The editor’s invisibility
What corpus analysis of draft translations can reveal about the translation product

Mario Bisiada
Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Barcelona

26 October 2017
Editorial influence in translation

Translated text
Editorial influence in translation

Translated text

Manuscript translation

Published translation
Editorial influence in translation

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## Stages in translated document production

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Toury’s (1995) critique

Comparing only source and target text → weakness in discovering translation processes

no way of knowing how many different persons were actually involved in the establishment of a translation playing how many different roles. Whatever the number, the common practice has been to collapse all of them into [...] “the translator”. (Toury 1995: 183)
Manuscript-based corpus research

Proposals in the literature

- “successive stages of individual attempts” (Hartmann 1981: 206)
Manuscript-based corpus research

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⇒ process-based research, revision studies
Manuscripts in corpus research

**Product research**

Empirical strength of product research into translation → relies on published sources

- “actual translated texts-in-function” (Holmes 1988: 101)
- “real data” (Baker 1993: 237)
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Main argument

What influence do editors exert on translated language?

→ corpus research should include unedited texts

The editor’s invisibility
Editorial influence in literary translation

Orality in romance novels (Sinner 2012)

- fictive dialogue in 26 novels published 2003 – 2009
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elimination of swear words and sexual references, even though translators had already toned them down

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confirmed by Andújar Moreno (2016) for Spanish → French
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→ no evidence of shared “mediation effect”

 translators favour “explicit and standardised language”
editors “introduce collocational variety”

⇝ drawback: no edited translations studied
Editors and the translation workflow

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Editors and the translation workflow

Corpus details & study objectives

Current project

Research assumptions

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Three items of study

- sentence splitting (Bisiada 2016)
- nominalisations (Bisiada 2017a,b)
- passive constructions (Bisiada forthcoming)
Editors and the translation workflow

Corpus details & study objectives

Corpus details

Corpus architecture

- Sources: *Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Manager*
Corpus details

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Do editors consult the source text?

Yes—“...legen wir uns in der Regel den Originaltext aus der *Harvard Business Review* daneben und vergleichen beides Satz für Satz.”

[‘...we usually have the source text from the HBR next to us and compare both texts sentence by sentence.’]
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What do they look for?

“...formulieren [wir] Substantivierungen und Passivkonstruktionen um...”

[‘...we rephrase nominalisations and passive constructions...’]
Editors and the translation workflow
- Manuscripts in corpus research
- Corpus details & study objectives

Editing and sentence splitting
- Background and methodology
- Findings and discussion
- Sentence splitting and readability

Editing and passive voice
- English-German contrasts
- The passive as textual metaphor?
- Method & findings
Theoretical assumptions about sentence splitting

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Translating *into* a high density language (e.g. DE) should thus trigger sentence *joining*
Editors and the translation workflow

Background and methodology

Editorial guidelines for HBM translations

Bitte übersetzen Sie möglichst textgetreu in einem klaren, verständlichen und lebendigen Deutsch. Vermeiden Sie Nominalstil, Fachjargon, das Passiv und das Wörtchen “man”. Lösen Sie Schachtelsätze, insbesondere dass-Sätze, möglichst auf.

‘Please translate as true to the original as possible in clear, understandable, and lively German. Avoid nominalizations, subject-specific terminology, the passive, and impersonal constructions using man. Where possible, dissolve nested sentences, especially those containing dass.’ (my translation)
Method of analysis

- Sentence-alignment (using the text alignment tool in +Tools) → One-to-two sentence correspondence maintained
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- Further manual inspection to remove false positives, e.g. abbreviations (‘U. S.’) or enumerations (‘1. , 2. ’)
Findings

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- much more splitting than joining
- large part of split sentences attributable to editors
Anaphoric reference—Relative pronoun

Many younger employees find they can complete tasks faster than older workers, perhaps partly because of technological proficiency.

‘That may be due to...’
Anaphoric reference—Demonstrative pronoun

- The gift of time—in the form of hours spent on coaching and building networks—is seen as crucial to the collaborative culture at Nokia.

Hier ist Zeit ein Geschenk—in Form von Stunden, die dem Coaching und dem Aufbau von Netzwerken gewidmet sind. Dieses Geschenk gilt als entscheidend für die kooperative Unternehmenskultur bei Nokia.

‘This gift is seen as...’
Anaphoric reference—Pronominal adverb

Johnson & Johnson offered Guidant shareholders $68 a share in late 2004, which wasn’t much of a premium over the stock’s trading price.


‘(Therein) / In that / That contained...’
Interpretations

Relative and modal clause constructions (*which*, *by*+part., *gerund*) are commonly split and expressed by sentence-initial anaphoric reference.

