

EDITORIAL PREFACE

After the special issue on Henri Meschonnic, RITT returns to its tradition of mirroring the multifarious nature of translation. This issue hosts articles dealing both with specialised and literary translation, as well as contributions analysing various characteristics of some LSPs, such as the language of medicine and the language of physics, with the aim of widening the linguistic background knowledge of translators working in these specialist subject fields.

The first three articles, though basically very different from each other, share a common feature: they all take as their starting point a translation (or translations) done by the author of the article himself and then develop their argument into a wider perspective. Gerald Parks, drawing on his own longstanding experience as translator of philosophical texts, outlines some of the typical problems associated with this field of activity. In particular, two aspects are discussed: first, a philosopher's own terminology, which sometimes requires that the translators know the "translational precedents" existing in a particular language and culture; and, second, the often literary nature of philosophical texts with the consequence that the translator has to pay attention not only to the informative function, but also to the aesthetic one. A composite nature also characterises the text analysed by Domenico Cosmai, which combines elements of a practical handbook with others which are typical of literary works. He reconstructs his own translation process and particularly underlines the difficulties of dealing with the temporal distance, with the author's own style, with the characters' peculiar idiolects and with the frequent poetic parts of the text. In the third contribution, Carlo Marzocchi examines his own translation of a normative text linking it with Skopos theory on the one hand and with the debate on the ethics of translation on the other. With a plethora of examples the author illustrates how every choice at a lexical, syntactical, textual and intertextual level can be traced back to the translation brief and, more broadly, to the communicative situation which the translation will become part of.

Federica Scarpa provides a diachronic analysis of a corpus of Italian texts of dermatology covering a time lapse of 60 years with the aim of investigating the influence of English on Italian text production patterns. Her findings, which point to an increase in the degree of nominalization, cohesion and explicitness over time, can indeed be explained in terms of an increasing Anglicization of the Italian LSP of this subject field. The author also discusses the effects of this evolution on text comprehensibility, and examines to what extent her results confirm the existence – postulated by Halliday – of "core" patterns of scientific discourse across different languages.

Another corpus-based analysis is at the centre of Maria Teresa Musacchio's contribution, which examines distribution of information, structural weight and cohesive devices in popular physics articles, both original and translated. By drawing on various examples the author shows that the above mentioned elements are particularly at risk of interference. Only through a greater awareness of the differences between the specific patterns of SL and TL can translators avoid reproducing the information structure of the original text in their translations.

Dolores Ross illustrates some morphological patterns of the LSP of medicine and focuses on the main differences between Germanic and Romance languages by means of examples relating particularly (but not exclusively) to Dutch and Italian. What emerges from her analysis is a greater tendency of Dutch and, more generally, of other Germanic languages, towards concrete forms of expression, whereas Italian and other Romance languages are characterised by a more formal style.

In the last paper of this issue, Inga Wagner describes the process that led to the publication of the WHO's new International Classification of Functioning. The author provides a detailed discussion of the terminological changes that distinguish this classification from the previous one, as well as of related standardisation problems. The approach adopted by the World Health Organisation for the translation of the classification into non-official languages as well as for the ensuing revision is also described.

The Book Review section contains two accounts of recently published books, the first on legal translation and terminography, the second on foreign language teaching.

A brief announcement concerns our website. While a decision on an on-line version of RITT is pending, it will soon be possible to access the table of contents of all past issues, as well as further information on the journal, by connecting to the following site: www.sslmit.units.it

Finally, I wish to express my thankfulness to Federica Scarpa who has passed the baton as editor, though fortunately continues to be a member of the Editorial Committee: she has been of great support to me with her experience and her valuable advice.

Marella Magris