CERTIFIED TRANSLATION IN THE UK: TOWARDS A STANDARD APPROACH

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Introduction: what is certified translation?

Pym et al. (2012), which is currently the broadest and most in-depth examination of the status of translation as a practice in various countries, state that certified translation represents one of three main pathways to producing translated documents which carry official authority. Whether or not this particular pathway is used depends largely on the policies in place in any given country, since translation policy internationally is a non-uniform practice.

They define certified translation as 'official documents' which are deemed acceptable to authorities due to the presence of explicit 'signals' that denote the professional competence of the translator. In this way, the translations themselves acquire the same legal authority as the original documents. Pym et al. note that these signals of translator competence often take the form of the translator's signature, a stamp or seal, mention of academic qualifications or membership of a professional organisation. The study also limits the definition of 'certified translation' to those translations which have also undergone a secondary approval from a notary or other qualified legal professional who attests to the competence of the translator and therefore the authority of the translated documents themselves. Said documents are usually, although not exclusively, used for public sector administrative processes or legal proceedings. As such, they often comprise birth/death/marriage certificates, academic qualification certificates, driving licenses, criminal records or witness statements.

The other two pathways, as defined by Pym et al., are *state authorised sworn translation* and *academically authorised sworn translation*. Both of these confer state authority upon a translator to operate in the public sector, be it by undertaking state-set exams in translation (as per the former), or by being awarded state recognition by virtue of holding certain academic qualifications in translation (as per the latter).

All three pathways fit into Stejskal's (2003) definition of professional signalling within the translation industry. He defines this as *credentialing*, with certified translation representing the *certification* method of credentialing whereby recognition of status is awarded voluntarily, and on an ad-hoc basis through signalling certain predetermined standards. State authorised sworn translation and academically authorised sworn translation represent *accreditation,* whereby official public recognition of status is awarded.

Pym et al.'s study identifies that the policy of sworn translation (be it state authorised or academically authorised) exists in the following countries:

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Malta, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

In these countries, the process of becoming a translator capable of translating documents for the public arena is clear, since well-defined steps must be taken to achieve state recognition. The fact that the United Kingdom sits outside this list is clearly worthy of more specific discussion.

Certified translation in the United Kingdom: research motivation

We have seen that Pym et al. (2012) limit their initial definition of certified translation to those translations which prove the authority of the translator through the translator's own signals and those of a notary or legal professional. However, in their individual case study into translation in the United Kingdom, they make no reference specifically to the presence of a notarial declaration as a compulsory signal of the validity of a certified translation. Moreover, they explicitly state that, often, the qualifications of the translator are not required as a means of affording a document 'certified' status. This immediately suggests that certified translation in the United Kingdom sits outside of their own standard definition of the practice.

Since Pym et al. is not a dedicated study into certified translation, but rather a country-by-country overview of the translation profession in general, touching briefly upon certified translation as one aspect, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge accumulated by Pym et al. by providing an in-depth look into the nature of certified translation in the UK.

In addition to the evidence set out by Pym et al., accounts from translation professionals in the UK, gathered from semi-structured interviews, seem to suggest that there is a general lack of standardisation within the practice of certified translation:

"We are one of the UK's leading solely legal translations companies. We experienced a period where our certified translations were being rejected, for a number of different reasons. We ended up losing a massive client over it. What happened was, we submitted our certified translation in the way that we always do; it was [then] rejected by the particular judge, [so] we resubmitted it the way he asked for, but the judge changed in the middle of the case and the next judge said 'I don't want it this way, I want done differently', resulting in the client complaining to us on the phone. It was all a bit of a mess, and no-one really seemed to know why. So, for me, there should really be a standardised procedure to safeguard the business and to ensure that we aren't letting our clients down".

- *CEO of a UK-based translation company, member of the Association of Translation Companies (ATC), June 2019*

"Unlike other countries, we don't have a system of registered sworn translators, so really the only way I know that my certified translations are ok is if I don't receive any negative comeback. Thankfully I haven't, so I assume I've been doing things right thus far, but really it's just a case of using my experience rather than any concrete guidelines."

- *Professional UK-based freelance translator and member of the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI), August 2019*

"I like to think I'm doing everything the right way, I'm experienced, a good linguist and a member of ITI, but really, I get the impression that anyone could produce a certified translation."

- *Professional UK-based freelance translator and member of the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI), August 2019*

In effect, this study will achieve consilience within translation studies (Chesterman, 2005) by examining the reality of the practice. It therefore poses the following research questions:

(1) **How do public organisations (end-users) view certified translations?**

(2) **What are certified translation practices in the United Kingdom, according to the professional stakeholders (producers) involved?**

From the above information gathered from participants in interviews, this study also proposes the following hypotheses:

(1) **There is no standardisation in how UK public sector organisations accept certified translations.**

(2) **There is no standard practice adopted by producers of certified translations in the UK.**

This study will aim to contribute to specific branches of the field of Translation Studies: since this study examines certified translation as both a process (how are certified translations produced?) and product (how are certified translations viewed by organisations?), credence is given to Holmes's seminal 'map' of translation studies, since the Pure/Descriptive branch of this map takes into account both process- and product- oriented research (Holmes, 1998/2004).

Methodology

Since this study is looking at translation process and product within the context of guidelines and standards, a context-oriented approach will be taken to methodology. Koskinen (2008) notes that translations do not take place in isolation and so this study will attempt to uncover the sociological (Marco, 2009) and, arguably, commercial (Hurtado, 2004) forces shaping certified translation practice. For this reason, case studies will be used to examine different discrete elements of certified translation practice. This method has reliable precedence in postgraduate research (Susam-Sarajeva, 2009) and will allow the study to examine the *how* and *why* (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013) of certified translation process and product.

