Application of a translation problems typology

A helpful pre- and post-translating didactic resource

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Abstract

Identifying translation problems, classifying them, and considering the most suitable strategies for solving them can be a helpful learning approach to develop strategic competence in translation trainees. On this assumption, we introduced students in Spain and Chile to a specific translation problems typology (TPT) for two years, and used it as a pre-translation task, for early stages of translation training, and as a post-translation task, for advanced stages. Then, a study comprising a survey and a questionnaire was conducted to determine whether trainees perceived this pedagogical approach and the TPT as helpful to solve translation problems, make fewer mistakes in the translation tasks, reflect upon their translation process and increase their knowledge about Translation Studies. Undergraduate and graduate students from both countries participated in the study. The results obtained suggest that both the TPT and the pedagogical approach are effective and that their usefulness and contribution are significant at different learning stages of the translation learning stages.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic competence (SC) is included in most of the generally accepted translation competence (TC) models (EMT expert Group, 2022; Kelly, 2005; PACTE, 2000/2018). It was defined in PACTE's early TC model (2000, p. 101) as "all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems found during the translation process." In this model, SC is considered to govern or manage all other competences, evidencing their interrelation. Kelly's TC model (2005) also includes SC as a governing competence over all other competences and is defined as "encompassing all the procedures applied to carry out organizational and planning skills, problem identification and problem-solving, monitoring, self-assessment, and revision" (Kelly, 2005, p. 85). Moreover, in Kelly's model, what is referred to as 'transfer competence' in many other models such as PACTE's, is included in SC. This is based on Kaiser-Cooke's idea (1994, p. 137) that from the perspective of an expert activity, translation is primarily a problem-solving activity "which involves problem recognition as well as decision-making, since recognition of the problem necessarily precedes decisions as to the various strategies which can be taken to solve it." Problem solving and decision making are also mentioned in the TC model of the Tuning project and included among instrumental competences (González & Wagenaar, 2003). More recently, the EMT expert Group has also stressed the importance of SC when stating that TC should encompass "not only the actual meaning transfer phase between two languages […] but also all the strategic, methodological and thematic competences that come into play before, during and following the transfer phase per se" (DGT, 2022, p. 7). Developing SC in translation trainees is, therefore, one of translation training's overall goals.

Translation problems have been studied by many scholars of Translation Studies (Angelone, 2010; Bell, 1991/1998; Calvo, 2018; Dancette, 1997; Deebs, 2005; De la Cova, 2017; González-Davies & Scott-Tennent, 2005; Hansen, 1997; Hurtado, 2001/2011; Kiraly, 1995; Krings, 1986; Lörscher, 1991; Mayoral, 2001; Miremadi, 1991; Muñoz, 2000; Nord, 1988/2005; Palumbo, 2009; Pavlović, 2010; Pym, 2017; Szymyślik, 2019; Toury, 2010; Way, 2014; Wilss, 1994/1998), although the approaches are very different and there is no consensus regarding the notion and the different aspects of translation problems. There are basically two reasons for this lack of consensus. Firstly, scholars have approached the concept from abstract, theoretical perspectives (e.g., Toury, 2010) or methodological and professional perspectives (e.g.,

Calvo, 2018). Secondly, the notion of translation problem is a complex issue, often associated with a particular model of translation process and/or translation competence model. Many scholars have different opinions on key elements involved, such as the importance of the translator's experience when facing a problem, the automation and speed of problem-solving, the existence of different strategies to solve the problems, or the reactivity to the context underlying the problem (De la Cova, 2017). For example, regarding the importance of the previous experience or level of competence of the translator when facing a translation problem, González-Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005) argue that:

> One important difference between beginner translators and experienced translators is the ability of the latter to spot a problem and to apply adequate strategies and procedures to solve it efficiently and as quickly as possible – the period between spotting the problem and solving it may go from a split second to whole days or weeks (p. 162).

This contrasts with Nord's (1988/2005, p. 166) definition of a translation problem, which states that a translation problem is "an objective (or inter-subjective) transfer task which every translator (irrespective of their level of competence and of the technical working conditions) has to solve during a particular translation process." Another example of disagreement among scholars can be seen in the possible strategies —also called translation procedures, operations, techniques, or solutions— that can be used to address the problems arising from the absence of a total or direct equivalent in a specific segment of a translation assignment. The points of view are entirely opposed and controversial, not only in terms of types and use of possible strategies, but also regarding their importance: many scholars keep considering translation procedures the quintessence of Translation Studies (TS), while others view them as a theoretical anachronism (Zabalbeascoa, 2000).

Without the intention of delving into this lack of consensus, but to approach the subject from a more practical point of view, we aim to explore the contributions to the pedagogy of translation by focusing on the applied methodology of a translation problems typology (TPT) in both pre-translation and post-translation stages. This innovative approach of applying a TPT at different stages of the translation process —and in two different countries— contributes to pedagogy of translation by proposing a new methodology in translator training. The methodology has been applied for two years in order to gather evidence to support the inclusion of this type of teaching exercise, which may be of interest to other institutions engaged in translator training.

