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Training citizen translators: design and delivery of bespoke training on the fundamentals of translation for New Zealand Red Cross

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Abstract:

Translators and interpreters have been shown to play an important role in supporting the activities of NGOs involved in crisis communication scenarios. However, there is little evidence of whether standardized training materials or technological assistance are required by or would be beneficial to quickly recruited ‘citizen translators’ working in these environments. This article will present a study of the design, delivery, and preliminary evaluation of a set of training materials developed for use in a citizen translation project run by New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) with the support of the EU H2020-funded International Network on Crisis Translation (INTERACT). The article describes the training materials and discusses the epistemological and didactic issues that were faced in their design and delivery. Findings from the article will be of interest to those seeking to understand citizen translation and issues involved in working with an NGO on translator training.

Keywords:

NGOs; citizen translators; translation pedagogy; New Zealand Red Cross; International Network on Crisis Translation (INTERACT); public service translation; community translation

Background to project

The case study on which this article is based arose out of an existing research collaboration between NZRC and the EU H2020-funded INTERACT network. The authors and other research members of INTERACT were approached by NZRC during a period of fieldwork in New Zealand for assistance with a translation project that was to begin in August 2017. Coordinated by an NZRC community development worker (henceforth referred to as

“coordinator”), the translation project had been commissioned by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) for delivery within 10 weeks. The commission entailed the multilingual translation of an earthquake planning guide that had been developed in English by WREMO. The budget for the project was limited; however, translators would receive compensation for their work. Translators liaised directly with the NZRC officer who coordinated the project. This coordinator did not have expertise in translation or in management of multilingual translation projects; hence, INTERACT members were consulted to ensure that good practices for translation quality control would be considered to achieve the best results within the project.

The project had to involve culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in the Wellington Region of New Zealand. NZRC had been tasked by WREMO to use its network to contact speakers of minority languages in the local communities with very good levels of English. These bilinguals would be paid to translate into their (often rare) languages a leaflet intended to inspire preventative strategies for enhancing households’ resilience to the natural hazards likely to occur in the Wellington Region. Those who volunteered for the project were often active voices within their own communities, and their bilingual skills motivated them to join the project. The higher aim of this project was to support the development of readiness to natural hazards at a time in which no major natural disaster was underway, but in which the threat remained high.

The 2010/2011 Canterbury Earthquakes revealed difficulties in crisis communication between local authorities and CALD communities in and around Christchurch (see Wylie 2012). In addition, NZRC’s policy is to facilitate community-based outreach in the context of national emergency planning (National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015, 49). Therefore, authorities in the Wellington Region as well as NZRC were eager to learn from the Christchurch experience and were looking for a project that could be used to

develop community resilience among their own CALD communities. Translation was a pillar of the resilience-building plan, which involved some 45 citizen translators working with a total of 17 languages in frequent use by CALD communities in the Wellington Region. They included well-resourced languages such as Arabic, Spanish, or Chinese as well as languages with more limited resources such as Burmese, Samoan, or Te Reo Māori. In the early phase of collaboration with INTERACT members, NZRC sought advice on translation issues in general and on the process of engaging with the relevant communities for this translation task in particular. In response, we in the INTERACT team designed a fast-track, 90-minute introductory citizen translation course in response to NZRC's needs. Focused on core concepts – the fundamentals that need to be considered when translating texts – we delivered its first iteration. The training materials were then made available to NZRC, and the NZRC project coordinator delivered the training for the remainder of the citizen translators.

To some extent, the translation project represented a textbook example of community translation, whereby bilingual speakers of minority languages or deprived groups offer translation services to enable their own communities to communicate with the main language adopted by the main institutions (see Taibi 2011; Valero Garcés 2014). As it implies recognition that “there are social groups that do not have (an appropriate level of) access to information, participation and services due to language barriers” (Taibi 2017, loc 460), quality community translation is a first step to reduce this barrier. However, the relationship between translators and institutions may be more ephemeral and focused on risk reduction, as in the case of this project; hence, we use here ‘citizen translation’ and ‘citizen translators’ to describe it. Citizen Translation is defined as translation practice conducted, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes by people who are volunteered, by an individual, or a community of individuals who may be trained or untrained linguists. The translational activity is conducted with the assumption of achieving a common good and may be paid or unpaid. The term

Citizen Translator, in turn, refers to a person who participates in Citizen Translation (INTERACT 2017).

The societal demands for information in this project were specific to the hazards of New Zealand, as the document to be translated would assist communities to mitigate risks from local natural hazards (Schneider 2017) and the act of translation would help integrate CALD populations into New Zealand's national plans for community-focused resilience. Hence the content of the training materials designed for this project is context-dependent: the points that the trainee citizen translators had to consider when translating are drawn from a context-specific source text. However, we present below our rationale for designing the course materials as non-language specific and adjustable to other crisis scenarios, in which training of citizen translators can be used to mitigate risks to multilingual communities.

