3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH ON LEVEL DESCRIPTORS IN TRANSLATION

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3.1. Descriptor scales

In the context of language training, a descriptor scale is a "graded list — hence it being called a scale — of specifications referring to a learner's knowledge or actions in the use of a foreign language. Descriptor scales are generally related with different levels of language proficiency and are fundamentally used when designing courses and programmes, as well as to describe the assessment criteria system adopted" (Palacios Martínez 2019, our translation).

Existing scales include more or less detailed descriptive categories (set out horizontally) and level descriptors (set out vertically), which intersect to describe what a subject is capable of doing in each category and at each level. Descriptor scales focus on what an individual *can do*, more than on

their declarative knowledge. The levels establish a progression and a scale can have as many of them as are necessary, be they of a more general nature or with internal sub-divisions, to reflect the stages involved.

The Council of Europe's CEFR, or Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001; Instituto Cervantes 2002), which is linked to translation, is probably the best-known level scale. Its vertical axis comprises three broad levels (A, B and C, identified as basic user, independent user and proficient user respectively), which have sub-levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2). The framework's descriptive categories (general competences, communicative language competences, communicative strategies, and communicative activities) are set out along its horizontal axis.

The updated CEFR (Council of Europe 2018) adds the skill of "Translating" to its "Mediation" section, along with plurilingual and pluricultural competence, although it specifies that its descriptor scale is not intended to relate to the activities of professional translators or their training. The progression in difficulty reflected over the different levels advances from translating short texts containing clear, everyday information at the lowest levels to translating more complex texts requiring greater accuracy at the highest levels.

Other language scales include the United Nations Language Framework[1], the levels of which are designed, in principle, to standardize language learning, teaching and assessment. The framework establishes four levels (basic, intermediate, advanced and expert) for four categories, which correspond to the four skills (reading comprehension, written production, listening comprehension and oral expression). The four levels can be aligned[2] with the eight established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTPL)[3] and with the six of the CEFR.

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1. https://hr.un.org/page/un-language-framework
2. https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/Language%20Frameworks_UNLF%20ACTFL%20CEFR_0.pdf
3. https://www.actfl.org/assessment-research-and-development/tester-rater-certifications

Another example of a scale for language training and assessment is that of the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB)[4]. Widely used with immigrants and students in Canada, it features the four skills and has 12 levels (which can also be aligned with those of the CEFR)[5].

On a related note, the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project[6] is also worthy of mention. Launched with work on generic competences in 2000, it has had a major impact owing to its efforts to coordinate relevant aspects of higher education across Europe. It involved establishing cycles and levels in higher education and defining descriptors for certain disciplines, among other things.

There have been very few attempts to develop level descriptor scales for translation. The handful of proposals made have not been empirically validated, lack sufficient detail in their category and level descriptions, and, in most cases, do not describe competences.

Some proposals from the professional and academic arenas are presented below (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively).

3.2. Proposals from translator accreditation or professional regulation bodies

There are translator accreditation or professional regulation bodies in some countries, mostly operating at national level.

One such body is Australia's National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)[7]. NAATI has a certification system that takes the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to work as a translator or interpreter into account, and there is widespread awareness of the system's existence in professional circles in Australia. Along with 11 credentials for interpreting, NAATI issues two for translation: the "Recognised Practising" credential, which accredits experience rather than a level of competency; and the "Certified Translator" credential, which accredits the capability to transfer written messages from one language to another for

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4. https://www.language.ca/home/
5. https://www.language.ca/aligning-clb-and-cefr/
6. https://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/publications.html
7. https://www.naati.com.au/become-certified/

the purpose of communication between a writer and reader who do not share the same language.

Another body that provides certification, for over 30 language combinations in this case, is the American Translators Association (ATA)[8]. ATA has detailed correction criteria but does not establish different competences or distinguish between levels. Success in an ATA certification exam can be considered equivalent to at least translation level 3 as established by another body from the USA, the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)[9]. The ILR does have a level scale and descriptions, in which levels 0 and 1 correspond to minimal performance, level 2 to limited performance, and levels 3, 4 and 5 to professional performance. The ILR identifies skills a translator should have, although they are not presented as competences or regular descriptors, and specifies that the complexity of translation increases as that of the texts being translated does. In principle, the ILR skill level descriptions are chiefly intended for use in government settings.

The Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) is the UK's association of practising translators, interpreters and language service providers. Together with educational institutions, ITI provides qualified translator certification, assessment for which[10], according to the Institute itself, involves producing a professional-quality translation that is technically correct and accurately conveys the meaning of the source text. While translators who obtain such certification are expected to be capable of translating to a high professional standard, ITI does not, on its website at least, provide a description of what it considers that to entail.

Another UK-based association of language practitioners is the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), which has developed an assessment and certification system for different levels, profiles (translation, interpreting, and bilingual skills) and language combinations[11]. CIOL prepares and examines people aiming to obtain professional qualifications. It offers a certificate of bilingual skills for police work, which it places at

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8. https://www.atanet.org/certification/guide-to-ata-certification/

9. https://www.govtilr.org/Skills/AdoptedILRTranslationGuidelines.htm

10. https://www.iti.org.uk/membership/individual-membership-categories/qualified-translator/qualified-translator-assessment.html

11. https://www.ciol.org.uk/ciol-qualifications

level 3 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), the framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. CIOL also offers diplomas in public service interpreting and police interpreting, both of which are at level 6 on the RQF, the equivalent of undergraduate degree level. Lastly, and of greatest relevance to this publication, CIOL offers a diploma in translation, which is at level 7 on the RQF, equivalent to master's degree level. The RQF, the level scale used by CIOL, is general and has nine qualification levels[12], ranging from entry level to level 8. Levels 1-3 correspond to training prior to higher education, levels 4-6 to higher education in general, level 7 to a master's degree, and level 8 to a PhD.

Staying in the UK, Instructus (formerly known as Skills CFA) is an organization (or a group of organizations) that establishes occupational standards for translation, although it does not certify them. Instructus establishes national occupational standards that define the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in a given profession and the tasks that exercising it is likely to involve. In 2007, Skills CFA updated the national occupational standards for translation[13], which distinguish between the levels of professional translator and advanced professional translator, the difference being that the latter can handle texts with complex subject matter and mentor colleagues or trainee translators. Instructus explicitly does not establish more specific guidelines, something it chooses to leave to certification bodies.

The Associaçao Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes (ABRATES) has a level accreditation system for its members[14], the test for which involves the translation of three short texts into or from Portuguese. ABRATES proposes correction criteria but does not distinguish between different levels.

Similarly, the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC)[15], a federation of associations of language professionals,

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12. https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels
13. https://fs.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/8304001/Translation.pdf
14. https://abrates.com.br/credenciamento/
15. http://cttic.org/

carries out national translation level certification tests but does not state which competences it assesses or whether it distinguishes between levels.

In China, the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI), with its preparation services, exams and computerized corrections, is promoted by Language Service Competence Accumulation & Training. In the same country, the Translators Association of China (TAC)[16], founded in 1982, offers evaluation and recognition for translation; its tests are described only superficially, however.

In 2011, the Vertaalacademie Maastricht and PSTEVIN (a platform comprising the professional associations of translators of the Netherlands) developed a framework comprising six competences and three levels, which they began to revise in 2016. The competences in question are translation competence, language and textual competence, documentation and research competence, cultural competence, technological competence, and business competence. The possible incorporation of a seventh competence referring to translators' professional ethics is currently under debate; its main characteristics have already been described but its levels have not yet been determined.

Promoted by The Poool, a platform and directory of audiovisual translation and localization professionals, AVT Pro Certification[17] is currently being developed. Its purpose is to recognize the linguistic and technical knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality language services for the audiovisual industry, specifically in the areas of subtitling, captioning and spotting. No descriptors or concrete details on criteria for establishing the level or levels to be certified have been made available yet.

The above examples of translator accreditation or professional regulation bodies chiefly serve to highlight the dearth of proposals where competence descriptions and levels are concerned. In most cases, certification is based on a translation test that entails admission to the body involved or official recognition of the candidate's capabilities.

