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## **DIDACTICS OF SPECIALIZED TRANSLATION – EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS ON STUDENT TRANSLATION ERRORS IN THE CASE OF A WINE- RELATED DOCUMENT**

### **Abstract**

Languages for specific purposes and technical terminology are key to developing professional competencies in future translators. During their undergraduate translation studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, students work with a broad range of texts, reaching from general-purpose to specialized texts (from economics, law, tourism etc.). Previous experience shows that while inexperienced translators and students feel a great deal of apprehension and uncertainty when faced with demanding technical texts, they nevertheless translate them successfully, primarily because the fear of the text motivates them to conduct in-depth research and seek solutions carefully. On the other hand, with general informative texts, which they do not perceive as technically challenging, they often overlook technical and culture-specific items, leading to severe translation errors. In order to verify this presumption, we analysed the translations of select technical and culture-specific terms in the text “Caractéristiques des vins d’Alsace” (Characteristics of the wines of Alsace). We were interested to see whether students working with a text that provides general information on different types of wine would identify its technical and culture-specific terms, and what solutions they would use in their translations.

**Keywords:** didactics of translation, error analysis, specialized translation, translation of culture-specific terms, LSP

## **1. Introduction**

Languages for specific purposes and technical terminology are key to developing professional competencies in future translators. Students enrolled in translation studies at the Department of Translation, University of Ljubljana first encounter specialized translation when translating into the Slovene language. In addition to general-purpose, journalistic, popular science and literary texts, they work with texts from the fields of business, economics, law, tourism, the EU, and engineering. These texts are often their gateway into the language and technical terminology of a specific area of activity, as well as their first step toward becoming acquainted with the role of the translator as an intermediary between two parties, who often have specific and rather different expectations and demands (e.g. seller and buyer, client and vendor, etc.). Contrary to many graduate translation study programmes across the world, where, in addition to an academic degree, students tend to have already acquired some work experience, the students at the Department of Translation studies are young undergraduate students who enrol in these studies immediately after high school. Their background lies primarily in literature and the humanities, and they have very little experience in translation. For them, the translation of specialized texts constitutes not only a practical experience of language in translation but also an introduction into the world in which these texts take shape. As a result, translation training is particularly challenging since it needs to encompass subject-specific content – with the goal of developing the students’ language and translation competencies – as well as content and strategies that raise the young translators’ awareness of the importance of extratextual factors crucial to the text and its translation (i.e. context and extralinguistic knowledge).

During their undergraduate translation studies at the Department of Translation Studies, students work with a broad range of texts, reaching from general-purpose to specialized texts (from economics, law, tourism etc.). Topics in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of the course Translation from French into Slovene include different wines and the culture of wine cultivation and consumption. The analysis of errors and other issues in student translations of texts focusing on wine and wine culture is part of an extensive empirical research study aimed at collecting data on the different types of problems and errors found in student translations, followed by their evaluation from the point of view of the students’ predicted and actual translation competencies. Analysing the translations made by the first generations of translation students under study (i.e. from 1999/2000 until 2010/2011), it became apparent that in addition to the difficulties we had anticipated the students would encounter, and which were thus a part of the course’s learning objectives, there were also errors which, according to our predictions, the students should not have made. The aim of the study was to examine which unexpected errors occurred systematically, what were the causes of these errors, and what they can tell us about the expected and actual competencies of the students.

The analysis of errors presented in this article focuses primarily on semantic errors in student translations of technical and culture-specific terms in the authentic promotional text “Caractéristiques des vins d’Alsace” (Characteristics of the wines of

Alsace). The aim of the analysis is to examine errors and their causes in order to improve the didactics of translation and specialized translation training.

## **2. Theoretical background: error analysis in translation**

Similar to the teaching and learning of foreign languages, the pedagogy and the didactics of translation are crucially linked to the identification of issues and errors. As opposed to the process of learning a foreign language, which concerns the development of communication skills in a foreign language, translation proceeds in reverse: the translator is supposed to have already mastered the foreign language and is now trying to express the message written in that language in their mother tongue. Error analysis therefore usually denotes an analysis of errors found in texts written in the translator's mother tongue.

The analysis of translation errors can be conducted from different points of view. It can focus on a single translation competency, on linguistic or pragmatic errors (vocabulary, syntax, spelling), or specific translation errors associated with the translator's (in)ability to transfer meaning adequately from one language to another. Depending on the different research directions (i.e., examination of causes vs. evaluation), the criteria for what might be considered an error differ significantly as well.

Authors who analyse errors predominantly in terms of communicative adequacy (Nord, 1991; Kussmaul, 1995; Dejean Le Feal, 1993) define translation errors as errors which adversely affect the communicative adequacy of the translation due to the translator's inadequate comprehension or action, which arise as a consequence of the translator's inadequate competency. Accordingly, emphasis falls on the comprehension of textual and extratextual factors in the context of communication and authorial intention, the assumption being that the students are (already) proficient in the source and target languages and as such focus mainly on the translation process itself (Nord, 1992; Kussmaul, 1995). On the other hand, authors who analyse student translations from the point of view of obtaining concrete information about the students' translation competencies pay more attention to the linguistic quality of the translations and to language errors in the target text (Billant, 1970; Bastin, 2003; Elmgrab, 2013, 1996; Chodkiewicz, 2016).

