

<https://helda.helsinki.fi>

Seek and Thou Shalt Learn : Information Seeking and Language Learning in Minority Language Translation

Kuusi, Päivi

Cambridge Scholars Publishing
2019

Kuusi , P , Koskinen , K & Riionheimo , H 2019 , Seek and Thou Shalt Learn : Information Seeking and Language Learning in Minority Language Translation . in M Koletnik & N Froeliger (eds) , Translation and Language Teaching : Continuing the Dialogue . 1 edn , Cambridge Scholars Publishing , Newcastle upon Tyne , pp. 39-58 .

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/354759>

unspecified
acceptedVersion

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository.

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.

This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Please cite the original version.

CHAPTER NUMBER

SEEK AND THOU SHALT LEARN: INFORMATION SEEKING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN MINORITY LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

PÄIVI KUUSI, KAISA KOSKINEN AND HELKA RIIONHEIMO

1. Introduction

The University of Eastern Finland has been given a national responsibility to maintain and protect the endangered minority language of Karelian.¹ One practical implementation of this task is the currently on-going four-year language revitalisation project (2015–2018) *Kiännä* (“Translation, revitalisation and the endangered Karelian language”), in which speakers and learners of Karelian dialects from Finland and Russia are given seminars and workshops on professional translation skills and competences. The bulk of translations into Karelian has been produced by volunteer language activists with little or no translator training. By offering this training, the project aims to support revitalisation by giving these volunteer translators advanced translation competences and by empowering Karelian speakers to produce and to publish texts in translation (<http://kianna-hanke.blogspot.fi/>). One special characteristic of teaching translation into an endangered language such as Karelian is that a considerable part of the students are language learners or “new speakers” (advanced language learners who are recognized as Karelian speakers by the community; for a discussion on the notion of new speakers, see e.g. O’Rourke, Pujolar, and Ramallo 2015, 1). Therefore,

¹ In Finland, Karelian can be studied at university level only at the University of Eastern Finland, where Karelian language and culture is available as a minor subject. For details, see <http://www.uef.fi/en/web/hum/karjalan-kieli-ja-kulttuuri>.

the seminars also serve language learning and language maintenance purposes.

A number of competing competence models have been produced in Translation Studies. Regardless of differences in terminology and level of detail, they all agree on seeing translation as more than a linguistic procedure, and emphasising the various sub-competences beyond language skills that a competent professional translator needs to possess (Hurtado Albir and Alves 2009). This line of thinking also underlies the *Kiännä* seminar format: seminar contents have been designed to support the development of translators' meta-level competences. Significantly for our current topic, specific language learning components have not been included in the curriculum. In this chapter we focus on information seeking skills. Here, we turn the tables. Rather than looking at data collected from information-seeking exercises to see how competently the seminar participants were able to execute the information-seeking tasks, we instead ask whether and in which ways these tasks can be seen to support their language learning as well.

This aspect of information seeking is not often discussed in translator education literature where information seeking tends to be seen as a non-linguistic professional competence, beyond language competence in the working languages. For example, the influential PACTE group places information seeking within what they call “instrumental sub-competence” and defines it as “knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and information technologies applied to translation” (PACTE 2005, 610). Professional use of documentation sources such as dictionaries, term bases and parallel corpora as well as the technological tools designed to aid working with these sources require technical know-how and advanced skills in information literacy; in translator training, these aspects are given prominence over issues of language competence related to information seeking.

In this paper, we argue that information-seeking tasks can also support language learning in many ways, both in professional translator education and in the context of volunteer translation for minority language revitalisation such as in the case of the *Kiännä* project. Prototypically, information-seeking tasks can improve one's lexicon and help in the acquisition of new phraseology (i.e., seeking and finding the “correct” words). In the context of minority language translation with limited diffusion and reduced domains, information seeking is, however, rarely a process of easy retrieval, or a straightforward matter of locating authoritative sources and using the most apt terminology, since such pre-existing established vocabulary often

does not exist.² Instead, the information-seeking process often leads to unsatisfactory results, forcing the seeker to adopt other strategies for solving the translation problem at hand. Paraphrasing, adopting loanwords or forming new words from existing ones are some of the options available. Even though sometimes thought of as “poor substitutes” in the absence of the “real” word,³ these strategies have the potential to enhance language learning by prompting learners to take a more active stance in their own learning process.

We postulate that because of these challenges, minority language translation contexts offer a good environment for studying the potential language learning benefits of information-seeking tasks. In this chapter, we will approach the data gathered from the *Kiännä* translation seminars from the viewpoint of language learning. The data consists of the participants’ reflections on their translation and information-seeking process during the first year of the seminar (fall 2015–spring 2016). We expect to find evidence of at least some learners acquiring deeper levels of learning, using several authentic sources critically and pondering on the principles of establishing equivalence relationships and, when necessary, even creating new vocabulary, i.e. moving from passive reception to active creation of linguistic knowledge.

