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Pair relations in translation peer feedback

Abstract

Pairwork in the translation classroom allows students to communicate about and complete tasks together. This article investigates pair relations in a didactic setup based on a translation task with written and oral peer feedback. The small-scale study draws on didactical and methodological peer-feedback research in translation studies, educational psychology and foreign language learning. Students translate, evaluate and comment each other's translations anonymously scaffolded by a rubric, discuss received feedback dialogically and revise and discuss their results, their respective roles and their perception of the feedback session. A combination of analysis methods, including feedback and transcription analysis, as well as implementation and questionnaire analysis are applied. The peer-feedback data analysis departs from dialogue transcripts of teacher-assigned pairs, which are triangulated with the other data sets to explore the link between pair relations, participant perceptions and implementation and discuss these in the light of prevailing theoretical considerations regarding peer feedback.

1 Introduction

Feedback is commonly provided by teachers of translation classes in various forms, including classroom discussions of translation solutions, explanations, summative assessment of student translations, problem identification at the linguistic level, praise and criticism, to name but a few. Not all of these practices are necessarily understood by students as feedback, implemented to result in improved translations, and neither do such activities necessarily foster learning. Translation teachers are challenged to balance their aspiration to provide students with appropriate individual feedback against institutional time constraints – given that proper problem-solution oriented feedback is labour intensive on the part of the feedback provider. Ballantyne, Hughes and Mylonas (2002: 427) state that high levels of coursework assessment, as is often the case in translation pedagogy, "are virtually impossible to maintain due to the inability to match resources to the associated marking loads". Involving peers in the feedback process appears to be a solution. Even though students often prefer teacher feedback over peer feedback (Guasch et al. 2013: 326), studies also find that peers are able to find the right tone and to help their fellow students along in text production tasks (Rollinson 2005: 24). The idea of student collaboration is not new in translation training either (Kiraly 2001;

Muñoz Martín et al. 2007; Risku/Dickinson 2009; Huertas Barros 2011; O'Brien 2011). Scientifically analysed peer-feedback approaches appear to gain momentum (Lindgren et al. 2009; Flanagan/Heine 2015, 2018; Vandepitte 2016; Heine 2019), particularly when related with the revision phase of the translation process (Robert/Remael/Ureel 2016). Given that industry standards such as EN 15038 (2006) and ISO 17100 (2015) incorporate revision and review (definitions of feedback terminology in Lisaitė et al. 2016) for the quality assurance of translation work, it is sensible to train students in providing and receiving feedback. Early reflections of such training activities in translation are provided by Lindgren et al. (2009) and Wang and Han (2013). Wang and Han's study investigates translation students' perception of anonymous peer feedback.

Giving credit to the complexity of the translation task, Lindgren et al. (2009) take a process perspective on translation training and blend keystroke logging with peer-based intervention to support reflection and discussion and to enhance student motivation. The above studies make an inventory of this under-researched area of translation didactics and touch upon notions, variables and concepts currently discussed in feedback literature in educational psychology, (foreign) language learning, writing didactics and other educational areas. They highlight topics such as the influence of reflection and discussion on learning through feedback, the value of feedback in different roles and modes of student activity, including motivation through feedback, and student perception about the feedback tasks to broaden and deepen the perspectives on this field from the viewpoint of translation studies. In a similar vein, this article departs from the notion that incorporating feedback assignments into teaching is a complex matter that involves multiple considerations to be made and decisions to be taken by the teacher/researcher.

Considerations regarding the status of feedback at the institution and the potential appreciation of teacher or student feedback with the students must be made. In terms of university policy, peer feedback and peer assessment are often viewed as beneficial (Lehmann/Sollner 2019), not least based on – unfortunately ungeneralizable – assumptions of efficiency and productivity (Heine 2021). It must be considered whether a feedback culture and other institutional circumstances (Nicol 2010: 508–509) will support feedback activities and whether time and energy of all involved parties can and should be afforded, as providing and implementing feedback is time consuming (Van den Berg/Admiraal/Pilot 2006) and at times not valued highly by students. The latter, in combination with self-defensive behaviours that "fail to nurture remediation following feedback" is pointed out by Forsythe and Johnson (2017: 850), who also discuss student mindsets, motivation and non-intellectual factors that influence academic performance, such as attitudes towards feedback and the person who provides the feedback (Forsythe/Johnson 2017: 850–851).

A translation syllabus should include quality assessment and review as essential professional skills (Nicol/Thomson/Breslin 2014: 116) and align preferences of effective feedback and strategies (Rivera-Mills/Plonsky 2007). Translation students are often aware that their future profession requires them to provide, receive and implement feedback. They appreciate feedback as a means to achieve performance quality. Hence, they –

rightly – expect to be trained in giving and receiving feedback and in developing and applying assessment criteria. The jury is still out on whether students who provide feedback are more empowered (Coit 2004) and benefit more from the activity than students at the receiving end of feedback[1] (Lundstrom/Baker 2009).

Drawing on studies like the afore mentioned in the area of L2 text production, time management of feedback activities can be assumed to be one additional factor in translator training, the source and target language transfer and its influence on the production process, feedback activities and classroom discussions can be another. Peer-feedback processes without teacher involvement may or may not be time savers – this depends on scaffolding, training, student involvement, and feedback roles assigned and pair composition. If teachers additionally attempt to close the double feedback loop – by not only providing feedback on final versions after peer-feedback implementation, but also on the feedback process – feedback tasks become time consuming (Heine 2021). Considerations should be made regarding the roles assigned in the feedback process, whether peers, multiple peers or the teacher, or both, provide feedback. They require a balance between the necessities of the didactic approach, group sizes, pair composition and student's feedback preferences.

Teachers and students may be concerned about reliability and validity of peer feedback, about lack of precision and detail and may prefer teacher feedback. The value of assessing other students' work (as a learning tool) is not necessarily immediately apparent to all students and may demotivate some (Smith/Cooper/Lancaster 2002). But there is evidence that students can effectively peer assess (Hughes 2001).

