for the exam of the third year of Anglo-American, I had to translate a page of a poem and then write a commentary explaining all my translation choices. Therefore, the classes before the exam were focused on literary translation and the professor left space for us students to discuss our translations. The other classes, on the other hand, were more focused on grammar, listening and speaking, as well as writing. We only used to translate few sentences per class, they were not parts of texts and were therefore devoid of context. Nevertheless, I did not have to take any additional courses/exams to be able to register for the master's degree entrance test, since I chose the English-Spanish curriculum.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

Honestly, I would have appreciated if there were more classes of translation, especially when I think about the master's degree I chose to attend afterwards. Moreover, I would have liked to translate texts of different types, such as technical-scientific texts, tourist texts, etc.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

I enrolled in this master's degree because I was interested in something more specific than just knowing a language, I was very interested in translation. I thought I could learn more about translation and be way more prepared for a future work. Moreover, to tell the truth, the other master's degree courses did not seem very interesting to me. This degree course, on the other hand, seemed to have great potential.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

As I have already explained, I expected this course to give me something new and specific. In my previous experience, I found Ca' Foscari to be a very good university, so much so that I thought this master's degree programme could have great potential. At the moment, I think I have learned something new, but I also feel a little worried because I do not think I have found what I needed to complete my previous degree. I still think I need to learn more, and I also think that students would be better prepared if they could have the opportunity to work and study at the same time, or at least have more opportunities to find some internships to put into practice what they are studying.

The working environment is poorer than I expected, at the moment I know that if I want to continue with the project of becoming a translator I absolutely have to specialise further as I do not feel ready to face the working environment of translation.

LM students

Student E (F, 25 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

I attended the Bachelor's degree programme in Disciplines of Intercultural and Linguistic Mediation, which was part of the department of Interpreting and Translation (DIT).

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2017 and I attended it in Forlì (Alma Mater Studiorum – Campus di Forlì).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English, Spanish and Arabic. I chose English as my first language (indeed the entrance test was in English), Spanish as my second language and Arabic as my third language. The language courses on offer were many, so I will split them by academic year.

First year: a) English language and mediation 1 (divided into a language and culture module in which grammar and culture were taught, and a language mediation module between English and Italian in which dialogical interpretation was taught). b) Translation between Italian and English (consisting of both translation from Italian into English and from English into Italian). c) Spanish language and mediation 1 (the same as in English). d) Basics of Arabic. All subjects were worth 10 credits each, except for basics of Arabic, which was worth 6 credits.

Second year: a) Translation between Italian and Spanish (consisting of both translation from Italian into Spanish and from Spanish into Italian). b) English language and mediation 2 (divided into a language and culture module as in the first year, and a course of liaison interpreting). c) Spanish language and mediation 2 (the same as in English). d) Arabic language. All subjects were worth 10 credits each, except for Arabic language, which was worth 6 credits.

Third year: a) English language and mediation 3 (divided into a language and culture module as in the previous two years, and the second part of the course of liaison interpreting). b) Spanish language and mediation 3 (the same as in English). c) Translation between Italian and English 2 (both from Italian into English and from English into Italian). d) Translation between Italian and Spanish 2 (the same as in English). e) Arabic language and mediation (divided into a language and culture module, and an Arabic mediation module). All subjects were worth 10 credits each.

4. In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

Regarding translation, the approach used by the professors was pragmatic, we always had many translations to do at home (up to 6 translations per week) and the texts we translated belonged to various types, from informational texts and news to technical and literary texts. Classes were interactive, each student brought his or her own computer and everyone took turns giving their own opinion on the translations that were read and analysed. Therefore, interaction with professors and between students was crucial, so much so that professors

assigned many group-work (e.g., group translations or translations in which everyone had a specific role). Translation techniques were not taught explicitly but included in the practical lessons and were useful for the many translation papers we were assigned, as we had to write a commentary justifying our translation choices by using them. The cultural knowledge needed to translate was taught to us involuntarily as the professors were all native speakers and therefore brought their culture into the classroom.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

Thinking back on my experience, I would have liked the professors to also talk about the job aspect of translation, I would have liked to get some tips on the job market to give those who were not planning to enrol in the master's programme the chance to take their first steps into the working environment.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

