

Translation textbooks: translation into English as a foreign language

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Abstract & Keywords

English: This paper examines translation into English as a foreign language as presented in translation textbooks offering Italian and English as working languages. By translation textbook is intended a practical work on translation providing texts for practice, with commentaries and/or annotations and/or suggested versions. Following a brief overview of (i) the status and training of translation into English as a foreign language, (ii) the basic differences between translation into a foreign language and into a native language, and (iii) the status and role of translation textbooks, there will be a review of the main English / Italian textbooks, with a distinction between those of a more vocational and a less vocational emphasis. The main purpose of this review is to assess firstly to what degree translation into a foreign language is catered for in these works, and secondly to what degree the vocational vs. non-vocational dichotomy is actually preserved. It will be claimed that failure to clarify these aspects not only hinders students' progress, but may lead to incomprehension between students and teachers during the process of assessment.

Keywords: translation textbooks, translation into a foreign language, translation into a native language, training, vocational translation, non-vocational translation, pedagogical translation, directionality, english-italian translation, translation into l1, translation into l2

Books discussed in this article: Hervey, Sándor, Ian Higgins, Stella Craigie and Patrizia Gambarotta. 2000. *Thinking Italian Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Italian to English*, London and New York: Routledge. - Laviosa, Sara. 2008. *Linking Wor(l)ds: Lexis and Grammar for Translation*. Naples: Liguori. - Laviosa, Sara and Valerie Cleverton. 2003. *Learning by Translating. A course in Translation: English to Italian and Italian to English*. Bari: Edizioni del Sud. - Ulrych, Margherita. 1992. *Translating Texts: From Theory to Practice*. Rapallo: Cideb Editrice. - Taylor, Christopher. 1998. *Language to Language. A Practical and Theoretical Guide for English/Italian Translators*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1. Translation into a foreign language: status and training

Since this paper is concerned with translation into a foreign language within pedagogical settings, the question of translation into a foreign language both in translation theory and in professional circles lies outside the scope of this work, but see Stewart (2000) for a summary. Suffice it to say here that although the traditional scarcity of reference to translation into a foreign language in translation theory remains a characteristic of contemporary translation studies, the situation has changed somewhat over the last twenty years or so with the publication of a number of works on the topic, including conference proceedings (Grosman et al. 2000, Kelly et al. 2003) and monographs (Campbell 1998, Pokorn 2005). It has been argued, however – notably by Kearns (2007) – that these developments in the academic field are not mirrored in professional ambiances, where attitudes to translation into a foreign language remain circumspect. Kearns goes on to point out that such attitudes are very much dependent upon the 'local' situation. In countries where Languages of Limited Diffusion (LLDs) are

spoken, such circumspection may be almost entirely absent. There are, for example, so few non-Polish translators with an acceptable command of Polish that questions of directionality [1] are practically redundant, i.e., it would simply be unrealistic to decree that, for example, only native speakers of English should translate from Polish to English. A macroscopic example of this is translation from Chinese to other languages.

In Italy the practice of translating into a foreign language is widespread, perhaps especially in the tourist sector. Testimony to this are those endless examples of risibly unidiomatic translation solutions that we all find in holiday brochures and websites, whose producers provide infallible evidence that they have had either inadequate training in translation or no training at all.

The teaching of translation into a foreign language is commonplace in translation faculties throughout Europe. It is also common in language faculties, though here there is a greater tendency to adopt it as a language-learning activity – along with reading comprehension, listening comprehension, cloze exercises etc. – rather than as a translation-learning activity as such, and in this sense one is reminded of the traditional prose translation of schools of classical orientation. See Stewart (2008) for more details. Translation into a foreign language is also nominally present in translation textbooks. However, as I shall argue in this paper, it receives less attention in textbooks than appearances might suggest.

2. Differences between translating into a foreign language and into a native language

It is probably fair to assume that anyone reading this article will already have formed a reasonable idea of the differences between the two directionalities, but it may be helpful to include some contributions on the subject on the part of translation scholars. Campbell (1998:57) writes that:

The two activities are in a way mirror images. In translating from a second language, the main difficulty is in comprehending the source text; it is presumably much easier to marshal one's first language resources to come up with a natural looking target text. In translating into a second language, comprehension of the source text is the easier aspect; the real difficulty is in producing a target text in a language in which composition does not come naturally.

