10 A Standards-Based Contrastive Analysis of Online and Printed Technical Translations in Romanian

10.1 Introduction

A recent study on the status of the translation profession in the European Union (Pym, Grin, Sfreddo, Chan, 2013) mentions that in Romania, ‘the Ministry of Justice lists 32,856 “certified translators and interpreters” (since anyone with a degree in languages can qualify)’ (2013: 21). According to the same study, as compared with other EU countries, in Romania, the lists of authorised translators exceeds by far the potential market demands, the number of translators and interpreters representing about 25 times the potential demand for professionals (2013: 21-22).

Concerning the types of translations requested in the Romanian market, I could not find any exact figures. However, given the size and development of the industry and international trade, the emergence of multinational engineering companies or the advances in science and technology in the past two decades in Romania and in the EU in general, one could estimate that the majority of the translations requested in the market are technical translations. On a global scale, based on Kingscott’s estimations (2002: 247), an overwhelming 90% of the translations are technical translations. Taking into account a small margin of error, one would rightfully say that the same percentage may be relevant for the Romanian translation market as well.

The relationship between the large number of certified translators in Romania and the estimated requirements for technical translations in the Romanian market should be apt. The current study presents the results of a standards-based analysis performed on a corpus of online and printed technical translations. In light of the findings, several comments and recommendations are made.

10.2 Standards. An Overview

In a recent survey (Dejica, 2015) at the PCTS9 Conference (Professional Communication and Translation Studies) in Timișoara, most of the translators present at the session declared that they were not aware of the existence or of the provisions of the international translation standards and that, they approached their translations tasks using the knowledge they accumulated during their studies in tertiary education or at their workplace. Indeed, even if most BA courses on translation theory and practice include topics on the importance and necessity of translation assessment, a few academic courses mention and even fewer detail translation standards. References to such standards are, however, available on online educational platforms (Logos - http://courses.logos.it/), on the official pages of professional organizations (Romanian
Translators Association – www.atr.org.ro), on the official pages of the organizations that created such standards (detailed below), or in the specialised literature (House, 1997; Schäffner, 1998), to mention just a few.

10.2.1 Definition and classification of standards

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines a standard as ‘a document that provides requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose’ (www.iso.org).

Organizations like CEN, the European Committee for Standardization (https://www.cen.eu/), CENELEC, the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (http://www.cencenelec.eu/), ETSI, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (http://www.etsi.org/), or Standards Australia (http://www.standards.org.au/) also provide similar definitions: they all share the idea that a standard is a document or a set of documents which provides rules or guidelines for performing some activities and achieving certain results, and which are approved and recognized by certain bodies. Concerning their classification, standards may be international, European, national or regional; each such class being adopted by international, European, national or regional bodies.

10.2.2 Translation Standards


10.2.2.1 ISO 2384 ‘Documentation – Presentation of translations’

The official description of the standard, as it appears in the online presentation abstract, reads that the standard ‘sets out rules to ensure that translations are presented in a standard form which will simplify their use by different categories of user. Applies to the translation of all documents, whether the translation is complete, partial or abridged. Four types of translation are discussed.’ (http://www.iso.org/).

Released in 1977, the standard was adopted unanimously by twenty-four countries, including Romania. The four types of translations discussed in the standard include
books, periodicals, articles and patents. Regarding the presentation of translations, the standard details and clarifies aspects related to the structure of the original (content, paragraphing, subdivisions into clauses); notes and bibliographical references; formulae, equations, symbols, units; figures, legends, titles of figures and tables; transliteration; names and symbols of organizations; abbreviations; terminology; identification of authors; retranslation; geographical names; dates; translation of periodicals; name of the translator; and authority to publish translations.

10.2.2.2 ISO 9001: 2008, 2015 ‘Quality management systems – Requirements’

A general description of the ISO 9001: 2008 standard, updated in 2015, reads that it is ‘designed to help organizations ensure they meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders while meeting statutory and regulatory requirements related to a product’ (https://en.wikipedia.org/). Even if this is not a translation standard, it is relevant for the language industry in that it certifies that the language service provider follows a process (http://www.languagescientific.com/). The requirements of the ISO 9001: 2008, 2015 certification are based on a set of principles, which include customer focus, leadership, involvement of people, process approach, system approach to management, continual improvement, factual approach to decision making, and mutually beneficial supplier relationship.