Feedback adoption preferences may also differ. While peer feedback is less likely to be adopted by learners than teacher feedback, it is still welcome (Miao/Badger/Zhen 2006), not least, because it is often motivational. Comments by equal status peers may be better understood than those of experts, based on shared problems, languages, knowledge and understanding of difficulties, while expert feedback providers tend to underestimate the difficulty level of tasks for novices (Cho/MacArthur 2010). It must also be distinguished, whether the feedback should be written, spoken or a combination of the two, and, in the case of dialogue, class time must be scheduled. Whether feedback is to be provided face-to-face, or, whether it is provided anonymously in writing is another issue, one dependent on other feedback features, such as pair status, general approach and group size.

Howard, Barrett and Frick (2010) discuss anonymity and the contrived nature of anonymous feedback. Carless et al. (2011: 395) point out that many problems with written feedback are "accentuated by the terseness and finality of one-way written

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[1] Our study touches upon both, with a slight focus on providing feedback, as this is the novel activity for the students involved. Providing feedback has been described as a more cognitively demanding activity than receiving feedback (Nicol 2010: 514) and as more rewarding activity in terms of learning outcomes (Nelson/Schunn 2009: 395).

comments". Technological advances[2] allow educators the choice to make learners' participation in critiques anonymous (Howard/Barrett/Frick 2010: 90). Rotsaert, Panadero and Schellens (2018) suggest anonymity as an instructional scaffold in peer assessment, arguing that anonymous feedback may encourage more open, honest and fluid comments by students. A study by Vanderhoven et al. (2015) has shown that anonymity enhances students' perceptions of peer feedback and Howard, Barrett and Frick (2010) found that students give more critical feedback when the identity of the feedback provider is unknown. Wallace (1999) and Postmes et al. (2001) investigate dis-inhibiting and de-individuating effects of anonymous online interaction and state it to be more direct, open, frank and less time-intensive. It can also be argued that it may introduce antisocial behaviour, if the task is not well scaffolded and explained by the teacher and applied with care, in order not to break social connections. Non-anonymous peer feedback can be argued to spark interactional feedback dialogue (Nicol 2010) that is also meaningful (Hansen/Liu 2005). Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006) state that dialogical feedback includes process-oriented feedback, an aspect that we deem particularly relevant to ensure that translation studies students' process awareness is increased and self-reflection skills are fostered.[3]

Considerations regarding the degree of scaffolding to be provided must be made against the backdrop of the ongoing discussion about predefined feedback criteria vs. self-administered feedback criteria (Leijen 2014: 179) or a mixed approach in which students generate "richer criteria" than the teacher and the teacher creates "sounder criteria" than the students would (Nicol/Thomson/Breslin 2014: 118). Other considerations regard the form of assessment schemes and rubrics. Defining rubrics, Allen and Tanner (2006: 197) suggest that a rubric is "a type of matrix that provides scaled levels of achievement or understanding for a set of criteria or dimensions of quality for a given type of performance". A rubric is intended to make students aware of the graduations of quality of their performance. Drawing on Huba and Freed (2000), Allen and Tanner (2006: 197) suggest that the descriptions of the possible levels of attainment for each of the criteria or dimensions of performance should be "described fully enough to make them useful for judgement of, or reflection on, progress toward valued objectives". This description assumes that a rubric is the carefully described expression of professional judgement. Wang (2014: 82) reports on the scarcity of research exploring rubrics in students' peer-feedback practice. He explains the rubric's role as an "explicit guide" to make goals and qualities of an assignment transparent and usable for peer and self-assessment, although rubrics can also be perceived as "exam-oriented" (Wang 2014: 93). Torrance (2007) has pointed out, that using rubrics might result in "instrumentalism". Training practices with clear guidelines for students to give peer feedback are used in

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[2]   Online word processors like e. g. Google Docs provide facilities for text, voice and video feedback. Online peer feedback tools like PeerStudio, Peergrade, TEAMMATES or FeedbackFruits allow for classroom integration.

[3]   For a representation of didactic tools to foster self-regulation cf. Boekaerts and Corno (2005), for a discussion of L2 text production and reflection cf. Heine (2020).

second language learning (e. g. Min 2006). Such didactic approaches are not yet wide-spread in translation and specialized text production training. For a course in web-based communication and translation, Flanagan and Heine (2018) suggest actionable feedback process guidelines and focus areas to aid students' text production and peer-feedback process. These guidelines range from preparation stages via peer-process stages of providing feedback, receiving and implementing feedback to submitting the final docu-ment and incorporate action prompts for familiarising oneself with assessment criteria. Time management aspects such as preparation, execution and implementation, indivi-dual and peer responsibilities for task execution, collaboration and dialogue and feedback type specifications are included. At the core of the guidelines, focus areas of feedback, such as course content, textual organisation and linguistic expression are highlighted (Flanagan/Heine 2018: 121).

It is claimed that a classroom dialogue about feedback in general and peer and teacher feedback processes are crucial. Given that teachers' conceptions of what is important and students' understanding of (underlying) criteria is not necessarily auto-matically aligned, students are less likely to produce quality work unguided (cf. Nicol/ Thomson/Breslin 2014: 117). Students with no or limited experience with peer feedback need scaffolding to provide effective feedback (e. g. Hattie/Timperley 2007).

Drawing student awareness to different concepts of feedback, such as feedback, feedup and feedforward (Hattie/Timperley 2007) can make them cognizant of their continuous reflexive processes (Nicol/Macfarlane-Dick 2006) and aware of which as-pects of their performance they themselves and their peers may need to improve. The introduction of feedback types by taxonomies (Cho/Schunn/Charney 2006; Cho/MacArthur 2010), such as e. g. motivational feedback, suggestions, and directional or expressive feedback, can help students to engage in feedback tasks. Self-assessment and other forms of other-assessment also require scaffolding (Evans 2013: 88).

Whether anonymous or non-anonymous, scaffolded or unscaffolded, rubrics-based or self-administered, considerations regarding the social relationships between the feed-back providers and receivers must be taken into account in peer-feedback settings. Group and pair relations are a crucial element in any teaching, since not all pair work is collabo-rative (Storch 2001: 156). In pair relations, status and gender play a role and learners negotiate not only the topic but also their relationship (Storch 2002: 119–120).

