

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS AS LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL, TEXTUAL AND INTENTIONALITY-RELATED PHENOMENA: EVIDENCE FROM AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

GEMANEN GYUSE

Lecturer, Department of Languages and Linguistics,
Benue State University, Makurdi.

Tel: +234(0)8065349438

Emails: ggyuse@bsum.edu.ng

Abstract

Translation is a complex endeavour that is particularly challenging for novice translators. Scholars in Translation Studies (TS), including Campbell, Delisle, and Kiraly, agree that translating from a familiar language (L1) to a less familiar one (L2) is especially difficult without adequate translation competence (TC). Although many studies show that L2 translations may be more challenging, leading to unacceptable translation outcomes, translating into all directions can present challenges. The question now is “what specific factors can impede the translator trainees’ task particularly when they translate from a more familiar language into a less familiar one?” The aim of this article is to answer the question above. Drawing on data from an earlier evidence-based study, this article addresses the research question. Method-wise, a convergent parallel mixed-method approach was adopted to collect and integrate both the quantitative and the qualitative datasets. A test was given to 15 bachelor’s students of French at the Benue State University, Makurdi-Nigeria, using the Gile’s (2004) Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR) model, which is a process-orientated protocol in translation research. While an error analysis was carried out on the participants’ test using Granger and Lefer’s (2021) Translation-oriented Annotation System (TAS), NVivo was used to analyse their IPDR reports based on Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés’ (2023) problem typology. Results

showed participants had translation problems relating to linguistic, extralinguistic, textual and intentionality-related factors as well as problems related to the working condition. These problems impacted negatively on the quality of their translation from English into French, thus compromising the intended purpose of the translation. In particular, the problems led to miscommunication, cultural faux pas, loss of tone and inconsistencies in the TT, suggesting that there is a critical need for targeted pedagogical intervention not just to improve students' translation quality but to boost their translation competences.

Key words: Translation problems, translation competence, error analysis, English–French translation, L2 translation.

Introduction¹

Translation is, indeed, a complex task that presents challenges to both professional and novice translators, although novices find it more challenging. Many scholars in Translation Studies (TS) like Campbell (1998/2014), Delisle (2013) and Kiraly (2000) all corroborate this assertion and they all believe that translation is even more difficult when one is working from a familiar language to a less familiar one, especially when the translator does not possess enough translation competence (TC). Although many studies indicate that translating into L2 can lead to significant errors, it does not vitiate the fact that all translation directionalities can present challenges to translators. The question should be “which specific areas are translators likely to face significant challenges especially when working from the first language (L1) into the second language (L2)?” This article aims to shed light on this question from the point of view of an evidence-based study.

The concept of translation problems, addressed by various scholars like Nord (2005), Muñoz Martin (2000), Deeb (2005), González-Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005), Palumbo (2009), Angelone (2010),

1 This article is partly inspired from my PhD research. Entitled *English–French Translation in Nigeria: A Mixed-methods Evaluation of Bachelor's Students' Translation Problems, Strategies and Products*, the thesis was submitted and published in 2025 for the degree of Doctor of Translation Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. The data, results and discussion are slightly adapted here to fit for a stand-alone journal article.

Toury (2010), Way (2016), Pavlović (2017), Pym (2017) and others, emphasises that translators often encounter situations that pose challenges during translation. Nord's handbook categorises translation problems into four types: pragmatic, cultural, linguistic, and text-specific. Pragmatic problems stem from differences in context and function between source and target texts, while cultural problems arise from differences in idea expression. Linguistic problems are linked to disparities between the source and target languages, and text-specific problems pertain to issues unique to a particular text, such as comprehension difficulties and vague presentations.

Besides, Orozco-Jutorán and Medel (2023) present a recent translation problem typology, designed as a pedagogical tool for translation education, encompassing comprehension, transfer, rewriting, and pragmatic issues. This typology categorises problems into linguistic and extralinguistic categories, except for pragmatic problems, to address different research needs for solutions. Although Orozco-Jutorán and Medel's (2023) problem typology has a lot of pedagogical merits, the division is seen as confusing and cumbersome.

