

## Creative characteristics of specialised translation

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<https://doi.org/10.61200/mikael.147628>

### Abstract

The creative aspects of specialised translation are explored here through the perceptions of translation professionals employed in various roles in the translation industry. Most of the interviewees supported the view that translation can be described as a creative task in accordance with the current understanding of professional creativity. Interviewees identified creative task elements related to changed content, linguistic forms and problem-solving. Translational creativity was considered to be limited by several factors such as the technological tools being used, although the use of tools was also seen as requiring creativity. Different text genres were considered to require different kinds of creativity, and individual translators were also seen to possess varying creative abilities. It was therefore suggested that in translation project management, selecting translation professionals who have a suitable set of creative abilities is a critical step. It seems that a narrow definition of translation may lead to a critical view of whether translation is inherently creative work, while recognising the diversity of translational tasks facilitates a more positive view.

**Keywords:** specialised translation, professional creativity, translation industry

### 1 Introduction

The concept of ‘creativity’ has received increasing, albeit sporadic attention in translation studies during the last decades; for an overview, see, e.g., Bayer-Hohenwarter and Kußmaul (2021) or Malmkjær (2020). However, the treatment of the concept has suffered from unclear definitions (see, e.g., Rojo 2017: 351; Aranda 2009: 23) which has led to differing assumptions of what creativity means for translation, and even whether it is to be recommended at all (Aranda 2009: 23). The present study aims to tackle this conceptual indeterminacy by gauging Finnish specialised translation professionals’ views on whether, and in what way, specialised translation is creative work in accordance with the definition of creativity used by creativity researchers in the field of psychology. Starting from a simple definition, I wish to arrive at a multidimensional understanding of how creativity may manifest in specialised translation, which has not always been considered a creative activity. The two concepts at the core of the article are thus firstly,

*Marja Kivilehto, Laura Ivaska, Olli Lautenbacher, Minna Ruokonen & Lena Segler-Heikkilä (eds.) 2025  
Mikael*

*Kääntämisen ja tulkauksen tutkimuksen aikakauslehti 18:1, s. 23–37*

*Finsk tidskrift för översättnings- och tolkningsforskning 18:1, s. 23–37*

*Finnish Journal of Translation and Interpreting Studies 18:1, p. 23–37*

creativity, and secondly, specialised translation. By bringing them together, I aim to contribute not only to a more nuanced understanding of the creativity that translators engage in as part of their work, but also to a more acute awareness of the real-life characteristics of specialised translation.

The term ‘specialised translation’ is used in this article to refer to the translation of non-literary texts as a service that language service providers (LSPs) and independent professionals, which together make up the translation industry, offer to businesses, public organisations and private individuals. While e.g. Scarpa (2020) defines specialised translation as “legal, technological, financial, scientific, medical and administrative” translations (Scarpa 2020: 81) that make use of what can be called special language, not all the texts that belong to these subject fields demonstrate the same level of specialisation; for example, some of them are targeted at a highly specialised audience while others are meant for target groups whose level of expertise in the specialised language variant is lower, resulting in pragmatic variation of the discourse (ibid.: 3). The definition of a special language and thus of specialised translation therefore seems to be somewhat blurred, and it is not wholly clear how the difference between specialised translation and what might be assumed as ‘general translation’ should be defined. Scarpa (2020: 3; with reference to Varantola 1986) admits that “between [languages for special purposes] and general language there is more a continuum than a clear-cut delimitation”. In light of this, practically all of the work engaged in by the translation industry can be considered to be specialised translation, even if some of it makes relatively little use of what can be called a special language. Both Scarpa (2020) and Rogers (2015) focus explicitly on texts that require quite specific terminology, for example. The understanding of specialised translation employed in this article is wider and also includes pragmatic texts that do not use special language varieties to any marked degree. This usage of the term ‘specialised translation’ stems from the fact that the Finnish counterpart of the term, *asiatekstikäntäminen*, which was used during the interviews and which is the main focus of the language industry in which the interviewees work, is generally understood to refer to a wide array of pragmatic texts.

