
[Home](#) > [Issue08](#) > [Künzli article](#)

The ethical dimension of translation revision. An empirical study. ¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates translation revision using think-aloud protocols. Ten professional translators were asked to think aloud while revising three draft translations. The focus of the analysis is on a specific aspect of the ethics of translation revision: the reviser's (sense of) loyalty to the different parties involved in a prototypical freelance translation revision job mediated by a translation agency. The findings reveal a number of potential loyalty conflicts and ethical dilemmas. They also indicate the need to consider situational factors such as time constraints when evaluating the product and process of translation (revision).

KEYWORDS

Translation revision, ethics, loyalty, professional translators, think-aloud protocols.

1. Conceptual frame of reference

Ethics has become an important topic in translation studies. This is confirmed in special issues published by *The Translator* (Pym 2001) and *Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction* (Fiola 2004). Discussion of the ethical dimension of translation generally deals with either the duties or the rights of the translator (Chesterman 1997: 147). The following elements are often mentioned as components of professional ethics: commitment to the highest standards of performance, willingness to improve one's skills and knowledge, adaptability, discretion, professional appearance and loyalty (see e.g. Kautz 2002; Nord 2004).

Loyalty is a key concept in these discussions. In this paper, I address it from the point of view of an actor that plays an important role in many, if not most, translation projects, but whose influence on shaping the final translation is often unmentioned because of his or her invisibility in research and theoretical discussions: the reviser. By translation revision, I refer to the scenario in which a person other than the original translator checks a draft translation for errors and makes any necessary changes (see also Mossop 2001: 169). A second aim is to explore the potential of think-aloud protocols of revision processes to study loyalty instead of (or in addition to) reconstructing loyalty relations and loyalty conflicts through the analysis of the written production of a translator or reviser. Finally, we will look at an aspect of loyalty that has often been forgotten: the loyalty a person has to herself or himself; in our case, the reviser whose interests, needs and expectations must also be considered in real-life translation projects.

Loyalty has been dealt with quite extensively in the German tradition of translation studies. This is probably not surprising. In the early days of *Skopostheorie* – one of the most influential theoretical movements in German-speaking countries – the source text was considered a (mere) offer of information (Vermeer 1982). The intended function of the target text was the main guiding principle of the translation process. As an ethical limitation to radical functionalism, Christiane Nord (1989, 1997: chap. 8, 2001: 185) introduced the idea of loyalty, arguing that translators, as mediators between two cultures, have a special responsibility with respect to the following parties: (1) source-text authors (who have a right to demand respect for their personal

choices and intentions), (2) commissioners (who want a particular type of translation), and (3) target-text receivers (who expect a particular relationship between source and target texts). The translator's special responsibility results from the fact that very often, the commissioner, the source-text author and the target-text receiver are not able to check whether the translation is compatible with the author's intentions; they have to trust the translator.

Michael Schreiber (2006) pointed out that the legitimate interests of the translators, that is the translators' loyalty to themselves, are not mentioned in this approach. Anthony Pym (1997: 91) criticised Nord for viewing the translator as a subordinate figure obliged to follow and apply the criteria established by others, while Andrew Chesterman (1997: 153) argued that loyalty is generally associated with the idea of duty to a master. He suggested that it made its way into translation studies because of the long-held idea of the source text as "holy original", placing the translator in a servant's role with respect to the other parties involved in translating. One way to avoid the association of loyalty with allegiance to a master might be to consider the responsibilities translators have towards themselves. One example is aiming at a translation that fulfils its purpose – i.e., a sufficiently good translation – rather than striving for a perfect translation. Another example is demanding and obtaining an appropriate financial consideration for the time and effort they invest in a translation project. The translator then becomes a partner. Ulrich Kautz (2002: 24-26, 56-57) makes a step in this direction. He describes four loyalty relationships: (1) loyalty to the commissioner, (2) loyalty to the target-text reader, (3) loyalty to the source-text author, and (4) the translator's loyalty to herself or himself. As an example of this last type of loyalty, he mentions the case in which translators refuse a translation job if they fear that it might jeopardise their integrity for moral-ethical reasons.