Description of course and its design

The 90-minute course introduces basic principles of translation and suggests a workflow for a project of this nature so that citizen translators can combine newly-acquired translation knowledge with their existing language skills in order to translate more easily and effectively. Designed for a non-homogenous set of learners, we state from the outset of the course that it is limited in scope and is not intended to train participants to become professional translators. The scope is limited to those people with language ability who wish to help their communities with a translation project in a crisis setting (e.g., following an earthquake, the widespread outbreak of a disease, or a mass migration) and want to understand effective techniques to pursue this goal. We suggest that, if participants combine their existing language skills with basic principles of translating, the translation project should be easier for the citizen translators and the final translations should achieve better results. Examples are used throughout the course and these are taken from the WREMO Earthquake Planning

Guide. The INTERACT team discussed the English source text with the institutional commissioner prior to commencing the translation project, and the commissioner accepted to revise some of the text's culture-specific difficulties. Thus, this preliminary work avoided what Taibi (2017, loc. 534) sees as a common pitfall in that "public service texts that need translating are often written with a mono-cultural audience in mind and with assumptions of shared knowledge that are far above what can be found on the ground". In this instance, comments from the INTERACT team, relayed by NZRC, to the text producer(s) were taken on board and the training on the English text could commence.

We had no choice in the course but to avoid prescriptive translation solutions, instructions, and guidelines because we did not speak the target languages that the participants would use, nor were we sure of all the target languages that would be involved in the final project. For these reasons, we proposed general, language-independent questions and issues for the participants to consider when translating. We categorized these questions and issues across a series of fundamental principles organized in a deliberate sequence: (1) Citizen translation as a process; (2) Effective writing; (3) Specialized language; (4) Identifying translation 'rich points'; (5) Doing background research; (6) Developing revision techniques; (7) Thinking about re-usability; (8) Considering translation technology. These principles are explained in the following sections. An important caveat should be mentioned: the training had a strict time limit, and the INTERACT team would meet the trainees for only one 90-minute training session; our greatest struggle was to decide the principles to highlight and the ones to sacrifice. The selection of eight principles was time-bound, and the figure does not represent our pedagogical or personal views on which concepts should be considered as the fundamentals of translation.¹

¹ The area is richly debated. The complexity of defining such fundamentals is attested to in high level projects such as the European Society for Translation Studies' *International Doctorate in Translation Studies: Foundation Document* (EST 2015), focused on doctoral competences for those who are likely to become

Lesson 1: Citizen translation as a process

In developing these materials, we relied on our own expertise in syllabus and curriculum design from a socio-constructivist perspective (Kiraly 2000). We intended to develop high-level understanding of translation problems by building on the participants' existing linguistic skillsets. The content is designed to set up key issues on which we wish participants in the course to focus. The first lesson provides a tentative and jargon-free definition of translation. The definition proposed is inspired by a variety of concepts taken from established discussions of translation theory, such as Pym (2014), Nord (2014) or more recently House (2017). Furthermore, with the caveat that we perceive translation acts as very complex, as the project had a very clear function to perform, we found that more functionalist views of translation aided us to create a coherent set of materials, whereby the purpose-driven explanation of translation principles partially compensated for some of the simplifications that we (painfully) had to introduce in our materials. Thus, we suggest that translation should be seen by trainee citizen translators as an action that transforms the 'start text' into a different text that we call the 'translated text'. This 'translated text' should 'carry over' the same 'message' that is in the 'start text', but should express it in a way that is appropriate for the participant's language and culture. We ask participants to imagine that, in 'carrying over the message', a 'process of transformation' occurs and, therefore, to feel free to change the expressions, the way the text looks, and the way the text sounds, as long as the key ideas in the 'start text' remain in the 'translated text', and as long as the 'purpose' of the 'translated text' remains the same as the 'purpose' of the 'start text'. A criticism of this definition could be that it is not entirely epistemologically consistent. While we adopt a highly functionally-oriented definition of translation – the closest perspective is perhaps Nord's view of function

academic translator trainers, curriculum-focused publications (e.g. Kelly 2005), and projects such as the European Masters in Translation to establish threshold competences to develop in academic graduates of translation.

and loyalty (Nord 2002, 2016) – we could be criticized for ‘cherry picking’ from a variety of perspectives in translation theory. Our counterargument is that we aimed for a definition comprised of accessible and intuitive terms from existing influential scholarly thought that would allow for understanding without detailed explanation and to which our citizen translators would be able to relate in general language. The reduction of terminology to immediately self-explanatory terms takes into account another pedagogical principle: as the vehicular language of our materials was English, and as the learners’ degree of linguistic competence was unknown, we intended to make the content adequate for the audience. The lesson goes on to introduce the workflow that we suggest following in a citizen translation project:

1. Read the start text;
2. Underline the challenging parts (from interactional linguistics, we borrow the term “rich points”, Agar 1994, as applied to translation, see discussion in Munday 2012);
3. Start translating;
4. Check the translated text;
5. Review the translated text;
6. Check if people can understand the translated text without problems.

We suggest that citizen translation works best when several people are involved in the process of carrying out this work, so we advise dividing these activities among people playing different roles; a volunteer translator, a volunteer reviewer, a volunteer community liaison (a tripartite system as in the standards ISO 17100:2015 and previously in BSEN-15038). We do this to promote a division of labour and responsibility, bearing in mind that a crisis setting is often one of limited resources. However, supporting the principle of

developing enhanced readiness to natural hazards, the project thus represented an opportunity to create human resources for CALD communities to rely on in future crises. We wished to devise a process that would incorporate multiple opportunities for quality control and that would encourage a consensus-based approach to problem solving in the process of translating. In addition, we wanted to ensure that the way in which the text would function for the end user would act as the ultimate arbiter of translation strategy and procedure adopted during the process.