After discussing the theoretical framework on translation problems from a teaching perspective, this paper describes the study design methodology — including the survey and questionnaire that were conducted in four working groups at two universities: one in Spain and another one in Chile— and then provides an analysis of the results on the students' perception of this pedagogical approach. Finally, conclusions based on the findings are discussed.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purposes of this article and the application of the translation problem typology, we adhere to the following definition of translation problem offered by Deeb: "A translation problem is whatever presents obstacles in transferring the content of one piece of language into another whether the latter be an element (word), string of elements (clause), a phrase, a grammatical pattern or even a whole text" (Deeb, 2005, p. 3). Additionally, Deeb (2005) distinguishes between the pre-translation and the post-translation approaches to problems, which is particularly useful in pedagogical terms, as it aligns with the way the TPT is used in the research study groups. The former involves identifying the problem while analysing the source text before translating, while the latter implies detecting an error made because a problem was not identified. This dichotomy was previously mentioned by Krings (1986, p. 266), who asserted that translation pedagogy has been attempting to either "predict translation problems prospectively based on a linguistic account of the source-language text or to identify translation problems retrospectively by an error analysis of the target-language text the subjects produced." Both approaches are in line with the two different pedagogical activities related to the use of a translation problem typology made by the authors of this article, that is, the pre-translation one used in Spain and the post-translation one used in Chile.

The issue of identifying a translation problem brings us to the problem-solving stages, since identifying a problem is usually the initial step in this process. As Angelone (2010, p. 17) states: "The translation task is essentially a chain of decision-making activities relying on multiple, interconnected sequences of problem-solving behaviour for successful task completion." Angelone (2010) suggests that there are three steps: problem recognition, solution proposal and solution evaluation. Dancette (1997, p. 86) also mentioned three steps, although they were different: "problem identification (reception of initial data, first interpretation, awareness of goals and

constraints), data processing (comparisons, classifications, inferences, deductions, construction of propositions and images, transformations, and so on), and response (monitoring, revision, and decision making)."

To sum up, as Way (2014) concludes, after reflecting upon the views of various TS scholars such as Wilss (1998) and González-Davies and Scott-Tennent (2005), decision making and problem solving are intertwined, because to solve a problem a decision must be made. After careful consideration of all the models mentioned, for the purposes of this article and the pedagogical implementation of the didactic materials presented, the authors have decided to apply the translation problems typology of Orozco-Jutorán (2016) which includes four stages: a) identification of a problem, b) decision on the appropriate strategies to solve it, c) solution of the problem, and d) assessment and reflection (metacognitive stage).

1.1. The translation problems typology (TPT) as a pedagogical tool

In our field, there are several authors who have approached the translation problems from pragmatic and textual perspectives (House, 1981), methodological perspectives based on cultural norms and conventions (Toury, 2010), practical approaches (Newmark, 2010), empirical studies (Lachat, 2003), functionalism (Nord, 2005), and pedagogy (Hurtado, 2011; Muñoz, 2000; Orozco-Jutorán, 2016). Since our approach is circumscribed within didactics, we have applied Orozco-Jutorán's (2016) typological proposal for the development of our empirical study.

This TPT is designed to enable trainees to choose and reflect upon the strategies employed so that they can find the resources (linguistic or extralinguistic) and establish the appropriate criteria to solve the problems (Orozco-Jutorán, 2016). Way (2014, p. 139) states that classifying translation problems is important because this enables trainees to progressively acquire the necessary skills to justify their decisions and thus "decision making becomes internalized and offers the tools to better visualise, understand and justify decisions throughout training and in professional practice." This is the spirit behind the TPT presented here. The TPT was created to be used in the translation class as a pedagogical resource and it covers the whole translation process, following the three fundamental cognitive processes described by Angelone (2010): 1) source language comprehension, 2) source-language-target language transfer of meaning, and 3) target language production.

As can be seen in Table 1, three of the four translation problem types —comprehension, transfer, and rewriting problems— are divided into two sub-categories: linguistic and extralinguistic, and the pragmatic one is the only one that is not divided into sub-categories because the reflection and possible research needed to solve the type of problem is not related to any linguistic or extralinguistic aspects. Pragmatic problems arise from the translation brief or the communicative context of the translation. The solution, therefore, involves a metacognitive task, since the translator needs to reflect and, in many cases, contact the client to find out, for instance, where the target text (TT) will be published.

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1. Comprehension problem. These problems arise when one element is not understood, and they can be either:
• **Linguistic** (terms, idioms, syntactic structures, cohesion, phraseology, etc.)
• **Extralinguistic**: cultural elements (i.e., a custom or tradition that does not exist in the target culture), encyclopaedic knowledge (i.e., general knowledge about the world and the specific vision of the world of the source language and culture), or domain-related knowledge (i.e., lack of knowledge of a concept due to the specificity of the domain: law, economics, sciences, engineering, etc.)

2. Transfer problem. These problems arise when one element may be literally translated, resulting in an incomprehensible or not idiomatic form in the target language or culture. It can also arise when the typical or traditional way of translating one element does not work in that specific context. These are problems resulting from differences between the two languages at the lexical, morphosyntactic, stylistic or textual level and can be either:
• **Linguistic** (false friends, idioms, syntactic structures more frequently used in the source than in the target language, punctuation used differently in both languages, etc.)
• **Extralinguistic** (cultural or domain-specific elements that may appear odd in the target culture if translated literally, e.g., non-existent customs, symbols, acronyms, or abbreviations that have different meanings)

3. Rewriting problem. These problems arise when an element of the source text seems to have been understood but is nonetheless difficult to rewrite or rephrase in the target language in an idiomatic, natural way or in the adequate mode, register, tenor, or language variety. This type of problem can be either:
• **Linguistic** (terms that cannot be repeated because of style, idioms that do not have a clear equivalent in the target language, nuances in meaning

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difficult to express in a natural way, syntactic structures or verb tenses or modes that do not coincide with those of the target language, etc.) • **Extralinguistic** (for instance, finding an adequate translation or the proper translation procedure to explain, adapt, substitute, etc. cultural elements, encyclopaedic or domain-related knowledge.)
4. Pragmatic problem. These problems arise when the translation brief (implicit or explicit) implies making changes in the target text because of the potential reader of the TT, the communicative context, or some other important element. These problems can be related to intention, assumptions, or implicit elements in the source text, as well as to the characteristics of the target reader, the mode, and the communicative context of the target text.