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16. http://en.tac-online.org.cn/
17. https://the-poool.com/certification/

Table 3.1. Translation levels and categories proposed by translator accreditation or professional regulation bodies

BODY	CATEGORIES USED	LEVELS
NAATI	• Language competency • Intercultural competency • Research competency • Technological competency • Thematic competency • Transfer competency • Service provision competency • Ethical competency	• Certified translator • Recognized translator
ILR	• Not stated	• Level 0-1 (minimal performance) • Level 2 (limited performance) • Level 3-5 (professional performance)
Skills CFA (2007) / Instructus	• Maintaining skills and systems for managing translation tasks • Managing new translation assignments • Translating written texts from one language to another • Developing performance as a professional / an advanced professional translator • Evaluating and improving translation services to meet client needs • Acting as a mentor to trainee and colleague translators • Managing translation projects	• Advanced professional translator • Professional translator

| Vertaalacademie Maastricht (2011, 2016) | • Translation competence (translation of texts)
• Language and textual competence
• Information mining / documentation and research competence
• Cultural competence
• Technological competence
• Business competence
• (Ethical competence) | • Level 3
• Level 2
• Level 1 |

3.3. Proposed competence level descriptions for translator training

There have been a number of initiatives aimed at describing competence levels for translator training. They vary in their level of detail.

Libro Blanco. Título de Grado en Traducción e Interpretación (Muñoz Raya 2004) was produced in Spain in 2004, with the collaboration of the country's National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation and following consultation with different figures from the world of translation (graduates, employers and authorities from the academic and professional translation arenas). It includes a list of general and specific competences, the latter being: proficiency in foreign languages; knowledge of foreign cultures and civilizations; proficiency in the written and oral forms of one's own language; proficiency in specialized translation techniques and terminology; use of IT tools; proficiency in assisted translation / localization techniques; documentation / information mining skills; knowledge of the economic and professional aspects of translation; the ability to work in a team; the ability to design and manage projects; and having extensive world knowledge.

In Europe, the EMT (European Master's in Translation) Expert Group's competence proposal is well known. Produced in 2009 and revised in 2017[18], its objective is to facilitate assessment of the realization of a set of learning outcomes at master's degree level. The first proposal included

18. https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2018-02/emt_competence_fwk_2017_en_web.pdf

six competences: translation service provision competence, language competence, intercultural competence, information mining competence, thematic competence, and technological competence. The second proposal includes only five areas of competence, which have been slightly modified: language and culture; translation; technology; personal and interpersonal; and service provision. The EMT's revised competence framework has some empirical basis in that it is the fruit of discussions among the members of the EMT network itself and language industry representatives. It does not claim to be comprehensive in terms of its list of competences and does not establish different levels.

One attempt to establish levels is the proposal of Cnyrim, Hagemann and Neu (2013), which is based not on empirical data but on their own experience, Risku's (1998) translation competence model and Bybee's (1997) framework for scientific and technological literacy. The authors' proposed framework of reference for translation competence has two categories, one being translation competence and the other competence in translation studies (knowledge of translation theory, metalanguage, etc.). Both have five levels, namely level 1 or lay competence, level 2 or basic functional competence, level 3 or conceptual and procedural competence, level 4 or multidimensional competence, and level 5 or autonomous and progressive competence.

Lastly, the Competence Awareness in Translation (CATO) initiative, developed within the EMT to make translation students conscious of their own competences, is worthy of mention. Data from an empirical study carried out on a European scale are currently being analysed to find out how master's degree students perceive their acquisition of the competences described in the EMT's 2017 model. Ten universities and 310 respondents have participated in the study (Froeliger 2019).

With regard to areas of specialization, two relatively recent European projects have produced relevant results. One is eTransFair, which proposed the following competences for specialized translation[19]: translation competence, language competence, inter- and trans-cultural competence, revision and review competence, domain-specific competence, technological com-

19. https://etransfair.eu/about/intellectual-outputs/io1-competence-card

petence, information mining and terminological competence, and professional competence. It did not establish performance levels or describe the different areas of specialization, however.

PETRA-E[20], the second of the aforementioned projects, developed a framework for literary translation with levels and a self-evaluation application. The competences[21] it includes are transfer competence, language competence, textual competence, heuristic competence, literary-cultural competence, professional competence, evaluative competence, and research competence. The five levels it establishes are beginner, advanced learner, early career professional, advanced professional, and expert.

Another self-evaluation application, albeit one that is not directly related to training and does not provide information on levels, is the Translation and Interpreting Competence Questionnaire (TICQ)[22] (Schaeffer *et al.* 2020), which collects qualitative and quantitative data from subjects and facilitates profile identification and classification. It has three sections: one on demographic and linguistic data, one on translation competence, and one on interpreting competence. It mainly consists of questions that require users to evaluate themselves, i.e. assign themselves a score on a scale. The result, while potentially of great use for research, does not establish levels, beyond grouping subjects whose answers are similar together.

