

A Text-Linguistic Approach to Translation Standards. Implications for Revision in the Portuguese Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper¹ aims to highlight the importance of associating Translation Studies with Linguistics, when it comes to looking at translation revision from a broader perspective. As set out in the standards that regulate the provision of translation services, revision is currently a mandatory activity within the translation process and plays a significant role in the translation industry. Taking into account the entry into force of the International Standard EN ISO 17100, which replaces the European Standard EN 15038, this article examines these two normative documents with regard to revision issues and text-linguistic topics. The analysis intends to explore the possible implications of the standards for both training and professional practice, given the socio-professional invisibility of the revision activity in Portugal.

KEY WORDS: revision, translation standards, text linguistics, socio-discursive interactionism, translation

1 INTRODUCTION

Translation Studies and Linguistics are two fields that have already acquired an independent status within the Human and Social Sciences. To achieve this autonomy both disciplines struggled for recognition for years and even had to turn their back on each other as if their main study objects – language and communication – were entirely separate realities. Only by doing so could they establish themselves as both academic and research fields. However, Translation Studies and Linguistics are undeniably related and can therefore benefit from being combined when reflecting on language practices, as for instance translation revision.

With this in mind, this paper aims to highlight the importance of considering Translation Studies and Linguistics from an interdisciplinary perspective, where the two fields are

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combined and complement each other, thus enriching both disciplines. When considering textual practices such as translation revision, Text Linguistics in particular can also be useful to better understand what texts are, how they are produced and what conditions their production. To test this argument, the present article will draw on the analysis of the two standards regarding the provision of translation services which have been in force in Portugal.

As far as the industry is concerned, the publication of the European Standard EN 15038 in 2006 and, more recently, of the International Standard ISO 17100 in 2015 was a major step towards regulating the provision of translation services, as well as towards defining revision as a mandatory requirement within the translation process. This new visibility assigned to the revisory activity, in turn, influenced academia and promoted discussion around the topic. As a result, theoretical and empirical studies focusing on the revision process (Künzli, 2007; Mossop, 2014; Parra Galiano, 2005; Robert, 2012) and revision competence (Horváth, 2009; Robert et al, 2017a) have flourished in the last decade, but have also raised concerns about the need for reviser training. Moreover, thanks to the technological developments in the translation industry, revision is increasingly required and has become a relevant quality assurance procedure (Parra Galiano, 2006, 2010). However, despite this recognition of the importance of revision, it remains unclear how revisers should be trained in order to comply with the requirements that are set out in the standards.

To tackle such issues, it is necessary to take a closer look at the two normative documents in question and understand how the reviser's role is described therein. To what extent do translation standards effectively value the revisory activity? Are there significant differences as far as reviser competences are concerned if one compares the first standard with the second one? Do both standards reinforce the importance of considering linguistic, textual, and translational aspects when it comes to revision or do they rather disregard the intertwined relationship between those three dimensions? These are some of the questions which this paper aims to address.

Based on a comparison of these two documents, the study starts by briefly outlining the research context in which it was developed, and to this end Section 2 describes the main objectives and the theoretical framework in question. Then, Section 3 provides a definition of the key concepts as they are understood in this work. The paper moves on to explain the methodology used in the analysis, and Section 5 looks at the materials – namely the translation standards – in more detail and discusses the results within a text-linguistic perspective. Finally, the conclusions are presented in Section 6.

2 CONTEXTUALISATION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Portuguese context

Portugal is one of the countries where EN 15038:2006 and ISO 17100:2015 have been transposed as national standards in 2012 and 2016, respectively (IPQ, 2012, 2016). However, university degrees in Translation are relatively new in the country. The first programmes date back only to the early 2000s and the ones that are currently offered still do not include specific training on revision, according to the curricula available online².

In Portugal, translator training programmes are offered by faculties of Arts or Human/Social Sciences. In addition, translation departments and linguistics departments do not always share their activities for the benefit of research, and interaction between members of the two groups can be quite scarce. This makes it more challenging for scholars to develop projects that combine both scientific domains. The present study fits into this kind of context – a PhD. research project in Text Linguistics that applies socio-interactionist principles to translation revision.

