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*Translating into English as a Non-native  
Language: Challenges and Perspectives for  
Translation Professionals*

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# Introduction

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, British poet John Donne wrote: “No man is an island”, a verse destined to become one of the most notorious lines of English literature and a milestone of European culture in general. If we try and apply these words to the context of our contemporary world, we will see that they have become truer than ever: no man is an island, meaning that people from all over the world are connected between one another, and this is acutely perceived thanks to technological innovations such as the Internet networks, which allow information to circulate worldwide in a matter of seconds. Nevertheless, the nature and correct understanding of such types of communications is sometimes hindered by a series of cultural and linguistic barriers that inevitably stand between people living in different countries, dividing them.

Albeit it may be considered as a natural phenomenon, whose root cause can be traced in the suspicion and mistrust human beings tend to feel when faced with the Other, such division can bear severe consequences for the establishment of human relations and mutual recognition of people belonging to different cultures. Throughout early-modern and modern history, this problem had yet to be acknowledged in European countries, where a general climate of ethnocentrism led to the rise of nationalistic ideologies, in their turn informing key political decisions such as the waging of wars or the colonial expansion in the American, African and Asian continent. Ethnocentrism, namely the belief that one’s own culture is centrally important and superior to others generally affects communication in a negative way, as people are not open to new information (Taylor, 2006:12).

Things have significantly changed in our contemporary world, where the need to communicate with people from all over the world has been enhanced by globalisation, a historical trend in the economic, cultural and social fields that creates close ties between

individuals, and generates cause-effect relations for events happening at the opposite poles of the globe. These types of connection rely on one fundamental element, namely communication, and, more specifically, intercultural communication. A clear definition of this concept is yet to be found; however, a starting point could be, very simply, the definition of its two constitutive elements: culture and communication. Countless pages have been written on this topic; for the sake of brevity, I will here quote just a small passage from research conducted by Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (1987:3), who effectively summarised the essence of the two concepts in question:

The linguistic aspect of communication [features] means of communication that accompany speech and their occurrence, meaning and formal organization in both everyday face-to-face interaction and in institutionalized or ritualized forms of language use, be it in discourse or in other texts [...]. An approach to intercultural communication should be comprehensive in nature, embedding detailed analysis of communication processes in their socio-political and socio-cultural contexts.

Basically, the complexity of intercultural communication lies in the capacity to identify the right means of communication cited by Knapp, and to adapt them to the communicative context in which they are acting. Language is the crucial factor: information cannot be transmitted if it is not conveyed through a set of signs or linguistic conventions whose knowledge is shared by interlocutors. As a consequence, if people involved in a communicative exchange do not share the same language, they must find an alternative idiom that could function as bridge between one another. Nowadays, with regard to communications at an international level, this task is very often performed by English used as a *Lingua Franca*.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will analyze the spread of English in a global scenario, and the development from English as a *Lingua Franca* into a new variety that can be described as International English, with its own distinctive grammatical and textual features, by now almost fully separated from the conventions of English as it is used by native speakers among themselves. As we will see, the success of the English language today is due to two important historical events: the creation of the British Empire and the emergence of the United States of America as global superpower in the aftermath of World War I. Other recent factors in favour of a wide use of English are the wave of

technological innovation leading to the development of the media and the World Wide Web and the fact that the establishment of business relations is not anymore a priority of national markets only, but has taken on international dimension.

While the pervasive presence of English undoubtedly has many advantages, it also triggers a series of difficulties, one of which being the alteration of language-identity bonds, in their turn informed by the concept of representation as formulated by Hall. Finally, Chapter 1 will take into consideration two specific sectors in which the use of English has showed particularly convenient: business and tourism. In both fields, the use of ELF has determined the creation of specialised languages, e.g. International Business English and tourist discourse as specialised language as described in Gotti's hypothesis.

Studies on English as a Lingua Franca have only proliferated in recent years thanks to the contributions by scholars such as Jenkins, Mauranen, Pitzl and many others, who decided to devote their research efforts to this very controversial yet fascinating topic and whose work will be briefly introduced throughout the first part of this thesis. Another emerging field which is providing a valuable contribution for the study of ELF is corpus linguistic, whose results and methods are also central in Translation Studies.

Chapter 2 will focus right on the theme of translation, and in particular translation into a non-native language, an extremely problematic issue which is not unilaterally legitimised by scholars and professionals alike. Of course, in order to have an in-depth understanding of such a complex topic, an introduction to the principal topics related to translation studies is required. The chapter will begin with an explanation of the respective roles played by theoretic and practical aspects in the elaboration of an all-comprehensive theory of translation, and how they can successfully be combined and support evidence presented in both sides.

From a professional point of view, translation services today are an indispensable prerequisite for supra-national organisations to effectively carry out their work. One

example of this might well be found in the Directorate General for Translation of the European Union, which everyday processes thousands of translations in all 23 official languages, even though most part of the documents, official reports and legislative proposals are only translated into the so-called procedural languages, namely English, French and German, so that their content can be readily available for policy-makers and the staff involved in the organisation of official meetings and seats of the European Parliament. One innovation recently introduced in order to speed up the translation process are machine translation softwares, whose work, although sometimes inaccurate, allows the production of rough translations that might be used in order to get the gist of a given document in a very short time. Sacrificing quality for the sake of a more extensive and fast translation action is sometimes the best solution in large organisations, where style and grammatical accuracy of texts are moved to the background.

On the other hand, the theoretical plan of translation studies has recently focused on the recognition and identification of the so-called “universal” principles applying to translations in every language, both in the relationship with the source and target text. Scholars have proposed a series of different general hypothesis tested according to the methodology of corpus linguistics, but results are still controversial and do not find unilateral approval on the part of academic environments. The pros and cons of such a complex topic will be discussed in detail in one dedicated section of Chapter 2.

All these elements aim at supporting the main argument, namely the fact that translation into a second language is nowadays not only a possibility, but a solid reality also in the professional field, dictated by the scarcity of translators having English as L1 when compared to the amount of translation work into English nowadays required for a number of purposes, ranging from advertisements, cinema, media, business, diplomatic relations, institutional communications etc. However, the quality of translations performed by non-native speakers is not necessarily lower: for this reason, a distinction must be drawn between language and translation competence. Both are essential skills that every translator should possess, and the lack of one of the two may negatively



affect the final outcome of every translation, either if carried out by a native or a non-native speaker. Moreover, one interesting aspect regarding translation into a second language is the peculiarity of the interlanguage created by the translator while transferring meaning from one language into another. This topic has been thoroughly explored in Campbell's research, whose main points will be briefly outlined.

Finally, one factor heavily influencing the work of translators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the availability of corpus analysis tools and other softwares such as Omega T, which can create a translation memory and suggest possible translations in accordance with total or partial correspondences with text segments previously elaborated into the target language. The advantages derived from the use of such programmes will be described in Chapter 3, centered on the translations done during my 6-month internship at 'Officine Micro', a press and communication office based in north-eastern Italy. This last part will summarise and try to implement in a practical student experience the theoretical principles expressed in the Chapters 1 and 2. More specifically, the translations I carried out from March until November 2015 concerned in the first place tourist texts and short online advertisements on events held within the premises of Expo 2015, the International Exposition that last year took place in the city of Milan; on the other hand, I also had the opportunity to translate company websites for two Italian firms willing to strengthen their presence in foreign markets, in particular in Asian and American countries. Therefore, the potential readership of such texts was not only composed by native speakers, but also included groups of people for whom English was the preferred language for communication, i.e. who used English as their *lingua franca*.

The brief summary of the main themes I will deal with in this dissertation aimed at introducing the main argumentation which I will try to support, namely the fact that translation into a second language is actually a legitimate possibility in the context of today's professional translation. In particular, translation into English as a non-native language is also informed by the spread of English as a global language for intercultural communication; the mutual influence exerted by these two phenomena on one another allows to affirm that, in a set of specific situational contexts, translation must be done

not simply into English as a Native Language but rather into English as a Lingua Franca.

One feature of this new type of target texts is the partial or complete removal of figurative language, culture-specific expressions such as proverbs or sayings and slang. Considering that the scope of these elements is to confer a note of humor or a touch of colour, their lack and replacement with other neutral terms is bound to inevitably flatten the character of the overall piece of writing; in this sense, the translator must operate an informed choice between text clarity and adherence to the source text's style, based on priorities derived from the purpose and type of readership that the target text will have.

However, the issue of translating into Global English still remains a taboo in a part of academics and even professional environments, and criticism generally arise from the fact that EIL is not yet a standardised language, featuring clear and distinctive grammar or punctuation rules that can be applied to every text meant for reading by an international audience. For example, while looking at some discussion threads in ProZ, an interesting question in the translators' forum came up:

Some translation agencies are starting to offer translations into Global English, a supposedly simplified international form of English. I am doing a research to understand whether this is actually happening and would like to hear from anyone who has been specifically asked to translate into Global/International English and how he/she tackled the job. (Retrieved from ProZ Forum, 2009)

Responses to this intervention were at least impolite, not to say offensive, ranging from accusations of smoking drugs to the dismissing of the question as nonsense, misleading, biased and even dangerous for the preservation of the English language. Now, although these comments were written back in 2009, the attitude they reveal is still widespread, just like the idea that non-native speakers of English may translate into ELF has not been totally accepted as yet.

The principal scope of my research on the theme of translation into a second language, and in particular into English as an International Language, is not that of claiming that translations into English by non-native speakers are always equivalent to those carried

out by native speakers, but rather to justify the very possibility that such translations into English as a second language might be performed, especially when the target text is meant for a readership of other non-native speakers of English. Languages are coded in a fixed framework, and they tend to evolve and change according to the circumstances in which they are used and the people who speak them. In the case of English, this should not be interpreted as a threat to the status of native speaker or as a contamination of the 'purity' of English as a Native Language (ENL), but more as a unique opportunity for intercultural communication to take place, in a world where linguistic barriers do no longer represent an obstacle. Idealistic as it may seem, this is probably the path we will be bound to follow in the near future.

# **Chapter 1 – English as a Lingua Franca in the Contemporary World**

Our contemporary world is based on what one could define as ‘connections’: a network of relations established at a social, economic or political level between people and among groups. Relations, in their turn, are built upon communication, the primary and fundamental prerequisite for it to take place being the availability of a shared code to be known and used by all interlocutors of a linguistic exchange in order to convey ideas, opinions, information, and much more. Linguistic codes were developed and adopted in the first place by men as means of communication between each other, and they have acquired various forms in different areas of the world. However, as we are presently experiencing a period of pervasive globalisation, it is becoming more and more evident that intercultural communication has gained an overriding role for the establishment of the “connections” mentioned above. The natural consequence of this is the emergence of an international language: English. In this first part I will discuss the planetary spread of the English language, its causes and consequences, the pros and cons of its prevailing on other idioms and the basic features of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). The last paragraphs will be devoted to an introduction of ELF in the fields of business and tourism, two of the most important sectors for our world economy.

## **1.1 The challenges of globalisation: perspectives on a global language**

Globalisation as a concept emerged during the 1990s, when it was widely agreed among scholars of economics that a huge change was already taking place at a global level. As a matter of fact, technological innovations and the advent of the Internet, together with radical transformations in global society and economy, made it possible for people in every part of the world to be informed in real time about what was happening at the opposite pole of the globe. As McGrew argues, globalisation represents

...the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness [...]. With a global communications infrastructure has also come the transnational spread of ideas, cultures, and information, from Madonna to Muhammad, both among like-minded peoples and between different cultural groups – reinforcing simultaneously tendencies towards both an expanded sense of global solidarity among the like-minded and difference, if not outright hostility, between different cultures, nations and ethnic groupings. (McGrew, 2011:17)

With regard to the cultural sphere, globalisation has brought forward a new set of often contrasting issues to consider. Future developments of this phenomenon have been described by scholars in three alternative scenarios: the first is one of homogenisation, in which a dominant culture (i.e. the Anglo-Saxon one from the United States) will gradually absorb and eventually dominate all the others; the second one would be characterised by a process of heterogenisation, involving the reinforcement of individual identities and a consequent exacerbation of what Samuel Huntington defined as “clash of civilizations”. The third and final option would be a co-existence and simultaneous development of the two opposite tendencies (Kumaravadivelu, 2008:38)

However, if we stop and consider the sole cultural aspect related to language and communication, a clear pattern of homogenization will emerge, in which English has become by far the most widely used idiom in intercultural exchanges. Such a trend has put its roots in two pivotal historical events: the creation of the British Empire, encompassing a number of colonies under the rule of the English monarchy, and the emergence of the United States as a superpower after World War I. Let us consider them separately. The former divides in two periods: on the one hand, a First Empire was established throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century with the migration of large masses of people towards the New World and their settlement in Northern America. On the other hand, a Second Empire (and by far the most extended one) originated from the imperialist ambitions of Great Britain and had become one of the primary policies during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). The extent and number of the British colonies throughout Asia, Africa and Oceania was so considerable that it earned the epithet of ‘the Empire where the sun never sets’. As for the second event, namely the economic growth of the USA that led to their becoming a global superpower, it had already begun at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was fully appreciated only in the

aftermath of WWI. Despite suffering from cyclical crisis (one of the worst being the 1929 Wall Street crash and subsequent Great Depression), the US economy always succeeded in promptly recovering and preserving the role of the country as global leader both at an economic and political level.

