TEACHING TRANSLATION INTO L2 WITH THE AID OF MULTILINGUAL PARALLEL CORPORA: ISSUES AND TRENDS

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0. Introduction

Translating into L2 is still somewhat of a controversial topic (Malmkjær 1993) whether in the context of translation and interpreter (T&I) training or in that of advanced foreign language teaching (FLT): in FLT because of its association with the "notorious" grammar-translation method and the view that the use of translation in the language classroom hinders the development of communicative skills in L2, and in T&I training because of the commonly-shared view that professional translators are only expected to translate into their mother tongue or, as it is now preferably called, their language of habitual use (Keith and Mason 1987: vi), all else being a futile academic exercise or an "educational artefact" (Harvey 1996: 58).

The present paper addresses the issues involved in translating into L2 at university level T&I institutions and modern language faculties and explores the contribution of corpus linguistics and particularly of multilingual parallel corpora (MPC) to the practice of translating into L2. Experience with MultiConcord (a multilingual parallel concordancer developed under Lingua project No. 36860-CP-1-96-1-FR-LINGUA-LD coordinated by Francine Roussel at the University of Nancy II) has shown how multilingual computerised corpora can be used to integrate the needs and perspectives of both the trainee translator and the language learner as well as those pertaining to theoretical and applied aspects of translation studies.

1. Developments in corpus techniques

Corpus techniques applied to large samples of naturally-occurring monolingual texts have provided valuable insights into language and are changing the face of linguistic study, as evidence of language in use forces linguists to see what they might otherwise overlook and to re-think established ideas and descriptions (Johansson 1995). The interdependency of structural and lexical features of language, i.e. "the indistinguishability of form and meaning" pointed out by
Sinclair (1997: 119 and 1991) is just one example of the changes in perspective that have occurred.

The same can be said for language pedagogy. Corpus data are increasingly becoming an integral part of language teaching programmes, and are modifying the very nature of the teaching methodology. The shift away from the teacher as "the fount of all knowledge" and the centre of activities to that of "director and coordinator of the learners' research" (Murison-Bowie 1993: 39) has been enhanced by the use of corpus material and concordancing techniques in the language classroom. Access to naturally-occurring language, unmediated by the teacher's intervention and interpretation, creates a stimulating learning setting of enquiry and speculation. This new paradigm in foreign language learning, which Johns (1991a, 1991b) has termed "data-driven learning", has therefore radically changed the view that new technologies are merely a support in the learning process. The availability of machine readable corpora not only to researchers but also to students of language has paved the way to "a new kind of knowledge ... and ... to a new way of thinking about language" (Leech 1992: 106).

Although not as highly advanced as monolingual corpus linguistic research, the application of computerised corpora techniques is beginning to shed interesting light on translation practice and translational behaviour. All the typologies of corpora currently available can be made use of for translation purposes:

- multilingual or bilingual parallel corpora, the classic original text/translated text format;
- multilingual or bilingual comparable corpora, consisting of original independent monolingual texts, comparable across languages on the basis of similarity of content, genre, communicative function, length, etc.;
- monolingual comparable corpora comprising two separate but comparable texts in the same language, one originally written in that language and the other a translation into it;
- monolingual parallel corpora which enable users to compare two or more versions of a text translated into the same language, generally by different translators, or different diachronic versions by the same translator.

Setting up a corpus for the purposes of translation studies is, however, not an easy task and differs somewhat from putting together a corpus of texts produced in the original language. A major issue is whether some kind of

1 For a detailed account of the rationale behind the present classification of computerised corpora, see Urych 1997b.
2 For an in-depth and up-to-date description of one such corpus, see Laviosa 1997.
3 There are, of course, aspects common to all corpus types: general practical problems like obtaining copyright permission, and methodological issues like selecting the concordancing program best suited to access the texts. Stevens
"quality control" is desirable: to what extent do the concepts of "naturally-occurring language", "acceptability" and "authenticity" need refining or redefining within the framework of translation corpora? If the criterion of authenticity in the generally-accepted sense is to be upheld, then any translation however "bad" (in itself a subjective concept) may be included in the corpus. If, on the other hand, "quality in translation" (House 1997) is to be a basic criterion, then not all texts are acceptable, even if "authentic".

One solution might be to select any text which does not contain frequent "gross" errors, a marker of the translator's linguistic, rather than translational, incompetence. This would make the corpus flexible enough to be used in different pedagogical and research settings. Those interested in using the corpus for foreign language teaching (as opposed to teaching translation) would be able to select suitable texts according to their pedagogic goals. Full access to the whole corpus would, on the other hand, be available to those interested in identifying and describing patterns of translational behaviour (Baker 1993, 1995, 1996) either for research purposes or for "the translator's 'education' in the broad sense that includes both training ... and learning through personal discovery and insight" (Robinson 1997: 103).

Much of the discussion on the potential of corpus-based methods in both the descriptive and applied branches of translation studies is, however, the result of different perceptions of what translation is all about, both within the discipline itself, which has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, and in related fields.

