

EDITORIAL PREFACE

The translation market is changing, and is doing so at a pace that was inconceivable even a few years ago. The new technologies, Internet, globalisation and the increasingly closely intertwined economic, political and cultural relations call for radical changes in the role of translators, in their working procedures, and in their competences. This is inevitably affecting research in translation as well, where two trends are evident: first, studies are increasingly making use of principles, methodologies and concepts derived from other disciplines; and second, there is a growing interest in the problems and characteristic features of the professional itself. While RITT has always advocated the need for constructive dialogue between theorists and practitioners – even during the times of deep mutual distrust – the current issue is a particularly clear example of these trends and of their relevance for the teaching and training of translators. The first two articles in particular, by Giuseppe Palumbo and Luigi Muzii respectively, reflect – albeit from different perspectives – a constant triangular link between research, professional practice and teaching.

After emphasizing the definitive abandonment of a purely linguistic perspective in the studies on LSP translation, Palumbo uses a sociological approach to investigate the importance of two current trends – the increasingly collective and cooperative nature of the translation profession and the rapidly growing number and variety of tasks translators are entrusted with – both from the point of view of the teaching and training of translations students and for the professional awareness of practitioners. His articles focuses on two notions, “translation norms” and “translation competence”. With Muzii, we move to a practice-oriented perspective where it is of paramount importance to combine quality and economic sustainability, a goal which has often been neglected both in theoretical debates and in translation teaching. He discusses the concept of quality in its multifarious facets and with reference not only to international standards but also with regard to management, marketing research and socio-economics.

A clear focus on the market also emerges from the article by Sara Pittarello: the author discusses advertising strategies that are used in two geographically close, but nonetheless different national contexts. Her results confirm that the translation of advertising texts can never rely solely on a linguistic analysis but must be preceded by a thorough evaluation of the economic setting, the normative conditions, and the cultural and psychological differences.

Sociology, economics, law and psychology are examples, as these first papers exemplify, of how translation studies are increasingly drawing on principles and methodologies from a wide variety of disciplines. This, however, is not tantamount to saying that linguistics has fully exhausted its contribution to research in translation: on the contrary, there are still countless lexical, morphosyntactic and textual features that need to be investigated, systematically described and presented to translators. The next three articles, in fact, by Francesco Straniero Sergio, Giovanni Garofalo and Erica Ianich, clearly demonstrate the variety of potential areas.

Straniero Sergio depicts some interesting changes recently occurring in the Russian language as a consequence of the influence exerted by English. The author is particularly concerned with mechanisms of word formation, where Russian adopts (and sometimes modifies) typical English patterns, as well as with the process of borrowing and its semantic and sociolinguistic implications. Garofalo analyses two corpora of Spanish and Italian criminal legislation in order to identify syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of conditionality, focusing in particular on Complex Conditional Connectors. The differences in the distributional patterns and the illocutionary values found between the two languages provide useful insights into the translation of this text type. The contribution by Ianich is also based on the analysis of two corpora, albeit parallel ones. The author's aim is to investigate English-Italian translation phenomena in a particular text type. Using a dedicated software she examines some overall textual categories and then analyses the expression of modality in detail. The variations detected between the corpora are explained by considering typological differences between English and Italian, the degree of specialisation of the texts and some hypotheses from the theory of translation universals.

The last article, by Massimo Caregnato, confirms the interest RITT reserves for terminological subjects, and is noteworthy in two respects. First, it describes a terminographic collection based on a corpus of mostly oral texts obtained by interviewing wine makers and other personnel working in this field. Second, it shows the potentials of this material for the teaching of liaison interpreting, an application that has been rather neglected so far in terminological research.

The issue ends with two reviews, which once more reflect the theoretical-practical dualism of RITT: the first review is dedicated to the English translation of a book by the late Chernov, the famous Russian theorist of interpreting, while the second is a review of an overview of the Italian translation market.

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