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## Case study on translating a medical record into B language: How do the translator's competences advocated by the EU appear in the case of a real-life assignment?

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### Abstract

The case study follows the translation of a medical document between two relatively small European languages, from Hungarian into Dutch, from the moment the translation agency approaches the translator to the last review of the proofread version. Through the analysis of the changes made in the text, and the quality control mechanisms employed by the translation agency involved in the process, the quality of the translator's work is assessed. The process is explored from the viewpoint of the model for the competences of the professional translator (EMT Expert Group, 2009). The competences include *language, intercultural, information mining, technological, thematic and translation service provision competence*. With the help of the model, the strengths and weaknesses of the translation can be explored and the conclusions are also informative for the field of translation training.

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**Keywords:** Medical translation; translating into a B language; translation competence; translation training; e-learning.

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### 1. Introduction and theoretical background

The case presented in the following paper is a real-life translation assignment completed by a professional translator. In the first part of the paper, the case is introduced: the players in the assignment, the text and the process of translation. In the second part, the research questions guiding the study and the researcher's hypotheses are

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presented. In the third part, the various stages of the translation process are investigated and evaluated from the viewpoint of the six competences for professional translators (EMT Expert Group, 2009). In the fourth part, the findings of the study are summarized, and the potential lessons for translation training and e-learning courses in translation are inventoried. The closing part of the paper describes the limitations of the study and possible future research directions.

The investigation further provides an insight into how translation quality is assessed in the market. In her study on translation quality assessment, House (2001) reviews the possible linguistic and social evaluations of translations and describes overt and covert translation types. In the latter case, “the translator must attempt to re-create an equivalent speech event” (p. 250). House also describes how the case study method can be used to evaluate translations and help shift attention from the translation product to the translation process. The present investigation also fits into the stream of process-oriented translation research, but while the case studies described by House (2015) focus purely on textual features of the translation, the present case study investigates the competences of the translator in the context of the translation market.

The fact that beside translation criticism and translation teaching, professional translations can also benefit from assessment is another pillar of the following study. Melis Martínez and Albir (2001) set up a framework for various objects, types, functions, means and aims for quality assessment in translation. When discussing assessment in professional practice, they mention that agencies assess professional translators before (and also when) giving them assignments. They claim the following: “The function of assessment is summative, since both judging the candidate and coming to a decision are involved in personnel selection. However, it may also be formative to the extent that a translator can learn from his mistakes following the assessment/revision process.” (p. 279). The case investigated in the present study will confirm these claims.

### 1.1. Introducing the case: The players, the text and the process

The translation assignment is introduced here as the study of a single case, with the intention of learning from a specific case (Stake, 2000) studied in detail, from different perspectives. The study is thus explorative in nature and not meant to produce generalizable results, but its findings are transferable to similar cases.

The players in the case study are shown in Fig. 1 as parties related to the various versions of the text. These will be described later in the section about the process. The main player was the translator, whose A language is Hungarian, and B language is Dutch. The translator was a professional based in Budapest, with ten years of experience as a freelancer on the local and international market, with a profile of translating texts in social sciences and economy, mainly from Dutch into Hungarian. The translator held an MA in languages and translation.

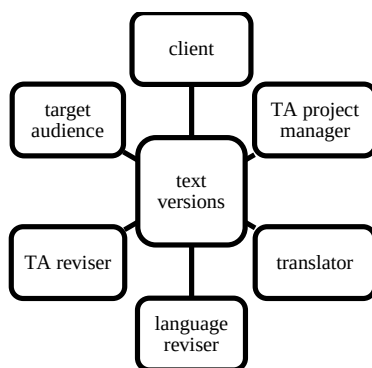


Fig. 1. The text and the players in the case study.

The translator was approached by an acquaintance who worked for a multinational translation agency (TA) based in Brussels, with a Central European office in Budapest. This was the translator’s first assignment from the agency. The translation was ordered in the afternoon and had to be completed for the next morning. A native speaker of Dutch was involved in the revising of the document. The language reviser was a professional translator specialised

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