10.2.2.3 EN 15038 ‘Translation Services – Service Requirements’

The scope of this standard is to specify ‘the requirements for the translation service provider (TSP) with regard to human and technical resources, quality and project management, the contractual framework, and service procedures’ (EN 15038, 2006: 6). EN 15038 is a European Standard which has the status of a national standard. Twenty-nine countries, including Romania, have adopted it. (In Romania, it is identified under SR EN 15038.) As stated in the Foreword section, ‘any conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by November 2006’ (EN 15038, 2006: 3). This requirement applied to all twenty-nine countries, which were bound to implement it.

According to the International Federation of Translators (FIT), ‘The purpose of the European Standard is to ensure high-quality translation services, fair competition, improved transparency and end user satisfaction.’ (http://www.fit-europe.org/). FIT Europe, the Regional Centre of the International Federation of Translators, developed a set of Recommendations on Criteria for Conformity Assessment and Certification under EN 15038 (http://www.fit-europe.org/). The recommendations follow the numbering of the standard and consist of three main sections, including basic requirements (human resources, technical resources, quality management system, and project management), client–TSP relationship (Translation Service Provider), relationship (feasibility of the project, quotation, client–TSP agreement, handling
of project-related client information, and project conclusion), and procedures in translation services (managing translation projects, preparation – including the administrative, technical and linguistic aspects – and the translation process).

10.2.2.4 Other Translation Standards

As mentioned above, EN 15038 cancelled any conflicting standards in the EU after November 2006. As of today, fifteen EU countries adopted EN 15039 as national standards. As listed in Wikipedia, these include: PKN EN 15038 Poland, BS EN 15038 Great Britain, DIN EN 15038 Germany, NF X50-670 France, ÖNORM EN 15038 Austria, SN EN 15038 Switzerland, UNE-EN 15038 Spain, SFS EN 15038 Finland, UNI EN 15038 Italy, EVS-EN 15038 Estonia, MSZ EN 15038 Hungary, SS-EN 15038:2006 Sweden, SR-EN 15038 Romania, BDS EN 15038 Bulgaria and LST EN 15038 Lithuania (https://en.wikipedia.org/).

Several European countries developed their own standards before 2006, including, for instance, Germany (DIN 2345), Italy (UNI 10574), or Austria (Önorg D 1200). A list of the translation standards between 1996 and 2006 is available in Stejskal (2009: 296).

The German Standard DIN 2345 was published in 1998 by the German Institute for Standardization. As shown in Samuelsson–Brown (2006), the standard ‘contains different conditions for concluding contracts between translators and clients. Among the issues the standard considers are: the original (or source) text, choosing the translator, setting up a contract between client and translator, target text, proofreading’ (2006: 137).

The Italian Standard UNI 10574 ‘Definition of services and activities of translation and interpreting enterprises’ was published in 1996 and ‘defines the requirements and procedures that providers of translation and interpretation services should implement in their daily activities’ (http://www.translinknet.be/).

The Austrian standard ÖNORM D 1200:2000 ‘Translation and interpretation services. Translation services. Requirements for the service and the provision of the service’ was published in 2000. It includes service requirements and provisions of the service. It details the types of competence required of the translators, including translating, linguistic and textual, research, cultural, and technical competence.

10.3 Technical Translation Research Today

industrial type of translation has been largely neglected in the literature of translation theory. Byrne supports his claim on a study conducted by Aixelá (2004), according to which, ‘out of 20,495 publications listed in the BITRA multilingual bibliography of translation research only 1,905 or 9.3% addressed technical translation’.

10.3.1 Translation standards and technical translation

Up to my knowledge, studies on the relationship between translation standards and technical translation (compliance or non-compliance with standards, standards-based contrastive analyses between source texts and target texts or different languages, case studies, etc.) have not been published, which supports Aixelá’s (2004) findings and proves that research in this field is still not fully explored and justifies the present research.