Table 1. Translation problems typology (TPT)

1.2. Examples of using the TPT in the classroom

The rationale for separating linguistic and extralinguistic problems is that the sources for researching to find the solution to the problems in the two cases are very different. Let us see an example. Table 2 shows two paragraphs of a text written in English.

My flat was at the first floor in a new block behind Langham Place. There was a common staircase, with a porter and a liftman at the entrance, but there was no restaurant or anything of that sort, and each flat was quite shut off from the others. […] I was just fitting my key into the door when I noticed a man at my elbow. I had not seen him approach, and his sudden appearance made me start.

Table 2. Extract of the novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, by John Buchan

If beginner trainees are asked to translate this text, the linguistic comprehension problems that might arise —such as not understanding "a man at my elbow" or "made me start"— can be solved by looking at a general monolingual dictionary in the source language; the definition of the wordings will be enough for the trainee to understand their meaning. However, an extralinguistic encyclopaedic comprehension problem such as "Langham Place" will not be solved by looking it up in a dictionary.

After understanding these linguistic and extralinguistic elements, the same elements might be classified as transfer, rewriting and/or pragmatic problems.

1.2.1. Example of using the TPT as a pre-translation task at an early learning stage

The didactic unit presented here has been designed for university beginner translators from English into Spanish in their first year of training in translation, either at graduate or postgraduate levels at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The TPT is used with a pre-translation approach, as part of the preparation to translate the text.[1]

Table 4 contains a text analysed in class, where many possible potential translation problems were identified. The trainees did not receive a copy of the text with the underlined problem types. This is only done here to provide examples of the possible translation problems of different types that can be found in the text. These problems will vary from one trainee to another, based on their previous knowledge, cultural background, etc. In fact, some elements may present different problems at different stages of the translation process or give rise to other problems for different trainees. For example, Table 3 highlights the extralinguistic rewriting problem of "100m" in Spanish, a concept that could be confusing for trainees. Also, the combination of numbers and letters is not common in Spanish, and the trainee may struggle with comprehension or transfer issues, as "m" is used for meters in Spanish.

AN UNACCEPTABLE WEAPON

If the United States were to decide that landmines, like biological and chemical weapons, are <u>beyond the pale</u> **(CL), the world would listen**
The particular horror of <u>anti-personnel landmines</u> (CED) is that their power to kill and maim survives the fighting. More than <u>100m</u> (RE) mines lie undetected in more than 60 countries, tearing the limbs off perhaps <u>20,000</u> (TE) passers-by each year. New mines <u>are laid faster than old ones can be</u> (CL) cleared. Next month in <u>Geneva</u> (CEE) governments will be trying, once again, to rewrite the <u>United Nations</u>' (CEE) feeble 16-year-old rules on these pernicious weapons. They will once again find it difficult. An earlier meeting ended in stalemate with some wanting the weapon to be banned, others keen to leave matters as they are for a generation or two, many pursuing a range of compromises. This time, however, if <u>America</u> (CEC)were to <u>weigh in,</u> (CL) renouncing the use of mines and supporting the two dozen (RE) countries that urge a ban, the result might be different. It could happen. The wounding

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[1] For a more thorough explanation of the whole didactic unit, see Orozco-Jutorán (2016).

of three <u>American</u> (TE) <u>servicemen</u> (TL) in Bosnia may have helped to concentrate <u>American</u> (TE) minds. But the unease goes well beyond this.

Codes used for the different translation problem types (underlined):
Comprehension:
- Linguistic (CL)
- Extralinguistic: cultural (CEC), encyclopaedic (CEE), domain-related (CED)
- Transfer:
- Linguistic (TL)
- Extralinguistic (TE)
- Rewriting:
- Linguistic (RL)
- Extralinguistic (RE)

Table 3. Fragment of a text with translation problem types highlighted. Text reproduced with permission of *The Economist* ©

The translation problems task is developed over four sessions with the goal of identifying the translation problems in the text, classifying them according to the TPT, and solving them using the documentation resources available that have been learned in previous instructional units.

In session 1, trainees are introduced to the TPT (Table 1). All types of problems and recommended strategies are thoroughly explained, allowing room for debate to ensure trainees understand them. In session 2, trainees are asked to detect, in the same text analysed in the previous task, which can be seen in Table 3, five problems of different types. In session 3, trainees are asked to find a specific strategy and a possible solution for the five problems that have been identified. Then, trainees have one week to submit a table like Table 4. In the table, they need to list the five problems detected, their type, the strategy used to solve them, and a possible solution. Finally, during session 4, trainees receive their tables back with comments from the trainer and discuss any possible questions or doubts regarding the activity, problem types, strategies, and reliable documentation resources.

