

An important component of discourse is lexical accuracy and appropriacy. Clearly no form of verbal communication should run the risk of being inappropriate or ambiguous and translation is no exception. Translators need to be able to ensure that their message is conveyed accurately and effectively in the TT. Lexical inappropriacies are often the result of translators being unaware of the rules governing the use of words when translating into the L2. If we take *forbid* and *prohibit*, for example, we see that *forbid* typically denotes a private act of a personal agent while *prohibit* is more generally to be found in a public context with an impersonal public authority as agent. Thus *forbid* would not be appropriate in such contexts as legal or public written regulations: *Smoking strictly prohibited* (and not *forbidden*). Such explicit information can offer translators working into the L2 an insight into how lexical boundaries separate words with related meanings.

A further concept of vocabulary that is of paramount importance to translators is that there is rarely a total one-to-one correspondence of lexical items between languages. Part of a translator's skill lies in using dictionaries (both monolingual and bilingual) judiciously, and this essentially means realising that words have to be chosen in the light of contextual restrictions. If faced with the expression *far predica* in a sentence such as

*Dì quei selvaggi (Tacito) non coglie soltanto, come altri autori, i tratti positivi, utili a far predica al lettore, ma anche quelli impressionanti e orrendi,*

translators need to be aware of the fact that options like *preach* or *sermonize* are unsuited to the context – a critical review of Tacitus' works. *Instruct* would be more appropriate pragmatically. Other dictionary equivalents of *far predica* like *give someone a lecture* or *give someone a telling off* are inappropriate as regards not only meaning but also the tenor of discourse. The ability to handle vocabulary confidently and effectively in extended texts and in a wide variety of contexts is therefore closely bound up with the knowledge of how meanings are related within the same language and across language boundaries.

This leads on to another aspect of vocabulary that plays a prominent role in translation, namely, the way individual words relate to and interact with each other to create coherent

and cohesive discourse. A text needs to display unity and uniformity with regard to tenor, field and mode. Whether, for instance, a translator opts for *vote*, *vow* or *mark* to translate *voto* will entail considerations of field: is the text dealing with politics, religion or academic performance?

*Vi è stato un notevole incremento del numero dei voti per la Democrazia Cristiana.*  
There has been a marked increase in **votes** for the Christian Democrat Party.

*I sacerdoti prendono i voti di povertà, castità e obbedienza.*  
Priests take **vows** of poverty, chastity and obedience.

*Ha preso ottimi voti agli esami finali.*  
She got very good **marks** in the final exams.

It is therefore crucial for translators to consider the overall textual meaning and register of the ST when translating individual lexical items into the TT. Selection of appropriate vocabulary in the TT depends not only on the type of text that is to be translated and its function but also on its co-textual features.

In this Chapter we shall be examining those aspects of vocabulary which are particularly pertinent to English-Italian translation. We shall first be looking at vocabulary as a component of textuality and then turn our attention to lexical and cognitive boundaries in the two languages.

## 7.1. Lexical Cohesion

A significant feature of textuality is lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of related vocabulary or "content words" across sentence boundaries. It both complements and interacts with grammatical cohesion. When some sort of relationship exists between the lexical items in a text a lexical tie or chain is set

up. The two general types of relationship are *reiteration* and *collocation*, and the interplay that occurs between them gives a text its lexical structure. Reiteration includes the repetition of vocabulary or the use of semantically-related lexical items at various points in a text, while collocation refers to lexical items that have a tendency to co-occur in similar contexts.

## 7.2. Reiteration

Reiteration comprises both repetition and the use of lexical items that are semantically linked in such relationships as synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and antonymy.

7.2.1. *Repetition* covers the repeating of the same lexical unit as well as of morphologically distinct forms of the same word such as, for example, a verb and a noun (explore and exploration) or two nouns with related forms (critic and criticism). One reason why writers use repetition is to reintroduce important topic words at various points in their discourse and thus to foreground them. It may be seen as a lexical counterpart of syntactic thematisation and thus an integral part of a text's communicative dynamism. Consider the way the writer brings prominent vocabulary back into focus by means of repetition in the following text:

*Davide sembrava, al solito, di cattivo umore, cosa che, del resto, non impressionava più nessuno: piuttosto ci si sarebbe impressionati a vederlo di buon umore. Ma anche lui non s'impressionò e finse di nulla, nel vedere Bona col bambino: qualche cosa però dovette passargli nell'anima perché si divertì a tormentare il cieco.*

*– Che fai lì in agguato? Pare abbia litigato con Dio tanto hai l'aria confusa.*

*L'altro non aprì bocca; potevano fargli quel che volevano, quel giorno, tanto era contento, d'una gioia un po' dolorosa di innamorato che è pronto a sacrificare anche il suo amore, purché l'oggetto amato sia felice.*

(Grazia Deledda, *Il ritorno del figlio*)

Davide seemed to be in a bad mood as usual, but this did not **alarm** anyone any longer: in fact, they would have been **alarmed** to see him in a good mood. But he was not **alarmed** either and pretended not to notice Bona with the child. Something must have gone through his mind, however, because he amused himself by tormenting the blind man.

"What are you doing lying in wait like that? You look so confused, anybody would think you'd quarrelled with God."

The other man didn't open his mouth; they could do what they liked to him that day, he was so happy, with that slightly painful joy of a **lover** who is even ready to sacrifice his **love** as long as the object of his **love** might be happy.

7.2.2. The other aspect of reiteration concerns relatedness in meaning. Lexical items can be semantically-related as synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms and meronyms. English is particularly rich in *synonyms* since it contains not only "native" words of Germanic origin (Old English/Anglo-Saxon) but also loan-words from Latin, French, Norse, Greek and a number of other languages. It would, however, be more correct to speak of near-synonyms since total overlap in meaning in all contexts does not exist. A comparison between Anglo-Saxon words and their Graeco-Latin counterparts will reveal, above all, a difference in frequency of use and degree of formality.

Anglo-Saxon	Romance
begin	commence
bodily	corporeal
book	volume
busy	occupied, engaged
buy	purchase
clothes	attire
climb	ascend
cheap	inexpensive
cheeky	insolent, impudent
freedom	liberty
give	donate
lighting	illumination
own	possess
sweat	perspire

Words that originate from Old English are associated with informal contexts, while those of Romance origin tend to be more formal. The former also tend to be shorter and more concrete; the latter longer and more abstract. The choice of one synonym as opposed to another is therefore closely linked to discourse genres and register. Texts with an academic, legal or scientific-technical subject-matter written for the profession will tend to use specialised language of a formal level.

With the advent of improved microsurgery techniques, congenital cataracts are being operated on at very young ages. The insertion of a polysulfone inlay might prevent the development of amblyopia. When the child is a few years old, it might be possible to remove the inlay and replace it with either an intraocular lens or an extended-wear contact lens.

