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## TRANSLATORS AS LANGUAGE USERS, DURING AND AWAY FROM TRANSLATION

### ABSTRACT

This paper provides a new outlook on the relationship between linguistics and translation studies, by focusing on the points in common between linguistic approaches to bilingualism and the study of translators as a unique type of bilingual language users. Following a historical overview of the influence of linguistic theories on translation studies, a more cognitive focus is adopted. Studies on the linguistic behaviour of translators in translation-related tasks are contrasted to those with tasks involving independent language production and tapping into linguistic competence, in native as well as non-native languages. Translation expertise and the role of metalinguistic knowledge are also briefly considered. The paper closes with a reiteration of the call to ease the disciplinary boundaries and work together.

*Keywords:* linguistics and translation; bilingualism; translation competence; linguistic competence.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistics and translation studies are language-centred fields that intersect and can inform each other in various ways. Yet, in the multi-volume *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Kirsten Malmkjær begins her article on “Linguistics and translation” by stating that “[t]he relationship between translation and linguistics has not always been harmonious” (Malmkjær, 2011: 61). While Malmkjær primarily relates such a state of affairs to a fear within translation studies of deleting disciplinary boundaries and encompassing translation theory within linguistics, her statement holds in several other ways. A similar sentiment is echoed by other authors, such as Whyatt (2012), or Rojo and Ibarretxe-Antuñano (2013), who write of a love-hate relationship, marked at the same time by mutual attraction and mutual dislike between the two fields.

At community level, translation studies scholars and linguists mostly have separate conferences and associations, they publish in different journals, and tend to administratively belong to different scientific/disciplinary sectors. In terms of topics, concepts and phenomena studied, there is a major overlap, and cross-fertilisation can only be beneficial.

Within this broad picture, differences exist between more specific topics and approaches. Both fields have more theoretical and more empirical branches, and strands that are more oriented towards text vs. those more interested in language users. The relationship between translation theory and linguistic theory has been complex and somewhat unbalanced, but it has certainly received quite some attention. On the empirical front, this has not always been the case, and text-oriented approaches have been much closer related across disciplines than user-oriented approaches. Soon after large corpora started being built across languages and corpus linguistics began firmly establishing itself as a method in linguistics (for a historical perspective on corpus linguistics, see McEnery, Hardie, 2013), Mona Baker's seminal work introduced corpus-based methods in translation studies (Baker, 1993, 1995), leading to a fruitful interdisciplinary exchange, characterised by numerous shared topics and techniques (see Bernardini, Ferraresi, 2022 for a recent overview). The aspect that has received less shared attention are translators as compared to other types of speakers, with their specific performance in language tasks, and their unique competence. Even though both linguistics and translation studies have developed lively strands of user-oriented research with elaborate experimental paradigms, a convergence is less strong both in terms of research topics and methods.

On the one hand, linguistic research of language users tends to focus either on mental representations of language (referred to as linguistics competence, or mental grammar), or on real-time language processing; the former is often studied in relation to first and second language acquisition and development (L1 and L2 respectively), while the latter falls within the realm of psycholinguistics. On the other hand, in translator-oriented translation studies, also referred to as “cognitive translation studies”, “cognitive translatology” (Muñoz Martín, 2010) or “translation process research” (Muñoz Martín, 2016)<sup>1</sup>, the focus does not lean only towards linguistic factors (which – when studied – mostly concern the bilingual lexicon and/or switching between languages), but also those that are related to more general cognitive mechanisms, often being closer to psychology than to linguistics. Particular interest is shown for topics such as cognitive control – in particular language switching costs and the bilingual advantage in non-verbal tasks (Ibáñez *et al.*, 2010, Green, Abutalebi, 2013); cognitive reserve and aging (Rossi *et al.*, 2023), and the role of expertise (Christoffels *et al.*, 2006). Less interest is shown in what translators are like *linguistically*, also outside translation activities.

