

**Are textual mediation activities effective in the training of translators?
Insights from an empirical study**

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According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages, when mediating, speakers need to apply a series of strategies such as condensation, reformulation, and translation to transmit the content of a text. Differences between trained translators and learners are quite frequent. The pedagogical challenge that arises here can be addressed by using textual mediation activities to help students define a 'skopos' and to avoid interferences from the source text. In this study, we compared the results of 15 translation and 15 mediation activities carried out by two groups of university students (L1 Spanish, L2 German) in an economic translation course. Results showed that linguistic mistakes decreased in some cases in the mediation activity, as students were able to detach themselves from the original structures with greater confidence. The pedagogical implications of these results may help open a new pathway in the design and application of activities and courses in the initial stages of translation training in higher education.

Keywords: CEFR; Higher Education; Skopos Theory; Textual Mediation; Translator Training

1. Introduction

According to the Council of Europe (2020), linguistic or textual mediation is the ability to translate or interpret a text, in a more or less formal way, that is, to transform an original text into a new text. This can be done either interlinguistically, using the L1 and the L2, or intralinguistically, for instance by providing a summarized version in the target language of a source text also written in the L2 (North & Piccardo, 2016). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR henceforth) offers six scales or

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activities, whose main aim is to strengthen language learners' mediation skills and help them become social agents capable of transferring and clarifying information from an original source using their plurilingual competence (Piccardo et al., 2019). Among these, we find translation activities, whose main goal is to transmit the main message of the original text (Council of Europe, 2018).

The growing importance of globalization and the use of English as a *lingua franca* have turned translation and code switching into consolidated practices in L2 classes. They are commonly used as learning strategies within the framework of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), languaging (Swain, 2006), and translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011; Corcoll González & González-Davies, 2016; García et al., 2011). Thus, translation as a subtype of linguistic mediation can be easily integrated into learners' everyday context and be used in combination with task-based approaches (East, 2021; Estaire, 1990, 2009; Kolb, 2016; Nunan, 2011; Sánchez Cuadrado, 2017; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

Translation allows students to be aware of their need to develop their intercultural competence during language acquisition (Kolb, 2016). When translating, not only the transfer of speech acts but also the adaptation to the context are necessary. Considering the recipient's cultural background to produce coherent texts is of paramount importance (Kolb, 2015). The search for a dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964) broadens students' language awareness (Gnutzmann, 2009). Linguistic regularities, similarities, and differences need to be systematized and speakers' possible reactions need to be considered and addressed from a pragmatic perspective (Kolb, 2016).

Together with their linguistic competence, L2 learners and translation students need to develop their cognitive, intercultural, and pragmatic-textual competence (Kitis & Kitis, 2022). If they do so, they will be able to transmit the content of a given text, expanding or reducing it to adapt it to a new communicative situation, performing a cultural adaptation to make it accessible to the recipient, and adapting its shape according to the norms and conventions of the target language (Bickert, 2015). In the same way that translation is an increasingly integrated practice in language teaching, the communicative mediation activities proposed by the CEFR (textual processing, selective reading, note-taking, and translation) can be integrated as a learning strategy in the training of professional translators (Corcoll González & González-Davies, 2016).

In this study, we aimed at verifying whether textual mediation activities can be useful in translation training. To do so, we compared the results of a translation activity (from German to Spanish) of two groups of students that received different instructions: while one group carried out a conventional

translation, the other performed a linguistic mediation of a source text using translation as a strategy.

2. Background

Spanish-speaking translation students who have German as their first or second foreign language usually have problems when it comes to direct translation to properly formulate the target text in their L1, even if no errors in the understanding process are detected. Students enrolled in degrees in translation are usually involved in two learning processes: acquiring an L2 and learning translation techniques. Their proficiency level in the L2 is usually below B1. As a result, they often lack the flexibility to find appropriate lexical equivalents, use syntactic structures naturally in their mother tongue, or make adequate register choices (Bickert, 2015). Rather than working on the message and applying reformulation strategies, they attempt to convey it directly, and usually fail to produce effective messages in the L2.

Linguistic or textual mediation was defined in the CEFR as a broader concept in which the processes of explanation, paraphrasing, and simplification are integrated to transfer information from an original text from one language to another so that the text is easily understood by the recipient (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). To carry out textual mediation, the CEFR proposed three strategies, namely expansion, reduction, and adaptation of the original text according to the communicative situation (Council of Europe, 2018). All these strategies, and particularly adaptation, are conceived to provide the mediator with a great deal of freedom as far as the transmission of the original message is concerned (Knapp, 2013). This greater range of freedom coincides with functional theories of translation, such as the 'Skopos' theory (Kolb, 2016; Nord, 2009; Reiß & Vermeer, 1991; Vermeer, 2000, 2010). Following this school, the main aim of the target text must fulfill a function, and therefore the main role of the translator-mediator is to implement decisions according to this given function. This task includes a thorough consideration of the prospective context of the text as well as functional and textual issues (Kolb, 2016; Reiß & Vermeer, 1991).

