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Introduction¹

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1. Translation and the dissemination of knowledge: Overview of an interdisciplinary and international research project

This volume of *Token: A Journal of English Linguistics* originates from an international research project funded by the University of Bergamo between 2015 and 2017 within its 'Excellence Initiatives' programme, and which also profited from the participation of students and staff from the Universities of Alcalá (Spain) and Giessen (Germany). The general topic of the project focused on the circulation of knowledge in the West, highlighting the important link existing between research and teaching, especially at the MA level. For this reason, it addressed the issue of knowledge dissemination from an interdisciplinary perspective; in particular, the project aimed to offer historical and methodological insights on the topic of translation, seen as an especially significant channel for the circulation of contents, both in the sense of representation of reality and in the sense of argumentation.

The diachronic perspective of the project deserves to be underlined because translation is addressed as one of the possible forms of cultural transmission from the past to the current world; it is therefore seen as a privileged tool for the cross-fertilization of cultures, not only for the linguistic and stylistic skills it implies, but also for the specificity of the cultures under comparison. It is on these grounds that this volume has chosen to address the topic of translation in a historical framework, taking into consideration how documents were translated, what tools the translators could rely on, and

¹ Although the authors worked closely on the preparation of this Introduction, Marina Dossena is responsible for Section 1 and the Dedication to the late Prof. Matti Rissanen at the end of the text, while Polina Shvanyukova is responsible for Section 2.

what instances of linguistic contiguity can be found even in monolingual texts in which social and geographical variation is discussed. At the same time, further reflections are offered on contemporary translation both in literature and in different media, not least in a didactic perspective².

The multidisciplinary nature of the studies conducted over the two years allowed valuable exchanges through contributions from different disciplines, which were nonetheless homogeneous in their methodological approach. In line with the specific areas of interest of the participants, the research areas mainly concerned the Italian, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Hispano-American, and Anglo-American languages, cultures, and literatures since the connections between them are as extensive as they are unavoidable, and therefore lend themselves to investigations also of a comparative nature. This multilingual approach has led to the preparation of different publications (in Italian, German, French, Spanish and English, all due to appear in 2018) in which the results achieved in the various branches of the project could be circulated. We are very privileged to offer this issue of *Token* as one of these publications, in the belief that it will prove of interest to our international readers.

2. The contents of this volume – an outline

The range of the topics discussed in the papers collected in this volume reflects the ubiquitous presence of translation practices, as well as the complexity and multifaceted nature of translation as a linguistic, cultural and social phenomenon. The first two papers in this issue (authored by Nicholas Brownlees and Massimo Sturiale) focus on newspaper discourse. Brownlees and Sturiale show how news publications can employ a varied repertoire of strategies to encode and disseminate powerful ideological stances. In seventeenth-century England, as **Nicholas Brownlees** explains, foreign news reached the English reading public mainly through translation, as news publications in English relied on sources in other European languages. At the same time, English-language newspapers could also be translated into other European languages in order to reach a wider reading public. Brownlees discusses the highly interesting case of *Gazette de Londres*, the

² Most papers included in this volume were first presented at an international conference held in Bergamo in September 2017, in which representatives of all partner institutions participated.

French version of the government-sponsored *London Gazette* and the only periodical newspaper of the Restoration period to run uninterruptedly for more than two decades. *Gazette de Londres* was printed as the officially authorised translation of the original English version, and yet, as Brownlee is able to show, the versions in English and in French were not exactly the same. The comparison of 11 numbers (issues) of *London Gazette* and *Gazette de Londres*, published in the summer of 1669, reveals intriguing differences in the layout, arrangement, inclusion/exclusion of news content, as well as in the way English news dispatches were translated into French. Although close translation was the most frequent strategy adopted by the translator, occasionally content was manipulated, sometimes with an explicitly ideological intent. In the latter case, an ideological translation strategy aimed to control, in more than one way, the reception of English news by the French-reading audience. Ultimately, it was through translation manipulation that the translator could, for example, promote the English government policy or lead his audience to believe that the events relating to the French court in the original *London Gazette* were cast in the same positive light as they were in the translated *Gazette de Londres*.

