

### *Application of LSP texts in translator training*

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#### Abstract

The paper presents discussion of the results of extensive empirical research into efficient methods of educating and training translators of LSP (language for special purposes) texts. The methodology is based on using popular LSP texts in the respective fields as one of the main media for translator training. The aim of the paper is to investigate the efficiency of this methodology in developing thematic, linguistic and cultural competences of the students, following Bloom's revised taxonomy and European Master in Translation Network (EMT) translator training competences. The methodology has been tested on the students of a professional Master study programme called *Technical Translation* implemented by the Institute of Applied Linguistics, Riga Technical University, Latvia. The group of students included representatives of different nationalities, translating from English into Latvian, Russian and French. Analysis of popular LSP texts provides an opportunity to structure student background knowledge and expand it to account for linguistic innovation. Application of popular LSP texts instead of purely technical or scientific texts characterised by neutral style and rigid genre conventions provides an opportunity for student translators to develop advanced text processing and decoding skills, to develop awareness of

expressive resources of the source and target languages and to develop understanding of socio-pragmatic language use.

*Keywords:* translator training; language for specific purposes (LSP); allusion; Bloom's revised taxonomy

## 1. Introduction

The paper presents a discussion of the results of extensive empirical research into efficient methods of educating and training translators of special texts in the field of business and finance, telecommunications and computers, and civil engineering and architecture. The methodology is based on using popular scientific LSP texts in the respective fields as one of the main media for translator training. The aim of the paper is to investigate the efficiency of this methodology in developing linguistic and thematic competences of the students. The methodology has been tested on the students of professional Master study programme called *Technical Translation* implemented by the Institute of Applied Linguistics, Riga Technical University, Latvia. The program is a member of the European Master in Translation Network (EMT). The group of students included representatives of different nationalities, translating from English into Latvian, Russian, and French.

## 2. Application of language-for-specific-purposes (LSP) texts in translator training

The Master students already possess an advanced level of linguistic competence. Many of them have a comprehensive level of thematic competence, which allows making use of more complicated tasks in the student-centered learning process and setting more ambitious targets. However, there are certain aspects of the language use that remain a challenge even for an advanced speaker. Such manifestations of the intertextuality as allusion, allegory, idiom, proverb and quote may become "culture bumps" (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 4) in the process of decoding the source text. They may become a challenge when their meaning has to be re-encoded in the process of translation. Overcoming these challenges, students both promote their foreign language competence and increase their awareness of the source culture. Expanding traditional pedagogical applications in second language acquisition, we employ focused textual analysis of popular scientific LSP texts, which helps students develop sound background knowledge in the subject field and master figurative language use.

Traditional methods of LSP translator training include development of advanced foreign language reading and writing skills, knowledge of terminological

resources available in the working languages, and promotion of background knowledge in the field of specialization. However, taking into consideration that contemporary scientific and technical texts increasingly display features of genre hybridity, it is useful to expand the range of genres LSP translators will be able to deal with. The present authors propose to use reading, analysis and translation of popular LSP texts in the field of specialization in addition to other traditional methods of LSP translator training as this methodology offers a number of advantages. First, reading popular scientific texts on economics, business, architecture, and so on, student translators get acquainted with new scientific and technical concepts in a comprehensible and entertaining way, developing both thematic and terminological competences. They also learn professional jargon that may eventually become part of the professional lexis. Second, as popular LSP texts are characterized by application of expressive resources of the language such as metaphors, allusions, puns, idioms, and lexical innovations used to promote interest, students develop their perception of figurative language use, which they would hardly encounter if they translated purely technical or scientific texts. Third, students raise their cultural awareness and socio-pragmatic competence by decoding allusions, which appear on the interface of linguistic and cultural knowledge (Lennon, 2004, p. 31), and by analyzing the references to the events which are topical in the source community. It is important to stress that instructors have to explain to the students the difference between approaches to translation of popular LSP and traditional scientific and technical texts, that is, to ensure that students are aware of the differences between genres and conventions of text production.