2. What do we mean by "translation"?

One aspect of translation studies that still requires addressing is the dichotomy between the descriptive and applied areas. Traditionally, the descriptive or "pure" branches of translation studies attempt to provide an account of the phenomenon of translation itself, of the nature, that is, of translated texts and of the processes that come into play in creating such texts; while the applied areas, notably translator training and translation criticism, fulfil predominantly pedagogic objectives.

One would presume that the branches are complementary to each another (Holmes 1988: 78) and concur with House (1997: 167) in thinking that

(1995), for instance, points out that the standard KWIC format of lines with a search word at the centre is at times ill-equipped to deal with certain language queries and proposes a broader context like the sentence or paragraph. A similar problem arises in corpus-based translation research: comparable corpora techniques generally make use of the KWIC format, whereas parallel corpora allow for parallel and interleaved configurations of sentences and paragraphs.
Any attempt to teach translational competence is premised on the assumption that one knows what translational competence is. Therefore a theory of translation and translation quality assessment must underlie any pedagogic training for translators.

But this is far from being the case. There is no general agreement within translation studies about the relations that hold between the descriptive and applied branches. Some researchers involved in descriptive translation studies feel that the applied branches are of no concern to them. Practitioners feel the same way, but for diametrically opposite reasons: they feel theory has nothing to offer. These two camps might be dubbed "separatist". A third camp is that of the "unionists", who, strongly support Holmes' view that the two branches should be complementary. Whether they are working in the descriptive or applied spheres of translation, scholars agree, however, that the object of their research is naturally-occurring language and how it functions in context. Translation is seen as an act of communication that takes place between two socio-cultural contexts, a much more complex phenomenon than a mechanical substitution of discrete grammatical or lexical items from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) in a cultural vacuum. While the aim of translation pedagogy is to develop communicative competence in translation, to foster, that is, the ability to convey messages from the SL to the TL that are not only linguistically correct but also appropriate to the new context of situation and context of culture, the task of descriptive translation studies is to observe how this has taken final shape in the products themselves, always within well-defined socio-cultural and historical terms.

This new way of looking at translation will, one hopes, sooner or later spread to all institutions where translation is taught. At present, however, there is still much "confusion about the purpose and place of translation" (Newmark 1996: 18) both in T&I institutions and in modern language faculties, especially in the more traditional pedagogical settings. A number of methodological changes need to be made if translation is to become a meaningful and realistic activity even when carried out in the classroom environment. First of all, the texts that students are asked to translate should be selected from among those that would be natural "candidates" for translation in real life and not be "contrived" or manipulated to test specific linguistic problems. They should, moreover, be presented as complete texts in their original form or at least with clear indications as to their discourse genre: adverts will, for instance, look like adverts, as will information leaflets, instructions, letters, research articles and so on. They should not, that is, be a "random collection of decontextualised ... texts" (Keith and Mason 1987: v) with students being given no indication as to

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4 For a discussion in favour of the "unionist" approach, see Ulrych, M. 1997b.
the purpose of their translation or the ultimate consumer of the finished product. It should also be made clear from the onset that their principal aim is to produce a text which is fully acceptable to the target culture and that the final "consumer" of the translation product is not the teacher or examiner as such. In other words, an integral part of students' briefings, when asked to translate any text, is information on where it comes from, why they are being asked to translate it, and who they are translating it for.

Translation as a classroom activity carried out along these lines makes students feel they are acting as real cultural mediators, actually bridging the gap between members of different socio-cultural backgrounds that do not share the same knowledge. At the same time, translation provides them with ample scope for exploring the similarities and differences between languages and cultures, and sensitises them to the compensatory strategies that need to be activated to achieve the pragmatic equivalence and cross-cultural understanding that is the goal of translation.

Viewed in this light, translation is an all-round activity involving the kind of consciousness-raising that is invaluable not only in translator training but also in foreign language learning. Computerised corpora techniques blend in perfectly with this interpretation of what it means to translate. For the present time, however, the fact remains that "translation can mean tangibly different things to its different practitioners and users. Extend the purview to other cultures, and other countries, and the differences multiply" (Round 1996: 3). Extend the purview to translation into L2 and the situation becomes more complex still.

3. What does it mean to translate into L2?

Attitudes towards translating into L2 constitute one of the most interesting differences between courses at university-level T&I institutions and modern language faculties. T&I institutions have traditionally upheld the view (Samuelson Brown 1993: 12-13, Delisle 1980: 28) that professional translators must, should, or for that matter can, only translate from their B or C into their A language. This is based on the assumption that this is the only mode that is required of translators in the real world. Recent developments in translation and interpreting research as well as observations from the field\(^5\) have, however, led

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5 The entry of Sweden and especially Finland into the EU has caused quite a stir in interpreting circles. Until then it had been standard practice for conference interpreters, working at the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Court of Justice to translate only into their mother tongue. With the new entries the possibility of bidirectional interpreting, now a necessity for Swedish and more particularly for Finnish, is under discussion for the other EU
to rather different conclusions. Translators and interpreters are increasingly expected to translate out of their language of habitual use into their foreign language(s) (Harvey 1996: 59, Korzeniowska & Kuhlweicz 1994). As for any type of communication, the criteria for doing so depend on market requirements, text-typology and the use to be made of the translations.