This brief historical overview was meant to explain the factors that led English to become the main international language in our contemporary world. Criticism of British colonisation or the aggressive nature of US foreign policy aside, the affirmation of English as a global language was fostered by phenomena of language imposition in colonial contexts, globalisation and migration. This latter theme, in particular, was at the centre of a study conducted by Magee and Thompson, who in their book “Empire and Globalization” claim that:

For those studying the contemporary world, migration and globalisation might seem inextricably linked. The growth of a more integrated international society is widely recognised to be the product of the sharp rise in geographical mobility that occurred in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. [...] By contrast, the historical relationship between empire, migration and globalisation is less well understood (Magee, 2010: xii)

Moreover, we cannot forget that with the birth of international organisations such as the United Nations or NATO, whose state members did not all share the same language, finding a common idiom for discussion was mandatory; the same applied to specialised agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) or the World Health Organization (WHO). The choice fell on English for well-known reasons: it was one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and it was also the language spoken in some of the most influential countries, first of all the United States.

One last issue to discuss with regard to globalisation and the spread of English is technological change and innovations from the 1990s for the development of an internet network connecting people from all over the world. Today, everyone can read newspaper articles in several languages, look up information on a variety of topics and communicate with each other by e-mail or through social media such as Facebook and

Twitter. According to a recent survey by the International Telecommunication Union, about 3.2 billion people (almost half of the world population) will have used the Internet by the end of 2015. A momentous shift in comparison with the only 400 Internet users registered in 2000. (ITU:2015). We can therefore speak of an actual globalization of the web and the creation of the “global village” foreseen by Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan. Citizens of different countries became aware of facts concerning the rest of the world and have the possibility of extending their knowledge in a global embrace where dimensions of time and space no longer exist (McLuhan, 1964:15).

British Empire, popularisation of American lifestyle and culture, Internet and the media: all contributed and still contribute to the spread of English at a global level, albeit in different ways. While the former two concretely brought forward the knowledge of the language, the latter clearly require an international idiom to be chosen, that is, a *lingua franca*.

## **1.2 The concept of Lingua Franca and its application to English**

Communicating with foreign people has always been a primary necessity for complex societies, especially when intending to establish a commercial or political relation between one another. The term ‘*lingua franca*’ applies to “any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language” (Samarin, 1987:23).

Even though some languages competed for the status of ‘international language’ in certain historical periods, like Spanish or French at the height of the colonial expansion of Spain and France respectively, no other language ever managed to reach the global spread of contemporary English. According to recent statistics, English is spoken as a first language by around 400 million people in the United Kingdom, USA, Australia and other Commonwealth countries. It is not the most widespread world’s native language (Chinese is used as L1 by over a billion people), but it is used as a second language in many former colonies in which it is still the only option for communication where

citizens do not have a common idiom, for instance in Nigeria or India. Here, the Constitution approved in the aftermath of the independence from the British Empire stated that English was to be maintained as official language for institutions until 1965, when the transition to Hindi (which Gandhi himself had proposed as official language) should have come to a conclusion. This however has never happened, and English, although in its regional Indian variety, still remains the most commonly used language for political purposes. Besides, English is nowadays taught as foreign language in a number of other countries, therefore becoming a lingua franca when it is the chosen idiom in conversations between people who do not share an L1. But what is actually a 'lingua franca', and how was this term created?

The first well-documented lingua franca in European history was the one used by traders and sailors on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, characterised by a grammatical and lexical merging of Romance languages, but also Arabic, vulgar Greek and Turkish (Martinez Diaz, 2008:225).

A lingua franca usually emerges when speakers of different languages aim at pursuing a common objective related to the areas of trade, politics, military actions, religion, culture or administration and need a means of communication in order to do so. For this reason, the very term 'lingua franca' can dispose of various synonyms, according to the context in which it is employed. As Martinez Diaz(2008:223) affirms, we can talk for example of international language, trade language or contact language. Besides, a huge variety of pidgins is also present, originating from the combination of two or more languages in multi-ethnic societies, refugee situations or trade relations. When a pidgin becomes the mother tongue of the next generation of children is becomes a Creole (Trask, 2007:54). Examples of pidgins and creoles were frequent during the colonial expansion and the slave trade from the coasts of Africa to the American colonies. Here we can still find today people speaking non-standard varieties of English, such as the Gullah, spoken by descendants of Africans living on the coast of South Carolina (for more in-detail information, see research by Mufwene).



But can we analyse ELF today as we did in the past with trade languages and pidgins? As Poppi (2013:24) argues, the very concept of ‘lingua franca’ has undergone a shift in meaning since it was first conceived: if the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Mediterranean pidgin was a fairly *stable* combination of native languages, English is constantly evolving in the international context. In a very straight-to-the-point 2005 article, entitled “Not the Queen’s English, Powell explains that new English speakers do not limit themselves to absorb the language, but are actually managing to change it (Powell, 2005). While native speakers (NS) could obviously regard this phenomenon as a disadvantage and a deplorable oversimplification of English, in this process of language evolution pros actually outnumber cons. Contributions by non-native speakers (NNS) might enhance the creation of a more comprehensible English at an international level, therefore increasing its effectiveness as an intercultural means of communication.

Moreover, the loss or replacement of some ENL norms regarding pronunciation or idiomatic expressions do not necessarily entail an impoverishment of English. On the contrary, other languages bring with them a precious baggage of cultural knowledge and innovation, that will concur to the enrichment of ELF in terms of new ideas and concepts to be formulated through neologisms or metaphors, and NNSs can now be considered as the major “agents of language change” (Brutt-Griffler, 1998:387). Thus, the new status of English as international lingua franca acquired over the last decades also confirms the theory according to which one key feature of all lingua francas is their hybrid nature (Jenkins:2007:209). As a consequence, we must recognise that another major change has simultaneously taken place, and that is:

...the English language no longer belongs numerically to speakers of English as a mother tongue, or first language. The ownership (by which I mean the power to adapt and change) of any language in effect rests with the people who use it, whoever they are, however multilingual they are, however monolingual they are. The major advances in sociolinguistic research over the half past century indicate clearly that the extent to which languages are shaped by their use [...] (Brumfit, 2001:116).

However, from another perspective, while the ownership of the English language might have shifted to non-native speakers from a numerical point of view – meaning that NNS

have actually the power of implementing *more* changes than NS on a quantitative plan - if we consider the qualitative evolution of the language, native speakers still have a huge influence and as yet they stand out as the model to follow for all English learners around the world with regard to pronunciation and vocabulary.

### **1.3 Language, representation and identity**

Whether in the case of loss or acquisition of language ownership, we must take into account changes in the definition of individual and group identity for speakers of that language. We now enter the field of linguistic anthropology, a science which combines the knowledge acquired in various subjects (i.e. psychology, linguistics, anthropology etc.) in order to investigate how language can affect social life. One of the foundations of human existence is the definition of personal identity: a most critical issue, as it is influenced by a variety of factors, among which an important role is played by language itself. Moreover, the very concept of identity is rather ephemeral and cannot be easily defined.

First of all, two levels must be distinguished: an individual dimension, linked to the shaping of a unique and specific personal identity, and a collective sphere, where individuals are connected by social relations, and in which collective identity is formed. Individual and collective aspects of identity are not completely autonomous, but on the contrary tend to overlap and influence one another within a complex network. However, in the analysis of a community of speakers, group identity plays an overriding role and here we will briefly reflect on some issues related to it.

The first question one need to ask is: how are language and identity actually connected? According to the influential theory by Jamaican-born British sociologist Hall, the answer can be found in the idea of “representation”, which functions as mediator between meaning, language and culture. Historically, processes of representation have been analysed by various scholars, adopting three main approaches: a reflective one, stating that language only reflects things that are present in the outside world; an

intentional one, according to which meanings conveyed by words are shaped by the speaker's ideas and communicative intention; and finally, a constructionist approach, asserting that meanings are created uniquely by language. Whichever of these three options is chosen, the primary focus of the study remains on the role of the linguistic code. Language has the capacity to create representations of reality, which are stored in our mind as concepts and are the indispensable tool through which we can experience the outside world. Concepts, in their turn, are organised in a specific order; thanks to their relation with concrete entities, they contribute to the creation of meanings. Such an order is determined by cultural-related factors, and the fact of sharing a mutual culture is what allows two human beings to effectively communicate. In Hall's words:

We are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways. That is indeed what it means when we say we 'belong to the same culture'. Because we interpret the world in roughly similar ways, we are able to build up a shared culture of meanings and thus construct a social world which we inhabit together (Hall, 1997:18).

In addition to sharing the same culture, mutual understanding can be ensured only through the use of the same language, whose basic units are signs.

The problem arising with ELF speakers is that, despite sharing the same language, they more often than not do not share the same cultural background, and their communicative exchanges might be hindered. Nevertheless, examples of successful intercultural exchanges are nowadays the norm, testifying that, whenever interlocutors maintain a cooperative attitude and a willingness to soften potential clashes, then difficulties related to their cultural or geographical origin move to the background and do not represent a totally negative element, but may even become a source for confrontation and personal enrichment. Besides, communication between people with different linguacultures involves a process of "negotiation of identity", a phenomenon described in their linguistic research by many scholars, and one that sees the speaker adapting him/herself to the situational context in which the communicative exchange takes place, also considering the interlocutor's 'otherness' (Vettorel, 2014: 43).

## 1.4 Defining World English(es): Kachru's Three Circles and Modiano's Proficiency model

New phenomena occurring in all scientific fields are studied and classified by scholars of that discipline according to precise criteria. The same happens for linguistic research: developments in all natural languages are monitored and analysed thoroughly, in order to trace their evolution and explain its root causes and consequences. The global spread of ELF can be enlisted among these changes and many experts have tried to account for it through different strategies, resulted in the elaboration of descriptive models. In this paragraph we will describe the most successful theories and their strong and weak points, also with reference to studies on the contemporary situation of ELF.

One of the first and most influential theorisations of the concept of World Englishes was the one proposed in 1985 by Indian linguist Kachru, developed in three concentric circles as shown by Figure 1 below:

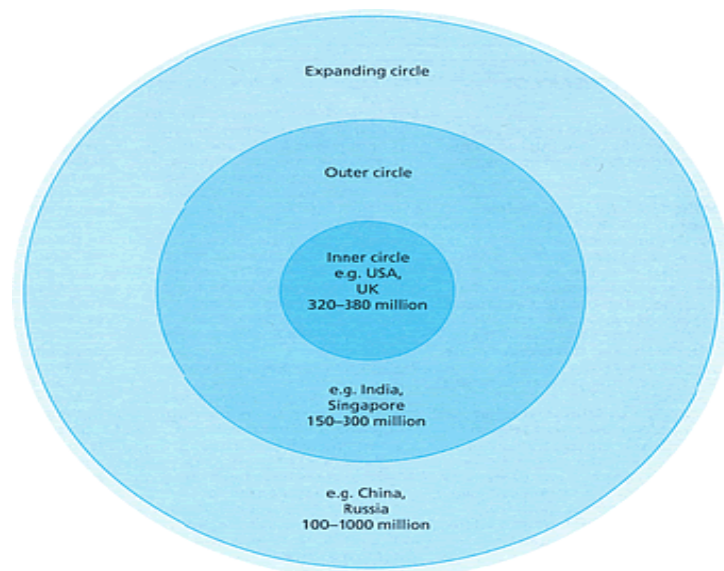


Figure 1. Kachru's Three-Circle Model

The Inner Circle includes countries where English is spoken as a native language; the Outer Circle encloses countries in which English is spoken as second language as a consequence of the settlement of British colonisers, this way becoming the official means of communication; the third or Expanding Circle is formed by states where English is used and learnt as a foreign language, with no official function in the institutions.