With this background in mind, the present article aims to provide a synthesis of linguistic studies of translators. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to do so<sup>2</sup>; the objective is thus to be selective rather than exhaustive, singling out examples of topics and areas in which there is existing work and/or potential for new strands of research being developed that will bring closer together the study of bilinguals within linguistic disciplines and work on translators in translation studies. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a general overview of the relationship (or lack thereof) between translation studies and different areas of linguistics. Section 3 zooms in on translators and their multifaceted status as language learners, native language users and language professionals, with an emphasis on a comparison between their language behaviour in translational and non-translational contexts, and a consideration of professional expertise on the one hand and the metalinguistic knowledge and awareness on the other. Section 4 brings some concluding remarks and a call for more linguistic studies of translators as a unique group of bilinguals.

## 2. TRANSLATION AND LINGUISTICS

Several works have offered informative overviews of the relationship between linguistic theory and translation studies; Figure 1 summarises their central points through a timeline with corresponding main trends and linguistic influences in translation studies (based on Malmkjær, 2005, 2011, 2017, Whyatt, 2012, Rojo, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013, and Pan, Zhang, 2022).

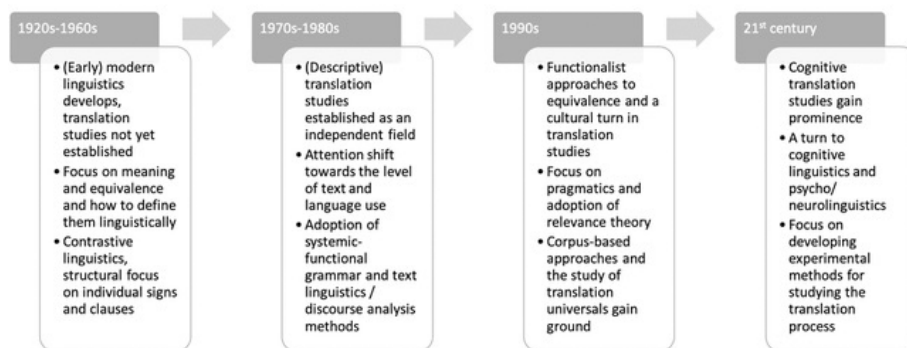


Fig. 1. A historical summary of the relationship between linguistics and translations

As can be seen in the summary in Figure 1, throughout the history of the two disciplines, linguistics has always been the one to give more and take

less, as translation studies repeatedly turned to various linguistic theories and subdisciplines for definitions of concepts, for frameworks, and methods. In fact, as pointed out by Pan and Zhang (2022), “early modern linguistics played an important part in the scientification of translation studies as a discipline”. Translation studies, on the other hand, has mostly provided linguistics with data, despite repeated calls for linguists to explore – among other features of translation – the choices made in difficult-to-translate contexts and use them as a window onto the nature of the linguistic phenomena involved (see e.g. Malmkjær, 2005, 2011)<sup>3</sup>.

Among linguistic theories, all major approaches have come to influence translation studies to some extent. Functional and cognitive linguistics have always provided, and continue to provide, the most fertile ground for theories of translation. Functional linguistics shares some general ideas about communication, and about language functions being above language structure, with functional approaches in translation studies, whose main focus is on functional suitability of translations rather than on their systematic fidelity to the original (see Munday, 2001, also Ibarretxe-Antuñano, Filipović, 2013). Cognitive linguistics is possibly the most comprehensive framework, embraced – together with some models from psycholinguistics – primarily but not exclusively in cognitive translation studies (see e.g. Halverson, 2010, 2013, Rojo, Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2013, House, 2015). But even the approaches focused on language as a system of formal rules, as was the case of structuralism, were reflected, for instance, in the first definitions of meaning and equivalence, and to some extent they remain present through contrastive analysis (for the first application of structuralist analyses to translation studies, see Vinay, Darbelnet, 1958). Generative linguistics has had some good fortune too, despite having typically shown little to no interest in performance-related activities such as translation; it fell short of becoming an adequate overarching theory of translation, but various translation studies scholars have used the tenets of generativism in defining equivalence based on the notions of deep and surface structure, or in coming up with translation grammars built of formal rules of between-language transfer (see Nida, 1964, Kade, 1968, Vázquez-Ayora, 1977).

Except for cognitive linguistics as a possible comprehensive framework (see also section 3), most of the recent linguistic influences on translation studies have come from more specific subdisciplines and theories, mostly in the realm of pragmatics and discourse analysis/text linguistics (Pan, Zhang, 2022). The main domains in which translations feed into linguistic research remain contrastive linguistics, language typology, and cross-linguistic studies in general, often based on parallel corpora of source and target texts (Vandepitte, De Sutter, 2013); the study of language contact and language change is another area to which translation provides valuable data (Luraghi, 2013, Kranich *et al.*, 2011).