Building on previous work on the advantages of the theoretical intersection between Text Linguistics and Translation Studies (Fidalgo, 2014), this study now looks at the translation standards stated above and tries to analyse whether and how the linguistic and textual issues are addressed in these documents. Furthermore, the article also seeks to critically reflect on how the standards describe the reviser's professional competences and suggests possible implications for reviser training.

2.2 The Socio-Discursive Interactionism framework

Text Linguistics encompasses several approaches to texts and textual analysis that share a common interest: communication. This dimension is relevant since this branch of Linguistics focuses on language functioning and use by advocating a more comprehensive analysis of textual phenomena.

Socio-Discursive Interactionism (SDI) is an epistemological and theoretical framework within Text Linguistics, which has been developed by Jean-Paul Bronckart (1997). It constitutes a variation and a continuation of the principles of Social Interactionism in the sense that it combines contributions from Psychology (Vygotsky, 1934/2007), Philosophy of Language (Voloshinov, 1929/1986), Semiology (Saussure, 2002) and the Activity Theory (Leontiev, 1978/2009), among others. Therefore, SDI should not be

² If one takes a look at the curricula of the three translation degrees currently offered by Portuguese public universities (Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa – <https://www.lettras.ulisboa.pt/pt/cursos/licenciaturas-1-ciclo/traducao>; Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa – <http://fcsh.unl.pt/ensino/licenciaturas/traducao#section-3>; Universidade de Aveiro – <https://www.ua.pt/#/pt/c/44/p>), it can be seen that none of them includes an autonomous unit dedicated to revision. This information is only available in Portuguese, but it certainly goes against the status given to the revisory activity in the standards.

considered as a linguistic theory but rather as a science of the human being, in which language plays a central role in human development. Bronckart (2004) argues that the mediating function of language cannot be separated from the context in which verbal productions (i.e. texts) emerge, because the social dimension influences the linguistic one. So, SDI advocates a top-down approach (Voloshinov, 1929/1986, pp.95-96) when examining the relationship between social activities, genres, and texts. In order to understand this dynamics, SDI is also concerned with the analysis of professional practices and consequently with professional training. The framework, which was initially theorised in Switzerland, now has active research groups in several countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Portugal.

The following section will discuss how SDI can be applied to the study of translation revision by considering two main concepts: text and revision.

3 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

According to the socio-interactionist assumptions, social interaction is a crucial factor as far as language use is concerned since individuals interact through texts, which can be produced in both oral and written form. Communication is a key notion within SDI just as in contemporary translation theories (Hurtado Albir, 2017), therefore revision, which contributes to achieving efficient communicative interchanges, can be seen as an issue that connects the two fields of research. With this in mind, it is possible to state that Text Linguistics and Translation Studies share the same research materials, namely language and texts, as well as a common goal which is to enable successful communication.

3.1 The notion of text

On the one hand, the concept of text can be perceived as a theoretical abstraction by overlooking contextual and situational features. On the other hand, a text can also be understood as a complex and concrete object (Miranda, 2010), which enables communication between individuals and even influences their actions.

In this paper, it is assumed that texts are not just linguistic units; they also constitute communicative units (Coutinho, 2014b, p.125) that are produced in a given time, in a given culture and within various spheres of human action. This multidimensional context will influence and even constrain text production in different ways, depending on the genre and the activity at issue. According to Coutinho (2008, p.202), texts are thus empirical representatives of social activities. At the same time, texts also comprise a praxeological component (Bota, 2009; Bronckart, 2008) that plays an important role in shaping reality.

From this perspective, standards are normative texts, which aim to regulate different areas of human interaction: what these particular texts prescribe through language (the linguistic dimension of texts) is to be complied with through actions (the praxeological dimension of texts). Therefore, each standard can be viewed as a unique specimen of the genre *standard*, which is produced within the activity of standardisation.