This type of instrumental translation (Nord, 2010) primarily seeks to maintain the function of the original through dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964). In other words, it allows the necessary changes that are necessary to adapt the text to the cultural background of the new readership. Considering the greater flexibility conferred on the translator-mediator, textual mediation activities may be a useful practice to train students' ability to detach themselves from the structures of the original text and to present the contents in the target text with greater freedom bearing in mind the conventions and norms of the new culture (Bickert 2015). This may be suitable for translation

students with a restrained knowledge of their working languages (PACTE 2018).

3. Method

This study compared the textual production of two groups of students in an economic translation course that was part of the Modern Languages program at EAN University (Bogotá, Colombia). Different instructions were provided to each group; whereas group A was asked to translate, group B was requested to perform a textual mediation using translation. Thus, this group was presented with the following instruction:

Partiendo de este texto fuente "Schuldschein und Darlehensvertrag", debe explicarle en un comunicado por escrito a su cliente, el cual solo habla español, en qué consisten un pagaré y un contrato de préstamo, qué se debe tener en cuenta al emplear estos medios de pago y cuál es la diferencia entre ambos. [Considering the source text "Schuldschein und Darlehensvertrag" (promissory note and loan agreement), you need to write to your client, who only speaks Spanish, to explain what a promissory note and a loan contract are, what should be taken into account when using these means of payment, and what the difference between the two is.]

Each of the groups had 15 students, who were L1 Spanish-L2 German speakers. Their L2 level ranged from A2 to a B1. All of them performed the task individually and submitted a written document containing either a translation or a mediation. The 30 texts were evaluated according to five categories of mistakes (Hurtado Albir, 2001), namely linguistic, textual, extralinguistic, intentional, and pragmatic. Linguistic errors included spelling, lexical, syntactic, grammatical, and punctuation mistakes. Textual errors address issues like coherence and cohesion, as well as style. Then extralinguistic errors refer to thematic or conceptual problems related to specialised terminology, in addition to problems arising from cultural references while intentionality mistakes arise when there are difficulties in capturing the meaning or communicative intention of the original text. Finally, pragmatic errors were related to the type of assignment and the recipient of the text.

In any translation, there are structural changes, both at sentence level, in the order of the sentences, as well as the informative structure (Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls, 2002). Thus, apart from measuring the errors, an analysis was also carried out to acknowledge the changes introduced in target texts to maintain the function of the original text. The mediation strategies proposed by the Council of Europe (2018) were considered. They included

informative reduction by omission or condensation of information, informative expansion by insertion of additional explanations or more detailed paraphrases (cf. Nadal & Thome, forthcoming), as well as linguistic adaptation to the register, cultural, and cognitive background of the target text (North & Piccardo, 2016).

Starting from the premise that a mediator has more flexibility to act than a translator, the following hypotheses were promulgated:

- H₁: The quality of the textual production in the mediation exercises will be higher, that is, fewer errors are expected in the evaluation of the mediations compared to the translations.
- H₂: Mediations will have a greater number of omissions or condensations of the original information compared to the translations due to the application of the information reduction strategy.
- H₃: Mediations will have a greater amount of additional explanations and paraphrases compared to the translations as a result of the application of the informative expansion strategies.
- H₄: More changes (compared to the original) will be found in mediations due to the application of the linguistic adaptation strategies.
- H₅: More linguistic changes at sentence and text level will be found in mediations.

To check the difference significance in the independent variables (translation vs. mediation), an independent samples *t*-test was applied in the case of total mistakes counted in the data set (Table 1) and in the case of terminology mistakes (Table 3). This test was carried out to determine if the means of the variables of two independent samples were different. In the rest of the comparisons, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* test was applied based on the medians, as the data did not present a normal distribution. All tests were performed under the starting hypothesis presented as H₁: mediation errors < translation errors (cf. Herrera-Soler et al., 2011).

4. Results

In this section, we provide an account of the results of the assessment of the 15 translations and 15 mediations according to the analysis of the mistakes and the changes found in the texts.

According to Table 1, there are no significant differences in the number of mistakes found in translations and mediations at a first glance. A more detailed breakdown of different types of mistakes can shed some light on the most common problems associated with each type of instruction. The distribution of mistake typologies found in the translations and mediations

analyzed for this study is presented in Table 2. In all cases, the number of mistakes increased in translations, with the only exception of spelling mistakes.