Missed opportunities for (more) cooperation and exchange – or, on a more optimistic note, gaps to fill in future studies – include the linguistic properties of translated texts (which tend to differ, lexically and structurally, from texts originally written in the same language, carrying important implications for linguistic studies based on translations), and even more so the linguistic properties of translators (assuming that the study of speakers and their competence in one or more languages falls under the umbrella of linguistics as much as the study of texts).

### 3. TRANSLATORS AS LANGUAGE USERS

Fully understanding translation requires understanding translators. While this involves comprehending the social context in which they operate, their working conditions and stress levels, ideology, and use of technology (all factors extensively dealt with in translation studies), what lies at the very core is a linguistic recoding process based on translators' knowledge, skills and competences, many of which are linguistic. In other words, as stated by House (2015), at the centre of the study of translation there needs to be a linguistic-cognitive orientation that combines linguistic analysis with an adequate model of the bilingual mind.

Indeed, bilingualism is a prerequisite for translation, and the key linguistic trait of translators as language users. But what kind of bilinguals are translators? In the linguistic disciplines, a broad definition is commonly adopted that sees bilingualism as a matter of degree, and bilinguals as speakers who use two (or more) languages<sup>4</sup>, in different contexts and with variable scale of proficiency (Surrain, Luk, 2019). For translators, however, the definition cannot end here, as they are *professional bilinguals*, who receive training in both translation and linguistic analysis, and whose studies and professional activities require them to reach sufficiently high proficiency levels and remain in frequent contact with languages they translate from<sup>5</sup>. Since the most common situation is that of individuals who master one or more non-native languages to this end, translators can be seen as a type of L2 learners, and given the extensive professional exposure to the L2, possibly also as a special group of L1 attriters, whose native language undergoes contact-induced changes.

Despite their unique linguistic profile, translators have not been studied extensively in light of their competence as bilinguals. Rossi *et al.* (2023) point out that:

“[a] majority of the current literature in bilingualism has studied average, i.e., non-professional, late learners and or early-childhood learners, TIs [translators and

interpreters], on the other hand, are unique in that they are often late learners with a significant amount of bilingual experience due to the nature of the profession.”

This claim holds true of topics such as cognitive control and bilingual advantage in executive functions, and even more so in relation to the translators’ linguistic competence, their L1 and L2 behaviour outside translation contexts, and their status compared to other types of bilinguals; having this state of affairs in mind, it becomes less of a surprise that studies of bilingualism tend not to be considered in overviews of the relationship between linguistics and translation studies. The situation might in part be due to the interdisciplinary nature of bilingualism studies themselves, which also encompass multiple dimensions external to linguistics (see Schwieter *et al.*, 2020: 81), but it is at the same time the result of an evident lack of dialogue between neighbouring disciplines.

The focus of the following subsections is on a summary of how translators are and can be studied from a linguistic point of view, during translation activities and outside of them.

### *3.1. Translators during translation*

In translation studies, the cognitive, process-oriented approaches are interested in a varied group of phenomena, sharing an “overall objective of studying cognition in multilectal mediated tasks” (Xiao, Muñoz Martín, 2021: 4), i.e., looking at “translational cognition” (Schwieter *et al.*, 2020: 80). Many of the studied phenomena are psychological and/or physiological rather than (purely) linguistic; attention, cognitive control, stress management and brain activity during translation are some of the recurring topics<sup>6</sup>. While understanding such phenomena is a must if a comprehensive theory of translation is to be arrived at, the translation process also remains a classic case of language contact, and many of the factors involved are linguistic in nature and call for linguistic explanations.