The first will look in detail at the view taken by various public organisations on certified translation, since they are the primary consumers and requesters of the product, regardless how, or by whom translations are produced. This information has been compiled from official written sources, such as public organisations' websites, as they are available, which give an overview of how certified translations are viewed. Where written sources were not available, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests have been made to public organisations in order to elicit what standard, if any, they adhere to in the consumption of certified translations. These FOI requests have been worded identically, so as to ensure uniformity of information collection (Best and Kruger, 2009).

The second will describe the role of professional organisations as stakeholders in UK certified translation practice, using written sources – namely their websites – as the basis for presenting their positions and to what extent they influence said practice.

The third will present the state of current practice as defined by participants in semi-structured interviews. In this way, participants will be free to discuss their experiences in a way which seems natural to them, but with the aim of divulging information about professional practice that can be qualitatively compared to that of other respondents' information, through improvised questioning on the researcher's part. (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013). Participants will be representatives of translation companies, or professional freelance translators, since they are the producers of certified translations and the customer-facing stakeholders in the process.

This study takes into account ethical considerations. Since part of its aim is to uncover where deviations from certified translation process (if any) occur, measures have been taken to safeguard participants from any negative implications (Koskinen, 2008). Therefore, confidentiality has been

assured wherever possible, by removing names and anonymizing participant accounts (Koskinen, 2008).

Case Study 1:   UK public organisations

In consultation with translators and translation companies, this study has identified a non-exhaustive list of UK public organisations who act as consumers and requesters of certified translations. The fact that this study focuses on seven organisations has been deemed rational and transparent enough (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013) to delimit what is usually a huge field of around 550 UK public sector organisations, whilst still remaining representative.

(1) Home Office

The government department responsible for immigration, security and law and order. See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office

(2) HM Passport Office

A subdivision of the Home Office providing passport services to UK nationals; it also manages the General Register Office for England and Wales which holds official records of births, deaths and marriages of UK citizens. See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-passport-office

(3) HM Courts and Tribunals Service

An executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, responsible for the administration of courts, the Probate service and tribunals in England and Wales. See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-courts-and-tribunals-service

(4) National Academic Recognition and Information Centre

A national agency managed on behalf of the Department for Education, conceived as an EU initiative for comparison and recognition of qualifications across the European Union. See:

https://www.naric.org.uk/

(5) Security Industry Authority

A non-departmental public body reporting to the Home Office, responsible for regulating the UK's private security industry. See: https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk

(6) Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority

The government department responsible for maintaining a database of licensed driver and vehicle information in Great Britain. See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency

(7) General Medical Council

A public body responsible for maintaining a register of individuals licensed to practice medicine in the UK. See: https://www.gmc-uk.org/

This study has found disparate guidance available from UK authorities on the matter of how exactly a certified translation should be carried out in order to be deemed acceptable.

The following table shows the names of the organisations concerned and whether or not their website contained any guidance on how to carry out and submit a certified translation:

	Guidance available on organisation's own website
Home Office	No
HM Passport Office	No
HM Courts and Tribunals Service	No
National Academic Recognition Information Centre	No
Security Industry Authority	Yes
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority	No
General Medical Council	Yes

Since four of these public sector organisations (Home Office, HM Passport Office, HM Courts and Tribunal Service and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority) did not publish any guidance on their own websites, this study obtained the following from submission of FOI requests:

	Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted	Information supplied as a result of FOI request
Home Office	Yes	Referral to https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document
HM Passport Office	Yes	Referral to https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-documents
HM Courts and Tribunals Service	Yes	Referral to https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority	Yes	No response

The guidance available from each organisation is summarised as follows:

(1) Home Office

Referral to https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document indicates that the translator must confirm in writing that the translation is a 'true and accurate translation of the original document', along with the date of translation and the name and contact details of the translator or translation company (Gov.uk, 2019).

(2) HM Passport Office

Referral to https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-documents indicates that the translator should attach the English translation to the original document. The translator, if an individual, must belong to the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) or the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI) and, if a company, must belong to the ATC (Gov.uk, 2012).

(3) HM Courts and Tribunals Service

Referral to https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document indicates that the translator must confirm in writing that the translation is a 'true and accurate translation of the original document', along with the date of translation and the name and contact details of the translator or translation company (Gov.uk, 2019).

(4) National Academic Recognition and Information Centre

A phone discussion with the organisation's UK National Europass Centre Co-ordinator determined merely that translations of foreign documents needed to be carried out by a 'qualified translator or translation company' and that the organisation did have a recommended translation company, although the telephone respondent was unable to say which company this was. No further information could be elicited despite multiple attempts.

(5) Security Industry Authority

This authority's website states that the translation into English must be provided along with the original document. It also states that if the translation is carried out by a member of CIOL or ATC, the translation must be submitted on headed paper bearing the logo of one of the above. Alternatively, the translation should bear the ITI seal if the translator is an ITI member. The website furthermore states that translations from ATC member companies must only be carried out by those holding full or overseas membership status – affiliate or associate membership status is excluded; translations from ITI members must be done by

those holding qualified or corporate membership – associate or student level membership status is excluded; and translations from CIOL members must be done by those holding full membership (MCIL) or fellowship (FCIL) status – associate and affiliate membership status is excluded (SIA, 2019).