Modern language faculties have traditionally not had the same qualms about L2 translation. What Harvey (1996: 46) calls the "undercover" use of translation as an integral part of the language learning programme in the era of the "communicative approach" was, and still is, standard practice in universities all over the world. It is therefore commonly used in its traditional role "as an aid for enriching the pupil's knowledge of the foreign language by the use of variant synonyms and structures" (Newmark 1996: 18) and has remained largely untouched by developments within foreign language teaching methodology, such as the emphasis on language awareness and crosscultural communication.

There is obviously a difference in teaching translation into L1 and into L2, as learners' attitudes towards the two translation modes clearly indicate. They are usually under the misapprehension that translating into their L1 is an easier option; they do not feel they are "on the spot", because "all they have to do" is to understand the source text and then reproduce it in what is, after all, the language they know best. The situation is felt to be relatively stress-free because of the sense of security afforded by translating into the mother tongue, and students tend to be less alert to the problems involved in translating. Needless to say, this sense of security is more often than not highly misplaced: apart from the fact that their comprehension skills of the L2 source text frequently leave much to be desired, it may also be the case that their productive skills in their mother tongue are far from satisfactory.

Nevertheless, students do not take readily to criticism when translating into their L1, since they do not see their teacher as a guide or facilitator. As far as the practical aspect of the translation course is concerned (i.e., apart from any considerations as to the theoretical component), he or she is seen as being no more or no less an expert in the language than they themselves are. At times, in fact, they can well be critical of the teacher's corrections and observations, not "seeing" what all the fuss is about. This is where parallel corpora have an important part to play. They provide "neutral ground" from which to observe translational patterns and behaviour.

In the translation into L2 class the situation is very different. Whether the teacher is a native speaker of the students' L2 or not does not really make a crucial difference. The important thing is that the students themselves feel at a disadvantage because they do not have full command of the L2 (there are notable exceptions, of course) and they are unsure, or at least not fully confident, of
their own performance. On the whole, they do not feel that their competence is on a par with that of the teacher, who is consequently seen as a useful source of information from the linguistic point of view and thus also an "expert" in translating into L2. Here too, and for different reasons, parallel corpora are extremely useful: by enabling students to observe examples of translation behaviour and to compare their own choices in a stress-free environment, the corpus-based approach shifts the focal point from the teacher and allows more scope for autonomous learning and confidence-building, a crucial aspect of translators' competence (Kussmaul 1995: 148).

4. Multilingual parallel corpora and translating into L2

One of the advantages of integrating multilingual parallel aligned corpora (MPC) within a course of L2 translation is that of enabling learners to think about language and how to reformulate concepts so that they fit appropriately into the new socio-cultural context of the target audience. Moreover, the use of MPC blends in well with the flexible methodology that underlies any translation teaching, whatever the direction, since it can be brought into play at any of the various stages of the translation process: source-text analysis, writing out a version of the target text, revising, or editing (Keith and Mason 1987: vi; Ulrych 1992: 285-293). By making it possible for learners not only to have online access to real data in more than one language, but also to explore the data on their own, MPC effectively shift the emphasis from traditional prescriptive methods to the more up-to-date descriptive approach. Corpus-based translation studies has great potential in bridging the gap between theory and practice. It offers the ideal means for establishing guidelines for translation practice, not along prescriptive lines, but based on observation and the description of patterns of translation behaviour. Stubbs' (1996: 46) point that "a corpus is not merely a tool of linguistic analysis, but an important concept in linguistic theory" also holds true for translation studies. In our experience with MultiConcord at the University of Trieste, learners are strongly motivated by the availability of multilingual corpus data to observe how translators have overcome difficulties in real-life translational contexts and to hypothesise on possible patterns and models which they can apply to their own translation practice. On a descriptive level, MPC have an important role to play in exploring "universal features of translation" and "textual exponents of translational norms" (Baker 1993: 246).

Various factors concur to make the use of MPC in an L2 translation course a motivating and fulfilling activity:
i. learners can observe translators' performance and compare their own competence in a stress-free environment;

ii. they can construct their own hypotheses and general guidelines regarding possible and viable translation equivalents on the basis of natural patterns of language at discourse levels beyond the word;

iii. they can compare not only a source text in one language and a target text in any other language available in the corpus, but also two target texts, that is, either two translations in two different languages of the same text or two translations of the same text done by two different translators, or again two translations done at different points in time by the same or different translators.

Let us now look at some practical examples of how MPC can be integrated into the L2 class in order to enhance both language and translational competence.

5. A procedural model

At the University of Trieste we have been using MPC as an integrated part of language and translation courses and as a tool for guided self-study. Parallel corpora have been found to be more motivating and fruitful for students translating into their L2 than comparable corpora. The ideal mode, especially for exploration activities, is, however, to work with the two types of corpora in combination.