What about the ethical dimension of translation revision? Revisers play an important role in the translation business, and that role seems to be becoming even more important. Thus, the recently adopted European quality standard for translation services (EN-15038) recognises different roles for translators and revisers: every translation should be revised first by the translator and then by a second person. Empirical studies in revision are still relatively rare, though (see, however, Arthern 1983; Brunette, Gagnon & Hine 2005; Lorenzo 2002). This paper sets out to contribute to filling this gap by simulating freelance translation revision mediated by a translation agency. The following diagram illustrates the parties involved in this type of interaction and the way information flows:

commissioner → translation agency → translator → translation agency →
reviser → translation agency → commissioner

As can be seen, there is generally no direct communication between the commissioner, who may also be the source-text author and/or the target-text receiver, and the translator; neither is there any direct communication between the translator and the reviser nor between the reviser and the commissioner. This situation may lead to different types of conflicts, not least because of the relative anonymity that characterises the interpersonal relationships. To give one example: revisers might get caught in an ethical dilemma between loyalty to the commissioner (who is willing to give priority to speed rather than quality) and loyalty to themselves or the profession at large (which generally expects priority be given to high quality). In what follows I will give examples of how loyalty conflicts express themselves in translation revision, to what extent revisers are loyal to themselves and in what respect they feel they have to make compromises concerning the values and ideals they strive for in their work. I am aware of the limits of my study. The variables to be considered in translation revision are complex. The number of participants in this study is relatively low. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to offer a systematic description of all the factors dealing with ethics and loyalty in translation revision, but to explore some aspects that appear particularly relevant from the point of view of the professional reviser's work.

2. Method

Data were collected from 10 professional translators with German as their native language. They were asked to revise three German draft translations of three French source texts while thinking aloud. The texts they used included a judicial decision, an instruction manual for an avalanche safety net, and an advertising letter for wine. The fictitious brief given to the participants was that

a translation agency asked them to carry out the tasks as express jobs. The sessions were conducted at the translators' usual workplaces. All participants had access to the tools and aids they normally use in their work. The participants were first given general information about the purpose of the study and were then familiarised with the think-aloud instructions. While they were revising and thinking aloud, I made a note of their use of information sources. At the end of the session, the participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire, providing additional information on their training and work experience.

For the purpose of this study, *loyalty* is tentatively defined in parallel with Nord (2001: 195) as the reviser' s consideration of the intentions, needs and expectations of all the parties involved in a translation project. For the translation reviser, this usually means making all necessary changes in a draft translation in as short a time as possible. More specifically, the reviser' s loyalty to the source-text author means that the author has the right to expect his or her text to be recognisable even in the target language. The reviser is supposed to respect, whenever possible and useful, the decisions of the source-text author concerning form and content. Loyalty to the translator means that the reviser should try to respect the translator' s linguistic idiosyncrasies and be able to motivate all changes made in the draft translation. The revisers' loyalty to the commissioner and the translation agency means that they should correctly evaluate the effort to be put into a revision job. Finally, the revisers' loyalty to themselves means e.g. that they should not invest more time than required by the purpose of the translation and than they feel they can bill the translation agency.

To analyse the think-aloud protocols from the point of view of the reviser' s loyalty relations, two types of verbalisations were looked at: (1) loyalty declarations, i.e. verbalisations that contain explicit references to the different parties involved in the fictitious translation project, and (2) evaluative utterances regarding the source text, the draft translation or the revised translation. Loyalty declarations express a concern about the needs and expectations of the different parties involved. They can be interpreted as revealing translation revision principles (for a more detailed discussion of the concept of translation principle, see Jääskeläinen 1999). Evaluative utterances can be used to investigate the translators' subjective translation theories, their professional self-image and, indirectly, their overall translation principles (Tirkkonen-Condit & Laukkanen 1996). Laukkanen (1996: 268) suggested that evaluative utterances be researched with regard to the translator' s values and ideals. Evaluative opinions expressed by revisers indicate what kind of features they expect from a good translation and what they consider acceptable or reasonable (i.e., ethical) behaviour in revision. Chesterman (1997) proposed to view the ethics of translation not from the point of view of the translators' rights and duties, but from the values they pursue in their work. The type of analysis conducted here might also be a step in this direction.