In this sense, translation standards are texts that are written to regulate and standardise the provision of translation services. This text production context has an impact on the linguistic forms used in those texts, as Miranda (2014, p.151) explains: the *social* influences the *linguistic*; the *global* affects the *local*. These are precisely the grounds on which the SDI top-down approach is based.

In order to accomplish the communicative goals implied above, texts sometimes need to be revised. Since the concept of revision is quite broad and not univocal, it demands further definition.

3.2 The notion of *revision*

According to TS scholars, revision is usually approached as both a process and a product (Mossop, 2014; Robert, 2008). In general terms, it is a process when it refers to the bilingual activity of comparing a target-language text with the corresponding source-language text by a person other than the translator; and it is a product when the notion is used to designate the improved version of a translated text.

However, translation theorists often point out the fact that the terminology concerning translation revision varies considerably (Brunette, 2000; Parra Galiano, 2005; Künzli, 2014) in different languages, including Portuguese as will be discussed further on in this paper. On the one hand, different terms can be used to name the same concept; on the other hand, a single term can also refer to distinct practices.

The multilingual publication of translation standards reflects an attempt to harmonise definitions related to the revision terminology used in the translation industry. A clear distinction is drawn, for instance, between the processual notions of *review* and *revision*. The first one applies to the “monolingual examination of target language content for its suitability for the agreed purpose” (ISO, 2015, p.2), the second one to the “bilingual examination of target language content against source language content for its suitability for the agreed purpose” (ibid.). As made explicit in the above sections, the present article focuses specifically on issues related to this second notion.

3.3 Relating *text* and *revision*

When associating Translation Studies with Text Linguistics, especially as far as the SDI framework is concerned, revision can be seen as a social and as a language activity for it implies interaction through texts. Moreover, since revision refers to a bilingual comparison of textual products, it also assumes a mediating function (Bronckart, 2004): it is the reviser's role to combine the different voices (authors, translators, reviewers, project managers) that might intervene in text production and to deliver a target-language text that complies with the project specifications, namely the so-called brief. By inserting the necessary changes to improve the quality of a text, the reviser is acting on that text through language, which again points to both the praxeological and linguistic dimensions of texts (Bronckart, 2008).

In this sense, revision is both a reading and writing practice, a linguistic and textual practice. It implies constant movements between three texts³ that engage in a dialogue with each other and, for that reason, it can also be viewed as a dynamic and dialogical practice within the interactionist perspective (Voloshinov, 1929/1986; Fidalgo, 2014).

Such an approach to revision not only provides a broader view of an activity which goes far beyond the correction of spelling and grammar, as the traditional understanding usually assumes, but also emphasises the link between the revision process and the text-linguistic issues associated with it. This is precisely what the analysis presented in this paper intends to underline.

4 MATERIALS AND METHOD

As described above, translation standards are empirical representatives⁴ of the standardisation activity in the sense that they embody language actions by specifying the “requirements for all aspects of the translation process” (ISO, 2015, p.vi) in textual form.

Interestingly, the national versions of the standards are translations as well and the responsibility for their production falls upon the competent standardisation bodies in each country. In the case of Portugal, this body is called Instituto Português da Qualidade (Portuguese Institute for Quality), which is also the entity to be contacted concerning the purchase of any national standard.

³ These are the source text and the two versions of the target text, the first target text is the one delivered by the translator and the second one is the one being revised.

⁴ The notion of texts as “empirical representatives” is commonly used within the SDI framework (Bronckart, 1997; Coutinho, 2006), where texts are considered to be complex material objects that represent social activities.

Given that the aim of this study was to examine the two translation standards while highlighting the links between Text Linguistics and Translation Studies based on that analysis, the first methodological step taken was to acquire the normative documents that now constitute the material under analysis. These texts are identified as follows:

1. the Portuguese version of the European Standard EN 15038:2006 entitled “Translation services – Service requirements”: *Norma Portuguesa*⁵ *EN 15038*, which was published in 2012 by Instituto Português da Qualidade, in short referred to as NP EN 15038:2012;
2. the Portuguese version of the International Standard ISO 17100:2015 entitled “Translation Services – Requirements for Translation Services”: *Norma Portuguesa EN ISO 17100*, which was published in 2016 by Instituto Português da Qualidade, in short referred to as NP EN ISO 17100:2016.

