This century has witnessed the unstoppable advance of machine translation and of tasks associated with it, such as post-editing. In this context, the concept of revision has again attracted the attention of recent research within Translation Studies (Riondel 2021) in order to establish the main differences between these two concepts—revision and post-editing. The publication of *Translation Revision and Post-editing: Industry Practices and Cognitive Processes*, edited by Maarit Koponen, Brian Mossop, Isabelle S. Robert and Giovanna Scocchera, could not be more timely, as the ever-increasing popularity of automated processes in translation raises questions about the differences between revision and post-editing that need to be tackled from both academic and industry viewpoints. In this regard, the volume collects 12 chapters which gather theoretical, empirical, and didactic approaches on translation editing, revision, and post-editing tasks, and impresses the audience by covering a wide range of both scholarly and professional perspectives. In the first place, it is a volume that includes both theoretical and empirical chapters and that explores the lines that separate translation, revision, and post-editing within Translation Studies and the translation professional market. Secondly, it is a book that also adopts a didactic approach to these three concepts, making the volume an invaluable resource for researchers, translation practitioners and students.

The volume opens with the editors’ “Introduction” by exhaustively contextualising the concepts that are the core of the volume — revision and post-editing — and describing existing relevant research. More specifically, the editors carry out a deep analysis of the main theoretical contributions that have dealt with these practices and classify empirical studies, offering a comprehensive review of product and process-oriented studies on revision and post-editing. As the editors note, translation revision is an activity that has been performed for centuries: “Revision of translations is an old activity in Europe and probably dates back to Saint Jerome, who was commissioned by Pope Damasus I to revise existing versions of the Bible in the late 4th century” (1). However, as the editors also emphasise, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that we find publications on revision (Arthern 1983, Toury 1995). The editors argue that it was thanks to the support of institutions, such as the United Nations and the European Union, and the creation of international standards (e.g., ISO 17100) that the importance of translation revision became widely recognised. The introduction also explores the intricacies of post-editing, that is, the editing and correction of machine-translation output (ISO 17100, 2015). After providing insights into the discussion on its definition, the editors state that the limits between revision and post-editing are fuzzy: “As more translators are finding themselves checking not only human translation but also machine outputs,
traditional boundaries between the functions of translators, revisers and post-editors are starting to blur [...]” (1). In this line, the introduction provides a clear theoretical base that helps interested readers to immerse themselves in the central topic of the work before reading each of the chapters.

The volume is divided into four parts. Part I, “Post-editing versus Revision”, includes three chapters that focus on differentiating revision and post-editing, in all cases both from a theoretical and empirical perspective. In “Preferential Changes in Revision and Post-editing”, Jean Nitzke and Anne-Kathrin Gros investigate the phenomenon of over-editing, which has already been addressed by previous studies (De Almeida 2013) and is strongly related to individual preferential changes. Based on data gathered from three English-German works involving the qualitative analysis of keylogging data, this research piece with clear pedagogical implications shows findings proving that, even when clear guidelines are given, translators unnecessarily over-edit. In this sense, authors highlight that both revision and post-editing are tasks that require practice, and the authors therefore strongly advocate for their inclusion in translation training programmes. Next, Félix do Carmo and Joss Moorkens conduct a theoretical review of the concepts of translation, revision, and post-editing. They conclude that post-editing is a translation task and that treating it merely as a form of revision contributes to devaluing it in both the professional and academic world. Throughout the chapter, entitled “Differentiating editing, post-editing and revision”, they argue that post-editing tasks viewed as a form of translation require a high specialisation on the part of translators. In “Post-Editing Human Translations and Revising Machine Translations”, Joke Daems and Lieve Macken present a comparison in terms of quality and efficiency of revised and post-edited texts produced by professional translation agencies in the language pair English-Dutch without the translators knowing their source (machine translation or human translation). Results confirm that participants carried out more changes over machine translation in the revision task and that preferential changes took place in both cases.