3. Results and discussion

The think-aloud protocols contain many verbalisations that can be interpreted as revealing different aspects of the revisers' loyalty relations and of their sense of responsibility to their partners. Here is one example of a verbalisation that has been coded as loyalty declaration²:

[1] [Sarah B]³ it' s always unfortunate um to start a sentence / by irritating / the reader because if you say DIE MONTAGEKABEL then you' ll think that this is the subject of the sentence ... but in fact it' s the object of the sentence ... therefore I' d help the / reader and say right away DIE MONTAGEKABEL WERDEN VON TECNAP / DEM UNTERNEHMEN FÜR DIE DAUER DER MONTAGE ZUR VERFÜGUNG GESTELLT / then the disappointment or the irritation of the reader is not so strong because he realises right away that the installation cables are put at his disposal / whereas ... DIE MONTAGEKABEL STELLT / it sounds bad it will irritate the reader

These verbalisations express a concern for the needs and expectations of the target-text receiver. Sarah believes the original translator failed to write an installation guide that allows smooth reading. She therefore changes the word order in this specific text passage. This type of verbalisation is relatively easy to categorise; it contains a straightforward evaluation and a direct reference to one of the reviser' s partners. At the same time, it is probably of little interest: we may assume that today' s professional translators and revisers try to consider the needs and expectations of the target-text receivers when translating or revising. From both the research and professional practice viewpoints, it therefore seems more interesting to focus on utterances that

might be interpreted as revealing loyalty conflicts, attempts to resolve such conflicts or instances in which revisers fear they fail to behave in an ethical way.

Let us start with some examples regarding the revisers' loyalty relations to the source-text author (or the commissioner or the translation agency; these roles sometimes overlap but we will not deal with this issue here). One important aspect in this regard is the way revisers deal with defects in the source text:

[2] [Timea A] ET QU' ELLE AVAIT AGIR / another mistake in the French source text / I' ll tell the translation agency in a footnote

Timea is reading a segment of the French source text in which it should say *agi*, not *agir*. Daniel Gile (1995: 28-31) touched upon the possible consequences of defective source texts from the point of view of the translator' s professional loyalty. He mentions the example of a poorly written letter from an investment company, arguing that if the translator does not reproduce or report the poor quality of the writing, the translator' s client may lose critical information about the company. The three source texts used in the present research project all contain some defects, though probably without the potential serious consequences of the example given by Gile. The TAPs reveal that the revisers often detect these defects but fail to report them to their fictitious client in the form of footnotes or comments. It is possible that the experimental situation played a role here; in other words, the participants refrained from reporting errors and ambiguities because it was not a real-life task. On the other hand, they seemed very anxious about their professional self-image. Therefore, one may wonder whether the relative anonymity that characterises revision jobs mediated by translation agencies lowers the revisers' sense of responsibility to those parties with which they are unable to communicate directly, such as the source-text author. This may then influence their performance and thus the quality of the translation.

Here are some further examples of evaluations of the source text and of the competencies of the source-text author:

[3] [Chiara A] okay that' s let' s leave it the way it is I mean it' s not perfect but the French source text is / difficult too / okay ... it' s not very elegant but in French it' s an impossible sentence too

[4] [Nina C] well the last sentence the last paragraph is / quite confusing too ET COMME EN PLUS PLUSIEURS PLUS PLUSIEURS it' s not beyond doubt in French either

These verbalisations can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, they suggest that revisers, under certain circumstances, may feel tempted to put the blame for what they fear might result in a not-so-good translation on the source-text author. In other words, they partially decline to take responsibility for their work. On the other hand, the fictitious brief given to the participants was that of an express job. One may therefore also argue that Chiara and Nina correctly evaluated their job: loyalty to the commissioner in the sense of respecting his or her demand for speed was considered more important than loyalty to what might be their own quality expectations or the expectation of a continuous attempt for excellence by the translation profession as a whole.