The choice between parallel and comparable modes raises interesting issues for translation and closely resembles the different points of view regarding the use of dictionaries: monolingual only vs. bilingual combined with monolingual. With the monolingual-dictionary-only mode of translating, learners have to envisage or hypothesise possible cross-linguistic or cross-cultural equivalents and then test their hypotheses by reference to the dictionary. Unless they already have an idea of the English options, learners have to go through a lengthy (and at times, demotivating) trial-and-error process of

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6 This feature of MultiConcord is of particular relevance to descriptive translation studies, since it provides the opportunity to observe translation behaviour across languages without any comparison with the source text. Thus, the "hegemony" of the "original" is subtly challenged and translations become worthy of study as texts in their own right. For the theoretical premise of this approach see Bassnett & Lefevere 1990; Baker 1993, 1995, 1996; Laviosa 1997; Ulrych 1997a. This is also in line with the experience of Mparutsa et al with concordancing: they found that the concordancer "challenges the role of a set text in the learning process. The text shifts from being an inviolable authority to something which students can question, explore and hopefully come to understand" (1991: 130).
dictionary consultation. The same is true when using comparable corpora for translation purposes. In applying bilingual comparable corpora techniques to "the identification of suitable Italian equivalents for the English adjective real" Tognini Bonelli (1996: 198-9) states that the decision to adopt the Italian adjective *reale* as a hypothetical translation is "totally arbitrary" and that "a certain amount of trial and error" is involved before arriving at other possible Italian realisations of *real*. Therefore, although highly useful in discovering how languages work and interesting for related language discovery activities, comparable corpora are rather time-consuming for translation purposes, since they fail to provide the necessary springboard to spark off possible search options which parallel corpora techniques offer.

With MPC, users are immediately given a variety of possible contextual realisations in the target language of the source text item. This does not do away with the work of exploration and observation that is an integral part of the data-driven learning approach to language, but it makes it more rewarding and, at the same time, challenging, simply because learners are called upon to account for actual instances of translation behaviour. Hypotheses can then be tested in a number of ways. One we have found particularly effective is the "criss-cross" procedure. A search is made of a language pattern or item in Italian source texts and its realisations in the English target texts are noted, sorted and categorised. The English patterns that have been identified are then searched for in similar original English texts in the parallel corpus and in their Italian translations. Further criss-crossing can be carried out to test hypotheses by searching for translations of the English and/or Italian items into French or German (or, indeed, into any of the other languages in the corpus) and vice versa.

Accessed in this way, MPC can also function as comparable corpora and enable learners to set up networks of relations within and across the various languages. These may then be looked at in actual comparable corpora as a way of both extending the activity and finding additional data with which to test hypotheses.

The procedure that in our experience with MPC has proven most productive and satisfying is, therefore, the following:

- a translational "problem area" is identified on the basis of texts encountered (in previous translation and/or writing activities); a "problem area" denotes a difficulty that has been found to be common to a number of learners and for which a "ready" and satisfactory solution is not available by reference to traditional sources.

- a series of problem-solving activities based on observation, hypothesis-making and testing are carried out using the MPC in order to formulate general principles of translation.
further hypothesis-testing activities are done on monolingual corpora and/or multilingual comparable corpora.

Let us now see an illustration of this procedure with regard to the problem of translating the Italian conjunctive *infatti* into English.

6. **Translating conjunctives from Italian into English: the case of "infatti"**

Conjunctives pose quite a dilemma for Italian native speakers when they have to speak, write or translate into English. Of these, perhaps the most insidious is *infatti* since many find it difficult to resist the obvious temptation of taking it to be a cognate of the English *in fact*, which they see as being a translation equivalent both in form (most write it as one word *in fact*7) and in function. Nothing could be further from the truth, teachers continue to repeat. But what our students actually found was a very intricate network of semantic and functional relations.

6.1. **Exploration**

Once the problem area had been identified, in this case how to translate *infatti* appropriately into English, the students pooled the knowledge they already had from other sources to see what hypotheses they could construct regarding the behaviour of *infatti* before accessing the MPC. They first consulted the corrections to their written work (not as a touchstone of accuracy, but rather as a means of forming hypotheses based on their personal experience) and then consulted their reference grammars. What seemed to emerge quite clearly from their personal experience was that *in fact* does not share the extremely high frequency that *infatti* enjoys in Italian. The impression was that *infatti* acts almost as an "all-purpose" conjunctive, covering a wide variety of meanings and functions. Their first hypothesis was, therefore, that some of the semantic, pragmatic and textual aspects of *infatti* are not explicitly stated in English, in which case one possible translation equivalent of *infatti* in English is the zero connective, that is, an implicit link. They also observed that when English did require an explicit connective device their choice of what seemed a structural and semantic equivalent (that is, *in fact*) did not seem to work in the English context. The problem was not so much that their choice was grammatically wrong as that it produced a different meaning. Consequently, their second

7 It was interesting to see that those who had the tendency to write *in fact* as one word were cured of their habit when they unsuccessfully tried to search the English texts for *infact*, repeatedly achieving zero hits. After a number of frustrating attempts they saw the error of their ways.
hypothesis was that the semantic properties of the two connectives were different and that *infatti* required different realisations to achieve functional equivalence in translation.