On the part of Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés' (2023), their problem typology addresses linguistic, textual, extralinguistic translation problems, and those influenced by intentionality and translation briefs. This recent work also categorises translation strategies into internal (cognitive) and external (technology and documentation) supports, establishing a clear link between problems and strategies. Their typology aligns with Nord's model, making it a valuable resource for translator trainees, aiding in the development of decision-making skills essential for professional practice. Additionally, their strategies tackle translation challenges at all transfer process levels, including comprehension and revision. Looking at Nord's work, which is somewhat dated and the more recent problem typologies from Orozco-Jutorán and Medel (2023) and Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés (2023), it is safer to adopt the more recent ones, specifically that of Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés.

This study, therefore, strives to highlight whether translator trainees in Nigeria can encounter problems during English–French translation that are similar to the problem typology proposed by Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés (2023) or whether there are other problems

that can compromise the quality of students' translation. The study relies strictly on empirical evidence drawn from the convergent parallel mixed-methods data collected and analysed in 2019 involving bachelor's students of French of the Benue State University, Makurdi. Indeed, apart from highlighting the factors that impinge Nigerian students' translation task performance based on emerging axioms in TS, this study is an important one since it can also help close the research gap bordering the obvious lack of empirical Nigerian-based studies combining IPDR and TAS to investigate issues related to translation quality evaluation.

Understanding translation problems versus translation difficulties

Generally, translation metalanguage presents challenges in Translation Studies (TS), particularly due to the lack of consensus around its definition and terminology. Scholars like Snell-Hornby (2007) argue that unlike natural sciences, TS deals with complex and ambiguous issues related to language, complicating its discourse. Three main challenges are identified: conceptual complexity, terminological diversity, and disagreement among experts (Chesterman, 2005; Marco, 2007). Although Gambier and van Doorslaer (2007) advocate for clarity and reader-orientation in TS discourse, Pokorn (2007) contends that the push for univocal definitions is outdated and impractical. However, Van Vaerenbergh (2007) underscores the importance of understanding this metalanguage in translator training, suggesting that the diversity in terminology can be an opportunity rather than a source of confusion.

Although problems and difficulties appear to be synonymous since they all connote challenges or obstacles, in TS, these two terms do not seem to mean the same thing according to researchers like Nord (1987/1991), Linder (2000) and Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020). Drawing on the work from Nord (1987/1991), Linder (2000) argues that the distinction between the two concepts is quite useful in the teaching of specialised translation in order to help both the translator trainers and trainees discuss separately what constitutes challenges to all translators, which may not necessarily be a challenge to specific individuals. Linder adds that distinguishing between these two terms is important as far as translator training is concerned in order to raise

the trainees' self-awareness. Thus, Linder (2000, p. 375) affirms that translation problems are the various points that pose a challenge to every translator working in a particular language combination, whereas translation difficulties are borne out of an individual translator's educational or cultural background and experience.

By the distinction above, one has to understand that translation problems are general and every translator working in any language combination has the tendency of encountering such challenges, but difficulties are specific to individual translators due to their inability to comprehend the ST or to properly reformulate the message into the TT either because of lack of translational skills, differences between the cultural setting of the SL and the TL or inadequate personal experience. On the basis of the differences above, it means both translation problems and difficulties cannot be restricted to a specific language combination or text genre since it is a general phenomenon in TS.

Linder (2000) criticises the views of Newmark (1988), who considers 'translation problem' a unit of translation. Newmark argues that translation problem occurs when direct or literal rendition of the ST into the TT is not adequate, then translators tend to deploy their skills to reproduce the message as adequately as possible (Newmark, 1988 in Linder, 2000). What is puzzling is that Newmark takes both problems and difficulties as belonging to the same phenomenon in translation, which, according to Linder (2000), is not really the case.

Highlighting the extent to which translation problems could be different from translation difficulties, Linder (2000) cites the following examples in the context of Spanish-English translation. He argues that the Spanish term *informática* could pose some translation problems to translators, because there are different possibilities of rendering the term into English depending on the context. The word could be mistaken for 'computing', 'computer skills', 'computer science' and simply 'computers'. The challenge in situating this word correctly in a given context might not be a difficulty due to lack of proper education or cultural differences. However, the Spanish term *dirección* may be difficult to render adequately into English for translators whose training background is from the humanities, as, depending on the field of usage, they may not be able to translate *dirección* as 'address',

'location', 'heading' or 'steering'. This highlights the extent to which problems could be different from difficulties.