I did not choose to continue in Forlì because for the master's degree it asked students to choose between translation and interpreting. Therefore, in addition to personal reasons, I chose this master's degree programme because it did not force me to choose and gave me the opportunity to study both disciplines. At that time, I did not feel ready to choose.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled, I expected to maintain the solid translation training that Forlì had given me, to learn interpreting techniques such as memorisation and note-taking, and to attend a master's degree that would give me the opportunity to enter the working environment. Therefore, I expected to understand the difference between an employed translator and a freelancer, to talk about rates, to learn about CAT tools and other translation-related computer skills (such as the use of Excel), and to gain awareness of the translation working environment.

I currently have no job expectations related to translation or interpreting because I do not feel I have the necessary skills and, unfortunately, I feel that the translation market is inaccessible.

Student F (M, 33 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

I attended the three-year degree course in Disciplines of Linguistic and Cultural Mediation which was part of the department of Linguistic and Literary Studies.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2015 and I attended it in Padua (Università degli Studi di Padova).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English as my first language, Spanish as my second language and Brazilian Portuguese as my third language. Therefore, I studied English and Spanish for three years, and Portuguese for two years. The language courses on offer were: English language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), Spanish language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), and Brazilian Portuguese language and translation 1 and 2 (6 and 9 credits).

4. In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

In the first year of English, translation was already taught together with a pronunciation module and practices with the native-speaking professor, all modules were included in the main Language and Translation teaching. In the second and third years, translation was taught but always in the form of practice alongside grammar and vocabulary. If, for example, there were grammatical forms or idioms which were particularly complex to an Italian student, we were given sentences to translate, these were unconnected sentences containing the above-mentioned forms. Regarding Spanish, translation was only taught at the end of the second and third year, but just as with English, it depended on the grammar topics being addressed. In this case, too, we were given sentences without context instead of whole texts. In Portuguese, on the other hand, translation was not taught, but the course focused on grammar and vocabulary.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the

working environment, etc.)

Honestly, I really would have liked the courses to focus on translation as a discipline in its own right rather than a means of practising grammatical and/or lexical topics. The language certainly needs to be reviewed but I would have done so only in the first year, and then I would have concentrated on the actual translation. Moreover, I would have liked to learn translation techniques by putting them into practice by translating various types of texts (technical, literary, etc.). Since I think that good practice is always preceded by good theory, I would also have liked the theory of translation to be addressed.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

I enrolled in this master's degree because I wanted to delve into translation as much as possible and because it seemed to me the appropriate continuation of the course study, I started in the three-year degree programme.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled, I expected that this master's degree would complement my studies and give me a pragmatic insight into the working environment of translation.

Now my biggest job expectation would be to start working in the translation working environment and to continue specialising because I do not feel ready for what I want to do, namely being a literary translator.

Student G (F, 25 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

The three-year degree I attended was Sciences of Linguistic and Cultural Mediation and was part of the department of Languages, Foreign Literatures and Modern Cultures.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2016 and I attended it in Turin (Università di Torino).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English, Spanish and Portuguese, and the language courses on offer were: English language 1, 2 and 3 (9 credits each), Spanish language 1, 2 and 3 (9 credits each), and Portuguese language 1 (9 credits). Alongside the language courses, practises with native-speaking professors were offered.

4. In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

Practises with native-speaking professors went hand in hand with what was taught in the main language courses. Thus, both courses taught the same things and even though the titles of the language courses did not include the word "translation" in the second year of both English and Spanish, translation was approached both in the main language course and practises. Indeed, during the second year of English we addressed audio-visual translation, first through the various possible translation techniques and then by analysing the scripts of the animated shorts we were given, to which we had to add a commentary discussing the techniques used by the translators. In the second-year Spanish course, on the other hand, translation was a means to consolidate the grammar and vocabulary learnt, indeed, we were given to translate sentences containing the acquired forms, they were not whole texts or text extracts. In the first and third years of both English and Spanish, translation was not approached, space was given to grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, and the intercultural and global aspect of the language, which was however useful for the translation discipline.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