The grammar books they consulted did not add very much to their knowledge, since *infatti* in Italian and *in fact* in English are not seen as being worthy of particular note in an intralingual setting. They did, however, help students in formulating their working hypotheses. In general, students noted that the basic function of conjunctives in textual structure is to interpret the text to the addressee (hearer/reader) and to express the relevant connection between one part of a text and another (Quirk et al 1985: 1468). These connective devices signal textual progression by marking the successive stages of the discourse. More specifically, they saw that the contrastive and appositive semantic relations were those most pertinent to their investigations, although they did not exclude any of the others. The most interesting point they noted was that both *infatti* and *in fact* realise not only a textual, but also an interpersonal function. In Quirk et al's terms, this second type of function can be realised either by an attitudinal disjunct (1985: 620) or by an emphasizer (1985: 583, 1415). This prompted them to formulate a third hypothesis: *infatti* may require different forms in English depending on whether its role is mainly textual, mainly interpersonal, or a combination of the two.

When they explored the MPC to test their hypotheses, students realised that the translation problem was rather more complex than simply finding one-to-one equivalents across languages. A whole web of intra- and inter-lingual relations was found to exist, and it was obvious that contextualisation beyond the sentence was indispensable for their investigations. MultiConcord, with its paragraph-aligned parallel concordance facility, gave them the necessary scope to carry out their explorations into language and translation behaviour. Apart from confirming their basic assumptions and expectations, their explorations with MPC threw up a whole series of other features.

6.2. Findings

6.2.1. *Infatti* is a high-frequency conjunctive in both written and spoken discourse and does not always require an explicit translation into English.\(^8\)

 e.g. desert.it P1001 S3 "Ecco là Morel, beato lui!" esclamò Drogo fermanosì a una finestrella. Attraverso la spianata si vedeva *infatti* allontanarsi il plotone. Sul terreno brullo e battuto dal sole i soldati spiccavano nitidamente.

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\(^8\) Finding any explicit mention of *in fact* in even the most authoritative English reference grammars like Quirk et al (1985) and Halliday (1994) required a great deal of painstaking research and only led to the formulation of hypotheses which then had to be verified in actual discourse by means of corpora.
e.g. desert.en P1001 "There's Morel, lucky man," exclaimed Drogo stopping at a window. There they saw the platoon marching off across the plateau. The soldiers stood out clearly against the bare, sunbeaten ground.

6.2.2. As a textual device *infatti* expresses a predominantly appositive conjunctive role, generally adding another formulation of what has come before by way of exemplification.

e.g. desert.it P889 S4 Benché fosse già primavera, la notte sarebbe stata lunga, uno spazio di tempo pressoché illimitato; prima dell'alba potevano succedere tante cose, esattamente Drogo non era in grado di specificarle ma certo lo attendevano parecchie ore di incondizionato piacere. Aveva *infatti* cominciato a scherzare con una ragazza vestita di viola ...  

e.g. desert.en P889 Although it was already spring the night would be long, an almost unlimited stretch of time; before the dawn so much might happen, what precisely Drogo could not say, but certainly several hours of undiluted pleasure. *And in fact* he had begun to joke with a girl in a violet dress ...

*Infatti* does not seem to add anything new to the ongoing argument, but rather rounds off what has come before. In other words, although it ensures thematic progression, it tends to signal topic closure rather than topic shift. The following example where *infatti* is translated by a temporal conjunctive demonstrates this point:

e.g. desert.it P238 S6 Sveglio più di prima, perché lo colpi la vastità del silenzio. Lontanissimo, ma era poi vero? giunse un colpo di tosse. Poi, vicino, un flaccido "ploc" d'acqua, che si propagò per i muri. Una piccola stella verde (egli vedeva rimanendo immobile) stava, nel suo viaggio notturno, raggiungendo il limite superiore della finestra, fra poco sarebbe sparita; scintillò un attimo proprio sul bordo nero e poi *infatti* scomparve. Drogo la volle seguire ancora un po', spostando in avanti la testa.

e.g. desert.en P238 More awake than before, because the vastness of silence suddenly struck him. From far, far away- or had he imagined it? -there came the sound of a cough. Then close by a soft drip of water sounded in the wall. If he lay still he could see that a small green star, which in the course of its journey through the night had reached the top of his window, was on the point of disappearing; it twinkled for a moment on the very edge of the dark window frame and then *finally* disappeared. Drogo wanted to follow it a little further by leaning his head forward.
6.2.3. *Infatti* often has a similar function to subordinate causal conjunctions and translates into English as *because, for, since*.