Both approaches are very important for the planning and implementation of pedagogical work – the first primarily in relation to outlining one's working methods, the selection of texts for translation and understanding the causes underlying the issues at hand, and the second in relation to the evaluation phase since the students' competencies do need to be assessed based on concrete criteria at the end of a course or semester.

A similar observation has been made by Paul Kussmaul (1995), who, in the framework of think-aloud protocols and in addition to the causes of "unsuccessful mental processes", examines translation errors and their causes. He illustrates translation analysis with the error falling into the following categories:

1. Cultural adequacy
2. Situational adequacy
3. Speech acts
4. Meaning of words
5. "Language errors"

Just like Christiane Nord (1992), Kussmaul is interested in translation errors particularly in relation to cultural and situational adequacy, as well as in relation to the translation's adequate function and purpose. He judges the severity of an error based on how the translator's inadequate comprehension or action has adversely impacted the message. He also highlights different approaches to the evaluation of translation errors. While foreign language teachers usually assess language errors with greater stringency, even if they have no significant impact on the communicated meaning, professional translators tend to evaluate errors with an emphasis on the communicative function of words and sentences. It might well happen that a language error as identified by a foreign language teacher is not an error in terms of the communicated meaning (1995: 128).

In this context, an important contribution has been made by Anthony Pym (1992: 279), who distinguishes between binary and non-binary errors. He defines binary errors as instances in which it is clear that someone has unquestionably made the wrong decision. The binary approach is characteristic of foreign language teaching, especially of "correct/incorrect" exercises, grammar tests and gap filling exercises. When educating future translators, however, Pym considers the non-binary approach to be more suitable, allowing for several options and acceptable solutions, where one would typically say: "This is correct, but ..." Many such examples can be found in the translations produced by students, especially when they cannot utilize dictionaries and have to find solutions of their own.

Jeanne Dancette (1989) addresses the question of errors and adequacy in translation in a similar manner. She conceives her analysis *La faute de sens en traduction* on two levels: "literal meaning" (*sens littéral*) and "meaning in context" (*sens contextuel; sens cognitif ou signification*) (1989: 85). She differentiates between two categories of errors in comprehension:

- language errors, where the error is a consequence of incorrect linguistic encoding – this includes typographical, morphological and lexical errors (words and idiomatic phrases);
- cognitive errors, which include the incorrect use of the context for interpreting the meaning of words and idioms, the incorrect use of the context for defining syntactic and semantic relations, and the incorrect use of extralinguistic knowledge.

She also stresses that some comprehension issues may arise on multiple levels, i.e. both on the linguistic and the cognitive level. However, whereas linguistic insufficiencies (e.g. understanding a word or a phrase) may be successfully overcome by recourse to extralinguistic knowledge, such insufficiencies might further increase

in direct relation to the diminishing availability of extralinguistic knowledge.

Systematic analyses of actual student translations (Bastin, 2003; Gile, 2005) show that besides translation-specific issues (e.g. problems with reformulating the message) young students also face linguistic difficulties, both in terms of reading comprehension in the foreign language (vocabulary, morphology, syntax) and in terms of expressing meaning in the target language.

The study of different error types is inextricably linked to the examination of the underlying causes of these errors and other issues. Paul Kussmaul (1995) exposes the following as the causes of unsuccessful cognitive processes occurring in translation:

1. interferences;
2. fear of interferences;
3. faulty one-to-one correspondences;
4. misuse of bilingual dictionaries,
5. misuse of world knowledge and one's own experiences;
6. incomplete paraphrasing.

While Kussmaul deals with errors and cognitive processes involved in translation in the most general sense, Daniel Gile (2005) offers an interesting take on error analysis of student translations. He categorizes the errors in student translations into

- semantic errors (*fautes de sens*),
- language errors and mistakes (*fautes et maladresses de langue*),
- and issues with technical terminology and phraseology (*faiblesses dans la terminologie et la phraséologie spécialisées*).

In relation to semantic errors, Gile (2005) states the following causes: insufficient knowledge of the source language; inattentive reading of the source text; bad quality of the source text; inadequate expression (reformulation) of the target text; "mechanical" errors in writing the target text. He attributes language errors and mistakes to insufficient mastery of the target language; temporary influence of the source language on the target language; a deeper inability of the translator to escape the linguistic structures of the source text when reformulating it in the target text; inattentive reformulation and no verification of the acceptability of phrases occurring in the target text. He states that problems which arise in the translations of technical terminology and phraseology are rooted in either no or inadequate research conducted by the student – the student might have opted for an inadequate resource or used it inappropriately.

As two key issues which give rise to the students' difficulties, Gile (2005) lists insufficient knowledge, linguistic as well as extralinguistic, and practical problems, which might include a lack of motivation on the part of the student to make a consistent quality

translation, bad working conditions (e.g. tight deadlines, unavailability of literature), and similar.