In her discussion of examples from Bible translations, Nord (2001: 196-197) mentions the moral obligation of translators to make certain translation strategies explicit in a preface or in footnotes. Yet even in more profane texts such as legal, technical or advertising texts, revisers resort to footnotes because they feel they have to justify themselves. Therefore, these comments have a different function than those mentioned in example [2]. Of course, they will not be maintained in the final translation. Their function is nevertheless to motivate certain decisions, most often the wish to measure the degree of liberty revisers take with respect to the individual choices made by the source-text author or the translator. Here is an example of Madeleine' s protocol:

[5] [Madeleine C] I' d express it / a bit more in an advertising tone I' ll have to insert a reviser' s comment for the agency and tell them that I' ve added something

The desire to justify oneself appears in the protocols of other participants too, even if it does not result, as in example [5], in a footnote. The revisers want to reassure themselves and their partners that their behaviour is reasonable and ethical:

[6] [Emma C] well I' d / rewrite this very freely ... yes I' d be so cheeky ... it' s less about the content / than um / um about getting the advertising message across ... as I said with this type of text I' m generally quite free ... so I' ll be free now and throw out this sentence

One of the most important aspects of the reviser' s loyalty to the translator is the obligation to respect the translator' s individual choices as long as they are compatible with the required function of the translation. The following TAP excerpts illustrate that revisers sometimes have to remind themselves of their loyalty to the translator:

[7] [Emma B] sometimes you' re overcritical when you think you have to change everything

[8] [Sarah B] I myself would say it differently but / I am not here to / rewrite the text according to my own style / I am only supposed to check if it is correctly translated / and that is the case ... I don' t want to tread on my colleague' s toes we can leave it the way it is ... after all we' re not writing / poetry

It is possible that the mere instruction to revise a text triggers the feeling of being obliged to make a minimum number of changes to prove that one deserves one' s money. Thus there may be a risk that revisers develop a lack of positive attitude towards the translator' s work. This behaviour can lead to conflicts of which the participants are often aware, as the examples above suggest. Hence the importance of reminding themselves in their work of one of the most fundamental ethical obligations: not to impose their own method of translation on the translator. This principle is central in the work of Horguelin and Brunette (1998) and Mossop (2001).

Several think-aloud protocols illustrate very nicely the development from the verbalisation of a revision principle to the emergence of a loyalty conflict with the translator and, finally, the resolution of this conflict:

[9] [Lisa C] I' ll try to put this into proper German after all here it' s not that / terrible if it' s not exactly tel quel

[10] [Lisa C] I think here you are allowed to take some liberties

[11] [Lisa C] I think the translator is going to shoot me ... I don' t think he would be happy to see his text

[12] [Lisa C] I find this text horrible honestly / I think here one can take some liberties / after all the consumer is supposed to buy this stuff afterwards

[13] [Lisa C] I' m going to massacre this text to put it nicely

[14] [Lisa C] DIE QUALITÄTSANSTRENGUNGEN now they bother me less / DIE IN DEN LETZTEN JAHREN AUF ANTRIEB / VON JUNGEN WINZERN it sounds okay after all / one shouldn' t exaggerate after all

[15] [Lisa C] I mean we' re not using the sledgehammer method after all

In the examples above, Lisa evaluates the quality of the draft translation of the advertising text and of tentative changes. Deviations from the draft translation and the source text are often justified by the declaration that advertising texts demand the strategy of " free translation" , as opposed to e.g. legal translation. Lisa starts by declaring that advertising texts do not have to be translated literally. She then makes a number of changes, which are often accompanied by verbalisations indicating a need to justify herself. Yet the closer Lisa gets to the end of the task, the more she appears afraid of not being loyal to the translator. Even if the verbalisations " the translator is going to shoot me" or " I' m going to massacre this text" are hardly meant literally, they reveal again the potential conflict between reviser and translator. Examples [14] and [15] can therefore be interpreted as indicating that Lisa reminds herself of the job she is supposed to do and of her loyalty commitment to the translator. The following examples from Allegra' s protocol reveal a similar conflict:

