ENGLISHES

TESTI E CONTESTI DELLE LINGUE INGLESI

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Tra le lingue occidentali, l'inglese è quello che si è maggiormente evoluto, se non trasformato, fino a divenire la lingua della globalizzazione. Oggi, quindi, non si può più parlare di "English" bensì di "Englishes", ognuno dei quali si inserisce in un ben delineato contesto geografico e storico-politico dal quale ricava e afferma nuove e originali strutture grammaticali e lessicografiche. È il caso dell'anglo-americano, dell'anglo-canadese e dell'anglo-australiano, ormai realtà consolidate e codificate, così come è il caso dell'anglo-caraibico, dell'anglo-indiano e dell'anglo-africano (nelle sue diverse accezioni) che sono tuttora realtà "in progress" e, proprio in virtù di ciò, le più interessanti e innovative.

La Collana intende, pertanto, ospitare studi filologici e linguistici, testi grammaticali e lessicografici che possano coadiuvare l'insegnamento dell'inglese moderno e aiutare la comprensione e l'insegnamento delle letterature che di questi "Englishes" sono espressione.

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LEARNER TRANSLATION CORPORA
EXPLORING REGULARITIES AND VARIATION IN STUDENT TRANSLATION

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A chi ha avuto pazienza

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Introduction

With the world becoming increasingly interconnected, the global demand for language services — including translation and interpreting services, dubbing, language technology and more — has been growing at a rapid pace in recent decades. Between 2009 and 2019 the global language service market doubled in size, from 23.5 to 49.6 billion U.S. dollars, it rose to 56.18 billion U.S. dollars in 2021 and is projected to keep increasing over the upcoming years.[1] Written translation services accounted for the largest market share (45.73%) in 2020, according to Verified Market Research.[2] International business, foreign investments and migration have been the key driving factors for this trend: more particularly, the growing number of companies that strive to make their services available through the internet has entailed an increased need for web content localisation, not least because consumers have been found to be more likely to buy from websites with contents in their native language (CSA Research 2020).[3] Quite expectedly, English represents the favoured target language, giving access to over one third (36.8%) of the online purchasing power worldwide according to research carried out by Translated's Research Center;[4] within the same study, Italian also appears among the top 10 languages in this respect, potentially reaching 2.4% of the global online purchasing power.

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[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/257656/size-of-the-global-language-services-market/ (last access: May 2022).

[2] https://www.verifiedmarketresearch.com/product/global-translation-services-market-size-and-forecast-to-2025/ (last access: May 2022)

[3] "*Can't Read, Won't Buy – B2C*" report, https://insights.csa-research.com/reportaction/305013126/Marketing (last access: May 2022).

[4] https://imminent.translated.com/t-index (last access: May 2022).

The expansion of the translation market, and the consequent increased need for translation professionals, has also resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of formal translator training programmes. The number of university-level institutions offering specific degrees or diplomas in translation and interpreting worldwide rose from 49 in 1960 to 108 in 1980, reaching approximatively 250 in 1994 and 500 in 2018 (Caminade and Pym 1998, Kelly and Martin 2020). Self-teaching and apprentice approaches that had prevailed until the mid-twentieth century still survive today alongside institutional programmes (especially in contexts where the latter do not exist yet) but account for a much smaller proportion of practitioners, and institutional training/education[5] for translators and interpreters seems to maintain tremendous impetus despite concerns about market saturation and the survival of programmes in some countries (Kelly and Martin 2020: 592-593).

While remarkable differences exist between translator training/education programmes offered in different countries, some supranational initiatives have emerged that aim to set quality standards and to ensure that curricula meet the needs of the global professional market. The CIUTI – Conférence internationale permanente d'Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes,[6] for example, which was initiated in 1960, is the world's oldest and most prestigious international association of university institutes with translation and interpretation programmes. A more recent initiative, the European Master's in Translation (EMT) is a network of higher education institutions offering master's level translation programmes that meet agreed

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[5] Although the distinction is not clear-cut, the two terms reflect different ideological approaches to the subject. The word *training* tends to be preferred by those who adopt a vocational or market-driven approach to curricular development as it involves the application of "acquired" procedures; on the other hand, *education* focuses on the development of cognitive capacities and attitudes and is thus favoured by those who situate the acquisition of translator skills in the broader social context of tertiary education (Kelly and Martin 2020: 591-592; see Bernardini (2005) for a more detailed discussion). In this book the expression 'translator training' is used without taking a specific stance on this matter.