## **2 Creativity in professional translation contexts**

Creativity has been most extensively discussed in psychology, covering perspectives such as how to define and assess creativity, how to foster creativity in individuals, and what role creativity plays in society (see, e.g., Kaufman and Sternberg 2019). Creativity researchers have usually defined creativity as the act of producing something that is both novel and appropriate for a specific use (see, e.g., Kaufman & Glăveanu 2019: 27). Since I examine creativity as a property of a task, I find this definition well suited for the current study. A creative person is someone with an ability to produce a product that can be considered to be creative (novel and appropriate). The creative process, in turn, can be defined as alternating phases of divergent and convergent thinking, that is, developing potential solutions and evaluating them (Guilford 1950; Kaufman & Glăveanu 2019: 32). In a professional (business) context, creativity can be functional (Cropley & Cropley

2010), engaged in as a response to a particular prompt or request (Unsworth 2001) and require professional expertise that surpasses the abilities of non-professionals but cannot be characterised as artistic creation (Kaufman & Beghetto 2009). For a discussion of these characteristics of professional creativity with regard to translation, see Korhonen (2024).

Translation scholars have often discussed creativity with regard to literary translation – which is the focus of e.g. Malmkjaer (2020) as well as Perteghella and Loffredo (2006) – or transcreation, which Katan (2021: 142) defines as the production of a translated text that contains “elements of innovative intervention designed to maximise impact while closely recreating the underlying essence and feel of the original”. The tradition of separating creative translation from non-creative has been strong and does not, at first glance, seem to offer much support for the view that all translation, even the specialised kind, requires creativity. According to Kußmaul (2000: 29), for example, cases of readily available direct translations do not require creativity. Nevertheless, he also introduces the idea that translation as an activity is inherently creative (Kußmaul 2007: 121); this approach rests on functional translation theories, such as skopos theory (Reiß & Vermeer 1984), which give priority to the translation’s purpose instead of strict adherence to a source text (Kußmaul 2007: 121). Despite this view, however, Kußmaul (2007: 122) continues to restrict his discussion of creative translation to translation in which some content element has been changed.

An even more critical view has been expressed by Wolfram Wilss (1988; 1999). According to him, the fact that translators do not deal with their own ideas but with those of authors leads to the conclusion that creativity is a rare exception, not a typical component of the task; translators do not act autonomously but are dependent on the source text (Wilss 1999: 2). However, even Wilss (1988: 111) has recognised that a certain type of linguistic creativity is a part of the translation process; he just does not consider it worth discussing as actual creativity. A contrary standpoint is taken by Rojo (2017), who focuses on linguistic creativity found in translation.<sup>1</sup> These two contrasting perspectives showcase the two major types of changes, or sources of newness, in translated texts: first, changes in the content, and second, changes in linguistic forms<sup>2</sup>. In translation studies, linguistic changes have traditionally been conceptualised as translation shifts, and the concept of shift has also been used to investigate the creativity of translations (Bayer-Hohenwarter 2011).

Another way of approaching creativity in translation contexts is to focus on the problem-solving process that leads to the shifts found in the final product. Kußmaul (2007: 123–126) describes the creative process based on Preiser (1976) as having four phases: preparation, incubation, illumination and evaluation. This description adds complexity to the more straight-forward understanding of the process as divergent and

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<sup>1</sup> These two contrasting standpoints are closely related to the discussion of authorship and whether a translation is considered as a narrative (produced by the original author) or as a text (produced by the translator). For a thorough discussion, see Bantinaki (2020).

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted, however, that it is not always possible to draw a clear line between content and style (form): when different linguistic forms are used, minor changes in the meanings of words and the relationships between them take place. Form and content should thus not be considered to be separate entities; for a discussion of this, see, e.g., Leech and Short (1981).

convergent thinking, applied in translation studies by Korhonen and Hirvonen (2021). Kußmaul (ibid.) also places high importance on lateral thinking that can be used to produce highly creative translation solutions: the translator looks at a problematic word or phrase from a different angle and produces alternative solutions through association and mental images in what could be seen as an enhanced process of divergent thinking. It seems that for Kußmaul (ibid.), such lateral thinking is necessary for a translation to be considered creative; if a solution is found with more traditional means, it is not creative. This approach thus portrays translation as an activity in which near-automatic task sequences and creative problem-solving alternate. The problem-solving process could, however, be understood as taking up most – if not indeed all – of the translator’s time; Rojo (2017: 354), for example, ascribes to “the view of the translation process as a constant process of generating and evaluating alternatives”, and Pym (2003: 489) describes translation competence as the ability to create alternative translations and to select one of them for the target text. This approach, which is compatible with the idea of all translation being creative action, has also been adopted by Korhonen and Hirvonen (2021).