[16] [Allegra C] ES SIND ERSTKLASSIGE WEINE DIE IHRE FLEISCH- UND KÄSEGERICHTE / AUFS BESTE / now we' ll exaggerate a bit after all it' s an advertising text

[17] [Allegra C] with this type of text it' s not that important to stick very closely to the text instead it' s important that it is formulated in an advertising tone and that it is persuasive that it is appealing

[18] [Allegra C] I' m absolutely not suited for advertising texts I' d refuse this job

Concluding that one is not suited for translating or revising advertising texts after having declared that it is not necessary to closely follow the linguistic choices of the author and/or the translator is, of course, a way to avoid a potential loyalty conflict. This does not mean, however, that Allegra would react this way in a prototypical freelance revision situation. Kautz (2002: 83) argues that refusing a translation job is not a sign of incompetence, but of a sense of responsibility, i.e. of loyalty to oneself, the profession and the potential client. Yet he also points out that turning down an assignment is probably the exception rather than the rule. Translators working as employees do not generally have this option. But even freelance translators will think twice before refusing a translation (revision) job. If they do it too often, they are quickly out of the game.

Some of the TAP excerpts discussed above have touched upon the issue of the ethical dilemma experienced by revisers who feel they have to make compromises with regard to quality. The excerpts below more explicitly reveal the possible reasons for this dilemma – namely situational factors such as time constraints:

[19] [Emma C] ZU DEN SPITZENREITERN / IHRES KELLERS ZÄHLEN I actually don' t like this either but I have to get on

[20] [Sarah B] normally I' d print the translation now / and then I' d let it rest for half an hour (she laughs) and then I' d have a second look but now I' ve already invested so much time in this text and the client has called twice already because he wanted the text fifteen minutes ago / therefore I' ll stop now

[21] [Madeleine C] if I had the time I' d double check / but if I don' t have the time we' ll have to leave it like this ... DANS L' ATTENTE D' AVOIR LE PRIVILÈGE DE VOUS SERVIR IN DER HOFFNUNG DASS ICH SIE BEDIENEN DARF / um / but it didn' t bother me that much when I read it through in German / it has to remain like this because we have no time

[22] [Madeleine A] how long is the text? ... I see / should actually only take a quarter of an hour ... now we' ll soon have been working on this text for a quarter of an hour I' ll have to start entering the changes

Excerpt [22] highlights an important aspect of professional loyalty: the revisers' loyalty to themselves and the responsibility they have to make sure their needs are also considered in the overall translation project. It shows that at the beginning of every revision task Madeleine counts the number of words and, accordingly, the amount of time she is willing to invest to make a reasonable living. This behaviour suggests that Madeleine shows a minimal loyalty to herself. It could also be analysed in the light of Lorenzo' s (2002) observation, according to which the more time the revisers participating in her experiment spent on the revision task, the more unnecessary changes they made and the worse they made the draft translation. In other words, a combined process and product analysis could reveal that the loyalty revisers show to themselves in the sense of a realistic assessment of the effort to be put into a revision job and the financial compensation they want to get out of it may have a positive effect on quality. Madeleine' s decision not to spend more time on the task than is economically justified could be associated with a comparatively low share of changes that do not lead to a quality enhancement.

Another ethical conflict concerns the revisers' uncertainty as to how to assess what exactly is expected from them. In real-life translation revision, revisers very often get the same brief as the original translator. The texts used in this research project come from my own practice as a freelance reviser for more than 10 years. The participants were given the same instructions I had received, i.e. a copy of the translation brief containing information about the style, the commissioner and the target audience, yet no information about the expected degree of revision

(full or partial check) nor the parameters I was supposed to check: meaning transfer, content, language and style, or physical presentation (see Mossop 2001: chap. 10). The absence of a specific revision brief can lead to additional uncertainties in the revision process:

[23] [Emma A] NICHEINTRETEN / now the question is of course whether the translator knows more about these things whether this is something Swiss that I don' t know / because I simply translate too rarely this type of texts

[24] [Madeleine A] here too / I' d have to ask the client in advance / if the translation was done by a qualified legal translator and if I / can trust the vocabulary

In the examples above, both Emma and Madeleine wonder whether they can trust the translator when it comes to technical terms. The lack of information given to the reviser may unnecessarily prolong the processing of translation projects and make them more expensive – especially if the reviser is paid by time units (number of hours) rather than textual units (number of words). Determining the parameters on which to focus and the reasonable, sufficient degree of revision becomes all the more important in express jobs.