An analysis of the standards presented in section 2 reveals that they are mostly descriptive, rather than prescriptive: the focus is on what aspects should be followed, rather than on how to follow them in the translation process. In addition, the analysis reveals that most standards include organizational details related to human resources, client–translator relationship, forms of delivery, confidentiality, etc., and only few standards include recommendations or requirements related to the content or form of the translation.

In order to create a standards-based grid for the analysis of technical translations, I used a three-stage process, consisting of the following stages: 1) standards-based identification of relevant formal and content-specific aspects for translation, 2) overall classification of aspects, and 3) genre-based selection of relevant aspects.

The results of the standards-based identification of relevant formal and content-specific aspects for translation are presented in Table 10.1. Not all of the standards detailed earlier made clear reference to the form or content of translations; therefore, I listed only the requirements related to the form and content (mostly linguistic) of the translations present in the standards ISO 2384, EN 15038, and DIN 2345.

The overall analysis of the requirements listed in Table 10.1 allows for their classification in formal and content-specific aspects. The content-specific aspects may, in turn, be classified in language- and translation-specific requirements (Table 10.2).

The requirements in Table 10.2 are not exhaustive. When used as a basis for the assessment of translations, other aspects may be included, for instance, requirements or guidelines pertaining to the translation of cultural items or culturèmes. Since the current analysis is based only on the requirements existing in the standards, such additions will not be made here.
### Table 10.1: Standards-based formal and content-specific translation requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>ISO 2384</th>
<th>EN 15038</th>
<th>DIN 2345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the original (paragraphs, numbering, subdivision of the text into clauses)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes and bibliographical references</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulae, equations, symbols, units</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures, legends, titles of figures and tables</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names and symbols of organizations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of authors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retranslation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical names</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of periodicals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the translator</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority to publish translations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar: syntax, spelling, punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexis: lexical cohesion and phraseology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style: compliance with the proprietary or client style guide, including register and language variants</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locale: local conventions and regional standards</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target group and purpose of the translation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning has been conveyed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omissions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a similar way, since standards refer to translation in general, not to the translation of a specific genre, certain aspects may be omitted from the list to suit particular genres’ specificities (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1993; Trosborg, 2000; Dejica 2011). For example, in the case of technical translation, aspects which should be considered redundant or irrelevant would include geographical names or the translation of periodicals.

Table 10.3 contains a tentative standards-based grid, which I believe would be relevant for the analysis of the formal and content-specific aspects of technical translation. The content-specific aspects may also be classified into language-specific and translation-specific aspects:

### Table 10.2: Overall classification of formal and content-specific translation requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal aspects</th>
<th>Language-specific aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the original (paragraphs, numbering, subdivision of the text into clauses)</td>
<td>Grammar: syntax, spelling, punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes and bibliographical references</td>
<td>Lexis: lexical cohesion and phraseology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulae, equations, symbols, units</td>
<td>Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures, legends, titles of figures and tables</td>
<td>Style: compliance with the proprietary or client style guide, including register and language variants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes, endnotes</td>
<td>Locale: local conventions and regional standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names and symbols of organizations</td>
<td><strong>Translation-specific</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Meaning (conveyed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transliteration</td>
<td>Target group and purpose of the translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of authors</td>
<td>Omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retranslation</td>
<td>Errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical names</td>
<td>Formatting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dates | **Table 10.3** contains a tentative standards-based grid, which I believe would be relevant for the analysis of the formal and content-specific aspects of technical translation. The content-specific aspects may also be classified into language-specific and translation-specific aspects:
Table 10.3: Tentative standards-based analysis grid for technical translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal aspects</th>
<th>Content-specific aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the original (paragraphs, numbering, subdivision of the text into clauses)</td>
<td>Language-specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes and bibliographical references</td>
<td>Grammar: syntax, spelling, punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulae, equations, symbols, units</td>
<td>Lexis: lexical cohesion and phraseology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures, legends, titles of figures and tables</td>
<td>Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes, endnotes</td>
<td>Style: compliance with the proprietary or client style guide, including register and language variants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names and symbols of organizations (companies, manufacturers)</td>
<td>Locale: local conventions and regional standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Translation-specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>Meaning (conveyed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting</td>
<td>Target group and purpose of the translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omissions</td>
<td>Errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.4 A Standards-based Analysis of Technical Translation