A dominant linguistic topic that has awoken interest in the study of translators is the bilingual mental lexicon. The mental lexicon, intended as information about the form, the meaning and the use of vocabulary, as encoded in the mind of an individual speaker, is one of the most widely studied topics in psycholinguistics, in terms of structure (form and meaning connections between individual words, and links between words and the associated concepts), as well as access (retrieval of words in actual language use). In the case of bilingual speakers, an additional central question becomes whether access to the mental lexicon is selective (meaning that different languages are activated separately from each other), or parallel (meaning that there is a single integrated lexicon and activation of two languages happens at the same time). Concise overviews of the main bilingual models are provided by Halverson (2013) and Schwieter *et al.* (2020); currently, more evidence is available in support of a parallel mod-

el, i.e., activation of both languages even in those situations in which only one is used, and a model that assumes increasingly direct links between words and concepts as proficiency grows. A key issue for translation studies then becomes how translators handle words from the two languages they work with, and in particular how they switch between languages with the help of cognitive mechanisms of language inhibition and control. At present, empirical results point to a complex, multicomponent language control system, which might be more efficient in translators than in non-professional bilinguals, presumably as an effect of training and practice, but is also subject to a high level of individual variation (Festman, 2012). What is less commonly researched (but see Diamond, Shreve, 2010), and could be particularly interesting from a linguistic point of view (especially in relation to topics from section 3.2), is whether translators eventually structure and access their mental lexicons differently from non-professional bilinguals outside translation tasks, and whether they do so equally for their native and non-native languages.

Some studies of vocabulary, and also of syntax, focus on the more general question of ease/difficulty of translating, and the associated decision-making and problem-solving strategies. While the latter might be of more interest to psychologically oriented research, establishing which and what kinds of units cause translational difficulty is at least in part a linguistic issue. For example, Dragsted (2012) studied the impact on difficulty of the number of alternative target renditions, which is again a mental lexicon problem. This strand of research is at the same time one in which methodological change over time has been noteworthy, as the initial introspective methods (most notably think-aloud protocols, in which translators were asked to reflect on the translation process while performing the translation; see Muñoz Martín, 2016) gave way to more objective measurements implemented through keylogging and eye-tracking, more recently also neuroimaging techniques, helping the researchers capture text points of major difficulty through time measures in sequences of interventions in the texts (insertions, deletions, copy-paste operations, etc.), or via gaze duration (Jakobsen, 2011).

Another pertinent domain is the study of specific linguistic characteristics of translations, some of which came to be known as *translation universals* (Baker, 1993); an example is explicitation – a tendency of translated texts to explicitly state elements or relations that in a given context can be left implied (e.g., the complementiser *that* in English, or overt pronominal subjects in null-subject languages such as Italian, both of which tend to be overused in translations compared to non-translated texts in the same language; see e.g. Baroni, Bernardini, 2006). Translation universals are typically approached as a textual phenomenon, and over the last 30 years an outstanding number of corpus-based studies have been dedicated to them. However, behind every text

there is a translator, and the question arises of what leads translators to produce such phenomena. A cognitive-oriented explanation has been put forward by Halverson (2003) within her Gravitational Pull Hypothesis, based on the idea that translators are led to patterns of overuse or underuse by a combination of three cognitive factors: the prominence of a given element in the source language, the prominence of its equivalent in the target language, and the strength of the cross-linguistic link (see also Halverson, 2017 for a revised version). While the hypothesis itself is still being tested and might be able to account for some phenomena better than for others, the very fact that it invokes cognitive factors opens up a new door between translation studies and linguistics, leading also to the question of whether translators are affected by the proposed factors only during translation, or also when performing other tasks, in their L1 or their L2(s).

Finally, underneath translators' translational behaviour is *translation competence*, another central concept that combines linguistic and non-linguistic elements. According to Beeby *et al.* (2011), translation competence is the underlying system of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in order to translate, composed of five sub-competences, labelled respectively as Bilingual, Extralinguistic, Knowledge of translation, Instrumental, and Strategic. The linguistic, i.e., Bilingual, sub-component is what enables communication in two languages; it comprises pragmatic, sociolinguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge in both languages. Interestingly, not being specific to translation, it does not occupy a central place, which is instead reserved for the Strategic sub-competence, considered crucial for problem solving and for linking the other sub-competences. Somewhat similarly, Whyatt (2012) sees professional translators as bilinguals who develop their natural ability into a refined trained skill, building a Knowledge Integration Network that incorporates as an important component meta-cognitive supervision. An additional methodological reason that makes translation competence interesting for the field of bilingualism is given by difficulties encountered in its empirical measurement. Hurtado Albir (2017), for example, reports that indicators in texts used as testing material can be difficult to link to one specific sub-competence from Beeby *et al.*'s model; the long and rich experience of bilingualism studies in testing language proficiency could be helpful in addressing such issues, while at the same time learning about the translational aspect of proficiency.