We focus on several key ideas in the basic theoretical positions that we ask participants to adopt in a citizen translation project. Based on previous work on translation in disaster and crisis settings (Cadwell and O'Brien 2016; O'Brien and Cadwell 2017), we encourage participants to consider the expression of a message not just in a linguistic context but also in an appropriate cultural, emotionally intense, and resource-constrained context. We underline that people involved in the citizen translation process should be attentive readers and we ask participants to focus on potential information loss, reminding them that only they as the translator, reviewer, or liaison will have access to both the start text and translated text. As discussed later, this acts as a first step intended to build implicit notions of accuracy in rendering. Finally, we encourage participants to consider the local circumstances of their own translation projects. We recognize that the workflow and role allocation suggested by us may not be the most appropriate for them, but that the principles and considerations outlined in the lesson should be considered and rendered in a project based on local considerations. It was essential to describe one possible workflow typology to enable NZRC to adopt a standard approach across all 17 languages because there was no way to monitor the final quality of the outputs in a number of languages aside from the consensus-based assessment of quality recommended by us.

Local circumstances did, indeed, impose some alterations on the initial process devised for this project. NZRC ensured three people would be involved to translate, revise, and approve the target text in many cases. This was not possible for all language combinations, though. In addition, while NZRC ran one further training session on crisis translation for 30 more citizen translators following initial delivery by us, individual meetings between the coordinator and some translators were required to brief those translators in language combinations that faced more difficulties in the recruiting process. Furthermore, the priority for WREMO in the project was the process of community involvement to increase awareness of and resilience to disaster hazards rather than the translation of the preparedness document, hence the deadline for submission of the full multilingual project was postponed twice and work on three languages was still ongoing at the time of writing (February 2018).

Lesson 2: Effective writing

This lesson is designed to stimulate citizen translators' thinking about methods for writing effectively in their own languages. It differentiates between source language skills for understanding, which we assume participants to be focused on, and target language skills for rendering, which we suspect might be more easily neglected by participants. For this reason, and based on our overall Nordin approach, we pose three broad questions to encourage participants to consider the textual features that would create an effective text of the type under consideration in their languages and cultures:

- What does such a text look like?
- What does such a text sound like?
- What does the reader expect of such a text?

We pose these questions so that citizen translators will consider issues such as textual norms and conventions in the target language and culture. We encourage participants to consider, for instance, information loading, sentence and paragraph length, writing direction, register,

stylistic devices such as repetition and rhetoric, use of voice, and forms of address for the reader. At the same time, we recognize that these specific questions may not deal with the issues of concern for the target languages of potential participants.

Another major principle in the materials is reflective practice (Kelly 2005, Chapter 3; Federici 2010). The lesson described here illustrates that, working under pressure, we relied on a self-reflective approach to teaching as both a functional tool (Nord-based) and a cognitive tool in the ways in which Kolb's experiential learning (Kolb 2014) describes the foundation of cumulative learning, which embeds knowledge in self-aware behaviours to *learn* and *improve* one's own knowledge through practice.

Lesson 3: Specialized language and Lesson 4: Identifying translation 'rich points'

The next two lessons in the course are designed to address particular challenges that a citizen translator may face. We focus on the challenges that could arise from terminology, language, culture, and translator experience and ability, and we remind participants to consider "rich points" (Agar 1994; Munday 2012) not only from the perspective of understanding the source text but also from the perspective of rendering an effective target text.

With respect to terminology (labelled by us 'specialized language' in the course), we warn that general words can be used by specialists in a variety of areas of knowledge and in a variety of ways within and between those areas. We rely heavily on examples from the WREMO Earthquake Planning Guide accompanying the course to mitigate the relative complexity of the lesson contents. As mentioned previously, the limitations of relying on English as the vehicular language of instruction and the one to use for illustration dictated many of our didactic choices. We hypothesized that the translation of terminology would be particularly problematic for translators with limited training, bearing in mind that it is challenging for highly-trained professionals (e.g., Bowker 2015). Thus, we warn participants that it is easy to be 'tricked' when translating terminology and that general language may

need to be understood differently in specialized contexts. We encourage citizen translators to devote adequate time and resources in the translation project to background research, especially by identifying terminology and translation rich points from the outset. With respect to language and culture, the lesson aims to steer participants away from a notion of translation as transfer of one-to-one lexical equivalents by prompting students to consider the appropriate form of language when creating a target text – citing examples such as consideration of the grammatical mood, rhyming devices, or intertextual references – or reminding them to consider cultural differences and cultural gaps.

Overall, this lesson introduces fundamental but not complete socio-linguistic perspectives on translation (see summary in Federici 2018), as principles of context-driven communication (see Hatim and Mason 1990/2014). Without using an explicitly Hallidayan model of communication, we describe the challenges of using *effective expression* for the audience and the message.

