Robert, Isabelle S. (2012). La révision en traduction : les procédures de révision et leur impact sur le produit et le processus de révision (Doctoral thesis, University of Antwerp). ISBN: 9789057283703. EUR 15.

This PhD dissertation is an experimental study of translation. It has a strong applied dimension, since it focuses on a translation-related service whose importance in the market is growing: translation revision, and more specifically, third-party revision. Although translation studies did become interested in translation revision some years ago, only a few empirical studies have dealt with revision, at least when compared to the number of publications dedicated to other aspects of translation and translating. The purpose of Isabelle Robert's book is to examine whether the revision procedure has an impact on the product (i.e., the quality) and the process (i.e., the time spent on the revision task and the ability to detect errors in a draft translation) and, if so, to determine the most efficient procedure. These kinds of questions lie at the core of most publications on translation revision, but have so far mostly led to speculation, with little systematic investigation. Isabelle Robert's study therefore sets out to fill a real gap in translation studies research.

The structure of the book follows the classical scheme. Chapter 1, the introduction, presents the rationale for the study and the four revision procedures to be compared: (1) procedure A which consists of a monolingual check without consulting the source text except when a passage is questionable, (2) procedure B which consists of one bilingual check, (3) procedure C which consists of a bilingual check followed by a monolingual check, and, finally, (4) procedure D which consists of a monolingual check followed by a bilingual check. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework of the study and identifies one of the main challenges in the field: how to come to grips with the terminological confusion surrounding the different activities associated with quality assurance in translation services. Chapter 3 presents the research questions and hypotheses, while Chapter 4 describes how the study was conducted. All in all, 16 professional revisers where asked to revise 4 different draft translations under the 4 modalities described in Chapter 1, utilising 4 different methods of data collection: an analysis of the changes made by the revisers in the draft translations; thinking aloud and key logging for the process part; and, finally, interviews conducted with the revisers after completing the tasks. Chapter 5 analyses and discusses the results. The statistical tests used to analyse the data are described in great detail. Not surprisingly, the results reveal the superiority of procedures B, C and D compared with procedure A when it comes to revision quality and error detection efficacy; and the greater efficiency of procedure A in terms of time required compared with procedures C and D. More unexpectedly, no significant difference was detected between procedures B, C and D regarding either the product or the process. One might have thought that the more thorough check involved in procedures C and D would be correlated with higher quality as compared to procedure B, which consists of only one bilingual check. Finally, in Chapter 6, suggestions and advice for revising translations are formulated by taking the two main aspects of quality and time into account. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study as well as future directions. A bibliography and several appendices complete the book.

Isabelle Robert's PhD dissertation has many merits. It takes as a starting point the European Standard EN 15038:2006 on requirements for translation services and identifies several inconsistencies in this standard regarding the definition of translation revision. Her observations suggest that translators and translation researchers should consider the issue more carefully than they have done thus far. Moreover, by showing that the revision procedure has an impact on quality, the study has a great many practical applications and represents a milestone in any attempt to define best practices for translation revision. Finally, the findings of the study also allow the author to refute certain assumptions about translation revision that have been around for many years. While many questions raised by Isabelle Robert in her dissertation have been formulated before, what distinguishes her study from others is its remarkable methodological rigour. There has not been much empirical research on translation revision. Moreover, most of these empirical studies are case studies, in which the data analysis and interpretation often appears to have been conducted in a rather anecdotal fashion. The present dissertation, however, is based on careful data collection and scoring, deliberate methodological choices, and exhaustive and systematic data analysis. Last but not least, the statistical treatment of the data is remarkable and could well be used as a guide for translation researchers willing to integrate inferential statistics into their work, which is also one of the declared objectives of the author.

There are, of course, some limitations of the study such as the small number of participants, the revisers' profiles – some of them having hardly any experience in translation revision – or the fact that the design of the study does not allow the author to conclude unequivocally that the draft translations actually were revised by the revisers according to the procedure requested by her. There are also some formal errors: orthographic, typographic and regarding the bibliography. Moreover, an index and a glossary of the key terms in translation revision would have added value, since the terminology in the field is far from standardized. Finally, the conclusions of the study are a bit thin compared to the amount of data collected and in particular, compared to the numerous statistical analyses conducted. Personally, I would have expected some more substantial reflections on the study's implications for translation theory and professional practice. Thus, I would have wished that the author had presented at least an outline of a possible model of translation revision competence. However, these are minor shortcomings in a study that will be a reference for any researcher working in the field of translation revision for many years to come.

Alexander Künzli
Faculté de traduction et d'interprétation
Université de Genève
alexander.kuenzli@unige.ch