(D.P. Choyce, "Semi-rigid comeal inlays used in the management of albinism, aniridia, and ametropia", *Acta:XXIV International Congress of Ophthalmology*)

In a less specialised setting, as in publications for a lay readership, lexical choice tends to be less abstract and more informal.

With most contact lenses you put them in and take them out every day, but some designs such as extended-wear contact lenses can be kept in for longer periods; overnight or up to a week. The exact amount of time depends on your eyes.

(information leaflet)

Italian tends to make use of the same term in both sets of circumstances: while in English *thorax* is to be found in medical register and *chest* mainly in everyday language, only *torace* exists in Italian. Care should therefore be taken when translating into an English TT not to alter the ST's field and tenor of discourse. Consider the following text:

*Una sera arrivò da Gaglianello un giovane, accompagnato da altri contadini, con un braccio legato. Si era ferito con un falcetto fra due dita: quando tolsi il legaccio il sangue schizzò violento contro il muro: era tagliata l'arteria interdigitale: bisognava cercarne il moncone con una pinza, e legarla: ma non potevo fare io stesso questa piccola operazione, perché si sarebbe risaputo.*

(Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*)

One evening a young man, accompanied by other peasants, arrived from Gaglianello with a piece of tape around his arm. He had injured himself between two fingers with a sickle. When I removed the tape the blood spurted violently against the wall: the artery **between the fingers** had been cut. The stump would have to be found with forceps and tied, but I could not do this small operation myself since word would get round.

A further aspect to be taken into consideration is the connotative meaning of a word, which is just as important as its descriptive or denotative meaning. Connotation refers to the culturally or socially determined value judgements that are implicit in the semantics of a word. Writers can, for instance, choose to describe someone who is careful with money as thrifty, stingy or economical. Whichever one they opt for will imply some kind of attitude, either approval, disapproval or neutrality. In these as in other sets like fragrance / stink / smell or resolute / stubborn / determined, the use of one synonym as opposed to another will be determined by the favourable or unfavourable value judgement a language-user wishes to express. It is therefore the connotative component that is foregrounded.

Positive, negative or neutral attitudinal markings are generally not restricted to one isolated word but tend to pervade the entire text. This is why it is essential for translators to identify the connotative attitude expressed in the ST and to reproduce it in the TT. The following text provides an example of how lexically cohesive items cluster in a set associated with a negative judgement.

*Quando, alla fine del nostro incontro mi offrì un biscottino, nonostante i suoi discorsi fossero stati né peggio né meglio di quelli sentiti tante volte da altri razzisti in varie parti del mondo, all'idea di mangiare con lui, di condividere alcunché con quel mostro, lo stomaco si chiuse come un pugno. Il rifiuto si fece terribile, fisico.*

*Ciò che ha portato David Duke alla sconfitta elettorale sabato scorso è stato certo qualcosa di simile; l'elettorato deve aver sentito che, al di là del desiderio di Duke di eliminare i problemi che elencava, si nascondeva quello di eliminare ben altro, di far sparire, di allontanare, segregandole, delle persone. Duke è, cioè, un autentico nazista, un antisemita convinto di appartenere a una razza eletta, e nessun mascheramento da razzista democratico ha potuto nascondere questa verità.*

(Fiamma Nirenstein, "Battuto il Grand Wizard, l'allarme continua", *L'Indipendente*, 19 novembre 1991)

Although what he said was not any worse or any better than what I had heard so many times from other racists in various parts of the world, when he offered me a biscuit at the end of our meeting, the idea of eating with him or sharing anything with that monster made my stomach clench just like a fist. The sense of rejection became dreadful, physical.

Whatever led to David Duke's electoral defeat last Saturday must certainly have been something similar. The electorate must have sensed that Duke's desire to eliminate the problems he listed masked quite another desire: to eliminate, alienate, segregate, people. In other words, Duke is nothing but a nazi, an anti-Semite, who is convinced he belongs to a chosen race, and no amount of masquerading as a democratic racist was able to hide the truth.

The text reproduced below, in contrast, has an overtly positive connotative force.

*Ero stordito e incredulo, felice come si può esserlo dopo aver assistito al miracolo d'un miraggio trasformatosi, lentamente, in un fatto vero, concreto, a mano a mano che gli occhi scoprivano un dettaglio, percorrevano la mobile superficie d'un bassorilievo, ovvero indugiavano nella luce d'un mosaico per infine naufragare nel fiore prezioso del rosone ch'è conficcato nel cuore della facciata, a suggellare questa "cattedrale" gotico-romana tra le più eccelse d'Italia.*

(Igor Man, "I tesori di Orvieto", *Ulisse* 2000, n. 35, 1990)

I was stunned and incredulous, as happy as if I had seen a mirage slowly and miraculously become real and concrete before my eyes, as I gradually noted a detail, let my gaze wander over the changing surface of a bas-relief, or linger in the light of a mosaic, to land finally on the precious flower of the rose-window set in the heart of the façade, marking this Gothic-Romanesque cathedral as one of the most sublime in Italy.

It should be noted that attitudinal marking of this kind is not restricted to overtly persuasive, emotive or polemical texts but can also underlie informative texts, thus often undercutting their supposed neutrality.



The immediate target of Mrs Currie's warnings was the egg industry. But, in taking on the egg producers, Mrs Currie could not avoid becoming embroiled in a fight with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) – and, ultimately, with the National Farmer's Union, whose power within Whitehall is legendary. ... In the recent affray, whilst the Department of Health held its ground with its warnings over eggs, MAFF still claimed its sacrifice. Mrs Currie was forced to resign, the purveyors of suspect food – rather than the victims of the diseases they pass on – received compensation from the Government, and an MP with farming interests moved into the vacant place at the Department of Health.

(Alan Long, "The Salmonella Epidemic", *The Ecologist*, vol. 18.6, 1988)

Even though complete overlap in meaning and frequency of use does not exist in all contexts, words can function as referential synonyms within a particular co-text. In other words, variations in lexical choice fall under the heading of synonymy because they have the same referent in the text.

The hearing **commenced** early on Tuesday morning. But from the moment it **began** the realisation dawned on everyone present that this was not simply an open-and-shut case of sexual harassment.

Referential synonymy is not confined to one-to-one lexical correspondence, however. Lexical cohesion can also be achieved by means of co-referential phrases, pediatrician and doctor for your child, for instance. Such single-to-complex or complex-to-single relationships also serve to propel the communication forward by means of a "nutshelling" technique: the anaphoric lexical item summarises (that is, "puts in a nutshell") the content of the antecedent, which is a whole proposition.