In Storch's (2002) study four interaction patterns or role relationships in pair work were noted: collaborative, dominant/dominant, dominant/passive and expert/novice. She also identified two indices of dyadic interaction: equality and mutuality, both of which are continuums. The latter distinction, introduced by Damon and Phelps (1989), describes an equal degree of control over the direction of a task (equality), and a level of engage-ment with each other's contribution, richness in reciprocal feedback and sharing of ideas (mutuality). Storch (2002: 147) found that the collaborative pattern was prevalent among student pairs and that students can scaffold each other's performances, especially when they interact collaboratively or in an expert/novice pattern. Collaborative and expert/novice dyads had most instances of knowledge transfer, while the dominant/dominant dyad had

least instances, and the dominant/passive dyad revealed most instances of missed opportunities for knowledge transfer (Storch 2002: 148). Thus, Storch concluded that pairs working collaboratively or are interacting in an expert/novice relationship are more likely to take part in language learning. Storch (2001) argues that cooperative learning produces social and cognitive gains, as working in pairs means collective action, co-constructing knowledge about language (Storch 2007: 155), knowledge pooling (Storch 2001: 45), collective (Storch 2001: 31) and mutual (Storch 2001: 45) scaffolding and opportunities to engage in processes that facilitate second language learning (Storch 2007: 156). When working collaboratively, chances are high that comments by peers get implemented (Storch 2002). The author also makes it explicit that the pooling of linguistic resources only works when students work collaboratively (Storch 2007: 144). Like Storch (2007) and Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller (2002), we see a link between collaborative interaction and language learning, not least, because negotiations of meaning may facilitate L2 acquisition (Storch 2001: 30), as the social interaction (Vygotsky 1978) allows peers to be concurrently experts and novices, and mediate language learning (Swain/Brooks/Tocalli-Beller 2002: 172–173).

In pairing there may be large differences between the learners on all levels, including language proficiency. The individual proficiency level(s) – in translation didactics the level of language proficiency in source and target language – and the distance in proficiency between the involved students/student groups, and their closeness in status, will shape the peer-feedback experience and outcome.

Differences in proficiency may also influence the degree of collaboration. In Storch's (2001) study it became apparent that other aspects, namely the task, student motives and goals and their attitude to pair work rather were the decisive factors. We would argue that pair composition depends on multiple factors, of which cohort size may be the most apparent.

This relates to assigned group and pair composition versus random pairs and groups and is a component that can shape the quality and perception of feedback and the feedback process. Whether pair composition should be performed by the teacher, is open for debate, as is how to handle pair-task design, depending on group sizes. Our study deals with a small group, which simplified pair composition. A decision was made regarding disentanglement and matching of performance levels (cf. section 2.2).

This article presents a peer-feedback study that investigates the considerations in a didactic peer-feedback setup in a translation studies classroom. The study implements a combination of anonymous and non-anonymous peer-feedback tasks, and didactic means, such as instructions, rubric and scaffolding in a six-step approach and applies multiple methodology. In chapter two, we describe the data set, and chapter three discusses the data from the study. In chapter four, we conclude on our study in the light of ongoing discussions about core considerations of peer-feedback approaches in the field of language learning and translation.

2 Peer-feedback study setup

The purpose of this small-scale study was to create a didactic setup in which translation studies students could try out peer feedback in a teacher-laid and scaffolded didactic setting that allowed the teacher to apply and test peer-feedback activities in the class-room and the researchers to gather and triangulate peer-feedback data. The study allowed the students to try out their commenting, revision and implementation skills in multiple ways in a variation of their regular practice, in a safe environment and allowed them to comment upon their experience.

2.1 Context and participants

The study took place during a mandatory second semester MA-course on economic and financial translation between Danish and Spanish, offered in the International Business Communication programme at Aarhus University. The 13-week course consisted of cross-language lectures (English, German, French, and Spanish) on general translation topics such as translation strategies, genre theory, and terminology management and smaller, language-specific class sessions. The main goal of the course was to enable the students to translate complex economic and financial texts between Danish and their L2, using the terminology and conventions prototypical of selected economic and financial genres.

The study was carried out in the Spanish class sessions taught by one of the authors. They involved a variety of teaching forms, including brief lectures, student presentations, and group work. Translation assignments were completed by students as part of the normal class requirements.

Data was collected from seven students (four female, three male). Participants were novice translators of the economic and financial genres of the course. They had no previous experience with peer-feedback activities and received no training prior to the study, but students' peer feedback was scaffolded with a feedback rubric.

2.2 Procedure

Students translated a text, completed anonymous (written) and non-anonymous (oral) feedback tasks, revised their translations and answered a short questionnaire. The steps, activities, data and methods of the study are illustrated in table 1.

In step one, students were introduced to the peer-feedback study during class. The students were informed of the purpose of the study and instructed on the anonymous peer-feedback tasks, they were not informed of the non-anonymous peer-feedback tasks. Students were instructed to provide feedback using a rubric developed by the

Steps	Activity	Data	Method
1	Instructions regarding purpose of study, anonymous feedback tasks, and rubric (in class)		
2	Translation (home assignment)	Translation product	Translation analysis
3	Anonymous written feedback (home assignment)	Rubric	Feedback analysis
4	Non-anonymous oral feedback (in class)	Audio capture, transcriptions	Transcription analysis (Audio capture used to aid transcription)
5	Revision of translations based on feedback (in class)	Revised translation product	Implementation analysis and analysis of students' reflections
6	Questionnaire (in class)	Answers	Questionnaire analysis

Table 1: Overview peer feedback activity, data and method applied

teacher for the study (see below for a description of the rubric content). Written instructions were also provided.[4]

In step two, students prepared individual translations of an extract from the annual report of the Spanish energy company Endesa. The source text is an extract from its corporate social responsibility strategy. Students were given five days to complete the translation task and submit their translations. The teacher assigned student pairs based on two premises: (1) to disentangle established study pairs to provide the possibility for different and more objective perspectives, as well as new input (Zeff/Higby/Bossman 2006: 531), (2) to match known levels of performance (using a Likert scale ranging from excellent via good and satisfactory to weak) from previous classes and written assignments as closely as possible, to make sure that all students had opportunities of receiving useful feedback at their respective levels, following the equal status students principle by Gielen et al. (2010). The disentanglement meant that the students' pairs comprised slightly different levels of performance in two of the three pairs. Of the seven translations submitted, four pairs were formed, with one student providing feedback for and receiving feedback from two peers. Since studies have indicated that friendships and social

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[4] Students were informed about the purpose of the study (i. e. to practice providing and receiving feedback from peers and to gain insights into own strengths and weaknesses) and were instructed to use the rubric for the written (anonymous) feedback. The instructions included a description of the anonymous feedback process (including tasks and deadlines).

relationships may result in students not wanting to provide critical feedback to their peers and that anonymity promotes peer critique, translations were anonymised and sent to students for peer feedback.