In the didactics of translation, the analysis of errors in student translations is important for two reasons: the first is theoretical, as error analysis can help teachers and researchers to better understand the translation process from one language to another, and consequently to better understand the process of acquiring translation competencies; the second is practical, as error analysis can help teachers to diagnose, monitor and evaluate their students' knowledge in a real-world learning situation, and also to facilitate decisions associated with planning group activities and selecting texts for translation. The results of such error analysis make it possible to predict the errors made by the future generations of students and are therefore an important instrument for measuring and developing translation competencies.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research subject and purpose**

The analysis of errors presented in this article focuses on student translations of technical and culture-specific terms in the authentic promotional text "Caractéristiques des vins d'Alsace" (Characteristics of the wines of Alsace). The text is part of a leaflet prepared by the Ruhlmann vineyards from Alsace for visitors to their estate and wine tasting participants. The leaflet describes the vintages 1994-1995. In addition to a description of the characteristics of the wines of Alsace ("Caractéristiques des vins d'Alsace"), it contains a pricelist, an order form, and general terms of sale. The Ruhlmann winery exists to this day and has a list of its wines posted on its official website.

In addition to the analysis of translation errors and solutions, the purpose of this study is primarily didactic, as the results of the error analysis serve as a basis for discussion with students in class, a comparison of translation solutions, a debate on the processes and strategies involved in translation, a conversation about searching for resources and choosing suitable solutions, an examination of the mental processes involved in choosing one option among many, and so on. In this way, students can internalize translation processes and strategies based on their own efforts and issues, and make a connection between theory and practical translation work. For students, this is one of the first specialized texts they have to translate, although they do previously deal with contrastive French-Slovene grammar, textual analysis, technical terminology, culturally specific terms (Schlamberger Brezar, 2009), and other linguistic and pragmatic aspects of translation in the scope of other theoretical courses and practical classes. During the translation process, everything they know about language and translation is interlinked and combined in the final product – the translation. Feedback on errors is important for the student as well as the teacher, while an evaluation of translations spanning multiple years enables us to observe differences among different generations of students, including their attitude towards

information technologies, their preferred method of looking for target equivalents in the available resources (the internet, various corpora, specialized literature), changes in how they tackle problems, as well as changes in the way they think and receive feedback.

In all the generations of students, the evaluation of errors provided starting points for a discussion that linked the students' practical solutions to theoretical foundations and recommendations. In the case of this text we decided not to suggest solutions to students in advance, but to encourage them to think and do research by themselves.

We were interested to see whether students working with a text that provides general information on different types of wine would identify its technical and culture-specific terms, and what solutions they would use in their translations. Previous experience shows that while inexperienced translators and students feel a great deal of apprehension and uncertainty when faced with demanding technical texts, they nevertheless translate them successfully, primarily because the fear of the text motivates them to conduct in-depth research and seek solutions carefully. On the other hand, with general informative texts, which they do not perceive as technically challenging, they often overlook technical and culture-specific items, leading to severe translation errors. In order to verify this presumption, we analysed the translations of select technical and culture-specific terms in the text "Caractéristiques des vins d'Alsace". The approach used for error analysis was based on the examination and comparison of numerous models of text analysis used in translation studies (Newmark, 1988; Nord, 1991; Kussmaul, Kiraly, 2000; 1995; Gile, 2005), as well as models of translation error analysis (Bastin, 2003; Elmgrab, 2017; PACTE, 2005). We focused the analysis on two categories of errors: semantic and language (stylistic) errors that are crucial for the quality of the target text. The focus on these two categories of errors was influenced by some recent research and findings (Chodkiewicz, 2016, Pokorn, 2019). In relation to semantic errors, we primarily focused on the domain-specific competence (knowledge in a specialist field for professional translation practice) and information-mining competence (ability to use documentation resources and search for information).

### **3.2. The source text**

The text "Caractéristiques des vins d'Alsace" consists of 8 short descriptions of wines, comprised of three parts: the name of the wine, a description of its characteristics, and a list of foods to pair it with. The style is concise and formal, with pronounced nominalisation (and omission of verbs). The sentences are short and succinct. The text contains technical terms normally used in descriptions of wines and their features, as well as a host of implicit references to gastronomy and the culture of wine cultivation and consumption (requiring familiarity with the culture of wine drinking, the characteristics of individual wines and their production). An important factor in the selection of this text was the fact that wines from Alsace are very similar to Slovene wines, especially those from the Štajerska region.

#### CARACTERISTIQUES DES VINS D'ALSACE

##### SYLVANER

Excellent vin de table, léger, fruité, agréable à boire.

Accompagne : poissons, charcuterie, choucroute, fruits de mer.

##### PINOT BLANC ou KLEVNER

Souple, moelleux, s'accorde avec tous les plats.

Peut se servir à tout moment de la journée.

##### RIESLING

Triomphe du terroir alsacien, à la fois viril, d'un fruité exquis et d'un bouquet délicat.

Accompagne indistinctement les mets les plus raffinés, est incomparable avec poissons, fruits de mer et bien sûr choucroute.

##### MUSCAT

Sec mais délicieusement bouqueté, constitue un merveilleux apéritif et un délicieux vin de réceptions.

