

## Introduction

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Within the dynamics of international communication today translation is recognised as not only reflecting but also directing transcultural contacts and exchanges. Never before has so much been translated by and for so many. Translation is, therefore, the most widespread means by which ideas, styles and genres transit from one language and culture to another and thus a powerful tool in the construction of languages and cultures (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998). At the same time, however, evidence from translation research has shown that, depending on the moment in history and the status of the two languages and cultures in contact, the receiving culture can either absorb or resist the incoming influence. Permeability to the "other" depends very much on prevailing social, historical, cultural and ideological forces as well as to linguistic factors related to the code (Lefevere 1998 [1992]).

This awareness of the centrality of translating and translations in the world arena has led to traditional views being challenged and new paradigms proposed. The overall effect is a general broadening of horizons to include various approaches, schools and perspectives (Gentzler 1998 [1993]). Once considered a branch either of linguistics or comparative literature, translation has now emerged as a discipline in its own right. Indeed, it can be considered a multidiscipline, a kind of superordinate discipline, or "metadiscipline" that draws upon the experiences of a number of contingent disciplines, ranging from linguistics, philosophy and literature to cultural studies, communication studies, media studies, semiotics, social and political studies, psychology, anthropology and information technology (Ulrych 1997a). The further enrichment of translation as a multidiscipline depends, however, on its capacity to blend and harmonise this stimulating plurality of approaches. It also depends on its ability to recognise the complementary nature of theoretical, descriptive and applied branches (Holmes 1987 [1972]).

The papers included in this section offer a wide spectrum of perspectives on translation and reflect the diversity of approaches to be found in translation research and pedagogy today. The subjects addressed range from literary to specialised translation, seen not as distinct poles but as different discourse genres along a cline or continuum (Snell Hornby 1995 [1988]), and provide an interesting forum for discussion. Although there seems to be general agreement on the fact that translating and translations are to be seen as processes and products occurring within well-defined socio-cultural and historical contexts and

not solely in linguistic terms, differences emerge as regards other fundamental issues: namely, the very concept of translation, the role of the translator and the confines of his/her creativity as well as the relationships between source text (ST) and target text (TT) in the sense of equivalence, fidelity and status of the TT.

The first article, by Mirella Agorni ("*Translation Studies: la revisione del rapporto traduzione/originale continua*"), is firmly grounded in the descriptive translation studies (DTS) tradition as exemplified by Toury (1995), one of the major exponents in the field. The basis for discussion is the idea developed by scholars working in this tradition that a translation has an autonomous textual and social status and is, from the point of view of the receiving culture, an original. The descriptive point of view is then explored in relation to the concept of equivalence and contrasted with the essentially linguistic approaches of Catford, Nida and Newmark. The final conclusion is that equivalence is a relative concept "to be understood as emerging from active interrelations, determined by what translators actually do, and not by actual comparisons between falsely discrete and passive systems" (Pym 1992: 46).

Maria Lima ("Le 'voci' italiane di Allen Ginsberg") follows this methodology in her study of two authoritative translators of Allen Ginsberg into Italian, Fernanda Pivano and Luca Fontana. Pivano's translations dating back to the 1960s and 1970s not only introduced the poet and the "Beat Generation" into Italy but also created new linguistic forms in Italian. Her translations are an example of how creativity on the part of the translator can cohabit with fidelity to the source text and how translations contribute to shaping the receiving language and culture. Fontana's translations, done in the 1990's, reflect an entirely different socio-cultural and ideological context and lack the immediacy and impact of Pivano's versions.

In her analysis of the various intralingual and interlingual translations of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, Gabriella del Lungo Camiciotti ("In margine alla traduzione del libro di Margery Kempe") explores the strategies of foreignisation and domestication (Venuti 1995). In her view, the specificity of *The Book* and its unique qualities related to genre (late medieval devotional writing by a woman) and to style (especially the idiosyncratic use of parataxis and hypotaxis) call for foreignising strategies in order to enable the modern reader to understand the full effect of the original text. In particular, the stylistic heterogeneity of the ST needs to be reproduced in the TT in order to reflect the underlying communicative goals.

Giovanni Iamartino ("L'innovazione lessicale nei testi letterari e nelle loro traduzioni") provides an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of neologisms in literary texts and offers a taxonomy of the potential ways in which they can be dealt with in translation. The paper argues in favour of the centrality of the

original ST and the inevitable losses that translations entail. Although, according to Levy (1992) the translator is encouraged to engage in lexical innovation and creativity, this is necessarily "constrained" by the characteristics of the ST (Newmark 1987).