In step three, students gave reciprocal written feedback using the rubric provided. It focuses student feedback and makes the evaluation criteria of students' translations explicit, enabling them to assess their own level of performance and providing them with insights on performance improvement (Allen/Tanner 2006). The rubric's criteria represented assessment criteria for the evaluation of economic and financial translations into Danish, as well as known typical problem areas in student translations. Students were asked to comment on grammatical criteria (syntax, prepositions, and spelling), genre-specific criteria (terminology), and other criteria (content and linguistic correctness). The most important evaluation criteria, as assessed by the teacher (i. e. syntax, content and linguistic correctness), were marked with a plus sign in brackets. Students were asked to give specific examples from the translation, to rate the level of achievement for each of the criteria on a three-point scale (high, medium, and low) and to provide feed forward. Students were instructed to provide constructive feedback. Because previous studies have shown that anonymity enhances students' perceptions of peer feedback and that students give more critical feedback when the identity of the feedback provider is unknown, feedback provider's names were anonymous. Students were given two days to provide feedback and submit their completed rubrics.

In step four, students were instructed on the non-anonymous peer-feedback tasks involving oral feedback. Face-to-face feedback was included in the study, because previous studies have indicated that oral feedback provides students with a possibility to engage in meaningful feedback dialogues with their peers and that oral feedback also includes process-oriented feedback. Students were paired in three groups with two students who had given feedback to each other, revealing their identities and allowing them to engage in interactive feedback dialogues. One student – one of the feedback providers for the translator receiving feedback from two peers – was absent. To monitor and record the feedback process, audio capture software was set up for each group. Students provided oral feedback to each other and sent their written feedback to each other.

In step five, students were given class time to implement the feedback received from their peer(s). They were instructed to provide arguments for implementation or non-implementation of feedback using the commenting function in Word. After revising their translations, students submitted their original translation, the rubric completed by the feedback provider, and their revised translation with comments about implementation or non-implementation of feedback.

In step six, students were asked to fill in a short questionnaire regarding their experience with and perceptions of the feedback study. The questionnaire included four open-ended questions:

(1)   What did you get out of this study with feedback?

(2)   What was difficult about providing feedback to a fellow student?

(3)   Which advantages does peer feedback have when it is used in the classroom?

(4)   Which disadvantages does peer feedback have when it is used in the classroom?

After the six steps had been completed, the teacher engaged in an evaluation dialogue of the peer-feedback task setup and the activities the students performed. Students provided their perception of and experiences with the peer-feedback activities, commenting mainly positively on the experience and emphasising the role of feedback provider as particularly beneficial to their own learning process, which aligns with previous research. Negative comments revolved around two themes: (1) the fact that peer-feedback is a time-consuming activity, and (2) anxiety to assess other students' work. As regards the setup, students commented positively on the use of rubrics as a guide for evaluating their peer's translations, and as a tool for checking the quality of their own translation performance and potential problem areas. However, students generally agreed that determining the degree of achievement (high, medium, and low) was difficult. After completing the evaluation dialogue, a sample translation (teacher version) was provided.

2.3   Data and methods

A qualitative approach was used to examine pair relations of the three pairs. Adopting a qualitative methods approach allows the researcher to study human interactions in order to make sense of the world (Denzin/Lincoln 2011) and it can contribute with understandings of a phenomenon or a context. A descriptive methodology was adopted to describe and categorise our findings from the data sets and relate these findings to the literature.

We based our individual pair analysis on a general inductive approach (Thomas 2006) and scrutinized the data for elements, concepts, topics, situations and themes through interpretation. The purpose was to analyse the data for dominant or significant pair relations "without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Thomas 2006: 238). The data were analysed, discussed and interpreted collaboratively, since more minds bring different perspectives (Saldaña 2013: 34), until consensus was reached between the authors.

The data set comprised the rubric filled in by the students, the dialogue between the pairs after written feedback was provided and students' revised translations and argumentation regarding implementation and non-implementation of feedback received, as well as students' reflections about the study setup and the feedback tasks performed and their outcome, as elicited from the questionnaires. Research emphasis laid on transcription analysis of the dialogue, based on the importance of dialogue between the parties involved in peer feedback (Nicol 2010) and because the dialogue data gave access to information, which could not be elicited from the written feedback alone. To provide insight into the complexity of the dialogical situations between the pairs and to

obtain different perspectives on the discursive acts, we triangulated the dialogue data with the additional data. The dialogue data was transcribed, following orthographic conventions, including repetitions, hesitations, laughs, etc. The original language combination of the translation is Spanish-Danish, but the examples are provided in English here.

Given the small scale of the study and the fact that the pairs were formed according to disentanglement of established pairs and matched levels of performance, a natural consequence is that the research focus is on the relations between the pairs. Our approach was to zoom into the pairs' dialogue based on a focus to investigate its relation with the actual implementation of feedback, the written feedback and the students' questionnaire responses.

3   Results

The analysis revealed a number of common issues in the three pairs' dialogues such as hedging, face-saving mechanisms, laughing, and turn-taking issues. We found certain relations, characteristic of each pair. They were especially evident in the dialogue data, but were also present in the other data sources. Hence, we discuss our data from a pair-relations perspective. While initially inspired by Storch's interaction patterns, the data from our small study provided us with different characteristic relations. We describe the pairs according to these: the positive dialogue match pair, the dialogue mismatch pair, and the power pair. In the subsequent presentation of the results, we draw on theoretical considerations to the extent they are relevant to our study.