In the history of creativity research, measuring and enhancing the creative traits of individuals has received much attention. The central role of individual agency and various personality traits for translational creativity has also been discussed by Rojo (2017: 358–359). In the current article, discussion of the specific creative traits required of translators is mainly limited to the interviewees’ opinions of whether differences exist between the creative abilities of individual translators or revisers.

### **3 Research design**

The data for this study comprises 17 semi-structured interviews with specialised translation professionals recorded in autumn 2021 via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The interviewees were selected based on their employment in the Finnish translation industry, the length of their experience and, since the data was also to be used for researching translation revision, based on their experience of translation revision work and/or related decision-making. All the interviewees were employed by LSPs which offer specialised translation services; the professional roles represented include translator, reviser, project manager, and various sales-related and managerial roles. All interviewees held positions that included tasks from more than one of these areas, or had previously been employed in other roles. Seven translator/revisers, nine project managers or sales/manager personnel, and one interviewee with a mixed role were included from eight LSPs; the largest number of interviewees from one LSP was four. Large Finnish LSPs were prioritized. The length of the interviewees’ professional experience varied from less than 5 years to approximately 30 years, and 12 had at least 20 years of professional experience. The video recordings were transcribed and anonymised.

The language of the interviews was Finnish. The primary themes discussed during the interviews were revision policies and practices, the creative characteristics of translation tasks, and changes in translation professions. The recorded background information

included the role and current responsibilities of the interviewee, the length of their professional experience, and their educational background. The duration of the interviews ranged from 52 minutes to 87 minutes.

To ensure that the interviewees knew what was meant by the term creativity, they received information on the topic via e-mail before the interview. The same information was also available in a brief form on a PowerPoint slide to be shown during the interviews. The following information was included (in Finnish):

- On a general level, creativity refers to action that leads to the creation of something new and appropriate for a specific purpose. Not all new products should therefore be considered creative products; appropriateness for a purpose is important.
- Creativity is not a characteristic that only few talented persons possess; instead, all people are creative, although their capacity for creativity may be different. Creativity exists in everyday life, including workplaces.
- Motivation for creative endeavours may be internal to a person, but it may also be external. In the latter case, a person is given a work task that requires creativity. The goal of the task may be open, or it may be known in advance.
- Creative work essentially consists of two parts: Finding or developing solutions, and evaluating the possible solutions to identify the one that is most suitable.

Since the interviewees were provided with this basic information, their perceptions of creativity could be considered as coloured by preconceptions originating from academic study of the topic, conducted in the field of psychology; it can be asked whether a *tabula rasa* would have been a better starting point. However, this would have dramatically changed the object of study. The aim of the study was to find out whether – and why – translation professionals believe that translation can be said to be a creative endeavour *in accordance with* the current, widely accepted definition of creativity, not whether translation coincides with any meaning that a person might give to the term creativity. If no terminological baseline had been established, the interviewees might have discussed the topic based on widely differing ideas of what creativity means; this would have resulted in a study of the definitions of creativity held by the interviewees, not of whether translation actually is a creative task. During the interviews, I did not explicitly express my own view of translation being an inherently creative task, and encouraged the interviewees to present contrary views and arguments. Some interviewees may have modified their views to comply with what they may have sensed my own perspective to be; however, as it was made clear to all interviewees that they were considered the experts in all the discussed topics, and they seemed happy to accept that role, I have no reason to assume that their statements would have been in contradiction to what they believed to be true.

The analysis of the data began in Atlas.ti software with automatic coding of all paragraphs that contained the Finnish word for creativity or its inflected form. These sections were further processed and interpreted by producing formulations of the core content of the interviewees' creativity-related utterances. The resulting core content statements were subjected to thematic categorisation. The analysis was carried out in Finnish; translation into English took place while writing this article.