Kachru's analysis features the first model that justified and explained the existence of many different varieties of English all over the world. If seen under the light of our present knowledge of ELF, it also presents some paradoxes. As a matter of fact, the Inner Circle was defined by Kachru as "norm-providing", the Outer one as "norm-developing"- meaning that English speakers in it were actually developing their own variety of the language - and the Expanding one as "norm-dependant". This conception seemingly appointed native speakers as the only source for language evolution, whereas non-native speakers of the Expanding Circle were confined to a simply passive role, with no possibility of concretely influencing the development of English, in spite of their being a much more numerous group (from 500 to 1,000 million people) than their NS counterpart. Critics to the Kachruvian three-circle model are summarised in the fact that it does not take into account the rise of ELF at an international level.

Moreover, this type of linguistic investigations inevitably rely on the concepts of Centre and Periphery, where the former is represented by speakers' communities belonging to the Inner circle and the latter includes not only the most external Expanding circle, but stretches out to the Outer circle as well. Now, such terminology establishes a strong opposition between central and peripheral realities, and one that in many respects can bring forward issues of discrimination and marginalisation. If the Centre stands out as the only space where norms can be created and whose varieties of English are the only acceptable ones, then the Periphery must necessarily adapt itself passively and remain submitted to the dominion of the Inner authority.

This interpretation can obviously convey both a linguistic and a political message, and these two dimensions often intersect and interact in a complex framework, whose conflicting aspects cannot be easily solved. As Holliday (2009:21) points out:

If the Centre and Periphery are ideas rather than geographical locations, rather like ‘the West’ as an idea, they represent uneven power relations or qualities of life, and can be applied strategically or emotionally to different groups of people, events or attitudes at different times. What is important is that they are meaningful to the people who use them. I find it useful to use Hannerz’s explanation that the relationship between the Centre and the Periphery is one of giving and taking meaning, within an unequal world.

The “unequal world” perceived by Holliday is one in which one dominant culture is imposed and becomes widespread by means of imitation. Post-colonial studies in the last decades have appropriated all of these concepts to describe the subaltern condition of colonies with respect to the mother country and in particular the imposition of the colonisers’ language. What took place in those cases was actually a linguistic globalisation, whose negative consequences may be evaluated in terms of loss of cultural identity within traditional communities in large areas of the Asian and African continent. Forced acquisition of a foreign language is just one example of the reasons leading many scholars to think that globalisation as a homogenisation process should be discouraged and avoided, as it annihilates and levels out specificities of the local dimension.

However, starting from the 1980s, a new idea began to emerge, which would contrast and offer a valid alternative to the dominance of the Centre over the Periphery: “glocalisation”. A portmanteau word created by the blending of the terms ‘global’ and ‘local’, it was initially employed in business terminology in a detrimental sense, and was made successful by the work of British sociologist Robertson. The concept lying at the basis of glocalisation is the commodification of contemporary society and the notion that local trends may influence the development and the market offer of great multinational corporations. On the other hand, this word was later adopted by post-colonial scholars in order to define the

foregrounding of local agency against a seemingly relentless global culture. Globalization is itself always local and while globalization operated according to 'flows', the agency of the local ensures that the flow is very often reciprocal. (Ashcroft, 2000:131).

The influence of the local dimension was also an important research ground for American-Indian philosopher Bhabha, who in his pivotal essay "The Location of Culture" argues that nations should in the first place confront with differences represented by minority groups within their borders, this way enhancing what he called a "globalisation beginning at home" (Bhabha, 1994:xv). The repression of the Other, i.e. people discriminated against for their religion, ethnicity or different cultural background, impedes the formation of a truly cohesive society and exacerbates claims for recognition and representation by minorities at a regional level.

This short insight in some of the most important studies dealing with the Centre-Periphery opposition was meant to carry out a deeper yet brief examination of some aspects of Kachru's three-circle model, which in any case marked a crucial turning-point for ELF research. As already mentioned, its paramount credit was probably that of casting light on the existence of varieties of English wholly separated from the two most renowned ones, namely British English and American English. What it failed to consider was that speakers in the Outer and Expanding circles could actually be in their own right "agents of language change" (Brutt-Griffler, 1998:387), endowed with the capacity of elaborating and implementing new linguistic norms, which could also permeate and exert their influence in the Inner circle.

The fall of the divide between native and non-native speakers is well represented in the studies by Modiano, who elaborated an alternative model presenting a portrait of World English which is quite distant from the kachruvian one. As a matter of fact, the core of Modiano's model is the concept of proficiency, i.e. the ability to effectively communicate in English at an international level.

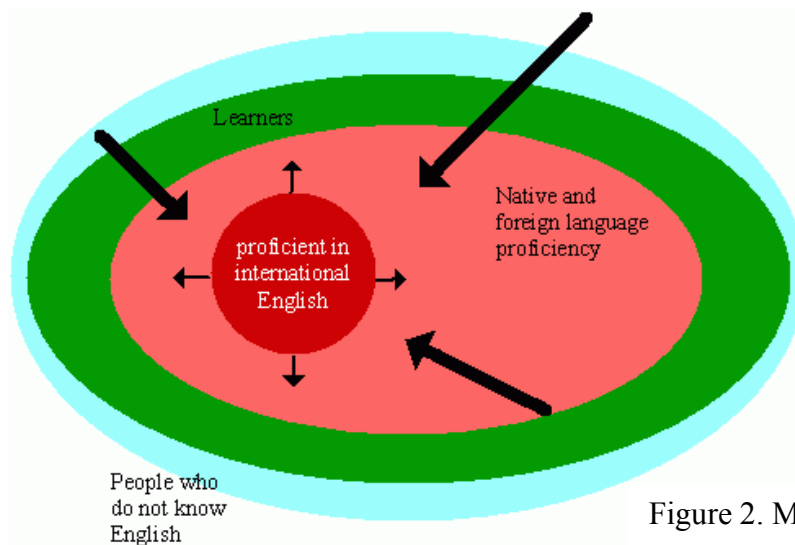


Figure 2. Modiano's Model

In this scheme, the first point that clearly emerges is the fact that we enter the domain of English as a global language. Speakers are subdivided according to proficiency criteria into three main groups: proficient speakers, learners, and people who do not know English. The absence of barriers separating NSs and NNSs comes as a consequence of the huge spread of the English language in the last decade, a phenomenon that was only dawning when Kachru developed his model. Nowadays, the focus of conversational skills has shifted from the capacity to be understood by and sound like a native speaker to the more general competence to effectively interact with people from every part of the world, for whom English may also not be an L1. I will discuss the crucial issue of intercultural communication later in this chapter.

Elaborated in the late 1990s, Modiano's model was not exempt from criticism, especially regarding its blurred boundaries between proficient and non-proficient speakers, and the fact that no clear set of norms was available to identify with a high degree of certainty if a speaker was to be located in one group or the other, in particular when liminal cases were taken into consideration. According to Poppi (2012:30), this was mainly due to the presence of a great number of contributing factors. To obviate this problem, Modiano later revised his model, proposing a scheme based on a central "common core" defining the main characteristics of the English language, around which



all varieties of English spoken around the world where located (including that of foreign language speakers).

Kachru and Modiano were not the only ones to elaborate a descriptive model accounting for the phenomenon of World Englishes, but for the sake of this thesis they stood out as two of the most meaningful examples. In this paragraph, a crucial element of discussion has been left out: which are the criteria informing the distinction between native and non-native speakers? And are they still valid in the light of contemporary and still ongoing variations in the number and geographical distribution of English speakers around the world?

### **1.5 The Native – Non Native speaker divide**

When we think of the linguistic concept of Native Speaker (NS), it seems quite easy to understand if a person could be included in it or not. Usually, NSs of English are identified as those having English as their L1. However, things are far more complicated, as the distinction between the two groups is only based on linguistic factors, but is always influenced by social, political and cultural elements as well.

In his research in the field of applied linguistics, Davies proposed a list of six criteria describing the linguistic skills characterising a NS, and which a NNS could not possibly possess:

1. The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.
2. The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her idiolectal grammar.
3. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Standard Language grammar which are distinct from his/her idiolectal grammar.
4. The native speaker has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries (the 'one clause at a time' facility) and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of

complete lexical items. In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.

5. The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels)
6. The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker. Disagreements about the deployment of an individual's capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the Standard or (standard) Language. (Davies, 1991).

Davies' list includes qualities that are obviously typical of native speakers, or, in his words, *unique*. A non-native speaker will never be able to be as fluent and as creative in her/his speech/writing as a native speaker of a language, one reason for that being poorer vocabulary. There are of course some exceptions, for example when we consider people that moved to a foreign country early in their childhood, or have been living abroad for enough time to become familiar with the local language at the point of (almost) making it their L1, or are bilingual because at least one of their parents is a NS. Briefly, there seems to be good reasons to think that a distinction between NS and NNS based on linguistic features was proven a solid theory.

Problems arises, as mentioned above, when the NS-NNS distinction is based on non-linguistic factors, like for example membership of a certain ethnic or social group. For example, Holliday (2014:xxxx) examined the case of a Pakistani British teacher of English working in the United Arab Emirates: despite being a NS fulfilling all criteria proposed by Davies, she distinctly felt that people she came in contact with still saw her as a NNS. The category of NS of English can enjoy a privileged position for a number of reason, one of them being that ENL is still perceived as the prestige and norm-providing variety. In this sense, discrimination against non-native speakers is evident especially in the field of education, where more experienced NNS teachers find themselves in a position of disadvantage with respect to their NS counterparts even when these latter are less suitable for the job in terms of preparation (Sharifian, 2009:10). Schools and universities around the world still prefer to offer English courses based on a native model of the language, and this affirmation is further proved by the fact that Test of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth TOEFL) remains one of the

most valued tests of English proficiency at an international level. As claimed by Khan (2013:xxxx), TOEFL evaluations are aimed at verifying the candidates' knowledge of only a particular variety of English, namely the American one, as the test was initially a basic requirement for students willing to continue their academic training in the US. However, TOEFL has by now become an actual benchmark for English learners from all over the world.

In particular, Khan's thesis was that tests like TOEFL constitute a clear evidence of "linguistic imperialism" (Khan, 2009:193), as they are imposed as pre-requisite to students who are not familiar with American English and neither have a good reason to become so. Her research was conducted in Saudi Arabia, where TOEFL is a mandatory requirement for students willing to access college education. In a series of interviews with a group of 24 female students from 18 to 21 years old, girls complained about the fact that TOEFL tests were too much difficult and too much focused on idioms and grammatical precisions. In their opinion, such an exam was rather useless for students in Saudi Arabia, who in their everyday experience come in contact with a wholly different variety of English. Moreover, TOEFL represented a great source of anxiety and fear, because a potential failure was directly linked to the impossibility to go to college. A group of English teachers seemed to share this vision:

Saba (T) [...] mentions that: "the idioms are mostly related to the American way of life. For example, 'I'm swamped with work'. Our poor students have never heard of a swamp in Saudi Arabia. It hardly gets muddy and they haven't seen rain much, so it's very unlikely for them to understand such a meaning. It's about everyday happenings, and some of these happenings are not related to their culture" (Khan, 2009:200).

Therefore, what are the reasons backing the choice of TOEFL as essential pre-requisite to access college in a Middle-East country like Saudi Arabia? The answer, according to Khan, is that the American model of language and lifestyle is pervasive in elite social groups, and as a consequence American English remains the reference variety to be spoken in order to be included in upper classes.

