



FACOLTÀ DI STUDI UMANISTICI

Lingue e culture per la mediazione linguistica

Traduzione

LESSON 7

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What is translation?

What words come to your mind when talking about lexis?

How does it influence the translator?



Vocabulary & Textuality

- Lexical accuracy & appropriateness

E.g., forbid v prohibit, permit v enable

- Total one-to-one correspondence?

E.g., *far predica*

- How single words “relate to and interact with each other to create coherent and cohesive discourse” (Ulrich 249)
- Unity and uniformity of field, tenor & mode



- The overall textual meaning & register of the ST need to be considered
- The choice of appropriate vocabulary in the TT depends on text type, text function & co-textual features
- Lexical cohesion: “the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of related vocabulary or ‘content words’ across sentence boundaries” (Ulrich 250)
- It occurs w grammatical cohesion



- Two types of lexical ties:
 - Reiteration: a) the repetition of vocabulary, b) the use of semantically-related lexical items at various points in the text
 - Collocation: the lexical items that have a tendency to co-occur in similar contexts



Reiteration

- Same lexical unit OR morphologically distinct form of the same word:
 - ❑ Verb 'explore' + noun 'exploration'
 - ❑ Two related nouns 'critic' and 'criticism'
 - ❑ Repetition as foregrounding technique
- Relatedness in meaning
 - ❑ synonyms : near synonyms! Watch out for tenor and formality!

Connotation!

Denotation: primary meaning, fixed; connotative meaning: beyond the literal meaning, shaped by the person, the culture, the CONTEXT
Communicative Competence involves connotation

Ex. Il gatto è nero (denotative) vs ho visto un gatto nero (possible connotative meaning).

Ex. 'Rat' vs 'mouse' : dirt and disease BUT not in specialised texts
BONUS: in AmEn: A person who is associated with or frequents a specified place.

Connotation



Connotation reveals

- ideology (as the reflection of how the speaker sees the world)
- Social class and social origins, age, relationship between speakers
- The speaker's positive or negative attitude
- Cultural associations : (ex. "woman' and frailty)

The connotative attitude of the ST must be reproduced in the TT: lexically cohesive items associated with an attitude/judgment

- Attention: also in supposedly neutral informative texts



Reiteration

- Repetition of lexical units & morphologically distinct forms of the same word (explore, exploration) or of two nouns w related forms -> used to emphasize, foreground; the lexical equivalent of syntactic thematisation
- Relatedness in meaning:
 - ✓ Synonymy (near-synonymy) – same meaning
 - ✓ Hyponymy a member—class relation, reflecting a taxonomy or conceptual hierarchy. Hyperonym bird-> hyponyms parrot, pigeon, eagle; break -> split, smash, shatter [meaning potential]
 - ✓ Meronymy – denotes part of something but which is used to refer to the whole of it. ex. ‘I see several familiar faces present’ faces = people a meronym denoting a part and a holonym denoting a whole.
 - ✓ Antonymy – the opposite meaning



Reiteration

- EN: Repetition preferred in technical and scientific discourse – clarity and lack of ambiguity
- Referential synonymy is an ‘elegant variation’ but dangerous
- IT: referential synonyms and co-referential NPs
- Repetition: legal discourse; advertising and ‘brainwashing effect’

Anglo-Saxon	Romance
Less formal Shorter More concrete	more formal Longer More abstract
Discourse Genre/register	

- Italian: same term
- Careful in maintaining ST field & tenor of discourse in the TT



Hyponymy & antonymy

- *Superordinate* or *hypernym* (generic/inclusive term)
- *Hyponyms* (more specific, included)
- *Meronymy* (part-whole relationship)
- A variety of points of view & degrees in meaning while building textual cohesion
- The translator: choice of hyponymy as a synonym of a superordinate or of a differentiating feature to be foregrounded