Table 1
Mistakes in Translations and Mediations

| | Mistakes | Mistakes (Mean) | SD | <i>p</i> value |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|------|----------------|
| Translations | 156 | 10.40 | 5.55 | |
| Mediations | 145 | 10.36 | 4.53 | |
| | | | | 0.49 |

Table 2
Types of Linguistic Mistakes in Translations and Mediations

| | Spelling | Punctuation | Vocabulary | Grammar | Syntax |
|----------------|----------|-------------|------------|---------|--------|
| Translations | 0.33 | 0.53 | 1.87 | 0.80 | 0.40 |
| Mediations | 0.79 | 0.07 | 2 | 0.21 | 0.14 |
| SD | 0.89 | 0.27 | 1.47 | 0.43 | 0.36 |
| <i>p</i> value | 0.96 | 0.0095 | 0.66 | 0.01 | 0.17 |

Lexical mistakes were the most common type, and their frequency remains similar in both mediations and translations. In this group, we found production mistakes caused by mistaken linguistic choices, as in (1) and (2), or unusual lexical combinations that challenge idiomaticity, as in (3) (Fleischer, 1997; Larreta Zulategui, 2001; Romero Ganuza, 2006).

- (1) Original: *Der vom Schuldner eigenhändig unterschriebene Schuldschein* [The promissory note signed by the debtor himself].
Target: *debe firmar el pagaré con mano propia*. [You must sign the promissory note with own hand].
- (2) Original: *hat Anspruch auf die Zahlung* [is entitled to payment]
Target: *tiene derecho al reclamo de la deuda* [you have the right to complain the debt].
- (3) Original: *Damit beschert der Schuldschein seinem jeweiligen Inhaber größtmögliche Flexibilität*. [In this way, the promissory note gives its respective holder the greatest possible flexibility]
Target: *el pagaré presta a su titular optima facilidad*. [the promissory note lends its holder optimal ease.]

Grammar mistakes included inappropriate use of articles, as in (4), of

prepositions, as in (4) and (5) respectively, or in verb agreement, as in (6).

- (4) Original: *Darlehensvertrag* [Loan agreement].
Target: *el contrato de un préstamo* [the loan agreement].
- (5) Original: *Dies wäre zum Beispiel auch bei einem Kredit zur freien Verwendung der Fall, aber nicht bei einem zweckgebundenen Darlehen.* [This would also be the case, for example, with a loan for free use, but not with an earmarked credit.]
Target: *Este es el caso de un crédito hipotecario, pero no para un crédito de libre inversión.* [This is the case for a mortgage loan, but not for a free investment loan.]
- (6) Original: *Dies wäre zum Beispiel auch bei einem Kredit zur freien Verwendung der Fall, aber nicht bei einem zweckgebundenen Darlehen.* [This would also be the case, for example, with a loan for free use, but not with an earmarked credit.]
Target: *Un pagaré no es un título valor, incluso con grandes volúmenes no se pueden negociar en bolsa.* [A promissory note is not a security, even with large volumes they cannot be traded on the stock exchange.]

Syntax-related production errors involve alterations in the order of sentence constituents, as in (7), where the apposition between commas breaks up the original Noun Phrase:

- (7) Original: *Die Möglichkeit der Weitergabe der Urkunde, der sogenannten Zession, an einen Dritten macht einen Schuldschein zu einem gesetzlichen Zahlungsmittel.* [The possibility of passing on the document to a third party, the so-called transfer, makes a promissory note a legal tender.]
Target: *La posibilidad de traspasar el documento, conocido esto como cesión, a un tercero hace que el pagaré sea una moneda de curso legal.* [The possibility to transfer the document, known as transfer, to a third party makes the promissory note a legal tender.]

Especially interesting is the effect of different types of instruction over terminology mistakes, a key issue in Translation Studies. As shown in Table 3, mediations contained a significantly lower number of terminology mistakes.

Table 3
Terminology Mistakes

| | Mistakes | Mistakes (<i>Mean</i>) | <i>SD</i> | <i>p value</i> |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Translations | 33 | 2.20 | 1.74 | |
| Mediations | 18 | 1.29 | 1.07 | |
| | | | | 0.05 |

If students are too focused on the structure, they may not be able to disengage themselves from formal limitations (Kitis & Kitis, 2022). In this case, syntactic and grammatical errors are more likely to take place (Bickert, 2015). However, when they can act as an editor and mediator, their perception of the freedom with which they can work increases, and they are less likely to make mistakes (Hurtado Albir, 2001).