Source text fragment where the problem is	Problem type	Strategy used to solve the problem	Solution found

Table 4. Table to be filled out in and submitted by trainees

1.2.2. Example of using the TPT as a post-translation task at an advanced learning stage

This didactic unit (DU) is developed over 12 sessions with advanced translation undergraduate trainees who are in their eighth semester, as a post-translation exercise in the English-Spanish Translation Program at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. The objective is to select some translation problems, classify them according to the TPT, describe them, and finally justify the proposed solution by explaining the strategies and resources used.

The DU begins with the translation and revision of several texts, during four sessions. After the trainees have become familiar with the translation process and the legal-economic subject area, they are prepared to undertake the post-translation exercise on translation problems. In sessions 1 to 4, trainees are introduced to the TPT (Table 1). All types of problems and recommended strategies are explained and discussed using examples. These examples are taken from texts translated by trainees both in previous years and the current year, before this DU. Trainees realise that translation problems have always been present in their previous translations, and in most cases, they have been able to provide a suitable solution. This helps trainees to familiarise themselves with this typology. In sessions 5 to 10, trainees receive new texts to translate and after the revision in class, they are asked to choose at least 2 translation problems they encountered and fill out the Classification Table (CT) shown in Table 5. The CT includes the problematic element of the source text, type of problem, problem description, theoretical basis for the proposed solution, and solution implemented in the target text. This systematic approach helps trainees gain awareness of their translation process, develop critical thinking skills, and integrate TS metalanguage into their justifications.

ST	Quote the whole sentence, or paragraph if necessary, and highlight the translation problem.
Type of problem	Classify the problem according to the TPT.
Description of the problem	Describe the problem in terms of impediments to conveying the meaning of the ST, obstacles to translating

	the author's intentionality, challenges posed by textual and genre characteristics or the translation draft, etc.
Theoretical basis for the proposed solution	Provide support for the solution proposed by integrating theory from translation studies with grammatical, linguistic, or pragmatic approaches. Your writing should include technolect, translation techniques, references to parallel texts, definitions from monolingual/bilingual dictionaries/encyclopaedias, databases, assessment by domain experts, and any theoretical knowledge used or acquired.
TT	Quote the whole sentence, or paragraph if necessary, and highlight where the solution to the problem is.

Table 5. CT and instructions given to trainees to fill it in

During sessions 5 to 10, 20 minutes are dedicated to discussing potential translation issues each time a new text is introduced. Trainees have already translated and revised the text with the trainer's guidance, so they are familiar with the problematic elements. Initially, the trainer, together with the trainees, completes the CT. This is done repeatedly over these 5 sessions with immediate feedback from the trainer, until the trainees have enough confidence to complete the table by themselves. In sessions 10-12, trainees continue working in pairs or groups of three to complete the CT. Then they are required to present their work to the class and the trainer offers feedback, makes recommendations, and provides necessary corrections to meet the requirements set up in the CT. In this way, using the TPT becomes a regular task in the translation process.

2. STUDY DESIGN

To assess the trainees' perception of the TPT's usefulness, the authors designed and conducted a survey and a qualitative questionnaire. The survey was conducted for two consecutive years (academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Spain and academic years 2021 and 2022 in Chile) for groups 1, 2, and 3. The qualitative questionnaire was administered to group 4 in Chile in 2022, to obtain qualitative data to complement the quantitative data collected in the survey.

The survey included four questions designed to test four assumptions. These assumptions are as follows: whether the pedagogical approach explained in the previous sections and trainees perceive the use of the TPT as (1) helpful to solve translation problems, (2) helpful to make fewer mistakes in the translation tasks, (3) helpful to reflect upon their translation process, and (4) helpful to increase their knowledge about Translation Studies. In addition to testing these assumptions, the survey also aimed at comparing the use of the TPT as a pre-translation task, with trainees at an early stage of the translation learning process (groups 1 and 2), and as a post-translation task, with trainees at an advanced stage of their translation learning process (groups 3 and 4). The survey comprised a series of questions in a Google Form format. Trainees in groups 1, 2, and 3 received an email containing a link to the form, allowing them to respond to the questions anonymously. The survey conducted was a non-interventional study and ensured anonymity, so ethical approval was not necessary. In the email and Google form, trainees were fully informed about the study's purpose and implications, and that their participation was completely anonymous and voluntary. The survey consisted of four questions, with the first four being multiple choice. These questions can be found in Table 6. Trainees were asked to use a 5-point Likert scale to indicate their agreement with each statement (1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = totally agree).

Q1. Has using the TPT been helpful in solving translation problems?
Q2. Has using the TPT helped you make fewer mistakes in the translations you did afterward?
Q3. Has using the TPT helped you reflect on your usual translation process?
Q4. Did filling in the table used in class after being introduced to the TPT increase your knowledge about Translation Studies?

Table 6. Multiple choice questions in the survey about the use of the TPT

After answering these four questions, respondents were asked an open-ended question: "Would you like to add any comment or suggestion regarding the usefulness or the way of using the TPT in the translation classes?" This extra question was designed to provide more comprehensive and contextual feedback from respondents, and also to establish a connection between the survey and the qualitative questionnaire, making it easier to analyse and

triangulate quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative questionnaire given to group 4 comprised 6 open-ended questions (see Table 7).