(6) Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority

This organisation did not respond to a Freedom of Information request and could not provide any information by phone.

(7) General Medical Council

This organisation's website states that the translation into English must be attached to the original document, and include the contact details of the translation company or individual translator. Documents must also be stamped and signed by the translation provider. Although the website does not demand that translations are carried out by an ITI, CIOL or ATC member, it does advise that clients use '*reputable commercial translation services',* and that clients check that said services bear a '*generally recognised professional accreditation'* or have '*membership with a relevant professional or trade association'.* The website then provides links to the websites of ITI, CIOL and ATC (GMC, 2019).

Interestingly, three of the seven organisations concerned fall under the jurisdiction of the Home Office: the Home Office itself, HM Passport Office and the Security Industry Authority. However, the above information clearly shows that each of these three organisations provides wholly different guidance on what constitutes an acceptable certified translation, despite the reasonable assumption that all organisations under Home Office jurisdiction would conform to the same approach. Indeed, the fact that the https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document URL is not explicitly linked to any particular public sector body on the www.gov.uk website suggests that its guidance may be applicable across the UK public sector as a whole, but further investigation into individual organisations proves that this is not the case. A complete overview of each organisation's criteria for accepting certified translations is shown visually in Appendix 2.

Case study 2: professional organisations for translators

Pym et al. (2012) see professional organisations as one of the clearest ways for a translator to signal their professional status. They explain this through two principal means:

(1) Membership criteria

Professional organisations determine who can or cannot become a member through diverse means, although Pym et al. identify that a commonality exists whereby experience and/or academic qualifications are necessary criteria. A degree in translation is not always the sole academic qualification necessary, although this is indeed the case with the Pan Cyprian Union of Graduate Translators and Interpreters. Recommendation from existing members can also be used as a criterion for entry.

(2) Longevity and size

Pym et al. note that longevity and size of professional organisations is commensurate with their prestige and standing within a country. In this manner, they explicitly identify two UK professional organisations as being significant in terms of membership: ITI, having 2800 members at the time of their study, and the Translation division of CIOL, having 2700 members. The study notes that these organisations enjoy considerable power and that membership is seen as a positive trait.

The goals - as distinct from the benefits - of professional organisations also merit closer examination: according to Wilensky (1964), one of the main goals of professionalisation is to win legal support and protection for a profession in question, through so-called 'political agitation'. Tseng (1992) notes that professional organisations representing conference interpreters in Taiwan worked to improve recognition of the profession to the extent that working with various stakeholders could influence legislation. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004) also support this notion, stating that public recognition for sign-language interpreting is one of the main traits of the profession. Pym et al. (2012) see fit to extend both Tseng's and Witter-Merithew and Johnson's context-bound definitions of professionalisation to the translation profession in general, giving credence to the link between the existence of professional organisations and the recognition of the profession by the state. From their study, one can assume that state recognition would take the form of sworn translation.

However, Pym et al. identify the United Kingdom as having the joint-second-highest number of professional organisations for translators (8) along with Croatia, after Spain (12) out of all of the EU member states. A clear paradox therefore exists which seems to run counter to long-existing theory on professionalisation, since, in the UK's case, having a high number of professional organisations does not necessarily lead to recognition of the profession by the state. This is because the UK has neither a sworn translation system nor a rigorous and consistent system of requesting and accepting translations, as demonstrated.

Although Pym et al. note that 8 professional organisations for translators exist in the UK, this study will focus on the three whose members are able to give 'certified' status to translations according to certain guidelines from the UK public sector: the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI), the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) and the Association of Translation Companies (ATC).

The Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI)

The ITI is an independent professional body for individual practising translators, interpreters and sign-language interpreters in the UK. It was founded in 1986 and at the time of this study has over 3000 members – representing an almost 7% increase in number since the time of Pym et al.'s study. As well as individual members, the organisation also has corporate members, such as academic institutions or private businesses who have a vested interest in the language services profession, either as trainers or clients (ITI, 2019).

The ITI claims to represent the highest industry standards, acting as an interface between government, business, and the general public. In the interest of these standards, the ITI publishes a Code of Professional Conduct to which members of all levels must adhere. Breach of the code can result in disciplinary measures such as a review or revocation of ITI membership. Significantly, this code outlines strict guidelines on competence, whereby translators must not endeavour to undertake work which they know is beyond their competence, either linguistically or in terms of subject specialism. In terms of translation, paragraph 3.1 of the Code states that translators must only work into their mother tongue or into a language in which they have been deemed equally competent by the ITI itself. (ITI, 2016).

These stipulations regarding professionalism are also present in the ITI's guide for consumers, entitled 'Translation: Getting it Right. A guide to buying translation.' This guide serves as the layperson's guide to purchasing translation services, and most notably includes sections on the fact that good translators will only work into their native language (with exceptions), and the importance of using subject-specialists according to the nature of the text. Furthermore, this guide stresses the

importance of proofreading and revision as a final step before sending a translated document to press. Finally, the guide emphasises the fact that a translator's credentials and examples of work done are good indicators of their competence (ITI, 2014).

The ITI website makes clear that the membership process itself is paramount to supporting quality in the industry. The ITI offers four hierarchical levels of membership, of which only the fourth, 'qualified member', grants the individual the right to use the ITI seal as a means of certifying translations (ITI, 2019).