e.g. desert.it P1056 S5 Fra tante cose belle del mondo, Giovanni si ostinava a desiderare questo improbabile palazzo marino, le musiche, la dissimazione delle ore, l'attesa dell'alba. Per quanto sciocco, ciò gli sembrava esprimere nel modo più intenso quella pace che egli aveva perduto. Da qualche tempo *infatti* un'ansia, che lui non sapeva capire, lo inseguiva senza riposo: l'impressione di non fare in tempo, che qualche cosa di importante sarebbe successo e l'avrebbe colto di sorpresa.

e.g.desert.en P1056 Among all the wonderful things of this world Giovanni Drogo persisted in desiring this improbable mansion by the sea, the music, the careless squandering of time, the waiting for the dawn. However stupid it might appear, to him it seemed to express more intensely than anything else the peace he had lost. *Because* for some time a nagging anxiety which *he* could not comprehend, had been ceaselessly pursuing him, the feeling, namely, that he was being left behind, that something important would happen and take him unawares.

e.g.desert.it P1079 S3 Mentre Drogo e Simeoni stavano così discutendo, un giorno cominciò a nevicare. "Non è ancora finita l'estate" fu il primo pensiero di Giovanni "ed ecco già arrivata la brutta stagione." Gli pareva *infatti* di essere appena tornato dalla città, di non avere avuto neanche il tempo di sistemarsi come prima. Eppure sul calendario c'era scritto 25 novembre, interi mesi si erano consumati.

e.g.desert.en P1079 While Drogo and Simeoni were arguing thus one day it began to snow. Summer isn't over yet, was Giovanni's first thought, and here the bad weather has come already. *For* it seemed hardly any time since he had come back from the city, that he had not even had time to settle down as before. And yet the calendar said the twenty-fifth of November—whole months had gone by.

6.2.4. The initial hypothesis that *infatti* is not only a textual marker but also an interpersonal semantic marker of modality was not only confirmed but also proved to be by far the most frequent occurrence. Or rather, the two functions often merged, with the interpersonal one being slightly more marked.

e.g. desert.it P1305 S1 Avanzava *infatti* contro Giovanni Drogo l'ultimo nemico.

e.g. desert.en P1305 *Yes*, the last enemy was advancing against Giovanni Drogo.
e.g.desert.it P465 S3 "Pst...pst..." fece Drogo due o tre volte, timidamente, per attirare l'attenzione dei fantasmi, ben sapendo però in cuor suo che sarebbe stato inutile. Nessuno di quelli infatti parve sentire, nessuno si accostò sia pure di un metro al suo davanzale.

e.g.desert.it P465 “Hist,” said Drogo two or three times timidly to attract the attention of the apparitions, although he knew quite well in his heart that it would be useless. And indeed not one of them seemed to hear, none one of them drew even a few feet nearer to his window.

e.g.desert.it P578 S2 Ora che il dovere era fatto, la sentinella mise il fucile a terra, si sporse dal parapetto, guardò in giù sperando di non avere colpito. E nel buio gli parve infatti che il Lazzari non fosse caduto.

e.g.desert.it P578 Now that his duty was done the sentry lowered his rifle, leant over the parapet and looked down, hoping he had not hit the mark. And in the darkness it seemed indeed that Lazzari had not fallen.

Infatti does not, however, generally present a forceful comment on the preceding part of the discourse, but tends rather to express compliance or varying degrees of partial agreement. At times, it is so non-committal as to be almost completely desemanticised:

e.g. desert.it P815 S1 Era infatti così: quasi di colpo le bianche falde si erano fatte meno fitte e pesanti, l'atmosfera più limpida, si potevano già scorgere, ai riflessi delle lanterne, rocce distanti anche parecchie decine di metri.

e.g.desert.en P815 So it was; quite suddenly the white swirls had become less thick and heavy, the air clearer; by the light of the lanterns one could already pick out rocks ten or twenty yards away.

Instances where infatti was translated by in fact (as in example 6.2.2. above) presented students with an interesting area of enquiry. It seemed that in fact was being used to comply with what was said previously and that it had an appositive role. Closer observation revealed that in fact was to be found in those cases where infatti expressed confirmation in rather stronger terms by presenting

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9 The investigations reported here were restricted to literary texts, which, nevertheless, constitute a large portion of Multiconcord's corpus. This was thought to be methodologically sound since the use of connective devices in English is known to be closely related to discourse type (Halliday 1994: 327). Further explorations are currently being done with other types of discourses and genres: e.g. social sciences, medicine, tourist brochures, and EU parliamentary debates, among others.
objective arguments to strengthen the foregoing statement. Thus, in fact was chosen because of its literal sense of providing "facts", of bearing out the accuracy or truth value or reality of what came before.

  e.g. P846 S3 M'ha spiegato che un elaboratore debitamente programmato può leggere un romanzo in pochi minuti e registrare la lista di tutti i vocaboli contenuti nel testo, in ordine di frequenza. - Posso così disporre subito d'una lettura già portata a termine, - dice Lotaria, - con un'economia di tempo inestimabile. Cos'è infatti la lettura d'un testo se non la registrazione di certe ricorrenze tematiche, di certe insistenze di forme e di significati? La lettura elettronica mi fornisce una lista delle frequenze, che mi basta scorrire per farmi un'idea dei problemi che il libro propone al mio studio critico.

  e.g. calvino.en P846 She explained to me that a suitably programmed computer can read a novel in a few minutes and record the list of all the words contained in the text, in order of frequency. "That way I can have an already completed reading at hand," Lotaria says, "with an incalculable saving of time. What is the reading of a text, in fact, except the recording of certain thematic recurrences, certain insistences of forms and meanings? An electronic reading supplies me with a list of the frequencies, which I have only to glance at to form an idea of the problems the book suggests to my critical study.