*Un primo censimento delle varie specie di flora alpina vide la luce nel '700 ad opera dello svedese Carlo Linneo. Egli enumerò 7.300 specie di piante, indicando ciascuna con un doppio nome latino per distinguere il genere e la specie: questa nomenclatura, di valore universale, è tuttora in uso biologico.*

(Aldo Torelli, "Il giardino più bello", *Ulisse 2000*, n. 35, 1990)

An early census of the various species of Alpine flora was compiled in the eighteenth century by the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus. He listed 7,300 different species of plants, and gave each one a double Latin name to distinguish its genus and species. This **nomenclature** was adopted universally and is still used by botanists today.

*La C.G. Croft, una delle poche ditte di costruzione inglesi con un'esperienza seria nella progettazione dei rifugi antiatomici, si è fatta promotrice di una "federazione nazionale dei consulenti nucleari" alla quale hanno aderito circa 200 imprese specializzate. Scopo dell'iniziativa, concordare i coefficienti minimi di sicurezza, tutelare la gente contro eventuali sfruttatori non qualificati, e naturalmente anche esplorare il mercato.*

(Renzo Cianfanelli, "Il fai-da-te per i rifugi antiatomici si sta sviluppando in Gran Bretagna", *Il Corriere della Sera*, 28 marzo 1981)

C.G. Croft, one of the few English construction companies with reliable experience in designing antinuclear shelters, has set up a "national federation of nuclear consultants", which about 200 specialised firms have joined. The aims of the **initiative** are to agree upon the minimum safety coefficients, to protect people from being exploited by unqualified firms, and, of course, to sound out the market.

Lexical cohesive devices of this kind may, of course, act as attitudinal markers if they include an evaluation rather than a mere summary of the foregoing proposition. In this sense, they interact with the overall connotative force of the text and serve the purpose of orienting the reader as to how the discourse is developing.

Boston has one of the most striking skylines of American cities, with high-rise office buildings, hotels and thousands of condominiums. Yet in their shadow, the old city... has streets that wind like the cowpaths they once were, and historic buildings on a Freedom Trail linking sixteen famous colonial and revolutionary sites. It has large Irish, Italian and black populations, who have met each other and the Brahmin city nobility in sometimes violent conflicts. Yet, even more startling ethnic cooperation has created a city where unemployment is presently at the lowest level in the country. It produces a stream of Nobel Prizes unmatched by any city. Yet Boston has a school system where more than forty-four percent of the students drop out of school before the end of ninth grade. It has "America's Technology Highway," the famous Route 128, a throbbing artery of high technology and silicon chips, where computer hardware and software nestle together, block after block. Yet, if you drive along, all you can see are glimpses of neat buildings, partly screened by maple trees. In fact, there are more trees in New England as a whole, than at any time since the Pilgrim Fathers arrived. ... Such are some of the **contrasts** of this city of over 600,000, which greets about a million tourists a year.

(Denis Redmont, "America's Most European City", *Ulisse 2000*, n. 35, 1990)

*Tra tutte le città americane Boston vanta uno dei più strabilianti orizzonti, grattacieli che ospitano uffici, alberghi e migliaia di condomini. Tuttavia, all'ombra di tutto ciò, la città vecchia... è caratterizzata da vie che si snodano lungo le antiche mulattiere e da edifici storici sulla Freedom Trail che collega 16 famosi siti dell'epoca coloniale e rivoluzionaria. A Boston vivono molti irlandesi, italiani ed una vasta comunità di neri che si sono spesso scontrati tra di loro e con l'aristocrazia conservatrice della città in conflitti a volte violenti. Tuttavia, è stata anche la sorprendente cooperazione tra i vari gruppi etnici a creare una città dove il tasso di disoccupazione è al momento il più basso della nazione. Boston ha anche sfornato un numero di premi Nobel mai eguagliato da nessun'altra città; tuttavia nel sistema scolastico vigente, più del 44 per cento degli studenti abbandona la scuola prima della fine del liceo. Boston vanta "l'autostrada tecnologica d'America", la famosa Route 128, un'arteria pulsante di alta tecnologia e chips al silicio, dove l'hardware ed il software si congiungono, isolato dopo isolato. Eppure, guidando lungo la strada, si scorgono solamente lindi edifici, parzialmente nascosti dagli aceri: infatti, nell'insieme, ci sono più alberi nel New England adesso che al tempo dei Padri Pellegrini. ... Questi sono alcuni dei contrasti che caratterizzano questa città di oltre 600.000 abitanti, che ogni anno accoglie circa un milione di turisti.*

Single/complex co-referential relationships are a useful aid to translators in understanding the ST and also provide a means for them to clarify coherence relations in the TT.

7.2.3. A more frequent lexical cohesive device than synonymy is the relationship that is set up by means of *hyponymy* and *meronymy*. Hyponymy refers to the classification of experience in successive orders of increasingly more generic terms. The general (inclusive) term is called the *superordinate* or *hyperonym* while the more specific (included) terms are known as hyponyms. Flower, for instance, is the superordinate of violet, rose and carnation, which are related to one another as co-hyponyms. Meronymy is the term used to refer to a part-whole relation, as in tree (superordinate) and branch and root (co-meronyms).

This kind of hierarchical relationship is extremely common in discourse as it is able to generate a variety of viewpoints and nuances in meaning, while, at the same time, creating textual cohesion. The co-hyponyms split, smash, splinter and shatter, for instance, all include the semantic component break but they each contain other components which distinguish them from one another. Writers select one in preference to another not only and not so much in the interests of stylistic variation, as to highlight differences in their meaning potential. Compare the following texts (the first example is from Widdowson 1979:95):

In engineering it is rare to find **iron** used in its pure form. Generally, the **metal** is alloyed with carbon and other elements to form wrought iron, steels and cast irons.

Here, **iron** and **metal** are used co-referentially as synonyms even if the semantic relation that generally holds between them in the lexical system is one of hyponymy, as is shown in the next example:

**Iron** is a strong, hard, malleable, silvery-white **kind of metal** used alloyed in many important structural materials.

The translator's task is to decide in each particular text whether hyponymy is being used more or less as a synonym of the superordinate term or whether a distinguishing

feature is being foregrounded. Consider the text below.