## **4 Translation professionals' perceptions of creativity in specialised translation**

In this section, I present the results of the analysis as they provide answers to four main questions: whether specialised translation is a creative task, and why; in what different ways does creativity manifest in the work; whether different levels of creativity can be identified in different types of specialised translation tasks; and whether individual professionals can be said to possess a higher or lower level of creativity. The discussions included in the following subsections overlap in many parts.

### **4.1 Is specialised translation a creative endeavour – or not?**

When discussing the interviewees' views on this question, I begin with the contrary arguments, drawing together the interviewees' justifications for not considering translation as a creative task, or only recognising very limited creativity in translation work. After that, I look for patterns in how the interviewees argued for the view that translation is a creative task; several cogent arguments for specialised translation being creative work were presented.

#### **4.1.1 The critical view: reasoning against translation being inherently creative action**

Of the 17 interviewees included in this dataset, only one was convinced that minimal creativity is involved in translation work. Several others, however, discussed types of translation that do not require creativity. For example, it was stated that some translations do not require the ability to use language creatively, even if they may require the kind of creativity needed when solving translation problems.

When arguing against the claim that specialised translation is essentially creative work, interviewees referred to the impact of various information sources and tools that translators use. The arguments were typically characterised by a narrow understanding of translation as re-writing of the source text content in another language. This became evident in explicit statements that services such as transcreation should be considered to be editing, not translating. It seems that some professionals do not wholly subscribe to a functional approach to translation which prioritises the target context at the expense of the source text. I assume this to be due to their experience of the type of translation work in which the text genre as well as the client require detailed repetition of the source text content; examples mentioned in the interviews include documents drafted by public authorities. The service design of the LSPs can be assumed to be the second reason for applying such a narrow definition of translation: in their everyday work, professionals refer to different translation tasks using the service labels, and not all their work is labelled 'translation' even if many translation theorists would call it that. Transcreation can be mentioned as a frequently appearing example of this.

Some interviewees found that the use of information sources, including term banks and grammars, limit creativity in several ways. It was stated that elements of the target texts, such as terms, can be extracted from various sources, removing the need to create any content. Some interviewees used a jigsaw puzzle as a metaphor of specialised translation, questioning whether creativity would be required in an activity that in some cases consists of arranging given pieces, including established terminology, into the correct order; this view is supported by Scarpa (2020: 340) who considers not only the terminology, but also the phraseology of highly specialised communication to be fixed, leading to situations in which only one translation equivalent exists. Such cases could thus be seen as requiring no creativity. An interviewee also noted that the formulations in the target texts naturally need to follow grammatical rules, and even if some elements need to be, for example, added to the text during translation, this is often done because grammatical correctness requires it, which the interviewee took to mean that creativity plays no role. Technical tools were also found to remove some of the need for the translator to think for themselves, which would require creativity: when the translation environment offers increasingly effective solutions, translators can be seen as engaging in less creative thinking. According to one interviewee, the increased reliance on technology may lead to unwillingness by translators to take on more creative translation tasks, and may also be seen as a factor in the development of translation from artistry into an industry.

#### 4.1.2 The argument for specialised translation as an inherently creative task

The majority of the interviewees subscribed to the view that translation is inherently creative action. When discussing these views, it must be kept in mind that the focus is on whether and how translation corresponds to the current widely accepted view of professional creativity, not on whether translation corresponds to the interviewees' potential previously held conceptions of what creativity is. In the following, I will draw a picture of translational creativity as described by the interviewees.

Translation was considered to be creative because it is a type of communication; one interviewee argued that a translated text is an independent piece of communication, and producing such texts is necessarily creative work. The status of the translation as an independent communicative text was justified by the fact that the translation is produced by the translator, not the author of the source text; it thus seems that interviewees ascribe agency to the translator. In my view, the attribution of agency implies the existence of professional creativity in the form of making conscious and justified choices in a creative process. This view of translation as independent communication is in direct contradiction to Wilss's (1999) view of translations being fully dependent on source texts; on the other hand, Rojo (2017: 358–359) takes for granted the close connection between agency and creativity.