Kiraly's (2000:117) observations are along similar lines:

When the translation direction is into the mother tongue, the translator must use non-native comprehension competence to interpret the foreign language text for re-expression using native speaker production competence. Perhaps production in this direction can generally be expected to be more idiomatic, more grammatically accurate, and more stylistically appropriate than language production in a foreign language. The situation is naturally reversed for translation into a non-native language. While production into the foreign language is expected to cause more production difficulties for the translator, perhaps comprehension of the native language text can be expected to be deeper, more nuanced and more accurate.

Thus the translator into a native language feels more confident about encoding the target language but may not fully appreciate all the subtleties of the source language, whereas the translator into a foreign language feels more confident about decoding the source language but tends to be on less firm ground when encoding the target language. And it is precisely this notion of encoding the foreign target language which makes many people, including translators themselves, feel uncomfortable about translation into a foreign language. All the more reason, one would have thought, to distinguish it as clearly as possible from translation into a native language and to cater for it accordingly, encouraging trainees to adopt intelligent strategies and to exploit appropriate language and encyclopaedic resources (as in Stewart (forthcoming)). For further comments on the tension between the two directionalities, see Pedersen (2000), Rodríguez and Schnell (2003:180), as well as Malkiel (2004), who reports on a directionality experiment at the Israel and Bar-Ilan University involving native and non-native speakers of English. For discussions of the more general issue of how far one can distinguish native language and non-native language, see for example Pokorn (2005) and Lorenzo (2003:96).

3. Translation textbooks

3.1 Translation textbooks: distribution and use

An overview of translation textbooks in terms of distribution, use and text-types, is included in Stewart (2008), but for the sake of convenience I shall reproduce some of that overview here.

Kelly (2005:84) notes that notwithstanding the number of textbooks generally available for specific language combinations, most translation trainers prefer to use and develop their own material, because: (i) textbooks have a short shelf-life, (ii) courses are sometimes designed with the local context in mind, so a textbook including material for an array of diverse situations may not be the best solution, (iii) many trainers are professional translators, and may prioritise material they have already translated, thus giving students the benefit of tangible experience, (iv) many textbooks confine themselves to exercises in contrastive grammar, and are thus not ideal for a vocational course. The outcome of this situation is that (*ibid*:84) “textbooks in the traditional sense of a course-book to be followed from beginning to end as the basis for a module are, therefore, in fact a little-used resource in translator training”.

I would not dispute Kelly’s observations, but we need to bear in mind that although teachers may not follow textbooks from beginning to end, they do extract passages of interest from them for analysis and translation in class. Further, and perhaps more crucial, textbooks can usually be found in bookshops and libraries for self-study. This being the case, even if teachers may not be particularly keen on using them in class, students may well be keen on using them at home, especially if they have problems of attendance – in Italy university lecturers are required to provide an alternative syllabus for non-attending students. It is also worth bearing in mind that teachers often recommend textbooks for extra study as a backup to classroom activities (see also Kearns 2006:212-213). With this in mind it seems to me that the issue of translation textbooks urgently needs to be addressed, above all – as we shall see – with reference to translation into a foreign language.

3.2 Text typology in translation textbooks

Kelly (2000:160) underlines that very little has been written on the criteria adopted by translation trainers in selecting texts for translation: “I believe that text selection is one of the most important aspects of our teaching activity and, as such, it is disheartening to see just how (albeit informedly) haphazard it often is”.

Of course it is difficult to monitor on a broad scale exactly what text typologies are preferred in the translation classroom, but the situation is clearer as regards translation textbooks. In order to investigate this it will be necessary to make a distinction between vocational and non-vocational textbooks.

3.3 Vocational and non-vocational textbooks

As stated in the introduction, ‘translation textbook’ is here intended as a practical work on translation offering texts for practice, with commentaries and/or suggested translations. It should be emphasised at once that the definition of textbook adopted here is narrower than that of other authors such as Youlan (2005), who includes under the heading of ‘textbook’ Bell’s (1991) *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice* and Munday’s (2001) *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. The works I have in mind almost always deal with a specific language pair and have a mostly practical orientation, with the majority of the book devoted to translation practice. For this reason I exclude from my analysis, for example, the recent works by Gatto (2009) *From Body to Web: An Introduction to the Web as Corpus*, and Torresi (2010) *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts*, despite the fact that they supply many examples between Italian and English.