_sentence splitting seems to be a phenomenon of translation that occurs irrespective of the informational density of the target language._

_its occurrence is further supported by editors’ activities, perhaps to increase readability?_
Editors and the translation workflow

Sentence splitting and readability

Editing to increase readability

“Strategy of anticipation” (Bisaillon 2007)

Editors search for certain anticipated problems, e.g. “overlong sentences”, “irrelevant use of impersonal pronouns”
Editors and the translation workflow

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Automatism in copyediting (Bisaillon 2007, Robert 2014)

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Automatisms in copyediting (Bisaillon 2007, Robert 2014)

- minimise reflection time for grammar/syntax problems
- 50%–75% of recorded editing: immediate solutions
Editors’ influence in translation

Some things to note

- editing and translating should be studied separately
- what guides editors’ behaviour when making structural changes?
1. Editors and the translation workflow
   - Manuscripts in corpus research
   - Corpus details & study objectives

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The editor’s invisibility
Passive voice and discourse structure

Passive voice changes the mapping of the roles of Actor, Process and Goal “onto the interpersonal functions in the modal structure of the clause” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 182).
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The editor’s invisibility
## English-German contrasts

### English-German contrasts discouraging passive use

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<td>Freer word order through case markings → more options to assign theme role (Kunz 2010: 164)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No restriction on Actors</td>
<td>Actor/subject conflation only for animate/conscious entities (Kunz 2010: 166)</td>
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During their initial training, **employees are given the freedom** to make judgment calls.

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<td>Schon in der Einarbeitungsphase dürfen Mitarbeiter selbstständig entscheiden.</td>
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[‘In the introductory courses, it is permitted for employees to decide for themselves.’]

[‘As early as the initial training, employees may decide autonomously.’]
# English-German contrasts II

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<td>Actor/subject conflation only for animate/conscious entities (Kunz 2010: 166)</td>
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</table>
The legitimacy to chart such a radical path forward is not conferred by title alone; it must be earned.

Das Recht, einen derart radikalen Weg zu beschreiten, erwerbt man sich nicht allein durch den Titel eines CEOs; es muss verdient werden.

[‘The legitimation for charting such a radical path is not conferred by title alone; it must be earned.’]
## English-German contrasts discouraging passive use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any participant can become the subject</td>
<td>Only participants that are direct objects in active can become the subject of the passive sentence (Teich 2003: 96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict word order → passive major option to assign roles</td>
<td>Freer word order through case markings → more options to assign theme role (Kunz 2010: 164)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To solve such problems, plants have evolved two strategies which they superimpose upon photosynthesis.

[‘For the solution of this problem, two mechanisms have evolved in plants by which photosynthesis becomes overlaid.’]

Example taken from Steiner (2004: 145).
The passive as textual metaphor?

Does the passive voice metaphorise a text?

Voice system, Theme/Rheme

- serve to structure discourse according to given and new information
- part of the textual metafunction in SFL (Eggins 2004: 296)
Does the passive voice metaphorise a text?

Voice system, Theme/Rheme

- serve to structure discourse according to given and new information
- part of the textual metafunction in SFL (Eggins 2004: 296)

- The passive allows the language user to vary the mappings of participant roles in order to allow non-Actors to become the Theme of a sentence.
The textual metafunction and metaphoricality

The textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 30)

Mode of meaning which relates to the construction of text, [...] build[ing] up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along.
The textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 30)

Mode of meaning which relates to the construction of text, […] build[ing] up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along.

decreased use of textual metafunction

↓

incongruency (metaphorical use)
Grammatical metaphor

Metaphorical realisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 593)
“expanding the meaning potential of the language creating a more complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar"
Grammatical metaphor

Metaphorical realisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 593)

“expanding the meaning potential of the language creating a more complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar”

Ideational

*People strongly believe that…*

*The strongest belief of all is that…*
Grammatical metaphor

Metaphorical realisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 593)

“expanding the meaning potential of the language creating a more complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar”

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→ re-mapping between groups and clauses
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→ re-mapping between groups and clauses

Interpersonal

*I think* it’s going to rain.

*It is probably going to rain.*
Grammatical metaphor

Metaphorical realisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 593)

“expanding the meaning potential of the language creating a more complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar”

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*People strongly believe* that...
*The strongest belief of all is that...*
← re-mapping between groups and clauses

Interpersonal

*I think* it’s going to rain.
*It is probably going to rain.*
← clause realised by modal expression
The passive as textual metaphor?

Grammatical metaphor

Metaphorical realisation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 593)

“expanding the meaning potential of the language creating a more complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideational</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Textual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| People strongly **believe** that…  
The strongest **belief** of all is that…  
→ re-mapping between groups and clauses | **I think** it’s going to rain.  
*It is probably* going to rain.  
→ clause realised by modal expression | Not defined |

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The editor’s invisibility
The passive as textual grammatical metaphor?