Since this paper is focused on the Portuguese context, the analysis is essentially drawn from the comparison of the two Portuguese versions of the standards. However, for the sake of clarity, all quotations are extracted from the respective texts written in English as this is one of the official source languages of the standards. Thus, whenever the term *standard/s* and expressions like ‘the two documents’ or ‘both standards’ are used in this paper, they should be understood as a reference to these normative documents as regulatory instruments, regardless of the language version. When this is not the case, it will be clarified.

The first thing worth mentioning about the standards in question is the publication date. It took six years for Portugal to have a national version of the European Standard EN 15038:2006, but only one year for the country to transpose ISO 17100:2015. This can be interpreted as being in line with the later development of Translation Studies in the Portuguese academic context, not to mention the fact that the professional status of revisers is still not recognised by the Portuguese tax system (Fidalgo, 2014). Furthermore, in Portugal, there is no professional bar association that can recognise the competences of those experts, just as there are no certified translators. The repercussions of the standards as both linguistic and social objects must therefore be considered in the light of these constraints, since these documents influence the provision of services as far as professional profiles, practices and terminology adoption in the translation market are concerned.

Once again, the usefulness of adopting the interactionist top-down approach as a methodological option within a text-linguistic perspective becomes evident in this context. It is important to understand the social conditions in which empirical texts circulate to better evaluate the linguistic forms in use, as Coutinho (2014a, p.227) explains in the following passage:

⁵ “Norma Portuguesa” means Portuguese standard and that is what NP in the abbreviated form stands for.

(...) social interaction is a determining factor, and furthermore, it implies that one should take into consideration the specificities of this same interaction: the context or, more accurately, the social activity where it takes place and the specific genre (among the genres in use, in the activity in question). Analysing linguistic forms where they occur only makes sense when you take into account these specificities, as they are the technical resource for the pursuance of social purposes (...).

In line with this perspective, the following section will firstly look at how revision issues are addressed in the translation standards, and secondly, it will discuss the discrepancies between the two documents in regard to text-linguistic topics.

5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Even though the International Standard ISO 17100 replaces the previous EN 15038, it is worth comparing both documents and commenting on some of the differences and similarities between the two, in order to assess whether changes have been made to the way revision topics are addressed in the most recent standard when comparing it to the first one. The goal is to tackle the issues raised in the introductory section of this paper, namely to understand how the revisory activity is described in these normative documents and whether they reinforce the intertwined relationship between linguistic, textual, and translational aspects when it comes to revision.

5.1 Revision issues

5.1.1 Revision terminology – what kind of service is provided?

Revision, as a mandatory quality assurance procedure, is considered essential to meet the expectations of clients and contributes to “the delivery of a quality translation service that meets applicable specifications” (ISO, 2015, p.1) by ensuring compliance with the linguistic conventions of the target language.

In this respect, both translation standards show a clear effort to present definitions of terms related to quality procedures by identifying five different quality control stages within the translation process: checking, revision, review, proofreading and final verification. To this end, both documents include a specific section entitled “Terms and definitions”. The ISO standard, however, is more structured since it divides this section into five subsections according to thematic criteria and even includes a diagram describing the translation workflow (see ISO, 2015, p.12). Table 1 below lists the different terms used in the standards to refer to the quality procedures in question, indicating their application status and the expert responsible for carrying them out.

Table 1. Revision terminology in English.

EN 15038:2006/ISO 17100:2015			
	Professional	Status	Synonyms*
Checking/Check	translator	mandatory	self-revision
Revision	reviser	mandatory	bilingual editing
Review	reviewer	optional; if requested	monolingual editing
Proofreading	proofreader	optional; if requested	-
Final verification	translation service provider	mandatory	-0

* These synonyms are explicitly proposed in ISO 17100:2015.