Some translation textbooks have a more non-vocational orientation, exploiting translation primarily as a language-learning activity, while others are more vocational in outlook, often simulating typical situations encountered by operators in the translation market. The difference between the two types may be summarised as follows:

textbooks concerned with non-vocational translation are generally restricted to

passages or sentences for translation practice together with commentaries and / or suggested versions. In these works there is a tendency to focus on passages of a literary or journalistic nature.

textbooks concerned with vocational translation tend to include briefs which are designed to reflect or simulate professional translation assignments. These too provide commentaries and translations, and some of them also tackle theoretical issues, which may contain recommendations for later 'practicals'. Included are a wide range of text types, many of them promotional, with some drawn from the tourist sector.

The division proposed is simplistic, firstly because some vocational translation textbooks take up theoretical aspects to such an extent that the term 'textbook' becomes something of a misnomer, and secondly because other textbooks constitute a mixture of the two categories proposed, inasmuch as they acknowledge the needs of the professional market, but are at the same time highly language-oriented and task-based in their approach, focusing on various types of language (i.e., not only translational) activities. Let us now consider the two typologies in more detail.

3.3.1 Non-vocational textbooks

Textbooks of the non-vocational type available in Italy, though offering plenty of translation into English as a foreign language, manifest an overwhelming predilection for literary texts, though newspaper articles are recurrent too. The main reason for the choice of such text-types is probably that they are felt to be generally more interesting and/or topical than other types, "a stimulating challenge in class" (Snell-Hornby 2000:38). Passages for translation in, for example, Brownlees and Denton (1988) and Falinski (1990) are nearly all drawn from Italian literature and newspapers, while other works, such as Coles (1992), Wardle (1996), and Cignatta (2000) deal almost exclusively with the translation of literature.

Such texts, though extremely useful in language pedagogy and providing important groundwork for courses in translation 'proper', are not directly concerned with translation in the vocational sense. Indeed they are perhaps more accurately described as exercises in contrastive grammar and lexis. Italian university students wishing to learn or practise skills in translation proper are thus required to seek elsewhere. Let us now turn our attention to those works with more vocational leanings.

3.3.2 Vocational translation textbooks

The best-known vocationally-oriented translation textbooks in Italy with Italian and English as working languages are the following:

Ulrych 1992. *Translating Texts: From Theory to Practice*.

Taylor 1998. *Language to Language. A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Italian / English Translators*.

Hervey et al. 2000. *Thinking Italian Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Italian to English*.

Laviosa and Cleverton 2003. *Learning by Translating. A Course in Translation: English to Italian and Italian to English*.

Laviosa 2008. *Linking Wor(l)ds: Lexis and Grammar for Translation*.

In what follows I shall provide a brief survey of these works, [2] which will consider in particular how useful they are to the student translator of Italian to English as a foreign language for professional purposes.

Ulrych 1992. *Translating Texts: From Theory to Practice*.

The principal aim of Ulrych's work is "to provide intermediate and advanced trainee translators and language students with the rationale that lies behind translation processes so that they will be able to tackle all text-types" (1992:10). In order to do this the author examines a number of aspects crucial to the translation process, such as pragmatics, text function, socio-cultural context, and stylistics. Particularly important is the subsequent focus on textual organisation in terms of phenomena such as thematisation, information focus and cohesion. Discussions and examples are generally bi-directional, i.e., both English to Italian and Italian to English, though in the final two chapters – Chapter 9, in which two Italian source texts and their translations are analysed, and Chapter 10, offering texts for further practice – the direction is

exclusively Italian to English.

It is thus the case that translation into English as a foreign language is certainly present in this book, though the two passages for translation in Chapter 9, used by the author as exam papers for final-year students at the University of Padua, are drawn from the prestigious daily newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera* and have a strongly literary, rhetorical feel to them. According to many of the authors cited in Sections 1-2 above, such passages would be unsuitable for trainee translators working into a foreign language, and it may well be that Ulrych's exams constituted primarily a language-testing assessment, with no particular professional translation scenario in mind.

Taylor 1998. *Language to Language. A practical and theoretical guide for Italian / English translators.*

Part 1 of this work explores a number of questions affecting translation on a linguistic-semantic level (e.g., terminology, context, function, pragmatics), and analyzes several different text types as a guide to the multiple factors involved in the process of translating. Part 2 offers texts for practice, both Italian to English and English to Italian, with commentaries and translations. The book's strength lies not only in the link between the theoretical background of the opening chapters and the practical nature of the rest, but also in the fact that it offers an substantial array of text typologies for analysis (literary, technical, scientific, legal, commercial, journalistic, promotional, film).