Successful translation was also seen by interviewees as nearly always requiring some level of editing to achieve a high-quality target text. Editing is here understood as an activity of linguistic re-working that surpasses the mere rendering of a grammatically correct text, instead resulting in a genuinely fluent and naturally sounding target text that

conveys the same essential meanings as the source text. The process includes first deciphering the meanings of the source text, and then rebuilding them in the target language. Understanding is thus also an activity that entails creativity (Fontanet 2005); this view is supported by Rojo (2017: 355).

Choice as an element of the linguistic work in producing communicative text (see, e.g., Levý 1967) received much attention in the interviews. It was stated that translation is never fully mechanical work such as automatically replacing source language words with target language words; instead, a word may be translated in many ways, and translators choose between several alternatives to find the word, expression or structure that conveys the necessary meaning. Essentially, it was explained, they create expressions anew using another language. Interviewees stated that as no new content is being added, this may sometimes feel like copying, but that would be a misconception, as the action is much more complex; the same argument has been presented by Korhonen and Hirvonen (2021).

In the previous subsection, it became evident that translation technology was considered to limit the translator's creativity. Some interviewees, however, also referred to translation technology to demonstrate why the human translator's effort is creative; for example, translation memory tools were seen as taking on any mechanical part of the overall work, while the human translator engages in the part that requires creativity. The use of translation engines and post-editing activities were also considered to add to the need for creativity instead of subtracting from it: making decisions on which parts of the translation engine output must be edited, and which parts quite specifically require added linguistic creativity, was thought to be far from a mechanical activity. One interviewee also mentioned that new, better ways of using the same tools are always in demand, and that finding them requires creativity. The introduction of technical tools to the translation process was therefore not taken to mean that the work would become a mechanical effort; the opposite can in fact be considered to happen. According to Ehrensberger-Dow (2017: 332–333), the key to whether technology constrains or enables creativity lies in cognitive ergonomics: the tools must be designed in a manner that will not hinder the human translator's creative effort.

#### 4.2 How does creativity manifest in specialised translation?

When discussing creative elements of specialised translation, interviewees included both the process-oriented and the product-oriented perspectives in their considerations: creativity is manifested in the professionals' work processes, and in the target translations. This section is organised into four thematic subsections that together present an interview-based synthesis of what creativity looks like in specialised translation: Firstly, it is reported to appear in the linguistic forms as smoothness and naturalness of the target text; secondly, in the introduction of new elements required by the purpose of the text, or the target context; thirdly, as unconventionality of solutions; and fourthly, as reactions to the everyday circumstances in which specialised translation tasks are carried out. Some

overlap in these categories can be observed in cases where the same phenomenon, such as stylistic editing, may be looked at from different perspectives.

**Smoothness and naturalness of the target text.** When expressing the source text content in the target language, linguistic forms frequently undergo changes beyond a literal translation. The need for such changes is particularly great when the two languages involved belong to different language families; such translation scenarios are prevalent in Finland, where the current data was gathered. When operating between language systems which differ not only in their morphology or syntax but also in how ideas are expressed and composed into texts, presenting the same essential message in the target language is a distinctly creative endeavour. Such linguistic creativity would manifest as text that is not only correct but also smooth and natural, uses idioms and metaphors that are understandable in the target culture, and is, when necessary, written in vibrant language that avoids dull repetition of the same expressions. The extent to which all these are necessary of course varies between text genres.

**Introduction of new elements required by the target context or the purpose of the text.** When translating pragmatic texts for a new target audience, various types of localisation or domestication may be necessary. This includes not only changes in the meanings but also stylistic changes. Content items may be changed into ones that are familiar in the target culture. Even a good source text may require modifications of how the ideas are developed, connected or justified. Text items may have different connotations in the target culture, and need to be edited accordingly to maintain the same message or even acceptability. In some special cases, the purpose of the target text requires adding new content. Interviewees emphasised that such content editing should always be agreed on in advance with the client.