Q1. Was it easy to understand this Translation Problem Typology which has 4 sections and 2 subsections (linguistic and extralinguistic), from the first time you were introduced to it?
Q2. Once you understood and assimilated this typology, can you describe how you actually use it to identify and classify a translation problem when you find it?
Q3. Do you think it would be also useful to identify and classify translation problems before you start translating it, instead of doing this only after you have translated the text?
Q4. Do you think the repeated use of this typology in some classes of Legal-Economic Translation and during the Translation Placement/internship has helped you to access or gain theoretical knowledge of Translation Studies?
Q5. Do you consider that identifying and classifying translation problems helps you to enhance the quality of your translations?
Q6. Do you agree with the following statement? "The use of a typology of translation problems should always be included in the translation courses of any translation training program" In case you agree with the statement, please elaborate.

Table 7. The questionnaire with open-ended questions applied in Chile to group 4

This qualitative questionnaire was designed to gather information about the trainees' perceptions regarding (1) the effectiveness of the pedagogical approach used to introduce and explain the TPT; (2) the application of the TPT; (3) whether this approach should also be adopted in a pre-translation stage, as this questionnaire was only given to trainees in group 4, who used the TPT as a post-translation task; (4) whether the use of the TPT increases or mobilises their knowledge about Translation Studies; (5) whether the use of the TPT contributed to improving the quality of their translations; and (6) the interest in introducing this pedagogical tool in translation training programs.

2.1. Participants

The different groups of trainees that make up the sample of the study were from two different universities, one in Spain and the other in Chile, with diverse backgrounds and contexts:

2.1.1. Groups 1 and 2 from Spain

The University's Faculty of Translation and Interpreting offers Bachelor's (BA) and Master's degrees (MA), including the Official Master's degree in Translation and Intercultural Studies. Therefore, TPT was first used with the graduate trainees of a mandatory translation subject of the BA, called "Introduction to Translation from B to A Language." This subject is taken in the first year of the BA. These trainees work from English (B language) into Spanish (A language). In the study, this group is referred to as group 1. The TPT was also used in group 2, which consisted of post-graduate trainees taking a compulsory subject of the MA called "Translation Methodology." This subject is part of a module called "Fundamentals of Translation, Translation Studies, and Intercultural Studies" in the MA. These trainees are from China. In this course, the trainees are not involved in actual translation; instead, they are introduced to the methodology of translation without working in a specific language combination. The examples used in class are in Chinese, English and Spanish, since they have a good command of all three languages. Therefore, the first group consists of undergraduate, first-year Spanish university students working with their B-A language combination, while the second group comprises postgraduate Chinese trainees working without a specific language combination. The two groups share a common feature: they are both in the early stages of learning translation, so the TPT is used as a pre-translation task. Both groups took part in the survey described in section 2 for two consecutive years, 2021 and 2022. A total of 76 students (37 in 2021; 39 in 2022) from group 1, and a total of 35 students (18 in 2021; 17 in 2022) from group 2.

2.1.2. Groups 3 and 4 from Chile

Undergraduate programs in Chilean universities are typically designed to be completed in four or five years of full-time study. Currently, there are 12 universities offering translation programs across the country (Araya, 2022). The Program at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso offers a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and a Professional Degree in English-Spanish Translation. The translation program requires completion of nine semesters. The undergraduate trainees who used the TPT were in their fourth and fifth year of university (eighth and ninth semester, respectively) and were generally between the ages of 20 and 24. The third study group from Chile was for the Legal-Economic Translation course in the eighth semester —in the study, this

group is referred to as group 3, and they participated in the same survey that was conducted in Spain for two consecutive years, 2021 and 2022. The fourth study group (group 4) from Chile was enrolled in the Translation Professional Practicum course at institutions that required translation services. In their final semester, trainees combine real translation work in a company or institution with academic activities. As part of these activities, they must prepare a final report on their placements. The translation practicum report should include the presentation of five translation problems collected from the 20,000 words they have translated.[2] Since this group was more advanced and worked more extensively with the TPT, they were considered the best group to gather qualitative data. A total of 24 students from group 3, and a total of 14 students from group 4, took part in the study.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Survey results

Regarding the survey, which was sent to trainees in groups 1, 2, and 3 for two consecutive years, a mean of 83% of the trainees answered the questions. This total percentage is broken down as follows: Group 1: Undergraduate trainees in Spain, using the TPT with pre-translation approach: 76%. Group 2: Postgraduate trainees in Spain, using the TPT with pre-translation approach: 91%. Group 3: Undergraduate trainees in Chile, using the TPT with post-translation approach: 82%.

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the survey results, comparing the answers to each of the four multiple choice questions of the three trainee groups. For the sake of clarity, for each of the three groups, the means of the answers obtained in years 1 and 2 have been calculated, and this is the number that can be seen in each figure. This system allows us to show the results for each group in only one column and thus the answers of the three groups can be compared in a simple chart. The datasets including all the answers to the surveys for each year and group can be consulted online.