*Sarebbe stato bello non far niente tutto il giorno, e uscire insieme a passeggiare sull'ora che rinfresca ma essere così eleganti che, mentre guardavano le vetrine, la gente guardasse loro. "Essere libera come son io, mi fa rabbia" diceva Amelia. Ginia avrebbe pagato a sentirla parlare con voglia di molte cose che a lei piacevano, perché la vera confidenza è sapere quel che desidera un altro, e quando piacciono le stesse cose una persona non dà più soggezione. Ma Ginia non era sicura che Amelia, quando passavano verso sera sotto i portici, guardasse quello che lei guardava. Non si poteva mai giurare che le piacesse quel cappello o quella stoffa, e c'era sempre da aspettarsi che ridesse come faceva con Rosa. Solo com'era tutto il giorno, non diceva mai quel che avrebbe voluto fare di bello, o se parlava non parlava sul serio.*

(Cesare Pavese, *La bella estate*)

It would have been pleasant to do nothing all day long and to go out for a walk together in the evening when it got cooler, and to be so elegant that while they looked at the shop windows, people would look at them. "To be as free as I am makes me angry", Amelia would say. Ginia would have given anything to hear her speak desirously of many things she herself liked, because being close to someone really means knowing what that person desires, and when you both like the same things, you no longer stand in awe of the other person. But as they walked under the arcade in the early evenings, Ginia could not be sure that Amelia looked at what she looked at. She could never swear that she liked that hat or that fabric, and there was always a chance she might laugh as she did with Rosa. Alone as she was all day, she never said what nice things she would like to do, or, if she did say something, she didn't mean it seriously.

In the following text we see that the translator has to infer which hyponym is required in English to express the SL term *sentire* from the surrounding co-text and the situational context:

D. Cosa più t'ispira?

R. Ciò che vedo, sento, immagino, e che può intonarsi al mio stato d'animo del momento, fin alla commozione.

(Roberto Gervaso, "Intervista a Mario Soldati", *La mosca al naso*)

One solution would be to opt for one or other of the co-hyponyms, either hear or feel. The collocation of *sentire* between *vedere* and *immaginare* in a kind of crescendo would seem to indicate that hear might be the appropriate choice:

Q. What inspires you most?

A. Whatever I see, hear, imagine, and that is able to match my momentary mood so intensely as to move me.

However, the very fact that the speaker intends to convey the idea of a crescendo of sensations and emotions would seem to justify the translator over-translating somewhat and inserting both hyponyms.

Q. What inspires you most?

A. Whatever I see, hear, feel, imagine, and that is able to match my momentary mood so intensely as to move me.

Compare the following excerpt from George Orwell's *The Hanging*:

He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes one of us would be gone – one mind less, one world less.

Another interesting aspect of reiteration based on hierarchical relationships is that it allows writers to weave a text pattern of successive generic and specific references. An initial generic superordinate term can be used as a scene-setting device, to then be developed by means of one or other of its hyponyms, depending on the overall text plan.

*C'è oggi una specie in via d'estinzione che a molti sembra non valga la pena di proteggere. È la lucertola.*

(Giulia Borghese, *Corriere della Sera*, 17 novembre 1984)

There is, today, a **species** which is in danger of extinction but which many feel is not worth protecting. It's the **lizard**.

In English texts it also reflects text-structuring strategies since successive paragraphs tend to open with a general proposition, moving to more specific statements, and finally closing with another generalisation.

The luxury of having non-utilitarian furniture about the house – furniture that is not for sitting on or for storing things in, but is purely ornamental – was acclimatized only relatively late in England. Painted pictures – “wall-furniture” – are one kind of such ornament; we are so accustomed to them now, that a wall can look bare without them, but it was not always so. In the Middle Ages, painting was hardly ever conceived in order simply to give pleasure; it was functional and educative, and its subjects were normally not of the here but of the hereafter. On the walls of churches the frescoes unrolled the Bible stories, and in the breviaries, the brilliant miniatures were, so to speak, aids to gracious praying. Only at the Renaissance did the art of painting begin to specialize in more avowedly aesthetic pleasure, contracting off the church walls and the altars into easel paintings, and setting up a portable world of its own within the gold frame. Its subjects too became more mundane, and concentrated on man in his earthly setting; a revival of interest in presenting an illusion, both of man in all the pride of flesh and life and of the three-dimensional world in which he lived, precipitated the rediscovery of the necessary technique of best achieving that illusion – the artifice of perspective, known to the Greeks and the Romans, but abandoned (doubtless as irrelevant to their purposes) by the Middle Ages.

(David Piper, *English Painting 1500-1880*)

Writers sometimes use this kind of reiteration to draw together the dominant shared feature of various co-hyponyms mentioned in the course of the text by means of reiteration with a superordinate term. This is rather like the “nutshelling” technique we saw earlier and again functions as a useful reader-orienting strategy.

Translators need to be aware of the reiterative options available to writers since they are by no means arbitrary. The type of lexical cohesion that writers select is related (consciously or unconsciously) to their intentions and message.

7.2.4. *Antonymy* is another lexical cohesive device that contributes to textuality. In this case the meaning of a lexical item is reasserted by means of its opposite. What needs to be stressed in relation to translation is that words tend to be polysemous and therefore have more than one antonym: old can be the opposite of either new or young depending

on the context.

Observing the combination of **old** and **new**, Jan Morris – whose books on Venice and other cities have become classics – concludes that Boston is the only metropolis she knows that has enjoyed a “true renaissance”.

(Denis Redmont, “America’s Most European City”, *Ulisse 2000*, n. 35, 1990)

*Osservando la combinazione di vecchio e nuovo, Jan Morris, i cui libri su Venezia ed altre città sono diventati dei classici, è giunta alla conclusione che Boston è l'unica metropoli di sua conoscenza che abbia goduto di un "vero rinascimento".*

### 7.3. Repetition or Referential Synonymy?

Why writers choose repetition in preference to referential synonymy or hyponymy depends both on discourse genre and stylistic factors. We have already discussed the use of repetition to foreground key concepts in a text. This function of repetition figures prominently in English in scientific and technical discourse where clarity of expression and precision are vital to the effectiveness of the message. Use of referential synonymy, or “elegant variation”, only serves to create ambiguity and is therefore discouraged by scientific journal and text-book editors.

Only the combined effect of the catabolic **hormones** was studied in the current report, and, consequently, it is not known which of the three **hormones** was most important for the increased muscle proteolysis. The **hormones** were administered simultaneously since the purpose of this study was to determine if the **hormonal** environment that is characteristic of injury and sepsis (i.e. increased plasma levels of all three **hormones**) would simulate the metabolic changes seen in sepsis.

The clarity of such texts is often further enhanced by the use of grammatical cohesive devices, especially co-reference. Consider the writer's use of pronominal intersentential an-



aphoric ties and its effect in the text below:

The inhabitants of the earth are divided not only by race, nation, religion or ideology, but also in a sense, by their position in time. Examining the present population of the globe, we find a tiny group who still live, hunting and food-foraging, as men did millenniums ago. Others, the vast majority of mankind, depend not on bear-hunting or berry-picking, but on agriculture. They live, in many respects, as their ancestors did centuries ago. These two groups taken together compose perhaps 70 per cent of all living human beings. They are the people of the past.