If revisers lack clear instructions, they eventually often express the hope that the translators whose work they are revising knew what they were doing:

[25] [Chiara B] MIT DEM BEFESTIGUNGSKABEL / AN DER OBEREN VERANKERUNG VERBUNDEN SEIN okay I guess that' s correct

[26] [Nina B] POUR DES CONDITIONS DE CHARGE DE NEIGE / I guess the engineer knew what he was doing

[27] [Sarah A] and the company name BÂLOISE ASSURANCES let' s hope that this is correct

The expression of hope may result from a feeling of lack of loyalty to the other parties involved in the translation project. It is sometimes – legitimately – justified by references to situational factors:

[28] [Timea B] yeah here too we' ll have to believe that this thing is called BARRIERE but it sounds terribly translated / I guess it' s correct / I won' t double check since they want the text back so quickly

A further ethical problem arises from the fact that it is not always possible in real-life translation projects to find a reviser who happens to have just the same language pair and subject-matter knowledge as the translator and who is available at the right moment. Such suboptimal situations are probably the rule rather than the exception, which is why translation agencies sometimes ask revisers to check e.g. only language and style, but not accuracy or terminology. This very situation was simulated in the revision of the technical text. The participants were told that the draft translation had been done by a subject-matter expert and that they did not have to check terminology. The following excerpts reveal that what might seem at first a straightforward instruction or an elegant solution is not entirely unproblematic:

[29] [Emma B] well I' ve got a problem here I mean it' s all okayed but actually I nevertheless have to understand what is what (she laughs) ... L' ALIGNEMENT / it' s not about aligning it' s / well that' s the question are only the technical terms validated or also the collocations?

[30] [Timea B] let' s insert a reviser' s comment ... I can' t / judge / the choice of words / consultation / with subject-matter expert / necessary / okay / I don' t know whether I' m of any use he' ll have to re-check everything once again

[31] [Valeria B] ENTSPRICHT DER ANZAHL DER WINDUNGEN DURCH DIE (she laughs) it' s all Greek to me

[32] [Sarah B] ANCRAGE DE POTEAU / I really feel / completely / at a loss because I simply

These examples raise the question of to what extent it is useful to ask revisers to check the quality of a draft translation if they feel they do not have the necessary subject-matter knowledge – even if the translation agency does not expect them to have this knowledge. The solution might again be for the translation agency to spell out its expectations; here, for example, by marking in the draft translation all the terms that have been okayed. As a result, revisers might probably be able to embark on the task with more confidence, feeling they can do an acceptable job. This seems all the more important as other TAP studies have shown that affective factors such as the translator' s feeling of certainty, security and self-confidence contribute to quality in translation (Laukkanen 1996).

It seems appropriate to conclude this TAP analysis with an example that highlights another important issue regarding the reviser' s loyalty to him or herself:

[33] [Sarah A] but I must not get bogged down with this problem or else / my revising will get much too expensive ... but it' s my problem I would not even bill the client for this for the fact that I' ve been stuck here for so much time