10.4.1 Corpus description

A classification of technical genres and sub-genres would include, but would not be limited to, instruction manuals, technical guides or user’s manuals; technical brochures, technical product presentations; technical drawings; technical product catalogues; technical reports, technical memorandums; feasibility studies; technical projects; spare parts list, catalogues, technical forms; or technical correspondence.

A standards-based analysis of technical translation from a genre perspective, covering all or most of the genres or sub-genres mentioned above would be very useful, but would exceed the size of the present research. Accordingly, this research is narrowed to user’s manuals, instruction manuals, and product descriptions, since I assume that the demand in the market for the translation of such genres is greater than the one for other technical genres mentioned above.

Another filter I applied in the process of narrowing and selecting the corpus for analysis refers to the range of products. I opted for various smart devices, digitally enabled, including phones, phablets, tablets, TVs, game consoles, watches, washing machines, etc., for the same reason: due to the market demands, such devices and their improved versions are released in the market more frequently and at shorter
time intervals than other technical devices (a lawn mower, for example), and hence, the need for the translation of the user’s manuals, instruction manuals and product descriptions, which accompany these products is greater.

Last but not least, in selecting the corpus, I opted for materials for products representing different brands, from different manufacturers, including LG, Philips, Samsung, Sony, or Treo, published at different time intervals in the last 10 years. Thus, the probability of analysing translations performed by different translators would be higher and the results more relevant.

The corpus included 45 interdependent translations (Sager, 1993, 177-182) in printed format and electronic format available online; the analysis and interpretation of the results are presented in the next section.

10.4.2 Analysis and interpretation of the results

The contrastive analysis was performed on the corpus described earlier and followed the observance or non-observance of the formal and content-specific aspects presented in Table 10.3.

When analysed individually, on the whole, the target texts look and read well; however, the contrastive analysis between the STs and the TTs shows that in most cases, the formal and content-specific requirements of the standards are not observed in most of the target texts.

10.4.2.1 Formal requirements

The structure of the original (paragraphs, numbering, and subdivision of the text into clauses) was respected in most of the cases.

Notes and bibliographical references were usually few and were translated in full.

Formulae and equations were not present in the source texts I analysed. The symbols like ©, ®, or ™ were preserved in the target texts in all of the cases. However, units seem to be approached in different ways by translators, most likely because of two reasons: as a marketing strategy (client’s requirements), but also due to the permissive formulation of ISO 2384, according to which ‘units are preferably not translated. If the units are converted, the value of the original units should be given in brackets’. In the case of smartphones, units were never translated or converted in Romanian (e.g., ST: 5 inch display – TT: ecran de 5 inch / ecran de 5 inci). This is also the case of computer monitors (e.g., LG LED Monitor 22M37A, 21.5’ Full HD Black – TT: Monitor LED LG 22M37A, 21.5’, Full HD, negru). However, the translation strategies differ in the case of flat TV screens: for smaller TV screen sizes, usually up to 32 inch, the original units were preserved (probably due to the similar size and the influence of computer monitors) and in some cases translated (TT: Televizor Smart LED LG, 80 cm, 32LF580V, Full HD), but for wider TV screens, usually above 40 inch diagonally, units were never preserved, and they were always converted (e.g., TT: Televizor
OLED Curbat Ultra HD 3D, Smart TV, 139 cm, LG 55EG960V). Indeed, when reading the product description online, a Romanian prospective buyer would probably find it easier to visualize a 139-cm TV screen than a 55 inch one, even if the two are identical in size. Another difference is related to the conversion of units. For the same size and unit (i.e., a 32-inch TV screen), I could find three different screen sizes in the Romanian translations: 80, 81, and 82 cm, which is also most likely due to the way a certain brand is marketed. (The exact size in centimeters as given by asknumbers.com is 81.28 cm.)