Some of the most common terminology errors in both translation and mediation activities implied the following terms:

Table 4
Examples of Common Terminology Errors

| Original | Correct term | Frequent mistake |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Wertpapier</i> | <i>Título valor</i> [Security paper] | <i>Garantía</i> [Guarantee] |
| <i>Inhaberpapier</i> | <i>Título al portador</i> [bearer security] | <i>Documento válido para el portador/certificado</i> [document valid for the bearer/certificate] |
| <i>Kredit zur freien Verwendung</i> | <i>Crédito de libre inversión</i> [Any purpose loan] | <i>Préstamo para uso gratuito</i> [Loan for free use] |

The lower presence of this type of mistakes in mediations may be due, on the one hand, to a better application of the instrumental subcompetence (PACTE, 2018), which leads to a more effective documentation in the search for equivalents. On the other hand, terms were sometimes diluted in mediation by means of condensation strategies or were replaced by broader explanations, as in (8), where the alternative explanation used by the student provides greater understanding and is well connected to the information contained in the adjacent sentence:

- (8) Original: *Bei einem Schuldschein handelt es sich nicht um ein Wertpapier. Er kann auch bei größeren Volumina nicht an der Börse gehandelt werden.* [A promissory note is not a security. Even in larger volumes, it cannot be traded on the stock exchange.]
 Target: *Un pagaré no es una garantía del pago de la deuda, por lo que no se puede negociar en la bolsa de valores.* [A promissory note is not a guarantee of debt repayment, so it cannot be traded on the stock market.]

Textual errors include those related to cohesion (connection between sentences, coherence in verb tenses or incorrect use of clitics and in-text reference) (Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls 2002; Hurtado Albir, 2001) as well as expression and style mistakes (unclear expression in the target

language that impedes a fluent reading or register inadequacy) (Hurtado Albir, 2001). According to Table 5, translations had a higher number of textual mistakes.

Table 5
Textual Mistakes (Mean)

| | Cohesion | Expression |
|----------------|----------|------------|
| Translations | 1 | 2.53 |
| Mediations | 1.71 | 3.29 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.14 | 2.33 |
| <i>p value</i> | 0.94 | 0.76 |

It seems that the greater flexibility in the expression of content allowed in mediations causes a more deficient textual production in terms of style and cohesion. In mediations, more explicit textual connections are preferred. This requires an advanced knowledge of argumentative connectives and information structure management. As a result, incorrect discourse connections abound, as in (9), where the student failed to recognize the cause-consequence relation present in the original and marked an additional relation instead (through the connective *además* [besides], and in (10), where the inclusion of two adjacent counterarguments is infelicitous:

- (9) Original: *Bei einem Schuldschein handelt es sich nicht um ein Wertpapier. Er kann auch bei größeren Volumina nicht an der Börse gehandelt werden.* [A promissory note is not a security. Even with larger volumes, it cannot be traded on the stock exchange.]
Target: *Un pagaré no es una garantía del pago de la deuda. Además, no se puede negociar en la bolsa de valores.* [A promissory note is not a guarantee of debt repayment. Besides, it cannot be traded on the stock exchange.]
- (10) Original: *Eine Weitergabe an einen Dritten ist nur durch Abtretung möglich.* [Passing on to a third party is only possible through assignment.]
Target: *Sin embargo, es posible hacer un traspaso a un tercero, pero sólo asignándolo por medio de una cesión.* [However, it is possible to make a transfer to a third party, but only assigning it by means of a transfer.]

Concerning expression mistakes, the use of an inappropriate register is common, as in (11), where words belonging to a more formal register should have been used.

- (11) Original: *Der Grund, weshalb der Schuldschein ausgestellt wurde, muss in der Urkunde nicht angegeben sein.* [The reason why the promissory note was issued does not have to be stated in the certificate.]

In a way, this could be seen as a result of the student's success in adopting the role of mediator to facilitate a third party's access to the information contained in the source text (Piccardo et al., 2019).

The least frequent types of mistakes are concerned with purpose and pragmatics. Their distribution is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Purpose and Pragmatic Mistakes (Mean)

| | Purpose | Pragmatics |
|----------------|---------|------------|
| Translations | 0.27 | 0.47 |
| Mediations | 0.36 | 0.50 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.14 | 2.33 |
| <i>p value</i> | 0.75 | 0.90 |

In general terms, the main problems found in this subtype of mistake are related to the re-expression of content and problems of misunderstanding. This explains why the mean number of mistakes was higher in mediations, as this type of activity relies on a full comprehension of the message. In the case of mistakes related to the purpose of the message, the problem lies in the correct interpretation of the message of the original text, and it may entail problems of communicative intention, intertextuality, speech acts, presuppositions or implicatures (Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls 2002). Conversely, pragmatic errors arise when conditions of the assignment, the context of the translation or the background of the recipient are not properly considered (Hurtado Albir, 2001).

