

Introduction

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The current volume, as the final act of the PRIN research project *Ecolingua: the role of e-corpora in translation, in language learning and in testing*, is largely based on the presentations made during *ECOLINGUA DAY*, an event organised at the University of Trieste in order to hear papers illustrating the results of a number of the various research sub-projects brought to conclusion by the five university units involved (The Catholic University of Milan, the University of Padua, the University of Pavia 1 & 2, the University of Trieste).

The *ECOLINGUA* project gave the opportunity to many of those involved in the previous *DIDACTAS* project, also financed by the Italian Ministry of Education, to continue and refine their various research programmes and produce useful materials for research in linguistics, in translation practice and teaching, in language teaching and in testing language competence. The scientific background to the project was more or less the same for all the local units even though each concentrated on a number of specific tasks. This background included systemic linguistics, information technology, text analysis, multimodality, translation (particularly film translation), language and translation teaching/learning and testing, and the glue that held all these strands together was the 'corpus' and corpus-based research. This common denominator of the whole project has for a long time formed the basis for a great deal of research in the field of both theoretical and applied linguistics. Much of the linguistic research carried out has been based on systematic observation of authentic communicative events, namely

texts (oral, written and multimodal) which are representative of the cultural and situational contexts in which they are produced and exchanged.

Following in these footsteps, the various units looked to computers and corpora to carry out their ongoing research projects. Members of both Pavia units were concerned with multimodal text analysis and the translation of multimodal products, particularly with a didactic objective. The articles by Elisa Perego and Silvia Bruti and by Maria Freddi in this volume are testimony to this line of research. Francesca Bianchi and Elena Manca provide other corpus-based research articles dealing respectively with academic language and student reaction to corpora. The Padua unit, represented here by Maria Grazia Busà and Sara Gesuato produced a great deal of valuable work on linguistic and pedagogical subjects, all the result of painstaking corpus-based research. The Trieste unit was mainly involved in the analysis and translation of screen material, pursuing new angles such as identifying the phenomenon of predictability in film and television products, and in the teaching of film translation. Vanessa Leonardi discusses here the positive and negative effects that dubbing can have on social integration. Finally the Milan group's research was again totally corpus-based with Amanda Murphy and Pierfranca Forchini providing contributions for this volume.

The joint paper by Silvia Bruti and Elisa Perego (*Vocatives in Subtitles*) continues their research into the function of vocatives and their translation in interlingual subtitles. A small corpus of films of various genres forms the raw material for the project. Summarising the results of the research, the authors' survey points up differences in the type of vocatives chosen in each genre of film, but also shows that the translation of these terms does not always reflect those differences. The rigorous analyses of the nine video products revealed the use of eighteen types of vocative ranging from proper names to insults and their relative frequency of use within the various genres. A quick glance at one of the tables provided by the authors shows how such vocatives are at times not translated or are translated in different ways e.g. first names instead of last names, diminutives instead of kinship terms, etc.

Maria Freddi (*Continuity and Variation across Translations*) analyses a small corpus of British and American films dubbed into Italian in order to check for variation in translated products. The corpus methodologies adopted are principally those of Baker (the identification of translation specificities and tendencies) and Diaz-Cintas (audiovisual translation). Using text alignment technology Freddi discovers that while continuity patterns can be observed as translators find many common solutions, individual choices are not uncommon and can be attributed to a number of factors.

Francesca Bianchi (*The Distribution of Authorial Presence in Experimental Psychology Articles*) investigates to what extent scientific writing adheres to an impersonal style. Her corpus of tagged experimental psychology papers is used to show not only the level of overt authorial presence, largely revealed through

pronouns and determiners, but also how certain key words, analysed quantitatively, highlight various distribution patterns and indicate the most frequent collocates. The results show that all the articles (43 papers) contained some form of overt authorial presence but it was also revealed that the Results and Discussion sections proved to be the most personal, and the Abstract, Method and Conclusions sections the least. As the author claims, this study of a single discipline provides useful insights into the use of a little analysed rhetorical practice.

Francesca Bianchi's second contribution, in collaboration with Elena Manca (Discovering Language through Corpora), goes to the heart of the question of the use of corpora in a university environment. The objective of the experiment conducted by the authors was to assess the level of intrinsic difficulty encountered by students in performing corpus-based tasks. Two different groups of students of different levels of competence and experience, and their responses to a variety of such tasks, led to the creation of a General Difficulty List of Corpus Analysis Tasks. The authors are at pains to point out that they were measuring intrinsic difficulty and not external or environmental factors such as previously acquired skills and courses attended. The results, as the authors claim, should be very useful in the designing of corpus analysis tools for students.

Maria Grazia Busà's article 'Teaching Prosody to Italian Learners of English' concerns the implications for English language pedagogy of the expanding role of English in the world. She concentrates on the question of prosody and the shift towards a greater recognition of this aspect of language learning in terms of *mutual intelligibility*. Accordingly Busà discusses aspects of Italian pronunciation in English which may affect intelligibility. Reviewing some of the technological advances in the field and the instruments now available to teach prosodic features, the author points out that prosody is now more accessible to the non-expert with concrete benefits for the learner in terms of sounding natural and communicating successfully.

Sara Gesuato, in her article 'Encoding of information in titles', likens the titles of academic publications to a business card, and describes these 'mini-texts' as useful, logical and reader-friendly, though to varying degrees. In her research the author finds much variation as she analyses a hefty corpus of English language titles culled from four distinct yet connected academic genres - books, dissertations, journal articles and proceedings papers on the subject of linguistics. She shows how the titles differ along several dimensions such as length in words, richness in technical vocabulary and content, denotational precision, etc., and how these differences can be attributed to context of situation, communicative goals and target readerships. Gesuato's minute analysis shows that there are similarities across the genres though also differences, particularly in terms of expansion, pre-modification strategies, post-modification resources and so on.

Vanessa Leonardi (Increasing or Decreasing the Sense of Otherness) also uses a small corpus of Walt Disney films to analyse the impact and potential of

audiovisual translation in the process of social integration. Starting from the premise that language has always been associated with power, the author examines the strategies of foreignisation and localisation in terms of an increasing or decreasing sense of 'otherness'. In particular she analyses dubbing and how it can be used as an instrument of linguistic nationalism but also as a means of strengthening social integration. The Italian versions of films that in the original contained potentially racist elements (accentuated 'foreign' accents, stereotyped behaviour and language patterns, etc.) consciously or unconsciously erased these features thereby contributing to portraying diversity in a positive light.

Amanda Murphy (Mediated Language in non-native speaker texts in the European Commission) looks at examples of mediated language in non-native speaker texts in European Commission documents. She compares edited with non-edited texts in order to see whether editing can be considered a form of language mediation. These texts are subjected to further comparison with general reference material from the British National Corpus. Some preliminary conclusions show firstly that most editing concerns objective criteria such as grammar and house style, though personal subjective modifications are also detected, highlighting the seemingly conflicting strategies of concision and explicitation.

In her paper on the 'get-unit' Pierfranca Forchini (Milan) makes an exhaustive analysis of the use of the ubiquitous English verb 'get', making a new contribution to the many studies already conducted on this aspect of verbal grammar. The author shows, through rigorous exemplification based on the US spoken sub-corpus of the *Bank of English* and a corpus of films, that the verb 'get' can be depicted semantically and pragmatically as a result marker. She also makes a convincing case for 'get' displaying prevalent negative semantic prosody. Thus, in spite of its syntactic versatility, the use of 'get' can be seen to imply some sort of transformation, often of a negative nature, and across a range of registers and text types.