The pedagogic aspects of literary translation are discussed by Cecilia Rizzardi ("Tradurre poesia: un modo per scoprire la potenzialità di una lingua") in her presentation of an innovative university course of language, linguistics and literature. Since students are not only learners but also potential future teachers, it is important to heighten their awareness of the finer aspects of their field of study. Analysing poetry and its translations as well as personally engaging in the actual translation process offer students the basis for exploring the phonological, lexico-grammatical, semantic and pragmatic features of the source and target languages while at the same time enhancing sensitivity to poetic discourse.

The remaining contributions address various aspects of specialised translation and translation aids and include descriptive as well as pedagogic issues. Far from constituting a merely terminological problem, the translation of special language texts present a variety of interesting and thought-provoking features at various discourse levels (Somer 1996). Nicoletta Vasta ("Advertising across cultures") effectively shows how advertisements of the same product in English and Italian function as independent texts within their cultures and only a close comparison of the two versions can shed light on the type of socio-cultural mediation and transformation that has taken place. Advertisements are a significant example of translation oriented towards the target culture and at the same time of the broader concept of translation as rewriting (Lefevere 1998). An important feature to emerge is that advertisements are not only powerful markers of their socio-cultural reality but also contribute to shaping it.

Federica Scarpa ("Localizing packaged software: linguistic and cultural problems") discusses the highly topical area of translating software products. Although all the texts contained in software packages are essentially user-oriented, they are multifunctional in character (the three main functions being instructions for use, description and advertising), requiring different interpretative and rewriting skills. The term "localization" refers not only to the linguistic rendering of the source message but also, depending on the prevailing function, to large-scale socio-cultural adaptation and reworking to meet the needs of the target audience. It is in this light that issues such as referential and pragmatic equivalence can be discussed. Besides language-related and cultural considerations, an important component of specialised translation is quality: not, as one would immediately imagine, solely of the TT but rather of the ST. Among the skills required of localizers (and translators of specialised texts in general) is, therefore, technical writing and cultural mediation to adapt the way information is

presented in the ST to a form that is in line with the conventions of the target culture.

Awareness of the ways scientific discourse is realised in different cultural contexts is also presented as constituting an essential part of the translator's competence by Maria Teresa Fabbro ("La traduzione scientifica e tecnica: dal lessico alla costruzione del discorso"). Starting from the cognitive aspects of the translation process, the paper discusses the specificity of scientific and technical translation and examines its various components from the macro to the micro levels.

The next two papers deal with the use of computer-based corpora in foreign language teaching and translator/interpreter training. Computer techniques applied to large samples of naturally-occurring texts have provided valuable insights into language and have profoundly modified the nature of language pedagogy. The application of computerised corpora techniques to translation is also shedding interesting light on the phenomenon of translation itself (Baker 1995) and providing interesting results from the pedagogic perspective. 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 (Ulrych 1997b).

Both Laura Gavioli ("Corpora and the concordancer in learning ESP. An experiment in a course for interpreters and translators") and Federico Zanettin ("Corpora for language learning and the training of translators") present their experience with bilingual comparable corpora as part of the ongoing project at the SSLiMIT of the University of Bologna at Forlì. Gavioli discusses a pedagogic experiment within a course of medical English for students of interpreting and translation. The aim was to enhance their language and translation skills and their grasp of content-related concepts. Although the use of a small corpus, like the one reported in the paper, has its limitations, the findings are encouraging: students felt comfortable enough with the competence they had achieved to interact confidently with a medical expert in the field. A further important result of the experiment was that it stimulated students' sense of enquiry and autonomy in research methods.

The corpus used by Federico Zanettin in developing comprehension and production skills in translator trainees is composed of collections of newspaper articles in Italian and English downloaded from CD-ROMS. A series of activities are proposed ranging from exploring discourse structures and conventions to looking at lexical and syntactic regularities. Extensive examples of the kind of work carried out are given in relation to lexical items such as *podio /podium* to explore its use in figurative language. The results of a comparable search in Italian and English texts reveal that although they can both be used figuratively, they do not share the same collocational patterns. Zanettin concludes that comparable bilingual corpora are a useful means to enhance students' analytical skills and their ability to produce appropriate translations.

The section closes with a study that investigates the permeability of Italian to English lexical influence. Virginia Pulcini ("Focus on Italian anglicisms: a comparative study of three dictionaries") discusses the massive presence of anglicisms in contemporary Italian and shows how certain discourse areas, notably computer science, economics and advertising, are more receptive than others. Following a classification of the various types of anglicisms, Pulcini compares the way they are covered in three authoritative dictionaries. The paper ends with a number of suggestions and recommendations that will prove useful to lexicographers, researchers and students alike.

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