Le Muscat donne l'impression de croquer le raisin frais.

##### GEWURZTRAMINER

Racé, corsé, bien charpenté, d'un bouquet élégant qui enveloppe le nez et remplit la bouche.

Accompagne foie gras, fromages et desserts. Constitue un merveilleux apéritif naturel et un délicieux vin de réception.

##### TOKAY - PINOT GRIS

Opulent et corsé. Aime la bonne chère, le foie gras, le rôti succulent et constitue un apéritif de grande classe.

##### PINOT NOIR

C'est l'outsider des vins d'Alsace. Sa couleur rosée, son fruité et sa race font de lui un vin très demandé par les connaisseurs. Corsé, d'un bouquet élégant, il accompagne tous les plats. Se recommande surtout pour gibiers, volailles, rôtis.

##### CREMANT D'ALSACE

Elaboré selon la méthode champenoise, sous sa robe d'or pâle et lumineuse, il ne manquera pas d'égayer vos réceptions et cocktails ; il rehaussera de sa fraîcheur discrètement fruitée les rencontres gastronomiques, de l'apéritif à la fin du repas.

Servez les vins d'Alsace frais mais non glacés. Conservez vos bouteilles couchées dans une cave fraîche à l'abri de la lumière.

Figure 1. The source text

### 3.3. Corpus of translations for analysis

The analysis included 196 translations made by 13 generations of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students between the academic years 2004/2005 and 2018/2019 (Table 1). The students



**Table 1**  
The corpus

Generation	Academic year	Number of translations	Corpus year code	Translation code	
				from	to
	2004-2005	21	V/1	V/1-1	V/1-21
	2005-2006	14	V/2	V/2-1	V/2-14
	2008-2009	22	V/3	V/3-1	V/3-22
	2009-2010	17	V/4	V/4-1	V/4-17
	2010-2011	15	V/5	V/5-1	V/5-15
	2011-2012	19	V/6	V/6-1	V/6-19
	2012-2013	23	V/7	V/7-1	V/7-23
	2013-2014	11	V/8	V/8-1	V/8-11
	2014-2015	13	V/9	V/9-1	V/9-13
	2015-2016	11	V/10	V/10-1	V/10-11
	2016-2017	13	V/11	V/11-1	V/11-13
	2017-2018	10	V/12	V/12-1	V/12-10
	2018-2019	7	V/13	V/13-1	V/13-7
Total		196			

received the text as part of the study material at the start of the semester, they translated it at home, and had to hand it in by a certain date and time (a condition they had to fulfil in order to be eligible for the test or exam).

We included in the analysis:

- wine names and structure of the document,
- "Gewurztraminer",
- "pinot noir",
- terms used in the descriptions of wines and their characteristics,
- "moelleux" (pinot blanc),
- "choucroute",
- "foie gras".

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Wine names and structure

We were interested to see how students perceived the function of names in a text intended for the promotion and sale of French wines. We anticipated certain dilemmas to arise as to the potential translation of wine names into Slovene, as well as difficulties in terms of structure, i.e. the consistency of nomenclature in the target

**Table 2**

Approaches to translating wines

	Number of translations	Only French or French and Slovene	Only in Slovene	In Slovene except "Gewurztraminer"	Inconsistent
1	21	2	3	7	9
2	14	1	0	6	7
3	22	6	7	3	6
4	17	2	3	0	12
5	15	3	7	2	3
6	19	1	8	1	7
7	23	5	0	12	7
8	11	6	2	3	1
9	13	3	3	7	0
10	11	7	0	2	3
11	13	6	1	6	0
12	10	2	3	0	4
13	7	3	2	2	0
Total	196	47	39	51	59

text (e.g. providing only Slovene names or Slovene in addition to French names), and issues with the wines Gewurztraminer and Crémant d'Alsace. Students received no prior advice or instructions as to the possible translation strategies.

Based on our analysis of the students' translations and the didactic goals of the study, we categorized the solutions found in the analysed target texts into 5 groups. The names of wines:

1. remained in French (no translation): 1 student;
2. were provided in French and in Slovene (or vice versa): 46 students;
3. were provided only in Slovene: 39 students;
4. were provided in Slovene except "Gewurztraminer": 51 students;
5. were inconsistent: 59 students.

The analysis shows considerable discrepancies in the students' translations of wine names, and a lack of thought dedicated to the role of structure and consistency in the target text.