This is the highest level of membership offered by the ITI to individuals, representing the completion of 3 years' worth of work experience in translation or interpreting. Qualified members have access to the ITI's full range of membership benefits, including use of the postnominal letters MITI, listing in the ITI's online directory of qualified linguists (searchable by the public as a way of procuring services) and access to the ITI's certification seal, for use in certifying translated documents. Qualified member status is the most difficult to achieve, with candidates needing to supply two professional references attesting to three years' worth of industry work experience, be in possession of a degree as well as completing two assessments (ITI, 2019).

The ITI's assessments for granting qualified member status are twofold: candidates are required to complete a 1000-word translation set by the ITI, as well as an online test designed to assess understanding of the Code of Conduct. The ITI stipulates that candidates undertaking the translation test view it as a professional-standard piece of work, which is designed to showcase a candidate's professional and linguistic skills, paying attention to style, quality and how meaning is translated. It is not a test of specialised subject knowledge (ITI, 2019).

Three levels of membership exist below qualified member status, in reverse hierarchical order as follows:

Associate: This membership level is offered for those translators or interpreters who have a minimum of 1 year's work experience. The membership benefits are the same as Student and Affiliate membership, although Associates are permitted to use the postnominal letters AITI to indicate their professional status and membership of ITI. Associate status is granted through supplying two professional references from previous or current employers or clients which attest to a year's worth of translation or interpreting experience.

Affiliate: This membership level is offered to those who are at the beginning of a translation or interpreting career and who therefore lack the necessary experience to access higher membership levels. The membership benefits are the same as Student membership. This membership level is granted upon supplying a professional reference (not necessarily in the field of translation) from a current or previous employer, or a reference from someone in a 'recognised profession'.

Student: Aimed at anyone studying at undergraduate or postgraduate level in any subject, this membership level offers access to ITI-run CPD events as well as access to the ITI's publication (ITI Bulletin). This membership is granted upon supplying proof of university study.

                    (ITI, 2019).

The ITI classes certified translation as one type of 'official translation'. It defines official translation as a translation which has been stamped by an authority. It also recognises 'legalised or apostilled', 'notarised' and 'sworn' as the other types of official translation. Its guidance on producing certified translations – as distinct from the other types – is as follows:

'The translator must attest that the translation is a true, complete and accurate translation of the original document. Each page of the translation should be stamped and/or initialled (by the translator and/or certifying authority), to prevent any tampering or misuse. Qualified Members can certify translations and purchase ITI Certification Seals to certify their work and confirm their membership of the Institute.' (ITI, 2019).

The Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL)

The Chartered Institute of Linguists was founded in 1910 and according to its website currently has over 7000 members. This represents around an 11% increase since the Pym et al. study which reported 6300. It is a UK based professional body representing the interest of linguists in general, whose stated aims are to provide high-quality services and to promote professional interests; to provide nationally-accredited language qualifications; to be a voice for languages and language learning in general; and to provide professional advice to bodies and organisations charged with formulating language policy. The organisation received a royal charter in 2005. The CIOL is split into three divisions, each representing a different branch of linguistic practice and operating independently in terms of the CPD and networking events that they provide: the Business,

Professions and Government division, the Interpreting division and the Translation division. For the purposes of this study, only the Translation division will be discussed here (CIOL, 2019).

Similarly to the ITI, CIOL operates a Code of Professional Conduct to which members must adhere. Paragraph 2 of this Code states that members must work within the limits of their linguistic competence, which – with some exceptions – largely means working into one's mother tongue. Paragraph 3 of the Code also makes stipulations on subject competence, limiting members to working only with subject matter in which they are specialist. CIOL members believed to be in breach of the Code can be subject to investigation, under the CIOL's Investigation and Conduct Procedures. Consequences for being found in breach of the Code can range from reminding members of best practice, to complete revocation of membership and publication of the outcome (CIOL, 2017).

CIOL is the sole provider of the Diploma in Translation exam, an OFQUAL-recognised qualification in translation pitched at postgraduate level. The qualification is designed to allow individuals to practise as translators, and awards the postnominals DipTrans to qualification holders. This is in parallel to the UK's system of university-led Master's degree programmes specifically in Translation, which also afford 'qualified' status to translators. The Diploma itself is arranged into three units, each of which must be passed by the examinee. The units consist of a translation of a general text into the candidate's target language, followed by translation of two 'semi-specialist' texts into the target language. Candidates have some flexibility in the choice of subject specialisms available. The Diploma handbook states that in order to pass, candidates' performance must be of a professional standard, i.e. that deemed necessary by the market. This takes into account functional accuracy, as well as stylistic appropriateness and the extent to which it successfully conveys meaning and tone from one language to another. The pass mark for the exam is 60%, with Distinction, Merit and Pass grade boundaries demarcated. In order to be eligible for the exam, candidates must possess either a university degree in the target language, or extensive and demonstrable skill in the target language acquired through alternative means. Candidates are also required to be members of CIOL at IOLET level (CIOL, 2017).

In terms of membership, CIOL offers 6 grades, three of which it classifies as 'pre-professional' and three of which it classifies as 'professional'. Unlike the ITI, CIOL makes no stipulations about which members can or cannot certify a translation in its name, as all members are able to access the CIOL's webpage which gives guidance on certified translation and offers a downloadable template as a declaration of authority. It is significant to note that CIOL does not issue a stamp or seal for this process. Rather, its guidance suggests those holding Chartered Linguist status commission the

creation of their own personal seals. CIOL states that translations can be 'self-certified' by practising translators, but states that this is often required to be a member of a professional organisation (such as CIOL itself) according to certain guidelines. CIOL also suggests downloading the members' logo to add to the declaration as an extra signal of authority. The organisation also recommends fixing the source text, translated text and declaration together in hard copy (CIOL, 2019).