Lesson 5: Doing background research

This lesson works from the premise that there is rarely one solution to a translation problem and that it is the job of a translator to choose the optimal solution for the circumstances in which they are operating. Background research will help the translator to make and justify these choices, and this justification can be especially useful in a distributed translation network such as the model for citizen translation suggested in the course. Without full prior knowledge of the language profiles of those who would participate in the training, we could not assume the existence of parallel texts or bilingual corpora in some language combinations, especially rare ones. Hence, we explain in the lesson that background research can be done by reading comparable documents in one's own language (e.g., at a library, community centre, health centre), by using dictionaries or existing glossaries, or by asking acquaintances within one's language community. The guiding principles suggested for

carrying out background research are to focus on evaluating the reliability of the sources used and to remember that the amount of background research should be appropriate to the time and other resources available. Once again, a lack of knowledge of the type of texts that would be used for research by trainee citizen translators prevented us from offering prescriptive advice on how to determine source reliability. Rather, we encourage trainees to consider issues of trust, access, and expert opinion through self-reflective exercises in the lesson.

Lesson 6: Developing revision techniques

This lesson asks participants to consider the importance of revision to the citizen translation process and helps participants to develop revision techniques. It explains to participants the difference between bilingual and monolingual review (adapting and simplifying from Mossop 2014). It underlines that revision differs from retranslation, that revision should not be based on personal preferences, and that revision requires attentive reading. We define revision as a set of checks done at first bilingually and then monolingually to ensure that the translated text will function effectively for the final reader. The dimensions to be checked comprise completeness, effort to understand a section of text, respect for rules of the target language, respect for the features of similar texts, and effectiveness of the expressions chosen to carry over the message of the start text. We support this notion of revision with practical activities, such as the five-minute revision of 100 words of modified source text, to raise awareness of both time constraints and error-diagnostic techniques. In addition, the lesson provides advice on making the process of revision by one individual of another individual's work easier for both parties. Specifically, it recommends using revision time effectively, archiving revised versions, maintaining a communicative and collaborative spirit between parties, and taking care to avoid information loss. When discussing the need for archiving revised and approved translations, the natural consequence was to introduce the concept of re-usability for the benefit of future projects.

Lesson 7: Thinking about re-usability and Lesson 8: Considering translation technology

In fact, in the last two lessons, we ask participants to think about ways in which they can systematically and consistently record information that they have translated – especially, effective translation choices that have been made, revised, and then checked with the community – so that these translation choices can be leveraged again in future projects. This schematic approach allowed us to introduce core notions of translation technologies, even though there was no scope in this type of training to include them and despite the fact that there was no possibility to assess whether appropriate technologies would be available in the language combinations required by the project. Moreover, unable to ascertain in advance whether all language combinations of the whole cohort of citizen translators would have a written alphabet or an agreed pictographic representation of the language phonology, we decided to exclude references to tools for collaborative text production and knowledge management, but we will consider adding a lesson on this in future iterations and for modular use in the self-study version of these materials. Hence, we recommend the use of simple spreadsheets to store information based on the fact that this file format could allow the information to be exported to translation technologies in their current and future project workflows. We introduce participants to two particular translation technologies – machine translation and translation memories – in an accessible manner and prompt participants to consider the pros and cons of using each in their projects. The technological discourse normally associated with a pedagogically optimal situation (academic or professional training) has to be foregrounded by explicitly useful translation technologies in the target languages; an important question remains for this course regarding the possibility of developing streamlined and efficient additions to the content with more extensive references to translation technologies. The answer to this question entirely depends on the extent to

which the training should be non-language dependent and the amount of advance notice that could be given prior to delivery.

Description of course delivery

The content was delivered in the first instance by us at a 90-minute, face-to-face session held in Wellington with nine members of CALD communities in the Wellington Region. We framed this session as a ‘Translation 101’ designed to support participants in this project and provide them with preliminary, basic skills that could be further developed in future.

Participants in the first session included speakers of Arabic, Assyrian, Somali, Spanish, and Burmese. Two of these participants had previous translation experience and, of these two, one was a translator by profession. Several participants had done ad hoc translations for NZRC in the past for community social events, but the translation of the earthquake planning guide was the first formal citizen translation project.

Overall, participants positively evaluated the training. In particular, we drew two points of reassurance from this feedback: the topics covered were necessary points for all participants, and the professional translator found that our materials were not patronizing and were informative for experienced translators as well. The two main negative criticisms we received did not surprise us: the session was too short, and we did not explicitly introduce translator ethics.

As mentioned previously, the first Translation 101 session was followed up by a subsequent session run by the NZRC project coordinator who had attended the initial training using the same materials. Then, these initial training materials were supplemented by us with the delivery to NZRC of a series of PowerPoint slides voiced with audio commentary totalling approximately 50 minutes of audio instruction.

In the following section we present our reflections on the limitations of the training materials designed and delivered in this project.

Recognized limitations

In her “Planning and Writing Objectives/Outcomes” Kelly (2005, Chapter 2) provides one of the most comprehensive sets of overarching principles to develop translator trainer curricula in academic contexts. These principles informed our design and delivery of the course, as we devised learning objectives (LO) that steered the selection of fundamental principles and how we intended to pursue these LOs. Furthermore, the authors have experience of training translators in academic contexts and hold professional experience as translators. In developing the materials, then, we drew from our experience of curriculum and syllabus design and applied principles of competence-based learning to select our topics.