This ties in nicely with Halliday's description of in fact as a discourse adjunct with a verificative function (1994: 49, 324), which is closely related to its function as a modal adjunct in expressing the speaker's attitude to the proposition as a whole, either as a comment or as a judgment on its truth value or reality (1994: 82).

6.2.6. Since infatti tends at times to be used in paragraph initial position or, at least, at some point in the opening sentence of a paragraph, it is not possible with the paragraph-aligned format of parallel concordances to evaluate its function in such cases. The only way to do so is by calling up the entire text. The following example illustrates this point:

  e.g. desert.it P974 S1 Voleva infatti domandargli una cosa, Drogo. Era una faccenda generica, senza la minima urgenza, pure essa premeva sul suo cuore da qualche giorno.

  e.g. desert.en P974 He wanted to ask him something. Solely as a matter of interest, but there was no urgency about it; yet it had been on his mind for some days.

  e.g. desert.it P325 S1 Nella penombra infatti si era sentito il riso soffocato dei tre aiutanti; adesso avevano chinato la fronte,
esageratamente intenti al lavoro. Il vecchietto continuava a scrivere, facendo parte a se stesso.

e.g. desert.en P325 *For in the shadows they had heard the stifled laughter of the three assistants. Now they had their heads bent and were exaggeratedly intent on their work. The old man went on writing and kept to himself.*

e.g. calvino.it P944 S1 *Infatti sul lavoro ero spesso distratto; cercavo tutti i pretesti per andare nelle altre stanze dove avrei potuto incontrare Makiko, sorprenderla nella sua intimità durante le varie situazioni della giornata.*

e.g. calvino.en P944 *In fact, in my work I was often distracted; I sought every pretext to go into the other rooms, where I might come upon Makiko, catch her in her privacy during the various situations of the day.*

The English translators opted for implicit linkage in the first example, a causal conjunction in the second and perhaps a contrastive (or might it be reinforcing?) use of *in fact* in the third. Without viewing the previous paragraph no comments can be made.

Once they had categorised all the translation options of *infatti* in English, students came to the conclusion that the textual role of *infatti* is closely related to its function as a modal adjunct in expressing the speaker's attitude to the proposition as a whole, either as a comment or as a judgment on its truth value or reality (1994: 82) and that the two aspects often overlapped. Its distinctive feature, they felt, was that of confirming and consolidating a previous statement rather than reshaping it. *Infatti* was therefore seen to be a weak connective device that contributes little if anything to argumentation or textual progression.

The hypotheses formulated by the students were thus mostly confirmed, although not always in the way they had anticipated. In particular, the translation data provided a far more wide-ranging set of translation options than they would have imagined themselves or would have found in traditional sources. This is by no means a surprising aspect of professional translating. In an analysis of translators' use of bilingual dictionaries, Teubert, for instance, found that "more than half of the translation equivalents generated by the translators were superior to the dictionary recommendations" and that "translators have a competence that often exceeds that of dictionaries" (1997: 155). This is precisely the type of competence that a translation course aims to develop.

Thanks to their work with the MPC they now had a clearer picture of the functional properties of *infatti* and of the ways it could be rendered in English. Their findings proved much more useful and satisfying than the descriptions
they had found even in the most comprehensive Italian reference grammars (Serrianni 1988: 457-458 and Renzi et al 1995: 219-220). Serrianni simply states that infatti expresses an appositional or exemplificatory semantic relation and that it may also fulfil the textual function of signalling an effect-cause relationship (in that order) as in: "Paolo non c'era: infatti mi aveva detto di non sentirsi bene". Renzi et al, on the other hand, stress the interpersonal function realised by infatti, stating that it essentially signals agreement or compliance with the previous speaker's point of view. Neither makes explicit mention of the students' observation that infatti does not generally contribute towards carrying the discourse forward.

6.3. Cross-checking

Students' findings and subsequent generalisations were tested on original English texts in the MPC. The first step was to observe the behavioural patterns of in fact in English and how they were translated into Italian. Two things immediately sprang to the students' notice: one was the comparatively low frequency of in fact in the English texts (which indicated that there were cases of implicit linkage) and the other was that, apart from the instances already noted above, in fact did not have infatti as its translation equivalent. The translation options in Italian included the following: anzi (by far the most frequent), which signals a distinct reformulation of the previous statement in contrastive terms; difatti (also di fatti), in effetti, effettivamente, appunto, del resto and in realtà, almost all of which are semantic markers of modality expressing different degrees of compliance, together with a comment on the preceding unit of discourse: all, however, tend to call the "facts of the matter" into play to some extent.