One student (Group 1) kept the French names without providing their Slovene equivalents, and only about 25% of the students (Group 2) decided to include French as well as Slovene names in their translations. The translations made by Group 1 and Group 2 show that the students were aware of the wines presented in the leaflet being typical Alsace wines, which means that "localization" was not a self-evident option. Their solutions seem sensible given the intended function of the document –

**Table 3**  
Examples of translations

Source	Adequate translation (French and Slovene; ex V/4-10)	Inadequate translation (inconsistent: ex.V/4-8)
SYLVANER	SYLVANER (Silvanec)	SILVANEC (SYLVANER)
PINOT BLANC OU KLEVNER	PINOT BLANC (Beli Pinot) ali KLEVNER	BELI PINOT ALI KLEVNER
RIESLING	RIESLING (Rizling)	RIZLING
MUSCAT	MUSCAT (Muškat)	RUMENI MUŠKAT
GEWURZTRAMINER	GEWURZTRAMINER (Traminec)	GEWURZTRAMINER
TOKAY - PINOT GRIS	TOKAY - PINOT GRIS (Sivi Pinot)	TOKAJ – SIVI PINOT
PINOT NOIR	PINOT NOIR (Modri Pinot)	MODRI PINOT
CRÉMANT D'ALSACE	CRÉMANT D'ALSACE (Alzaška penina)	ALZAŠKA PENINA (CRÉMANT D'ALSACE)

the presentation and promotion of select wines, equipped with French labels, which can still be connected to Slovene wines by the translated descriptions.

About a half of the students (Groups 3 and 4) translated the names of the wines into Slovene, 40 of them did so for all the wines in their entirety. However, the translations were very diverse, ranging from neutral terms (“silvanec”, “rizling”, “muškat”, “traminec”) to distinctly Slovene varieties (“zeleni silvanec”, “renski rizling”, “rumeni muškat”, “dišeči traminec”), which do not correspond to the wines of Alsace and yield an erroneous understanding of their characteristics. Particularly interesting is the 4<sup>th</sup> group of students, who, despite translating the wine names into Slovene, identified the Gewurztraminer as a typical Alsace wine with no Slovene equivalent and left the name in French.

As many as 30% of the students (Group 5) paid no attention whatsoever to the consistency of names in the target text. They randomly and intuitively opted for either the Slovene translation of the name, the original French name, and a combination of both.

Didactically speaking, this example provides a good starting point for thinking about the context of a document in translation – who the text is meant for and for what occasion, and what is the product in question (in our case specific French wines, which do not entirely correspond to Slovene wines). It raises awareness of the importance of understanding the context of the text and giving due thought to the translation process and techniques before translating.

## 4.2. Gewurztraminer

Among the names of wines presented in the leaflet, the term “Gewurztraminer” is a special case since it is used only for the Traminer variety from Alsace. One of the key differences between Slovene Traminers and the Gewurztraminer is that the Gewurztraminer is a dry wine paired with savoury dishes, especially select delicacies

**Table 4**  
Details on translations of "Gewurztraminer"

Generation	Number of translations	Inadequate translation
1	21	9
2	14	10
3	22	6
4	17	7
5	15	8
6	19	4
7	23	2
8	11	0
9	13	5
10	11	1
11	13	1
12	10	2
13	7	1
Total	196	56

**Table 5**  
"Gewurztraminer" in translations

Source	Adequate translations	Inadequate translations
GEWURZTRAMINER	GEWURZTRAMINER (II/3-1) GEWURZTRAMINER (dišeči traminec) (II/3-6)	rdeči traminec (II/3-2) dišeči traminec (II/3-4) aromatični traminec (II/3-5) traminec (II/3-8) gewurz traminec (II/3-14)

such as *foie gras*, whereas the Slovene Traminer is known and appreciated for being a semi-sweet or sweet wine.

The translation "dišeči traminec" or just "traminec", stated without the accompanying French name, can therefore lead to a false understanding of this wine as a sweet wine.

### 4.3. Pinot noir

**"Črni pinot" (black pinot).** With pinot noir, the translation "črni pinot" unexpectedly appeared already in the first generation of students, although it concerns a technical term which we assumed students would identify and appropriately check.

Out of 196 translations, 56 students (a little under a third) translated the phrase "pinot noir" as "črni pinot". This error is primarily due to the fact that students were not familiar with different vine varieties and did not check the name of the wine in the specialized literature. As it turned out during our discussions, those students

**Table 6**

Details on translations of "pinot noir"

Generation	Number of translations	»Črni pinot« or inadequate translation
1	21	9
2	14	10
3	22	6
4	17	7
5	15	8
6	19	4
7	23	2
8	11	0
9	13	5
10	11	1
11	13	1
12	10	2
13	7	1
Total	196	56

who translated the name correctly as "modri pinot" were either already familiar with the wine or had looked it up in the literature. Interestingly enough, while with the first generations of students the incorrect translation can be ascribed to faulty literal translation (noir = black, i.e. "črn"), after 2007 much of the blame lies with the internet as search engines begin to provide an increasing number of hits for the phrase "črni pinot" (probably as a consequence of Google Translate). The oenologist Jože Rozman (2012) is among those who warn of its ever increasing frequency. In 2010, for example, Mladinska knjiga even published a book that refers to "črni pinot", which one student cited as their resource and reliable reference material. The book in question is *O vinu* by Marijan Borovec, and the reason for the erroneous naming is simple: the book was originally written in Croatian and then translated into Slovene. So, in this case, since the students did check the literature but chose unsuitable resources, we can talk about wrong or inadequate resource selection as the source of the error (Gile, 2005: 217).