3.1   The positive dialogue match pair (Laura and Naomi)

The first pair consists of two female students, Laura and Naomi.[5] They engage in a positive and functioning dialogue and are therefore described as the positive dialogue match pair. Based on previous classes and courses taught by the same teacher, both Laura's and Naomi's known level of performance is described as satisfactory. In the examples below, Laura is the feedback provider, Naomi is the feedback receiver.

Dialogue
This pair's feedback process is reflected by an appreciative and polite tone in the dialogue data and their peer-feedback cooperation actually works for both parties, given that the students have a functioning dialogue, which sparks individual and joint reflection (Eisen 2001). Feedback provider and receiver engage in an adaptive, interactive and reflective dialogue, where meaning is negotiated (Rollinson 2005: 25).

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[5]   All student names have been anonymized.

Example 1

L: um… well with terms… assess … those …. assess those environmental risks

N: yes

L: um… I don't… I was puzzled by your suggestion, but maybe it's just me, but I think that … just that positive assessment of risks … risks are ne…ga….tive right?

N: yes… (hesitantly)

L: well, I do understand what you mean by this

N: yes

L: I just thought like … I wonder whether you can …

N: yes

L: kind of like positive disrupts the meaning when used with risks

N: yes, but we have understood that in different ways, I kind of think, when I read yours

L: no, but maybe it has not gone particularly … (laughing)

N: no, but I actually think that yours was … one of the better ones… better than what I had. I do understand what you mean by positive.

Example 1 shows that the feedback provider tones down the potential negative effect of the feedback (criticism) using mitigating language. Nelson and Shunn (2009: 381) suggest that mitigation can include hedges, personal attribution and questions, which are displayed in the dialogue. The feedback provider uses personal attributes such as "I", "me", and "I do understand". She hedges what could come across as negative with "it is just me", "just" and "well, I do understand what you mean by this". Ferris (1997) points out that hedging is likely to lead to implementation of feedback. In addition, a raised tone of voice is used to indicate a question. The latter marks a turn shift and invitation to dialogue. A further interesting element derived from this pair's dialogue is self-reflective comparison, as illustrated in example 2.

Example 2

N: no, but I actually think that yours was … one of the better ones… better than what I had. I do understand what you mean by positive.

According to Nicol, Thomson and Breslin (2014: 216–217), peer review encourages reflection and comparison triggers the reflective process, where students use the feedback they generate for others to update their thinking about their own assignment. Translation tasks tie in well with this notion, as the pair has translated the same text. Having translated the same text and having provided written feedback prior to oral discussion, textual references allow for a clear (and maybe even better) mutual understanding in the dialogue situation, as the feedback comment can be pinpointed by either of the two and

made explicit, which in turn may increase feedback implementation (Nelson/Schunn 2009: 378). Such textual references are exemplified in example 3.

Example 3

L: Spelling… Well, I think you have a spelling mistake here… Ehm… formålet med Endesa miljøledelse (i. e. the purpose of Endesa environmental management)… I think Endesa should be genitive.

N: Ah, yes.

L: Exactly. I think that is what you meant to do. The rest of it is correct.

N: Yes.

Rubric

In the feedback rubric, hedges, personal attribution and questions also occur in the commentary section. Questions in particular are interesting with respect to their implications on the engaging feedback dialogue. They can be used to ensure discussion and potential mutual agreement, understanding and change/implementation (Nelson/Schunn 2009: 382ff). A further use of questions (and tag questions) is to make a negative or critical comments less unpleasant as exemplified in example 4.

Example 4

L: On the Internet, one suggestion is engagere sig på højeste niveau (i. e. to involve oneself at the highest level) – perhaps?

Emojis are used as exemplified in example 5.

Example 5

L: Quite well done (usually it is difficult in Danish [winking smiley]).

Emojis are substitutes for facial expressions and emotions that are normally present in face-to-face communication (Ousterhout 2017: 15) and they are said to facilitate the understanding of a message (Kralj Novak et al. 2015: 1). With respect to example 5, it must be noted, that the expression "Quite well", which might be understood as praise, is not necessarily praise in this case. We believe the "Quite well" is a positive response to express high achievement of the rubric criteria rather than praise.

Revised translation (implemented feedback)

The revised translation of example 1 provides an insight into the reflective power of feedback dialogue on implementation decisions. This builds on the argument posed above that understanding and agreement increase the likelihood of implementation (Nelson/ Schunn 2009: 382 ff) as does pair collaboration (Storch 2001). The feedback receiver implements the feedback and uses the feedback provider's suggestions and argumentation. The comment made by the student in the revised translation "selvmodsigende"

(i. e. self-contradictory) shows a critical stance towards her own performance, which she adds upon individual reflection after the feedback dialogue session.

Short questionnaire

With regards to the self-reflective comparison, the questionnaire shows that both students comment positively on the impact of providing feedback on their own performance. Besides the general comparison (example 6), the effect specified in the questionnaires is the enhancement of the "thinking process", such as translation alternatives (example 7), and self-monitoring of own translation errors (example 8).

Example 6

"You become aware of own errors, and you have to carefully consider, which solutions work well and not so well".

Example 7

"By providing feedback to someone else I became aware of errors that I had made in my own translation, as well as alternative expressions."

Example 8

"It gives you the opportunity to 'hear' not completely idiomatic expressions in Danish when someone else wrote them, and it makes you wonder which expressions you have written yourself that do not 'sound natural in Danish'".

One additional advantage mentioned in the questionnaire is the possibility of receiving comprehensive feedback (particularly via the dialogue) on an entire translation – as opposed to brief zoomed-in feedback during a standard translation class discussion.

Example 9

"You talk together in a different way, and you get feedback on your entire work (as opposed to just sentences in class)".

3.2 The dialogue mismatch pair (Noah and Karen)

The second pair consists of a male and a female student, Noah and Karen. They do not have a functioning dialogue and are therefore described as the dialogue mismatch pair. Noah's known level of expertise is described as good, while Karen's is described as satisfactory. In the examples below, Karen is the feedback provider, and Noah is the feedback receiver.