Nevertheless, early in the design process, it became evident that designing a solid yet intensive course to cater for NZRC training needs would require us to shift our perspective towards a reductionist approach. Only a few minimal and essential concepts could be profitably introduced by us directly and by the NZRC personnel who later delivered training using our materials. This forced us to make substantial reductions and we became immediately aware of difficult exclusions. As trainers, we felt challenged by certain ethical issues that affected our work at three levels: instrumental, pedagogical, and social.

From a didactic point of view, a training course such as this should be accompanied by reading materials and exercises that would enable participants to consolidate their learning. Consolidation in this manner was not possible in the setting we had available. Instead, the *collaborative elements* of the tripartite workflow – especially, knowing a reviser will assess one’s work and the experiential learning arising out of dialogue between the three parties – were expected to create the premises for natural self-criticism to emerge. This expectation

was, of course, only aspirational as the community dynamics and the operational dynamics of the project were not monitored by us after the training was delivered. For instance, were this course to be an integral part of several complementary and interrelated courses in an academic setting, several resources in English would be available (introductory, Munday 2016; critical, Pym 2014; historical-synoptic, House 2017), yet none of these texts would be suitable for short, intensive, hands-on courses. Nevertheless, these are common readings in English-language academic training courses in translation studies, and their internal structures indeed influenced our selection of the fundamental principles to introduce in the course.

In the translation process described, we felt that we were omitting very important social principles in a professional context, such as the principle of *attribution*. Many debates have focused on the social position of translators and the need for the market and commissioners to enable translators to retain all or part of their translation in terms of intellectual property (a very complex area to discuss also in relation to translation technologies). As we omitted it, we knew that we were in turn omitting its natural consequence: the concept of accountability to the readers and commissioner by the translator and the responsibility for the content (see Baker 2011, 274-99). We were omitting discussion of the complex relationship between good renderings (which we termed ‘effectiveness of expression’), accuracy of rendering, and translation quality. Our conviction is that these areas must be added to future iterations of training through these materials, but also that the training needs to be longer to avoid any cognitive overload on learners (who are likely to attend the training after a full day of work, as was the case for the citizen translators in Wellington).

Among the many concepts we had to sacrifice to time constraints, we must provide a rationale for the omission of two in particular: a definition of accuracy and discussion of

translation ethics. We *resented* having to exclude discussion of these two aspects, and a time constraint was only one of the considerations for their exclusion.

We worked extensively on the notion of effectiveness and provided numerous techniques to ensure quality-driven textual, terminological, and content solutions, instead of discussing definitions and examples of *accuracy*. These were all target-language oriented approaches to translating that emphasized how understanding of the emergency preparedness message was to be paramount to all other considerations. The practical examples and their discussion focused on accurate and complete translation as a way of achieving this understanding. We adopted a pragmatic solution, which aligns to a certain degree with Kelly's (2017) reflections on curriculum design for community translation: we stressed effective communication as a consensus-based approach to testing how the text was understood by the community receiving the text. From a positive outlook, this approach resembles the aim of empowering communities, which Taibi (2011, 224) describes as part of public service translation (PST), in as much as "PST services are normally needed or offered in multilingual/multicultural community situations where migrants, refugees, ethnic minorities, or disempowered groups in societies do not have access to texts written in the official language(s)".

It is an understatement to say that we were dissatisfied by our workaround on accuracy, as it has too many uncontrollable consequences (e.g., the power-based consensus within the receiving community, disempowerment of the trainee translators, shifting of a sense of responsibility, limiting awareness of the discourse that could lead to the consensus).

However, we took the view that other approaches would equally pose concerns when training had to be intensive. Having had recourse to practical ways of describing accuracy, we felt that the practice-based approach could avoid that the text would feel imposed top-down. Whilst we avoided language combinations that could be perceived as highly-resourced to provide illustrations to prepare them for a project in which it was crucial to serve many

lesser-translated language combinations, we concluded that also in practical terms, the interrelation between accuracy and quality of translation is better explained when working with illustrations from specific language combinations. In this context, in which English had a clearly dominant position, we avoided backtranslations of examples for similar reasons: the unknown levels of proficiency in English among the participants (on the day and for the use of the materials independently from us) might have led to misunderstandings of the role of backtranslations (i.e., solutions being accurate and correct only when the English backtranslation shows so), thus undermining the principle of empowering the communities, which was a strong objective for the commissioner. The realization of power distance, especially when dealing with texts related to risk reduction, underpinned our approach to avoid that “the difference between the mainstream audience and the users of PST is not only linguistic, but also socioeconomic, cultural, and educational” (Taibi 2011, 224). It could be argued that the comparison with PST finishes here, as citizen translators involved in the training belonged to their communities and the process was not only of empowerment for their communities but also of integration, by gaining access to information *effectively communicated* to them in their own language(s).