It was obvious, therefore, that the translators interpreted the predominant functional aspect of the formal item in each specific context and selected the equivalent in Italian accordingly. The main feature of in fact to emerge from this cross-checking procedure is that of signalling a shift in textual progression entailing the reassessment of a previous unit by means of either a corrective or a clarificative strategy. Linked to this is its interpersonal function of introducing a new interpretative angle, often by reinforcing the truth value of what is being said by means of a forceful reference to facts and reality. Generally, therefore, the structural and attitudinal roles of in fact overlap.

e.g. gatsby.en P135 S2 'Of course you will,' confirmed Daisy. 'In fact, I think I'll arrange a marriage. Come over often Nick, and I'll sort of - oh fling you together.
e.g. gatsby.it P135 'Certo che vi rivedrete' osservò Daisy. 'Anzi, ho intenzione di combinare un matrimonio. Vieni spesso Nick, e cercherò di ... o ... di gettarvi l'uno nelle braccia dell'altra.

e.g. gatsby. en P1516 'Well, the fact is - the truth of the matter is that I'm staying with some people up here in Greenwich, and they rather expect me to be with them tomorrow. In fact, there's a sort of picnic or something. Of course I'll do my best to get away.

e.g. gatsby. it P1516 'Be', il fatto è ... La verità è che sono a Greenwich, ospite di amici, e domani dovrei stare con loro. C'è una specie di picnic, o qualcosa del genere. Naturalmente farò di tutto per liberarmi.

The second example is interesting in that no specific Italian translation is given of in fact. The reference to reality and to the “truth of the matter” exists in both texts, so there is no loss of meaning, but structurally the two texts differ: in the English text in fact signals a further step in the speaker's argumentation with the addition of new information, while in the Italian text the whole development of the discourse hangs on the initial statement "La verità è ...". This seems to confirm that in fact (unlike infatti) is an important marker of textual organisation.

An interesting observation was made by one student regarding textual relational structure. She noticed that when the relationship is unmarked, that is, the text proceeds from the general to the particular, English does not tend to make the direction of transition explicit; when, on the other hand, it is a marked sequence (particular to general), then it is signalled by overt linkage:

e.g. gatsby. en P111 S1 The telephone rang inside, startlingly, and as Daisy shook her head decisively at Tom the subject of the stables, in fact all subjects, vanished into air.

e.g. gatsby. it P111 Il telefono trillò di nuovo impaziente; mentre Daisy scuoteva con energia la testa rivolta a Tom, l’argomento delle scuderie, come del resto qualsiasi argomento, svanì nell’aria.

7. Conclusions

What has been said so far as regards translation naturally does away with the misconception that translation means transforming isolated words, phrases or sentences in the SL into a sequence of equivalent units in the TL. One of the most important developments in both language and translation pedagogy is the move away from sentences in isolation to larger stretches of language. It is the text, and not the word or sentence, which is the basis for translation. Vocabulary and grammar are therefore seen not as self-contained formal entities, but as the
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functional components of a text whose meaning is to be decoded according to the overall context. Traditional formal equivalence as the goal of translation has given way to the notion of functional equivalence, which in turn means that the translation activity involves exploring linguistic and cultural assumptions in the SL and the TL and solving the problem of how to match them up in the two languages. Thus, translation enhances learners' awareness of how formal and functional features of language interact both within the same language and between languages.

An important contribution to the changing fortunes of translation into L2 both in translator training and in the language learning curriculum can, as we have seen, come from corpus-based techniques. Bilingual or multilingual parallel corpora in particular provide a powerful tool for exploring linguistic and communicative issues across languages and for providing insights into translation behaviour. Moreover, their potential in bridging the gap between descriptive and applied translation studies through access to natural patterns of language is indeed enormous. Following the identify-classify-generalise procedure described by Johns (1991: 4) for concordance-based learning research, or "data-driven learning", both researchers and learners can objectively establish how translators deal with translation problems in practice and use this evidence to construct models of translation behaviour. These models can then be used as general guidelines in helping learners to understand the nature of translation and to overcome their translation problems with confidence, especially when translating into their L2.

In their introduction to Teaching Translation in Universities Sewell and Higgins (1996: 9) write

Communicative theory has involved teachers and teacher-trainers reflecting on method and asking whether the practice of translation (both ways) in the classroom is in any way beneficial to L2 learners. The theory would indicate that it is not. And yet many learners at every level find translating very useful. It seems that translation as a language learning device just will not go away.

This seems yet another example of learners being at times more aware of what is good for them than those entrusted with their education. And since the education of language learners and trainee translators continues well beyond the classroom, an important objective of teaching programmes should be to promote learning strategies that are in some way transferable to other tasks and situations that they might encounter in real life. L2 translation activities combined with the use of MPC offer a unique resource for developing this fundamental competence.
References