On their part, González Davies and Scott-Tennet (2005) present a two-fold view of translation problems. They assert that problems could be local and global, depending on whether they have to do with a particular element of the text or the entire text. This suggests that the focus is usually on linguistic errors in the context of an equivalence-based framework.

On her part, Nord (2005) presents an in-depth analysis of what constitutes translation problem and translation difficulties. On one hand, she argues that 'translation problems' are "objective (or inter-subjective) transfer task, which every translator (irrespective of their level of competence and technical working conditions) has to solve during a particular translation process" (pp. 166-167). For Nord, translation problems could actually be specific to the ST. Such problems include: (1) Language problem, which is divided into terminological, lexical, semantic and stylistic problems; (2) cultural problems, which are due to dissimilar nature of the culture of the ST and that of the TT. These problems have to do with cultural references or culture-specific items, and cultural allusions. i.e., there may be concepts that could not be translated simply because such concepts contain cultural references and allusions that are not quite known in the TL; (3) textual problems, which are due to (mis)understanding of the ST with particular reference to the intra-textual features and extra-textual references. This could border textual references such as cohesion and coherence, and (4) pragmatic problems, which arise due to the dissimilar features of the ST and the translation situation.

On the other hand, Nord (2005) states that 'translation difficulties' are challenges that are subjective to a translator. Meaning such challenges "have to do with the individual translator and the specific working conditions" (p. 167). Nord (2005) asserts that "a particular translation problem, which seems very difficult to a beginner will remain a translation problem, even when the student has learned to cope with it. It can turn into a difficulty again, though, if the translator has to solve it without the necessary technical resources" (p. 167). She identifies four categories of difficulties namely; (1) text-specific difficulties, which have to do with the degree of the

translator's comprehensibility of the ST. One can discover the said comprehensibility by examining the intra-textual factors of the text analysis, while purposely ignoring the translator-dependent criteria. As for the degree of difficulty of a ST, one can measure it by analysing the quantity and complexity of content; (2) translator-dependent difficulties, which have to do with the level of the trainee's knowledge and competence; (3) pragmatic difficulties, which have to do with the nature of the translation task, and (4) technical difficulties, which arise in situations where the translation task presents so many difficulties, which, in comparison with the level of the learner's knowledge and competence, are too complex. One can infer from Nord's argument that 'translation problems' are general to all translators irrespective of language combination, while 'translation difficulties' are specific to individual translators due to challenges that are unique to them.

For Toury (2011), despite stating that the notion of translation problem has a vague terminological status, he still views the concept in three dimensions: (1) the first and most common perspective within the framework of TS is linked with translatability and the relationship between the ST and the TT, especially with regards to language and culture; (2) the second perspective has to do with specific instances of constraints within the translation act, whereby one brings to life the assumed translation, which in itself appears to be a collection of solutions. What is then required is to analyse the translated text by comparing it with the ST in order to detect what actually constituted a problem; (3) the dynamic nature of impediments during the translation process, which involves observing them side by side with the gradual unfolding of the translation exercise.

Adding his views on the debate, Stiegelbauer (2016) also conceptualises the terms 'problem' and 'difficulties' using Nord's (2005) model. He does this in an attempt to identify, classify, analyse and provide solutions to series of translation problems encountered by translators working from English into the Romanian language. For Stiegelbauer (2016), both problems and difficulties are considered the challenges a translator encounters during translation, which have to be dealt with or resolved in order to manage the translation quality. For Stiegelbauer (2016), 'translation difficulties' have to do with the level of the translator's knowledge of the two languages, word meanings, translator's perception, the time setting of the ST vis-à-vis the context

in which it was situated, and to a large extent, ST interpretation based on “the writer’s personality and experience” (p. 56). He maintains that translation difficulties can also occur at the level of comprehension of lexical items, textual structure, the pragmatic language and above all, at the linguistic level, particularly as it borders terminology and semantics of the ST. This shows that translation difficulties are challenges that are unique to the individual translator.