When one takes a look at the Portuguese versions of the standards, there is one aspect that immediately stands out: the efforts to improve the terminological consistency and adequacy as far NP ISO 17100:2016 is concerned. The first standard, NP EN 15038:2012, included five different translations just for the term *review*, as shown in Table 2. The Portuguese language does not have different words for the terms *revision* and *review* – the word ‘revisão’ is used for both meanings. Nevertheless, it is still possible to distinguish the two notions by specifying whether they refer to a bilingual procedure (‘revisão bilingue’) or to a monolingual one (‘revisão monolingué’) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Revision terminology in Portuguese.

	NP EN 15038:2012		NP ISO 17100:2016		
	Main translation	Other translations	Main translation	Other translations	Synonyms*
Checking/Check	<i>revisão pelo tradutor</i>	-	<i>verificação</i>	-	-
Revision	<i>revisão por terceiros</i>	<i>revisão da tradução</i>	<i>revisão bilingue</i>	-	<i>revisão da tradução</i>
Review	<i>revisão</i>	i) <i>revisão especializada;</i> ii) <i>revisão técnica;</i> iii) <i>revisão pelo especialista;</i> iv) <i>revisão monolingué</i>	<i>revisão monolingué</i>	-	<i>revisão de texto</i>
Proofreading	<i>revisão de provas</i>	-	<i>revisão de provas</i>	-	-
Final verification	<i>verificação final</i>	-	<i>controlo final</i>	-	-

* These synonyms are explicitly proposed in NP EN ISO 17100:2016.

As seen in Table 1, the English versions of the standards are identical regarding the terminology used to designate different revisory practices, while several variations can be observed in the two Portuguese documents. In this regard, NP ISO 17100:2016 is definitely more coherent than NP EN 15038:2012, because it does not entail the level of terminology variation that is found in the previous standard. These changes are significant, but the reasons behind them are never addressed in the document. One can only assume that they are based on the synonyms provided in ISO 17100:2015 (see Table 1), which were non-existent in EN 15038:2006.

Since terminology comprises a linguistic dimension in addition to the conceptual one, these changes can once again be linked to the argument that the social activity (in this case standardising the provision of translation services) in which a text is produced has an impact on the linguistic forms that are used in that same text. Moreover, these differences may also foster the use of a more harmonised metalanguage about the professional practices at issue by both revisers and translation agencies in Portugal.

5.1.2 Revision methods – how is the service provided?

The definition of the term *revision* does not differ significantly from one standard to another. Both documents clearly mention the contrastive nature of revision (CEN, 2006, p.6; ISO, 2015, p.2) and point out that the translation should be examined “for its suitability for the agreed purpose” (ibid.). Although this wording obviously refers to a functional approach to revision, in line with contemporary translation theories, what is meant by the expression still remains vague in the documents, since this requirement is not further explained in the standards.

Moreover, the standards do not include any specifications regarding the way the revisory task should be carried out, as Robert (2008) also stresses. The ISO standard does highlight the fact that revision should take into account the aspects listed under the section devoted to translation (ISO, 2015, p.11), but nowhere in the standards are possible revision methods and strategies explained or recommended.

Thus, in the case of revision, translation standards are able to prescribe *what* is to be done but not *how* it can be accomplished.

5.1.3 Revision competence(s) – who provides the service?

Globalisation has boosted the demand for language services and increasingly qualified language experts, who are able to deliver quality translations “in line with the highest professional and ethical standards” (DGT, 2017, p.4). This seems straightforward and easy to grasp, but the criteria used by translation service providers for the selection of revisers actually do not differ much from those applying to translators, if the requirements included in the standards are to be met (as it will be shown below).

According to the standards, the professional competences of translators are the following:

- a. translation competence;
- b. linguistic and textual competence in the source language and the target language;
- c. competence in research, information acquisition, and processing;
- d. cultural competence;
- e. technical competence;
- f. domain competence (new addition to ISO 17100:2015, since it was not included in EN 15038:2006).