Honestly, I would have changed many things. I would have included many more hours of translation in the syllabus, and I would have used a different method, namely I would not have made students translate sentences without context as I consider them useless for translation practise. Instead, I would have made students translate whole texts of various types (technical texts, literary texts, texts for tourism, etc.). Moreover, I would have liked to have been taught translation theory and CAT tools.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

After my bachelor's degree, I felt confident in the grammatical part of the language, in oral and written comprehension, but I felt the need to go deeper and learn more about translation,

its theory and its techniques, precisely because translating is what I want to do in life.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled in this master's degree programme, I expected that I would practise a lot, namely that I would translate whole texts of different types (technical texts, literary texts, texts for subtitling, etc.). Besides, I expected it would open my eyes and give me awareness of the translation-related working environment through a wide range of internships, courses on the use of CAT tools and advice on how to take the first steps in a very hostile world of work especially for new graduates.

Now my ambition is to work in the field of audio-visual translation, but I know I am not ready, so I am inquiring about the most suitable postgraduate courses to be able to work in this field. Nonetheless, I do not preclude myself from any job which may allow me to put my language skills into practice and, above all, allow me to pay for specialisation courses to become an audio-visual translator.

Student H (F, 25 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

I attended a three-year degree course in Disciplines of Cultural Mediation belonging to the department of Languages and Cultures.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2016 and I attended it in Udine (Università degli Studi di Udine).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English, German, and Spanish (as my third language). The language courses on offer were: English language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (9 credits each), German language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (9 credits each), Spanish language and translation (from the second year and worth 9 credits), and Spanish literature (in the third year and worth 6 credits).

4. In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation

taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

In the first year of English, we addressed translation theory through a book on translation studies (“Introducing translation studies” by Jeremy Munday) and alongside this we also practised a lot, namely we translated many texts including extracts from the aforementioned book and newspaper articles. In the second and third year, on the other hand, we approached translation in the medical and economic fields both from English to Italian and from Italian into English. The method used by the professors was to assign us translations at home and then discuss our translation solutions all together in class, thus fostering interaction between us. In my first year of German, translation was not approached but morphology, phonology and phonetics were taught, while in the second year I left for Erasmus in Germany. In the third year, on the other hand, translation was approached both in the field of art and tourism and both from German into Italian and from Italian into German. Besides, we also translated web content and studied the features of localisation. The method used by the professor in this case was to ask everyone for their translated version of the text. The Spanish language and translation course, on the other hand, focused on the pragmatics and intention of the text, as well as the translation of text passages. Since Spanish was my third language, indeed, translation was not as in-depth as for the other two languages.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

If I could have changed anything, I would definitely have included more hours dedicated to the teaching of CAT tools and more hours of translation. Moreover, I would have liked to translate a wider variety of texts, especially more technical texts in view of the market demands.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master’s programme in Interpreting and Translation?

Since I had good language skills after my bachelor’s degree but less translation skills, I enrolled in this master’s degree programme because I wanted to study translation in depth and add interpreting to that. Moreover, I knew that Ca’ Foscari is an excellence in the field of language studies, and this also influenced my choice.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled, I expected this master's degree programme to give me the necessary tools to then take my first steps into the working environment. This means that I expected to understand how CAT tools work, to translate a lot of specialised texts and to receive advice on how to enter a such challenging working environment.

Now I do not feel ready to enter the world of translation work, so I would like to attend postgraduate courses either in audio-visual translation or conference interpreting. I think the situation in Italy is static because we, new graduates, are not given the opportunity to learn by doing, thus I would like to move abroad to test the ground. My feeling is that I know a bit of everything, I do not feel specialised in a particular field of translation.

Student I (M, 24 years old)

1. Which department did you attend in your undergraduate degree?

My three-year degree course was Languages and Cultures for Tourism and International Mediation, and it was part of the department of Humanities, Languages and Arts.

2. In which year and in which city did you attend it?

I enrolled in 2017 and I attended it in Bari (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro).

3. What languages did you study and what language courses were on offer? What was their weight in terms of credits?

I studied English as my first language, Spanish as my second language and Portuguese as my third language (from the second year). The language courses on offer were: English language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), Spanish language and translation 1, 2 and 3 (12 credits each), and Portuguese language and translation 1 and 2 (12 credits each).