#### **4.4. Terms used in the descriptions of wines and their characteristics (taste, smell, colour).**

The analysis partially confirmed our predictions regarding the difficulties students would face when translating terms used to describe the wines, i.e. "fruité", "agréable à boire", "souple", "moelleux", "viril", "d'un fruité exquis", "d'un bouquet délicat", "d'un bouquet élégant", "délicieusement bouqueté", "race", "corsé", "bien charpenté", "d'un bouquet élégant", and "opulent". This is a very particular area of technical terminology, especially because Slovene does not have a completely uniform terminological inventory that would parallel the French one. However, analysis has shown that the

students recognized the translation of these terms as a potential problem, which they proceeded to address accordingly.

The errors stemmed primarily from inadequate resources used by the students (mostly online resources, lexicons and dictionaries, even acquaintances). Conversely, it should be noted that some students looked for corresponding translations in verified expert literature, such as the wine lexicon *Veliki vinski leksikon*, and their translations stood out among the others. Given the relative inconsistency and looseness of the terminology employed in Slovene oenology, there were but few completely inadequate and incorrect translations, with no significant impact on the text. Still, it is worth taking a closer look at the adjective “moelleux”, which can, due to its indeterminacy and polysemy in the French language, cause a mistranslation to occur if the translator does not possess the necessary extralinguistic knowledge.

#### 4.5. “Moelleux” (pinot blanc)

“**Sladki beli pinot**” (sweet pinot blanc). In the description of pinot blanc, an interesting issue arose with regard to the translation of the adjective “moelleux” in almost all the generations of students (except two):

The error occurred in 24 translations of 11 generations of students, with a wide range of variations (sweet, semi-sweet, medium sweet, sweetish, mildly sweet etc.). Although our sample is not representative, the error clearly demonstrates the importance of the translator’s familiarity with the customs and the culture of wine drinking in France, where meat and savoury dishes are paired with dry wines. Students who did not know this and translated based on the fact that in Slovenia savoury dishes are

**Table 7**

Details on translations of “moelleux”

Generation	Number of translations	Inadequate	Examples of translations
1	21	7	sladko, rahlo sladko, srednje sladko, polsladko, polsuho, sladkast, polsuho in polsladko
2	14	0	
3	22	4	sladko (2), polsladko (2)
4	17	2	sladko
5	15	1	sladko
6	19	3	sladko, polsladko (2)
7	23	2	sladko
8	11	1	polsladko vino
9	13	1	srednje sladko
10	11	0	
11	13	1	sladkega okusa
12	10	1	polsladko
13	7	1	polsladko
Total	196	24	

**Table 8**  
"Moelleux" in translations

Source	Aadequate translations	Inadequate translations
PINOT BLANC ou KLEVNER Souple, moelleux, s'accorde avec tous les plats.	Nežno, mehko vino (II/3-3) Polno in žametno (II/5-4)	To milo in rahlo sladko vino (II/2-4) Polsladko vino milega okusa (II/4-3) Zelo pitno, sladko vino (II/5-6)

also accompanied by semi-dry and semi-sweet wines, therefore did not hesitate to describe the wine as "sweet". The error can hardly be ascribed to negligence since it is due to insufficient knowledge that surpasses resources such as handbooks and termbases. For the most part, students who did not make this error only managed to avoid it because they incidentally chose a different word. In practical classes, most students said that they saw no issue with the translations "polsladko" (semi-sweet) or "sladko" (sweet), and that they were viable options. Despite the rather small sample, this error illustrates the pitfalls of implicit meanings and the importance of extralinguistic knowledge for translation.

#### 4.6. "Choucroute"

Translations in all the generations under study confirmed our expectations as to the difficulties the students would encounter when translating the terms for two French specialities associated with the wines of Alsace: "choucroute" and "foie gras". We anticipated that there would be mistranslations of "choucroute" primarily because Grad's French-Slovene bilingual dictionary and the online Pons dictionary do not contain contextually suitable solutions. We expected students who were unfamiliar

**Table 9**  
Details on translations of "choucroute"

Generation	Number of translations	»Choucroute«	Kislo zelje (sauerkraut)
1	21	1	20
2	14	2	12
3	22	7	15
4	17	2	15
5	15	4	11
6	19	5	14
7	23	15	8
8	11	10	1
9	13	10	3
10	11	11	0
11	13	11	2
12	10	3	7
13	7	5	2
Total	196	86	110

**Table 10**  
 "Choucroute" in translations

Source	Adequate translations	Inadequate translations
SYLVANER Accompagne: poissons, charcuterie, choucroute, fruits de mer	Spremlja: ribe, suhomesnate izdelke, alzaški choucroute, morske sadeže.	Spremlja jedi kot so ribe, suhomesnati izdelki, kislo zelje in morski sadeži (II/5-5)
RIESLING Accompagne indistinctement les mets les plus raffinés, est incomparable avec poissons, fruits de mer et bien sûr choucroute.	Spremlja najbolj izbrane jedi, neprekosljiv je z ribami, morskimi sadeži in seveda alzaško specialiteto »choucroute«.	Odlično se poda k najbolj prefinjenim jedem in je nepogrešljiv ob ribah, morskih sadežih in seveda kislemu zelju.« (II/2-15)

with the specialities to be content with the translations provided in the dictionary. Those students who identified the terms as being culture-specific and researched their meanings provided better, correct translations.