On his part, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) views translation problem in a manner that corresponds to the linguistic problems in Nord’s (2005) model. In other words, he offers a more restrictive view of translation problem “as a limitation connected with language-based aspects of the ST and presenting certain difficulties to the translator” (pp. 95–96). Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) continues that these limitations are mainly due to: (1) structural differences that exist between the SL and the TL, thereby necessitating the translator to employ techniques such as compensation or paraphrasing and, (2) cultural contrast between the SL and the TL, which makes culture-bound expressions or humour difficult to render in the TL.

Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) hypothesises that the idea behind translation problem may not be unconnected with either “a process-orientated perspective within a cognitive approach, or with the text-based perspective typical of a psycholinguistic or didactic approach” (p. 95). On one hand, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) argues that translation problem centres on the ST, which has the specific elements connected with the idea of (un)translatability, and on the other hand, he states that translation problem centres on the translator who has the responsibility of making a decision. This means that translation problem is both “text-based and translator-dependent” (p. 95).

While translation problems may stem from cultural, linguistic, textual or pragmatic factors, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) states that the translator is the one who can determine if a given element constitutes a problem or not. This means that the whole notion is subjective and not static. Thus, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) concludes that providing a list of translation problem within a text appears almost impossible since what constitutes a problem to a given translator may not necessarily be a problem to another. To him, “it may be only feasible to provide some general characteristics of the notion” (p. 95)

In the opinion of Piotrowska (2007) as cited by Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020), the concept of translation problem takes the debate about terminological and conceptual issues in translation to another complex level – the translation unit. The author states that translation problems are related to untranslatability, linguistic competence or language proficiency, translation and language errors, the translation process as well as the complex nature of the process (Piotrowska, 2007, in Rędzioch-Korkuz, 2020). However, Rędzioch-Korkuz (2020) argues that Piotrowska’s discussion of translation problem is rather quite general and inexact perspective. This is because, in addition to the limitations to translation process identified by Piotrowska, there are other numerous factors that are capable of influencing “the whole translation environment in a restrictive way” (Rędzioch-Korkuz, 2020, p. 93).

In all the reflections above, what is important to understand is that both problems and difficulties are the challenges encountered by translators when translating from one language into the other and which need to be solved to ensure the translation is adequate. Despite these reflections, looking at the Granger and Lefer’s (2021) error typology and Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés’ (2023) problem typology, which all consider both translation problem and difficulties the same, this study refers to all challenges encountered by translators as problems.

Methodological considerations

For a more systematic approach, this study takes into account the following methodological considerations:

Study design

The convergent parallel mixed-methods approach was adopted to collect, analyse and integrate both the quantitative and qualitative datasets based on insights from Cresswell (2014) and Hesse-Biber (2010). The two data strands, indeed, can provide better insights into the subject matter and can enhance better credibility to the findings.

Data collection tools

An experiment was carried out using a translation test and Gile's (2004) Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting (IPDR) model. This is a process-based framework used in interpreter and translator training to gather information about trainees' translation problems, decision-making and problem-solving skills, thus promoting reflective practice and improvement.

Participants

The study used 15 research subjects drawn from Year 4 bachelor's students of French at the Benue State University, Makurdi.

Procedure

The study subjects were given a one-paged Press Release written in English to translate into French. Using the IPDR model, they were required to also document the problems they encountered and how they were able to solve the problems.

Criteria for the selection of the source text (ST)

In Nigeria, everyone who is 18 years and above is expected to participate in the electoral process. Therefore, it was believed that all the study subjects must have participated in the electoral process of 2019. The ST was, therefore, selected because it presented a familiar situation. The ST (i.e., press release) had to do with the electoral process, meaning it presented a familiar subject matter and could be translated with more ease. The vocabulary too was supposed to be a familiar one for those who are familiar with the electoral process.

Method used to assess the ST's level of difficulty

Assessing the ST difficulty beforehand can help one plan translation strategically. This is because, certain factors are looked at like ST complexity (sentence structure, vocabulary, technical terms etc), ST ambiguity (potential for multiple interpretations), cultural references (culture-specific concepts) and domain specificity (specialised knowledge needed, e.g., legal, medical). Translators can therefore use

readability metrics or expert evaluations to gauge difficulty. This was exactly what was done to measure the ST difficulty level.