2. Previous research into information seeking

The competence directly related to information seeking—variously labeled as “documentary competence”, “research competence”, “information competence”, “instrumental competence”, “tools and research competence”, (and probably a number of other names)—has widely been identified as a key competence for translators (e.g., Enriquez Raido 2011, 61; Göpferich 2009, 21; Hurtado Albir and Alves 2009, 66; PACTE 2005, 610). The various competence models emphasise that this competence includes but also goes beyond the routine use of translation tools and established resources, encompassing locating and evaluating language and knowledge resources, identifying translation problems and making adequate decisions

² We also opt for the term “information seeking” over the competing term “information retrieval” to emphasise that the seeker does not always find.

³ For example, Cabré (2010, 364) notes that neologisms “are used when all the possibilities of finding a *real* term have been exhausted” (emphasis original).

about the use of those resources (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011, 194). The central role of this competence is also evidenced by its being included in practice-oriented competence listings guiding training curricula in translator training institutions (such as the EMT network), and by translators' own testimonies of its relevance for their everyday work. For example, in a survey of Finnish professional translators' attitudes towards various technical skills, the respondents gave information retrieval skills an average of 4.93 points out of 5 in terms of importance (Mikhailov and Suppanen 2013, 27).

Considering this global agreement about the centrality of this competence, research efforts in Translation Studies have been relatively scarce. This gap has been identified by a number of other scholars as well (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011, 194; Enriques Raido 2014). The gap is made even wider by the rapid changes in the field of translation; for example, research done in the 1990s, focusing on printed dictionaries and reference materials is rendered largely irrelevant in the contemporary scene of digitalised resources. Since change is still ongoing, any results focusing on search technologies run the risk of soon having historical value only, as tools, resources and work processes evolve. Digitalisation has shifted research attention towards web searching competences, and this is also the focus of the most extended research effort in information seeking so far (Enriques Raido 2014). The current digitalised environment has also led to emphasising the technological aspects of information-seeking, gearing research focus toward listings of the information-seeking tools in use rather than toward the abilities to critically assess and strategically use the information found (e.g. Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011). The internet era has, however, also brought forward the issue of information overload, and the resulting necessity to be able to select key information strategically and efficiently (Pinto et al. 2014, 90).

The most widely applied avenue for research so far focuses on the training context, on studying the level of information competence acquired by particular sets of students or discussing best practices in teaching this competence. In many of these studies, the theoretical framework and often even some authors in the research team come from information science. Among the most extended of such projects is that of Maria Pinto and Dora Sales, who have published numerous articles together on the relevance of information science to translation students (e.g. Pinto and Sales 2008; Pinto et al 2014). The training context is obviously relevant for our purposes as well, but although competences related to information literacy are of immediate importance to minority language translators, the skill levels, tools and resources available to trainee translators in the major languages for which

most university programmes cater are so widely different from the reality of Karelian translators that parallels are not easily drawn. The research focus on competences such as knowledge management skills (Pinto et al. 2014) is of relevance to volunteer activist translators as well, but the results are not easy to combine with our present interest in language learning. Another current emphasis, on efficiency and time management (e.g. Daems et al. 2016), more directly aimed at catering to the needs of the translation industry, is less immediately relevant for language activists, who are not operating within the context of earning their living or being pressed for fast delivery,.

Research on various competences, their acquisition, development and expertise, has been a longstanding interest of process studies. One branch of research into competences related to information seeking comes from within this research tradition. Contemporary process studies methodology, such as screen monitoring and eye-tracking, has been used to explore what kinds of searches participants make, how fast and efficiently these searches are executed and how successful the results are, often comparing students and professionals, or novices and experts (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011, 205-07). In some of these studies, occasional language learning issues are dealt with implicitly. For example, a comparative study of the consultation processes among novice (student) translators and professionals (Prassl 2011) showed that students consulted dictionaries far more often than professionals. One can assume that among explanations for this difference, is that professionals had already learned the vocabulary and phraseology the students needed to seek. Indeed, research competence can be seen as a compensatory competence, compensating for deficiencies in other areas such as subject knowledge or linguistic knowledge (Kumpulainen 2016, 63-64). A logical next step is to assume that information-seeking tasks fill these lacunae in knowledge and in so doing contribute to learning. How this learning happens is not necessarily straightforward. Kumpulainen (ibid.) also emphasises that translators' knowledge related to an information search contributes only indirectly to interlingual text production, through a conscious decision process over what is needed in a particular situation, how it can be obtained and what the translator is to do with the results.

Similar to what we found in the case of researching translator training, in the area of second-language acquisition, a common approach is to perceive information literacy as a sub-competence of its own, and studies report results on teaching innovations or aim to measure the level of students' information seeking skills (e.g. Rosell-Aguilar 2004, Peltari and Mutta 2014). When discussed in connection with a particular area of linguistic or textual competence, information literacy is often linked with researching the Internet for essay writing, and many studies are also written from the perspective

of the librarian working in liaison with teachers. It proved difficult to find previous studies on the benefits of information seeking tasks on language learning on a more general level.