Dialogue

This pair's feedback process does not work particularly well for either party, given that the students do not have a functioning dialogue. It is characterised by talking past each

other, interruptions, unrelated strings of thoughts and unfinished utterances, as illustrated in example 10.

Example 10

K: and then there was that thing about … um… about Endesa … It's just that … um… well, here you have written it with a capital S…, that is, and here it is with a small … Endesa's … well, it's just that I was thinking that then maybe it should just be … well, I don't know …

N: I just think that is because I am looking at the heading

K: yes, with a capital

N: in capital letters

K: yes … but should it only be in small letters?

N: That is a good question. I actually don't know (laughing)

K: yes (laughing). Um… it's just that …

N: it is worth looking into. Many people also put an …

K: yes

N: some kind of an apostrophe … I think that is definitely …

K: yes

N: definitely more wrong

K: Yes, I actually think that I did that … I certainly think so too afterwards, because I thought that it was wrong … and when I saw this, then it looked right, but … I would have just written it with an s … I thought it should be with a capital here, but it …

N: yes, we will just look into that

While specific comments have been found to be helpful (Nelson/Schunn 2009) and identifying the problem explicitly is said to increase feedback implementation (Nelson/Schunn 2009: 373), the opposite is the case in this pair's dialogue. Their dialogue is marked by indirectness, which "can open the door to misinterpretation" (Hyland/Hyland 2001: 207), as exemplified in example 11.

Example 11

K: and then there was that thing about … um… about Endesa … It's just that … um… well, here you have written it with a capital S…, that is, and here it is with a small … Endesa's … well, it's just that I was thinking that then maybe it should just be … well, I don't know …

N: I just think that is because I am looking at the heading

K: yes, with a capital

N: in capital letters

K: yes … but should it only be in small letters?

The students' discussion regarding the capitalised versus non-capitalised letters in the company name Endesa goes in circles – and remains unsolved. The feedback provider suggests a problem with the genitive-s, without using grammatical terms or explaining which of the company references in the text is meant "um… well, here you have written it with a capital S…, that is, and here it is with a small … Endesa's". This indirectness causes the feedback receiver to misinterpret the comment on multiple levels. The feedback receiver interprets the comment to mean that the company name is to be written with a capital E only "in capital letters". The company name in the genitive occurs multiple times in the text and in the title, and it is unclear which one is meant "I just think that is because I am looking at the heading".

Example 11 displays a lack of grammatical knowledge and, given that the problem is not solved cooperatively in the situation, also a lack of willingness to take responsibility for problem solving. Interestingly, the feedback receiver makes the following replies: "it is worth looking into "and "Yes, we will just look into that". These replies could be interpreted as a postponement of the implementation task at hand. It could also be assumed that the feedback receiver interrupts the partner's unrelated string of words to signal the feedback provider to speed up the process, politely indicating that minor issues could be tackled later on. This is supported by the fact that the feedback receiver does not take initiative to actually follow up on these replies. At the same time, the feedback provider does not use the opportunity to take responsibility to engage in problem solving (e. g. by checking the rule online). This relates to peer-feedback roles and student responsibilities (Nicol 2010).

The misunderstanding displayed in example 11 is one of many in this pair's entire feedback dialogue. The feedback provider's uncertainty of expression, use of hesitation markers ("um", "well", "it's just", "maybe it should just be", and "well, I don't know"), and unrelated strings of thoughts lead to disruptive turn taking in the dialogue and low discussion value. Their use can express uncertainty, hesitation, or display a thinking process. The feedback provider's lack of clarity may also be a face-saving mechanism as vagueness can function as a face-saving strategy (Ruzaitė 2007: 158). The problems with both lack of clarity and lack of clarity of thoughts and expressions could be explained by anxiety to assess other students' work (Cartney 2010: 555). The students make their first experience with such a peer-feedback setup and might not entirely understand the psychology of giving and receiving feedback (Yorke 2003). A further explanation for this pair's ineffective dialogue is hedging. While feedback literature suggests that hedging is likely to lead to feedback implementation, as with the positive dialogue match pair, the sheer abundance of hedging used by the feedback provider results in an unproductive dialogue that does not lead to mutual decisions and implementation. Related to the abundance of hedging, downplaying problems is another issue in this peer-feedback dialogue. In example 11, the feedback provider downplays negative criticism regarding the "s" by stating that it "looked right", yet pulling the statement back straight after by stating "I would have just written it with an s". Nelson and Schunn (2009: 381) suggest that downplaying problems raised decreases likelihood of implementation.

Rubric and revised translation

Whereas the dialogue is characterised by an abundance of hedging, the feedback provider does not use hedges in the feedback rubric, and a limited number of keywords is used, which makes the comments concise. The short statements in the commentary section exclude personal attribution and problem-solution suggestions, and evaluative comments are limited. In the case of example 11, the comment made is incomprehensible "… ENDESA's………………for ENDESA's" without further elaboration. Yet, the elaboration in the dialogue did not enlighten the feedback receiver, as discussed above. In the revised translation, the feedback receiver does not implement any changes related to the example and does not reflect about non-implementation.

Short questionnaire

The questionnaire shows that both students perceive peer feedback as a helpful element in their learning process and as a translation means, using expressions such as "educational", "clearly advantageous", and "important part of the learning process". The feedback provider mentions the professional aspect of feedback. The feedback receiver points out that peer feedback prompts attention to inappropriate translation solutions. The feedback receiver mentions the importance of constructive criticism, and the feedback provider stresses the element of uncertainty and self-doubt regarding the value and correctness of one's comments as illustrated in example 12.

Example 12

"It is difficult to give feedback because you sometimes start wondering whether your co-student is right. Even though something looks a bit strange the first time you read the text, it may start sounding correct or incorrect after having read the text aloud a few times."