Data analysis

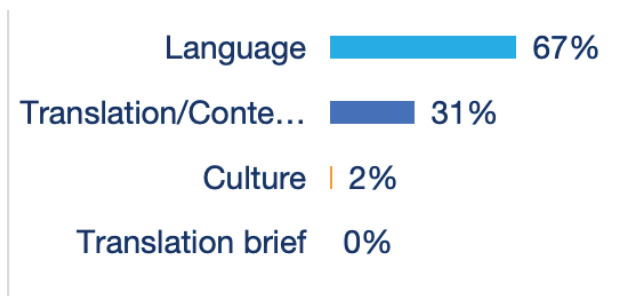
Although the emphasis in this paper is on the problems participants encountered, an error analysis of the participants' translation test was conducted originally to identify their error patterns, using Granger and Lefer's (2021) Translation-oriented Annotation System (TAS). It must, however, be noted that in this article, the error patterns will only be used to confirm participants' IPDRs. This means the quantitative results, for the purpose of this paper, may not be the main focus given the scope of the paper. Regarding the qualitative results, an analysis of the participants' IPDR was conducted using Nvivo 14, which is a good qualitative data analysis software package. This software really facilitated the organisation and sorting of the data in to themes (parent codes) and subthemes (child codes).

Results

As earlier announced, although the aim in this paper is not to focus on the error patterns produced by the study subjects, but to look at the problems participants reported, participants produced 2107 errors distributed as follows: 1413 language errors, representing 67% of the total errors, 644 translation/content errors representing 31%, and 50 culture errors, representing 2%. Based on the TAS error typology used, there was no error recorded under the translation brief subcategory. The results showed participants produced more language errors than the rest of the error categories. Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of this result.

Figure 1:

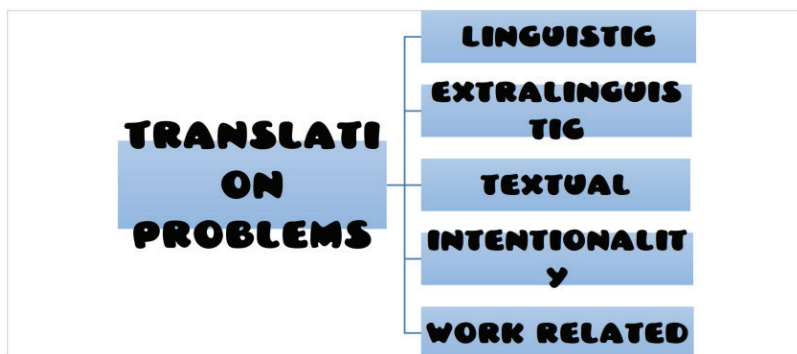
Total errors recorded based on the error analysis



Concerning the qualitative results drawn from the IPDR analysis, several themes emerged. Participants reported linguistic, textual, extralinguistic, and intentionality problems. Indeed, since a deductive approach was employed, guided by the problem typology from Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés (2023), one had to transition to an inductive approach, leading to the emergence of an additional theme – problems with working conditions. This category formed the fifth main theme in the qualitative analysis. See Figure 2.

Figure 2:

Translation problems reported by participants



Out of these main categories, several sub-themes emerged. Linguistically, participants reported issues with deceptive cognates, certain terminologies, compound words, syntax, sentence structures,

genitive cases, tenses, and conjugations. Textual problems included challenges with nominal strings, domain-specific registers, phraseology, and translating ST titles. Extralinguistically, common issues involved translating acronyms and proper nouns, while concerns about intentionality aspect were less prominent. Participants reported difficulties with working conditions, which related to tool availability, and the length of the ST among others, contributing to the overall perception of the translation task as challenging.

Discussion

Linguistic problems

The linguistic problems reported by the participants indicated that their language problems or their deficiencies in language competence had to do with their inappropriate use of the French language itself, including the misuse of grammar, lexis, syntax etc. At the lexical level, these views surfaced mainly in relation to compound words like “Federal government-owned”, “state-run” and “last-minute”. This explains why, in the error analysis, P9 translated “On the media, the mission’s media monitoring found that, positively, the federal government-owned radio, as well as leading commercial broadcasters at national and regional level offered a diversity of views” into French as “Au niveau de média, la mission à decouvert positivement que la poste-radio du gouvernement federale et celles de la nation et regionale, a bien travaillé pour leurs services divers »

There is definitely a linguistic inconcinnity in the way the compound “Federal government-owned” is translated. This incongruity was noticeable in the way other compounds as mentioned above were translated. The ST structure above ought to have been rendered as “Du côté des médias, le contrôle des médias par la mission a constaté que, de manière positive, la radio appartenant au gouvernement fédéral, ainsi que les principaux diffuseurs commerciaux aux niveaux national et régional, offraient une diversité de points de vue.”