Lastly, the following are noteworthy in connection with cultural competence in translation: the curriculum framework for intercultural competence stemming from the European project PICT (Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators) (Tomozeiu and D'Arcangelo 2016); the aspects of intercultural competence proposed by the INCA (Intercultural Competence Assessment) project[23]; and the intercultural competence model put forward by Yarosh, and the learning outcomes she describes for each sub-competence (Yarosh 2012, 2015).

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20. https://petra-education.eu/framework-literary-translation/
21. https://petra-educationframework.eu/
22. https://traco.uni-mainz.de/ticq/?fbclid=IwAR3p0amyNQRfy4rQ_ig4Eo8YBrtD-QBRf_NGMoUbqrIbZh7csX-kdoRTndTc
23. https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/the-inca-project-intercultural-competence-assessment

Table 3.2. Competence level proposals for translator training

REFERENCE	COMPETENCES	LEVELS
Libro Blanco on translation and interpreting in Spain (2004)	• Proficiency in foreign languages • Knowledge of foreign cultures and civilizations • Proficiency in the written and oral forms of one's own language • Proficiency in specialized translation techniques and terminology • Use of IT tools • Proficiency in assisted translation / localization techniques • Documentation / information mining skills • Knowledge of the economic and professional aspects of translation • The ability to work in a team • The ability to design and manage projects • Having extensive world knowledge	Undergraduate degree
EMT (2009, 2017, 2022)	2009: • Translation service provision competence • Language competence • Intercultural competence • Information mining competence • Thematic competence • Technological competence	Master's degree

	2017: • Language and culture competence • Translation competence • Technology competence • Personal and interpersonal competence • Service provision competence	
Cnyrim, Hagemann and Neu (2013)	• Translation competence • Competence in translation studies	• Level 1, lay competence • Level 2, basic functional competence • Level 3, conceptual and procedural competence • Level 4, multidimensional competence • Level 5, autonomous and progressive competence
eTransFair	• Translation competence • Language competence • Inter- and trans-cultural competence • Revision and review competence • Domain-specific competence • Technological competence • Information mining and terminological competence • Professional competence	Specialized translation
PETRA-E	• Transfer competence • Language competence • Textual competence • Heuristic competence • Literary-cultural competence • Professional competence • Evaluative competence • Research competence	Literary translation • beginner • advanced learner • early career professional • advanced professional • expert

3.4. Study on competence levels in translator training in Europe

As part of the NACT project, the PACTE group conducted a study on the situation of competences and the levels established for them in translator training centres across Europe. The study is described below.

3.4.1. Analysis of curriculum documentation from 18 translator training centres across Europe

In the academic year 2015-16, as a first step towards producing translation level scales, PACTE undertook a study with a view to developing a database for analysing the competences, content and progression involved in translator training in Europe at that time. The goal was to learn more about the situation of competences in translation and the levels established for them. To that end, the group collected curriculum documentation and data related to the following:

1. Translation curriculums (from undergraduate and master's degree programmes), especially the languages, level requirements, and general and specific competences involved.
2. Language 1 (L1) – language 2 (L2) translation subjects involving direct or inverse translation and general or specialized (legal, technical, audiovisual, literary, etc.) translation, with English or Spanish as L1, L2 or even language 3 (L3) if the level required was the same as for L2.

To simplify the task of collecting information, two online forms were produced, one of them on curriculums (https://ddd.uab.cat/record/249773?ln=en) and the other on translation subjects with a language pair including English or Spanish (https://ddd.uab.cat/record/249774?ln=en). Participants were asked to complete the forms in English or Spanish. When they had done so, they could attach relevant documents, such as the curriculum used in their centre and programme, subject guides, etc.

The information requested in each form, and on which results are provided here, is as follows.

Curriculum analysis form:

- Programme name
- Programme duration in ECTS
- Number of languages available in translation subjects: L1 (first language), L2 (first foreign language) and L3 (second foreign language)
- L2 and L3 starting level required to study translation
- General and specific competences

Subject analysis form:

- Number of subjects analysed
- Semester(s) in which training in direct translation and training in inverse translation begin
- Progression
- General and specific competences
- Learning objectives
- Content
- Text genres used

3.4.2. Results for undergraduate degrees

Information from 16 undergraduate degree programmes (see Appendix II.1) was obtained for the study. Below, data on curriculums are presented first, followed by data on subjects.

3.4.2.1. Curriculum information

With regard to curriculums, the main data obtained are set out below.