In the context of second language acquisition, Mutta et al. (2014) conducted research on the differences in information seeking competence and digital literacy between one's L1 and L2. Their findings suggest three different personalities, the first group prone to very straightforward queries, the second willing and able to use advanced search strategies, and the third willing to trust their intuition as much as possible (238). Similar seeker profiles were detected in another study investigating L2 learners of French and Spanish (Pelttari and Mutta 2014, 168–69). Significantly for our purposes, in both studies the participants were shown to use multilingual search strategies, exploiting their language skills to verify their findings (Mutta et al. 2014, 240; Pelttari and Mutta 2014, 170–71).

In the study by Mutta et al. (2014, 228) and Pelttari and Mutta (2014, 159) on language students, information literacy was divided into two dimensions: critical and competent use of search tools, on the one hand, and more language-related, textual or semiotic skills, on the other. In Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow's study (2011), targeting translators in particular, information literacy was divided into solving linguistic and extra-linguistic problems. The emphasis is different, but both divisions implicitly contain the element of language learning: the translator consults resources to find the words and expressions they do not yet possess. It has therefore been a disappointment for us that we have been unable to find previous studies that would explicitly study translators' language learning by and through information seeking. This gap we aim to start filling in this chapter. We hope to invite others to explore this area of overlap between information literacy and language learning.

3. The translation seminar for Karelian

Karelian is a critically endangered Finno-Ugric language closely related to Finnish. It is also a transnational language, with speakers residing both in Finland and in Russia. In Finland, the speakers live scattered among the majority population, after having been resettled as the Eastern parts of Finland were lost to Russia in the Second World War. On the Russian side of the border, most speakers live in the Republic of Karelia, neighbouring the Finnish border, with a smaller population in Tver Oblast. The speakers are thus divided into two separate groups by the Finnish-Russian state border, and the subdivision of the language into areal varieties (Olonets Karelian

and Karelian Proper, the latter of which is further divided into North and South Karelian⁴) further enhances the fragmentation. Exact information on speakers is impossible to obtain, but some 11,000 speakers of Karelian have been estimated to live in Finland and some 25,000 in Russia (Laakso et al. 2016, 108; Karjalainen et al. 2013, 3). All speakers are in practice bilingual, and for the majority, Karelian is a heritage language used mainly in the private sphere.

Over the course of time, Karelian has been subjected to suppression for political and cultural reasons, but since the late 1980s and the 1990s, efforts have been made to revitalise it (Karjalainen et al. 2013, 37, 59). One notable result of revitalisation is the standardisation of several Karelian varieties, resulting in the emergence of a literary standard for Olonets Karelian and North Karelian (and to some extent to Tver Karelian). New vocabulary is being published in some dictionaries, but the dominant language barrier divides the Karelians: Russian-Karelian dictionaries are unavailable for those Finnish Karelians who do not understand Russian and vice versa. Modern vocabulary is also introduced through the weekly newspaper *Oma Mua* and a few other regular publications, bulletins, radio programs and television broadcasts in Karelian (for more details, see Iso-Ahola 2017, 166–68). The online visibility of Karelian is feeble, and official web resources in particular, such as government websites, are non-existent (Moshnikov 2016, 304–05). Some dictionaries or glossaries have been published online, but most of these are only available in print. In sum, the information overload that complicates information seeking in major languages is nowhere to be seen.

Between 2015 and 2018, the University of Eastern Finland hosted a language revitalisation project, *Kiännä* “Translation, revitalisation and the endangered Karelian language,” funded by a private foundation. The project aims to support the revitalisation of the Karelian language by organising short-term courses in professional translation for speakers of Karelian. By means of translator training, the project aims at empowering speakers of Karelian to translate, contributing to the emergence of a new generation of translators of the Karelian language, increasing the number of language products available in Karelian and, finally, connecting translators and speakers of Karelian from Russia and Finland with each other. The training consists of intensive courses on translation theory and practice (translation seminars) open to anyone interested but also offered as part of the academic curriculum of Karelian at the University of Eastern Finland.

⁴ Tver Karelian represents the South Karelian dialect.

The data reported in this chapter was collected during the first translation seminar in the academic year 2015–2016 (for details, see Koskinen and Kuusi 2017, 192–94). Out of 28 participants who signed up for the seminar, 16 completed the course, having handed in all required assignments. Roughly one-third of the participants were native speakers of Karelian, while two-thirds were new speakers or second-language learners. The language skills varied greatly, with some learners or new speakers having more advanced skills than some native speakers and with some participants having completed only elementary courses in Karelian. Since approximately half the participants came from Finland, and the other half from Russia, the dominant language of the participants—even those classified as native speakers—was either Finnish or Russian, and in this sense, the participants were translating into their L2 or at least into their non-dominant language. However, given the internal fragmentation of Karelian, there was no single target language for all participants: most of them translated into Olonets Karelian, while the rest translated into North Karelian (5 participants) and South Karelian (1 participant). Only a few participants had previous experience in translation.