[6] https://www.ciuti.org/ (last access: May 2022).

professional standards and market demands.[7] At the core of the project lies the *EMT competence framework*, first devised in 2009 and then refined in 2017, which defines the basic competences that translators need to work successfully in today's market and has become one of the leading reference standards for translator training and translation competence throughout the European Union and beyond, both in academic circles and in the language industry.[8] Another famous competence model was developed within the PACTE project (PACTE Group 2003), whose academic members have also carried out experimental research into process-based aspects of translation competence acquisition, such as the identification and solution of translation problems, decision-making, and use of instrumental resources (PACTE Group 2020).

Besides its actual practical implementation, translator training has entered the academic sphere as an area of Translation Studies (TS), and more precisely as part of the applied branch of the discipline as mapped by Holmes (1972). Research on translation teaching, ranging from theoretical concerns to competence development and practical classroom approaches, has proved a prolific strand (see e.g. Yan et al. 2015 for a thematic review). In addition to this, over the last two decades the unprecedented availability of translations in digital format has also given impetus to product-oriented research into student translation, i.e. to investigations of the actual texts produced by learner translators.

Analysing features of learner translation is not a new preoccupation for TS scholars, who have always been interested in describing features of texts translated by students, especially in order to identify phases of competence development. For example, Toury (1986) investigated the relationship between the students' degree of segmentation of the source texts in translation

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[7]   EMT   website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/european-masters-translation-emt_en (last access: May 2022).

[8]   The   *EMT   competence   framework   2017*   is   available   online   at https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/emt_competence_fwk_2017_en_web.pdf (last access: May 2022).

units (that is, parts of the texts for which a translation is sought, such as paragraphs, sentences, phrases or single words), the presence of negative transfer and translator experience; in another study, Puurtinen (2003) observed inconsistent translation strategies by students with respect to source text features possibly expressing ideology, such as hedging items and passive structures, which could result in the unintentional manipulation of the source text meaning. While such studies typically centred on the manual analysis of small sets of data, the new possibilities offered by corpus linguistics over the last decades have opened up new research paths on learner translation of great interest and potential.

Overview of contents

The investigation of learner translation with corpus methods has so far remained relatively marginal compared to the analysis of professional translation within the descriptive branch of TS commonly known as Corpus-Based Translation Studies (CBTS). However, corpus-based research on student translation appears to have been gaining interest and momentum since the early 2000s. This book represents the first book-length exploration of the affordances of learner translation corpora. It aims to provide a state-of-the-art account of this burgeoning research field and to demonstrate, by means of complementary empirical case studies, how these corpus resources can contribute to better descriptions of learner translation as well as to theoretical, methodological and descriptive advances in CBTS.

   Part I offers an overview of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of learner translation corpus (LTC) research. **Chapter 1** sets the scene for LTC research by presenting the tenets and the twenty-five-year evolution of the two disciplines it draws upon, namely CBTS and Learner Corpus Research (LCR). The first part of the chapter traces the birth and development of CBTS, focusing in particular on the search for regularities in translated texts which followed Baker's (1993) seminal paper on the potential use of corpora and corpus techniques

to identify common features of translated language. Baker's claim that corpora can help understand the peculiar nature of translation as a distinct communicative event favoured the emergence of largely explored research topics and constructs such as *translationese* and *translation universals*, which have long remained at the core of the discipline. The advent of the corpus methodology as a major research paradigm has also shaped another research area which also started to rise in the 1990s, namely LCR: in this field, electronic collections of foreign/second-language learner writing have been used to identify and describe typical features of learner production, with the ultimate aim of informing theory about second language acquisition and generating more efficient pedagogical approaches and teaching/learning materials (see Granger 1998, Granger et al. 2015). Although the above-mentioned research strands have long been kept separate, translated language and learner language have one common denominator: they are *mediated* varieties (Ulrych and Murphy 2008, Gaspari and Bernardini 2009, 2010), i.e. they both result from a process of mediation between two languages — namely the translator's source (SL) and target (TL) language, and the learner's native (L1) and second/foreign (L2) language, respectively — which has been shown to leave visible traces differentiating mediated varieties from native and non-translated language. Chapter 1 briefly reports on recent developments in this area, focusing on the notion of *constrained communication* (cf. Kotze 2022) and on the importance of taking into due consideration all the factors that can influence the characteristics of translated language, including individual-related factors affecting language use, translator style and translation choices.