Taylor's book provides valuable advice on translation techniques in both directions, from Italian to English and from English to Italian, and a directionality distinction between translation into a native language and translation into a foreign language is included in the introduction to Part 2: "The methodology outlined in this section will deal with translating both into and out of the translator's native language" (1998:157). The Italian to English translations, "where the translation is into the author's mother tongue" (*ibid*:158), are presented in terms of the author's 'rolling translation', whereby "translators gradually mould *their native language* into the required shape, by sifting through the layers of meaning in the *foreign language source text*" [my italics], i.e., an initial stage consisting of a fairly literal rendering which is then honed to make it appropriate in terms of "semantic, pragmatic, stylistic and cultural features" (*ibid*:158).

This reference to the "foreign language source text" clarifies that the Italian to English texts for practice are addressed to native speakers of English, and this is substantiated by some of the suggestions and recommendations in the Italian to English text commentaries provided. For instance, when discussing the translation of *grandi mutevoli cieli* [literally 'large changeable skies'] in a tourist brochure, Taylor writes: "The final noun phrase *grandi mutevoli cieli* should create some kind of image in the translator's mind, perhaps that of *wide rolling skies*" (*ibid*:308). The implied transition, apparently unassisted by language resources, from the image in the translator's mind to the string of words 'wide rolling skies' seems feasible enough for native English-speaking student translators, but is probably beyond the reach of the average Italian student translating into English as foreign language, even with the aid of standard language resources – for example in bilingual Italian/English dictionaries *mutevole* is rendered by equivalents such as 'changeable', 'variable', 'mutable', 'unsettled' and 'inconstant', while 'rolling' is absent.

It therefore seems clear that as regards the Italian to English direction in *Language to Language*, the author has the native English-speaking student translator in mind and is therefore dealing with translation into a native language. Since the present article focuses on translation from Italian to English, I shall not comment on the English to Italian passages in *Language to Language*, but one has the impression that these too constitute translation into a native language, since they appear to be intended principally for native speakers of Italian. (Just one example: in the commentary on an excerpt from *Martin Chuzzlewit* for translation into Italian, and more specifically on the sequence 'not more than a shilling's worth of gin', the reader is urged to note "the saxon genitive on *shilling*" (1998:164), a recommendation whose beneficiaries are evidently not native speakers of English.)

If the above is correct, we must conclude that all the translation practicals in the book, whether the direction is English into Italian or vice-versa, are concerned with translation into a native language. In which case, translation into a foreign language is absent.

This is not to suggest, however, that *Language to Language* would be of no use to translators into a foreign language. On the contrary, the book is extremely rich in insights and strategies regarding translation between Italian and English in general, and the author supplies invaluable tips regarding specific translation equivalents, for example, Italian terms indicating (areas of) towns, villages etc. (*paese, comune, borgo, frazione* (*ibid*:303-305)). All this is vital information for students involved in Italian / English translation, irrespective of directionality, but the fact remains that translation into a foreign language as a specific activity does not lie within the remit of this work.

Hervey et al. 2000. *Thinking Italian Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Italian to English.*

This textbook offers passages for translation exclusively from Italian to English, and embraces a variety of text-types. Briefs are provided for each translation practical in order to simulate professional situations, an approach often commended in translation studies – Klein-Braley (1996:24-25), for example, urges that in the classroom “we should work on translation materials for which a scenario can be developed: a text is needed by a specific client, for a specific purpose, and is addressed to a specific audience”.

Although the book can be found in Italian university environments, the stated target readership is actually native-English speakers who already have “a good command of Italian”, and more specifically final-year undergraduates, postgraduates, “or others seeking an academic or professional qualification in translation” (Hervey et al. 2000:2). The ideal readers are thus students translating from Italian to English as a native language.

This notwithstanding, we find the proviso that the book will also be of use for “Italian students seeking to improve their skills in translation into English” (*ibid*:2). Note that with this proviso no change of direction is involved (Italian to English remains Italian to English); what we are confronted with is a change of directionality, from translation into a native language (Italian to English for native English-speaking readers) to translation into a foreign language (Italian to English for native Italian-speaking readers). Despite this, no methodological distinction between translation into a native language and translation into a foreign language is apparent here or anywhere else in the book, with the result that the reader may conclude that the two directionalities are methodologically very similar.

This textbook therefore deals with the translation of various text typologies within a vocational framework, but does not concern itself in any methodological sense with translation into a foreign language. Thus once again users wishing to practice specific skills in translation into English as a foreign language within a vocational setting are obliged to continue their quest.