### *3.2. Translators away from translation*

In linguistic approaches to bilingualism, recent decades have seen an important expansion in terms of groups being studied separately, and sometimes compared to each other, due to displaying (partly) different patterns of language behaviour. From an initial division into early and late bilinguals, the field has

arrived at encompassing at least simultaneous and consecutive bilingualism, adult and child L2 acquisition, third language acquisition, heritage language acquisition, and L1 attrition. Translators have not received much attention in this sense, being typically grouped together with “ordinary” bilinguals based on proficiency, age of acquisition, language of schooling, or other similar generic criteria. In other words, they have rarely been studied as a bilingual group in its own right outside the translation context<sup>7</sup>.

Yet, it has long been known that language behaviour is highly subject to task effects; a small shift in the level of task formality can lead to differences in performance in L2 speakers (see Tarone, 1988), and tasks involving entirely different processes and different competence systems are likely to cause performance divergences in any speaker group. Translators can thus not be expected to perform the same when translating and when engaging in other language-related activities, be it in their L1 or L2. They will also not perform the same in novel vs. well-known tasks (as captured by Diamond, Shreve, 2010, in the concept of “task proficiency”; see also related considerations by Halverson, 2013). Task effects are evident, for instance, in studies that compare translators’ reading for understanding or repetition, and reading for translating: the typical pattern appears to be for the reading to be faster when not performed for translating (see the recent overview in Schaeffer, Carl, 2017).

The issue in fact goes deeper, to the translators’ linguistic competence<sup>8</sup>. In the context of L2>L1 translation, translators are known to display some “odd” behaviours (cf. the translation universals above), presumably as a combined result of cross-linguistic influence and the translation process itself. But are such behaviours also reflected outside translation, resulting possibly from a more permanent change in the translators’ L1 grammar? Cardinaletti (2004) was one of the authors to propose, based on textual phenomena such as overt subject pronoun overuse and atypical subject placement in translations into Italian, that experienced translators undergo a form of L1 attrition that can be ascribed to the prolonged contact with an L2, albeit in a non-immersion context. Several studies tested the attrition claim experimentally, employing a non-translational picture selection task widely used with other bilingual groups for probing into the knowledge of constraints on the use of overt pronominal subjects (Miličević, Kraš, 2017, Miličević Petrović *et al.*, 2019); no evidence of attrition effects was found with either experienced or trainee translators. However, this set of studies used the same task, targeting the same linguistic phenomenon; they should be complemented with additional studies of possible L1 attrition in translators, looking at new linguistic phenomena; such new studies would also fit a nascent strand in bilingualism research dedicated to possible attrition effects in other cases of intensive instructed L2 exposure (Martín-Villena, 2023).

Reversing the situation and focusing on L1>L2 translation, Ferraresi and Bernardini (2023) compared collocational patterns in student translations from (L1) Italian into (L2) English with those in essays written directly in (L2) English, discovering that translations overall contained a higher number of typical English collocations than non-translated production, contrary to what tends to happen in L2>L1 translations compared to original L1 texts (i.e., in the context in which translation universals are found). This study provides additional evidence for task effects in linguistic behaviour, showing also that in certain cases translation can enhance target-like production. Furthermore, jointly with the above work on L1 attrition, it has implications for future studies not only in the domain of translators as L2 learners and/or L1 attriters, but also in the explorations of directionality in the translation process, which still awaits in-depth exploration (as highlighted also by Halverson, 2013 and by Schwieter *et al.*, 2020, who quote it as a promising venue for further research).

All of the mentioned studies also point to the importance of linguistic competence and general language proficiency. Even though translators are almost by definition assumed to reach high(est) proficiency levels in the languages they work with, empirical studies indicate that in practice this is not always the case, that performance on language tasks is directly affected, and that individual differences persist; for this reason, scholars such as Schwieter *et al.* (2020) call for a more thorough assessment not only of the translation competence and the professional profile of translators (see sections 3.1 and 3.3 respectively), but also of their linguistic competence and their bilingual profile (in particular their proficiency level in the L2s known, and their language history). Since bilingualism studies also suffer from inconsistencies in subject selection as well as in reporting on subject profiles (revealed, e.g., in a recent review by Surrain, Luk, 2019, the two disciplines could establish an exchange of good practices.