Part II contains several chapters and addresses the practice of editing and post-editing by non-professionals, an area that is undoubtedly of great importance and for which there is still scarce systematic research. First, Matthieu LeBlanc explores the institutional context of a Canadian government department and the practice of editing translations by civil servants. After a review of the sociolinguistic context and of the language and translation policies in force, Leblanc presents the results of a qualitative study conducted based on observation and interviews with public officials who occasionally edit French translations made by professional translators. Findings reveal that this non-professional editing should not be considered a marginal activity. Additionally, the study offers valuable information on the actual process of translations that are entrusted to professional
translators, who are not often informed of the specific requirements of the requested translation task. This reveals a lack of coordination in the translation-editing workflow that may have a negative effect on the final product. The next chapter by Carla Parra Escartín and Marie-Josée Goulet reports on an empirical study that analyses post-editing tasks undertaken by individuals outside the world of translation, such as scholars who do not speak English but want to make their research visible. The study compares the type of editing carried out on a target text (English) by a group of five Spanish physicists and that carried out by professional reviewers on the same text without the source text (Spanish). The authors conclude that the texts lacked adequate quality for publication after being post-edited by the physicists. As their main conclusion, the authors state that post-editing training would have been essential for this specific group of participants, without which it is impossible to ensure the acceptability of the final texts.

Part III, “Professional Revision in Various Contexts”, approaches professional revision from a variety of perspectives. In Chapter 6, Madeleine Schnierer surveys the quality standards of linguistic service providers (LSPs) — certified and uncertified companies — in Austria to ascertain whether they follow the recommendations in EN 15038:2006 and ISO 17100:2015 in relation to translation revision. Drawing on a quantitative methodology, results show that compliance with the translation revision requirements of ISO 15038 is higher amongst uncertified companies. On the other hand, and regarding ISO 17100, the study proves that most certified companies work with revision parameters, while only a small number of uncertified companies follow this standard. In Chapter 7, Annamari Korhonen explores variation in the revision stage of the workflow of language service provision in Finland. Her findings show significant differences among the various LSPs participating in the study. Korhonen argues that revision should be considered as an important part of the production effort of translated texts and proposes a revision continuum ranging from proofreading to extensive creative editing of a translation. This concept of revision continuum would serve LSPs as a starting point to set the different variables to be considered in their workflow and to rank, for instance, revision parameters. Susana Valdez and Sonia Vandepitte delve into the differences between translators and reviewers in terms of their attitudes and expectations towards the competencies of one another in the context of biomedical translation in Portugal. The participants surveyed share the importance of terminology and information mining as the main competencies that both types of practitioners should acquire. Results also shed light on the lack of communication and trust between revisers and translators, which may have a considerable negative impact on the quality of the translation. The last chapter of this part of the volume examines revision from the perspective of literary translation and reflects on the complementary concepts of self-revision and other-revision. The authors, Ilse Feinauer and Amanda Lourens, analyse the revision processes involved
in the translation from Afrikaans into English of three fiction works, and then propose an innovative theoretical model of revision in literary contexts.

Part IV of the volume explores didactic implications of revision and post-editing and makes a substantial contribution to translator training. In chapter 10, Finnish researchers Kalle Konttinen, Leena Salmi and Maarit Koponen provide an exhaustive review of the competencies related to revision and post-editing in translator training programmes, and more specifically in the translation programme at the University of Turku. Their findings are valuable for other scholars involved in tertiary education who are considering the inclusion of revision and post-editing modules in their training programmes. Gys-Walt Van Egdom critically reviews translationQ, a tool intended to facilitate revision tasks. Although the chapter is mainly descriptive, Van Egdom convincingly argues that translationQ can help in the revision practices in the translation classroom. In the final chapter of the volume, Ginovart Cid and Colominas Ventura present the results of a mixed-methods study conducted with translator trainers with the objective of improving understanding of how machine translation and post-editing are taught within the European Master’s in Translation (EMT) network. Their findings corroborate those of other studies (e.g., Plaza Lara 2019) that show a lack of systematic treatment of machine translation and postediting in training programmes, with issues such as machine translation assessment not receiving sufficient attention.

Translation Revision and Post-editing contains rigorous studies that address some of the most pressing challenges in relation to machine translation, post-editing and revision. The combination of theoretical and empirical chapters makes the work useful for both researchers and translation practitioners interested in incorporating the most recent research on the subject into their practice. In overview, the volume demonstrates that bringing together revision and post-editing and professional and non-professional perspectives from different contexts succeeds in making a successful and significant contribution to the state of the art in Translation Studies. However, despite its many merits, there is considerable repetition of the theoretical foundations underpinning the main topics covered in the volume, which is perhaps understandable due to the diversity of the contributors. Overall, this book can be considered an extremely useful resource for understanding the changes that machine translation is bringing about in translation editing, revising, and post-editing.

References


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