Laviosa and Cleverton 2003. *Learning by Translating. A Course in Translation: English to Italian and Italian to English.*

Overall this book has a very concrete, pedagogical approach. As immediately clarified by its title, the emphasis is on language learning, and the translation activities offered are bidirectional, both English to Italian and Italian to English. Indeed the title *Learning by Translating* would initially suggest that this text is fundamentally concerned with non-vocational translation, i.e., language-learning through translation. This emphasis is apparently confirmed in the brief introduction, where the entire initiative is linked to “the *language* curricula recently introduced in Italian universities” [my italics] (2003:8). This statement also reveals the target readership – Italian university students – who will thus have the opportunity to practise both translation into their native language (English to Italian), and translation into English as a foreign language (Italian to English), though the fact that the book is written in English rather than Italian would suggest that a broader target readership is envisaged.

In the light of the above, therefore, the first impression is that this work epitomises non-vocational translation. However, a rapid glance through the chapters suffices to reveal that this is not the whole story. On the contrary, what is especially commendable about this book is that it provides a detailed, personalised and precise translation brief for each and every assignment, of which there are something like fifty, drawn from an impressive range of professional domains. Each of these briefs contains background information about the communicative situation in question (e.g., the commission itself, the target readership, the formality / informality of the context etc.), something which

is extremely helpful and motivating for the student, now released from the traditional translation vacuum and immersed in a realistic vocational scenario.

In view of the admirably clear exposition and the eminently 'realistic' orientation of this work, it is perhaps surprising that no methodological clarification is included with regard to the question of translation into a native language vs. translation into a foreign language. There are certainly references to questions concerning translation *direction* (principally that in very general terms translating from English to Italian is not the same as translating from Italian to English, the difference being mainly one of register), but the overall impression we have as far as directionality is concerned is that the skills attendant upon translation into a native language and translation into a foreign language are the same.

Having said that, the Italian student in search of practice and advice on the translation into English as a foreign language for professional purposes will be relieved to find that s/he now has some material to work on. For example, one of the texts Laviosa and Cleverton provide for translation is drawn from a magazine published by the Tourist Board of the Republic of San Marino, and concerns the local jazz festival. Here is an extract – the parts in bold will be analysed subsequently.

*Siamo già al lavoro per la prossima edizione che si terrà da domenica 12 a domenica 19 luglio, e che logicamente prevede alcune **grosse novità**. [...] La Milano jazzistica degli anni '50 e '60 sarà presente con alcuni suoi protagonisti: il chitarrista Franco Cerri, i pianisti Enrico Intra e Renato Sellani, l'armonicista Bruno de Filippi e il tenorsassofonista Gianni Basso **si susseguiranno** sulla pedana di Piazza Sant'Agata, ricordando i momenti più salienti del jazz meneghino di quegli anni.*

*George Gershwin verrà ricordato anche in questa edizione in quanto ricorre il centenario della sua nascita avvenuta nel 1898. A ricordarlo sarà il pianista Nando de Luca che dirigerà la sua big band che si prodigherà nel **riproporre alcuni successi** del celebre compositore (Laviosa and Cleverton 2003:102-103; also present in Laviosa 2008:106)*

The text is accompanied by the usual brief which contextualises the translation situation, in addition to annotations and suggestions for a more effective rendering. The translation supplied by the authors is the following:

We are already working on the next production which will be held from Sunday 12th - Sunday 19th July and will of course include some **great novelties**. [...] Some of the leading figures from the Milanese Jazz scene of the 50s and the 60s will be present: the guitarist Franco Cerri, the pianists Enrico Intra and Renato Sellani, the harmonica player Bruno de Filippi e the tenor sax player Gianni Basso **will succeed each other** on the stage in Piazza Sant'Agata recalling some of the most salient moments of Milanese jazz in those years.

George Gershwin will be remembered too in this Festival as the centenary of his birth in 1898 falls this year. He will be recalled by the pianist Nando de Luca with his big band that will **propose some of the successes** of the famous composer (Laviosa and Cleverton 2003:219-220; also present in Laviosa 2008:213).

It will be noted that the authors' translations shadow the source text quite closely, and with this in mind one appreciates the authors' laudable intention of not 'losing' the reader with renderings which would be too sophisticated for the average student translating into English as a second language. However, shadowing the source text in this way carries the risk of producing target text solutions which do not sound entirely natural or idiomatic. Not that this is necessarily a grievous fault, indeed it may be defended, as we shall see below, but it has important implications for the issue of vocational vs. non-vocational translation. Let us consider some examples by turning to the sequences highlighted above in the source and target texts.