The principle of accuracy of rendering was spread across several other fundamentals, such as fluency of rendering, acceptability of target-text, and function-oriented translation. These fundamentals were undeniably simplified, yet significant time was dedicated to their role in achieving results in the whole process of translation through our approach of embedding accuracy in a practical manner. Nevertheless, it became evident early on for us that this part of the training needs further expansion. Our immediate priority in revising the materials lies in finding a much-broader *applicable* and *actionable* definition of accuracy for complete beginners that would inform citizen translators of the relationship between a readable rendering and a fully adequate, complete, and readable rendering. The most significant

question that emerges is what basic or complex metrics² of quality assurance, accreditation systems, and debates on accuracy can be taught in a text-specific context, in relation to linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal accuracy in a non-language specific setting?

Another significant element of participant feedback after our first iteration of the training focused on the absence of any explicit mention of translator ethics in the 90-minute training session. Our approach was to attempt to explain principles of fair collaborative work, accountability, responsibility, and quality-assurance in the practical suggestions delivered to the participants. We discussed whether or not to include an explicit discussion of ethics as one of the fundamental dimensions of translating. Instead, we decided to suggest *ethical* ways of translating by instrumentally focusing on translator behaviour that can be described as aligned with the discourse in the discipline (House 2015, 2017; Drugan 2013). At a first glance, our training is distant from best-practice suggestions for a curriculum that extensively and explicitly focus on ethics (Drugan and Megone 2011, Baker 2011) – which was applied by Federici to the curriculum design of the EMT MA in Translation Studies at Durham University, for which he also designed the MELA43315: Translation Ethics module that ran from 2010-11 and 2015-16.³ We perceived the omission of translator ethics as a limitation in our training, but we took a risk of implicitly delivering concepts of ethical value in developing a *modus operandi* for citizen translators. We believe now that additional time is required to include translator ethics and notions of codes of conduct as a separate topic in the course.

² For instance, the Multidimensional Quality Metrics (MQM) Framework suggests that “[w]ith MQM you can check the translation quality issues that matter to you, in as much or as little detail as is needed. MQM supports both quick, high-level, ‘holistic’ evaluation that focuses on entire texts and detailed ‘analytic’ evaluation that identifies specific problems in text.” The MQM has been considered as potentially attractive to translation novices to assess quality (see Mariana, Cox, and Melby 2015), yet it remains difficult to be introduced as a five-minute topic.

³ See

https://www.dur.ac.uk/postgraduate/modules/archive/module_description/?year=2010&module_code=MELA43315, accessed 12 December 2017.

According to Taibi (2006, 2011), the very few empirical studies carried out to assess the quality achieved by PST – which sampled predominantly translators in Spain, working within the Spanish-Arabic language combinations – indicate that PTS translation output tends to be difficult to read by the target language audiences. Recent research (Taibi 2017) also suggests that too few empirical studies have been carried out to have a broader picture to confirm this perception. In the training, we were very concerned with notions of readability, which we tried to define with examples in relation to varying degrees of literacy in the target-language audiences. As we would not access nor assess the translations, we wanted to ensure that citizen translators were introduced in the training to a notion of translation for a target audience – in the functionalist approach described above – that would equip them with essential awareness to consider gender, age, and literacy issues. Our ethical concern was that, by defining effective writing as a skill for the translation process, we would encourage citizen translators to consider ‘readability’ (for instance, Burns and Kim 2011) and not ‘appropriateness’ of their solution as a priority.

At a pedagogical level, the content was designed through a critical (and incomplete) selection of essential notions that forced us to prioritize concepts of translation among many options. In the selection, we could elicit the objectives of the training. However, we could not formulate these as learning outcomes, as the project structure and the language combinations did not allow us to assess their acquisition. In academic settings we accept as forms of best practice an alignment between the intended learning outcomes and the assessment that verifies degrees of attainment. Nevertheless, though we could not link learning outcomes to specific forms of assessment in this course, this does not mean that it would be impossible to do so in a non-language specific context in more far-reaching forms of training of citizen translators. We share Kelly’s pedagogical ethos that there is always “the need for clearly expressed outcomes, which should be linked to societal demand, including professional

benchmarking[...]” (2017, loc. 813), and that this need “has been a major pillar of translator education for many decades, and is now central to competence-based curricular design around the world” (2017, loc. 813). However, we had no way of assessing learning in this project. The materials we designed could not take Kelly’s high-level suggestion that training for community translation should be embedded in university-based training – from courses within degrees to standalone options. Having said that, we did espouse a practical approach that was driven by an attempt to develop transferrable skills and competences, as the NZRC and WREMO translation project itself reflected societal demands. We expected the course to enable citizen translators to recognize the difference between being bilingual and translating. Furthermore, our training responded to an immediate social demand in one of the contexts in which collaboration between institutions and community translators is best regulated:

The best single guide to translation of official documents is from the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters [NZSTI], the NZSTI Guidelines for the Translation of Official and Legal Documents (2005)⁴, which sets out the steps to follow through all stages of translation and presentation.