In (12), the expression “el acreedor tiene derecho al pagaré” [the creditor has the right to the promissory note] does not cover all meaning nuances contained in the original: “el pagaré está en propiedad del acreedor” [the promissory note is owned by the creditor] or “el acreedor tiene derecho al cobro de la deuda” [the creditor has the right to collect the debt].

- (12) Original: *Paragraf 952, Abs. 1 BGB: Das Eigentum des Schuldscheins steht dem jeweiligen Gläubiger zu.* [Section 952, Paragraph 1 BGB: The ownership of the promissory note belongs to the respective obligee.]
Target: *Artículo 952, apartado 1 BGB: El acreedor tiene derecho al pagaré.* [Section 952, paragraph 1 BGB: The creditor has the right to the promissory note.]

Pragmatic mistakes were found, for example, in the translation of the legislative works, having included the original name in German, as in (13), where it is unnecessary to include the full name of the original title of the Civil Code.

(13) Original: *im Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch (BGB) und in der Zivilprozessordnung (ZPO)*. [in the German Civil Code and in the Code of Civil Procedure.]

Target: *en el Código Civil alemán (Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch, BGB) y en el Código Procesal Civil (Zivilprozessordnung, ZPO)*. [in the German Civil Code (Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch, BGB) and in the Civil Procedure Code (Zivilprozessordnung, ZPO).]

In general, mistake analysis cannot be used to prove that mediation has a direct effect in the reduction of the number of mistakes. Hence, our first hypothesis seems to be confirmed only partially. The trend described here might indicate that mediation activities foster a more detached approach to the text. Linguistic mistakes (especially in grammar and syntax) are less in mediations because students may be more focused on their own textual production and the skopos of the text. However, this freedom from the original may also increase the chances of making mistakes related to textual issues like style, coherence, cohesion or register.

All hypotheses related to the analysis of changes involved in translations and mediations (H₂-H₅) could be confirmed. Mediations contained more changes than translations: reductions and omissions (H₂), extensions and paraphrases (H₃), as well as linguistic adaptations were more frequent in the mediations. Consequently, more linguistic changes at sentence and text level were also found (H₅).

Concerning reductions and omissions, twenty-two examples of condensation and nineteen cases of omission of information were found in the sample. In both cases, students' active participation is needed, as they consciously decide to omit information only partially, as in (14) where three sentences are compacted into one, or totally, as in (15).

(14) Original: *1. Im Gegensatz zu einem Darlehensvertrag handelt es sich bei einem Schuldschein um ein Inhaberpapier*. [In contrast to a loan agreement, a promissory note is a bearer paper.]

2. Bei einem Schuldschein verhält es sich so, dass derjenige, der den Schuldschein besitzt, Anspruch auf die Zahlung hat. [In the case of a promissory note, the person who owns the promissory note is entitled to payment.]

3. Damit beschert der Schuldschein seinem jeweiligen Inhaber größtmögliche Flexibilität. [In this way, the promissory note gives its

respective holder the greatest possible flexibility.]

Target: *Por otro lado, el pagaré es un título al portador, su acreedor es quien tiene derecho al cobro y dispone de total flexibilidad para su cesión.* [On the other hand, the promissory note is a bearer title, its creditor has the right to collect and has total flexibility for its transfer.]

- (15) Original: *1. Der Grund, weshalb der Schuldschein ausgestellt wurde, muss in der Urkunde nicht angegeben sein.* [The reason why the promissory note was issued does not have to be stated in the certificate.]

2. Dies wäre zum Beispiel auch bei einem Kredit zur freien Verwendung der Fall, aber nicht bei einem zweckgebundenen Darlehen. [This would also be the case, for example, with a loan for free use, but not with an earmarked credit.]

3. Die Möglichkeit der Weitergabe der Urkunde, der sogenannten Zession, an einen Dritten macht einen Schuldschein zu einem gesetzlichen Zahlungsmittel. [The possibility of passing on the document to a third party, the so-called transfer, makes a promissory note a legal tender.]

Target: *No es necesario especificar en el documento el motivo por el cual se emite el pagaré.* [It is not necessary to specify in the document the reason why the promissory note is issued.]

Target: *Esto aplicaría también en el caso de un crédito de libre inversión, pero no para un crédito con fines específicos (p. e. hipotecario).* [This would also apply in the case of a free investment loan, but not for a loan with specific purposes (e.g., mortgage).]

Target: *La posibilidad de traspasar el pagaré a un tercero mediante la cesión lo convierte en una forma de pago legal.* [The ability to transfer the promissory note to a third party by assignment makes it a legal form of payment.]

The application of an omission technique is not textually-related, as much as it is a consequence of the application of the Skopos theory (Reiß & Vermeer, 1991), thanks to which students apply purposeful actions to guide their translation techniques. Thus, in (14) and (15), some of the information related to the promissory note is deemed irrelevant, as in the case of the example that covers two types of credits in (15.2).