Thus, in designing a curriculum of translation practice modules, the learning outcomes should be formulated to account for a higher level of foreign language knowledge, and at the same time to precisely formulate the components of advanced competences that students should develop. The methods that are traditionally used in translator training include development of core competences: linguistic competence in the working languages placing particular emphasis on the student's native language, thematic competence in the fields of specialization addressing both the conceptual framework of a particular discipline and terminological resources, and socio-pragmatic competence making translators effective communicators between languages and cultures.

Developing a translator profile within the technical translation study programme, the components of translator competence set by the EMT are used as the basic framework of reference (European Commission. . . , 2009). The core components addressed within the framework are translation service provision competence (interpersonal and production dimensions), language competence,

intercultural competence (sociolinguistic and textual dimensions), as well as technological, thematic and information mining competences.

### 3. Core competences of an LSP translator

Translator training and relevant curriculum design have recently become one of the main areas of interest of translation scholars. Campbell and Halle (2003) stress, "much . . . work is concerned with identifying the components of competence and proposing curriculum models that incorporate these components and suitable teaching strategies" (p. 205).

Bloom's revised taxonomy is a tool that can be efficiently used in identifying the elements of competences and skills in curriculum design to redefine academic excellence. It can be adapted to any field of study and help formulate relevant and measureable learning outcomes. The revised taxonomy consists of two dimensions, namely, knowledge and cognitive processes; each dimension is organized into subcategories (cf. Munzenmaier & Rubin, 2013, pp. 18-19). The translator competences set out in the EMT manual can be related to four categories of knowledge dimension "arranged from the most concrete to the most abstract" (European Commission. . . , p. 18), namely, factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge.

Factual knowledge is closely related to the thematic competence of a translator. It is the knowledge about facts and specific details within a certain field that are essential to decode the message. It also includes the mastery of terminology in the given field and other related fields. Taking into consideration that technology and science are becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, it is important to make students aware of common and distinguishing features of a subject field. Jones (1985) argues that in the context of language for special purposes (e.g., in economics, telecommunication, civil engineering and architecture, etc.), domain specifications are well-defined, which still does not guarantee the basis for wide-ranging and powerful predictions of language behavior in new situations.

Conceptual knowledge is also closely connected with the thematic competence of a translator. According to Munzenmaier and Rubin (2013, p. 18), it is the knowledge of "classifications, principles, generalizations, theories, models, or structures pertinent to a particular disciplinary area." A translator should be familiar with the conceptual structure of the field of specialization in both working languages. Moreover, understanding of inherent interdisciplinarity of any subject field is necessary for the formation of new conceptual knowledge, as interdisciplinarity incorporates a variety of models from other fields. The establishment of a network of relevant background knowledge is the key aspect of cross-curricular learning.

Developing procedural knowledge, a translator at the same time advances one's translation service provision competence, its production dimension in particular. In Bloom's taxonomy, procedural knowledge "refers to methods of inquiry, very specific skills, algorithms, techniques, and particular methodologies" (Munzenmaier & Rubin, 2013, p. 19). For example, a translator should master translation strategies, identify translation problems, and select appropriate methods for their solution.

Metacognitive knowledge is the awareness an individual should have of one's personal growth and life-long learning needs. Developing a spirit of curiosity, ability to analyse and summarise are mentioned as some of the aspects of the thematic competence of a translator and are closely connected with the knowledge management function.

In designing the curriculum that would account for the changing requirements set forth to the professional profile of an LSP translator, it is important to address the core competences and skills which a student translator can develop only with appropriate tutoring. The competence that is most difficult to develop without guidance is intercultural competence and its elements, the sociolinguistic and textual dimensions.

According to EMT manual (European Commission. . . , p. 6), the dual perspective should be taken into consideration in developing this competence, comparing and contrasting discursive practices in the working languages. The sociolinguistic dimension covers awareness of social, dialectal, and stylistic variations of the languages, as well as the ability to discriminate between the registers and select the one appropriate for a given communicative situation.