Its pre-professional membership grades are as follows:

Student affiliate: This membership level is aimed at those studying a foreign language at undergraduate level, or a language-related specialism such as translation or interpreting at postgraduate level. Student affiliate membership allows access to all of CIOL's division-specific CPD and networking events, subscription to the CIOL's journal *The Linguist*, career coaching services and a CIOL banner to display on a professional website or email signature.

IOLET affiliate: This membership level is aimed at those undertaking CIOL's own accredited language qualifications such as the Diploma in Translation or the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting. Its benefits are the same as Student affiliate membership except it also offers access to preparatory material related to the CIOL qualifications such as past papers and examiners' commentaries.

Career affiliate: Career affiliate status is aimed at those looking to work professionally as linguists who already hold the necessary qualifications (such as an undergraduate language qualification or postgraduate translation qualification) or who have up to 3 years' work experience using their target language professionally in lieu of a university qualification. Career affiliate members have access to some of the same benefits as professional members, such as insurance, accounting and legal support, as well as those benefits enjoyed by student and IOLET affiliate members.

The professional membership grades are as follows:

Associate: Associates are required to hold the same professional qualifications as career affiliates, as well as being required to have a minimum of 1 year's professional experience at using the target language(s). IOLET affiliate members are eligible for Associate status upon completing their CIOL qualification. CIOL will also consider for Associate status those not holding

university qualifications but having had at least 3 years' work experience using the target language(s). Associates are allowed to use the postnominal letters ACIL as well as enjoying the same benefits as Career affiliate members.

Member: Members are required to have the same professional qualifications as Associates, as well as being required to have a minimum of 3 years' professional experience at using the target language(s), dropping to 2 years for holders of the Diploma in Translation or a postgraduate qualification. CIOL will also consider for Associate status those not holding university qualifications but having had at least 5 years' work experience using the target language(s). Members are allowed to use the postnominals MCIL. Members enjoy the same benefits as Associates, with the addition of being able to access the CIOL legal helpline and to apply to become a Chartered Linguist (see below).

Fellow: Fellows are required to have the same professional qualifications as Associates, as well as being required to have a minimum of 5 years' professional experience at using the target language(s). To achieve Fellowship, candidates are also required to evidence career progression since their date of admission to CIOL, as well as to evidence a significant contribution the profession or the world of languages in general, such as longstanding professional seniority, promotional or outreach activities or published works. Fellows are allowed to use the postnominals FCIL. Fellows enjoy the same benefits as Members, and can also apply to become a Chartered Linguist.

(CIOL, 2018).

Chartered Linguist status is an additional status awarded by CIOL to Members and Fellows. It is a sign of additional professional recognition and Chartered Linguists are allowed to use the postnominals CL. Candidates must hold a relevant language qualification (as per the above membership grades) and be able to evidence at least 5 years' worth of work experience using the target language(s). Candidates must also be able to evidence 30 hours of CPD over the preceding 2 years, as well as a 12-month plan for future CPD and a reflective journal (CIOL, 2018).

The Association of Translation Companies (ATC)

Unlike the ITI and CIOL, the Association of Translation Companies (ATC) does not represent individual language professionals but rather companies. It was founded in 1976 in order to promote quality and standards amongst the translation industry. It currently numbers over 150 member companies (ATC, 2019). The ATC acts as a lobbying voice to government concerning the translation profession and the state of languages in the UK in general (ATC, 2019). The ATC was at the forefront of the creation of EN15038, a Europe-wide standard for translation services, and is now the awarding body of various ISO standards in the translation industry. The most notable of these is ISO17100, introduced in 2015, relating to industry standards in translation service provision (ATC, 2019).

This ISO is the current international standard for translator competence and qualifications (ISO, 2015) which all Language Service Providers adhering to said standard must ensure that translators have. This standard sets out certain requirements on the part of the translator or translation company, for instance that the translator should be certified by a government body, that the quality of the translation is dependent upon co-operation between translator and client, that the translation should be subject to revision/proofreading, and that a process for handling client feedback is necessary in order to continually improve standards (Pich & Johnson, 2014).

The ATC also promotes language-industry research, CPD for companies and hosts a variety of networking events throughout the year. The most well-known of these is the Language Industry Summit (ATC, 2019).

The ATC operates a Code of Conduct, much like the ITI and CIOL, to which company members must adhere. This Code of Conduct states that members must only provide translations which have been prepared by competent individuals, and must make every effort to proofread translations before issuing them to a client, in order to avoid errors (ATC, 2019).

Becoming a member of the ATC requires a company to meet stringent entrance criteria that take into account financial, quality and service level requirements. In addition to adhering to the Code of Conduct, membership candidates must provide proof that at least 65% of their core business is that of translation, supported by 2 years' worth of accounting history, professional indemnity insurance, 2 client references and 2 supplier references and a county court declaration. In order to assess quality, membership candidates must also hold a relevant ISO certification (such as the aforementioned 17100) or be able to prove that their company has rigorous quality control procedures evidenced through other means: a corporate statement, translator competence

assessments, or an internal quality control process. Fees for becoming a member of the ATC vary depending on the member company's annual turnover, and range from £339.99 plus VAT to £1039.99 plus VAT (ATC, 2019).

The ATC provides member companies with a stamp featuring the company's name and membership number which can be used as a means of signalling authority to carry out certified translations (ATC, 2019).