Chapter 2 introduces LTC as special, multiple parallel corpora of student translations that are typically developed to investigate common translation patterns and difficulties, a twofold research focus that testifies to the double lineage of LTC. The main methodological approaches adopted so far in LTC research — outlined in the first part of the chapter — also build on established CBTS and LRC practices, revolving around the

analysis of translation errors as well as of common features of learner translated language compared to other varieties. The second part of the chapter traces the rapid growth of LTC since their appearance about two decades ago, surveying the most significant LTC initiatives and highlighting their contribution to the evolution of the research strand. A practice-oriented section is also included that, building on the above-mentioned survey, brings into the spotlight some of the most significant aspects of LTC creation. The final part of Chapter 2 makes suggestions for possible uses and applications of LTC in translation pedagogy, emphasising in particular the potential value of multi-parallel concordances for the analysis of regularities and variation in student translations and as a source of data for data-driven learning-oriented applications.

Part II of the book comprises two complementary case studies that aim to exemplify how LTC can help achieve better descriptions of the features of learner translation on a number of levels, but also contribute to theoretical and methodological advances in CBTS. In both cases, the focus is not on error analysis — which represents an already abundantly explored research topic — but rather on insights that can be gained thanks to the specific multiple nature of LTC with respect to important notions and constructs of CBTS. The case studies are based on English-to-Italian student translations taken from selected LTC that I have personally developed or contributed to develop, and rely on a combination of corpus-based and corpus-driven linguistically informed analyses.

The case study presented in **Chapter 3** zooms in on the notion of explicitation and its link with two other postulated regular features of translated texts (Baker 1993), namely normalisation and interference. Explicitation is one of the most widely studied phenomena within CBTS, where it has been presented as a potential translation universal; furthermore, it has been suggested by some scholars that less experienced translators might show a more pronounced tendency towards explicitatation (e.g. Levý 1965, Vinay and Darbelnet 1977, Blum-Kulka 1986), although corpus findings have not been conclusive (e.g.

Englund Dimitrova 2003 found that professionals added more connectives than students in Russian>Swedish translation). Taking shifts in conjunctive explicitness between source and target texts as an indicator of explicitation in translation, given by the use of more — or more specific — connectives, the study aims to assess to what extent explicitation is a feature of English-to-Italian student translations and to investigate if it might be related to target language preferences. For this purpose, the quantitative analysis of connective frequencies in source, target and comparable reference texts in the target language is complemented by more qualitative observations of multi-parallel concordances, that is parallel concordances showing alternative student renditions of the same source text excerpts. The study suggests that observing the proportion of translators opting for similar strategies can help judge on their adequacy and acceptability.

The study presented in **Chapter 4** focuses on the notion of variation and invariance in translation, touching upon important and evolving TS constructs like *interference* (e.g. Toury 1995)*, literal translation* (e.g. Chesterman 2011, Carl and Schaeffer 2017) and *default translation* (Halverson 2019). Building on the claim that providing a literal rendition of the ST is less cognitively demanding than a less literal translation (see e.g. Bangalore et al. 2016), and that learner and less experienced translators are more reluctant than professionals to depart from the ST surface structure (see e.g. Toury 1995, Kujamäki 2004), the case studies presented in this chapter aim to assess whether translations from two different LTC confirm that students opt for a literal translation whenever acceptable in the TL, to what extent this determines variation or invariance across translated texts — the hypothesis being that variation is higher when a literal translation (which would be the default translation) is not possible, and finally if literal translation and variation are connected to translator experience. For this purpose, multi-parallel concordances are produced for selected syntactic and lexical items expected to trigger different degrees of variation in translation.

The **Concluding remarks** section sums up the main findings of the case studies emphasising how, besides enhancing better descriptions of learner translation, the unique design of LTC offers new opportunities for CBTS and empirical translation studies in general, and sketching further avenues for LTC-based research.

THE ROAD TO LEARNER TRANSLATION CORPORA