Studies like those by Khan have proliferated over the last years, especially thanks to the emergence of the ELF concept, which triggered a reaction by NNSs of English, who cannot possibly be relegated to a marginal role anymore, but need to be accepted as owners of the language in their own right. English spoken in international contexts has become a variety worth of being placed at the same level with native ones. As a matter of fact, ENL proficiency does not imply ELF proficiency, and native speakers may actually prove themselves less skilled in intercultural communication, due to their use of an excessive number of culture-related aspects of the language (e.g. metaphors, idioms, phrasal verbs and other collocations), which are not of immediate comprehension for other NNS interlocutors. Effective communication in international environments does not depend on the ability to speak English with a native accent, but rather on the capacity to adapt one's language to the situational context and to the interlocutor. In the next paragraph we will analyse the main features of ELF, in order to better understand it better as an independent variety from ENL.

## **1.6 Distinctive linguistic features of ELF**

The emergence of ELF has triggered a new conceptualisation of the notion of language which, despite its being problematic and often controversial, is bound to completely revolutionise our perception of speech community, errors and linguistic interaction. The first pivotal studies aimed at describing ELF and its characteristics were those by Jenkins on ELF phonology, followed soon afterwards by research conducted by Seidlhofer and Mauranen, among many others. All their attempts, however successful, reflect the enormous difficulty of drawing a consistent and coherent classification of ELF features, mainly due to the lack of stability and intrinsic flexibility of ELF structures. Above all, it is important to note that, despite a certain resistance encountered in some academic groups where ENL is still seen as the prestige variety to be taught and spoken, deviations from the NS norms used in ELF interactions are no more considered as mistakes, but tend to be conceived as accommodation strategies implemented by speakers in order to enhance an effective communication. The next paragraphs will be dedicated to the description of ELF features in four distinct linguistic

fields, namely phonology, lexicogrammar and morphology, idiomaticity and pragmatics.

### **1.6.1. Phonology**

In her 2001 work on ELF phonology, Jenkins argued that Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) - still nowadays widely regarded by English learners as the ones they should aspire to - are actually not the most effective in conversations taking place in an international contexts. According to Jenkins' analysis, imitation of these two NS types of pronunciation do not correspond to an actual increase in intelligibility in ELF exchanges, but could on the contrary lead to misunderstandings and communicative failures. Through a series of interviews with NNSs, which also saw her participation in the role of NS, she managed to elaborate a list of phonology features to be considered as essential for ELF intelligibility, named as the Lingua Franca Core:

- Consonant sounds except voiced/voiceless *th* and dark *l*
- Vowel length contrasts (e.g. the difference between the vowels in 'pitch' and 'peach')
- Restrictions on consonant deletion (in particular, not omitting sounds at the beginning and in the middle of words)
- Nuclear (or tonic) stress production/placement

(Jenkins, 2000:159)

All other phonological components informing a correct RP pronunciation were to be considered as secondary and non-necessary for mutual understanding between ELF interlocutors, were encouraged to use their regional accents instead of being submitted to a native model that in many cases may even prove counter-productive. This was a complete change of perspective if compared to previous theories based on a EFL point of view, and also one of the reasons that made Jenkins' research so influential in the field of ELF studies.

Nevertheless, some criticism to this research methodology came from scholars like Modiano, who did not agree with the choice to select only NNSs for interviews. In his

opinion, a coherent analysis of ELF communicative exchanges could not possibly exclude native speakers, as they are as well involved in ELF communications in a number of cases, and would be bound to adapt themselves to the situational context just like any other participant. In particular, statistics conducted at a European level may be invalidated by the marginalisation of NSs, who are present in 60 millions in a total of nearly 500 million people (Modiano, 2009:61).

### **1.6.2. Lexicogrammar and Morphology**

With regard to lexicogrammar and morphology, distinctive ELF structures have been identified above all in spoken interactions, as they are more variation-prone than written forms, which are usually more conservative and resistant to change (Jenkins, 1997:30). A list of ELF lexicogrammar characteristics was compiled by Seidlhofer in 2004, following investigation on the basis of available extended corpora of ELF. Seidlhofer considered instances of:

- ‘dropping’ the third person present tense –s
- ‘confusing’ the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- ‘omitting’ definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- ‘failing’ to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g. *isn't it? Or no?* Instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting ‘redundant’ prepositions as in *We have to study about...*
- ‘overusing’ certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- ‘replacing’ infinitive constructions with *that-* clauses, as in *I want that*
- ‘overdoing’ explicitness (e.g. *black colour* rather than just *black*)

(Seidlhofer, 2004: 227)

If seen from an ENL perspective, the above list would appear as a series of mistakes which could easily compromise the normal flow of communication in a given interaction between two NSs. However, as demonstrated by Björkman (2010:xxxx), in

ELF contexts they do not impede the linguistic exchange and actually provoke little disturbance, except in a few cases involving non-standard question formulation.

### **1.6.3. Idiomaticity**

Metaphors and other types of figurative uses of language are the product of a specific culture, and, as Prodromou affirms, they are frequently employed by NSs belonging to a given speech community because of the existence of a “deep commonality”, i.e. a shared socio-cultural background and knowledge (Prodromou, 2008:88). As a consequence, according to the principle of idiom by Sinclair, speakers in a linguistic community

[have] available [...] a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices (Sinclair, 1991:110)

On the other hand, NNSs tend to avoid using this type of idiomatic expressions when communicating with NSs because in many cases they are afraid to make an improper use of metaphors or do not want to be misunderstood. With regard to the relation between ELF speakers, they can only share a “shallow commonality” (MacKenzie, 2014:104), and cannot therefore employ idiomatic expressions in the ENL sense, i.e. as “territorial marker or indicator of the native identity” (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009:128).

However, it would be false to claim that figurative uses of language are never present in ELF interactions. On the contrary, as Pitzl (2009:300) affirms, metaphors in ELF can be forged in three different ways: first, they can be elaborated from scratch by speakers and introduce a new image created to suit a certain purpose; second, a process of “re-metaphorization” may occur, where idiomatic expressions are produced on the basis of existing ENL metaphors; third, speakers may creatively use metaphors from their own L1 and transfer them in the ELF system (Pitzl, 2009:300). The title of Pitzl’s chapter in Mauranen and Ranta’s volume - taken from the VOICE corpus - is itself an example, of a modified ENL idiom: the expression *Let sleeping dogs lie* was turned into *We should not wake up any dogs*. (Pitzl, 2009).

Idioms and metaphors are widely used in ELF contexts as well, although in this case they serve different purposes than equivalent expressions associated with ENL. A number of scholars has dealt with this issue, proposing alternative reasons governing the scope of idioms in ELF. These can be used in order to: enhance clarity, show solidarity with the interlocutor, adding humor, providing emphasis and so on. Extensive researches on this topic is still ongoing, and is greatly encouraged by the creation or enlargement of ELF corpora.

#### **1.6.4. Pragmatics**

When considering the enormous variety of linguacultural background informing interactions between ELF speakers, it would be easy to think that misunderstandings and errors might be the norm. Actually, things are quite different, as researches conducted on this topic show that linguistic mistakes do not normally invalidate communicative effectiveness. On the contrary, ELF interactions almost always acknowledge Grice's Cooperative Principle of Conversation, stating that:

our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. (Grice, 1975:26).

Moreover, it has been pointed out that misunderstanding is likely to occur more frequently in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) rather than in ELF. According to Jenkins (1997:xxx), ELF speakers accommodate to their interlocutor by implementing a series of pragmatic strategies ranging from paraphrasing, self-repair, clarification, repetitions, etc. A crucial role is played by code-switching when, for example, speakers want to show solidarity (e.g. by adopting terms from a language which is an L1 for neither of the participants to a given communicative exchange) or in order to introduce elements from his/her own linguacultural background (in this case, s/he will rely on vocabulary items from his/her L1) (Cogo & Dewey, 2012:44).



In this short section, an overview of the main characteristics of ELF has been provided, with the aim of demonstrating how English has developed as a global language, and is by now quite separate from ENL. This perspective has gained momentum especially from the early 2000s, when scholars began to deal with such a complex and controversial topic, thus producing a number of studies allowing us to better understand the phenomenon and the reasons behind the success of the English language on an international scale, and the transformations that this process has triggered in the linguistic system as well.

### **1.7 IBE and BELF: two conceptions of English as a Business Language**

Up until now, we have been discussing issues and perspectives related to English as a lingua franca enhancing multi- and inter-cultural communication between people who do not share the same mother tongue. But what are the reasons behind their need to interact with one another? There are infinite answers to this question; however, one of the fields where English is most widely used as means of communication is the business sector. Clients, producers, sales agents, and employees of a number of companies all around the world are bounded together in a global network, in which one manager in New York may need to know real time market data for stock exchanges in Tokyo or a Skype video-conference might be organised between potential buyers in India and sellers in Brazil. Quotations, business negotiations, information exchanges between companies, and marketing strategies alike are based on a single yet fundamental concept: communication, the main prerequisite for it to take place is mutual comprehension.

In the past, this was not quite an issue, as companies tended to direct their efforts mainly towards national markets. This trend changed along with the creation and development of the first multinational corporations, i.e. large companies constituted by one central headquarter and a number of subsidiaries in different countries, and above all thanks to the technological innovations of the World Wide Web, a phenomenon triggered, like we mentioned above, by the advent of globalisation. As a consequence,

even small companies are nowadays ‘forced’ to entertain business relations with foreign firms in order to enlarge their turnover and increase their revenues through export activities. Therefore, the need for a shared code of communication has emerged over the last decades and, once again, English has provided the only viable solution.

One of the first studies aimed at the definition of an International Business English (IBE) was carried out in the 1990s by Johnson and Bartlett, who listed a series of linguistic features, which in their opinion characterised IBE as spoken by NNS professionals. These features pointed out to an overall simplification both at a lexical and grammatical level:

- Restricted vocabulary (e.g. We’ll call together -not each other)
- Non-count nouns lacking (e.g. I have a news)
- Pre-/Postposition reduced (e.g. I’ll pay the coffee)
- Simplified question forms (e.g. Why you are here?)
- Simplified tense/mood system (e.g. Tomorrow I go to London)
- Passives avoided (e.g. That represents only 10%)
- Conjoined not embedded sentences (e.g. We know about the project in the other countries and then we every month call together)
- No gerunds/present participles (e.g. It is not worth to do)
- Few relative clauses, simplified relative pronouns (e.g. My company which name is...)

(Johnson & Bartlett, 1999:9)

Moreover, a comparison chart revealed that IBE had much in common with pidgins and creoles, due to its being used as a contact language for trade purposes and as simplified means of communication between people who do not share a common native language. However, subsequent developments (e.g. spread of English as a global language) showed that the type of English employed in business contexts could actually be defined as a lingua franca in its own right, and this marked the starting point allowing the concept of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) to emerge. According to Poppi,

BELF is the term coined to refer to the ELF used in the business community to conduct business and by business practitioners to do their work (Poppi, 2012:130).

As opposed to EFL, effective communication in BELF is not to be judged on the basis of the respect of NS norms, but it strongly relies on the interlocutor's communicative and accommodation skills. As Charles affirmed in her intervention at the first ELF Forum held in Helsinki and in a subsequent article, the primary objective of professionals using BELF in their everyday working experience is to "get the job done" and establish relationships with their business counterparts (Charles, 2007:23-24). Besides, BELF speakers are communicators in their own right (not merely learners of the language). This comes as an aftereffect of the choice to consider BELF as a tool of communication acquired as a second language by the totality of speakers; no one can claim to be a NS of BELF and there is not a group who exclusively own the language and can be appointed as the only norm-providing agent.

Eventually, every language is backed by a specific culture, and also in this respect we can perceive a clear distinction between EFL and BELF: while the former is a manifestation of the national culture(s) of NSs of English, the latter reflects both the business community cultures and individual cultural backgrounds (Charles, 2007). This fact was further proved by researches conducted by Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, who indicated that multiculturalism and multilingualism informing BELF were actually to be considered as its "inherent quality" (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013:28), in its turn enhancing proficiency and communication strategies that are crucial in BELF:

It [BELF] requires competence in the English "core" business-specific genres, and communication strategies focusing on clarity, brevity, directness and politeness. In essence, BELF is very different from a "natural" language spoken with native speakers because it is highly situation-specific, dynamic, idiosyncratic and consequently, inherently tolerant of different varieties (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013:28).