In turn, the professional competences of revisers are described in the normative documents as follows:

Revisers shall have the competences as defined in 3.2.2 [‘Professional competences of translators’], and should have translating experience in the domain under consideration. (CEN, 2006, p.7)

The TSP shall ensure that revisers have all the translator competences defined in 3.1.3 [‘Professional competences of translators’], the qualification defined in 3.1.4 [‘Translator qualifications’], and translation and/or revision experience in the domain under consideration. (ISO, 2015, p.6)

This means that, in theory, every translator is a potential reviser, which seems to be in line with the new *EMT Competence Framework*, where revision is included in the competences of translators (DGT, 2017, p.8). In practice, however, professionals know this is not always the case because not all good translators are good revisers. In addition to that, according to the standards, revision competence is apparently identical to the sum of the above-mentioned translator subcompetences, contrary to what Horváth (2009) and Robert et al (2017a, 2017b) argue.

Furthermore, revision experience is not a compulsory requirement but an optional one, since revisers can have “translation *and/or* revision experience” (ISO, 2015, p.6, our emphasis). But what is even more surprising are the qualifications required to become a reviser in the twenty-first century, namely one of the following:

- formal higher education in translation (recognised degree);
- equivalent qualification in any other subject plus a minimum of two years of documented experience in translating;
- at least five years of documented professional experience in translating. (CEN, 2006, p.7)

- a) a recognized graduate qualification in translation from an institution of higher education;
- b) a recognized graduate qualification in any other field from an institution of higher education plus two years of full-time professional experience in translating;
- c) five years of full-time professional experience in translating. (ISO 2015, p.6)

Since a reviser is only required to meet one of the three qualification criteria listed in each standard, it can be inferred that a reviser does not need to have either training or experience in revision or a university degree of any kind for that matter, as long as s/he has worked as a professional translator for at least five years. The same applies to

translators, who are allowed to exercise their profession without holding an academic degree, as the qualifications required of translators are the same as those of revisers.

Close textual analysis of the standards thus reveals that these requirements do not ensure high quality of the revisers' output.

5.2 Text-linguistic issues

Assuming that every textual production is necessarily situated in a particular social context (Coutinho, 2006), that is, that the social setting not only influences the choice of the genre but also affects the textual structures and linguistic forms used in a text, the terminology adopted in translation standards is an important aspect to consider. The terms in use certainly derive from the context of activity, namely that of translation, but at the same time these choices also influence the verbal interactions between collaborating professionals.

In this sense, the changes introduced in the ISO standard represent a notable effort towards terminology adoption and consistency. First, ISO 17100:2015 reveals a considerable difference in the way definitions are organised by presenting different thematic subsections, which was not the case in EN 15038:2006. Secondly, it also includes a greater number of terms (forty-two against a total of nineteen in the European Standard). For instance, the section devoted to language and content encompasses eleven definitions, some of which were not part of the previous normative document, like the concepts of *domain* (ISO, 2015, p.3) or *text* (ibid.). Although some of these definitions may also be perceived as vague or circular⁶, one should recognise that some progress has been made in this respect, judging by the changes mentioned above.

As far as text-linguistic issues are concerned, it should also be underlined that the two standards provide a definition for the notion of linguistic and textual competence in the sense that it “includes the ability to understand the source language and mastery of the target language.” (CEN, 2006, p.7; ISO, 2015, p.6). Although one could argue that these are in fact two competences, the effort in emphasising the relevance of both language comprehension and production has to be acknowledged, and more importantly the notion does not overlook the “knowledge of text-type conventions” (ibid.). This obviously represents a positive aspect of the standards as they recognise each text is produced in accordance to certain textual parameters (Coutinho & Miranda, 2009), depending on the genre question.

Strangely enough, however, while the European Standard does not include any further reference to this matter, the International Standard states that the “review includes

⁶ See, for instance, the definitions of *reviser* as a “person who revises target language content against source language content” (ISO, 2015, p.4), of *reviewer* as a “person who reviews target language content” (ibid.) or of *proofreader* as a “person who proofreads target language content” (ibid.).

assessing (...) respect for the relevant text-type conventions.” (ISO, 2015, p.11), ultimately assigning this responsibility to the reviewer, rather than to the reviser. A problem arises here, and the incoherence is easy to understand if one recalls that review is not a mandatory task within the translation workflow; it is an optional procedure that depends on the project specifications (see Table 2). This means that text-type conventions do not need to be considered by the reviser after all, which points to a less comprehensive view of revision.