By contrast, somewhat more than 25 per cent of the earth's population can be found in the industrialized societies. They lead modern lives. They are products of the first half of the twentieth century, moulded by mechanization and mass education, brought up with lingering memories of their own country's agricultural past. They are, in effect, the people of the present.

The remaining two or three per cent of the world's population, however, are no longer people of either the past or the present. For within the main centres of technological and cultural change, in Santa Monica, California and Cambridge, Massachusetts, in New York and London and Tokyo, are millions of men and women who can already be said to be living the way of life of the future. Trendmakers often without being aware, of it, they live today as millions will live tomorrow. And while they account for only a few per cent of the global population today, they already form an international nation of the future in our midst. They are the advance agents of man, the earliest citizens of the worldwide super-industrial society now in the throes of birth.

(Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*)

Italian differs in this respect since greater use is made of referential synonyms and co-referential noun phrases in preference to both repetition and pronominal reference. This is illustrated in the following texts:

The world's **human population** passed the threshold of five billion **people** in the second half of the 1980s, having doubled since 1950. **It** is now increasing by about eighty million **people** each year, so that by the year 2000 **it** is likely to be over six billion. Such **increases in population** are unprecedented in history, but the great wave of concern about **population growth** in the 1960s has now become reduced, or replaced by other problems, even though the forecasts made at that time have turned out to be surprisingly accurate at a global level.

(Mike J. Murphy, "How many people will there be on earth in the year 2000?", *Ulisse 2000*, n. 63)

*Nella seconda metà degli anni '80, la popolazione mondiale ha varcato la soglia dei 5 miliardi di individui, raddoppiando così rispetto al 1950; e poiché attualmente aumenta al ritmo di 80 milioni di persone all'anno, è probabile che nel 2000 essa raggiunga la quota di 6 miliardi. Una simile crescita demografica è senza precedenti nella storia, ma la grande preoccupazione che ciò destava durante gli anni '60 si è oggi attenuata, o è stata sostituita da altri problemi, benché le previsioni fatte allora si siano rivelate sorprendentemente precise su scala mondiale.*

Repetition is also a feature of legal discourse, especially in such text-types as agreements, guarantees and treatises. Its function is clearly to obviate any kind of misunderstanding or misconstruing of the intended meaning. If synonyms or hyponyms are used, it is to foreground the different nuances of meaning rather than to exploit their similarities.

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*Senza il permesso scritto dell'Editore, sono vietati la produzione anche parziale, in qualsiasi forma e con qualsiasi mezzo elettronico o meccanico (compresi fotocopie e microfilm), la registrazione magnetica e l'uso di qualunque sistema di meccanizzazione e reperimento dell'informazione.*

The function of repetition in advertising is to reinforce and reaffirm the advertiser's message and generally involves reiterating the brand-name or key characteristics of the product in question.

## Renaissance Banking from First Chicago

Remember when banks were banks and value was just good business? So do we. There was a time when service and value were the basics of good banking. At First Chicago, they still are. So we created Renaissance Banking - a special package of banking services exclusively for people who are at least age 55. Renaissance is a new kind of banking value you've been missing elsewhere. It's checking account that actually pays you interest for every dollar you keep in it. But that's not all. There are many other valuable benefits and personal service, too. In our opinion, that's what banking is all about.

This persuasive, "brain-washing" use of repetition can also be found in other vocative texts, especially propaganda and polemical writings.

## IF WE SAY YES

Let us be clear about one thing: In or out of the Common Market, it will be tough going for Britain over the next few years.

In or out, we would still have been hit by the oil crisis, by rocketing world prices for food and raw materials.

But we will be in a much stronger position to face the future if we stay inside the Market than if we try to go it alone.

**Inside**, on the improved terms, we remain part of the world's most powerful trade bloc. We can help to fix the terms of world trade.

**Inside**, we can count on more secure supplies of food if world harvests turn out to be bad. And we can help to hold down Market food prices - as we have done since we joined in 1973.

**Inside** the Market we can work to get more European Community money spent in Britain.

**More** from the Social Fund for retraining workers in new jobs. Since we joined we have benefited from this Fund to the tune of over £20 million a year.

**More** from the Community's new Regional Fund, which already stands to bring us £60 million in the next three years.

**More** from the Farm Fund when world prices are high. For instance, up to now we have obtained £40 million from this Fund to bring down the price of sugar in the shops.

**More** from Coal & Steel funds and the European Investment Bank. Since we joined, arrangements have already been made for loans and grants of over £250 million.

(HM Government Pamphlet, "Britain's New Deal in Europe")

In vocative and informative texts, therefore, lexical cohesion is related not only to individual choice on the part of writers but also to the conventional textual features of the discourse genre. Translators need to bear both these factors in mind when selecting the appropriate vocabulary in the TT.

In literary texts, on the other hand, the choice between the various forms of lexical reference is largely stylistic and needs to be carefully evaluated by the translator. Since the focus of attention in expressive texts is on the ST and SL author, the effect of the lexical relationships selected has to be reflected in the TT. Consider the way James Joyce has exploited lexical cohesion in the following text and how this has been rendered in the Italian ST:

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

(James Joyce, *The Dead*)

*Un batte: e leggero sui vetri lo fece voltare verso la finestra. Aveva ripreso a nevicare. Assonnato guardava i fiocchi neri e argentei cadere di sbieco contro il lampione. Era venuto il momento di mettersi in viaggio verso l'ovest. I giornali dicevano il vero: c'era neve dappertutto in Irlanda. Neve cadeva su ogni punto dell'oscura pianura centrale, sulle colline senz'alberi; cadeva lieve sulle paludi di Allen e più a occidente cadeva lieve sulle fosche onde rabbiose dello Shannon. E anche là, su ogni angolo del cimitero deserto in cima alla collina dov'era sepolto Michael Furey. S'ammucchiava alta sulle croci contorte sulle tombe, sulle punte del cancello e sui roveti spogli. E l'anima gli svanì lenta mentre udiva la neve cadere stancamente su tutto l'universo, stancamente cadere come scendesse la loro ultima ora, su tutti i vivi e i morti.*

(James Joyce, *I morti*, translated by Franca Cancogni)

## 7.4. Collocation

The other general type of lexical relationship is collocation. Collocation refers to lexical items that are related associatively in the lexical system and have a strong tendency to co-occur in discourse: smoke ... ashtray ... nicotine ... mild ... cigarettes. In an English TT concerning newspapers, for instance, the Italian *titoli* would be translated as headlines and not titles, and *libertà di stampa* as freedom (not liberty) of the press. Collocational bonds of this kind contribute towards creating textuality and generate reader expectation. It is therefore a powerful element in the way readers process the ST and should be reproduced in the TT.