(Taibi and Ozolins 2016, 155)

Yet, the fact that the New Zealand context is well regulated does not entail that forms of professional and community translations are always possible in the same manner; different needs, including those of educating communities to specific responses in crisis scenarios, may demand training of citizen translators such as the one requested by NZRC. The WREMO guide is an official document. While the NZSTI guidelines would, in principle,

⁴ The guide is available online at <http://www.nzsti.org/assets/uploads/files/translationguidelines.pdf>, accessed 12 December 2017.

apply to its translation, the guidelines refer to legal translation within established collaborations between institutions and public service translators. The guidelines would be better received by and useful for community translators who already possess some basic skills, whereas our training targeted absolute novices. It became clear in the design of our course that the materials would need to enable *first-time translators* to deal with the socio-cultural complexity of any text (Federici 2018) and the political, institutional dimension of the commissioned text through the identification and selection of fundamental competences and concepts from translation studies scholarship.

Our training materials subscribe to attempts to develop intercultural, communicative, and interpersonal competences (see Kelly 2017) specific to translator practice as a way of supporting NGOs such as NZRC. For this reason, in the next sections we discuss how we intend to enhance the materials through direct feedback from operators in other NGOs.

From self-reflective analysis to external evaluation

As translator trainers, it would be fair to state that we believe the deployment of citizen translators should be kept to a minimum and for specific tasks, which may pursue broader purposes such as education to risks and disasters, CALD integration, and participation in the multicultural contexts in which the citizen translators reside. Professional translation, whenever possible, with high-level quality assurance should be the default position.

However, finances, resources, and even policies dealing with emergency planning indicate that these optimal conditions are sometimes neither met nor even considered. Thus, crisis scenarios call for extreme flexibility. We acknowledge, therefore, that the intrinsic purposes of training community members to become involved in the process of educating a community in risk reduction represent a distinct area of operation more suited to citizen translators than volunteer professionals. Translator training to support NGOs has been described as necessary

in country specific studies (e.g. Mäkelä 2013). Nevertheless, literature on the topic remains limited and the vast majority of resources focus on interpreting training and have been developed in two intensive decades of work within the InZone Centre at the University of Geneva (see Moser-Mercer 2016; Moser-Mercer and Bali 2007; Moser-Mercer, Kherbiche and Class 2014).

If there truly is a need for this form of citizen translator training – and anecdotal evidence shows that there is, even just within the New Zealand context – it is crucial to have our training materials evaluated in the contexts in which they are likely to be used. To do this, we have requested evaluations of the audio-commented PowerPoint version of our training materials from several NGOs, such as Translators without Borders, Trócaire, CARE International, and Rosetta Foundation.

The NGO setting is multifaceted, as other contributions to this volume show. There are NGOs with their own translation departments for some language combinations, while others provide translation services to humanitarian organizations – both international institutions and other NGOs. We intend to collate evaluations from a range of NGOs. We will include Translators without Borders (TwB) – a partner in the INTERACT network – because it leads the context of NGOs providing translation services in support of humanitarian crises. Their services rely on a network of volunteers, consisting of select and pre-vetted language specialists. They also offer contracts to large NGOs and institutions that need translations of this nature, thus financing the human resources necessary to maintain their operational ability to respond to unpredictable translation needs. Clearly, operations such as TwB are not the natural adopters of the training described here; nevertheless, their extensive experience in supporting multilingual communication in humanitarian crises means that they will be able to provide us with invaluable feedback.

Furthermore, some organizations, for instance those supporting refugees and migrants, have access to systems of PST, or their own translation departments (e.g., Oxfam International). NGOs, for instance, collaborate to provide translation services to regional institutions, as in the COMRADE of Madrid in Spain (see discussion and empirical analysis of the quality of their output in Taibi 2006, 2011; Valero Garcés 2014). Other systems rely on banks of volunteer interpreters and translators, with some degree of pre-vetting, such as The Language Bank of the American Red Cross in its Seattle offices⁵. We recognize, therefore, that training projects similar to ours may have been carried out by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or other NGOs in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, the materials illustrated in this article constitute, to the best of our knowledge, one of the first opportunities for training new citizen translators as a multi-agency collaboration (WREMO, NZRC, the whole INTERACT team, and the authors), whereas other similar opportunities described so far have been more common in training crisis interpreters.

At the time of writing, the PowerPoint slides with audio commentary developed for this course have been evaluated for appropriateness of content to citizen translation by one NGO in order to gauge the usefulness of the materials beyond an NZRC context. A programme support officer for a humanitarian charity with personal experience as a non-professional translator and interpreter evaluated the course positively. On five-point Likert Scales (with ‘one’ being the least satisfactory and ‘five’ being the most satisfactory evaluations), the evaluator awarded ‘four’ or ‘five’ along all dimensions proposed: clarity of instructions, appropriateness of the language used, course length, topics covered, exercises, and mode of delivery. The evaluator singled out advice in the course to think about the reusability of

⁵ See extensive description in <http://www.redcross.org/local/washington/programs-services/translation-interpretation>, accessed 12 December 2017.

translation resources and a critical approach to machine translation as commendable. This broadly positive evaluation was tempered by some criticisms:

I presume that in an emergency environment the time is not always on our side, so for a document to have to go through 3 different people (translator, reviewer and liaison) is quite time consuming and not realistic or efficient.

(Evaluation by Programme Support Officer in international humanitarian charity)

Furthermore, the evaluator stated that basing a training course on examples from an emergency guide produced for use in a developed country might not be applicable to training crisis translators in a developing country.