Information seeking was discussed in the first two of the three contact teaching sessions and in the two subsequent distance learning assignments. During the first session, a lecture was delivered on the translation process, with reasons explained for writing reflective translation commentaries. Self-reflection and developing an awareness of one's own translation solutions (describing, justifying and evaluating them) were presented as tools for continual professional development. Issues related to target readers were also touched upon. The first distance learning assignment after the session comprised choosing a short Wikipedia text (in Finnish or Russian) on a topic lexically familiar to the student, translating it into Karelian to be published in the Karelian edition of Wikipedia (located in the Wikipedia incubator at the time) and writing a translation commentary on one's translation process.

Lectures on information seeking for translators, including special field translation, were delivered during the second seminar weekend. A special emphasis was placed on the active role of the translator, whose research sometimes resembles the work of a detective or, when translating special field texts, feeling one's way through unknown territory. The second distance learning assignment focused specifically on information seeking in special field translation. Students were instructed to choose a Wikipedia text on an unfamiliar topic, translate it for the Karelian edition of Wikipedia and to report on their information-seeking process in a detailed manner (e.g. why they decided they needed to find more information on this word or topic,

where they decided to look for it, how their search proceeded, what they found and what they decided to do with the information they found).

4. Data and method

The two distance learning assignments described above provide two data sets for analysis. We have included assignments from all the participants who gave their consent to use their texts for research purposes, regardless of whether the participant completed the course or not. Before analysis, the texts were anonymised. The data consists of 20 contributions to the first assignment and 17 to the second one.

Methodologically, we proceeded in three steps of close reading and categorisation. First, one of the authors (KK) analysed the commentaries for assignment 2 independently, aiming to create categories relevant for language learning; second, another one of us (PK) analysed the commentaries for assignment 1 independently but with prior knowledge of the categories created during the previous step. Third, the analysis and the relevant categories created by the two members of the author team representing translation studies were validated and complemented by the third author (HR) with a linguistic background. After each step, we discussed and deliberated amongst ourselves to create a consensus view. As the participants were free to choose whether to write translation commentaries in Karelian, Finnish or Russian, our data included commentaries in all three languages. Whereas all commentaries produced in Finnish were analysed only in the original language, those written in Karelian or Russian were analysed in the original language by at least one of us, while other authors were provided a rough translation into Finnish for analysis. (For more details on the complex linguistic set-up of the seminar, see Koskinen and Kuusi 2017, 195.)

In evaluating our results, one needs to proceed with some caution. It needs to be emphasised that, rather than testing any actual language learning, we are reporting our analysis of self-reported practices which we connect to language learning and therefore postulate as evidence of actual practice. The dangers of making this leap have been pointed out in process research (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011, 198). However, we believe that this is less critical for our research aims than for those who want to study the information-seeking processes themselves. We aim to identify the potential of information-seeking tasks for language learning. While we can safely assume that all learning has not been documented in our data, we still trust we can provide a plausible overview of the kinds of learning that may take place in a minority language translation context. Furthermore, Massey

and Ehrensberger-Dow's criticism is directed at a survey design that involved recall of a previously conducted translation assignment, whereas our data has been produced simultaneously with the translation.

5. Results and discussion

Some participants reported their search on a very general level, simply noting that they had looked up some words or expressions in a dictionary or conducted a Google search, and these reports have little to offer for our analysis. Most students, however, gave detailed reports on their search, describing their search process and justifying their translation solutions. The participants' approaches were probably affected by their background: those with no previous experience of university-level studies were perhaps less accustomed to writing a self-reflective account of their work process, and might not have fully appreciated the benefits of focusing on metacognition. Another factor affecting participant behaviour is perhaps the activist bend of some of the learners. For them, writing a translation commentary in Karelian might have constituted a conscious act of using the language to make it fit for all purposes, and the possibility of publishing their translations in Karelian Wikipedia might have served as an additional motivating factor for accomplishing their task to the best of their ability.

Both data sets clearly indicate that for some participants, information-seeking tasks are beneficial in enhancing their understanding of linguistic structures, word formation strategies in particular. Coining a neologism by analogy was a strategy employed by some of the students in both assignments (e.g. 1/03, 1/11, 1/18, 2/01, 2/03, 2/09, 2/10, 2/18): for example, the adjective *šeikkailunhimoine* [adventure-loving] (as an equivalent for Finnish *seikkailunhaluinen*) was formed on the model of similar compound words in Karelian (*kunnivonhimoine* [ambitious], *verenhimoine* [blood-thirsty] etc.) (1/18), and the adverb *puolistuksellisesti* [defensively] inflected from the Karelian verb *puolistaa* [to defend] (2/10). The fact that even the first data set—where participants were assigned to choose a text with a familiar topic and vocabulary—included cases where students report on creating new words, underlines the omnipresence of lexical gaps in Karelian. The second assignment, specifically designed to involve more information-seeking and detection of lexical gaps, offers an abundance of neologisms produced by the participants. In this assignment, a major part of information seeking was related to creating a natural-sounding neologism in Karelian. We might argue that the limits of information seeking, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, have a positive effect on language learning: when

there are no readily available equivalents, the learner is continuously forced to create new expressions, which develops the sense of linguistic structures, an understanding of the structure of the lexicon and awareness of the principles of word formation in Karelian. The data reveals that general linguistic knowledge both serves as a basis for information-seeking and is enhanced when addressing the tasks.