The last topic covered in this section concerns a model proposed within translation studies that linguistics in general, and bilingualism studies in particular, could also benefit from. It is known as the *constrained language model*, and it has been proposed in several works by Haidee Kotze and colleagues, receiving a final elaboration in Kotze (2022). According to this model, language production can be defined through a series of constraints – some task-related, some speaker-related – that each exert an impact on what production will be like. The constraints and their possible values are as follows:

1. Language activation: monolingual / bilingual
2. Modality: spoken / written
3. Text production: unmediated / mediated
4. Proficiency: proficient user / learner
5. Task expertise: expert / non-expert

Assuming bilingual language activation, the model can link different bilingual contexts based on the remaining constraints, allowing for an exploration of translational (mediated) vs. non-translational (unmediated) contexts while also considering proficiency and task expertise.

### 3.3. *Translators as professional bilinguals*

In defining simultaneous interpreters, Babcock and Vallesi (2017: 403) point to factors that also apply to translators:

“Simultaneous interpretation lies in a unique position as it is both a form of bilingualism and a learned skill. Thus the cognitive profile associated with interpretation may be reflective of both of these sources.”

In addition to the factors discussed in previous sections, translators are defined by their *expertise*. Being a psychological more than a linguistic concept, expertise is not of central interest for the present paper, but it will be treated in relation to two topics relevant for the relationship between linguistics and translation. One is the nature of (linguistic) knowledge in terms of the memory resources involved. Expertise is commonly understood as acquired through practice that transforms initially declarative knowledge into a set of interiorised and automated procedural skills, be they bicycle riding, translation as an activity, or language use in general. Since the two memory systems are very commonly invoked in accounts of language acquisition and bilingualism (Paradis, 2004), especially in cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics (but see also Beeby *et al.*, 2011, who primarily refer to procedural knowledge when defining the bilingual sub-competence of their translation competence model), when interfacing linguistics and translation studies it is important to distinguish between this core use of the term, and the one also found in translation studies, referring to expertise as a directly experience-based rather than cognitive factor.

Even more methodologically, scholars in translation studies often divide translators into expertise/experience-based categories, the most typical ones being trainees, novices and experts (or experienced translators). Calls for being more explicit about categories and for providing a more detailed description of study participants along the expertise/experience dimension(s) have already been put forward by translation scholars themselves; see Jääskeläinen (2010). This information, however, gains additional weight if translators are to become regular participants in linguistic studies, where this type of data is currently absent, and a reliance on approximate categories could lead to confusion.

### *3.4. The metalinguistic dimension*

Several related concepts that can be seen as belonging to a dimension dealing with knowledge *about* language and translation, namely metalinguistic knowledge, metalinguistic ability and metalinguistic awareness, have been found important for both bilingualism and translation studies. In bilingualism, these concepts (with metalinguistic knowledge referring to what is known about language, metalinguistic ability to the capacity to use one's knowledge about language, and metalinguistic awareness to attentional focus on metalinguistic knowledge) are primarily studied as facilitators in the acquisition of non-native languages (see Roehr-Brackin, 2018 for an extensive overview). In translation studies, they have a role in problem solving, as well as in the monitoring of the translation process and the quality of the final product, and they are seen as part of the Strategic sub-component of translation competence (cf. section 3.1); that is, as summarised by Halverson (2018), metalinguistic concepts as applied in translation studies do not really have a clear linguistic component, and are more conspicuously linked to the more general cognitive domain.

However, several studies indicate that metalinguistic knowledge and awareness, intended linguistically, could be important factors for translators' performance, and even possible guardians of their linguistic competence; this is highlighted, for instance, by Whyatt (2012). A related empirical finding of L1 attrition studies is that trainee and experienced translators in Miličević, Kraš (2017) and Miličević Petrović *et al.* (2019) not only did not show any attrition effects, but their choices were more in line with the theoretical preferences than the choices of the control groups composed of non-translators; moreover, the trainees slightly "outperformed" experienced translators, which could be explained by the recency of their metalinguistic training.