More than half of the students (110 translations) translated "choucroute" as "kislo zelje" (sauerkraut), which means that they did not recognize it as a gastronomic term and were satisfied with the expression found in a bilingual dictionary.

This is one of the most common errors made by young translators when the bilingual dictionary provides only one option, which the translator uses without further reflection:

Grad (1975: 231): **choucroute** [šukrut] *f* kislo zelje

Grand Robert (2005): Mets préparé avec des choux débités en fins rubans que l'on fait légèrement fermenter dans une saumure. | *Choucroute fraîche, en tonneaux.* — Plat fait de choucroute accompagnée de charcuterie. | *Charcuterie d'une choucroute garnie* (plat de côte, jarret de porc, saucisses, lard...). | *Choucroute alsacienne, d'Alsace.* – An Alsace speciality which consists of cooked cabbage (less sour than Slovene sauerkraut) and different kinds of meat.

From the analysis, it is evident that the vast majority of students were fine with the solution provided in the bilingual dictionary. This error is, on the one hand, a consequence of the students' reliance on bilingual dictionaries. On the other hand, however, it implies that the students did not identify the term as being culture-specific, and therefore did not adequately research its meaning.

At the same time, it is worth noting that while in the first case (Sylvaner) the error has no broader implications (it only involves the local level), in the second case (Riesling) it leads to an illogical passage, which every careful reader would find suspect (without having read the source text): "It goes exceptionally well with the most exquisite delicacies and is unrivalled when paired with fish, seafood and, of course, **sauerkraut.**" Didactically speaking, this illustrates the principle of "common sense" – most students claimed that although they found the argumentation to be really weird, they did not dedicate enough time to the issue, which points to a lack of motivation and persistence in seeking the right solutions as the cause of the error.



#### 4.7. "Foie gras".

Similar to "choucroute", we also assumed "foie gras" would be a problem for students unfamiliar with this speciality.

Grad (1975: 584): **foie** [fwa] *m* jetra; *pâté m de ~ gras* jetrna pasteta; *huile f de ~ de morue* ribje olje; *avoir les ~s (pop)* zelo se bati

Grand Robert (2005): Spécialt. Foie d'oie, foie de canard. | *Foie de canard frais, en semi-conserve, en conserve.* —**FOIE GRAS:** foie hypertrophié d'oie ou de canard engraisé par gavage. | *Escalope de foie gras aux raisins.* | *Foie gras en brioche.* | *Aspic, coquille, mousse, parfait, terrine de foie gras (froid).* | *Un bloc de foie gras truffé.* —Absolt. | *Foie:* foie gras. | *Foie de canard frais.*

The analysis shows that half of the students (94 translations) only listed the French term "foie gras" in the translation, in some cases with the addition "the French

**Table 11**

Details on translations of "foie gras"

Generation	Number of translations	Only »foie gras«	Only translation (paté, foie)	Foie gras + (inadequate) explication
1	21	1	20	0
2	14	3	9	2
3	22	2	16	4
4	17	6	10	1
5	15	3	10	2
6	19	4	10	5
7	23	17	4	2
8	11	11	0	0
9	13	13	0	0
10	11	8	0	3
11	13	13	0	0
12	10	7	3	0
13	7	6	1	0
Total	196	94	83	19

**Table 12**

"Foie gras" in translations

Source	Adequate translations	Inadequate translations
GEWURZTRAMINER Accompagne foie gras, fromages et desserts.	Dopolnjuje foie gras, sire in sladice. (II/3-3)	Spremlja jetrno pašteto (II/1-2) Pijemo ga pri jetrih (II/2-12) Spremlja gosja jetrca (II/3-10)
TOKAY - PINOT GRIS Aime la bonne chère, le foie gras, le rôti succulent (...)	(...) poda se k dobri in obilni hrani, k foie gras, sočni pečenki ...	Poda se k jetrom (II/2-4) Prilega se dobrim jedem, gosji pašteti (II/3-11)

speciality *foie gras*", which means that they recognized it as a culture-specific term that does not require translation. Those students who did not identify it as a gastronomic term referring to a French speciality, and hence relied on a bilingual dictionary, were mostly content with the expression provided in the dictionary ("jetrna pasteta", i.e. liver pâté) or merely modified it with "gosja" (i.e. goose). The second group of translations involves the word "jetra" (liver), which would be a semantically more appropriate solution if not for the fact that it could be misleading in the case of a speciality such as *foie gras* (*goose liver* does not equal *foie gras*). In addition, analysis has shown that a couple of students who did correctly decide to preserve the French term wrote it down incorrectly as "fois gras" (II/3-11) and "foi gras" (II/3-7), or used the incorrect Slovene declination form "foie grasa".

The errors and issues surrounding "foie gras" demonstrate primarily the students' failure to identify a specialized term and their misuse of a bilingual dictionary. At the same time, analysis shows that a greater number of students recognized "foie gras" as a gastronomy-specific term compared to "choucroute", and hence put more effort into finding the correct translation. These students had the most problems when deciding whether to leave the term in the French language as it stands or equip it with additional explanations (which in some cases led to long explanatory notes).