In addition to coining neologisms, another solution employed by students when encountering lacunae in language was paraphrasing (e.g. 1/07, 1/08, 1/10, 2/10, 2/16). Paraphrasing concretises how meanings are sometimes expressed differently in different languages, and thus arguably supports language learning. This contrastive skill is aptly described by a student as “a learning process” useful for translation in general because when translating, “you always need to consider alternative words or sentences for relating the contents of the source text anyway” (1/07).

The close resemblance between Finnish (as the source language) and Karelian (as the target language) creates a situation with a potential for harmonious coexistence as well as emerging tension. As one participant (1/01) stated, the closeness of languages both facilitates and complicates the translation process. The similarity between Finnish and Karelian was sometimes seen as offering a way out when the translator could not find a suitable equivalent: by modifying a Finnish word, it could be made to sound Karelian (1/06, 1/07, 2/06). Comparisons with Finnish also served as justification for choosing a certain equivalent: for example, one participant (2/10) notes that he/she thinks it plausible that a word is formed in Karelian in the same manner as in Finnish. Conversely, contrasting closely related languages led some participants to carefully avoid Finnish influence in their translations, illustratively called “hidden Finnishness” by one of the participants (1/13). This awareness of interference was also manifested in the criticism of one of the most frequently used sources of information, a Finnish-Karelian dictionary published in Finland, for containing new vocabulary too directly based on Finnish (1/10, 2/10). The role of Finnish both as a model language and as a source of unwanted interference is a typical example of the dual role of translation for minority languages, repeatedly emphasised in research on minority language translation (see, e.g., Toury 1985, 7–8; Cronin 1995, 90). As Toury (1985, 7–8) observes, translation may both stimulate the development of a minority language and expose it to heavy interference from the dominant source language. When the two languages are closely related, the risk of source-language influence is even more acute (Raine 2010, 40). This ambiguity in minority language translation was one of the theoretical issues covered during the seminar sessions, so it is not surprising

that it also emerged in the reflective assignments—particularly in relation to Finnish, owing to its close proximity to Karelian.

The ability to contrast languages—whether in order to find models for word formation or to avoid unnecessary interference—seems to be important for our trainee translators. In PACTE’s competence model, contrastive skills appear rather effaced, being only implicitly present in the “ability to avoid interference”, presented as a subcomponent of bilingual competence (PACTE 2003, 58).⁵ However, when resources are scarce, information seeking may rely more on the translator’s ability to compare and contrast (see also our observations on etymology and multilingualism below).

An intriguing and somewhat surprising finding in our analysis was the deepening understanding and appreciation of etymology; this topic was not included in the lectures, and yet it surfaced in some commentaries (most profoundly in 2/09 and 2/18). When coining new Karelian words or modifying loan words, these participants first wanted to study the etymological roots of the source word. When translating a text concerning chemistry, participant 2/09 had to find equivalents for the Finnish words *vety* [hydrogen] and *happi* [oxygen]. Finding out that the Finnish words are derived from *vesi* [water] and *hapan* [acid], and that the situation was the same for the Russian equivalents, he/she decided to use the Finnish words in a modified form (Karelian *vedy* and *happi*), since they have similar roots in Karelian (*vezi* and *hapain*).

We found abundant evidence of participants comparing sources and search results as well as assessing them critically (e.g. 1/01, 1/05, 1/09, 1/10, 1/15, 1/17, 1/18, 2/01, 2/09, 2/10, 2/11, 2/13, 2/17, 2/18). When choosing between two or more alternatives, some participants reported carefully considering the suitability of the expression for the context at hand (e.g. 1/01, 1/10, 1/15, 2/01, 2/10, 2/17), demonstrating an emerging sensitivity to nuances between similar or synonymic expressions. Another factor influencing decision-making among the participants was the target audience (e.g. speakers of Karelian living in Finland vs. those in Russia) (e.g. 1/01, 1/02, 1/08, 1/10, 1/13, 1/18, 2/01, 2/04, 2/11). Students were concerned, for example, about loan words (1/02) or culture-specific terms being understood

⁵ Interestingly, in an inverse translation competence model proposed by Beeby (2000, 186-87; see also Kumpulainen 2016, 36), two out of four subcompetences focus on contrastive skills, including, e.g., knowing the lexical and syntactic differences between the languages and being aware of the limitations of dictionaries.

by their target audience. An example of the latter would be the choice between coining a Karelian equivalent for the Finnish term *jatkosota*, i.e. The Continuation War (referring to the war between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1941–44) or using the existing Karelian term for WWII (*Šuuri Isänmuallini šota*, i.e. Great Patriotic War⁶ formed on the Russian model) (1/01, 1/08). These considerations indicate an understanding of the culture-specific nature of language, sensitivity to the transnational nature of Karelian and a wish to make texts understandable to Karelian-speakers in both Finland and Russia.