Undergraduate degree programme name and duration

Table 3.3. Undergraduate degree programme names

Names	N	%
Undergraduate degree programmes with names referring to philology, with or without direct mention of translation	6	37.5
Undergraduate degree programmes with names including translation and interpreting	4	25
Undergraduate degree programmes with names referring to communication between languages, with or without direct mention of translation	3	18.75
Undergraduate degree programmes with names including just translation	1	6.25
Undergraduate degree programmes with names referring to mediation between languages, with or without direct mention of translation	1	6.25
Others	1	6.25

While the names (table 3.3) of the undergraduate degree programmes vary, a preference (37.5%) can be seen for those that refer to philology and, in some cases, mention translation. Strikingly, only 25% of the programmes include translation and interpreting in their name.

As far as duration is concerned, most (68.75%) of the undergraduate degree programmes comprise 180 ECTS credits.

Languages available and required starting level

Table 3.4. Level of L2 and L3 required at start of training

LEVEL OF L2	N	%
B1	2	12.5
B2	7	43.75
Depends on the language	2	12.5
No prior knowledge required	1	6.25
Not specified	4	25

LEVEL OF L3	N	%
B1	1	6.25
B2	2	12.5
Depends on the language	1	6.25
No prior knowledge required	5	31.25
Not specified	7	43.75

Looking at the languages available, most of the undergraduate degree programmes analysed offer three L2 options. As can be seen (in table 3.4), B2 is the most commonly required L2 starting level (seven programmes). As far as L3 is concerned, seven programmes do not specify whether any prior knowledge of the relevant language is required and five state that no such knowledge is required.

Specific competences and learning outcomes

Table 3.5. Total number of specific competences per undergraduate degree programme

Undergraduate degree programme 1	33
Undergraduate degree programme 2	8
Undergraduate degree programme 3	27
Undergraduate degree programme 4	5
Undergraduate degree programme 5	5

Most of the undergraduate degree programmes do not list the specific competences they develop (table 3.5); only five of the 16 analysed do so, and only four actually call them "competences". The number of specific competences the different programmes include is not homogeneous, ranging from five to 33.

Furthermore, not all the competences in question have specified learning outcomes. Of the five programmes that list specific competences, only two give learning outcomes for each competence.

Table 3.6. Total number of specific competences related to written translation

	N	%
Undergraduate degree programme 1	19	57.57
Undergraduate degree programme 2	7	87.5
Undergraduate degree programme 3	24	88.8
Undergraduate degree programme 4	2	40
Undergraduate degree programme 5	5	100

Table 3.6 shows the number of specific competences corresponding to subjects linked to translation (terminology, documentation, etc.), with subjects on interpreting excluded. Not all the specific competences listed by the five programmes are related to translation.

General competences and learning outcomes

Table 3.7. Total number of general competences per undergraduate degree programme

Undergraduate degree programme 1	6
Undergraduate degree programme 2	19
Undergraduate degree programme 3	29
Undergraduate degree programme 4	3

Most of the undergraduate degree programmes do not have a list of general competences (table 3.7), although three of the four that actually do so call them "competences". The number of general competences the different programmes include is not homogeneous, ranging from three to 29. Learning outcomes for general competences are given in just one case.

3.4.2.2. *Subject information*

Data on subjects were obtained from only nine undergraduate degree programmes. All the information collected was used to analyse 91 translation subjects with English or Spanish as L1 or L2. Translation subjects with

English or Spanish as a second or third foreign language were excluded from the analysis, as were subjects mainly involving declarative knowledge (e.g. literature and translation; translation theory and methodology), work placements included in curriculums, subjects not strictly consisting in translation (e.g. consolidation of written production in L2), subjects not included in curriculums, subjects included in curriculums but without information, and subjects mixing direct and inverse translation without separating competences, content, etc. If a centre offered translation between a given L1 and English and Spanish as L2s, both subjects were analysed.