**Unconventionality of solutions.** Some interviewees understood creativity as instances in which the translator strikes out on an unconventional path, deviates from what is usually expected and alters the meanings expressed in the source text. When considering this perception of creativity, we must bear in mind that it depends strongly on how translation is defined: the interviewees may have a strong image of equivalence-oriented *translation proper* in their mind. Unconventionality was not, however, presented as a negative characteristic of translation; on the contrary, the ability to look for translation solutions “outside the box” was valued, and such translators were seen as resourceful and highly skilled.

**Reactions to elements of the working context.** A real-life translation context has many fixed elements that influence all work and may either limit or foster creativity. Since the material being processed is the property of a client, interviewees pointed out that their approval is normally required for major content changes. Translators cannot introduce such changes at will even when the changes are deemed to be absolutely necessary. The technical environment also sets preconditions to how the texts can be treated: translators often receive many translated elements from the translation memory or term banks. The terminology may be fixed to the extent that the translator is compelled to use it. The status of translation memory matches is usually not as compelling, but the economic model imposed on the translator dictates that legacy material should be utilised as much as possible. As the legacy translations already in place in the file often must not be changed,

any new translations must be made to fit together with the legacy sections; this is often the case in technical texts. This can be seen as simultaneously restricting and requiring creativity: the translator has less choice in how to express the meanings of the source text, but on the other hand, increased creativity may be necessary to develop new translation solutions that result in a final text in which new and legacy translations fit together seamlessly.

Finally, some interviewees mentioned special cases that require creativity. In software translation, user interface items must often fit into a designated space, which means that strict limitations on the number of characters are imposed. In these cases, it may not be possible to merely translate the full original meaning word for word and then try to compress the words into abbreviations; the result would in many cases still be too long, or incomprehensible. Instead, the interviewee said, the translator must consider ways of conveying the same meaning with fewer words, which could then be adequately compressed while maintaining comprehensibility. Another special case are source texts that are poorly written to the extent that they have to be heavily edited to achieve a satisfactory target text.

#### 4.3 Are there different levels of creativity in specialised translation?

Many interviewees perceived creativity in specialised translation as something that varies along a scale that reaches from unedited machine translations (the zero point on the creativity scale) to transcreation, or even to projects in which translation is only part of the overall work. The lowest human translation level was considered to comprise “bulk translations” and light post-editing of machine translations; the actual production processes of these may be merging as an increasing proportion of low-price bulk translations go through a translation engine before a human translator picks up the work. It was stated that content editing is not part of the work at this level, unless definite errors are found in the source text.

The level of creativity was perceived to increase in tasks that require localisation or editing, such as corporate blog texts. All in all, creativity was seen to be closely connected to genre: different kinds of texts require different kinds of creativity. Some of the interviewees emphasised that this does not always mean more or less creativity – just different. For example, even though technical translators typically receive much legacy material from translation memories, creativity is still required when analysing these materials and deciding what must be changed to achieve an appropriate translation.

In specialised translation, marketing texts are usually considered to require the highest level of creativity. Transcreation services were often mentioned by interviewees in this context, even if not all marketing texts are translated under that label; interviewees expressed conflicting views on whether the concept of transcreation is necessary. Deviation from the source text’s meanings is typical and was reported by interviewees as generally accepted in this genre, even if the most dramatic changes usually require the client’s approval.

#### 4.4 Are there differences between individuals?

It was generally agreed among the interviewees that there are differences between translation professionals as to their natural ability for highly creative work. Some translators find it easy to write a good, smoothly flowing translated text; this was seen as an indication of a higher creative ability. On the other hand, different areas of creativity that are required in translation work were discussed in this connection. It was stated that everyone who becomes a translator has the type of creativity required for text comprehension and basic linguistic activities; without it, they would not be able to become translation professionals. The ability to solve problems, which can be considered to always require a creative process, was considered to be another basic requirement in this profession.

The differences between individuals were found to become more evident when the translation task is what is often called “a creative translation” in the jargon of the translation industry. In such tasks, the translator is expected to let go of some source text properties and demonstrate more advanced text production skills and ability to develop the text. According to the interviewees, not everyone possesses this kind of creativity. Those who do are highly valued, and it was stated that there is some shortage of such professionals; the current translator pool may not be able to fully respond to the need for people who would be able to take on these, perhaps more demanding, combined translation and editing tasks.