(a) **grosse novità** / **great novelties**. The student who makes good use not only of

traditional language resources but also of online collections of native-speaker texts would be hard-pushed to find attestations of the expressions which I have highlighted in bold in the translation, or at least attestations with the meaning intended in this text. The co-occurrence 'great novelties', for example, is not present in the archives of *The Daily Telegraph* or in the *British National Corpus*, and occurs just once in the archives of *The Guardian*, interestingly with reference to Italian fashion. This would suggest that such a co-occurrence is unusual in British English at least, whereas the Italian *grosse novità* and particularly the synonymous *grandi novità* are reasonably frequent.

(b) **si susseguiranno / will succeed each other**. The verb 'succeed' (from here on references to this verb indicate all its morphological forms – 'succeed', 'succeeding', 'succeeds', 'succeeded') certainly has a transitive use (which would legitimise the use of the reciprocal pronoun as object), and this is normally listed as the third or fourth definition in dictionaries for advanced learners. For example the *MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, having provided meanings 1 and 2, for both of which 'fail' is given as antonym, then lists meaning n.3:

3. [T] to replace someone in an important or powerful job or position: *In 1649 Turkey's Sultan Ibrahim was succeeded by Mohammed IV.*

This is followed by an example of 'succeed somebody as something', and then by definition 3a:

3a. *formal* to follow and replace something: *Embarrassment had now been succeeded by fear.*

This last meaning looks closer to what is required in the above translation, but these dictionary entries should be approached with caution. In the definition of 3a: (i) the grammatical object is given as inanimate ('something'), and indeed in the example the grammatical subject is also given as inanimate ('embarrassment'); (ii) the register is classified as formal. Since in the text above it is people (musicians) who are 'succeeding' people, and since the register is generally an informal one, definition 3a is not as appropriate as one might first imagine. A similar definition is to be found in the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*:

5. If one thing is succeeded by another, the other thing happens or comes after it. *A quick divorce can be succeeded by a much longer – and more agonising – period of haggling over the fate of the family.*

Here it is the definition which suggests that both subject and agent are inanimate, and the use is described as usually passive, something which again runs counter to the translation supplied by Laviosa and Cleverton, where the verb is active. Further, in neither the *MacMillan* nor the *Cobuild* is there any reference to the use of 'succeed' with the reciprocal forms 'each other' or 'one another'. Of course the reciprocal structure cannot be excluded, because 'succeed' has transitive meanings, and indeed it is attested in the *British National Corpus*. A query builder for 'succeed' in all its verb forms co-occurring with 'each other' within a span of 8 retrieved the following occurrences:

Philip *succeeded* in keeping them at *each other's* throats, or at Henry's coat-tails and, after a moment, *succeeded* in recognising *each other*. Fleury, too, had grown stout
Genera, sub-species etc., can *succeed each other* temporarily or permanently, and if
just a little smaller – and the clusters *succeed each other* almost continuously, or at least
'The soil never rests in these huertas, crops *succeed each other* without interruption... Night
and these two sentiments may *succeed each other* as, say, a regional grouping for mutual
not well-defined. Events do not *succeed each other* in time, instead reversible metaphor is
order do these modes of production *succeed each other* and how is their sequence to be
the succession of images – and they *succeed each other* with alarming frequency – enables us
The bus lines were mappable – new buses *succeeded each other* infinitely. Everything was
Pictorial discoveries and transformations *succeeded each other* rapidly. The quality of the
Scawen Blunt [q.v.], and two sons who *succeeded each other* as Baron Wentworth and second

In this concordance the first two occurrences may be discarded at once, since the reciprocal pronoun links not with 'succeeded' but with 'keep' and 'recognise' respectively. In the remaining lines 'succeed each other' has only things as grammatical subject, both concrete (crops, buses) and abstract (sentiments), with the exception of the last one, where the meaning connects with the notion of lineage. Thus the evidence from both the *British National Corpus* and from learner's dictionaries suggests that in British English 'succeed each other' does not, so to speak, enjoy people's company, and it is also worth noting that we have found no example / occurrence of this structure with 'will' (Laviosa and Cleverton use 'will succeed each other'). The

impression is that the translation provided by the authors is both collocationally and colligationally uneasy.