As far as expansion strategies (Council of Europe, 2018) are concerned, sixteen cases were found in our data set. In this case, the target text contained a more detailed explanation of a term that appears in the original (amplification technique, Hurtado Albir, 2001), as in the example of *Wertpapier* [security] in (16) or *Inhaberpapier* [bearer paper] in (17).

- (16) Original: *Bei einem Schuldschein handelt es sich nicht um ein Wertpapier.*
[A promissory note is not a security]

1. Target: *El pagaré no constituye una garantía del pago de la deuda.* [The promissory note is not a guarantee of payment of the debt.]
 2. Target: *A pesar de que el pagaré funciona como una promesa de pago, no es una garantía de que se vaya a saldar la deuda.* [Although the promissory note functions as a promise of payment, it is not a guarantee that the debt will be paid off.]
- (17) Original: *Im Gegensatz zu einem Darlehensvertrag handelt es sich bei einem Schuldschein um ein Inhaberpapier.* [In contrast to a loan agreement, a promissory note is a bearer paper.]
 Target: *El acuerdo de préstamo se firma entre dos personas y no se puede transferir a terceros, mientras que un pagaré se puede emplear como una moneda o cheque.* [The loan agreement is signed between two people and cannot be transferred to third parties, whereas a promissory note can be used as a coin or check.]

In (16), the student may have considered that it was not enough to state that “[a] promissory note is not a security” and decided to clarify the fact that when using a promissory note, the debt is not settled yet, as the document “functions as a promise of payment”. A similar situation is found in (17), where *Inhaberpapier* [bearer paper] is deemed insufficient to ensure comprehension, and a more detailed explanation that includes a short distinction between loan contracts and promissory notes is integrated in the target text. This type of extensions containing explanations has a direct effect on the frequency of extralinguistic errors, since the omission of terms also reduces the possibility of mistakes.

Other extension techniques applied by students focused on the addition of a new perspective with a view to ease the understanding of the main message. Hence, in (18), the extension of information is achieved by including details about the flexibility and the possibility of assignment of promissory notes, and at the same time by introducing what a change of creditor implies, according to the student’s own perspective.

- (18) Original: *Bei einem Schuldschein verhält es sich so, dass derjenige, der den Schuldschein besitzt, Anspruch auf die Zahlung hat.* [In the case of a promissory note, the person who owns the promissory note is entitled to payment.]
 Target: *El pagaré implica mayor flexibilidad [frente al contrato de préstamo] al ser transferible, la deuda se liquida al acreedor, sin importar si este es la misma persona que recibió el pagaré en un primer momento.* [The promissory note implies greater flexibility [compared to the loan agreement] as it is transferable, the debt is settled to the creditor, regardless of whether this is the same person who received the promissory note in the first place.]

In turn, in (19), a paraphrase of what is indicated by the adverb “simply” is added in the first sentence, indicating that the process may come to an end.

- (19) Original: *Da Person C eine offene Forderung gegenüber B hat, gibt B den Schuldschein des A einfach an C weiter, tritt ihn also ab, B hat seine Schuld beglichen und C wurde formlos zum Gläubiger gegenüber A.* [Since person C has an outstanding claim against B, B simply passes A's promissory note on to C, thus relinquishing it, B has paid his debt and C has become the creditor to A.]
 Target: *Como B tiene una deuda abierta con C, este simplemente transfiere el pagaré de A a C, por medio de una cesión. Así B liquida su deuda y C pasa a ser el nuevo acreedor de A, sin necesidad de formalizar el proceso de ninguna otra manera.* [Since B has an open debt with C, he simply transfers the note from A to C, by means of a transfer. Thus, B pays off his debt and C becomes A's new creditor, without the need to formalize the process in any other way.]

This type of explanatory extensions shows the same tendency (see (16) to (19)): to apply linguistic adaptation or simplification by changing the register (Council of Europe, 2018), which largely explains the high number of writing mistakes documented in mediation exercises. Expansion, reduction by condensation and omission strategies (Council of Europe, 2018; Nadal & Thome, forthcoming) were common in mediations, while they were never used in translations. This may be explained by the fact that mediation activities challenge students' cognitive competence (Bickert, 2015) and force them to manipulate the message according to the skopos. As a result, they need to adopt the intended addressee's perspective and communicate the original content in the way they consider most accessible for the new communicative situation (Kolb, 2015).

One of the main consequences of the application of expansion, reduction by condensation and omission strategies is related to changes in the informative structure of the target text (Albrecht, 2013). An example of this is presented in (20).