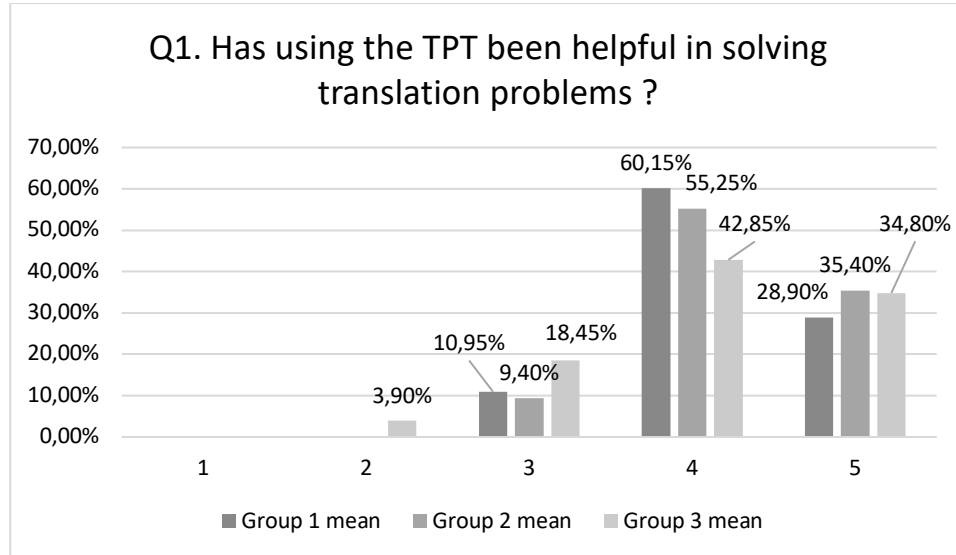[2] For more details about the practicum process and specifically about translation problems, see Araya (2025).

Figure 1. Comparison of answers to question 1 by the three trainee groups

The answers to question 1, which was designed to see how helpful the TPT was to solve translation problems according to the trainees' perception, show some similarities and slight differences between the three groups. The average among the three groups is as follows: for option 4 (I agree), 52%; option 5 (I totally agree), 33%; and option 3 (I neither agree nor disagree), 12%. There were no "1: I totally disagree" answers in neither of the three groups and only 4% of the answers in group 3 were "2: I disagree." Adding the percentages of the answers "I agree" and "I totally agree" in each of the three groups (89%, 91%, and 77%) suggests that most trainees found the TPT helpful to solve translation problems.
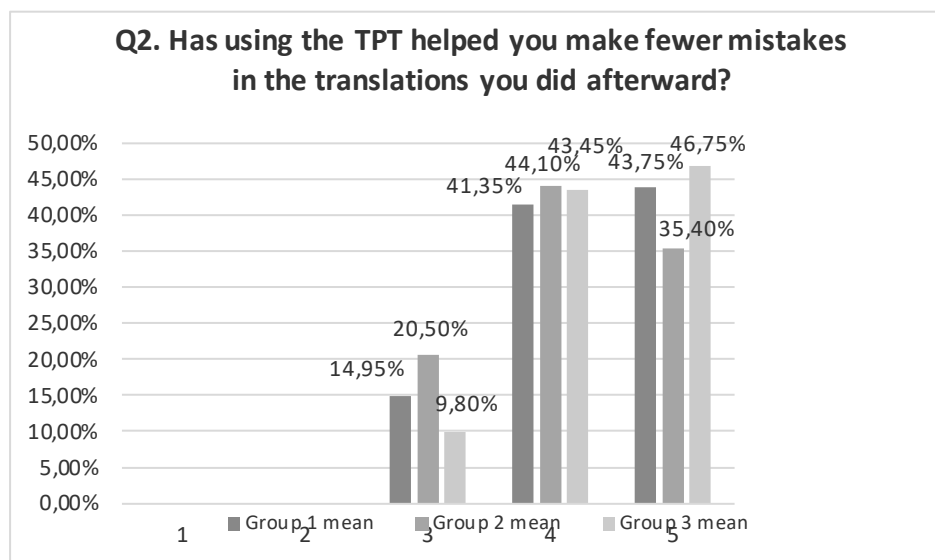
Figure 2. Comparison of answers to question 2 by the three trainee groups

The answers to question 2, which was designed to see how helpful the TPT was to make fewer mistakes in the translation tasks according to the trainees' perception, show some similarities and some differences between the three groups. The average among the three groups is as follows: for option 4 (I agree), 42%; option 5 (I totally agree), 42%; and option 3 (I neither agree nor disagree), 15%. There were no answers of "1: I totally disagree" or "2: I disagree" in neither of the three groups. Adding the percentages of the answers "I agree" and "I totally agree" in each of the three groups (85%, 79% and 90%) suggests that most trainees found the TPT helpful or very helpful to make fewer mistakes in the translation tasks.
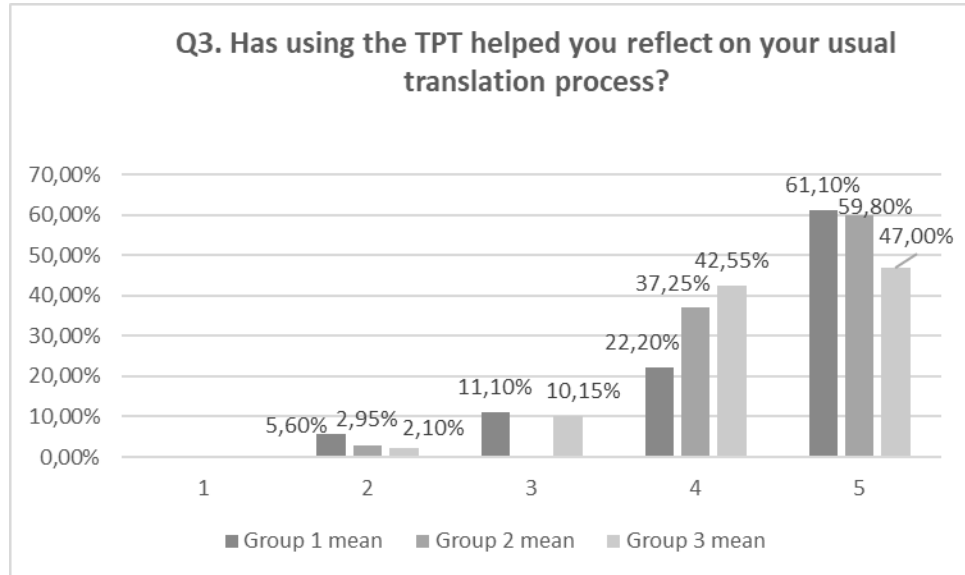
Figure 3. Comparison of answers to question 3 by the three trainee groups