Having ascertained that BELF is nowadays chosen as corporate language by a great number of multinational and local companies, the next question is: why are communication issues so crucial in the business sector, and in particular within companies themselves? The answer can be summarised in the concept of *corporate identity*, theorized during the 1990s by Van Riel and Balmer, among others. There is a

lack of consensus on what factors constitute the core of corporate identity; however, central elements are normally agreed to be corporate communication, culture, strategy and structure. Briefly, together they frame:

the articulation of what an organization is, what it stands for, what it does and how it goes about its business (especially the way it relates to its stakeholders and the environment) (Topalian, 2003:1119).

To rephrase this definition, we could say that corporate identity stands for the planned strategies and other non-predictable circumstances which, combined, determine the way in which a company is perceived by its stakeholders from the outside and internally by its employees.

Coming to corporate communication, it plays a huge role, as explained by Poppi, at three different levels: a managerial one, a marketing one and an organisational one (Poppi, 2012:135). The first is linked to the internal functioning of a company and the need to build a shared view of mission, objectives and trust in the leadership; the second aims at supporting sale activities, whereas the third is more general, including all communications influencing the self-presentation of the company in the eyes of both employees and clients or external stakeholders. In all of these cases, corporate communication is implemented through a variety of tools, ranging from newsletters, advertising campaigns, meetings, e-mails, public relations and many others. The corporate chosen language is the core element that holds together all communications strategies aimed at building a solid and positive corporate identity, and it has a significant impact on the maintenance of a serene office atmosphere, as it acts in the relationship between colleagues, with clients or other collaborators.

This is just one of the many areas in which English is chosen as the only possible means of communication encompassing all people working in that sector, but it is in no way the only one. The next paragraph will be devoted to a brief analysis of another field: that of international tourism.

## **1.9 International tourism and the use of English**

Another field where ELF is widely used all over the world is that of tourism. Many universities today offer a wide range of degrees in tourism management; as a matter of factor, it seems to be a sector only partially touched by the ongoing global financial crisis, and one in constant evolution as well. According to statistics provided by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, a specialised agency of the United Nations), and its operative branch World Tourism Barometer based in Spain, tourist arrivals in Europe saw an increase of 4.3% in the first eight months of 2015. In total, 810 million people were esteemed to have travelled in various regions of the world in this interval, 33 millions more than in the same period of 2014 (UNWTO, 2015). We are here considering only the number of so-called “overnight visitors”, meaning:

tourists who travel to a country other than that in which they have their usual residence, but outside their usual environment, for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose in visiting is other than an activity remunerated from within the country visited (World Bank, 2016)

As a consequence, tourist services need to be provided both by national authorities and private entities, and, once again, the issue of communication is crucial. Information offices, tourist guides, personnel in museums and other places of interest: in each of these cases, the tourist flux needs to be effectively coordinated. The most widespread languages of communication for tourism are English, French and Spanish.

Moreover, tourism must be encouraged and supported through a series of advertisement campaigns and other promotional activities. Websites play an overriding role in this sense: they are nowadays the primary source of information for people travelling abroad, also offering the possibility to make reservations, buy tickets online, contact an operator. This is why website administrators often establish collaborations with translation agencies, in order to create multilingual online platforms where people from all over the world can get the information they may need.

The growing importance of the tourist sector justifies and supports the hypothesis formulated by Gotti that tourist discourse has nowadays become a true specialised language, a domain governed by specific syntactic and lexical rules, besides textual features related to this field. Gotti's analysis is based on examples taken from English, which is the most widely used language in the tourism sector, and also the one from which other languages borrow new terms related to emerging practices (e.g. in Italian we currently use words such as *voucher*, *booking*, *tour operator* etc.)

In Gotti's opinion, Languages for Special Purposes (LSPs) share a set of common features, the most important among them being monoreferentiality and conciseness. The first one identifies the univocal correspondence between specialised terminology and external references. In the case of tourist language, this happens much less than in other disciplines, and many words and expressions of everyday use are in fact chosen to describe new concepts, as they are more suitable for texts with persuasive aims such as advertisements, leaflets and other informative material distributed by travel agencies to promote their activities. On the other hand, conciseness is a crucial element for tourist language, and it is achieved through different strategies. For example, premodification and affixation are very common in tourist texts, with nouns used in an adjectival position like in *self-catering accommodation* or *pre-arranged car rental* (Gotti, 2006). Another linguistic device characterising tourist language is the creation of new compound nouns from the merging of two terms, as in *ecotourism*, *motel*, *travelodge*, *campsite* etc. or other acronyms and abbreviations, such as *ETA* (*Estimated Time of Arrival*) or *ID* (*Identity Document*) (Gotti, 2006:24).

The richness and huge lexical variety presented by tourist language is also due to the fact that it comprises terms from many other fields, such as economics, history, geography, history of art etc. This complexity is probably one of the main challenges for translators of tourist text, as the analysis of terminology not only includes field-specific words, but must be extended to other sectors. However, when we come to English translations, the same problem arises again: which type of English should websites adopt in order to reach the widest possible number of users and be understood

by people from all over the world? We have seen how written forms of English are more conservative and still tend to preserve ENL rules; yet, too much idiomatic and culture-specific expressions may compromise the capacity of a text to be comprehensible and clear for an audience also including a huge number of NNSs. Very few tourist websites are translated in more than 3 or 4 foreign languages and, also considering the huge number of NNSs of English to whom they should be accessible to, it would be recommendable to employ a more ELF-oriented perspective. More detailed and accurate considerations on this theme will be provided in the next chapters of this thesis.

### **1.10 Developments in ELF corpus-based research**

As we have understood by now, ELF is a very challenging yet fascinating field of research, and still a relatively young one, most likely to consistently develop in the near future. Early studies on the theme of lingua francas were published already in the 1990s, but from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ELF became a reference point for all studies encompassing intercultural communication, English as a global language and other related issues. We will now see some of the pivotal projects which marked a turning-point for ELF studies, namely two ELF corpora (VOICE and ELFA) and international ELF Forums.

The idea of the VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) project was launched by Professor Seidlhofer and it was developed by a team of scholars including Breiteneder, Klimpfinger, Majewski, Osimk-Teasdale, Pitzl and Radeka. As a computerised corpus of naturally-occurring interactions, it has presently come to include about 1 million words from ELF speech events such as interviews, press conferences, service encounters, seminar discussions, workshop discussions, meetings and many others (Seidlhofer et al., 2013). Speakers recorded in VOICE are about 1,250, and includes people with approximately 50 different L1, without taking into account possible varieties of the same language. It is also important to highlight that both NSs and NNSs of English participated to the transcribed speech events; these latter are

differentiated in terms of function, domain, participant roles and relationships (Seidlhofer et al., 2013).

The creation of this first pioneering corpus of ELF gave way to further similar projects, like for instance ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings), completed in 2008 by Mauranen and a team of researchers. Recordings (for about 131 hours) and related transcripts were collected by scholars in the University of Tampere, the University of Helsinki, Tampere University of Technology, and the Helsinki University of Technology. Like in VOICE, the variety of speech events featuring in the corpus is fundamental. As for the domain of such interactions, it is summarised in Figure 3 below:

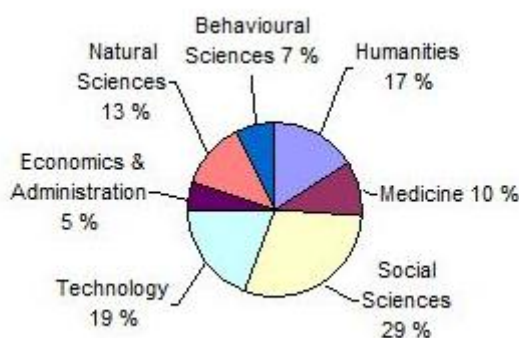


Figure 3. Interactions in ELFA

The number of recorded speakers is lower than VOICE, with about 650 recorded interlocutors. The selection process of speech events to be included in the corpus is carried out according to three basic principles:

- **prototypicality**, or the extent to which genres are shared and named by most disciplines, for example lectures, seminars, thesis defences, conference presentations.
- **influence**: genres that affect a large number of participants, for example introductory lecture courses, plenary lectures
- **prestige**: genres with high status in the discourse community, for example guest lectures, plenary lectures at conferences.

(ELFA, 2015)



Finally, one recent ‘work in progress’ is the ACE corpora (Asian Corpus of English) ideated by Kirkpatrick.

We have seen here that corpus-based research is one of the most promising fields in ELF studies and this topic will be analysed more in detail in chapter 2. However, one of the greatest strength of ELF lies right in the possibility to take advantage from the work of a huge number of scholars interested in the subject and contributing to its development. It is also essential for them to confront with each other in order to share opinions, points of view and problems tackled during research activities; one important occasion to do so is provided by ELF Forums, the first of which was held in 2008 in Helsinki. Until now, there have been six conferences, attended by major researchers like for example Seidlhofer, Mauranen, and many others. Academic cooperation represents one of the paramount factors enhancing research and this is particularly true in the case of ELF, a multicultural topic to be explored through an equally multicultural approach.

### **1.11 Conclusions**

In this first chapter I have briefly analysed the major issues concerning the theme of English as a Lingua Franca and its developments at a global level. Being it a highly controversial and problematic topic, it is impossible to exhaustively deal with it in such a short space, but the discussion of some of the most essential points will be functional to the next part of this thesis, that will be devoted to the translation theories and in particular to the possibility of translating from L1 to L2.

Nonetheless, research in ELF is nowadays a very productive terrain, and contributions by scholars from all over the world will undoubtedly encourage further developments. In this sense, an enrichment of existing ELF corpora and the creation of new ones are probably to be considered as one of the most promising field of study. One of the paramount obstacles to the formulation of an all-comprehensive theory of ELF is represented by the huge number of opinions and points of view, and the need to conciliate them. This process will take time, and its unpredictable results may open new

paths and cast light on innovative issues and ideas. The expression “there is always room for improvement” seems in this case to be particularly appropriate.



## **Chapter 2 – Translating into a Non-Native language: emerging theories and widespread practice**

Translation in our contemporary globalised world stands out as one of the most important tools we have available to understand reality around us and its developments. It represents the key to access information on the most diverse topics, being it politics, arts, entertainment, economy, medicine or technology, and the list could go on indefinitely. A major percentage of all novels, textbooks and articles we read in our mother tongue has been translated from a foreign language and movies dubbing is a normal practice in the Italian film industry. Translation is also widely employed in international contexts such as business relations or in international organisations such as the United Nations, whose General Assembly includes delegates from 193 member states.

In this second chapter, I am going to explore a number of issues related to the theory and practice of translation, and in particular to the controversial theme of translating into a non-native language, by now a widespread activity among professionals. Due to the unprecedented spread of the English language and the resulting creation of what in the previous chapter has been defined as ELF, the need for translations into English has increased significantly in the last decades. Therefore, considering that native speakers of English have been by far outnumbered by non-native ones, it is impossible even to think that such a small minority could handle all required translations into their mother tongue. According to Crystal, at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an estimate 1,5 billion people were able to speak English and the language itself was fast becoming

a vacuum cleaner of a language, readily sucking in words from whichever other language it meets – well over 350 of them. Because of this, although English is historically a Germanic language, the bulk of its vocabulary is not. (Crystal, 2000)

This affirmation is by no means aimed at suggesting that everyone with only a basic knowledge of English can produce an acceptable translation, as an educational or professional background is obviously required. On the other hand, Chapter 2 will also support criticism against the elite view that only NS of English are able to provide what we could define as a ‘good’ translation into that language. A distinction needs to be drawn in this sense: while language competence is actually an essential pre-requisite, it is not the only skill informing translation competence. In the next paragraphs, this topic will be extensively discussed both through concrete examples and theoretical assumptions.

A thoughtful combination of theory and practice is the main guideline for the realisation of an accurate and comprehensible translation. Thelen, from the Maastricht School of Translation and Interpreting, stated that these two aspects need to co-exist and co-operate, as they can have a positive influence on one another. In his opinion, Translation Studies do not recognise pure practice as such, but only as an object of study, which could provide the necessary data and elements for the elaboration of an organic theory. Moreover, as an academic discipline, it also intertwines with many other fields, such as terminology, lexicography, cultural studies, etc. On the contrary, in actual translation practice, although theory seems to play a marginal and non-influential role, it is nevertheless implemented. This demonstrates that the dichotomy between theory and practice can be resolved through the use of both aspects for the final aim of obtaining the best possible translation. This is especially true in the case of specialised texts, where a very important point is the recognition and distinction of terms from words: here, the professional experience of a translator is not enough for the correct identification of the right correspondent item in the target language, and theory comes in handy with tools provided by sciences like terminology and text analysis or corpus linguistics. As Thelen puts it,

Although the distinction between theory and practice is not clear-cut, both are condemned to co-operate. Only then can they benefit from one another and, most importantly, be beneficial to the translation process and ultimately help the translator ( human or machine), who is the person who has to do the job (Thelen, 2005:48).