Figures, legends, titles of figures and tables were translated in full. The text which accompanied them was also translated in full in all of the cases. However, the standard recommendation (ISO 2384) regarding the position in which they appear in the source texts was not followed in 35 of the 45 target texts analyzed. An example is shown in Figure 10.1, which presents in parallel the source text (English) and the target text (Romanian); the example is an excerpt from a user’s manual, which details tips for washing and energy saving. As it can be seen, the form of the ST differs: 1) in the ST, the section starts at the top of the page, which is a common editorial practice for new sections or chapters; this detail is not followed in the TT; 2) the position of the table presenting the hardness scale and the degree of hardness differs and 3) the image representing the dispenser compartment is not next to the table, but on a different page, which would probably irritate the user since there is clearly a close relationship between the quantity of detergent used, presented in the table, and the dispenser compartment, which indicates where the detergent should be placed. Thus, the intention of the source text writer – to facilitate understanding by associating figures with images – is not preserved in the target text.

![Figure 10.1: Position of tables and images in the source text (English) and target text (Romanian).](image-url)
Almost the same differences between the position in the text can be observed in Figure 10.2, which represents an excerpt from the user’s manual of a smartphone: 1) the TT does not start with the title of the new section at the top of the page and 2) the TT fails to preserve the same information at the bottom of the page. A contextual analysis of the ST would reveal that the intention of the ST writer was to contrast two different models of the same smartphone, and in doing so, s/he presented the position of the Sleep/Wake button in two adjacent pictures. The pictures and the accompanying text, all on the same page, were clearly meant to highlight the differences – which, in this way are obvious – and to facilitate understanding of the text. Since the TT does not preserve the same position of the images and the text – the second image and the accompanying text are on the following page, the ST would most likely fail to convey the intention of the TT writer. As I mentioned before, such examples are common for most of the target texts I analyzed. On the whole, failure to comply with the standard’s recommendation on the position in the text would make it difficult to read the texts interdependently, would disrupt a carefully arranged document structure, and eventually would lead to a difference in focus in the target text.

Footnotes and endnotes were not present in the technical texts I analysed.
The names and symbols of organizations (companies and manufacturers) were usually translated in full. However, in 10 target texts, there were cases where manufacturers’ symbols or logos present in the source texts were missing. Some of the missing logos include the SD card symbol 

\[ \text{SD} \]

, the Mac OS symbol 

\[ \text{Mac} \]

, or the Microsoft Windows OS symbol 

\[ \text{Windows} \]

. Abbreviations were translated using proper equivalents in Romanian, and appendixes were translated in full.

Formatting was not respected in 35 target texts. The cases of non-observance included different text alignment and font style. Page margins and font-size and types were preserved in the target texts.

### 10.4.2.2 Content-specific requirements

As suggested in Table 10.3, the content-specific aspects include language- and translation-specific aspects. The 45 texts which constituted the corpus totalled about 900 pages. A standards-based quantitative analysis would have exceeded the purpose of this research; hence, I performed a qualitative analysis on one page, randomly selected from each document, the amount of analysed text totalling 45 pages.

The language-specific grammatical analysis showed that there were no syntax errors in the target texts.

Concerning the spelling, in 6 out of the 45 excerpts analysed, the translator did not use any diacritical marks in Romanian, in contradiction with standards’ requirements according to which translators should pay special attention to the use of diacritical marks in the target texts. Proper punctuation was not used in most of the analysed cases. Most common punctuation errors included misplaced comma use or faulty spacing before or after punctuation marks.

Lexical cohesion was preserved in all of the analysed excerpts.

In the case of terminology, the translator did preserve the specialised terms in the target texts; however, there were cases in which it would have been more appropriate to use a target language equivalent instead of a borrowed term. In few cases I could identify the use of barbarisms in Romanian, one such example being 

\[ \text{Organizer Palm OS} \]

instead of 

\[ \text{Organizator Palm OS} \]

for the English 

\[ \text{Palm OS Organizer} \]

. In other cases, terms were not translated at all (exemplification and discussion as follows).