Such findings also point to comparisons between translators and foreign language teachers, another subgroup of professional/trained bilinguals, as a potentially promising new field of inquiry. Some initial steps have in fact already been taken through the empirical testing of translation competence, where comparisons between experienced translators and foreign language teachers revealed that translators produced a higher rate of acceptable solutions in translation, but with a less obvious advantage when it came to L1>L2 translation (Hurtado Albir, 2017). Finally, these results confirm the usefulness and the multiple benefits of teaching linguistics in translation degree courses, in addition to specific knowledge and skills related to the languages involved in the students' chosen translation combinations (see, for example, Gatta, Mazzoleni, 2020 and Gatta, 2021).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In the “Introduction” to *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies and Linguistics*, one of her most important attempts to bring the two disciplines closer together, Kirsten Malmkjær points to a “greater likelihood of finding scholars within Translation Studies with an understanding of and interest in Linguistics than of finding scholars within Linguistics with an understanding of and interest in Translation Studies” (Malmkjær, 2017: 1). In contrast to that trend, the point of view presented in this paper is that of a linguist, and the article itself is intended as a step towards a more evenly balanced cooperation. To that end, a selection of topics was presented in which the research interests of the two disciplines overlap, together with a call for heightened mutual awareness, recognition and dialogue.

Among the next steps, the most pressing ones are systematic reviews of the literature on the phenomena briefly presented here, and the ensuing formulation of a more specific research agenda for the interface between linguistic approaches to bilingualism and linguistically oriented translator studies. In particular, a strand that can respond well to this call is research on the linguistic profile of professional bilinguals, including translators and language teachers, and their associated competence, including metalinguistic knowledge. Such a line of research is needed to enable more comprehensive comparisons between professional and “ordinary” bilinguals, leading in turn to a more in-depth understanding of bilingualism in general.

An additional aspect that makes explorations of linguistic competence appealing is their link with practical considerations that also bring together multiple domains. In Europe, several recent Erasmus+ strategic partnerships have looked at competences in a broader perspective of language professions: the *European Framework for Translation* project (EFFORT, <https://www.effortproject.eu>) has proposed descriptions of translation performance levels inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, while *DigiLing: Trans-European e-Learning Hub for Digital Linguistics* (<https://learn.digiling.eu>) and *Upgrading the SKills of Linguistics and Language Students* (UPSKILLS, <https://upskillsproject.eu>) have reframed the knowledge, skills and competences that can be seen as targets for students in language-related degrees. The policy-oriented work within these projects already considers the changing workflows of the language professions and the ensuing need to incorporate computational developments (such as neural machine translation or large language models) in education. However, if we are to also comprehend how these changes depend on, or could impact, the language professionals’ linguistic and metalinguistic competence, we need to reach its more complete baseline understanding first.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Translator studies” has also been proposed as a subfield by Chesterman (2009), but in his view this subfield encompasses cultural and sociological aspects in addition to the cognitive ones.

<sup>2</sup> Wyatt (2012) is a partial exception, focused on the development of translation competence from general bilingual competence.

<sup>3</sup> The approaches that view translation as problem solving identify two central types of problems that are linguistic in nature: *linguistic problems*, related to the lexicon and morphosyntax, and *textual problems*, related to issues of coherence, cohesion, genre and style (Hurtado Albir, 2017: 11).

<sup>4</sup> Or multilingualism; the term “bilingual(ism)” is used as a hypernym throughout the paper.

<sup>5</sup> A popular estimate provided for professional interpreters is that they “speak and listen simultaneously for approximately 70% of the time” (Chernov, 1994: 139).

<sup>6</sup> Extensive overviews of the development of cognitive translation studies are provided by Muñoz Martín (2016) and Xiao and Muñoz Martín (2021).

<sup>7</sup> A notable exception are studies that focus on cognitive control, bilingual advantage and related issues, and thus to a certain extent also research on the bilingual mental lexicon (see section 3.1).

<sup>8</sup> Linguistic competence is intended here as the speaker’s mental language faculty, without reference to any specific linguistic framework, and without considering it necessarily either fully separate or indistinguishable from language performance.

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