Start of training in translation

Table 3.8. Semester in which training in translation begins

DIRECT TRANSLATION	180-credit undergraduate degree programmes		240-credit undergraduate degree programmes	
	N	%	N	%
1st semester	4	66.7	1	33.3
2nd semester	1	16.6	1	33.3
3rd semester	1	16.6	0	0
4th semester	0	0	1	33.3
5th semester	0	0	0	0
6th semester	0	0	0	0
7th semester	0	0	0	0
8th semester	0	0	0	0
INVERSE TRANSLATION	180-credit undergraduate degree programmes		240-credit undergraduate degree programmes	
	N	%	N	%
1st semester	1	16.6	0	0
2nd semester	1	16.6	0	0
3rd semester	2	33.3	0	0
4th semester	2	33.3	0	0
5th semester	0	0	2	66.6
6th semester	0	0	1	33.3
7th semester	0	0	0	0
8th semester	0	0	0	0

With regard to when training in direct and inverse translation begins (table 3.8), there is little difference between 180-ECTS credit and 240-ECTS credit undergraduate degree programmes in the case of training in direct translation, which starts in the first or second semester in almost all of them. There is a relative difference where training in inverse translation is concerned, in that it begins later in the 240-ECTS credit programmes, although it is true to say that such training starts or is stepped up around the middle stage of both sets of programmes.

Progression between translation subjects

Of the nine undergraduate degree programmes, seven include general translation subjects and six include specialized translation subjects. While general translation is taught before specialized translation in five programmes, it is impossible to tell whether that is so in the other four.

There is progression between the various general direct translation subjects in four of the undergraduate degree programmes; in three others there is no way of knowing whether there is such progression, and the remaining two do not have more than one general translation subject. In the case of inverse translation, such progression can be observed in two of the programmes and cannot be observed in another three; the remaining four do not include more than one inverse translation subject.

Most (four out of six) of the undergraduate degree programmes in which specialized translation is taught do not include more than one such subject. It is impossible to observe progression between subjects in any given area of specialization as there is no more than one such subject in most cases, be it in direct translation (five programmes) or inverse translation (seven programmes).

Specific competences in subjects

While eight of the nine undergraduate degree programmes analysed identify the specific competences developed in subjects, only half (four) of them include those competences in the competence list for their programme. In most cases (six programmes), there is no way of knowing whether there is progression where specific competences are concerned.

Just one programme gives learning outcomes for specific competences.

General competences in subjects

Five of the nine undergraduate degree programmes analysed identify the general competences developed in subjects, but only three include those competences in the general competence list for their programme. There is just one programme in which there is progression, and four in which it is impossible to tell whether there is progression.

In most cases (four programmes), learning outcomes are not given for general competences.

Learning objectives in subjects

While most (seven) of the undergraduate degree programmes analysed include learning objectives, there are only four programmes in which they are linked to specific competences, and just one in which progression can be observed.

Subject content

Subject content is specified in almost all (eight) of the undergraduate degree programmes analysed, although it is linked to specific competences in just one case and progression can be observed in only two.

Text genres used in subjects

Some (four) of the undergraduate degree programmes analysed spec-ify the texts used in certain subjects only; three specify the texts used in every subject while two make no such specification whatsoever. Most (five) of the programmes do not specify the text genres used in their sub-jects. Just one programme links all the text genres used to specific com-petences or to learning objectives, while six do so for only some of their subjects. Overall progression in the use of text genres can be observed in just two programmes, and progression within certain subjects only in three programmes.

3.4.3. Results for master's degrees

Information from 26 master's degree programmes (see Appendix II.2) was obtained for the study. Below, as in the case of the undergraduate degree programmes, data on curriculums are presented first, followed by data on subjects.

3.4.3.1. Curriculum information

With regard to curriculums, the main data obtained are set out below.

Master's degree programme characteristics

Table 3.9. Master's degree programme names and types

Names	N	%
Master's degree programmes with names referring to philology, with or without direct mention of translation	7	26.9
Master's degree programmes with names including general or specialized translation and interpreting	3	11.5
Master's degree programmes with names referring to communication between languages, with or without direct mention of translation	1	3.8
Master's degree programmes with names including just general translation	7	26.9
Master's degree programmes with names including just specialized translation	6	23.3
Master's degree programmes with names referring to mediation between languages, with or without direct mention of translation	0	0.0
Others	2	7.6

Where the names of the master's degree programmes (table 3.9) are concerned, there is a fairly even distribution among those referring to philology (seven), to just general translation (seven) or to just specialized translation (six).

In relation to duration, most (69.1%) of the master's degree programmes comprise 120 ECTS credits.

Most (14) of the master's degree programmes analysed are of the generalist type with specialized translation subjects or modules, mainly on scientific translation (13), technical translation (13), legal translation (11), audiovisual translation (eight), translation for publishing houses (seven) and localization (seven). The six programmes specifically in specialized translation, some of which cover more than one area of specialization, deal with scientific translation (three), audiovisual translation (three), technical translation (two), translation for publishing houses (two), legal translation (one), medical translation (one), literary translation (one) and localization (one).