Case study 3: Current professional practices

This study has interviewed leaders of four ATC-member translation companies in the UK as well as 5 freelance professional translators, who responded to an appeal for participants to share their experiences. Through semi-structured interviews of participants, this study has found both similarities and differences in the approaches taken to certified translation by both companies and individuals.

Translation companies

Participant 1

This participant is the Managing Director of a translation company based in the south of England whose main business is legal translation, although other services, such as financial translation, transcription and provision of interpreters are also offered. The company is a member of the ATC and regularly uses this stamp on certified translations. This company became aware of lack of standardisation in the practice of certified translation after having the same translation rejected multiple times over the course of a court case, whose presiding judge changed and consequently changed the requirements he demanded of the translation. As such, the company lost the client in question due to the client's negative perception of the translation. The fact that the translation bore the ATC stamp seemed to have no bearing on the judge's decision.

The company has always operated a system of internal guidelines for managing certified translation, both before and after the problem in question. The CEO is personally responsible for signing certified translations and an in-house template is used to ensure that the same declaration of authority is applied to each translation. The company expects the client to know which 'level' of translation is needed for their particular case, be it certified, notarised or apostilled. This avoids undue responsibility for the success or failure of the translation falling on the company.

The participant notes that in the past, translations have been rejected because the end-user has requested that the ATC stamp be applied to the source document, although since the company deals only in translation, the participant states that this is unreasonable as they have no way of checking the veracity of the source document.

The company does not offer revision or proofreading of translations as standard, as this is service bears an additional cost which the client will not necessarily want.

The company always uses subject-specialist translators both in-house and freelance. Only translators with 5 years' experience are used for translation jobs.

The company possesses ISO9001 certification which attests to a rigorous and consistent general quality management system (ISO, 2015).

Participant 2

This participant is the Operations Director of a translation company based in London. This company offers a range of language services, principally translation, transcreation, localisation and editing. The company uses a set of internal guidelines to ensure that a standard process is followed when producing translations and is ISO9001 accredited. The company also works closely in alignment with ISO17100 which specifically addresses quality standards in translation. The company is a member of the ATC but does not currently use the ATC stamp for certified translations due to lack of familiarity with the stamp's authority. Rather, they use a twofold certification system whereby the individual freelance translator recruited to a job supplies a declaration of competence (stating qualifications, experience, subject specialisms and membership of professional organisations) which is seconded by a corporate declaration stating that the freelancer has been recruited in conformance with the company's vendor management system and therefore in conformance with ISO9001 and ISO17100. An agency stamp with their own corporate name is then applied. The company expects clients to know which level of certification is required for their translation project, for example if notarisation is needed above and beyond the standard certification. The company has not experienced any certified translations having been rejected by the client or end-user.

The company only ever employs subject-specialist translators who have at least three years' experience. Only freelance translators are used as no in-house translators are currently employed.

The company does not offer revision or proofreading of translations as standard, as this is service bears an additional cost which the client will not necessarily want.

Participant 3

This participant is the Managing Director of a translation company based in Yorkshire. The company's business is split roughly equally between legal translation and commercial translation (translation of marketing/business material, financial documents, etc.). The company is a member of the ATC and provides declarations of authenticity bearing the ATC stamp when submitting certified translations. This company requires the client to state the level of certification necessary for the translation project – i.e. whether the ATC stamp is enough or if further certification such as apostille or notarisation is necessary. The company uses a network of freelance professional translators, who must be able to attest to three years' worth of experience as well as being the holders of a relevant postgraduate qualification in translation. Only subject-specialist translators are used and are

allocated to projects accordingly. In this way, the company is in conformance with ISO9001 quality standards in terms of recruitment.

The company does not provide proofreading or revision of translation as standard as this service bears an additional optional cost to the client.

Participant 4

This participant is the Managing Director of a translation company based in the West Midlands. The company employs both in-house and freelance staff who are recruited according to the requirements of ISO17100, using an in-house procedure which involves aspiring translators completing a translation test. The translation company's work ranges from legal to financial to scientific translations, and only subject-specialist translators are used according to the requirements of each project. The typical method of certifying translations is by declaration of authority bearing the company's ATC stamp, although customers have sometimes requested higher levels of certification, such as apostille or notarised translations. A revision/proofreading process is carried out as standard on all translations which must be signed off in-house before they can be supplied to the client as a finished product. The company reports one instance of having had a translation rejected by a client due to a misunderstanding about the level of certification that was needed on the particular project. Since then, the company reports having taken steps to make sure information about certification levels is more clearly communicated to the client before commencing a translation, so that the customer is able to make an informed decision about which level of certification is necessary.