Another area that may go unnoticed in language classrooms but was highlighted in our data is linked to multilingualism. To make informed decisions about the best course of action in Karelian, students often resorted to comparisons involving a number of languages in their efforts to solve translation problems. For example, several participants mentioned using Wikipedias in many languages (mostly Finnish, Russian, Karelian, Estonian, Veps and English) (e.g. 2/01, 2/09, 2/19, 2/11, 2/13). Here, information seeking for translation purposes bears a resemblance to information seeking in second language acquisition: in both contexts, participants use their knowledge (however modest) of other languages to solve problems related to the language in question. An intriguing detail from our data is the use of languages the translator does NOT know. When coining a term in Karelian for *lucid dream*, a participant (1/09) consulted Google Translate to learn how the term was translated into Estonian, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian, Greek and Swedish. After that, he/she—with practically no knowledge of Russian—used Russian as an interlanguage: unable to consult Russian-Karelian dictionaries directly, he/she first consulted Finnish-Russian dictionaries and then Russian-Karelian dictionaries. Even though the execution was accompanied by a feeling of uncertainty, in this case the method produced results. Resorting to such unsafe methods is perhaps not an indication of professional competence, but certainly an instance of creative detective work in circumstances where resources are scarce.

A meta level element important for both language learning and revitalisation is empowerment. In the context of a minority language such as Karelian, information-seeking results are often unsatisfactory. The positive side to this is that missing or unacceptable prior solutions push novice translators to make their own decisions and trust their own instinct. With no decisive

⁶ In Russia, there is no separate name for the war against Finland, but the general name for WWII is used.

authority to rely on, participants often had to make choices between two alternatives, guided by their linguistic instinct (e.g. 1/07, 1/13, 1/16, 2/11, 2/13) or, when there were no alternatives to choose from, to coin their own words (for examples, see above). Creating new terminology and making educated guesses demonstrate courage and willingness to believe in one's own language instinct, and some participants explicitly stated that in the end, they decided to "trust their ear" (e.g. 1/13, 2/11). On the level of language ideology, a recurrent theme in the data is a wish to empower and emancipate the Karelian language itself: the status of Karelian as independent compared to both Finnish and Russian was often emphasised (e.g. 2/10, 2/13, 2/18). When describing the process of creating a Karelian equivalent to Finnish *tapahtumahorisontti* (Engl. *event horizon*, Rus. *горизонт событий*), one participant explained that he/she did not want to coin a neologism based on the model of either of the dominant languages (Finnish or Russian) but rather on the original Greek word, because he/she wanted the Karelian language "to stand on its own feet and drink from the same source as the other languages" (2/18, source referring to the old Greek word *horizōn*).⁷

At the same time, this lack of ready-made answers emphasises the role of the language community and the concrete ways in which speakers can support one another. In the context of revitalisation, language learning is less an individual effort of improving one's own competence, measured against an existing yardstick, and more a collective undertaking where individual speakers are learning to create language resources for the benefit of the whole community. Some participants consulted other speakers of Karelian or language experts during their assignment (e.g. 1/01, 1/03, 1/18), and the need for joint consideration of potential neologisms or having an opportunity to consult native speakers was expressed in several commentaries (e.g. 1/09, 1/10, 2/09, 2/11). The purpose of the task (an individual learning assignment), however, seemed to hinder taking this step. One of the participants commented that he/she would have liked to ask the Karelian teacher but, as it seemed too easy a way out, he/she decided to search for the information him-/herself, opting for learning process instead of direct consultations (1/10). An analysis (see Koskinen and Kuusi 2017, 204) of another reflective assignment handed in at the end of the seminar shows that by that

⁷ Incidentally, the Karelian neologism *tapahtumuhorizontu* closely resembles its Finnish equivalent, but the participant explains how the borrowing process was made according to principles of the Karelian language (and the similarity is caused by the phonological closeness of Karelian and Finnish).

point, participants rated the possibility to consult other speakers as very important. However, the role of a language community seems less visible in the present data. Possibly, the benefits of consulting a colleague or the language community became apparent to the participants only gradually as the seminar proceeded.

