Editors’ influence on passive use in English-German business translation

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Editorial influence in translation

Translated text
Editorial influence in translation

Translated text

Manuscript translation

Published translation
Editorial influence in translation

Translated text

Manuscript translation

Published translation
### Stages in translated document production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Sub-process</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Product</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing¹</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Original author</td>
<td>Source text</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Translation²</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Translator</td>
<td>Draft</td>
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<td>Revising</td>
<td>Reviser</td>
<td>Manuscript</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
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<td>Editor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Content editing</td>
<td>Editor</td>
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<td>Publication</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Target text</td>
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¹ adopted from Hayes et al. (1987)
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Manuscript-based corpus research

Proposals in the literature

- “successive stages of individual attempts” (Hartmann 1981: 206)
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→ process-based research, revision studies
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Product-based research

empirical strength: “authentic data attested in texts” (Kenny 2009)
→ published sources
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Editing and translation

Manuscripts in corpus research

Product-based research

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⇝ neglects linguistic interventions made at editing stage
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- Editing and translation
- Manuscripts in corpus research

Product-based research

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⇝ neglects linguistic interventions made at editing stage

Main argument

Editors may have significant influence on translated language
→ corpus studies should draw on manuscripts
Applications

Corpus studies of editing

- Utka (2004): “phases of translation corpus”
- UPF research on editing
  - in literary texts: Sinner (2012)
  - on sentence splitting: Bisiada (2014)
  - in French–Spanish translation: Andújar Moreno (Forthcoming)
  - on mediation universals: Bisiada (Forthcoming)
Applications

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Research on editing has so far focussed on

1. readability studies
2. “mediated discourse”
Research line: Editing and readability

Editors search for certain anticipated problems, e.g. "overlong sentences", "irrelevant use of impersonal pronouns".

Automatisms in copyediting (Bisaillon 2007; Robert 2014) to minimise reflection time for grammar/syntax problems. 50%–75% of recorded editing: immediate solutions.

“Strategy of anticipation” (Bisaillon 2007)
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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
pursuing readability with little reflection for discourse matters?
Does editing improve readability?
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Editing in *Annals of Internal Medicine* (Roberts et al. 1994)

- 101 original research manuscripts from 1992
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17.16 before, 16.85 after editing

published texts longer by 2.6%

does this reflect peer review or editing?

→ No evidence in favour – more studies are needed!
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Editing and translation

Edited language as mediated discourse

Research line: Translating, editing…: → mediation?

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“communicating in a non-native language […] or any form of communication that involves relaying messages, such as reporting discourse, even journalism” (emphasis mine)
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→ “processed, or rewritten, for particular audiences and thus mediated for a purpose” → “mediation universals”

~~ Which communication is not constrained/mediated?
Current study

Research assumptions

Several agents participate in the (holistic) translation process

- Published translations may differ significantly from manuscripts
Several agents participate in the (holistic) translation process.

- Published translations may differ significantly from manuscripts.

How reliable are they to study features of translated language?
Corpus & research aims

Current study

Research assumptions

Several agents participate in the (holistic) translation process

- published translations may differ significantly from manuscripts
- how reliable are they to study features of translated language?

Three items of study

- sentence splitting (see Bisiada 2014)
- grammatical metaphor (nominalisations)
- passive constructions
# ModevigTrad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Evidencialidad y epistemicidad en textos de géneros discursivos evaluativos. Análisis contrastivo y traducción (FFI2014-57313-P)</th>
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<td><strong>PI</strong></td>
<td>Montserrat González Condom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Discourse genres that show a high degree of metaphorical language and modalisation</td>
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</table>

Funded by the Spanish *Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad*
Corpus details

Corpus architecture

Sources: Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Manager
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Corpus details

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- **Sources:** *Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Manager*
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- Tripartite corpus (315,955 words)
Corpus details

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  - Source texts (English) – 104,678 words
Corpus details

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- **Dates:** 2006–2011
- **Tripartite corpus (315,955 words)**
  - Source texts (English) – 104,678 words
  - Manuscript translations (German) – 106,829 words
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- Dates: 2006–2011
- Tripartite corpus (315,955 words)
  - Source texts (English) – 104,678 words
  - Manuscript translations (German) – 106,829 words
  - Published translations (German) – 104,448 words
How do HBM editors work?

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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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.’]

What do they look for?
“…formulieren [wir] Substantivierungen und Passivkonstruktionen um…”
[‘…we reword nominalisations and passive constructions…’]
# Passive forms in English & German

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>form of <em>to be</em></td>
<td>form of <em>werden</em> or <em>sein</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 passive alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impersonalisation <em>man</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modal passives <em>lassen</em> (‘to let’) + reflexive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modal infinitives <em>sein</em> + infinitive phrase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During their initial training, *employees are given the freedom* to make judgment calls. (Text 9)

**Manuscript:**
In den Einführungskursen wird Mitarbeitern gestattet, nach eigenem Gutdünken zu entscheiden.

[‘In the introductory courses, employees are permitted to decide at their discretion.’]

**Published version:**
Schon in der Einarbeitungsphase dürfen Mitarbeiter selbstständig entscheiden.

[‘As early as the initial training, employees may decide autonomously.’]
Passive alternatives

Diese Tür kann **man** nicht öffnen. – (One cannot open this door.)
Passive alternatives

**man**

Diese Tür kann man nicht öffnen. – (One cannot open this door.)

**Modal passive**

Der Text liest sich leicht. – (El texto se lee fácilmente.)

- The text reads easily.
- The bunkhouse sleeps ten. / The surface cleans easily.
Passive alternatives

**man**

Diese Tür kann **man** nicht öffnen. – (One cannot open this door.)

**Modal passive**

Der Text **liest sich** leicht. – (El texto **se lee** fácilmente.)

- The text reads easily.
- The bunkhouse **sleeps** ten. / The surface **cleans** easily.

**Modal infinitive**

Die Aufgabe **ist** bis 3 Uhr **zu lösen.** – (The task **is to be solved** by 3)

- Hay que resolver la tarea antes de las 3.
- ?“El futuro **es para ser** vivido, nada está preestablecido” —Luke Skywalker → translationese? (“The future is to be lived”)
## Mean normalised frequency

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ST form</th>
<th>Translator’s action</th>
<th>Editor’s action</th>
<th>Instances</th>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>activisation</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>activisation</td>
<td>re-passivisation</td>
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<td>activisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>passivisation</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>passivisation</td>
<td>re-activisation</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>passivisation</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>990</strong></td>
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</table>
Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
Findings

Passive constructions

- More utterances are passivised than activised
- Translators and editors activise to a similar extent
Findings

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- Translators and editors activise to a similar extent
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- Editors re-activise to a significant extent
Findings

Passive constructions

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

⇒ Translated language contains more passive voice than we conventionally see
Further research

Current questions

- how to treat nominal forms?
- difference between present and past tense?
  present utterances are more likely to be passivised
Thank you for your attention!


References II


References III