As a general comment regarding the disadvantages of peer feedback in the classroom, the feedback receiver states that peer feedback is time-consuming and suggests embedding it in translation-task preparation. According to Cho, Schunn and Charney (2006: 264), peer feedback is less effective for students who have a negative experience with the process. In addition, Bosboom et al. (2014: 31) suggest that lower quality feedback affects student attitudes towards receiving feedback negatively. Interestingly, the feedback provider, who struggled to provide feedback and express criticism, clearly does not see any disadvantages in peer-feedback tasks in the classroom.

3.3 The status pair (Jane and Tim)

The third pair consists of one female and one male student, Jane and Tim. This pair's dialogue is reflected by differences in status between the two, and, as a result, the third pair is described as the status pair. Jane's known level of performance is described as good, whereas Tim's is described as good or excellent.

Dialogue

Characterised by differences in status and a slightly negative tone, this pair's dialogue is a peer-feedback process that does not work particularly well for either of them. While the teacher-student relationship is characterised by an unequal distribution of power and status (Hyland 2000: 34), peer feedback is commonly referred to as a process in which feedback is provided by equal status learners (Gielen et al. 2010: 305). However, in this pair, Jane enjoys a higher status than Tim based on her mutually perceived dominance in linguistic and translation competencies, which is reflected in examples 13 and 14. In example 13, Tim is the feedback provider, and in example 14, Tim is the feedback receiver.

Example 13

T: Now I get to give feedback on your excellent translation

J: You think so?

T: Yes, don't you? Naturally, there were a few things, but I certainly think it is better than mine. Of course, that doesn't come as a surprise, does it? Well … um... yes... I think... naturally, there were a few things, right?

J: hmm

Example 14

J: Now we come to yours

T: Yes, now it gets really terrible.

J: Yes

T: Yes, I thought so too… um… (pause) it has been a long time since I have looked at mine.

J: Yes. Um... well, I don't want to … let's have a look at spelling. Here you have a couple of...

In both example 13 and 14, Tim exerts self-criticism "Of course, that doesn't come as a surprise, does it?" and "now it gets really terrible", downgrading own abilities. As the examples show, Jane does not respond and does nothing to save Tim's face, despite his tag question "does it?" in example 13 directly inviting her reply. Because Tim does not get a response, he attempts to save face in example 14 commenting that it has been a long time since he has looked at his translation. Interestingly, the students' self-perceived competencies do not correspond with their known level of performance as defined by the teacher. Anderson and Kilduff (2009: 492) suggest that within a group, status is assigned according to perceived value to the group. Thus, a group member may be conferred a high status based on perceived competence independently of actual competence, which is the case with Jane in this pair. Similarly, a group member may opt for a lower status rank based on self-perceived shortcomings and incapability to make valuable contributions to the group (Anderson et al. 2012: 1078), as we have seen with Tim

in this pair. Although Tim is careful to play down own abilities, he takes responsibility for improving his translation and for the learning process, while displaying openness for suggestions by Jane, as reflected in example 15.

Example 15

J: Yes, the question is whether …. well, affaldssortering (i. e. waste separation) is this then the same as …

T: Yes

J: Gestión de residuos (i. e. waste management)?

T: Yes

J: Um… because you …

T: It was actually also some source …

J: Yes

T: where I think I found affaldssortering (i. e. waste separation)

J: well, okay, of course … I think that maybe to handle it correctly has another meaning to it, but it …

T: Yes, that …

J: in relation to if they are using some environmentally hazardous or…

T: No, you are actually right … I also liked your translation better

J: Haha (laughing)

T: I did

J: (laughing) you always feel that way when you see others'

T: Yes, I should have done that too

J: Yes

T: So that … um… I had made … at least I had found …

J: Oh well, it is definitely in the same …

T: waste separation. That sounds more like something you would do, right? There is plastic and paper, and… that is the sort of thing you do at home, right?

J: Yes

T: Yes …

J: Yes, and I suppose companies have to do that as well.

T: Yes, but you are probably right that there is something else to it when it concerns environmental policy.

J: Yes

T: Then there is probably some other like environmental …

J: Yes, or you can…

T: Yes, there are probably several waste products

J: Hmm.

T: when you produce electricity … um… I would imagine.

J: Probably.

T: Yes … yes, let me just write that down … what did you call it again? You called it something with handling of …

J: maybe handling of…

T: environmentally … hazardous waste … no, I don't remember what it was

J: Yes … yes, it was environmentally hazardous waste

T: yes

In example 15, Jane points to a problem in a vague way offering no solution "the question is whether …. well, affaldssortering (i. e. waste separation) is this then the same as (…) gestión de residuos (i. e. waste management)?". Tim, on the other hand, argues with himself trying to engage Jane into a professional dialogue, which is unsuccessful, cumu-lating in one comment by her "probably", which shows little interest in being engaged in the discussion. In the end, Tim solves the problem with minimal help from Jane. The example illustrates yet again Tim's downgrading of own abilities praising Jane for better work about which she grins. This time Jane saves Tim's face "you always feel that way when you see others'" but only here.

Rubric

In the feedback rubric, Jane points out problems in Tim's translation without offering specific solutions to the problems, as illustrated in example 16.

Example 16

"Medium

'The creation of a new corporate culture'

Nominal style"

We believe that the expression "medium" is a response to express medium achievement in meeting the overall criteria of the rubric. In support of her evaluation, Jane gives an example from Tim's translation "The creation of a new corporate culture", stating that the problem is the use of the nominal style, but offers no suggestions for improvement. Question marks are used in the feedback rubric, which may be used to spark dialogue, as exemplified in 17.

Example 17

"Is affaldssortering (i. e. waste separation) the same as gestión de residuos (i. e. waste management)?"

As the dialogue data reveals, Jane is not particularly interested in participating in a problem-solving dialogue, leaving it to Tim to solve the problem.

Revised translation

In the revised translation, Tim makes adaptations, which are not necessarily related to the exact feedback from Jane, but he gives Jane some of the credit for his solution although she was not particularly engaged in the discussion.

Example 18

In this example, Tim comments on the revision made in relation to waste separation (as mentioned in example 15). In his comment, Tim uses the personal pronoun "we" to indicate that the solution has been reached through a collaborative process "we found that *minimere udledning af affald* (i. e. minimize waste emissions) was a better solution", although the dialogue data reveal that this is not the case. According to Greer, Van Bunderen and Yu (2017: 113), group members who enjoy a high status have more authority and control than lower power individuals, and they receive more recognition.