*Abbastanza bruscamente, anche se in modo un po' generico, nella seconda metà del Settecento, la gente comincia a lavarsi. L'idea che siano le arie a condurre i morbi persiste, ma insieme nasce quel concetto squisitamente nostro e moderno, che è l'igiene. Chi ha viaggiato in Africa e in Asia ha imparato che la presenza dell'uomo bianco è indicata in modo indubitabile dal sorgere di alberghi e rest-houses destinate alla sosta: a differenza degli uomini e donne del terzo mondo, il bianco ha bisogno di docce e gabinetti.*

(Giorgio Manganelli, "Anche gli odori sono ideologia", *Il Corriere della Sera*)

Quite suddenly, even if somewhat generically, in the second half of the eighteenth century, people began **to wash** themselves. The idea that it was the air that spread diseases persisted but at the same time there came into being that peculiarly modern concept of ours which is **hygiene**. Anyone who has travelled in Africa and Asia has learned that the white man's presence is undeniably signalled by the appearance of hotels and rest-houses meant for brief stops. Unlike the men and women of the Third World, the white man needs **showers** and **toilets**.

In the following example of an Italian ST the shift in the field of discourse is established by the collocational chain that runs through Eduardo's words: *aula, giudicare, accusati, piccoli reati, catene e ferri, giudicato, esaminati, cancelliere, avvocato, giudici*. Recognition of collocational bonds will help the translator to select the appropriate vocabulary for the English TT: *aula* is courtroom, rather than hall or simply room; *cancelliere* is clerk (of the court) and not chancellor.

*Ci andai per la prima volta che avevo quattordici o quindici anni, accompagnato da un mio amico, nipote di un avvocato. Ne rimasi sconvolto.*

*«In un'aula si dovevano giudicare tre giovani, accusati di piccoli reati. Li portarono in catene e ferri. Erano appena ragazzi, laceri, sporchi, smunti. Uno di loro fu giudicato e lasciato da parte in attesa che venissero esaminati anche gli altri due. Un cancelliere parlava con un avvocato dei fatti suoi. I giudici – come i medici che, dopo aver preso dimestichezza con il sangue, non ci fanno più caso – se la prendevano calma, abituati a queste situazioni. Il ragazzo chiese di essere portato via. Insistè che non voleva più rimanere lì. Nessuno gli diede retta e preso da un terribile raptus, si sbattè catene e ferri contro il viso: il sangue schizzò tutt'intorno e lui fu una maschera piagata. Solo allora lo portarono via»*

(Federico Frascani, *Eduardo*)

I went there the first time when I was fourteen or fifteen years old, taken by a friend of mine, a lawyer's nephew. I was shocked.

"In a courtroom three youths accused of petty crimes were to be judged. They were brought in chained and manacled. They were only boys and looked ragged, dirty and drawn. One of them was judged and left to one side until the other two had been questioned. A clerk was talking to a lawyer about his personal affairs. The judges were taking things easy, accustomed to such situations, like doctors who no longer notice blood once they have got used to it. The boy asked to be taken away. He insisted that he didn't want to stay there any longer. No one took any notice of him and, seized by a terrible fit, he beat his face with the chains and manacles. The blood squirted everywhere and he was a mangled mask. Only then was he taken away".

## 7.5. Lexical and Cognitive Boundaries

So far, we have been discussing the pragmatic meaning of words, that is, the meaning which words take on in a particular context and co-text. This meaning is activated from a set of semantic context-free meanings that a word possesses. Iron, as we saw, is a hyponym of metal in the English semantic system but the two words may be used co-referentially as synonyms within a particular text or context. In other contexts, iron may take on the meaning of "an implement used to remove creases from clothes, sheets, and the like."



Store your steam iron in a dry place and always rest it upright.

*Riponete il ferro a vapore in luoghi asciutti e in posizione verticale.*

Yet, words do not exist in isolation even when they are lifted out of a specific context. They are part of a highly structured system and are organised in networks of sense relations. This network consists of three layers of lexical organisation: the lexeme, the lexical set, and the lexical domain or semantic field. Words that are semantically-related within a language system belong to the same lexical set and to the same semantic field. As we have seen, they may be related to each other either paradigmatically or syntagmatically. Synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy are instances of paradigmatic lexical sets while collocation is a syntagmatic relation. Moreover, they define their meanings through their relationships with other lexical items in the language. Walk covers the range of meaning of "physical movement through space by a human being" but does not include the component "in a slow relaxed way", which is, instead, covered by a separate (even if related) item – stroll.

The interest and relevance of this to translation lies in the fact that a word's range of meaning rarely overlaps in any two languages. Although the words of a language are organised in networks of sense relations, the same *conceptual* field might be covered by different *lexical* fields in different languages. In other words, each language has a distinctive way of segmenting experience by means of words. Even if we do not wholly accept the extreme view put forward by Sapir and Whorf that people are virtually prisoners of their native tongue, which shapes and conditions the way they think and see reality, we have to acknowledge that there is a link between language, thought and reality. People are accustomed to seeing the world divided up according to the vocabulary of their language. If the language of one person has two separate items for orange and tangerine, they are more likely to conceive of the two fruits as separate and distinct entities than another person in whose language one term covers both fruits.

This poses translators with a thorny problem since it is extremely difficult (Sapir and Whorf would say impossible) to convey the same reality to readers who have a different conception of it. The nouns used to denote the conceptual fields pertaining to the activity of getting married or the state of being married do not overlap in Italian and English, for instance. The Italian *matrimonio* covers the areas of meaning of the English *matrimony* (the sacrament or rite of marriage), *wedding* (the ceremony or celebration of a marriage and the anniversary of a marriage) as well as *marriage* (the state of being married). In Italy *terrorista nero* is an ultra right-wing terrorist, while in an American setting *black terrorist* refers not to his or her political affinities (right-wing or left-wing) but to racial and cultural origins.

It is nevertheless the translator's task to bring about some degree of cross-cultural communication and thus a convergence of SL and TL realities. This means acknowledging the fact that differences exist and trying to extend the TT readers' ground of shared knowledge. Let us now consider in more detail the extent to which conceptual and lexical boundaries overlap in English and Italian.

## 7.6. Cognates

When words in two languages resemble each other, it is assumed that they cover the same semantic area. This is rarely the case. A comparison of Italian and English produces four categories of cognates: 1) true cognates or "true friends" with almost total overlap in meaning; 2) partial cognates where the range of meaning is narrower in Italian than in English; 3) partial cognates where the range of meaning is broader in Italian than in English; 4) deceptive cognates or "false friends" with no overlap in meaning.