The textual dimension of intercultural competence may potentially pose the greatest challenge not only for student translators but also for experienced professionals, because it is inherently connected with the ability to decode, uncover and reproduce implicit meaning. If a translator fails to pick up contextual clues, decode the meaning communicated by such intertextual references as allusions, or make the references to the sources culture specific knowledge understandable to the target audience, the process of communication across the cultures may be seriously impeded. It is stipulated in the manual that a translator should be able to understand and analyse the macrostructure of a document, including the information communicated by graphic expressive means; to summarize and extract the most relevant information from the source text; to identify, contrast and reproduce to the degree possible elements, values and references of the cultures represented; as well as to compose the document in accordance with the conventions of the genre and rhetorical standards.

A Master student in translation is expected to possess an advanced level of foreign language knowledge. However, considering the growing complexity of the contemporary language and the growing rate of linguistic innovation and

language change, language skills of a translator should be developed on a life-long basis. Translation is an exercise in languages, and every act of translating promotes the knowledge of the working languages. By decoding the meaning of the source text, recreating its rhetorical function and stylistic coloring, students use languages to advance their linguistic competence.

Translation as a means in second language acquisition has been discussed since the times of ancient Greece. At present, this issue has not lost its prominence. Translation as a tool in second language learning is considered from numerous perspectives (see Krawutschke, 2008; Leonardi, 2010; Witte, Harden, & Ramos de Oliveira Harden, 2009). Talking about the role of translation in language instruction, France (2005, p. 256) maintains that "it should be noted that among the exercises of the rhetoric classes, translation always had an important place and is still regarded as one of essential ways of acquiring the mastery of a foreign language." Steiner (1998, p. 490) adds to the point: "Inside or between languages human communication equals translation. A study of translation is a study of language."

Another competence that should be specifically addressed in curriculum design is thematic competence, which implies not only the knowledge of the conceptual framework and terminology of particular fields, but also development of the spirit of curiosity, analysis and summary.

#### 4. Intertextuality in LSP texts

In the case of LSP translation, it is not always easy to draw a line between some elements of textual and thematic competence because the ability to decode references to the previous texts is a core element of both competences. The mastering of "systems of concepts, methods of reasoning, presentation, controlled language, and terminology" (European Commission. . . , p. 7) (thematic competence) is inherently connected with the ability "to grasp the presuppositions, implicit information, allusions, stereotypes and intertextual nature of a source text" (p. 6) (textual competence). Thus, it may be maintained that a translator should have a thorough understanding of the intertextual nature of any text taking into consideration the specific character of LSP texts that are produced and decoded in special thematic fields. The transmission and comprehension of information within professional communication is based on the knowledge of not only one special subject field but also of the entire body of world knowledge for production, reception, and interpretation of LSP texts.

In the process of translation, the degree of intertextuality of a text increases because the translated text belongs to networks of both the source and target language texts, and it may contain the references to both source and target culture and require activating various levels of background knowledge.

Within his intertextual theory, Barthes (as cited in Allen, 2011) stresses the role of the reader in the interpretation of the text. The reader is seen as a co-creator or even a single creator of the meaning of a text. He distinguishes two types of readers: passive “consumers,” who read the work for stable meaning encoded by the author, and “writers of the text,” who are essentially co-authors of the text, and are involved in the analysis and production of the text. Allen (2011, p. 74) supports and expands this view maintaining that “the modern scriptor, when s/he writes, is always already in a process of reading and re-writing. Meaning comes not from the author but from language viewed intertextually.”

From the pedagogical perspective, it is necessary to train student translators to identify intertextual references, to select an appropriate strategy for transferring them into the target language, and applying the most efficient compensation mechanism to account for inevitable meaning loss in the process of translation. It is particularly challenging in a multilingual classroom, when background knowledge is not shared by all participants. What is usually considered to belong to the universal knowledge of the Western civilisation may appear to be only relatively universal or not universal at all.

According to Gerard Genette (1997), intertextuality is a textual strategy which may appear in the form of quotation or allusion that imply “a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts” (p. 1). Allusion as the type of intertextual references that translators have to deal with in translation of LSP texts can be conditionally classified into three categories with regard to degree of universality and compatibility. The first group comprises allusions that can be considered to be relatively universal, belonging to the general world knowledge or establishing reference to widely known facts, events, personalities or artefacts. These allusions rarely pose any significant challenge in translation. However, it is expected that the users possess the necessary individual background knowledge to decode their meaning. The second group includes allusions that are shared by both source and target languages as a result of close language contacts, and thus are also quite easily transferrable across the working languages. The third group covers allusions that are specific for a particular language, culture or field of knowledge. These allusions pose considerable challenge in the process of interlingual transfer, and should be analyzed individually in a particular context. It is important to stress that in the case of LSP text translation the degree of universality of allusion will greatly depend on the thematic field of the discourse. Within the framework of professional communication, for instance, economists and architects will use references to different realms of knowledge and operate with different sets of allusions.