Results

Through the above participant interviews, this study has identified four aspects of the certified translation process which appear to be the most salient: (1) use of the ATC stamp with a declaration of competence (2) Adherence to ISO quality standards (9001 and/or 17100) in recruitment and quality assurance (3) use of subject-specialist translators for appropriate projects, and (4) proofreading or revising of work before issue to the customer. Although only one out of the four surveyed stated that proofreading was carried out as standard, this study has identified it as a significant step, since it is explicitly mentioned in the ATC Code of Conduct. The below table shows these results in a comparative format:

	ATC stamp & declaration used unless otherwise requested	Adherence to ISO standards (9001 and/or 17100)	Only subject-specialist translators used	Proofreading/revision as standard
Participant 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Participant 2	No	Yes	Yes	No
Participant 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Participant 4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Professional freelance translators

Participant 1

This participant is an ITI member who has worked as a freelance German to English translator for around 30 years, after having worked in-house as a translator for private companies. The majority of this participant's freelance translation work comprises patent translation. This participant has undertaken certified translation work for a client who was a German doctor wishing to register with the GMC to practise in the UK. Upon being approached by the client, this participant stated at the outset not to be a subject specialist, but the client accepted this and the participant was offered an initial translation project consisting of two pages of qualification certificates. The participant certified these with a declaration of competence (in line with the GMC online guidelines) and the ITI seal. The client was satisfied and so more translation work was offered, this time a description of the doctor's specialisms. This contained considerably more technical vocabulary but knowing that the translator was not a subject specialist, the doctor agreed to assist with vocabulary. These translations were again certified with a declaration of competence (in line with the GMC online guidelines) and the ITI seal. The doctor again offered further translation work, this time comprising detailed case studies with technical vocabulary and many abbreviations and acronyms. The doctor again assisted in this. These translations were certified with a declaration of competence (in line with the GMC online guidelines) and the ITI seal. In these three instances, the participant stated that revision/proofreading by a fellow translator were not necessary as the client had already had sufficient input into the translation process to render the product accurate. However, the participant has stated that in normal circumstances they would request revision/proofreading from a fellow translation professional.

Participant 2

This participant is an ITI member who works as a German and French to English translator, primarily for the patent industry on behalf of intellectual property companies. The participant does not usually consult any guidelines on certified translation beyond those given by the client. These usually consist of a request for a statement of competency accompanied by a professional seal, which in this case is the ITI seal. The participant has stated that they do not usually request revision/proofreading as the client has always been happy with the work done.

Participant 3

This participant is an ITI member working as a French to English translator and has undertaken one certified translation project, which was for a French marriage certificate. The participant used the ITI seal accompanied by a declaration of competence. The participant states that they always have translations proofread/revised as standard before issuing them to the client.

Participant 4

This participant is an ITI member working as a bidirectional translator between Greek and English. The participant undertakes varied work, including translations of birth/death/marriage certificates, documents for use by the DVLA or Passport Office, deeds to property, or legal case files for use in court proceedings. The participant notes that translation agencies and law firms always state clearly what the requirements are for producing a certified translation in each case, but individual clients often do not know. As standard, this participant uses the ITI seal and a declaration of competence, and always offers a quote for revision/proofreading. This is not always accepted by the client, however.

Participant 5

This participant is an ITI member working as a translator of French and German to English. The translator is a legal specialist. As such, most of their translation work is in the legal field for documents most likely being used in court cases. The participant only works via agencies, and has never received any feedback on translations done. The participant uses the ITI seal and a declaration of competence as standard practice. The participant states that they do not have revision/proofreading carried out as standard on translations before issuing them to the client.

Results

The above participant interviews indicate that membership of a professional body seems to be standard practice amongst the professional freelance interpreters in question, namely the ITI. This

affords the authority to apply the ITI seal to certified translations along with a declaration of professional competence, which is again done as standard by all participants. However, variation seems to exist in the likelihood of a professional freelance translator carrying out revision/proofreading as standard, as well as in whether or not the translator only ever accepts jobs which align with their specialism (if any). This is shown visually in the below table:

	Membership of professional body (ITI, CIOL)	Use of official seal & declaration of competence	Only translates in specialist field	Proofreading/revision done as standard
Participant 1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Participant 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Participant 3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Participant 4	Yes	Yes	No	No
Participant 5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Conclusion

This study has presented three case studies, all of which are relevant in describing the landscape of certified translation practice in the UK. However, beyond a merely descriptive account, this study proves the hypotheses posited in Chapter 2 that there is indeed no standardisation in the acceptance of certified translation by UK public sector organisations, nor in the approaches taken by professional translators in producing certified translations. This has been demonstrated through the vastly divergent criteria that UK public sector organisations use in order to assess the 'acceptability' of certified translations submitted to them for use, as well as by the accounts of translation professionals who differ in their approaches, particularly towards revision or tackling subjects in which they are non-specialist. However, it should be noted that certain trends are evident in the practices adopted by translation professionals - namely membership of professional organisations and use of stamps and declarations of competence - so differences in practice amongst this group are not as marked as amongst public organisations. Moreover, professional organisations in the UK which exist for the benefit of translators also differ in the guidance that they offer, leading to inconsistent approaches on multiple fronts: that of the UK public sector, that of professional organisations and that of translation professionals.

It is unsurprising that translation professionals do not seem to take a uniform approach to producing certified translations, since only disparate information is available to them from other market sources (i.e. the UK public sector and professional organisations). No mention is made by UK public sector organisations of the need for translators to specialise or to show proof of having carried out revision on certified translations. Moreover, professional organisations differ in the approach that they take to proofreading/revision, with some placing more of an emphasis upon this stage of the translation process than others. It is therefore equally unsurprising that UK public sector organisations do not insist on this, since its significance is diminished by the non-uniform approach of professional organisations as stakeholders in the certified translation process. The lack of standardisation seen as a whole is therefore cyclical, and reminiscent of the *market disorder* that Pym et al. (2012) refer to when discussing how the implications of inefficient professional signalling can cause deterioration in the translation industry in general.