4. In the language courses with the term "translation" in their title, how was translation taught? Through which activities was practice taught?

Since the method varied depending on the teacher and the language taught, I prefer to analyse it language by language.

English: in the first year with the Italian professor, we addressed translation, the cultural aspects involved, the vocabulary related to the political and economic texts we had to translate, and the translation techniques used when translating. Alongside this teaching, there

were practices with the English native-speaking professor with whom we translated newspaper articles of a commercial, economic, and political nature. At the end of the class, the professor used to explain the most complex words and the most problematic elements of the translation we had just carried out. Instead, in the second and third year we studied translation theory and technique and did some translation tests, while during the practices with the native-speaking professor we did not address translation as in the first year but essay writing, cover letters and business letters.

Spanish: in the first year we were all put in the same grade, both those who already had a good level of Spanish and those who were starting from scratch. Therefore, teaching included basic vocabulary and grammar, which was then repeated and consolidated during practice hours with the native-speaking professor. In the second year, on the other hand, translation was only provided to us during practice hours in the form of specialised translation (we translated papers of various types) and translations of sentences. Finally, in the third year, we mostly translated newspaper articles and focused on the cultural aspect of translation by translating texts related to Spanish language varieties.

Portuguese: although the teacher started from a basic level of Portuguese suitable for everyone, in the first year the translation was provided in the form of simple translations related to the cultural and grammatical aspects taught in class. In the second year, instead, we translated various literary works by both Portuguese and Brazilian authors whom we discussed during the hours dedicated to the teaching of culture.

For all three languages, it is necessary to specify that translations were done in class all together, no translations were assigned to be done at home, except for a few rare occasions.

5. Very freely and honestly, what would you have changed about the translation teachings? (Number of hours available, teaching method, tools available, lessons on how to enter the working environment, etc.)

I would have changed the method used in English in the second and third years and made it more practical, theory is important, but it must then be put to use in the practical act of translation. With regard to Spanish, I would have preferred a pre-selection of levels to allow us to study the topics best suited to our language skills and, in the third year, I would have liked to put into practise much more specialised translation, for instance technical and legal translation. Finally, I would have liked the teaching of Portuguese to begin in the first year

like the other two languages in order to be able to deepen the specialised translation in the third year.

6. What motivated you to enrol in the Master's programme in Interpreting and Translation?

After my bachelor's degree, I felt confident about my language skills, but I did not feel ready for the working environment of translation, especially with respect to Spanish, because during my three-year degree programme we addressed the specialised translation much more in English than in Spanish, so I felt an imbalance between the two languages. Therefore, I chose to enrol in this master's degree to study translation in both languages but also because of Ca' Foscari's prestige in the rankings.

7. What were your expectations when you enrolled? What are your expectations now with regard to the working environment?

When I enrolled, I expected to approach specialised translation in great depth through a lot of practice and to get the necessary tools to be able to take my first steps in the working environment after graduation.

Now that I have graduated, I am doing an internship in customer care but what I aspired was to specialise to become a technical communicator. Nevertheless, I am aware that in Italy people think it is easier to teach an engineer how to translate properly than to teach a translator how a machine works. Therefore, for the time being, this ambition remains unfulfilled and, as the translation market seems saturated to me, I decided to direct my translation skills towards the ability to relate to foreign customers.

Appendix 3. Informed consent form (in Italian)

RICERCA QUALITATIVA SUL RUOLO DELLA TRADUZIONE IN NOVE CORSI DI LAUREA TRIENNALI

Il/la sottoscritto/a

AUTORIZZA

La studentessa Sarah Bossio (matricola 975478) dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia (Campus di Treviso) a: prendere nota di quello che verrà detto durante le interviste, elaborare tali informazioni per iscritto nell'appendice della tesi e a riportare esclusivamente sesso, età e nome del corso di laurea triennale frequentato dall'intervistato/a.

Tali informazioni sono fornite solo ed esclusivamente per le finalità accademiche di redazione del lavoro di tesi e non potranno essere utilizzate in altra sede e con altro scopo.

.....

Con l'apposizione della firma, il/la Sottoscritto/a esprime anche il consenso al trattamento dei propri dati personali in favore dei soggetti coinvolti per la stesura della presente liberatoria.