The responses to question 3, aimed at assessing how helpful the TPT was for trainees to reflect on their translation process based on their perception, reveal both similarities and differences among the three groups. The average among the three groups is as follows: option 5 (I totally agree), 56%; option 4 (I agree), 34%; and option 3 (I neither agree nor disagree), 10%; and option 1 (I disagree), 3%. The sum of the percentages of the answers "I agree" and "I totally agree" in each of the three groups (83%, 97%, and 90%) indicates that most trainees found the TPT useful or very useful to reflect upon their translation process.
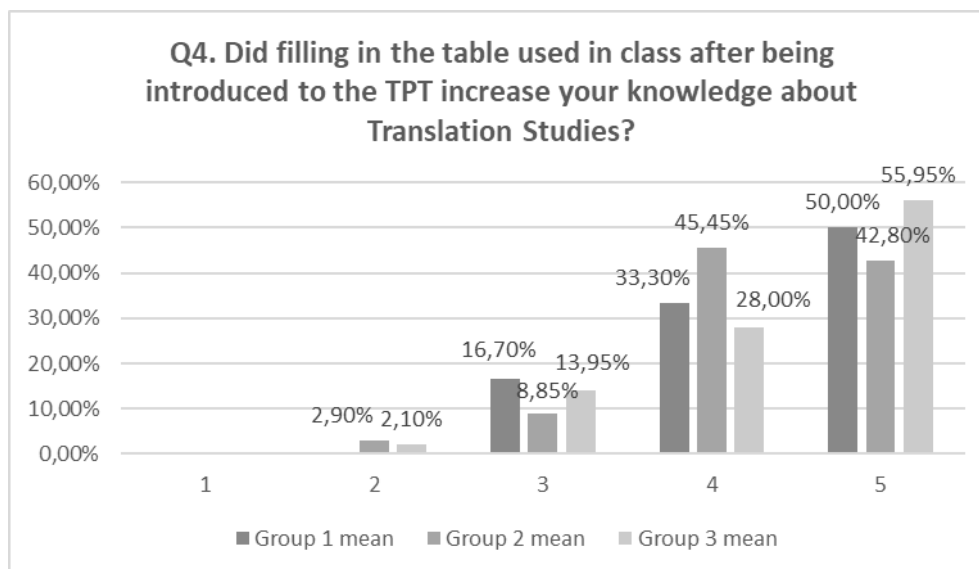
Figure 4. Comparison of answers to question 4 by the three trainee groups

The responses to question 4, aimed at assessing the TPT's effectiveness in enhancing the trainees' understanding of Translation Studies as perceived by them, demonstrate both similarities and differences across the three groups. The responses to question 4, aimed at assessing the TPT's effectiveness in enhancing the trainees' understanding of Translation Studies as perceived by them, demonstrate both similarities and differences across the three groups. The average among the three groups is as follows: option 5 (I totally agree), 49%; option 4 (I agree), 35%; and option 3 (I neither agree nor disagree), 13%; and option 1 (I disagree), 1.6%. Finally, there were no total disagreement answers in the three groups. The results showed that none of the three groups disagreed completely. When we combined the percentages of "I agree" and "I totally agree" for each group (83%, 86%, and 84%), it showed that most trainees found the TPT helpful or very helpful to increase their knowledge about Translation Studies. The optional open-ended question at the end of the survey, "Would you like to add any comment or suggestion regarding the usefulness or the way of using the TPT in the translation classes?" was answered by 20% of the trainees. The group that provided the most answers was group 3, the undergraduate trainees in Chile, who used the TPT with a post-translation approach. The trainees' feedback can be divided into two main

categories: 80% found the TPT useful and functional, while 20% found it interesting and felt that its use broadened their understanding of translation.

3.2. Questionnaire results

Regarding the qualitative survey, 80% of the trainees provided more detailed responses to the questions while 20% just answered yes or not. Trainees emphasized the educational value of the TPT in their professional university training, and how it helped them enhance their translation competence. Here is a summary of the responses to the questionnaire, along with personal assessments and suggestions:

- Q1: All trainees agreed that initially, it was difficult to differentiate among the first three categories. However, as they were given more and more examples and started to apply the TPT in their own translations, classifying the problems became an easier task. Suggestion: include more examples at the beginning.
- Q2: 90% of the trainees stated they followed the same step-by-step process: identification, analysis, description, problem classification with the TPT, and offering a solution.
- Q3: 90% of the trainees indicated that using the TPT would enhance the productivity and quality of the translation process. Three trainees, however, emphasized the fact that translation problems are easier to identify during the translation process or during the revision.
- Q4: Except for one negative response, all the trainees agreed that using the TTP helps them remember and think critically about translation studies and theory. Three trainees emphasized that this pedagogical exercise helps them defend their decisions with more evidence, better understand theoretical concepts, and assign greater importance to TS than before.
- Q5: All trainees strongly believed that using the TPT helped them to enhance the quality of their translations, become more aware of the mistakes, and that the TPT not only helps to understand the translation problems, but also provides other procedures to achieve a high-quality translation.
- Q6: All trainees unanimously agreed that this translation approach for analysing and resolving translation issues should be included in every training course. The following response effectively summarizes the trainees' feedback: "It would be beneficial not only for trainees, but also for trainers, for they will be able to give feedback based on a practical

theoretical guide of a translation problem" and because "answers like 'it doesn't sound right to me' will change to, for example, "it is a linguistic transfer problem."