Explicit ideological colouring of newspaper discourse is also discussed in **Massimo Sturiale's** paper. His study examines the role of news publications in disseminating prescriptive linguistic attitudes in Britain and the United States in a critical period of 'linguistic instability' in Late Modern times. The corpus under investigation is composed of more than three hundred nineteenth-century "letters to the editor" and newspaper articles, collected from British and American sources, all dealing with issues of pronunciation. Sturiale's analysis makes it clear that the ideological agendas were markedly different on the two sides of the Atlantic, with British orthoepists, journalists and readers targeting 'vulgar' accents, i.e. regional English accents, at a time when their American counterparts were preoccupied with becoming more linguistically independent from Britain. However, the two news discourses had something in common as well: both actively engaged in the ideologically charged debate on standard language by providing space for laymen's opinions, comments and efforts to 'safeguard' what they considered 'proper' language use. Letters to the British and American editors, written to express strong prescriptive attitudes, often criticised specific phonological features, which were singled out as disgraceful and unacceptable. Some of these phonological features gradually became associated with a particular group, which would be stigmatised on the grounds of 'incorrect' pronunciation (e.g., *yod*-dropping as a stereotypical 'Americanism' for the British).

The next two papers address the social and cultural dimensions of lexical borrowing (Marina Dossena) and the role played by ideologically-motivated translation practices in the transfer of encyclopedic knowledge from the source into the target language (Elisabetta Lonati) in Late Modern times. **Marina Dossena's** paper is concerned with the ways in which Gaelic vocabulary, borrowed into (Scottish) English between 1700 and 1900, helped construct an enduring image of Scotland as a unique and exotic culture. With ca. 65% of Gaelic vocabulary entering English in the Late Modern period, the acquisition of new borrowings was greatly facilitated by widespread circulation of contemporary literary and popular culture works that preserved, promoted and popularised Celtic items. The analysis of the most important lexicographic sources of the period shows how culture-bound, untranslatable items (e.g., *caddis*, *plaid*, *dirk*, *carval*, *quaaltagh*, *kilt*) represent the largest group of the borrowings, whose provenance can be traced back to contemporary literary works. Dossena then discusses the role played by other text types, such as popular culture and non-literary works, in the diffusion of Gaelic vocabulary, focusing specifically on the narrations of the dramatic events of the last Jacobite rebellion. She is able to show how, in the aftermath of Culloden, the vast popularity of Sir Walter Scott's novels and their representations of Scotland and the Jacobite cause endorsed the preservation and the diffusion of lexical items associated with Scottish culture. Scott's novels, alongside other nineteenth-century text types, contributed to a significant cultural re-assessment and reinterpretation of Highland life, language and culture. Marina Dossena's study demonstrates how a multi-dimensional, multi-level kind of investigation, combining quantitative and qualitative methods with an in-depth historical and cultural analysis, can further our understanding of the complex relationship existing between historical events, their literary and popular culture representations, and lexical change in the intertwined history of Scots, Scottish English and Gaelic.

This encompassing approach is adopted also in **Elisabetta Lonati's** paper, which examines the mechanisms of the preservation and dissemination of culture-bound topics in Late Modern Europe. In her case study, Lonati looks at three eighteenth-century Italian translations of the 5th edition of Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia, or An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Science* (1741-34) and its 1753 *Supplement*. Chamber's work, published in Britain in two in-folio volumes in 1727, was the first reference work of its kind to introduce a system of complex cross-references, an innovation that marked the beginning of a new era in the encyclopaedic genre. The editorial success of Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* is attested by the many editions,

reprints and translations into other European languages in the course of the eighteenth century, which boosted the dissemination of British history and culture across Europe. The analysis of the Italian translations of the work, issued in Venice (1748-49 [1748-1753]), Naples (1747-54), and Genoa (1770-75), focuses on the translation/adaptation of the entries on religious dissent, a topic of particular interest from a historical and cultural perspective. Lonati conducts a qualitative, comparative analysis of the entries of the thirty major headwords pertaining to the notion of dissent (e.g., *dissenters/dissentisti/dissenzianti*, *nonconformists/noncoformisti/nonconformisti*) in the English and the three Italian versions. On a general level, the major finding is that all English headwords and entries relating to the notion of religious dissent have been included in the translated works. Moreover, the three Italian texts, in most cases, represent a word-for-word version of the English original. However, instances of more or less significant manipulation of the source text are also present, and Lonati details the varied inventory of the translation strategies that are employed to modify the contents of the original entries. Lonati complements her linguistic analysis with a close reading of the accompanying prefaces, shedding light on the social, cultural and ideological background in which the Italian translations were produced.

The papers by Polina Shvanyukova and John Douthwaite offer two complementary perspectives on translation used as a didactic tool in English-language teaching. In **Polina Shvanyukova's** paper, the use of Italian glosses and explanatory notes is scrutinised in two nineteenth-century business letter-writing manuals, J. Millhouse – W. Anderson's *Practical Mercantile Correspondence, Collection of Modern Letters of Business, etc.* (1873 [1856]), and T. Cann's *Comprehensive Letter-Writer: A Complete Guide to English Correspondence* (1878). These two guides were addressed to Italian learners of English who had an interest in learning how to read and write business letters and documents in English. As such, the goal of these didactic works was to teach the specialised commercial style of letter-writing and in both cases the authors relied on a repertoire of translation practices to realise their objective. Shvanyukova provides a quantitative overview of the number and types of glosses included in 110 model business letters from the two manuals. The preferred translational strategy for both authors is the use of single or two-item glosses as a way of introducing specialised commercial terminology. The selection of the items to be glossed reflects the authors' awareness of the importance of acquiring specialised vocabulary. The analysis of glossed adjectives also reveals how culturally specific norms of conduct were transmitted as an integral part of language teaching.