Besides, participants reported having problems with translating cognate items. Granger and Lefer’s (2021) description of cognate-related errors indicate that such errors result from students mishandling of formally similar words in the ST or English, which

diverge totally or partially in meaning from the source word. This IPDR segment was confirmed where P8 translated, for instance, “A final report, including recommendations for future elections, will be published approximately two months later” as “Un report final inclut les recommandations pour les futures élections sera publié à peu près deux mois plus tard”. While ‘report’ in the ST relate to details of an event or incident, in French ‘report’ means a different thing despite the formal similarity. In French, ‘report’ refers to ‘postponement’. Using the same spelling in the TT, thus, led to mistranslation, thereby compromising the purpose of the translation. The participant would have rendered the ST fragment as “Un rapport final, comprenant des recommandations pour les futures élections, sera publié environ deux mois plus tard.”.

At the syntactical level, some participants expressed concerns over the translation of genitive cases, sentence structure and conjugations. For genitive cases, many linguists, including Carlier and Verstraete (2013) emphasise that the genitive case is a component of the language case system, representing a formal category of nouns or pronouns that indicates possession, measurement, association, or dependency relationships with other units. Indeed, some participants went beyond expressing their frustration on transfer of genitive cases into French but highlighted the fact that trying to render three or more complementary words like ‘Mission’s preliminary statement’, “INEC’s operation” and “the mission’s media monitoring” from English to French was a problem for them. It appears the participants were really fixated on the use of inflected genitive (--’s) and did not bother to remember the of-construction, which one could easily turn into French using ‘de’ hence some even went ahead to render, for example, “INEC’s operation” into French as “INEC’s opération” instead of “le fonctionnement de la CENI”.

Extralinguistic problems

Most participants reported extralinguistic issues, with concerns mainly focused on the translation of acronyms and proper nouns. Participants had problems with translating acronyms such as ‘INEC’, ‘EU’ and ‘EU EOM’. This was confirmed in the error analysis where P2 translated “INEC operated in a difficult environment” as “INEC a opéré dans un environnement difficile” instead of “la CENI a fonctionné

dans un environnement difficile” or “les activités de la CENI se sont déroulées dans un context difficile”.

Notably, Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés (2023) consider extralinguistic problems challenges due to culture-specific habits or cultural differences, aspects of the translator’s knowledge about the world and thematic aspects in specialised areas such as legal, economic technical domains etc, (i.e., specialised concepts). Extralinguistic problems were, therefore, triggered where participants failed to include explanations of realia or cultural concepts which may not be understood by the target audience or where they translated untranslatable items or did not translate translatable items. In the case of ‘INEC’, this was a translatable item that ought to have been rendered into French as ‘la CENI’ (i.e., La commission électorale nationale indépendante). Conversely, some participants translated “Nigerian Television Authority” as “l’Autorité du télévision Nigerienne”. This ST fragment was actually not supposed to have been translated. Translating it rather compromised the quality of the translation.

Textual problems

The majority of participants faced textual challenges in the translation task, particularly struggling with nominal strings, juxtaposed determiners, domain-specific registers, phraseological issues, and titles. In the context of juxtaposed determiners or nominal strings, the issue arises from participants’ difficulties in systematically arranging these elements from the source text (ST) into the target text (TT), which reflects a problem of intraphrasal incohesion. Hurtado Albir and Rodríguez-Inés (2023) regard such intraphrasal inconcinnity as a textual issue, aligning with Delisle’s (2013) assertion that incohesive lexical relationships within a text disrupt the logical flow of ideas. Delisle further emphasises that the absence of explicit logical connections within noun strings complicates the decoding of their semantic units, leading to awkward translations. Participants reported they had challenges translating fragments of the ST with many nominal determiners or adjectives qualifying a single noun such as “leading commercial broadcasters”, “Their coordinated independent observation” and “Local commercial radio stations” as well as “European union election observation mission”.