Sarah is evaluating the appropriate translation of a technical term. Her verbalisations reveal – once again – that revisers are very well aware of the fact that time is money. Not without good reason, Horguelin and Brunette (1998: Chapter 3.1.3) mention *profitability* as one of the five parameters to be taken into account in translation revision. Sarah' s verbalisations show that revisers may hesitate to bill the client for the actual time they spend. It could therefore be interpreted as indicating that revisers are sometimes disloyal to themselves out of loyalty to the other parties involved in the translation project. On the other hand, Sarah' s behaviour might be expressing the fear that if she bills the translation agency too much, then the agency (and the commissioner) will look for a reviser who can do a sufficiently good job faster. Unlike translators, revisers are often paid by time unit. More and more translation agencies, however, seem to be switching to paying the reviser by textual units, with fees making it difficult for the reviser to do a good job and make a reasonable living at the same time. In other words, the fees tend to resemble what might be a reasonable financial compensation in monolingual proofreading rather than bilingual translation revision. It is therefore not unlikely that in the future we might see revisers either trying to show a minimum of loyalty to themselves by tacitly replacing translation revision with the faster method of proofreading to be able to make ends meet, or else sacrificing their loyalty to themselves by continuing to offer the same service at a fee that cannot cover the actual effort they put into their work. This dilemma can hardly be solved by individual revisers. It is a topic that professional translators' associations will have to address.

4. Summary and conclusions

The analyses of the think-aloud protocols from ten professional translators asked to revise three draft translations reveal a number of ethical dilemmas and loyalty conflicts between the different parties involved in translation (revision) projects: source-text author, commissioner, translation agency, target-text reader, translator, reviser. The analyses also stress the need to consider the responsibility revisers have to themselves, i.e. their own legitimate interests and expectations. After all, demanding and obtaining reasonable financial compensation for one' s work might lead to higher motivation, better quality and more satisfied clients. Other TAP studies have shown that the right affective frame such as motivation and self-confidence goes hand in hand with success in translation (Tirkkonen-Condit & Laukkanen 1996).

The analyses also reveal that the protocols contain many verbalisations that illustrate the conflict between the economic demand for speed and the ethical demand for thoroughness, reliability or quality – a dilemma also mentioned by Mossop (2001: 88-89). The large number of verbalisations indicating that revisers must compromise with respect to the values or ideals they pursue in their work due to time constraints raises the question of whether, in translation research, we have sufficiently taken into account the effect these situational factors have on the translation process and on the final product. Indeed, the context of situations is rarely considered in evaluating product and process within the framework of translation competence studies (Cao 1996: 335). A not-so-good translation might often be the result of lack of time or lack of access to an information source rather than of insufficient linguistic or extralinguistic skills.

A further problem revealed by the TAP analyses and that seems to deserve further attention is the need for the reviser to work on the basis of a specific revision brief. The notion of *translation brief* has become one of the key concepts in translation studies since its introduction by functionalist approaches in the 1980s (Vermeer 1982; Nord 1989). An awareness of the importance of the translation brief for the work of the translator is also apparent in my experiments, several participants declaring before the recording started that they needed information about the fictitious target readers or the client to be able to do a good job. However, the TAP analyses show that it is not enough if the translation agency hands the reviser a copy of the translation brief. Revisers need a *revision brief*, stating explicitly what is expected from them in terms of full or partial revision and what parameters of the draft translation they are supposed to check. Without a specific revision brief, revisers often seem to work under the impression that they fail to meet their own or their partners' expectations.

The think-aloud protocol analysis has turned out to be useful for exploring some aspects of the ethical dimension of translation revision. Yet the revisers' ethical thinking and sense of loyalty can also be reconstructed by analysing their written production. The next step could be to investigate the extent to which the sense of loyalty, the ideals and the values explicitly referred to by the revisers in the revision process materialise in their actual work, the revised translations.

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Biography

Alexander Künzli has a Master's degree in translation studies and psychology from Geneva University and a PhD in French Linguistics from Stockholm University. He is a senior researcher in the Department of French, Italian and Classical Languages at Stockholm University. Current academic interests include translation revision, translation competence acquisition, and translating and interpreting (in) the Caribbean. www.alexander-kuenzli.se

Note 1:

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[Return to this point in the text](#)

Note 2:

The excerpts have been translated from the German protocols as accurately as possible. Verbalisations of elements of the French source text and of (tentative) translation solutions in German are capitalised and maintained in these languages. They often concern language-pair related translation problems that have no equivalence in English. No knowledge of these languages is however necessary to follow the line of thought.

[Return to this point in the text](#)

Note 3:

A = revision of the legal text, B = revision of the technical text, C = revision of the advertising text.

[Return to this point in the text](#)