7.6.1. As in the case of intralingual overlapping or synonymy, *true cognates* (words that look alike in two languages and overlap completely in meaning in all contexts), are rare since differences usually exist as regards register, connotation, collocation and frequency of use. Even technical or scientific terms, which are more susceptible to being true cognates, may be affected by restrictions: *atomico* = atomic but *bomba atomica* = atom bomb. *Mortalità* = mortality in scientific register but the common English equivalent in everyday conversation is *death-rate*; *dati* = data when reference is made to statistics, otherwise *information* is used in English. Timid is both a more formal and less frequent equivalent of *timido* than *shy*.

*I Germani, scrive Tacito, non possiedono oro, né argento, né opere d'arte; le loro donne sono vigorose e caste, i pasti frugali. I dati che fornisce sono di grande interesse per l'intelligenza e la sensibilità delle sue osservazioni, e la vaga ansia presaga che li pervade.*

(Lidia Storoni, "Quei barbari modello", *La Repubblica*, 20 agosto 1983)

The Germans, Tacitus writes, possess neither gold nor silver nor works of art; their women are strong and chaste, their meals frugal. The information he gives us is of great interest because of the intelligence and sensitivity of his observations and the vague sense of anxiety and foreboding that pervades them.



7.6.2. *Partial cognates* reflect the same relationship between languages that hyponymy denotes within the same language. In some instances an Italian word which resembles its English counterpart has a more specific or narrower range of meaning. Consider *collezione* and collection for instance: stamp / butterfly / medal collection = *collezione* (or *raccolta*) di *francobolli* / *farfalle* / *medaglie* but *una colletta* when it is money that is being collected. Similarly, oil = *olio* when used to dress salad but *petrolio* when it comes from an oil well (*pozzo petrolifero*). Engineer in English covers the range of meaning of the Italian *ingegnere*, *tecnico* and, as far as American English is concerned, *macchinista*.

Frank is employed as a television repair **engineer** but wants to do better.

*Franco lavora come tecnico riparatore di apparecchi televisivi ma vorrebbe trovare un lavoro migliore.*

7.6.3. Far more frequent are partial cognates whose range of meaning is broader in Italian than it is in English. *Arbitro* in Italian denotes both referee and umpire in sporting terminology and arbitrator in political and legal register. *Tremare* = tremble, shake, shiver, quake, quiver: the English lexical items all share the semantic feature "shaking" but the contrastive features are "degree of shaking" (violently, slightly) and "reason for shaking" (fear, excitement, weakness, anger, cold, horror), which involves the problem of collocation. Thus, *la terra tremava* = the earth quaked; *le tremavano le labbra* = her lips quivered; *la voce gli tremò dalla gioia* = his voice trembled with joy; *tremava dalla rabbia* = he was shaking / trembling with anger; *tremava dal freddo* = he was shivering with cold; *tremava dalla paura* = he was trembling / quaking with fear. Connotative meaning can also be a distinguishing feature: *Amo la solitudine* = I love solitude; *Soffrire di solitudine* = To suffer from loneliness. *Solitudine* has a neutral connotative meaning which may become positive or negative depending on contextual constraints. Loneliness, on the other hand, has a distinctly negative connotative value.

The texts below illustrate the range of meaning of the partial cognates *precoce* and *precocious*:

*... non ci sono prove a carico del sole per quanto riguarda il più temibile dei tumori della pelle, il melanoma. A questa buona notizia ne aggiungiamo un'altra: all'Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori a Milano un gruppo di medici guidati da Natale Cascinelli e di esperti di informatica ha messo a punto un sistema elettronico in grado di aiutare il medico a scoprire il melanoma in fase precocissima.*

(Giovanni Maria Pace, "Amico sole", *Ulisse 2000*, n. 74, 1990)

... there is no evidence to link sunlight to that most feared of all skin cancers, melanoma. More good news comes from the National Cancer Institute in Milan, where a group of doctors led by Natale Cascinelli has been working with computer scientists to set up an electronic system which will help to identify the disease at a very early stage.

In English *precocious* is restricted to the meaning of "early in development or maturity, especially in mental aptitude" (*un bambino precoce* = a precocious child), while the area covered by "occurring before the usual time" is rendered by *early*. *Precoce* is used in both cases in Italian.

7.6.4. The problem with *deceptive cognates* or *false friends* is, as the term itself implies, that certain lexical items look alike in Italian and English but their meanings do not coincide at all. Consider the two texts below:

Quality checks are made on every batch of grain received at the mill, and no additives or **preservatives** are used in making this product.

*Queste prugne sono confezionate sotto vuoto senza conservanti.*

The following are just a few more examples:

<i>precisione</i>	= accuracy	≠ <i>accuratezza</i>	= care
<i>effettivo</i>	= actual	≠ <i>attuale</i>	= current
<i>argomentazione</i>	= argument	≠ <i>argomento</i>	= topic, subject
<i>informale</i>	= casual	≠ <i>casuale</i>	= chance (adj.)
<i>comodo</i>	= convenient	≠ <i>conveniente</i>	= inexpensive
<i>efficace</i>	= effective	≠ <i>effettivo</i>	= actual, real
<i>alla fine</i>	= eventually	≠ <i>eventualmente</i>	= possibly
<i>pertinente</i>	= relevant	≠ <i>rilevante</i>	= striking, major

7.6.5. There are also cases in which lexical items are at the same time broader and narrower in one language than in another, which gives rise to interesting networks. Consider, for instance, party and *partito*:



Although *festa* is a party, it is also a feast day and a festival. *Partito* is not only party in the meaning given in the above example but also match in the sense of *è un buon partito* = he is a good match. The Italian feminine form *partita*, includes the meanings of match (as in football match), game (e.g. chess), batch, consignment, lot.

Since the distinction in meaning is quite cut and dried in the case of deceptive cognates, translators tend not to have too many difficulties in dealing with them once they have identified them. Partial cognates present more of a problem because of their overlapping areas of meaning, especially when the range is broader in the translator's native language.

## 7.7. Range of Meaning and Translation Equivalents

The same problem of range of meaning arises with the so-called translation equivalents that are to be found in bilingual dictionaries and often constitutes a major pitfall even for experienced translators. A critical approach to the use of both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries is of course essential at all levels of translation. If translators are able systematically to analyse the conditions governing the use of a lexical item through their knowledge of semantic field theory, they will be in a better position to select suitable words correctly from the various dictionary options and use them appropriately.