These problems were confirmed in the error analysis under the content transfer category. In many parts of the ST where there were juxtaposed determiners, the participants ended up with nonsense structures partly due to their translation and linguistic incompetence. For examples, P9 translated “The European Union Election Observation Mission” as “L’Union Europeenne de la mission observation des elections Nigerianes” instead of “La mission d’observation électorale de l’Union européenne”. Although this result represented a very negative outcome of the evaluation of the participants’ translation, it goes to show the extent to which the participants not just lack translation competence but lack general linguistic proficiency.

Intentionality problems

Intentionality problems are challenges related to the translator’s inability to grasp the information in the ST due to intertextuality (i.e., one text’s dependency on a different text), speech act (i.e., the intended action of an utterance (stating, telling, insisting), presupposition (i.e., knowledge shared by the sender and receiver), implicatures (i.e., implicit elements conveyed in a text from which receivers infer meanings) (Hurtado Albir & Rodríguez-Inés, 2023). In the analysis, intentionality problems were identified by most participants, revealing an interconnection with various other themes. Specifically, issues arose regarding comprehension of certain structures in the source text (ST). Indeed, most participants reported difficulties in understanding the ST information, leading to concerns about the adequacy of their translations. Some participants reported that they could not understand exactly the interconnection of the numerous nominal strings or juxtaposed determiners used in the ST and this gave the difficulties in translating. This explains why there were many nonsense errors related to portions with nominal strings and the likes.

Problems related to work conditions

Some participants’ reports highlighted issues not only with the transfer of ST content and difficulties in manipulating the French language but also raised concerns about the general working conditions during the task such as general task difficulty, the nature of translation tools, ST length, and the availability of materials. Indeed, participants

expressed a common concern about the difficulty of the task, which led to various errors. Many found the requirement to simultaneously take a translation test and write a report problematic. Notably, P1 noted that report writing was time-consuming, making it difficult to address all issues during the challenging test. P9 acknowledged the translation difficulty but completed it out of obligation, remarking that it did not meet expectations. Although the problems related to work condition were not envisaged in the problem typology adopted, which means they may not be translation problems per se, it is crucial to highlight that this theme revealed a lot, including the fact that many translation errors discovered in the error analysis such as omission and deliberate leaving of the ST items untranslated in the TT were due to the challenges related to the condition under which the participants were working.

6. Conclusion

It is crucial to conclude that this study highlighted the fact that translation is a complex endeavour, but it is particularly challenging for novice translators. Many scholars in TS corroborate this fact, including Campbell, Delisle, and Kiraly, highlighting that although these translation problems can affect translators working in all directions, the situation becomes worse when one is working from a familiar language (L1) to a less familiar one (L2), especially without adequate translation competence (TC). In this article, one sought to identify specific areas where translators encounter difficulties by focusing on evidence-based research. Findings showed translator trainees are prone to have linguistic, extralinguistic, textual and intentionality-related problems as well as problems related to work conditions. Findings also showed translation problems can completely jeopardise the translation product if not handled correctly. In other words, there are many ways by which translation problems can compromise the intended purpose of the translation or the translation quality. These include miscommunication, cultural faux pas, loss of tone and inconsistencies etc. If translators fail to grasp the source text nuances, the message can get lost in the translation. Regarding the cultural faux pas, one can say missing cultural references can actually lead to awkward or offensive translations. Concerning the loss of tone or intent, problems encountered during translation might make translators not to convey the original tone or intent of the ST, thereby

changing how the message is delivered to the target audience. Besides, inconsistent terminology or style can make the translation look messy. All these can impact the quality, accuracy and overall effectiveness of a translated text. It is therefore pertinent to emphasise the critical need for targeted pedagogical intervention during translation training, not only to improve the students' language proficiency but also to address the broader implications of accurate translation in international relations and commerce. By fostering a more robust translation education framework, quality of translation services will be improved across different settings. Research is still needed to further explore translation competence and the challenges faced by students especially in settings like Nigeria, ultimately contributing to the development of effective educational strategies in the field of Translation Studies.

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