The following extract provides insights into the types of challenges student translators have to face decoding allusive references in the source text:

Dorothy and her troop presented their requests to the Wizard, who demanded that they first vanquish the Wicked Witch of the West, representing the McKinley/Rockefeller faction in Ohio (then considered a Western state). The financial powers of the day were the Morgan/Wall Street/Cleveland faction in the East (the Wicked Witch of the East) and this Rockefeller-backed contingent from Ohio, the state of McKinley, Hanna, and Rockefeller's Standard Oil cartel. (Brown, 2008, p. 18)

Allusive references in the excerpt can be established at several levels: allusions to F. Baum's book *The Wizard of Oz* and allusions to political and economic landscape of the USA at the end of the 19th century. In this case, two seemingly unrelated fields of reference overlap and are explained one in terms of another, which requires a complex approach to text analysis and lateral thinking to elicit relevant information and decode the author's propositions. The text is abundant in references that can be identified only by advanced learners of English, and due to extreme information density, it is complicated to establish appropriate relationships between units of information.

Items of professional economic vocabulary are often based on allusions. If the source and target readers share the background knowledge referred to by an allusion, allusion can be easily reproduced in translation; however, in the opposite case, it may become a stumbling block for a novice translator. For example, such professionalisms denoting the types of takeover strategy as *scorched earth strategy* and *Lady Macbeth strategy*, which come from the dictionary at the Investopedia website ([www.investopedia.com/dictionary](http://www.investopedia.com/dictionary)), can be relatively easily represented in Russian by means of calques, and they will be transparent for the target audience. At the same time, the item *mad hatter* taken from the same source and denoting an incompetent CEO prone to making spontaneous unsubstantiated decisions may not be so easily decoded because it is highly context dependent and may appear ambiguous if transferred literally. The context of use has a major impact on the meaning of another item of professional vocabulary in the sphere of business and finance: *May Day*. This traditional signal of emergency acquired new meaning on May 1, 1975, when the US government liberalized domestic financial markets (Zweig, 2015). In the context under discussion, the lexical item has a positive connotation, signifying change and liberation, rather than emergency and distress. A translator specializing in the field of finance should be aware of these varying meanings.

The main difficulty in translation of allusions lies in the fact that student translators sometimes simply do not identify a certain reference as being an allusion. Contemporary search engines allow to find any relevant information quickly and efficiently; the problem is if a student does not know what to search for or whether it is necessary to search for additional information, because they perceive the text literally. The following excerpt from the source text (ST) *Currency*

*Wars: The Making of the Next Global Crisis* by James Rickards (2011) and the target translation (TT) by a student translator may well illustrate this point. The student failed to identify the phrase *We the People* as a reference to the Preamble to the United States Constitution and translated the phrase literally, ultimately failing to communicate the message of the source text.

ST: The media, governments and business interests assure the public that We the People have the knowledge to make these decisions.

TT: Интересы средств массовой информации, правительства и предприятий заверяют общественность, что у нас, у людей [emphasis added], имеются знания для того, чтобы принимать эти решения.

Decoding of allusions in a foreign language is complicated for the users because they can be ambiguous and polysemic. The author can activate only one facet of meaning, and the readers will have to determine which meaning is relevant for a specific context. One of the learning activities that can be used to promote competence in decoding and translation of allusions is an awareness test where students have to determine whether an allusion is universal (Group 1), matching in the source and target languages (Group 2), or language- or culture-specific (Group 3). If students are not familiar with a certain allusion, they are invited to check the meaning of the item in question and to consider its use in various contexts. In such a way, students develop textual competence and enhance background knowledge. Awareness raising activities are one of the mechanisms to minimize the possible effects of differences in prior knowledge among the students within a group.