Languages available and required starting level

Table 3.10. Level of L2 and L3 required at start of training

LEVEL OF L2	N	%
A1	1	3.8
A2	0	0
B1	0	0
B2	1	3.8
C1	12	46.1
C2	3	11.6
Depends on the language	2	7.7
No prior knowledge required	3	11.6
Not specified	4	15.4
LEVEL OF L3	N	%
B1	0	0
B2	4	15.4
C1	7	26.9
C2	1	3.8
Depends on the language	1	3.8
No prior knowledge required	4	15.4
Not specified	9	34.7

Regarding the languages available, 11 of the 26 master's degree programmes analysed offer just one L2, although six offer four L2s and five offer more than four. As can be seen (in table 3.10), C1 is the most commonly required

L2 starting level (12 programmes). In the case of L3, nine programmes do not specify whether any prior knowledge of the relevant language is required and seven require level C1.

Specific competences

Table 3.11. Total number of specific competences per master's degree programme

Master's degree programme 1	6
Master's degree programme 2	47
Master's degree programme 3	13
Master's degree programme 4	9
Master's degree programme 5	6
Master's degree programme 6	7

The vast majority (20) of the master's degree programmes do not list the specific competences they develop; only six of the 26 analysed do so, and only five actually call them "competences". The number of specific competences the different programmes include is not homogeneous, ranging from six to 47.

None of the six programmes that list specific competences gives learning outcomes for each competence.

Table 3.12. Total number of specific competences related to written translation

	N	%
Master's degree programme 1	0	0
Master's degree programme 2	47	100
Master's degree programme 3	3	23.1
Master's degree programme 4	9	100
Master's degree programme 5	6	100
Master's degree programme 6	0	0

Table 3.12 shows the number of specific competences corresponding to subjects linked to translation (terminology, documentation, etc.), with

subjects on interpreting excluded. Depending on the characteristics of each programme, it is not always the case that every specific competence listed is related to translation.

General competences

Table 3.13. Total number of general competences per master's degree programme

Master's degree programme 1	5
Master's degree programme 2	7
Master's degree programme 3	7
Master's degree programme 4	3
Master's degree programme 5	4
Master's degree programme 6	5

Most of the master's degree programmes do not have a list of general competences, although five of the six that actually do so call them "competences". The number of general competences the different programmes include is relatively homogeneous, ranging from three to seven (table 3.13).

None of the programmes gives learning outcomes for general competences.

3.4.3.2. *Subject information*

Data on subjects were obtained from 19 master's degree programmes. All the information collected was used to analyse 124 translation subjects with English or Spanish as L1 or L2. As in the case of the undergraduate degree programmes, translation subjects with English or Spanish as a second or third foreign language were excluded from the analysis, as were subjects mainly involving declarative knowledge (e.g. literature and translation; translation theory and methodology), work placements included in curriculums, subjects not strictly consisting in translation (e.g. consolidation of written production in L2), subjects not included in curriculums, subjects included in curriculums but without information, and subjects mixing direct and inverse translation without separating competences, content, etc. If a centre offered translation between a given L1 and English and Spanish as L2s, both subjects were analysed.

Start of training in translation

Table 3.14. Semester in which training in translation begins

DIRECT TRANSLATION	60-credit master's degree programmes		90-credit master's degree programmes		120-credit master's degree programmes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st semester	3	60	2	100	9	81.8
2nd semester	2	40	-	-	1	9.1
3rd semester	-		-	-	1	9.1
4th semester	-		-	-	-	
INVERSE TRANSLATION	60-credit master's degree programmes		90-credit master's degree programmes		120-credit master's degree programmes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1st semester	1	100	1	100	2	28.6
2nd semester	-		-	-	3	42.8
3rd semester	-		-	-	2	28.6
4th semester	-		-	-		

With regard to when training in direct and inverse translation begins (table 3.14), training in direct translation is usually introduced straight away in the first semester, regardless of the number of credits each master's degree programme involves. There is a slight difference in the case of training in inverse translation, however, which begins in the second semester in three of the 120-ECTS credit programmes.