- Hierarchical relationships enable the writer to intertwine successive references -> text-structuring strategies often start from a general proposition, move to more specific statements & close w a generalization
- Goal: orienting the reader
- ANTONYMY: lexical cohesive device restating the meaning of a lexical item through its opposite
- As words are polysemous, more than one opposite is possible



- Repetition v hyponymy / referential synonymy
 - discourse genre, style
 - Repetition: specialized languages, to emphasize key concepts and for the sake of clarity – also co-reference
 - Synonymy: may create ambiguity, as a creative/elegant device
 - In IT: referential synonymy & co-referential NP are preferred to both repetition & pronominal reference



- In vocative & informative texts: lexical choice < writer's choice + conventional textual features of the discourse genre
- In literary texts < style
- In expressive texts: focus on the ST -> lexical relationships to be reflected in the TT



Collocation

- Lexical items associatively related in the lexical system – tend to co-occur in discourse
- Identification of collocational ties will help the translator to select the right vocabulary for the TT



Collocation

- Collocation: words which naturally co-occur:

Occurrence related to propositional meaning : ‘Cheque’ occurs with ‘money/bank/pay’

BUT

Meaning does not always account for collocational patterning

This is why ‘visit’ goes with pay ‘pay’ but not with ‘make’ or ‘perform’

This is why you can say ‘rancid butter’ and ‘addled rancid’ but NOT ‘addled butter’ ‘rancid eggs’

Marked

vs

unmarked collocations

(Baker 48)

Table 3.1 Unpredictability of collocational patterning

	<i>unblemished</i>	<i>spotless</i>	<i>flawless</i>	<i>immaculate</i>	<i>impeccable</i>
performance	-	-	+	+	+
argument	-	-	+	-	?
complexion	?	?	+	-	-
behaviour	-	-	-	-	+
kitchen	-	+	-	+	-
record	+	+	-	?	+
reputation	?	+	-	?	?
taste	-	-	?	?	+
order	-	-	?	+	+
credentials	-	-	-	-	+

+ = common/acceptable collocation

- = unacceptable/unlikely collocation

? = questionable/may be acceptable in some idiolects



Lexical & Cognitive Boundaries

- Pragmatic meaning of words: words in context & co-text -> it is activated from a set of semantic context-free meanings that a word possesses

HOWEVER

- THEY ARE STILL ORGANISED IN SENSE RELATIONS
- 3 layers of lexical organization:
 1. The lexeme: orthographic or phonological form + meaning)
 2. The lexical set: a group of words with the same topic, function or form.
E. 'Cat, dog, tortoise, goldfish, gerbil' : lexical set pets; 'quickly, happily, completely, dramatically, angrily' syntactic lexical set adverbs.
 3. The lexical domain or semantic field: lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain "Words that are semantically-related within a lg system belong to the same lexical set and to the same scientific field"
(Ulrich 270)

Paradigmatic relations: words that can be substituted with another word - synonymy etc

Syntagmatic relations: relations holding between elements that are combined with each other collocation



- Same conceptual fields realised in different languages by different lexical fields
- No perfect overlapping – different way of segmenting experience (Sapir Whorf)

COGNATES: words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation

1 true cognates, total overlap (is it really?): timid-timido BUT more formal and less used.

2 partial cognates, narrower range of meaning in IT than in EN

Ex. oil = olio, food / OIL = petrolio

3 partial cognates, narrower range of meaning in EN than in IT

Ex. Arbitro: referee AND arbitrator, different fields; solitudine: loneliness AND solitude

4 false friends

Range of meaning & translation equivalents



- Translation equivalents & bilingual dictionaries
-> a pitfall -> both bilingual & monolingual
- Range of meaning: broader in IT than in EN
- Collocation: creation of textuality by means of associative links + combinations of words that co-occur in close proximity
- Easily recognizable by native speakers, arbitrary & unpredictable



Main types

- Adj + N
- N + V
- V + N
- Adv + Adj
- V + Adv