At times, intertextual reference would not be recognized by the majority of the readers and sometimes the reader, on the contrary, may extract more information from the text than originally encoded by the author. In other words, the scope of meaning communicated by an intertextual reference may not always fully coincide on the part of the author and the reader. Nevertheless, at least some information encoded in an intertextual reference should belong to their shared knowledge. Nord (1991) and Leppihalme (1997, p. 80) consider cultural familiarity of the source text allusion to the target readers a major success factor in translating allusions.

## 5. Methodology of LSP translator training

Popular LSP texts as a medium for translator training have a number of important benefits and some minor drawbacks that can be easily overcome if addressed properly. Using these texts instead of purely technical texts devoid of genre, register, and style variations provides an opportunity for student translators to

develop advanced text processing and decoding skills, dealing with translation of stylistically marked vocabulary to become aware of expressive resources of both the source and target languages and to develop sensitivity to specifics of socio-pragmatic language use.

Popular LSP texts also offer considerable benefits with regard to development of factual and conceptual knowledge as well as training of advanced terminological competence. In contrast to purely technical texts that make use of standardized terminological resources, popular LSP texts contain not only the terms used in a particular field, but they are also abundant in professionalisms and ad hoc lexical units denoting new, innovative or imaginary concepts. Knowledge about the status of a particular lexical item within a particular language for special purposes is important for an LSP translator and allows them to make informed choice in the process of translating professional vocabulary. Moreover, taking into consideration that many professionalisms and ad hoc items often do not have target language counterparts, student translators learn to solve potential translation problems, thus developing their procedural knowledge.

Each message of an original text communicates the individual author's opinion, attitude, or assessment, which may or may be not shared by the reader. One of the new competences a translator should develop is the ability to stay up to date with the rapid changes occurring in the working languages: new words, new meanings of existing words, and buzz words which come and go out of fashion and get obsolete very quickly (e.g., linguistic memes and folk etymology).

Thus, one of the challenges student translators have to face is translation of novel pieces of professional vocabulary coined for a particular purpose to refer to a concrete media event. Such items are launched, become topical and disappear as soon as the event is not in the headlines anymore. Translating items of this kind, novice translators, apart from the obvious exercise in dealing with non-equivalent vocabulary, also promote their awareness of the current issues discussed in the source language media, thereby developing their socio-linguistic competence. It is very important to identify and estimate the effect of such factors as information density and vocabulary load on language change.

Two examples of such ad hoc items are professionalisms *baby bills* and *mini Madoff*. The former is defined by the Investopedia dictionary as a hypothetical nickname for the smaller companies that would have been formed if Microsoft had been broken up for violation of antitrust rules in 2000. These companies have never been formed, and the event itself is not topical any more, but the term is still listed in professional databases (e.g., Investopedia and the financial dictionary at The Free Dictionary: <http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com>) and may potentially appear in economic press. According to the Investopedia dictionary, *mini Madoff* is used to denote financial con men

who are accused of or have committed crimes similar to those of Bernard Madoff. The attribute *mini* implies that the runners of financial pyramid schemes are not as notorious as Bernard Madoff. Both items in question do not have established target language equivalents (i.e., lexical items in Latvian and Russian); moreover, events or personalities referred to may not be familiar to the target audience. Thus, student translators not only have to decide on the choice of relevant translation strategy, but they also have to consider the amount of additional information they have to supply to the target audience to ensure the message of the source is understood and interpreted correctly. In the case of translation of *mini Madoff*, students are invited to pragmatically adapt the unit and refer to a fraudster better known in the target culture: Ponzi (as in *Ponzi scheme*) or even Mavrodi, an infamous founder of a pyramid in Russia. Thus, students not only consider the pros and cons of various translation strategies, but they also develop factual knowledge in their field.