The implications of this on the UK translation industry are potentially significant, particularly since Pym et al. identify that certified translations of official documents, by nature, acquire the same legal status as the originals. This implies that theoretically, translations carried out without prescribed quality checks could feature errors that hinder the process of public administration, or, even worse, have grave consequences for clients who are reliant upon said translations in legal or commercial contexts (Byrne, 2007). Since subject-specialist translators have a large amount of subject

knowledge (Galinski & Budin, 1993), similar risks are posed by translators operating outside of their declared specialisms, since lack of familiarity with any given subject matter could increase the likelihood of errors. The situation is aggravated by the https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document website, which makes no mention of professional signals being necessary to have a translation accepted by the UK public sector. In this sense, the door is open to amateur translators competing alongside qualified peers, diluting the status and credibility of professional translators, and by extension, their pay and recognition.

It is crucial, however, to highlight the fact that lack of standardisation largely absolves professional translators of any malpractice in reality, since practitioners can only work according to the norms and standards available to them. Presented with different standards, one can forgive a professional translator for adhering more closely to one than another, or for attempting to accommodate both by relaxing their approach somewhat.

How, then, to proceed? House (1997) notes that different views of translation lead to different understandings of quality and quality assessment. In many ways, this is a prescient description of Pym et al.'s 2012 description of market disorder, since lack of industry standardisation leads to multiple competing approaches with higher or lower thresholds of translation quality acceptability, as proven. This study therefore suggests a bilateral approach to resetting the market, on the part of translation companies and individuals, as a way towards standardisation, based on the following recommendations:

(1) Revision/proofreading is offered as standard by translation companies and freelance professionals, with the customer ultimately deciding whether or not to purchase this service.

(2) Professional organisations adopt a uniform approach to stipulations on revision/proofreading.

(3) Translators adhere, where possible, to subject specialisms, signalling to clients any instances where they may be at risk of operating outside their area(s) of expertise.

(4) Translation companies use the stamp or seal of a professional organisation in all cases, so as to increase the market visibility of this method of signalling. This would then be in line with the practice adopted by individual professional translators, all of whom reported using a stamp or seal in this study.

(5) Professional organisations increase their lobbying activity, so as to better inform UK public sector organisations of the importance of professional standards in certified translation.

The question of lobbying is particularly significant, since Pym et al. (2012) note that the UK has the second largest number of professional organisations for translators but no system of state-authorised sworn translation. This obvious paradox is worth further investigation, but it suggests that the power of professional organisations as drivers of industry change in the UK is not as strong as it could be, or at least is unrelated to the number of organisations in existence. Professional organisations could prove themselves active stakeholders in the shaping of public policy (Rixon, 2010) on certified translation by, as a first step, lobbying for a change in the https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document website so that it reflects the more stringent quality criteria on certified translation set out in the SIA or GMC website. Whilst the UK adopting a complete system of sworn translation may be an overly ambitious move, improvement and uniformity in current public sector guidance on certified translation would represent a good first step in resetting the market in favour of the professional, and consequently in favour of quality.

Limitations and suggestions for further study

This study has been limited due to the relatively small number of public sector organisations and professional freelance interpreters surveyed. Further study, particularly at PhD level, would do well to survey every UK public sector organisation to create a universal map of the public sector's -approach to certified translation, coupled with a larger scale study of professional practice. Further study could also look at the specific role that professional organisations for translators play in shaping government policy.

Further study could also examine the professional status (income, perception by public organisations or clients, etc.) of translators in countries with a sworn translation system, as one could hypothesize that sworn translators in these countries enjoy, by all metrics, higher professional status (potentially on a par with other state-qualified professionals such as teachers) than translators in countries such as the UK which do not enforce such a system.

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Appendix 1: wording of FOI request made to UK public sector organisations

Hello

My name is David Gray and I am heading up a research project at Leeds University into the use of certified translations within the UK public sector.

The project aims to get a nationwide picture of the criteria that UK public sector organisations use to either accept or reject certified translations of foreign documents submitted by members of the public for administrative purposes.

Please could you assist me with an answer to the following:

If a member of the public had, for any reason, to submit a document to your organisation that was written in a language other than English (for example, a birth certificate of someone born in France and written in French), what (if any) standards would you expect the translation of the document to conform to?

For example, would you expect the translation to be certified in some way? If so, are there any more specific criteria? For example, should the certified translation be carried out by a particular agency or individual, and what qualifications, and proof of qualifications, should that agency or individual have?

Does the translation need to conform to any pre-existing standards, such as those laid out by the Association of Translation Companies (ATC) or the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI)?

Does the translation need to conform to any specific layout requirements, i.e. a particular size of paper, font size, etc?

Is there anyone within your organisation specifically responsible for determining what does and does not constitute an 'acceptable' translation? Or is this left up to whichever member of staff deals with the case in question? Are all members of staff aware of/trained in the criteria for accepting or rejecting a translated document?

The reason for this research project is that many UK translation companies have stated that certified translations are being rejected by UK public sector organisations for reasons unknown, so therefore to have a nationwide picture of standards would help translations companies produce better-conforming translations with less chance of rejection.

	Translator/translation company must be a member of a professional body (ITI, CIOL, ATC)	If CIOL or ATC member, translation must be presented on headed paper showing CIOL or ATC logo	Declaration of authority must be provided	Translation attached to original document	Contact details of translator/translation company must be included	Stamp/seal must be present	Signature of translator must be present	Date of translation must be present
Home Office	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
HM Passport Office	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
HM Courts & Tribunals Service	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
National Academic Recognition Information Centre	Unclear – translator must be 'qualified'	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Security Industry Authority	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
General Medical Council	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Appendix 2: comparative table of criteria used by UK public organisations for accepting certified translation