6. Conclusions

Our analysis provides a wealth of evidence for our argument—namely, that information-seeking tasks can support language learning in several ways. The results indicate that trainee translators of an endangered language benefit from their information-seeking process not only as translators, but also as language learners: apart from more linguistically oriented benefits such as learning word formation strategies, understanding etymology or paraphrasing, they also develop important metacognitive skills such as a critical eye towards sources of information and, last but not least, a growing understanding of their own role in the development of their heritage language and appreciation of the advice from the language community. The fact that their search is often complicated by the lack of modern vocabulary may seem a hindrance at first sight, but it forces them to take an active stance towards both the translation task at hand, and the development of the target language. Coining new words requires agency by definition, and so does critical assessment of both search results and sources of information. More than just locating ready-made solutions, trainee translators of an endangered language need to learn to make decisions—even when they are based on bold guesses rather than verified information—in a resource-scarce environment.

To some extent, the benefits listed above apply both to regular translator education and to translator training offered to volunteer translators in the context of an endangered language. Most notable differences are related to the status of Karelian as a heritage language rarely used in most specialised domains such as trade/commerce, science, law or administration. For example, when looking for an equivalent for a special-field term, a professional translator would normally strive to find an equivalent that is accepted and used by domain specialists in the target culture. This will obviously not apply to under-used languages with no specialists using the language in their professional lives. When translating into Karelian, the challenge lies in finding an equivalent accepted and understood by the (rather fragmented) linguistic community. Additionally, the quest is sometimes accompanied by a wish to find an equivalent that would set Karelian apart from both model

languages, Finnish and Russian, thus underlining its status as an independent language. However, the sheer number of lexical gaps in Karelian is the single most prominent factor that makes information seeking so different from a major language situation. Compared to translation into a major language, translation into an endangered language entails the more frequent need to create new vocabulary—thus, perhaps, stimulating a more active stance towards establishing equivalence relations. In seeking and not finding, novice translators are pushed to exert agency in a more self-confident manner, coining new expressions in order to proceed in translation even when their search seems to arrive at a dead end.

In PACTE's competence model, information seeking has been subsumed under instrumental subcompetence, foregrounding the technical skills of locating and retrieving pre-existing information. However, sometimes the only thing that can be located is non-existence, a lacuna in language. In such a case, the translator can either paraphrase it, skip it or propose a new term to be accepted or rejected by the linguistic community. None of these options really fit the category of instrumental competence; rather, they are strategic choices that translators have to make when the instrumental research skills offer no ready-made solutions, and thus related to PACTE's strategic subcompetence needed, for example, in identifying, evaluating and solving translation problems (PACTE 2003, 59).

Language learning is commonly perceived as a personal process of an individual L2 speaker improving their skills. In heritage language contexts, this individual level is foregrounded by the fact that even those who can be classified as native speakers need to enhance their language skills, but it is also accompanied by another, more collective need to support the learning of new words and expressions at the level of the whole language community. Being essentially a compensatory competence, information seeking serves to fill lacunae in the trainee translator's language skills. However, for our trainee translators, it often leads to an attempt to fill lacunae in the language itself. Apart from supporting individual language learning, it supports the language, serving the supraindividual cause of revitalisation.

Works cited

Beeby, Allison. 2000. "Evaluating the Development of Translation Competence." In *Developing Translation Competence*, edited by Christina Schäffner and Beverly Adab, 185–198. New York, London: John Benjamins.

Cabré, M. Teresa. 2010. "Terminology and translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Vol. 1, edited by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, 356–365. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Cronin, Michael. 1995. "Altered States: Translation and Minority Languages." *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 8(1):85–103. Accessed May 24, 2017. <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ttr/1995-v8-n1-ttr1482/037198ar/>.

Daems, Joke, Michael Carl, Sonia Vandepitte, Robert Hartsuiker, and Lieve Macken. 2016. "The Effectiveness of Consulting External Resources during Translation and Post-editing of General Text Types". In *New Directions in Empirical Translation Process Research: Exploring the CRITT TPR-DB*, edited by Michael Carl et al., 111–133. Cham: Springer (New Frontiers in Translation Studies).

Enriquez Raido, Vanessa. 2011. "Developing Web Searching Skills in Translator Training." *redit*, número 6:60–80. Accessed December 16 2017. https://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/11378/redit6_art%C3%ADculo4.pdf?sequence=1.

Enriquez Raido, Vanessa. 2014. *Translation and Web Searching*. London: Routledge.

Göpferich, Susanne. 2009. "Towards a Model of Translation Competence and its Acquisition: The Longitudinal Study TransComp". In *Behind the Mind: Methods, Models and Results in Translation Process Research*, edited by Susanne Göpferich, Arnt L. Jakobsen, and Inger M. Mees, 11–37. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.

Hurtado Albir, Amparo, and Fabio Alves. 2009. "Translation as a cognitive activity." In *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*, edited by Jeremy Munday, 54–73. London: Routledge.

Iso-Ahola, Riikka. 2017. "Literary Translators as Revitalisers of an Endangered Language." *trans-kom* 10(2):164–187. Accessed May 8, 2018). http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd10nr02/trans-kom_10_02_03_Iso-Ahola_Revitalisers.20171206.pdf.