There were no identifiable differences in terms of style or register.

The translation-specific analysis showed that meaning had been conveyed in all of the analysed texts. A particular case is represented by the translation of terminology and its relation to text understanding and meaning, which deserves special attention. As presented earlier, in most of the cases, terms were borrowed or translated using proper target language equivalents. However, I could identify two more different cases, which could be interpreted as different overall approaches to the translation of the source texts. In the first case, English terms were used in the Romanian texts as such, without further explanation or additional translation (Figure...
10.3). In the second case, English terms were used in the Romanian texts, followed by the Romanian translation (Figure 10.4).

Figure 10.3: Example of a target text (Romanian) which preserves the source text terms (English).

Figure 10.4: Example of a target text (Romanian) which preserves the source text terms (English) and provides their translation in brackets.

Figure 10.3 is taken from a user’s manual and represents the translation of the operating system of a mobile phone. The translator’s choice of preserving the English terms (23 occurrences on two pages, including terms like *to do list, delete, new item,*
10.5 Conclusion

This research offered the opportunity to reach several conclusions and to identify several research questions, which need further investigation.

An analysis of the standards presented in section 2 reveals that they are mostly descriptive, rather than prescriptive. Moreover, in many cases, the standards’ requirements may be interpreted as recommendations (extensive use of should). If some standards are relatively new (EN 15038, 2006), others are rather old (ISO 2384, 1977), and as compared with the other standards, have never been updated. Given that ISO 2384 was published before the invention and implementation of the World Wide Web, and that nowadays most technical translations are available online or only in an electronic format, translation professionals would rightfully question themselves as to the relevance of the standard’s requirements for today’s translation situations. The answer would become even more obvious in the case of digital-born translations and would definitely require the immediate attention of bodies responsible with the maintenance of such standards.

There is no doubt that translation standards are necessary and useful. When analysed individually, most technical target texts read and look well. However, the standards-based formal and content-based contrastive analysis revealed that there are cases where the provisions of the standards are not followed. In such cases, the target texts’ qualities and properties are not met (in particular, consistency and adequacy), which in turn, leads to an overall poor quality of the translations. The possible reasons include translators’ unfamiliarity with the standards, lack of using dedicated software, or even the fact that such translations are performed by non-
professionals. Given the market demand for technical translations and implicitly for well-trained translation professionals, this is a luxury no one should afford.

There should be a correlation between translation ethics, functional translation or functional nature of a standard, and observance of standards’ requirements. Functionalism in a standards-based translation context should not be understood as the possibility to gamble with the text, to alter it unconscientiously or according to unethical requests (e.g., avoid transferring company or manufacturers’ logos in the target text, misplacing the position of tables or figures, giving inadequate equivalents for technical terms, or non-observance of other standards’ provisions), but as the possibility to tailor a translation according to the client’s requirements, by following standards’ or any other ethical requirements.

In the context of preparing translators for the translation of technical texts in the digital age, universities and professional organizations in Romania should be more visible and have an increased role. Some of the immediate measures may include developing and accrediting technical translator-training programmes, setting up life-long learning programmes (including, but not limited to masters’ programs in technical or specialized translations, intensive courses, summer schools), and last but not least, raising awareness of the importance of using dedicated software to improve the quality and efficiency of technical translations. Other supportive measures may include setting up standardised examinations for technical translators’ certification or creating periodical re-evaluation programmes for technical translators.

This study has also confirmed that the field of technical translation offers many opportunities for further research, particularly in the context of its development and evolution in the digital era. Some of the research questions and topics that emerged from this study and which deserve attention include, in a random order, 1) the evolution of online technical genres and their implications for translation, 2) the identification and analysis of the features of online interdependent technical translations, 3) the possibility of creating standardized genre-based requirements for the translation or assessment of technical translations (or of specialized translation in general), 4) the relationship between different translation schools and the nature of translation standards, or 5) the relevance of the existing translation standards for digital-born translations and the necessity or opportunity of updating standards to be one step ahead or at least keep up with the continuous evolution and form of translations in the digital age.

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