With multi-item glosses, the authors choose to focus on different types of formulaic structures typical of nineteenth-century business English. In Cann's manual, for example, the learner's efforts are directed at the acquisition of longer routinised sequences, of the type 'I beg to do X', which are glossed consistently in different model letters. As Shvanyukova's paper shows, historical didactic materials of this type represent a treasure trove of information on the contemporary language teaching methods, as well as the business practices of the time.

The contribution by **John Douthwaite**, instead, discusses literary translation. How difficult would it be to translate into Italian (or any other language for that matter) an English sentence as short and simple as "Mrs. Mooney was a butcher's daughter"? Extrapolated from its original context, the sentence appears to be transparent and straightforward. However, in its original context of James Joyce's short story "The Boarding House", Douthwaite argues, this sentence represents a challenge even for an experienced translator. In order to render the translation as accurately as possible, training in interpreting the source text becomes an essential part of the translation process. In guiding the reader through the practice of the preparatory stylistic analysis, Douthwaite shows how every single word in the source text has to be carefully evaluated before a translation of a literary text can be attempted, to make sure that the translator can transfer the effects (i.e., the meanings conveyed and the reactions expected from the reader) of the source text into the target language. Douthwaite's stimulating discussion addresses the many challenges that the teaching of literary translation poses, at the same time it highlights the multitude of opportunities this complex task can offer.

The last two papers in this volume are concerned with the role of translation as a vehicle of cultural dissemination in two different genres: those of museum website pages (Judith Turnbull) and cinematic script (Larissa D'Angelo). **Judith Turnbull** discusses the linguistic, pragmatic and cultural complications associated with museum communication in translation on the example of the English versions of Italian museum websites. Significant differences in the communication style that characterises the English and the Italian museum discourses undoubtedly represent one of the major challenges facing translators: the latter appear to adopt a more formal, impersonal style, with more obscure and dense Italian texts containing a lot of specialised terminology, while the former sound more informal, resulting in clear and friendly English texts. Moreover, in the contemporary globalised world, an English translation of an Italian museum website can be deemed

successful only if it is accessible to native and non-native English-speaking audiences alike. Turnbull's analysis of pages from the official websites of eighteen Italian museums shows that their translations into English tend to be literal and, at times, they manifest a degree of linguistic 'foreignness', possibly as a result of the use of English as a lingua franca to appeal to a more international audience. However, according to Turnbull, the main issue is not the 'foreignised' version of the English text, but the failure, on the part of Italian museum professionals, to limit the use of highly technical, professional jargon which resurfaces in translation; another problem is that more background knowledge ought to be provided on culture-specific references, such as events in Italian history or specific aspects of Italian culture and artistic heritage, with which international visitors are unlikely to be familiar.

Culture-specific references (CSRs) feature prominently also in **Larissa D'Angelo's** paper, which investigates the differences found in the Italian dubbing and redubbing of Steven Spielberg's motion picture *E.T. The Extraterrestrial*. The study analyses three different versions of the movie script: the original 1982 version in English, the 1982 dubbed version in Italian, and the redubbed version in Italian produced in 2002 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the movie. D'Angelo applies Vinay – Darbelnet's (1958/2002) taxonomy to identify the preferred translation techniques employed in the two Italian versions. This investigation shows that the more recent, redubbed Italian version relies more on techniques such as Adaptation, Borrowing and Literal Translation when it comes to culture-specific references, and thus shifts the orientation of the first dubbed version from the target culture to the source text.

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Dedication

While this issue was in preparation, we were reached by the sad news of Prof. Matti Rissanen's untimely passing. Prof. Rissanen was a pioneer in diachronic corpus linguistics, and many of us were among the first users of the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, a project coordinated by Prof. Rissanen at the University of Helsinki, which would become a milestone among historical analyses of language variation across genres. Many of us were also privileged to know Prof. Rissanen in person and to appreciate his

unfailing support and generosity with younger scholars, his modesty, and his kindness. He has been a constant source of inspiration, and his legacy will continue in the work of all those who have benefited from his expertise. It is therefore with much gratitude that this issue of *Token* is dedicated to Prof. Matti Rissanen's memory.

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