Karjalainen, Heini, Ulriikka Puura, Riho Grünthal, and Svetlana Kovaleva. 2013. *Karelian in Russia. ELDIA Case Specific Report*. Studies in European Language Diversity 26. European Language Diversity for All (ELDIA). Accessed April 12, 2017. https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/detail_object/o:314612.

Koskinen, Kaisa, and Päivi Kuusi. 2017. "Translator training for language activists. Agency and empowerment of minority language translators." *trans-kom* 10(2):188–213. Accessed May 8, 2018. http://www.trans-kom.eu/bd10nr02/trans-kom_10_02_04_Koskinen_Kuusi_Activists.20171206.pdf.

Kumpulainen, Minna. 2016. *Learning Translation. An empirical study into the acquisition of interlingual text production skills*. Publications of the University of Eastern Finland. Dissertations in Education, Humanities, and Theology No 91. Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland. Accessed May 8, 2018. http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-61-2235-9/urn_isbn_978-952-61-2235-9.pdf.

Laakso, Johanna, Anneli Sarhimaa, Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark, and Reetta Toivanen. 2016. *Towards Openly Multilingual Policies and Practices. Assessing Minority Language Maintenance across Europe*. Linguistic Diversity and Language Rights 11. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Massey, Gary, and Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow. 2011. "Investigating Information Literacy: A Growing Priority in Translation Studies." *Across Languages and Cultures* 12(2): 193–211. DOI: 10.1556/Acr.12.2011.2.4

Mikhailov, Mikhail, and Outi Suppanen. 2013. "Google, Word ja Trados – pyhä kolminaisuus? Kääntäjien tietoteknisiä taitoja kartoittamassa." In *MikaEL. Electronic proceedings of the KäTu symposium on translation and interpreting studies*, Vol. 7, edited by Marja Kivilehto, Minna Ruokonen and Leena Salmi, 20–30. Accessed February 18, 2018. https://www.sktl.fi/@Bin/340835/MikaEL_2013_mikhailov_suppanen.pdf.

Moshnikov, Ilia. 2016. "Karjalankieliset verkkosivut virtuaalisena kielimaisemana." *Läshivõrdlusi. Lähivertailuja* 26:282–310. Accessed April

4, 2017. <http://arhiiv.rakenduslingvistika.ee/ajakirjad/index.php/lahivor-dlusi/issue/view/LV26>.

Mutta, Maarit, Sanna Pelttari, Leena Salmi, Aline Chevalier, and Marjut Johansson. 2014. "Digital Literacy in Academic Language Learning Contexts: Developing Information-Seeking Competence." In *Digital Literacies in Foreign and Second Language Education*, Monograph Series, Vol 12, edited by Janel Pettes Guikema and Lawrence Williams, 227–244. Calico.

O'Rourke, Bernadette, Joan Pujolar, and Fernando Ramallo. 2015. "New speakers of minority languages: the challenging opportunity – Foreword." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 231:1–20.

PACTE. 2003. "Building a translation competence model." In *Triangulating Translation. Perspectives in Process-Oriented Research*, edited by Fabio Alves, 43–66. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

PACTE. 2005. "Investigating Translation Competence: Conceptual and Methodological Issues." *Meta*, 50(2):609–619.

Pelttari, Sanna, and Maarit Mutta. 2014. "Language Learners' seeking paths and strategies: one dimension of digital literacy." In *Tulevaisuuden kielenkäyttäjä. Language users of tomorrow. AFinLA yearbook 2014. Soveltavan kielitieteen yhdistyksen julkaisuja 72*, edited by Maarit Mutta, Pekka Lintunen, Ilmari Ivaska, and Pauliina Peltonen, 157–175. Jyväskylä: Association Finlandaise de Linguistique Appliquée.

Pinto, Maria, and Dora Sales. 2008. "Towards user-centered information literacy instruction in translation: the view of trainers." *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 2(1):47–74.

Pinto, Maria, Javier García-Marco, Ximo Granell and Dora Sales. 2014. "Assessing information competences of translation and interpreting trainees." *Aslib Journal of Information Sciences* 66(1):77–95.

Prassl, Friederike. 2011. "Übersetzerisches Rechercheverhalten von Profis und Novizen auf dem Prüfstand Empirische Befunde aus der Analyse von Konsultationshandlungen und ihren Auswirkungen auf die Qualität des

Zieltextes.” *Trans-kom* 4(1):23–48. Accessed December 16, 2017. http://www.trans-kom.eu/ihv_04_01_2011.html.

Raine, Roberta. 2010. “Minority, Language and Translation in Tibet.” *mTm. Minor Translating Major-Major Translating Minor-Minor Translating Minor* 2:35–53.

Rosell-Aguilar, Fernando. 2004. “Well done and well liked: online information literacy skills and learner impressions of the web as a resource for foreign language learning.” *ReCALL* 16(1):210–224.

Toury, Gideon. 1985. “Aspects of Translating into Minority Languages from the Point of View of Translation Studies.” *Multilingua – Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* 4:3–10.