Professionalisms may be not only language- but also country-specific, and students have to develop an understanding of regional varieties of the source language. Language of business in use in the United Kingdom and the United States of America differs considerably. Thus, tasks aimed at appreciating these differences promote both factual and socio-cultural knowledge of the students. For instance, such professionalisms as *pay czar clause*, a clause found in financial institutions' employment contracts that would subject compensation terms to the U.S. government's approval, and *maquiladora*, a factory located near the United States-Mexico border, may be encountered in the U.S. press and will not be transparent for the speakers of English outside the USA. At the same time, it is important to dispel misconceptions student may have concerning certain items as belonging to a national variety of English. For example, *Big Mac Index*, also known as *Big Mac PPP*, a survey done by *The Economist* magazine (<http://www.economist.com/topics/big-mac-index>) that is used to measure the purchasing power parity (PPP) between nations using the price of a Big Mac as the benchmark, is a term that is nowadays widely applicable across the world. It is not typical of the USA only; despite a common stereotype that MacDonald's is a symbol of USA driven market globalization.

Frequent use of professionalisms is characteristic not only of the field of business and economics. Popular scientific texts on architecture and civil engineering also make use of pieces of professional vocabulary that strictly speaking cannot be considered terms, for example, *frog* denoting a depression in the bed surface of a brick (Masonry Institute of Washington, 2012, p. 53), *camelback truss*, a professional variant of a term *crescent truss* (Camelback Truss, n.d.), and *bull stretcher*, a header laid on its edge so that the end of the unit is exposed (Masonry Institute of Washington, 2012, p. 42), and many more.

Contemporary popular LSP texts are the main source of new vocabulary, the medium through which knowledge is disseminated among the general public, and the type of text that most quickly reflects the changing nature of multimodal discourse. Using popular LSP texts in translator training allows building student awareness of linguistic innovations that enter LSP vocabularies through these texts.

## 6. Foregrounding strategies in LSP texts

Apart from being a great source of novel or ad hoc lexical units as well as items of professional jargon, popular LSP texts provide opportunity to practice strategies and methods for treatment of elements of foregrounding in translation.

Coined by the Prague Linguistic School (cf. Garvin, 1964, pp. 9-10), foregrounding is defined as “use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon.” Foregrounding raises interesting questions when two or more languages are involved. Foregrounding is also considered to be the main effect produced by literary code switching (Montes-Alcalá, 2013, p. 216). Usually the appropriate codes are determined by different contextual and intertextual cues. Texts draw upon multiple codes from wider contexts, both textual and social (cf. Chandler, 1994-2016). The theory of codes provides an instrument for text analysis, taking into consideration various aspects of text production.

As a textual strategy, foregrounding is used by authors to make the text more appealing to the prospective readership and may potentially become a challenge if its effect should be recreated in another language in the process of translation.

Foregrounding may contribute to the total meaning of the text expressed in references, images, quotations or citations. If meaning in the source text is transmitted using foregrounding strategies, student translators are not always capable of recognizing the relationships between information units. Textual and stylistic analyses are employed to bring implicit information into the foreground to ensure the message of the text is interpreted accurately. The following examples illustrate the types of texts used in training LSP translators that feature the application of various foregrounding techniques aimed at bringing some information into focus.

The explosion of mind-boggling technological “tools” mushrooming from the global envelopment of the Internet into cellular telecommunications, powerful financial and investment software, wireless computing connectivity, and high-volume electronic data management. All were developed by techno-wizards with laudable intentions, but were promptly adapted by what came to be known as the “black hat” community of high-tech fraudsters, saboteurs, and terrorists. (Goldman, 2010, p. 5)

The excerpt from the text *Fraud in the Markets: Why It Happens and How to Fight It* by Peter Goldman is a good medium for practicing the translation of interdisciplinary popular LSP texts featuring the use of a variety of foregrounding techniques. The text addresses the issues of market and finance, ICT technologies, online fraud, and forensic techniques. Considering such terms as *cellular telecommunications*, *wireless computing connectivity*, and *high-volume electronic data management* as well as the professionalism “*black hat*” *community*, students develop their thematic competence. At the same time, analyzing such stylistically loaded pieces of vocabulary as *mind-boggling*, *mushrooming*, and *laudable intentions* from a contrastive perspective, students not only advance their linguistic competence but also promote their procedural knowledge in dealing with elements of foregrounding in translation, that is, selecting the target language counterpart with the same expressive value and within the same register as the respective source language units. Sometimes relevant contextual information can be found in the text itself, the so-called co-text, which, according to Brown and Yule (1983), provides an expanding context that affects the interpretation of the text, such as the following:

The façade of the Rucellai palace is famous for its meticulous grading of the classical orders, from Doric at the bottom to Corinthian at the top. . . . Juicy oak garlands are crammed into narrow crevices over the doors. Bifora windows, familiar in Italian Gothic, now acquire three tiny classical columns framing and splitting the openings, capped by a tiny entablature, which completes a separate little architectural universe. (Harbison, 2009, p. 144)

This extract from the book *Travels in the History of Architecture* by Robert Harbison provides student translators an opportunity to activate and expand their background knowledge on architecture considering such terms as *Doric* and *Corinthian order*, *Bifora window*, and *entablature*. At the same time, as the text is highly expressive, presenting unique aesthetic vision of the author, the students have an excellent opportunity, in translating the text, to practice the transfer of a wide range of rhetorical techniques, numerous instances of foregrounding (e.g., *juicy oak garlands crammed into narrow crevices*, *separate little architectural universe*) and excel in their own talent development producing a creative translation that causes equivalent response with the target readership.

## 7. The case study

The present case study reflects on the results of the ongoing research on the efficiency of the application of popular LSP texts in LSP translator training. The study was performed in two groups of Master students in translation rendering

from English as the source language into Latvian, Russian, and French. The sample consisted of 14 students, 4 male and 10 female in the age group from 24 to 27. At the moment, the sample is too small to make reliable conclusions, so the results of the analysis are preliminary.

The sample task (given in the appendix) consisted of reading, analyzing and translating a popular text on architecture. Students were informed about the expected level of background knowledge and the desired learning outcomes: to demonstrate sound level of thematic competence in architecture and civil engineering (factual and conceptual knowledge) and linguistic competence, to be able to identify and decode intertextual references in the text, to organize and manage knowledge, to be able to identify elements of foregrounding in the text, to identify figurative language use, to decode implicit meaning in contexts and to analyze the text from a contrastive perspective. English was used as the language of instruction, and possible translation variants and solutions to potential translation problems were back translated into English to ensure the students followed the line of reasoning.

During the pre-reading stage, the students were invited to activate and demonstrate their background knowledge on the subject, constructing a mind map of concepts related to the thematic field of Gothic architecture. It was expected that the students would possess different levels of factual and conceptual knowledge, so this activity was aimed at raising awareness of existing knowledge and levelling this knowledge across members of the group.

After reading the text, students had to check their preliminary knowledge against new information they learned. The instructor should have made sure students did not miss any of the terms in the given subject field: *internal elevation, two-tier system, flying buttress, arcade, partition, buttress, tracery, portal, nave, and chancel*, as well as the terms belonging to other thematic fields, for example, *bishop's seat, royal patronage, raise money, coronation church, tax levied, and social unrest*.

Completing Task 2, students were supposed to identify at least three allusions in the text: to a personality, to a Biblical scene and to an architectural style. It should be expected that the students would not be familiar with the personality of Suger, a French abbot, a proponent of the spread of Gothic style, but they should be capable of identifying an allusion in the text. Analyzing and decoding religious references is always a sensitive issue, as depending on the composition of the classroom, students may or may not experience more or less difficulties in decoding the allusion to a Biblical scene, Annunciation. All students in the sample had to consult the dictionary to understand the item in English, and 73% needed additional explanation with regard to the exact scene portrayed by the carved group. The reference to Romanesque style was successfully decoded by all students, although the differences between Gothic and Romanesque styles had to be readdressed.

The next task involved detailed stylistic analysis of the text. Analyzing the instances of foregrounding, students displayed their skills in identifying and interpreting figurative language use. Students identified many vivid manifestations of the author's individual style: "The structural system is refined by eliminating the gallery, turning it into a skeleton of itself, spidery frameworks pierced by little arcades, following the century-long saga with baited breath, the nave and chancel walls are being dematerialized to admit light filtered through colored glass." However, less expressive instances of foregrounding were not noticed and had to be identified by the instructor and discussed: *crucial ingredient*, *raise money on the back of this earlier achievement*, *'wrong' smiling angel*, and such graphic stylistic devices as the use of italics (*didn't get their cathedrals*). Discussion of the elements of foregrounding helped students identify potential translation problems and suggest methods for their solution. Students were asked to translate the text at home, and their translations were peer-discussed in the classroom.