- (20) Original: *Bei einer Abtretung handelt es sich um eine formlose Übertragung der Schuld von einem Gläubiger auf einen anderen, ohne, dass sich der Schuldner oder der Gegenstand des Schuldscheins ändern.* [An assignment is an informal transfer of debt from one obligee to another without changing the debtor or the subject of the promissory note.]
 Target: *Al cederlo, el monto de la deuda y el deudor se mantienen igual, lo que cambia es el acreedor a quien se le va a pagar.* [When assigning it,

the amount of the debt and the debtor remain the same, what changes is the creditor to whom it is going to be paid.]

In this example, the original context already contained an explanation an assignment supposing a change of creditor, which makes it possible to present this information as given information/theme and proceed to introduce new information in the rheme (Albrecht, 2013; Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls, 2002). However, in the target text, a different theme ("when yielding it") is used, which alters the informational flow of the original and eventually creates a tropicalized structure.

Deixis changes (Albrecht 2013; Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls 2002), which are not described as strategies in the CEFR, were found in mediations. We found examples of involvement that implied the use of first and second person pronouns, as in (21).

- (21) Original: *Die Rechtsgrundlagen des Schuldscheins finden sich im Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch (BGB) und in der Zivilprozessordnung (ZPO).* [The legal basis of the promissory note can be found in the German Civil Code and in the Code of Civil Procedure.]
1. Target: *En el Código Civil (BGB) y en el Código Procesal Civil (ZPO) podemos encontrar los principios legales de este documento contable.* [In the Civil Code (BGB) and in the Civil Procedure Code (ZPO) we can find the legal principles of this accounting document.]
 2. Target: *Todos los pagarés emitidos en Alemania cuentan con unas bases legales descritas en el Código Civil alemán (BGB) y en el Código Procesal Civil (ZPO). Como aspectos primordiales, usted puede encontrar los siguientes:* [All promissory notes issued in Germany have legal bases described in the German Civil Code (BGB) and in the Civil Procedure Code (ZPO). As main aspects, you can find the following:]

This type of changes can be considered a successful adaptation technique, as they show that the mediator tries to relate to their interlocutor (Casamiglia Blancáfort & Tusón Valls, 2002). The same purpose of direct interpellation is pursued by using of directive speech acts (Albrecht, 2013), as in (22):

- (22) Original: *Bei einem Schuldschein handelt es sich nicht um ein Wertpapier.* [A promissory note is not a security.]
- Target: *Se debe tener en cuenta que un pagaré no es un título de valor.* [It should be noted that a promissory note is not a security.]

This type of modification was recorded five times in the mediation set. In (23), a directive speech act is found again, introduced by a communication verb ("se indica que" [it is indicated that]).

- (23) Original: *Paragraf 371 BGB: Hat der Schuldner seine Verbindlichkeit getilgt, kann er die Herausgabe des Schuldscheins verlangen.* [Section 371 BGB: If the debtor has paid off his liability, he can request the issuance of the promissory note.]
 Target: *En el artículo 371 del Código Civil alemán (BGB) se indica que una vez la deuda sea liquidada, el deudor puede solicitar al acreedor la devolución del pagaré.* [Article 371 of the German Civil Code (BGB) indicates that once the debt is settled, the debtor can request the creditor to return the promissory note.]

At the level of textual grammar, the high number of explicit connections inserted in the target text stands out compared to those found in the original. Forty connections between sentences or larger textual segments were recorded. In four cases they were marked by connectives (*pero, mientras que, lo cual* and *lo que* [but, while, what and what]), while the rest were introduced by discourse markers. Within this group, three subcategories (Loureda & Acín, 2010) were found in mediations, namely argumentative connectives (*sin embargo* [however]), reformulators (*es decir* [that is]) and information structurers (*por otro lado, en primer lugar, por último* [on the other side, first, last]), as in (24), (25), and (26).

- (24) Original: *Er kann auch bei größeren Volumina nicht an der Börse gehandelt werden. Eine Weitergabe an einen Dritten ist nur durch Abtretung möglich.* [Even with larger volumes, it cannot be traded on the stock exchange. A transfer to a third party is only possible through assignment.]
 Target: *Por otro lado, los pagarés no pueden ser negociados en bolsa, sin embargo, sí pueden cederse a un tercero.* [On the other hand, the notes cannot be traded on the stock exchange, however, they can be assigned to a third party.]
 Original: *Paragraf 952, Abs. 1 BGB: Das Eigentum des Schuldscheins*
 (25) *steht dem jeweiligen Gläubiger zu.* [Section 952, Paragraph 1 BGB: The ownership of the promissory note belongs to the respective obligee.]
 Target: *En primer lugar, en el artículo 952 apartado 1 del BGB, se indica que el acreedor es el propietario del pagaré, es decir, es la persona que tiene derecho a exigir el pago y cumplimiento de la deuda.* [First, in article 952 paragraph 1 of the BGB, it is indicated that the creditor is the owner of the promissory note, that is, he is the person who has the right to demand the payment and fulfillment of the debt.]
 (26) Original: *Der Grund, weshalb der Schuldschein ausgestellt wurde, muss in der Urkunde nicht angegeben sein.* [The reason why the promissory note was issued does not have to be stated in the certificate.]