Another few words need to be spent in favour of the valuable contribution that professional translator could make for further developments in Translation Studies. As claimed by Mossop, from the York University School of Translation, translators are most likely to cast light on one aspect of translation that is generally overlooked in research conducted in an academic context, namely the functioning and influence of “workplace procedures” (Mossop, 2005:24). Nowadays, the largest part of translation work is profit-oriented, and operated by people whose primary aim is to make a living of this job. As a consequence, some translations could result inaccurate due to the need to respect deadlines fixed by employers, and not for lack of competence on the part of the translator. This is just one example which shows how, in the real world, the work of professionals is hugely influenced by factors related to the company they are hired by, or to the time they have available to translate a certain text, or their collaboration with other practitioners.

One last interesting point highlighted by Mossop is the substantial difference between two sub-types of Translation Theory, which he labels Theory 1 and Theory 2. While the former identifies as its primary purpose the understanding of translation processes, the latter focuses on an explanation and justifications on how a translation has been carried out. For this reason, Theory 2 is often considered as the most useful, as it is directly applicable to translation practice. However, one should not underestimate the importance of Theory 1, for the simple fact that, despite not having a straightforward utility for translation activities,

Such ideas can well have an explanatory value. [...] MT systems can improve, and training can improve, without us having a iota more understanding of what happens when translation are produced (Mossop, 2005:25).

Theory 1 and 2 are complementary in the sense that they deal with different aspects of translation activities and both aim at improving translation understanding and practice respectively. Both of them are fundamental in the educational background of a translator.

To sum up and conclude this short introduction to Chapter 2 of this thesis, translation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become an essential element in our lives, and a relevant progress has been registered in Translation Studies as well. Taking advantage of technological innovations such as the Internet and computer memories, many corpora have been created, and machine translation is in constant improvement, although it is clear that it will hardly be able to fully replace human work and competences in this field. All the above-mentioned issues and many others which will be dealt with later in this chapter, demonstrate that translation is one of the most fascinating and fast-developing research sectors of our times, besides being one of the most enriching at an individual level. Translation is often the lens through which we come to know the outside world and establish relationships with other people at an international level. In the words by Rushdie,

The word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from the Latin for 'bearing across'. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained (Rushdie, 1992.16).

## **2.1 The cognitive challenges of translation: a multi-tasking approach**

It is commonly thought that translation, all in all, is a quite straightforward activity, and every translation or foreign language student has been told at least once that “there’s nothing complicated in learning how to translate! It’s simply a matter of reporting A into B and vice versa”. Wrong as it may be, this phrase is also reflected in the behaviour of some employees who, when commissioning a translation, expect it to be finished within a very short time.

First of all, a distinction is to be made between writing and speaking activities on the one side, and mediation tasks (i.e. translation and interpreting) on the other. The difference between these two areas lies in the fact that, while the former can be considered as a uniquely linguistic processes, the latter imply cultural, social and psychological aspects as well. Language mediation in any communicative context requires three main stages: to begin with, a communicative function is created between

the *first sender* (the person who produces the source text or speech) and the mediator; then, the mediator needs to process the received informational input and re-elaborate it; finally, an outgoing communicative function is established this time between the mediator and the intended addressee of the source text/speech (Padilla & Baja, 1999:64). The second stage in this message flow is also the central one, as it includes the mental mechanisms informing translation, and it relies on the human cognitive dimension, where the transfer from one linguistic system to another is achieved. In their interesting research conducted during the 1990s at the University of Granada, Padilla & Baja identified and described a possible sequence of steps at a cognitive level, which are responsible of translation constructive process, namely analysis and comprehension of the source text, translation of the text into the L2, and production of the translated text once reformulated (Padilla & Baja, 1999:65).

According to psychological studies, cognitive efforts required for translation activities are considerable, as a whole range of different skills and sets of knowledge is activated in order to accomplish even the simplest translation task. Therefore, not only is translation a complex mental process, but also a multidisciplinary one. To begin with, basic logical assumptions need to be made and implemented. One example can be found in the assessment by the translator of truth values underlying the passage (s)he is working on (Newmark, 1981): if the meaning of a sentence in the source text is obscure or ambiguous, the translator must go back to its presuppositions; this will allow to fully understand the message that the author intended to convey and to find the perfect expression to reformulate it in the target language. Moreover, a background knowledge of the culture and traditions of both the source and target language is required, along with a technical competence in all linguistic fields related to the production of accurate texts, such as syntax, grammar, lexico-morphological structures and vocabulary.

The concurrence of all above mentioned processes and disciplines requires a great mental effort to be implemented together at one given moment. For this reason, the job of a professional translator is usually not measured in pages, but words. Yet, even the most expert professionals in this sector can live moments of uncertainty, for example



when translating a particularly complicated passage or when coming across an expression which does not seem to have a direct equivalent in the target language. Interruptions in the translation process may surely diminish with the increase of expertise, but they are seen as inherent to the translation process itself.

Observable indicators of uncertainty, such as extended pauses, deletions, revisions, or other editing actions, as well as direct or indirect articulation, including for instance, hedges on quantity or quality, tend to arise when the translator reaches what Angelone has termed a *problem nexus*. A nexus is the confluence of a given textual property and level (lexis, term, collocation, phrase, syntax, sentence, macro-level feature) and some sort of deficit in cognitive resources: a lack in the declarative or procedural knowledge the translator possesses (O'Brien, ...:109).

We now enter the realm of metacognition, namely the capacity to control a complex cognitive task. Despite its resounding name, it is actually a mental dimension which we often resort to in everyday life (Livingston, 1997) in order to tackle communication difficulties. In translation, metacognitive processes are activated when a nexus hinders the normal flow of discourse, and problem-solving strategies are called into action. For professional translator, such strategies are also enhanced by their capacity of monitoring their work and constantly providing self-feedback about possible errors. According to Hansen's research, a higher degree of expertise in translation also imply a correspondent increase in the tolerance for uncertainty, probably due to the fact that translators are more conscious of problem-solving strategies and more aware of their capacity to exit the translation impasse through self-reflection and regulation (Hansen, 2003:26).

Briefly, this short paragraph depicted a general overview of the complexities of translation as a professional activities, and the challenges that translators must face every time they sit at their desk to work on a text. Of course it is not even close to being an exhaustive description, as cognitive studies are a fascinating science whose mastery requires a deep knowledge of mental processes and the psychological dimension. Yet, for the purpose of this thesis, two considerations needs to be retained and pondered: the complexities linked to the production of an accurate translation, and the multi-disciplinary nature of translation as a professional activity. The next paragraph will

focus on an insight in one of the most important translation provider at an international level, namely those incorporated in the institutions and governmental bodies of the European Union.

## **2.2. An insight into the European Union's translation services: the difficulties of implementing multilingualism**

The European Union has by now become the framework within which we shape our individual and collective identity. We do not think of ourselves only as citizens of a national state, but as citizens of Europe as well. Officially constituted with the Treaty of Maastricht, which came into force in 1993, the EU nowadays reunites 28 countries ranging from Portugal in the West to the Baltic Republics and Finland in the East. It has been one of the paramount political achievement of the last century, and is one of the most advanced democratic systems in the world, thanks to the promulgation of a legislation based on social justice and the respect of inherent human right, with brilliant examples like the European Convention of Human Rights, issued in 2010. Notwithstanding recent developments in the migration crisis and the thorny issue of the refugees re-location among European member states may lead to an about turn of its policy, the EU has constantly been promoting a culture of tolerance and laicism, based on the assumption that cultural difference can always be seen as an enrichment for local communities.

The European linguistic policy has been shaped on the same substructure. While at the beginning EU's official languages only included Dutch, French, German and Italian, their number has increased with the acquired membership by other states, until presently reaching 24: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish (European Union, 2016). All of them legally enjoy an equal status within European institutions, and a list of regional idioms is safeguarded by the European Charter for the Regional and Minority Languages. In this context of multilingualism, translation and interpreting services are

of paramount importance, and they stand out as one of the most challenging themes for European integration.

At an institutional level, the European Union is based on two fundamental bodies: the European Parliament and the European Commission. The former is the main legislative assembly, with the power of voting, proposing and amending legislative acts and of supervising the work of the European Commission. During seats of discussion, its members can take the word into one of the official languages at their choice and all parliamentary document are available in all 24 official languages. According to Article 4 of the Treaty of the European Union,

An eight-week period shall elapse between a draft legislative act being made available to national Parliaments in the official languages of the Union and the date when it is placed on a provisional agenda for the Council for its adoption or for adoption of a position under a legislative procedure. Exceptions shall be possible in cases of urgency, the reasons for which shall be stated in the act or position of the Council. Save in urgent cases for which due reasons have been given, no agreement may be reached on a draft legislative act during those eight weeks (European Union, Treaty of the European Union, 2012).

The European Commission is the executive body of the EU, responsible for upholding and safeguarding the interests of the Union as a whole, for implementing and proposing laws, and for managing financial and budget matters. It is subdivides in a series of Directorates General, each in charge of specific policy areas. Inside the Commission, translation services are coordinated by an ad-hoc body, namely the Directorate General for Translation (hereafter DGT). This in-house organ has a total permanent staff of 1,750 linguists and 600 support staff (European Union, 2016). Of course, it would be impossible for every document issued by the European Commission to be translated in all 24 official languages; this happens only with legislative acts of major public importance, quantifiable in roughly one third of the total volume of publications and reports. The remaining two thirds are only available in the three idioms of larger use: English, French and German, also called procedural languages. As a matter of fact, internal documents need to circulate among politicians, professionals and staff of the Commission itself, in order to convey communications, agendas, general administrative information and the like.

In detail, the mission of the DGT is to ensure the normal functioning of the Commission, and the fulfilment of its legal obligations related to the multilingual asset. In a presentation to the candidates participating to the DGT selection session, translation was described as an essential pre-requisite for the development of the law-making process in EU institutions (Soriano, 2007:5). Translations are made from and into all EU official languages, with 506 combinations. Between 1958 - year of DGT's establishment – and 2007, the employed staff of translators and other collateral personnel saw a 100% total increase (from 25 to 2,350); the same is valid for the average number of translated pages (from 17,000 to 1,800,000). Translations provided by the DGT encompass a whole range of texts, beginning with documents related to the legislative activity of the Commission (e.g. Green Papers, White Papers, regulations, directives, law proposals), to then continue with those related to the work of the various Directorates General, and concluding with informative material for the general public (e.g. leaflets, websites, booklets, etc.). The pie chart in Fig. 4 below illustrates the huge diversity of translations produced by DGT:

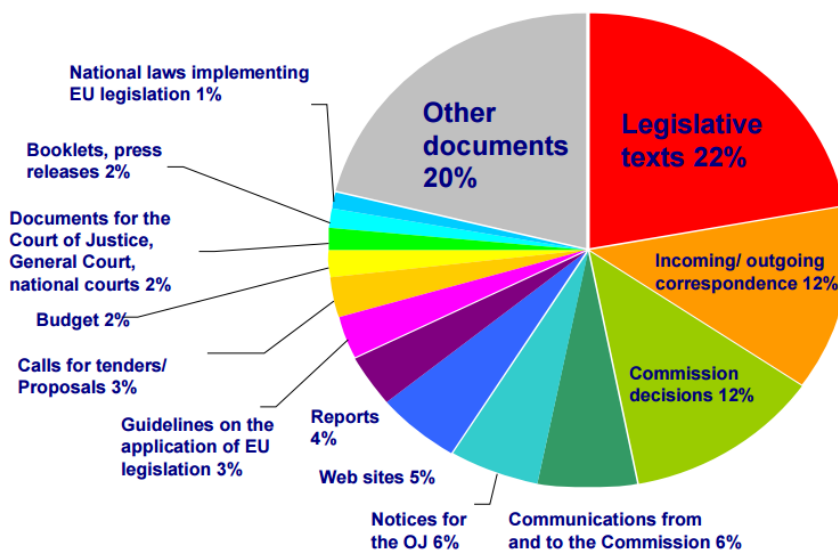


Figure 4. Types of documents translated by the DGT

Machine translation is also widely employed by the DGT, which in recent years developed its own machine translation system for public administration, MT@EC, available for free download at the EU's website. Surely the quality of non-human translation is lower, and influenced in the first place by three fundamental factors: first, the grammatical complexity of the source and target language may heavily influence the final outcome in an inversely proportional relation, meaning that the higher linguistic challenges are, the poorer the automatic translation is going to be; second, the register and style of the text, as either too long or too short sentences are processed with more difficulty, and the domain of literary texts is probably the one with the worst results in machine translation; eventually, content is crucial, and in particular the use of a terminology that is known by system or not (MT@EC, 2015). A graphical description of machine translation quality in each combination of EU official languages is provided by Fig. 5 below:

To From	BG	CS	DA	DE	EL	EN	ES	ET	FI	FR	GA	HR	HU	IT	LT	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SK	SL	SV
BG		B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	S	S	B	B	B
CS	B		B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
DA	B	B		B	B	G	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
DE	B	B	B		B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
EL	S	B	B	B		G	S	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	S	B	B	B	B
EN	S	S	S	S	S		G	B	B	S	B	B	B	S	B	B	G	S	B	G	S	B	B	S
ES	B	B	B	B	B	G		B	S	B	S	B	S	B	B	S	B	B	S	S	S	B	B	B
ET	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
FI	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
FR	B	B	B	B	B	G	G	B	B		B	S	B	S	B	B	S	B	B	S	S	B	B	B
GA	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
HR	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
HU	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
IT	B	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	S	B	B	B		B	B	S	B	B	S	S	B	B	B
LT	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
LV	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
MT	S	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	S	B	S	B	S	B	B		B	B	S	S	B	B	B
NL	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B
PL	B	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B		B	B	B	B	B
PT	S	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	B	B	S	B	S	B	B	S	B	B		S	B	B	B
RO	S	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	S	B	B	S	B	B	S	B	B	S	B		B	B	B
SK	B	B	B	B	B	S	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B		B	B	B
SL	B	B	B	B	B	S	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B		B	B
SV	B	B	B	B	B	G	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	S	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

G = gold, S = silver and B = bronze

Gold = best available; Silver = good for understanding; Bronze = just a rough idea

Figure 5. Language pairs for MT procedures.

As this table clearly shows, golden quality is only assigned to machine translations from and into the English language. Not surprising, if we consider that English is not only one among the 24 official languages of the EU, but a procedural one as well, meaning that it is also used in various contexts as means of communication between people who do not share a common language. Therefore, the sheer quantity of available documents into that language allows the creation of richer translation memories, and ensures a higher number of occurrences for each terms, which in its turn improves the outcome of machine translations. The only exception is constituted by the French>Spanish combination, whereas translation from English into Italian has been awarded only silver quality. All in all, it is possible to consider MT@EC as a very useful tool for obtaining on-demand raw translations for grasping the gist of a message in a very short time. Of course, machine translation does not suit every type of text; in some cases, an accurate reformulation is required, in particular in legal papers or other documents that are being published in institutional websites. Nevertheless, these automatic translation systems are going to be upgraded in the near future, with the development of artificial intelligence and the progress in the recognition of grammatical patterns, together with the enlargement of the available corpus of texts.

MT@EC is not the only language technology resource offered by the DGT. Other innovative tools launched throughout the years 2000s include DGT-Acquis, JRC-Acquis and DGT-TM. While the first two of them, i.e. DGT-Acquis and JRC-Acquis, are both paragraph-aligned parallel corpora, the third is a translation memory also available as open-source software for public use. The three are intertwined systems, relying on one another's' data, and their creation is the natural outcome of the initial idea of an "Acquis Communautaire", namely a collection of selected legislative texts in 23 official languages (Irish is not being translated at the moment), issued from the 1950s to the present day. Eventually, with regard to specialised EU legal terminology, a multilingual term base is freely available online at IATE (Inter Active Terminology for Europe). Specific terms and jargon can be searched in this platform for every language combination within the EU official languages, resulting in a list of occurrences including references from the target texts and the possible meanings that a term can

assume in different contexts. Fig. 6 below shows a sample search for the entry word “Parliament” in the ENG>IT language combination:

parliament Search  
en > it (domain: Any domain, type of search: All)

Result 1- 10 of 274 for parliament

**ENVIRONMENT [CdT]** [Full entry](#)

EN [Parliament](#) ★★★★★ →@

IT Parlamento ★★★★★ →@

**Parliament [EP]** [Full entry](#)

EN [Parliament](#) ★★★★★ →@

IT Parlamento ★★★★★ →@

[Feedback](#)

**Domain** ENVIRONMENT

**en**

**Definition** 1.A national representative body having supreme legislative powers within the state.  
*Definition Ref.* 1.WEBSTE;

**Term** **Parliament**  
*Reliability* 3 (Reliable)  
*Term Ref.* Institution: EEA; Title: GEMET - GEneral Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus; Publication Year: 1999; Publication Month: August; Volume No: 5;  
*Date* 23/03/1999

**it**

**Term** **Parlamento**  
*Reliability* 3 (Reliable)  
*Term Ref.* Institution: EEA; Title: GEMET - GEneral Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus; Publication Year: 1999; Publication Month: August; Volume No: 5;  
*Date* 23/03/1999

Source: CdT IATE ID: 48070

Figure 6. Search in IATE

Now, in the previous pages a very concise overview of human and machine translation services provided within the European Union has been outlined, which testify the efforts and investments of communitarian institutions in the asset of multilingualism. At the basis of EU’s constitution was the ambitious project of speaking in different languages, yet with one voice (Tosi, 2003:11). As Gazzola argues, languages not only play a role for communication purposes, but also have a symbolic value, in relation to the cultural dimension and collective identity of the communities in which they are spoken (Gazzola, 2006:394). Nevertheless, this unique political framework is revealed as quite weak when confronted with practical needs, and, consequently, real multilingualism can

be guaranteed only at a superficial level, so that excessive costs of translation are avoided (they are already one of the Commission's biggest budget items) and the fast and efficient functioning of institutional bodies is ensured.

Even at a European level, English has become one of the most widespread languages also for political communication and the most largely employed procedural language inside the European Commission and its collateral bodies. This is demonstrated by a number of facts, ranging from the unequivocally higher number of documents, declarations and speech reports available in this language if compared with others, the greater accuracy of English machine translated texts and the preponderance of speeches and interventions in English by staff and politicians working in EU institutions. Even internship application forms for candidates willing to find a job in the EU headquarter in Brussels need to be filled either in French (traditionally considered as the classic language of diplomacy) or in English (the actual global *Lingua Franca*). The unprecedented spread of ELF in recent years could not but influence Europe itself. Moreover, an obvious advantage of speaking a mutually comprehensible language is the reduction of misunderstandings and the increase of communication speed and effectiveness.

To sum up, multilingualism in the European Union is on the one hand a unique occasion of promoting national and regional cultures and enhancing political cohesion while preserving the individuality of each member state, and on the other hand an expensive and sometimes complicated obstacle to the normal political work development. In an interesting article published in *The Economist's Prospero's* blog and meaningfully titled "Babelicious", the EU was defined as a unique case of "lavish generosity", as all national languages spoken in newly entered member states can be recognised as official languages of the Union. (Prospero, 2015). Other international organisations decided to choose only a selection of languages for internal communication; for example, at the UN headquarters, only English, French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic are currently spoken. (United Nations, 2015). Yet, the main difference between the EU and other supra-national bodies is that the former was constituted not only as a federation of



countries based on the a shared project of peace and social justice, but also as a much more practical community for economic growth and prosperity. As a matter of fact, if multilingualism was to be abolished,

the result would be a populist-nationalist backlash even bigger than the one Europe already faces. European citizens joined the union for its economic benefits, not because they wanted to dissolve their identities into a larger European one. The Commission's translation and the Parliament's simultaneous interpretation may be expensive and confusing. So be it; the union's multilingualism is a part of its own official motto. If "United in diversity" is to be more than a slogan, multilingualism must be more than a hazy goal (Prospero, 2015).

### **2.3. Translation universals: methodological challenges for their identification**

The need for translations has increased over the years together with the need of communicating with an higher and higher number of interlocutors, who might speak a different language and live in another continent. In these days, translation as practice has enhanced the development of translation as science, meaning an interdisciplinary object of study for many academics and scholars from all over the world. Thus, its mechanisms and characteristic cognitive processes are undergoing thorough investigations, in order to formulate an organic theory, which could enhance an understanding of its underlying functioning and the factors informing the production of 'good' translations (as explained above, theory can apply to practice and vice versa). Theoretical hypothesis in every science aim at postulating a set of norms that could be held valid for the specific phenomena occurring in that field. In the case of translations, the identification of general rules or circumstances derived from a sufficiently representative sample of texts may prove functional for a better understanding of the discipline itself and an improvement in its implementation, or at least a more conscious knowledge of its potentials and limits.

One of the most interesting and yet controversial themes debated in Translation Studies is the existence of translation universals, i.e. general features to be found in translated texts regardless of their typology, topic, and language. The main problem in this type of

research is related to the identification of such general statements and the subsequent empirical demonstration of their actual universal-ship. If their presence was to be unequivocally ascertained, it would totally mark a turning-point for Translation Studies, and at the same time provide an effective tool for an in-depth comprehension of translation processes. In the following paragraphs, some methodological issues will be discussed, which could inform and influence the recognition of translation universals and their profitable use in the linguistic field.

At a practical level, as claimed by Toury (2004:36), translation universals should be investigated neither at a too concrete or too abstract a stage. In the former approach, data are collected according to the criterion of frequency, i.e.. the number of times they appear in every analysed text. Enquiries of this kind would result in a series of low-level phenomena, too case-specific and idiosyncratic to be awarded a normative status, and too peculiar of a given group of authors to be applied elsewhere. On the contrary, the second approach would recommend data to be acquired through a probabilistic strategy, which would provide sets of regularities in the system, instead of pure regularities in the performance (i.e. individual translations). However, even conjectures developed on an excessive degree of abstraction are destined to prove not enough explicative of any phenomena, despite their being directly applicable to every translated text. In Toury's opinion, a possible universal feature of translated texts might be the presence of so-called 'shifts', constituted by semantic aspects such as explicitation, implicitation, simplification, complexification, and so on. Moreover, shifts come in pairs defining opposite concepts, and the function of translation norms should be that of defining how the translator can operate choices between opposite, in a series of points located in a gradual scale in-between the two poles.

A different view is proposed by Chesterman, who outlines some methodological procedures which are or have been adopted by translation scholars in order to proceed from the general to the particular in scientific theorisation of translation. The first one is the prescriptive route, according to which all translated texts (occasionally limited to a certain typology) should or should not present specific characteristics. The second

approach is constituted by the pejorative route, where all translations are seen by proofreaders and text critics as lacking and inaccurate in some aspects. Eventually, a third methodological option is offered by the descriptive route, the most recent one, which heavily relies on technological resources such as translation memories and corpora for the identification of translation universals. This last branch of research is the one the present paragraph is more concerned with, and a number of eminent scholars developed a list of potential translation universals divided into two main categories: one related to the processing of the source text by translators (defined by Chesterman as *S-universals*) and the other informing the use by translators of the target text (*T-universals*). Here are a few examples from both sides:

Possible S-Universals:

- Lengthening by Berman
- Laws of interference and standardisation by Toury
- Dialect normalisation by Englund Dimitrova
- The Explication Hypothesis by Blum-Kulka

Possible T-Universals:

- Simplification by Laviosa-Braithwaite
- Conventionalisation by Baker
- Untypical lexical patterning by Mauranen

(Adapted from Chesterman, 2004:40)

Demonstrating the actual existence and validity of these theories is, as we have seen, undoubtedly challenging; however, if the debate will move towards this direction, it would represent a huge step forward in Translation Studies, and trigger a more precise definition of the features informing both good and bad translations. This would be of paramount importance especially for professionals translating into a non-native language, whose number is gradually increasing together with market need of translations. The next paragraph will focus on the main issue of the chapter, namely

translation with English as target language and carried out by non-native English speakers: problematic and controversial as it might be, this trend is bound to continue in the future, as shown in the first survey conducted on this theme by an international association of language professionals such as IAPTI.