- manipulating the voice system by selecting active or passive constructions
- creating a texture that exhibits a “marked information focus” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 232)
- may metaphorise the text
The passive as textual grammatical metaphor?

- manipulating the voice system by selecting active or passive constructions
- creating a texture that exhibits a “marked information focus” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 232)

→ But are passive constructions **textual metaphors**?
What makes textual metaphor?

An incongruent realisation in terms of voice (Lassen 2003)

Medium = subject; medium ≠ complement
Agent ≠ subject
↪ “thematic tension caused by the fusion of Agency and Medium/Subject features.” (Lassen 2003: 46)
What makes textual metaphor?

An incongruent realisation in terms of voice (Lassen 2003)

Medium = subject; medium $\neq$ complement
Agent $\neq$ subject
$\leftrightarrow$ “thematic tension” caused by the fusion of Agency and Medium/Subject features. “ (Lassen 2003: 46)

$\leftrightarrow$ Active/Passive dichotomy perhaps too simple
$\leftrightarrow$ Is “thematic tension” not rather caused by unexpected Theme/Rheme progression?
### Passive use and textual metaphor: examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text (active)</th>
<th>Target text (passive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have disguised all names and other identifying information about the people and their company.</td>
<td>Die Namen und andere Daten, anhand derer die Mitarbeiter identifiziert werden könnten, wurden geändert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source text (active)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have disguised all names and other identifying information about the people and their company.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target text (passive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Namen und andere Daten, anhand derer die Mitarbeiter identifiziert werden könnten, wurden geändert.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

↑

Metaphorical?
When something happens at work, it immediately triggers cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes.

Depending on what happens with these cognitive and emotional processes, motivation can shift.

We discerned these processes in the diaries of every team we studied and in most of the people who worked on those teams.
Some conclusions

- Passive use is not necessarily metaphorical/incongruent
Some conclusions

- Passive use is not necessarily metaphorical/incongruent

Are passive constructions harder to process?
Some conclusions

- Passive use is not necessarily metaphorical/incongruent

Are passive constructions harder to process?

- No clear answer given, variable hard to isolate (overview in Rhodes 1997)
Some conclusions

- Passive use is not necessarily metaphorical/incongruent

Are passive constructions harder to process?

- No clear answer given, variable hard to isolate (overview in Rhodes 1997)
- using passive forms increases
  ... reading time (Müller-Feldmeth et al. 2015: 251)
  ... processing difficulty (Gorin 2005)
Editors and the translation workflow
Editing and sentence splitting
Editing and passive voice

Method & findings

Two step method

First step: German passives (to find passivisations)

1. search for the lemmas *werden*, *sein*
2. manual analysis to filter out non-passive constructions
3. find corresponding construction in the respective ST subcorpus
Method & findings

Two step method

First step: German passives (to find passivisations)

1. search for the lemmas *werden*, *sein*
2. manual analysis to filter out non-passive constructions
3. find corresponding construction in the respective ST subcorpus

Second step: English passives (to find activisations)

1. search for participles anteceded by the lemma *be*
2. manual analysis to filter out non-passive constructions
### Method & findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST form</th>
<th>Translator</th>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>passive</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>passive</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>passive</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>passive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>passive</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>990</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method & findings

Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
- Translators passivise much more than editors
Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
- Translators passivise much more than editors
- Editors re-activise to a significant extent
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- Translators and editors activise to a similar extent
Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
- Translators passivise much more than editors
- Editors re-activise to a significant extent
- Translators and editors activise to a similar extent

⇒ Translated German (in this genre) may contain more passive voice than we conventionally see
## Differences in tenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Translators</th>
<th></th>
<th>Editors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passivisation</td>
<td>Activisation</td>
<td>Passivisation</td>
<td>Activisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z-ratio</td>
<td>4.575</td>
<td>-4.883</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>&lt;.0002</td>
<td>&lt;.0002</td>
<td>0.6687</td>
<td>0.5864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- editors’ decision not affected
- translators: more likely to render ST active as passive when it’s in present tense
Further research

Current questions

- difference between present and past tense?
  → active voice preferred for past tense constructions
Further research

Current questions

- difference between present and past tense?
  - active voice preferred for past tense constructions
- semantic restriction of Agents acting as subjects to “animate and conscious participants” in German (Kunz 2010: 166, Teich 2003: 97)
  - does this encourage passive use?
Thank you for your attention!

Read:

- *Perspectives* –
  doi:10.1080/0907676X.2017.1290121

- *The Translator* –
  doi:10.1080/13556509.2017.1301847

- *Target, Across Languages*…
  – visit website for pre-prints!

Method & findings

References 1


Bisiada, Mario. Forthcoming. Translated language or edited language?: A study of passive constructions in translation manuscripts and their published versions. *Across Languages and Cultures*.


References II


Editors and the translation workflow

Method & findings

References III


References IV