Activities of this kind proved to be very useful in LSP translator training as they simultaneously promote development of thematic, linguistic, and intercultural competences. The students displayed interest in looking for additional information on the subjects addressed, actively took part in discussion of translation challenges, and exercised their own creative talent in producing the target text.

## 8. Conclusions

The analysis of popular LSP texts provides opportunity to structure student background knowledge and expand it to account for linguistic innovation. Application of popular LSP texts instead of purely technical or scientific texts characterized by neutral style and rigid genre conventions provides opportunity for student translators to develop advanced text processing and decoding skills, to develop awareness of expressive resources of the source and target languages and to develop understanding of socio-pragmatic language use.

Performing pragmatic and stylistic text analysis, student translators have to consider the layers of complexity of meaning representation and make a final decision concerning the optimal, most acceptable translation variant. Thus, the knowledge of lexical relationships should be an integral element of a translator's linguistic competence. Students should be motivated to advance their mastery of both their native and working languages, read and analyze popular and scientific LSP texts, develop their perception of figurative language use, such as metaphors, puns and wordplay, and raise their cultural and socio-pragmatic literacy.

The novelty of the suggested methodology is that students are trained to spot and decode relevant explicit and implicit information in the text, to make informed choice in selecting the most appropriate translation strategy, and to

promote their curiosity in acquiring new knowledge and imagination in transferring this knowledge across languages and cultures.

Translation is primarily a linguistic activity, and the very act of translating promotes the knowledge of the working languages. By interpreting and transferring the meaning of the source text, reproducing its rhetorical function and expressive potential, students become more proficient language users.

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## APPENDIX

### The sample task

#### Pre-reading tasks

You are going to read a text on Gothic architecture. Before you read, make a list of terms denoting elements of Gothic buildings you already know. Organize them into a mind map. Add any other relevant concepts to represent your understanding of Gothic architecture. Read the text and compare your ideas with the ideas of the author

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At Chartres there is a marked increase in scale made more forceful by simplifying the internal elevation. The structural system is refined by eliminating the gallery, turning it into a skeleton of itself, the lower stage of a two-tier system of flying buttresses that are no longer heavy vanes of stone as at Laon, where they formed almost solid partitions. At Chartres they have become spidery frameworks pierced by little arcades, forecasting the next development at Reims and Amiens in which the buttress starts to resemble a fragile tracery, allowing the walls to do the same and matching them in the other dimension until every solid element partakes of the single striving after height and lightness.

For completeness perhaps we ought to mention important towns of the early thirteenth century that didn't get their cathedrals. It turns out that a crucial ingredient in almost every successful case is a Suger-figure, a powerful and effective bishop who for his own purposes wants a large new cathedral. Sometimes, as at Reims, the coronation church, he can depend on royal patronage. Elsewhere, as at Chartres, he has already made his seat a centre of learning and can raise money on the back of this earlier achievement. Moving stories are told about how the whole community pitches into the task, dragging heavy loads, donating skills, following the century-long saga with baited breath.

There are also the stories of construction halted by popular riots or insurrection, as at Reims, where the grievance was a heavy tax levied to fund the construction. It has been shown that column-figures for the portals at Reims were sometimes carved long before they could be set in place and held over during delays caused by social unrest, so that groupings were revised, and we wound up with the 'wrong' smiling angel in the famous Annunciation group. While the nave and chancel walls are being dematerialized to admit light filtered through coloured glass, façades and portals are disappearing under sculptural multitudes that far outdo Romanesque schemes in complexity and extent.

#### Post-reading tasks

1. Find the items of professional vocabulary that do not pertain to the field of architecture and civil engineering. Identify the field to which they belong.
2. Identify intertextual references in the text and uncover their implicit meaning.
3. Find instances of foregrounding. Specify their function.
4. Analyze potential translation problems. Decide on the most appropriate translation strategy.