## 5. Interpretation of the results

The analysis of results focusing on select terms from the informative promotional text "Carastéristiques des vins d'Alsace" confirmed our hypothesis that young translators have problems identifying and translating technical and culture-specific terms.

On the level of technical terminology, we looked at the students' translations of wine names and the terms used in wine descriptions. The first issue was consistency in the translation of eight wine names. A third of the students were utterly inconsistent – they left some names in French, translated others into Slovene, or preserved the French name along with its Slovene version, which looks somewhat chaotic in the final target text. Only a quarter of the students obviously recognized the importance of consistency and listed the French names along with their Slovene counterparts. About half of the students were fairly consistent in providing only Slovene wine names, which was to be expected since Alsace wines are comparable with Slovene ones. However, they neglected to consider that they were translating a promotional leaflet intended to facilitate sales, so preserving the French names of the presented wines would be beneficial to those readers actually tasting and purchasing these wines. At the same time, analysis has shown that a third of the students who otherwise translated the names into Slovene identified the Gewurztraminer as a special wine typical of Alsace and left the name in French. With the Slovene translations of wine names, terms typical of Slovene wines are notable (e.g. "zeleni silvanec", "rumeni muškat", "renski rizling" etc.), which conveys a false impression of the characteristics of the wines described in the source text. A special kind of error, which appears in all the generations of students under study, is the translation of "pinot noir" as "črni

pinot" (black pinot), which in addition to insufficient extralinguistic knowledge also points to carelessness and reliance on (inadequate) internet resources.

Analysis confirmed our expectation that the students would put more effort into finding the correct translation if they identified a term used in the description of a specific wine as belonging to specialized terminology. About two thirds of the students looked for the appropriate terms in specialized literature. Their translations were coherent and consistent with the technical terminology, although many students reported that they found some terms to be unusual or weird. Certain issues arose with words or phrases that are not part of the established French terminology and whose meaning is therefore loose and elusive, for instance "moelleux". When translating this term, the students had a considerable degree of liberty, which, however, led to a severe semantic error in cases where they described the wine as "sweet" – this incorrect translation can be ascribed to unfamiliarity with the culture of wine drinking in France.

The analysis of the students' translations of culture-specific gastronomic terms revealed a variety of issues. Over one half of the students did not identify the word "choucroute" as a special gastronomic term and were content to use the sole and unsuitable option provided in the bilingual dictionary. The word features in the source text twice. In the first instance, the incorrect translation carries no broader significance, whereas in the second case the error leads to nonsensical argumentation. More than one half of the students (60%) recognized the phrase "foie gras" as being culture-specific and preserved it in the translation. With both terms, analysis shows that some students, wishing to explain them, added descriptions, clarifications and notes to the original French expressions, which in most cases proved to be inadequate.

Discussions with all the generations of students included in the study further confirmed the hypothesis that the students' motivation for in-depth research and verification of terms was significantly impacted by the fact that they deemed the text to be familiar and relatively unchallenging. Moreover, since comparisons can be drawn to Slovene wines, they overestimated their extralinguistic knowledge and neglected the context (the purpose of the text). Similar findings were arrived at by a study conducted at the Department of Translation in 2016/2017 on "the influence of directionality on the quality of the students' output": "When working on a text with a familiar topic, they [students] felt very confident and did not believe they needed additional verification. Their over-confidence resulted in various misunderstandings of the ST. On the other hand, when working with the ST whose topic was unfamiliar to them, they spent more time checking parallel texts and became acquainted with the topic." (Pokorn et al., 2019)

## **6. Conclusion**

In addition to the usual problems (interferences, faulty one-to-one correspondences, misuse of bilingual dictionaries, misuse of extralinguistic knowledge and own experience), the analysis of errors found in student translations of the text

“Caractéristiques des vins d’Alsace” confirms that students had issues translating specialized and culture-specific terms. The findings relevant for future work with the students and the advancement of translation training can be summarized as follows:

students of all generations had trouble identifying specialized terms;

students who knew or recognized specialized and culture-specific terms devoted more attention to them and put more effort into finding the correct translations;

students who made severe errors because they did not recognize certain specialized and culture-specific terms admitted that they found the text to be undemanding and intelligible, so they did not think that additional verification was necessary; they only tried harder with unfamiliar terms.

The purpose of our error analysis of the translations of specialized and culture-specific terms is primarily didactic and supports the notion that feedback about errors and their causes should be a regular and planned part of translation training at all study levels. The results of this error analysis serve as a basis for discussion with students in class, a debate on the processes and strategies involved in translation, a comparison of translation solutions and a conversation about the mental processes involved in choosing one option among many, and so on. In this way, students can internalize translation processes and strategies based on their own efforts and issues, and make a connection between theory and practical translation work. Regular feedback about errors and their causes can provide students with some insight into their own translation competencies and helps raise awareness of the scope of the translation process as a whole, the importance of recognizing the specificity of each text and assessing the adequacy of one’s resources, and, perhaps most importantly, the necessity of continuous and comprehensive knowledge acquisition.

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