7.7.1. The range of meaning of a word may be narrower in Italian than in English. Stone covers the range of both *sasso* and *pietra*: the Stone Age = *l'età della pietra*; corner-stone = *pietra angolare*; to throw a stone = *tirare un sasso* / *lanciare una pietra*. A plum-stone, however, is neither *pietra* nor *sasso* but *nocciolo*. In medical register gallstone or bilestone (and not calculus/i) is the normal terminology used to denote the Italian *calcolo alla cistifellea* or *calcolo biliare*. In gemology precious stones are *pietre preziose*. Another example is window, which covers *vetrina* / *finestra* / *finestrino*:

She saw a beautiful dress in the window.  
*Vide un bel vestito nella vetrina.*

She opened the window.  
*Apri la finestra.*

She lowered the (car) window.  
*Abbassò il finestrino.*

7.7.2. As in the case of partial cognates the range of meaning tends overall to be broader in Italian than in English. *Lucido* includes the meaning sheen (*il lucido del marmo* = the sheen of marble), gloss (*lucido per le labbra* = lip gloss), polish (*lucido per le scarpe* = shoe polish), transparency (*hai preparato i lucidi per la lezione?* = have you got the transparencies ready for the lesson?). Both shade and shadow are covered by the Italian

*ombra*: *camminava all'ombra* = he was walking in the shade but *vide l'ombra del gatto sulla parete* = she saw the cat's shadow on the wall. *Piegare* can be either fold (*piegare le lenzuola* = fold the sheets) or bend (*piegare la testa* = bend one's head).

In the following Italian ST *sindaco* cannot be translated into English as mayor ("a person elected to be the chief citizen of a city or borough") or auditor ("an accountant who officially examines the accounts and records of organisations to make sure they have been done correctly") although both are dictionary equivalents. *Sindacare* has a wider range of meaning and frequency of use and would more appropriately be rendered by check on or inspect in this context.

*Quando un sacerdote cominciò a far conoscere loro il Dio d'Europa – il Dio-creatore, il Dio-providenza –, uno di essi, che doveva essere singolarmente incline alla speculazione filosofica, rispose: "Voi dite che il Dio dei cristiani sa tutto, che nulla gli è occulto, e che per la sua immensità sta in ogni luogo, vedendo tutto ciò che qui si fa. Noi non vogliamo un Dio che abbia tante scienze e gli occhi così ben aperti. Desideriamo vivere nei nostri boschi e nelle nostre caverne in pace e in libertà, senza aver sopra di noi un sindaco e un giudice delle nostre azioni".*

(Piero Citati, *Il Corriere della Sera*, 7 luglio 1985)

When a priest began to make the God of Europe – God the Creator, the God of Providence – known to them, one of them, who must have been singularly prone to philosophical speculations, replied: "You say that the Christian God knows everything, that nothing can be hidden from him, that because of his greatness he is everywhere, seeing everything that goes on down here. We don't want a God who has so much knowledge and keeps his eyes so wide open. We want to live in our woods and in our caves in peace and freedom without having someone above us to check on and judge our actions".

Similarly *smarrimento* covers the conceptual fields of both loss and bewilderment:

which of the two the translator opts for will depend on the context. Consider the following Italian ST:

*Di fatto, per tutto il Settecento la Russia visse in una condizione di acuta insicurezza sotto ogni profilo: economica ...; giuridica ...; amministrativa ...; psicologica e culturale (perché i tentativi di modernizzazione, ricalcati su modelli europei, provocarono lo smarrimento di numerosi membri dell'élite dirigente e parecchie rivolte popolari).*

(Valerio Castronovo, "Vita col 'Piccolo Padre'", *La Repubblica*)

In fact, Russia experienced a state of extreme uncertainty throughout the whole of the 18th century from every point of view: economic ...; juridical ...; administrative ...; psychological and cultural (because the attempts at modernization based on European models caused bewilderment among numerous members of the ruling élite and many popular revolts).

## 7.8. Interlingual Aspects of Collocation

The term *collocation* is used to refer not only to the creation of textuality by means of associative links (see 7.4 above) but also to combinations of words that co-occur in close proximity (a heated argument = *una discussione accesa*). They are not idiomatic expressions as each element has a meaning of its own, but they are easily identifiable by native speakers as being recurrent and fixed combinations. Collocations are largely arbitrary and unpredictable, and they are not correspondingly translated into other languages. In English a politician announces his/her candidacy or declares his/her candidacy but does not state or advertise his/her candidacy for office; in Italian a politician can *annunciare* but not *dichiarare la propria candidatura*. One can make an estimate but one cannot make an estimation just as one can *violare i diritti d'autore* but not *infrangere i diritti d'autore*. Consider the way the collocations of the following Italian ST have been translated into English.

*L'obiettivo dell'attuale presidente americano è lo stesso che si era prefissato allora Roosevelt: accrescere l'occupazione, espandere l'economia, ottenere un gettito fiscale elevato consentendo contemporaneamente al cittadino di vivere meglio.*

The current American president's aim is the same as the one Roosevelt set himself in his time: to increase employment, boost the economy, get a high tax yield while at the same time enabling the citizen to live better.

The major types of lexical collocations have been described by Benson, Benson and Ilson (1986) as combinations with:

- i) adjective + noun: strong tea = *tè forte* but weak tea = *tè leggero*; confirmed bachelor = *scapolo impenitente*;
- ii) noun + verb: alarms go off = *l'allarme scatta*;
- iii) verb + noun: issue a warning = *lanciare un allarme*; award custody = *affidare la custodia*;
- iv) adverb + adjective: strictly speaking = *strettamente parlando*; utterly useless = *assolutamente inutile*;
- v) verb + adverb: to affect deeply = *colpire profondamente*; to argue heatedly = *discutere animatamente*.

Distinguishing the semantic components of words might be of some help to translators in selecting items that can co-occur syntagmatically. In Italian *dotato* can be used with both a *human* and a *non-human* subject while English requires two different lexemes:

*Un uomo dotato di memoria prodigiosa.*

A man **endowed/gifted** with a wonderful memory.

*Una fabbrica dotata di impianti aggiornati.*

A factory **equipped** with up-to-date machinery.

## 7.9. A Systematic Approach to Vocabulary in Translation

The kind of approach to vocabulary described in this chapter will make translators aware of how lexical boundaries separate words with related meanings and of how these boundaries differ across languages. Since each language has a different way of segmenting reality, there cannot be complete overlap between the words used to label the various segments. Such an awareness might prevent translators working into their L2 from producing translations like the one found on an Italian motorway warning motorists against unlawful vendors: Distrust abusive retailers of various articles. The Italian text, as might be imagined, was *Diffidate dei venditori abusivi di articoli vari*.

Another important factor that needs to be taken into account when translating is that words interact with others in a text to produce textuality. The cohesion and coherence of a text largely depends on the way lexical, as well as grammatical, co-referential networks have been set up. The nature of the lexical and grammatical semantic relations in a text is closely related to meaning and the stylistic effect the writer wishes to convey. Examining a text in terms of its lexicon may reveal cohesive links that are not immediately noticeable but that may signal recurrent underlying themes. Translators therefore need to identify the co-referential relations in the ST and the way they contribute to the overall message of the text. Their next step will be to recreate the same message and effect in the TT by means of the lexical patterns available in the TL.