Progression between translation subjects

The majority of the master's degree programmes include general translation subjects (14 out of 26 programmes) and specialized translation subjects (17 programmes). In most (17) cases, however, it is impossible to tell whether the general translation subjects are taught before the specialized translation subjects.

It is also impossible to tell whether there is progression, as most of the master's degree programmes include no more than one general translation subject, be it in direct translation (11 programmes) or inverse translation

(14 programmes). There is no more than one subject in any given area of specialization either, be it in direct translation (eight programmes) or inverse translation (13 programmes).

Specific competences in subjects

While half (13 out of 26) of the master's degree programmes identify the specific competences involved in subjects, most (14) of the programmes do not have a specific competence list, making it impossible to gauge consistency. Furthermore, there is overall progression in just one case, and progression only in certain subjects in another; in the vast majority of cases (11 programmes), it is impossible to tell whether there is progression as regards specific competences in subjects.

There are just four programmes that link learning outcomes to specific competences.

General competences in subjects

Most (16) of the master's degree programmes analysed do not have a list of the general competences developed in their programme, and only five identify the general competences corresponding to each of their subjects, while another two do so for certain subjects. Progression in terms of general competences can be observed in only one programme.

There are just two programmes that link learning outcomes to general competences.

Learning objectives in subjects

While two master's degree programmes do not state their learning objectives at all, and another two only give them for some subjects, most (15) state learning objectives in every case, although the design of those objectives is inconsistent in nine programmes and homogeneous in eight. Progression in terms of learning objectives can be observed in just one programme; in 16, it is impossible to determine whether there is such progression.

Subject content

Most (14) of the master's degree programmes specify subject content. It is not linked to specific competences in five programmes; it is linked to them

in every case in four programmes, and in certain subjects only in eight. There is progression in terms of content in all subjects in five programmes, and in certain subjects only in two programmes; in 10 programmes, it is impossible to say whether there is such progression.

Text genres used in subjects

Nine master's degree programmes indicate the texts used in all their subjects, eight make no such indication, and two indicate the texts used in certain subjects only. Just four programmes specify the text genres used in most of their subjects, while five do not specify text genres at all. Five programmes link the text genres used to specific competences or learning objectives, and five do not. In general, it is impossible to tell whether there is progression (10 programmes).

3.4.4. Main analysis results

The results of this study are based on data obtained from 16 undergraduate and 26 master's degree programmes. The main conclusions that can be drawn from it are set out below.

1. With regard to curriculum information, the data obtained clearly show that most undergraduate and master's degree programmes do not list the specific competences they develop, which vary greatly in number from one programme to the next, and that learning outcomes are not specified in most cases.

    Similarly, the majority of undergraduate and master's degree programmes do not have a list of the general competences they develop, and learning outcomes for such competences do not tend to be stated. The number of general competences involved differs more between undergraduate degree programmes than between master's degree programmes.

2. Subject information was obtained from nine undergraduate and 19 master's degree programmes. As regards progression, undergraduate degree programmes usually include various general translation subjects, between which there is progression in most cases; master's degree programmes, on the other hand, do not tend to include various general translation subjects. It is not usually possible to

observe progression between subjects in a given area of speciali-
zation, be it in undergraduate or master's degree programmes, as
there are not normally various subjects of the type in question.

While most programmes identify the specific competences
developed in their subjects, it is usually the case that either there
is no list of the programme's specific competences or the specific
competences identified as being involved in the subjects are omitted
from any such list. It is generally impossible to determine whether
there is progression in terms of specific competences, and learning
outcomes do not tend to be given for them. The same applies to
general competences.

Learning objectives for subjects tend to be stated in both
undergraduate and master's degree programmes, but it is almost
always impossible to determine whether there is progression in that
respect.

The situation of the content and text genres used in subjects
is much the same in both undergraduate and master's degree pro-
grammes. In most cases, content is explicitly stated but not linked
to specific competences and it is impossible to tell whether there is
progression. Most programmes do not identify the text genres used
in their subjects; even where text genres are identified, progression
cannot be observed.

In short, there is a general failing to explicitly state the competences devel-
oped; even programmes that do identify them do not tend to give their
learning outcomes (pointing to a lack of descriptions of competences and
of established levels for them). In general, it is impossible to tell whether
there is progression where competences are concerned, and there is no con-
sistency as regards the number of them involved and their characteristics.

It is thus very clear that standardization is lacking and there are other
shortcomings in terms of describing and establishing levels for compe-
tences; the need for progress in that respect is equally evident.