Whether these types of creativity are characteristics that one is born with, or whether they can be learned, is a somewhat complex question. One interviewee explained that in their view, personal characteristics are not everything; the translator’s experience, education and professional interests play a role. The same interviewee did, however, also admit that it seems to be easier for some people to allow the creative process to have an impact on the outcome of the translation task, as this may require stepping outside routines and predefined working procedures. The interviewees also raised the point that a translator may in some cases be too creative. They should be able to maintain the ideas and emphases of the source text, and not let their own ideas take over. A good translator must know where to draw the line.

Since there are differences in the types of creativity that translators possess, it was considered important that the right people are chosen for different kinds of translation tasks. This task falls to the project coordinators, who need tools such as databases that provide information on the strengths of translation professionals. In the coordinators’ minds, and perhaps also in the databases, translators are often categorised into those who are good in tasks that require detailed accuracy, and those who are better at tasks in which more freedom is allowed. However, it was also stated in the interviews that the same translator may be good in both. Based on the interviewees’ discussion of this topic, it seems that the need for a successful selection process is most urgent in the case of tasks that require a high level of creativity; there is a higher risk of problems arising in a project if an inadequate translator selection process is used for a high-creativity task, than if the same happens in a project in which the translation is expected to closely reflect the source text. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that the actual creative editing work can be

given to a separate editor, who will then process the draft translation further. This removes some of the pressure of finding a translator who would be good at such tasks. Nevertheless, this may lead to situations in which the editor will need to fully recreate the text.

## **5 Discussion: solving a creative jigsaw puzzle?**

The metaphor of specialised translation as a jigsaw puzzle came up in more than one interview. It was used to argue against translation being creative work, but also developed further: translation is a puzzle with no single correct solution. The “pieces” of a translation fit together in more than one way. In my view, it could also be said that there is more than one piece for each place in the puzzle, some of them differently shaped and requiring other special pieces around them, and the translator has to choose the pieces that together create the picture that is needed. To achieve this, they do not always choose the ones that seem obvious based on the model picture.

Based on the current data, translation professionals find abundant justification for the view that specialised translation is creative work, even if the everyday labour in the jungle of pragmatic texts may not meet the general stereotype of creativity as artistic endeavour. Translational creativity comes in many forms, but from the product perspective, can often be discussed under two categories: novel content and creating a different linguistic form. From a process perspective, creativity manifests as the problem-solving process. The interviewees were inclined to think that only particularly difficult portions of the source text require a problem-solving process; it could also be said that all the choices and decisions that translators make for each word, phrase or structure require a decision-making process in which alternatives are evaluated, and which therefore requires a creative process.

Although glossaries or term banks specific to the topic may be used, even provided by the client, and elements of the translation can be taken from these, the target text as a whole must still be written by the translator. While the provided materials restrict the creative process, they also offer food for it; in the creative process of comprehension, the translator considers the information offered by the source text, and then moves on to production and decides which term should be used in each instance.

To sum up, if translation is defined exclusively as the transfer of content into another language, and translational creativity is understood as clear departure from source text content, artistic use of language, action engaged in without the help of technical tools, and/or solving markedly difficult problems, then not all translation can be considered creative work. If, on the other hand, we define translation as producing an appropriate text for a target context even if content editing is required, recognise the existence of linguistic variation even in non-artistic texts, are willing to admit that creative work can be performed using technical tools, and see translation as a continuous process of choosing between alternative renderings of meaning, then we must consider translation to be creative work. I believe that the latter of these two ways of seeing translation and

translational creativity offers a better way forward, particularly in the light of the advent of usable AI tools and the related, ongoing changes in the translation industry.

Discussion of the creative aspects of translation helps us understand not only the current, but also the future roles of humans and technology in specialised translation. The concept of creativity can be a tool for describing some essential aspects of the task and, when taking the product-oriented view and focusing on translation shifts as an indicator of creativity as described e.g. by Rojo (2017: 353), even for quantifying creativity in translations that we intuitively assess as good, or as failing to achieve their objectives. The concept must, however, be carefully defined in any future studies to avoid drifting into arguments in which the parties base their views on differing assumptions of what creativity is.

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