Short questionnaire

Although the peer-feedback process does not work particularly well for this pair, both students comment positively on the experience in the short questionnaire, stating that peer feedback sparks reflection and self-comparison and makes one a better translator. Commenting on the disadvantages of peer feedback, Jane addresses the issue of students' lack of confidence in their peers (Nicol 2010: 514), as illustrated in example 19.

Example 19

"Peer review may be problematic because not all students are comfortable giving feedback, and not all students are willing to accept feedback from their peers".

Tim, on the other hand, comments on the importance of the manner in which feedback is provided, as illustrated in example 20.

Example 20

"When giving peer feedback it is important to keep a polite and constructive tone"

Commenting on the challenges of providing feedback, Tim states that it was difficult to find errors in Jane's translation, which may be related to Jane's perceived higher status.

4   Conclusion

The study reported about in this article aimed at gaining insight into student peer feedback in a multi-faceted setup. It was designed in accordance with the development of and findings from research into L2 peer feedback and previous research approaches into peer feedback and peer revision in the translation classroom. General didactic considerations and scholarly discussions about core issues of peer feedback as tool for preparing future language workers with a crucial professional competence were aligned, to provide insight into what we deem a determining element for training in translation and communication studies.

Given the size of the study, generalisations regarding pair relations – the focus of our analysis – cannot be made. Still, we believe to have identified three types of pair relations of which two deviate from interaction patterns previously categorized, which lend themselves to further investigation in a more comprehensive study comprising multiple pairs. The setup could e. g. have included a pre- and post-test design, peer-feedback training with instructions regarding a feedback, feedup, feedforward approach or a focus on feedback types, revision types (such as higher order concerns and lower order concerns) and implementation types. Since it did not, student focus was split between feedback and evaluation criteria.

Feasibility aspects played a role in the methodological considerations regarding the design and execution of the peer-feedback activities. Data collection had to be balanced against classroom and semester organisation aspects. To keep the setup as natural and unintimidating as possible, the teacher decided against adopting additional methodology, even though the classroom would have allowed for e. g. video recording or retrospective interviews to investigate body language or student perception.

This first attempt to implement peer feedback in this MA-course was designed around the teacher as the facilitator, including her scaffolding to smoothen the process. Students appreciated the procedure and, on the whole, reported positively about the experience. They particularly stressed the helpfulness of the rubric and the fact that they received feedback to an entire translation rather than only parts, as in regular teaching. Increased training and practice of peer-feedback tasks in the classroom would allow a gradual decrease of scaffolding in future peer-feedback settings, support classroom and teacher time management and – hopefully – raise student's awareness for necessary professionalization skills and of responsibility for their role as feedback receiver and provider and increase their independence.

While we recognise the potential of anonymous peer feedback that may relieve social pressures, our study showed, that it was the dialogue that the students perceived as most beneficial for their L2 language learning experience. From a didactic perspective, the beauty lies in the possibility to discuss, argue, negotiate and – not least – agree or agree to disagree. Students might experience that providing anonymous feedback can be time efficient, yet getting anonymous feedback may make them aware of the necessity

of well-supported comments, mitigated language and argumentation for mutual under-standing and implementation.

Group size is another consideration in peer-feedback setups. Regardless of group size in initial attempts to incorporate peer feedback in the translation classroom, it is valuable to include a cyclic process of tasks and reflection with teacher monitoring and group evaluation of processes, perceptions and outcomes.

Regarding pair composition, our study revealed that face-to-face dialogical inter-actions and pair relations influence students' implementation decisions, their perception of peer-feedback activities and of the value of peer feedback itself. As teachers, we must be aware of and monitor pair interactions to enhance the L2 language learning oppor-tunities for students when engaging in peer-feedback activities.

With respect to institutional considerations, we continue to believe that institutional support is key to stimulate attitudinal change towards the application of peer-feedback setups. Institutional backing allows teachers to systematically embed peer feedback into their regular teaching activities, which may also lead to higher quality peer feedback. Increased and systematic application of peer feedback calls for training and practice. Not only for students – regarding their role as feedback receiver and feedback provider – but also for teachers in terms of planning, implementing, managing and evaluating peer-feedback. Teachers who investigate student-produced peer-feedback data may be well-advised to convey their results back to the students and learn about their opinions. Engaging students in all parts of the research process may motivate them and give them a sense of belonging to our research community, as a part of ongoing knowledge deve-lopment, considerations and reflections. Closing this loop may increase student interest into translation review processes beyond the task at hand and beyond the mere sub-mission of the products and the performance of actions in the peer-feedback setup.

Sharing discipline-specific lived experience with students and fellow teachers can lead to attitudinal change towards more peer feedback in the classroom and we hope that our study will be perceived as a contribution on that path.

While our study may contribute to translation studies didactics research, a multitude of open questions remain to be answered in translation related peer-feedback research. With respect to methodological questions, feasible combinations of methods that are applicable in the classroom should be investigated. Designs should incorporate pro-ducts, processes and the individual perceptions of the participants, ideally in replicable formats and in the form of longitudinal studies. A comparison between review practices of experts and novices and comprehensive and didacticized knowledge about common practices in translation review are necessary for a better understanding of the profes-sional requirements and could in turn help foster peer-feedback-based teaching.

Translation didactics does not have a theoretical stance on peer feedback yet. The few translation-oriented studies currently available and general principles, classifica-tions, concepts, definitions and models of peer feedback in other research areas need

to be explored, aligned with and described in the light of how they can inform and trans-cend translation studies to form a body of knowledge.

While pair constellations certainly require investigation beyond the scope of this article, a fruitful area of research of similar potential is to explore the relationship between L1, L2, translation competence and peer-feedback processes and products. Another avenue of research could be the abstraction of peer feedback into explanatory models to support teacher and student training and assist researchers in gaining insight into the complex matters that encapsulate peer feedback. Despite the complexity of the object of study in all its facets, we believe research into peer feedback to be an interesting and fruitful didactical, methodological and theoretical endeavour.

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