Also, it is interesting to note that both standards present specific indications about the text-linguistic aspects that should be accounted for when translating (CEN, 2006, p.11; ISO, 2015, p.10). However, when it comes to revising, the normative documents are less explicit. For example, the International Standard determines that the reviser “shall examine the target language content against the source language content for any errors and other issues” (ISO, 2015, pp.10-11), but it does not explain what issues these might be. Instead, it limits the revisory activity to the “comparison of the source and target language content for the aspects listed” (ISO, 2015, p.11) in the translation section.

On this basis, one can only infer that there are no major differences between translation and revision and this is perhaps the reason why the standards do not distinguish between the professional competences of translators and revisers. Several research studies (Horváth, 2009; Robert et al, 2017a), however, have already demonstrated that, despite the common characteristics, translation and revision are different activities and require distinct professional competence profiles.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that two significant annexes that were included in the European Standard EN 15038 were simply removed from the ISO standard: Annex C entitled “Source text analysis” and Annex D “Style guide”. The first appendix focused on aspects related to textuality and textual organisation (both on the macro- and micro-levels), while the second one provided instructions about punctuation, spelling, and formatting, among other related topics.

This omission can be viewed as a major setback from a text-linguistic perspective, as these appendixes reinforced the need for integrating text-linguistic concerns in translation and revision practices.

6 CONCLUSIONS

José Saramago, Portuguese writer and winner of the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1998, once wrote, “amending is the only task in the world that will never come to an end”⁷ (Saramago, 2008, p.14, our translation). Indeed, with the growing technological advances in translation industry, one may consider the possibility of revision becoming more and more the future of translation. For this reason, it is essential to acknowledge the role of revision in ensuring the quality of translation products, i.e. translated texts. Translation standards such as EN 15038 and ISO 17100 contributed to the recognition of the revisory activity as a mandatory procedure within the provision of translation services, but there is still work to be done.

This article outlined how those normative documents approach revision from a text-linguistic point of view. After comparing the two standards, it is possible to conclude that they do not distinguish between reviser competence and translator competence, and also that both standards (and particularly ISO 17100) essentially disregard the intertwined relationship between linguistic, textual, and translational dimensions when it comes to revision.

The analysis also explored the possible implications of this scenario for Portugal, a country where reviser training opportunities are much-needed, especially in the field of translation, since most training offers are targeted at the book publishing sector. Nevertheless, this absence may be linked to the fact that the standards do not require translation revisers to have any specific training in the field.

Both translation standards do refer to the notion of *professional competences of revisers* suggesting that it should be possible to validate the acquired competences in some way. However, there is no official body in Portugal that can issue such certification. Furthermore, the International Standard shows less concern for text-linguistic issues, when compared to the previous European Standard. This will inevitably have repercussions on the way future training courses are designed, because the specific competences of revisers remain to be set out in the normative documents.

All in all, the shortcomings identified in this paper may have a partial explanation: the main purpose of the standards is to certify the quality of the production process rather than the quality of the textual products that are produced. Nonetheless, if the goal is to specify requirements for the delivery of quality translation services, it is hard to understand how this can be ensured without providing more details on revision practices. Additionally, on the one hand, a translator does not necessarily have to be a reviser since “in this, as in many other issues, one size does not fit all” (Kelly, 2008, p.118). On the

⁷ Original quotation: “o trabalho de emendar é o único que nunca se acabará no mundo” (Saramago, 2008, p.14).

other hand, translators and revisers are language and communication experts, text producers and, for this reason, the useful contributions from the field of Linguistics should not be overlooked when tackling these questions.

In conclusion, this paper illustrates that the translation standards that have so far been published do not promote either revision or reviser competence, and leave the current situation unchanged by not filling the gaps between professional practice and qualification needs among revisers.

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