(c) **riproporre alcuni successi / propose some of the successes.** The co-occurrence 'propose success(es)' is also unusual. It is not attested in the main learner's dictionaries, and searches involving various combinations of the two words with all forms of the verb ('propose a success', 'proposed some successes' 'proposes a number of successes', 'successes were proposed' etc.) in the *British National Corpus*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* produce no relevant occurrences. The main collocates of 'propose' (again all forms of the verb are intended) would appear to be those listed in the *MacMillan*: 'change, idea, plan, reform, scheme, solution, theory', and of course you can 'propose a motion' and 'propose marriage', but there is no trace of the combination of 'propose' and 'success(es)'. (Laviosa 2008:213 supplies a slightly different rendering for this sequence, i.e., '... will play some of the successes', but even this seems unidiomatic.)

3.4 Appropriate or inappropriate translations?

My comments so far might lead the reader to think that I consider inappropriate the translation solutions discussed above, but this would be an over-simplification of the issue. Any judgements of the solutions in question must hinge upon the parameters adopted to make such judgements. If the translations are considered with the professional translation market in mind, then my response would be that they could well be appropriate. If, for instance, they were to appear in a tourist flyer or brochure targeting holidaymakers in Italy, one imagines that the average reader in search of useful, rapid information, would not bat an eyelid when confronted with the expressions analysed, because although such expressions may not sound totally natural, at least in British English, they have the important advantage of semantic clarity. Tourists tend to privilege communicative function and successful transmission of the message rather than smooth style or rhetorical grace. Further, we need to bear in mind that the typical readership of such translations is international, and therefore mostly non-native speakers of English, the vast majority of whom are very unlikely to notice that there is anything stylistically or collocationally uneasy about 'great novelties', 'succeed each other', 'propose some of the successes', or even about 'salient moments' (also present in the translation examined above).

Another crucial point in favour of the solutions analysed is that their absence from collections of native speaker texts does not automatically mean they do not exist or cannot be used. Such resources can give us an idea of what is attested or what is likely to be attested, but cannot tell us what is not attested or what is not possible. Moreover, the resources I adopted above to aid my analysis (e.g., *MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, *British National Corpus*, and the archives of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*) are all based on British English, and one can undoubtedly question the necessity and wisdom of circumscribing the language of a text destined for an international readership to usage adopted in Britain alone. [3]

In view of the arguments produced above, one could certainly support the idea that the translations supplied by Laviosa and Cleverton, notwithstanding the fact that they do not seem wholly idiomatic, are acceptable for publications intended for an international readership. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that if we switch the focus to a more strictly pedagogical setting, such translations have their drawbacks.

The first drawback is that Laviosa and Cleverton may inadvertently give users of their book the impression that literal translations are the most appropriate. Yet a successful combination of literalness and naturalness is hard to achieve, and in any case student translators – and this is particularly true of those translating into a foreign language – often perform better when they *avoid* adhering too closely to the source language, i.e., when they are encouraged to reformulate creatively, for example by adjusting the syntactic and sentential structure of the source text.

The second drawback is that users of this textbook – especially those translating into English as a foreign language – who make the most of on-line resources of native-speaker English such as dictionaries, corpora and archives, may wonder where solutions such as 'great novelties' and 'salient moments' actually come from, in view of the fact that they are not attested in those resources. Some insidious knock-on effects of this could be that the Italian users translating into English (many of whom, as pointed out earlier, work alone or at least without the assistance of a teacher):

(i) will be discouraged by their failure to achieve or even to justify the solutions provided by the authors, perhaps erroneously deducing that, however assiduously they adopt language and information resources, they will generally be unable to come up with suitable target language solutions.

(ii) might convince themselves that an 'anything goes' policy is the best, that just about any combination of words is possible as long as the meaning of the source text is somehow preserved.

(iii) will conclude that translation into English as a foreign language is unreachable, and therefore best left to native speakers of English.

4. The hybrid nature of vocational translation

It is thus the case that the translation solutions discussed here can be both defended and attacked. As far as translation as a language-learning exercise is concerned, it seems to me that the solutions are open to criticism – if my Italian students were to produce solutions such as these I would assume that they were not making proper use of the language resources available to them – but within a vocational translation scenario the situation is rather more complex.