The points raised by the evaluator enabled us to further reflect on the role of translation in relation to phases of crises. The point regarding time constraints is valid when considering the response phase (which tends to be discussed, also in PST, as the *pro-active* mode whereas interpreting is the *reactive* mode). These points highlight a tendency to consider crisis scenarios predominantly in terms of immediate response; translation, however, is suited to enhancing resilience and is acutely needed in other phases of crises (Cadwell 2015). We view our training as part of a broader social education to build resilience, including language capacity, in language communities that do not already possess it and to provide a pathway to more inclusive societies. Citizens' participation in public life in their country of residence – e.g., their awareness of matters of public health or disaster resilience – is to be supported in theory at an institutional level by countries hosting migrant communities and/or having large communities of minority language speakers. Mowbray (2017, 32) reminds us that “[d]ifferent areas of international law explicitly and implicitly require the use of translation in order to protect individuals' rights to fairness and equality”. In preparing to respond to disasters,

access to communication and information to increase societal resilience is a matter of integration as much as one of equality. The principle is, however, restricted by the praxis: “In limiting translation rights, through formulations such as ‘where numbers require’, international law incorporates assumptions about the ‘impracticality’ of providing widespread translation services” (ibid., 50). Where budgetary restrictions further limit access to information, citizen translator training may be an alternative resource – though in this case, the project was funded, and all people involved in the process with different roles received some remuneration. As translation for the community does not necessarily always operate at the response phase of a crisis, it could be argued that this type of training, enhanced and complemented by foundations in other areas of translation practice, could be a stepping stone to support NGOs and other agents assisting CALD communities to become more embedded in their multicultural countries.

Another worthwhile criticism raised by the evaluator focused on *limited human resources*:

Sometimes in rural areas of developing countries you are very lucky to find one person who speaks the local language, so how do you ensure you have a good quality product when you don’t have a reviewer or/and a community liaison? It would be good if the course gave guidance on how to proceed when you don’t have the full resources available.

(Evaluation by Programme Support Officer in international humanitarian charity)

This criticism takes us back to our greatest challenges and current priorities in revising the materials: to provide translation of acceptable quality and, hence, to devise non-language specific solutions and didactic solutions to teach quality assurance in translation.

From this perspective, an initial interview with the NZRC Project Coordinator an hour before the face-to-face training session represented a starting point for us to ascertain training needs in the context of delivery for our materials. It was interesting for us to see that the project coordinator's concerns about quality, accuracy, and *inhomogeneous* standards across the languages were at the forefront, as they had been in our organization of the materials:

Where do you draw the line as far as people's qualifications if they are volunteers? If they can speak both languages and write in both languages enough, is that okay? What kind of quality document is good enough? Where do you draw the line? I can make up my own criteria. I'm thinking I just want people to get the messages and I want them to understand, but is that not good enough?

(Interview with NZRC Project Coordinator)

With respect to the citizen translation process in itself, the coordinator spoke of how she came to realize the complexities of translation. In particular, the importance of cultural and contextual considerations, such as inter- and intra-community politics, the complexity of some of the concepts taken for granted in the earthquake planning guide, and the different understandings and cultural expectations that people from other backgrounds, especially refugee background communities, will bring to translating the guide were explicit concerns. With respect to ethics, the coordinator explained that NZRC already implements a code of conduct for all its volunteers. This NZRC code allowed us to focus on translation ethics as a *modus operandi*, and it gave us an alternative way to include translator ethics in the training, possibly in the form of a succinct Citizen Translator Code of Conduct to accompany the training materials and be discussed and adopted in future projects of this nature.

By way of conclusion

Even though we subscribe to the notion that native languages should be guaranteed to reduce impacts on vulnerable CALD communities before, during, and after a crisis has peaked – as this is a human right – we acknowledge that there is a long way to go before the provision of comprehensive and accessible information in all languages used within a state is guaranteed (Mowbray 2017).

In discussing training in relation to definitions of citizen translators, we do not intend to further expand the terminology surrounding forms of translation outside the range of professional profiles. We acknowledge, however, that there is specificity to the work of citizen translators in preparing their communities to accept emergency procedures through the institutional texts that they help to make available in their native languages. This specificity overlaps with notions of educating societies to risks, which are common in disaster studies, and reveals differing cultural understandings of hazards, preparation and response. Since citizen translators can carry out the work paid (as in the example of the participants to our training) or unpaid, their social functions may be close to those of volunteers working as community translators (see Valero Garcés 2014, 153-75). Critics could argue, then, that their functions could be studied within the broader field of public service or community translation. However, citizen translators in crisis scenarios seem to overlap only partially with the roles of public service translators. Citizen translators need to know fundamentals of translation to support their communities, but also to build resilience within that community in the process of integrating them within the hazardscape of multilingual and multicultural societies. In a way, citizen translators may represent a way of empowering vulnerable communities; they could inform emergency planners of ways in which CALD communities considered vulnerable can in fact offer diverse notions of resilience and create a truly multicultural education on risk reduction.

Our evaluation process will continue for two years until 2020. The training materials will be revised and enhanced on a regular basis. They will be used in other authentic contexts, and a survey of translation needs in crisis scenarios should further assist us in defining fundamental topics that need to be used in training and best operational practices to enable efficient communication in crises.

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Red Cross, citizen translators, and the fundamentals of translation

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