Table 8. Summary of the questionnaire's responses

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results of the survey data yields several insights. When combining the percentages of answers indicating total disagreement with the four questions asked in all groups and years (which is 0%), the percentage of answers indicating disagreement (ranging from 0% to 5%, with a mean of 1.6%), and the percentage of "neither agree nor disagree" (ranging from 0% to 20%, with a mean of 12%), the result is that only a mean of 13.6% of trainees disagree or are not sure whether the TPT is helpful for solving translation problems, making fewer mistakes in the translation tasks, reflecting upon their translation process, and increasing their knowledge about Translation Studies. This is confirmed by the combined percentages of responses showing complete agreement with the four questions asked across all groups and years —ranging from 29% to 61% with an average of 45%— as well as partial agreement —ranging from 22% to 60% with an average of 41%—. These combined percentages show that, on average, 86% of trainees agree or strongly agree that the TPT is helpful for solving translation problems, reducing errors in translation tasks, reflecting on their translation process, and increasing their knowledge of Translation Studies. This data is further supported by the positive responses to the fifth question of the survey, indicating the usefulness and interest in the TPT. Additionally, the positive feedback received from the qualitative questionnaire provides different insights into the usefulness of the TPT. This leads to the conclusion that the TPT is a valuable pedagogical tool for the translation class.

Secondly, when examining the individual percentages of the responses to each multiple-choice question in the survey, some interesting variations in the trainees' views can observed regarding the effectiveness of the TPT for the four elements that were investigated: solving translation problems, making fewer mistakes in the translation tasks, reflecting upon their translation process, and increasing their knowledge about Translation Studies. The most noticeable difference is that there is just one question for which there are no

conflicting or completely conflicting answers in any of the groups or years; that question is question 2, which is about the connection between using TPT and making fewer mistakes in translation tasks. This suggests that the trainees perceive this as one of the most valuable features of the TPT, whether used as a pre-translation task or a post-translation task. This suggestion is reinforced by the answers to the fifth question of the qualitative questionnaire ("Do you consider that identifying and classifying the translation problems helps you to enhance the quality of your translations?"), where all trainees responded that it did help improve the quality of their translations: some of them mentioned specifically that it helped them make fewer mistakes.

From a pedagogical perspective, this prompts further research into the connection between addressing translation problems in class and the trainees' confidence in making fewer mistakes in their translations. An interesting idea could be to investigate whether this sense of security leads to making fewer mistakes, which could be confirmed through a repeated measurement study, following the works of Haro Soler and Kiraly (2019), for example. Another important difference to be noted is that the third question of the survey received the most "totally agree" responses from all three groups in all years. This was the question regarding the helpfulness of the TPT for reflecting upon their translation process. The percentages of total agreement were 61% in group 1, 60% in group 2 and 47% in group 3. This implies that this would also be one of the most valuable features of the TPT based on the trainees' perception, with some interesting variances when the TPT is used as a pre-translation task or a post-translation task. In the responses from groups 1 and 2, where the TPT was used as a pre-translation task, the percentage of "totally agree" was the highest for all four questions. In contrast, in the responses from group 3, where the TPT was used as a post-translation task, the most notable "totally agree" percentage was for question 4 (related to the increase of their knowledge about Translation Studies), which received 56% of responses, i.e. this was seven points higher than this group's responses to question 3. This makes sense, as the trainees of group 3 were advanced translation trainees and thus were able to incorporate the use of the TPT in their broader experience and perspective of translation. The qualitative questionnaire responses from group 4, consisting of advanced trainees, consistently reinforced the idea that the TPT was helpful. They mentioned that it helped them reflect on the translation process and either increase their knowledge about translation or at least recall what they already knew.

CONCLUSIONS

Concerning the utility of the TPT in addressing translation problems, the results indicate that trainees' perceptions differ based on whether the TPT is used as a pre- or post-translation task. Although there were no instances of "total disagreement" in any group or year, it is interesting to note that there were no "disagreement" answers at all in groups 1 and 2, while in group 3 there was a 4% disagreement rate. This suggests that using the TPT as a pre-translation task (groups 1 and 2) leads to the trainees' perception that it helps to solve problems more than when the TPT is used as a post-translation task (group 3). This makes sense because in the latter case, the translation has already been completed and the problems have already been solved, regardless of how well they were solved. These comparative results suggest that the pre-translation approach is more useful as a practice-oriented tool for problem-solving, while the post-translation approach is more beneficial as a reflection-oriented tool. This could help trainers who are deciding whether to use the TPT as a pre- or post-translation task in class.

In conclusion, we aim to contribute to translation training by introducing a pedagogical tool, the TPT, which can be used with either a pre-translation or a post-translation approach. We believe this tool can help trainees identify and solve translation problems, and enable them to reflect on their translation process, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for the decision-making process with and helping them to make fewer mistakes in their subsequent translation assignments. We also believe that it can be easily used in any cultural and linguistic context, as well as in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. It would be of great benefit if other researchers used the TPT and provided more data to be added to the one gathered in the study presented in this article.

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