The reason for this lies in the essentially hybrid nature of vocational translation, particularly vocational translation into a foreign language, which simultaneously entails both language training and translation training, looking two ways at once – towards both the language classroom and towards the professional market. Personally I consider this to be something of a dilemma, and it can certainly complicate the process of translation assessment. Recently I marked the exam paper of an Italian student who was following my course in vocational translation. The general quality of her English was excellent, but about halfway through the text she translated the Italian *cedro* with 'cedar' (the name of a tree or the type of wood deriving from it), whereas the reference was actually to 'citron', i.e., a citrus fruit (the Italian term can refer to both). The outcome was that the second half of her translation, though correctly and elegantly expressed, was very confusing, probably impenetrable for the imagined target reader.

How is the trainer / assessor to react to this? It is clear that the student should be penalised, but to what degree? Once again, the answer to this depends upon the parameters one adopts. If the erroneous use of 'cedar' is evaluated as a language error, then the trainer would clearly be justified in detracting a point or two, but if it is evaluated as an error of translation proper, then one would have sufficient grounds to fail the student outright, because there is a major communication breakdown which not only renders the rest of the passage incomprehensible but could also seriously mislead the unsuspecting reader. And a similar dilemma applies to combinations such as 'salient moments' above, albeit in a sense the other way round. From the point of view of language training, this might well be regarded as a mistake, because, I repeat, it looks like the student has translated too literally, without making good use of the wealth of language resources available to her (I am assuming that students of vocational translation work with a computer connected to Internet), but if regarded within a professional simulation for an international readership, then the trainer might be happy to accept it.

5. Conclusions

The main thrust of this paper has been to investigate whether translation into English as a foreign language is adequately catered for in translation textbooks, with particular regard to the opposition vocational vs. non-vocational translation. The first part of the paper raised the following points:

the training of translation into a foreign language is widespread in both language faculties and translation faculties, at least in Europe.

translation into a foreign language and translation into a native language are two overlapping but essentially different activities.

translation textbooks may or may not be used in the classroom but they are habitually recommended for further study and are usually available in university bookshops and libraries.

non-vocational translation textbooks privilege literary and journalistic texts, while vocational textbooks include a much broader range of text types.

The second part of the paper focused on the more vocationally-oriented translation textbooks, highlighting the following aspects:

most authors of these textbooks clarify the direction of translation (Italian to English and/or English to Italian) from the beginning, but not the directionality (translation into a native language and/or translation into a foreign language). According to Pym (1992:73), this is a feature of translation training in general: “Even theoretically developed syllabus projects ... give scant attention to directionality, preferring instead to consider the translational problems of ‘language pairs’ where exercises are presumably to be carried out indifferently both to and from the mother tongue”.

where directionality distinctions are actually provided – often in the introduction or preface – they do not have any bearing upon the methodology adopted.

as a rule, in the suggested versions provided by the respective authors it is not 100% clear whether it is vocational or non-vocational translation which is really being advocated or prioritised.

Summing up, translation textbooks are a loaded gun. Firstly, their general availability in university environments means that students may be using them without the teacher’s knowledge; secondly, even if the teacher has recommended them for self-study, the teacher in question may not have a clear idea of the criteria adopted by the authors to reach their solutions, and may even inadvertently penalise the student for using those criteria.

My belief is that translation textbooks can be an important contribution to the training of translation into a foreign language if their users, both teachers and students, are precisely and unambiguously informed from the outset of the rationale and the criteria that lie behind them, above all in terms of directionality and in terms of vocational vs. non-vocational translation. In short, they must be taught how to handle the gun.

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Notes

[1] The term 'directionality' refers to the opposition translation into a native language vs. translation into a foreign language, whereas 'direction' – in this paper at least – simply denotes the direction between two languages, i.e., Italian into English or English into Italian. The distinction is worth emphasising because in the literature on translation 'direction' has often been adopted to indicate both.

[2] In reality the survey will not include Laviosa (2008), *Linking Wor(l)ds: Lexis and Grammar for Translation*, a work whose scope and aims have much in common with the work by Laviosa and Cleverton (2003) to be discussed here. Indeed many of the passages for translation in Laviosa 2008 are drawn from the earlier work. For a review of the first edition (2005) of this book, see Stewart (2007).

[3] One would be less likely, however, to question the wisdom of suggesting parameters which would help students make translational decisions. In general, Standard British English and Standard American English are the two most obvious choices when translating into English, especially for an international readership, because they are well-known around the world and because there are so many language resources and materials for each of these, although of course any decision of this nature is contingent upon the holistic translational context of any given text. This does not mean that one should be totally intransigent with regard to anything that lies outside the parameter chosen, but it is essential that students working into a foreign language be provided with reasonably definable boundaries within which to operate.

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