Target: *Por último, la razón por la que se emitió el pagaré no tiene que estar indicado en el certificado.* [Finally, the reason the promissory note was issued does not have to be stated on the certificate.]

It was shown above that cohesion textual errors also increased in the case of mediations, which can be associated with the high number of cohesion devices used by students.

Finally, one of the main practices that demonstrates the flexibility with which students act as mediators is the substantial changes in the order of the sentences in the target text with respect to the original order (recorded on twenty-two occasions); they not only occur between consecutive sentences but at any position in the text. Such modifications were not observed in the translation exercises. Conversely, when students adopt the role of mediator, they show they can manipulate the message to present it as their own and adapt it to contextual needs, which ultimately shows command of the maxim of functional adequacy (Nord, 2009).

5. Conclusion

Linguistic or textual mediation is contained in the CEFR as one of the communicative competences to be developed during L2 acquisition. It involves the implementation of a series of strategies that allow students to access communication under the scope their multilingual condition (Piccardo et al., 2019). So far, six scales have been proposed together with their performance descriptors (North & Piccardo, 2016). In them, communication is understood as a process of capturing and transmitting the essential meaning of the source text through the application of mediation strategies, namely expansion, reduction, and adaptation (Council of Europe, 2018). Mediation challenges traditional notions of linguistic equivalence. Under this new lens, the main task is to present a new informative proposal in a functionally adequate target text that fits the context, the addressees and the communicative aim of a new context that may (or may not) differ from the original (Reiß & Vermeer 1991).

In this study, we argued that the textual mediation activities proposed by the CEFR can contribute to the training of university translation students whose proficiency level in the working language is not yet advanced enough. One of the main problems faced in translation activities is students' inability to detach themselves from the structures of the original texts. Most times, their insecurity makes them focus only on the search for linguistic equivalents at sentence level (Bickert, 2015). Mediation activities allow a greater scope for action, as students' focus shifts when they start applying strategies to manipulate the information contained in the original to adapt it to the cultural and cognitive background of the intended addressee (Council of Europe,

2018). This type of activities enhances students' autonomy and decision-making abilities and empowers them to fulfil their role as authors of a new text.

We carried out a comparative analysis of 15 translation and 15 mediation exercises to verify five hypotheses that can be summarized in three main points: (a) the textual production of the students who employed mediation contains fewer errors than that of the students that translated a text (H₁); (b) in mediation exercises, extension strategies (H₂, H₃, and H₄) are more frequently used; and as a consequence of this, (c) mediations contain more changes in the sentence and textual levels (H₅).

The first hypothesis could be only partially confirmed. In general, mediation exercises contained fewer mistakes. There seems to be a difference between mediations and translations in grammar, syntax, and punctuation issues, and to a lesser extent also in lexis. Less mistakes were found in mediations when those dimensions were analyzed, probably as a result of students' effective detachment from the original, which allowed them to stop tracing the source structures and jump directly from decoding to re-expression, without a prior deverbalsation process (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984). However, at the same time, there seems to be a compensatory effect in the field of cohesion, expression and style. More mistakes were found in these areas in mediations, which might be explained as an effect of the greater flexibility that students have to reorder the information and resort to paraphrasing in the target language, which often translates into inappropriate register choices and unclear wording.

All the hypotheses related to the kind of changes introduced in mediations could be confirmed. Mediations entail a reinterpretation at the structural and textual level and they require the application of a series of strategies that enable students to feel in a position to work towards the achievement of a given *skopos*. Hence, they may become aware that the original text is an information proposal, produced by an author, and that they, as mediators, can critically and creatively elaborate a new proposal that needs to be functionally adapted to the requirements of the new target audience (Nord, 2009).

According to the data in this study, textual mediation can be confirmed as an efficient method to train translation students in introductory direct translation courses. These students do not have an advanced level in the working language yet and can benefit greatly from a method that allows them to detach themselves from the original and use the resources and abilities they have in their mother tongue. If more textbooks and pedagogical materials were created using mediation as an effective strategy, it would be interesting to pay more attention to the challenges raised by its application. According to our data, mediation activities would need to be paired with

textual production instruction and practice to fill in the gap created by students' new role as authors of a new text.

Authors' Statement

Laura Nadal Sanchís is responsible for the design of the study, data collection and the conception of all sections of this article. Iria Bello Viruega is responsible for the translation into English and the adaptation of some content.

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