## **2.4 IAPTI's Survey on L1>L2 Translation**

January 2015 saw the publication of the first survey conducted by the International Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators (hereafter IAPTI) on the theme of translation into a non-native language. IAPTI was founded in 2009 in Buenos Aires by a group of 34 language professionals, with the aim of promoting ethical behaviours and practices in their fields of activity, and enhance the exchange of opinions and constructive criticism for the improvement of translation and interpreting activities (IAPTI:XXXX).

Lead researcher of the project Piroth and his team examined a pool of 780 online interviews carried out between February 28 and March 10, 2014, among translators with different degrees of experience, language combinations, types of certification and educational background. Statistics were developed taking into account some of the main factors which are likely to influence translation as a professional activity, e.g. the country of origin/country of residence dichotomy, native language, years of experience in the field, membership of national or international translation associations etc.

A set of 29 questions was submitted to all interviewees who, in addition to providing an answer, were also given the opportunity to leave a comment clarifying their position or state any critics or viewpoints that may be of any contribute to the general outcome of the survey. Due to their high number, only a selection of these comments is present in the published version of the enquiry. This analysis guarantees a large-scale insight in the translation sector, thanks to the inclusion of people from 73 countries of origin and 80 countries of residence, as shown in Fig. 7 below:

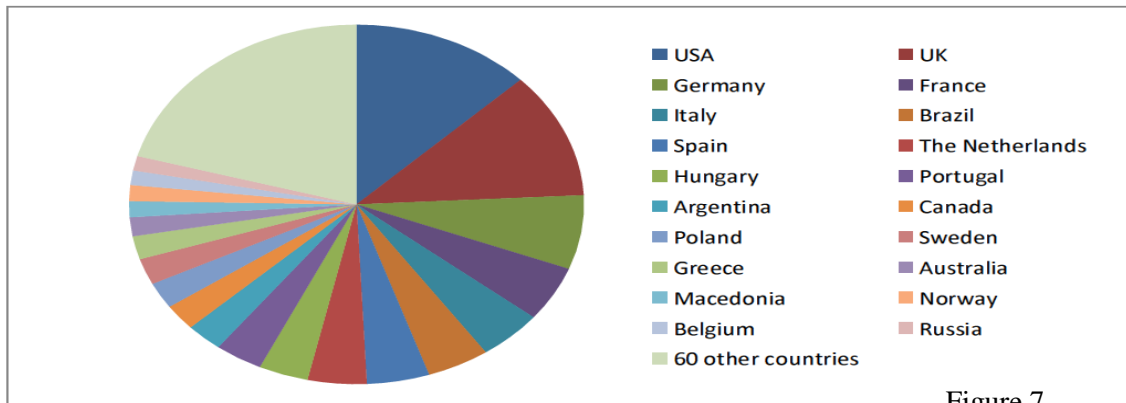


Figure 7.

The average work experience of interviewees in professional translation amounts to 13,59 years; 90% of them had earned one or more university degrees and 21,54% was certified by a translation association. Questions proceeded from the general to the particular, in order to collect some background information before focusing on the actual core theme of the survey. The first problematic issue arose from question No. 6, “How many languages do you consider to be your first language?”, and in particular from the following question definition, allowing people who could “justifiably claim to possess indistinguishable language skills from such educated native speakers” to consider the language in which they had native proficiency as an additional L1. However, there was no univocal interpretation for the meaning of the adjective ‘native’, and as a consequence two positions were outlined: on the one hand, some respondents argued that a native language is only the one in which a person has been brought up and in which (s)he received an education from primary school until university; on the other hand, others highlighted the difference between what is a native language in everyday life and in translation, as in this latter cases more factors are to be taken into account, e.g. writing skills, grammar accuracy or educational background in translation studies. Eventually, criticism to the very existence of the concept of “native language” was expressed by a couple of interviewees.

When confronted with the core theme of the survey, namely translation into a non-native language, almost half of respondents (precisely 45,45%) declared not to do it as a professional activity, while roughly another half (44,5%) asserted to do it into one other

language. A small minority, around 8%, was providing translations into two non-native languages. One of the most frequent reasons advocated by the former group for not translating into an L2 was that they did not feel confident enough in their target language skills. However, the sheer number of professionals who admitted that L1>L2 translation constituted a significant part of their work, demonstrates how this has by now become a widespread practice not only among amateur or non-experienced translators, but also among qualified translators as well. Nevertheless, according to many interviewees, an acceptable translation into an L2 could be ensured only by through the adoption of revision methods (e.g. proofreading and editing by a native speaker of the target language), the use corpora to check collocations, collaboration with other NS colleagues or the client, and the use of parallel texts in order to faithfully reproduce the register of the source text (p.18). These strategies are aimed at avoiding some of the most classical mistakes of NNSs, enlisted in Fig. 8 in a statistic elaborated from the answers to question 28, namely “Compared to native speakers of the target language, do non-native speakers make more or fewer errors in each of the categories listed below?”:

	More (+1)	About the same (0)	Fewer (-1)
Spelling error	34.23%	53.57%	12.20%
Grammar or syntax error	79.18%	17.01%	3.81%
Terminology error	56.46%	38.93%	4.61%
Wrong collocation/usage	87.17%	11.50%	1.33%
Misunderstanding of the source text	38.60%	38.45%	22.95%
Stylistic/register error	79.23%	19.44%	1.34%
Meaningless sentence	59.70%	35.82%	4.48%
Addition/omission	29.11%	64.86%	6.03%

Figure 8.

Yet, the real paradox with proofreading activities is that a large part of participants declared that they would provide editing only in exceptional cases, e.g. for translators they trusted or with whom they had already worked, and would less likely do it for texts written by non-native speakers of the target language. In their say, although proofreaders are rarely informed about the author of the translation they are revising, it

is almost always possible to understand it by paying attention to some clues such as interference and the wrong use of prepositions.

A quite interesting set of data also emerged from question 29, “Under what circumstances is it acceptable for a translator to translate into a non-native language?”: here the number of received comments was well over 600, and for the sake of brevity, not all of them were published. However, from the sample of opinions collected by Piroth and his team, it is clear that, although L1>L2 translation has become a common practice in the field, a high number of translators does not regard it as acceptable from a professional point of view. In particular, criticism by native speakers of English (unsurprisingly the most common TL for translations into a non-native language) was especially harsh. Accusations levelled at target texts produced by NNSs in English ranged from their being inaccurate to unsatisfactory (pp. 28-29).

Nonetheless, despite the attacks of a group of respondents who categorically denied the possibility of translating into a non-native language, others argued that the status of native speaker do not automatically constitute a guarantee for the acquisition of translation competence. Moreover, for some specialised sectors, a perfect understanding of the source text, together with its cultural and political implication, could actually play a greater role than writing skills or the capacity of “sounding nice” (p. 32). I will here report below three of the most meaningful comments about this aspect to be found in the survey:

Modern linguists fail to appreciate the importance of comprehension, resulting in crowds of natives of the target language with B2 certificates in source languages, thinking they can translate (p.39)

In some cases it is preferable to lose a bit of naturalness in the final text in exchange for a perfect understanding of the source text. [...]Nativeness is not a “competence in the language” category, least is it a “competence in translation” capacity (p.40).

Assumption that fluency and easy readability matter more than understanding of the source text [...] is a fallacy which is typical of Anglo-American translation culture (p. 67)

With regard to the acceptability of L1>L2 translation, one point seems to have been overlooked throughout IAPTI's survey, namely a consideration of the type of readership that a certain text will have. This issue will be discussed in the next paragraph, together with other themes concerning the technical and methodological aspects of translating into a non-native language.

## **2.5 New perspectives on the theory and practice of translating into non-native languages**

Translating into a non-native language is a challenging choice, and an ambitious one as well. It is nowadays a perfectly natural one, since for some languages the number of native speakers cannot possibly fulfil the request of translations: for example, even if all NSs of English were working as professional translators, they would not be able to process all demanded translations into their mother tongue anyway. The case of English is emblematic and peculiar at the same time: its global spread in the form of ELF triggered the development of new business relations and of opportunities for intercultural communication, increasing as a consequence the importance and amount of translations toward this language. As shown by the above data collected in IAPTI's survey, L1>L2 translation is presently a very widespread practice among translation circles, and this trend is not going to reverse anytime soon. Quite paradoxically, publications and research activities on this theme are still very scarce, and only coming from a very restrict niche of scholars; almost certainly, the root cause for this is the sceptic attitude by many, who consider translations into a non-native language as unprofessional and even unethical.

Their argumentations are based on the assumption that the knowledge of a second language is always inferior to that of a native one, and a lessened linguistic competence invariably leads to inaccurate translations. Moreover, in their opinion, every NS is able to detect, almost at first sight, the difference between a translation by a NS and a NNS, due to the specificity of errors committed by the latter, whatever their experience and skills. According to this view, everyone should translate only in their native language,



or that, as Rega once ironically claimed during a conference held at the University of Trieste, “language in a translation is like a toothbrush: everyone needs it, yet everyone should only use their own”. In order to solve this controversy, a separation should be drawn between linguistic and translation competence, where the one does not automatically imply the other and vice versa. As has already been said in previous paragraphs, the status of native speaker is never in itself a guarantee for being able to translate perfectly into a language and, on the other hand, a background education in translation studies does not compensate for the lack of communicative and grammatical skills. The perfect solution can therefore only be a wise combination of the two aspects, with the translator effectively harmonising them in his/her work. In this section I will discuss a series of theoretical issues that might serve as the fundamental elements for the success of a translation into a non-native language.

As stressed by Campbell, the main research focus should not be on the comparison between source and target texts (hereafter ST and TT), but on translators as professional figures, also considering that their work was often marginalised in previous studies or marked as non influential (Campbell, 2013:3). On the contrary, translators play an essential role as mediators between two languages, and are bound to consider a whole range of linguistic issues in order to make the passage between L1 and L2 as smooth as possible. In this sense, they not only have to understand the message that the author of the ST intended to convey, but must also act as text authors in their turn, to transmit the same message to a different readership. The starting point of every translation should therefore always be a reflection on audience design, namely on the expectations of the addressees of the TT. Initially formulated by Bell for the domain of spoken interactions, the theory of audience design was subsequently applied to written texts by other scholars. Its basic assumption is that communicators design their style primarily for and in response to their audience, which can be divided into the categories of addressees (whose presence is known), auditors (present but not directly involved in the communicative exchange), overhearers (whose presence is known but not recognised), and eventually eavesdroppers (whose presence is unknown) (Bell, 1984:160). The need

to consider audience design is also valid for translators, whose work does not take place in a vacuum, but is part of a speech act as well (Serban, 2005:116).

Bell's theory might prove even more fundamental for translations into English as a non-native language, where the TT might be addressed to an audience of NSs or, in the case of ELF, of NNSs. A clarification can be made through a practical example: let us consider a situation in which a Spanish company is willing to translate its official website into English. Now, of course the style of writing should be grammatically accurate, with a good lexical variety and an adequate formal register. Nevertheless, if the main target users are clients living in Eastern Europe, the texts should neither contain too many idiomatic expressions or references to the British culture. Figurative language would, in fact, hinder text comprehension by its preferred readers, namely people who can well understand English, but do not share the same social and cultural background of native speakers living in the United Kingdom or in the USA. And this might actually be a case in which a non-native professional translator could produce a more accurate translation for the specific readership of the text.

Another argument advocated by critics of translation into non-native languages is that an average speaker is able to fully master only one mother tongue. According to Pokorn, this idea seemingly traces back to the first translation of the Holy Bible by Martin Luther, with the German monk arguing that a perfect knowledge of the target language was essential for the faithful transmission of the message from one language to another. This theory was later strengthened by the rise of 19<sup>th</sup>-century nationalism and the birth of the Romantic ideology (Pokorn, 2005:55). The idea that only native speakers of the target language are the only legitimate translators has survived the end of these political and cultural movements, and is still alive today. Even though the practice of inverse translation is nowadays widespread among professionals, attempts to provide a theoretical basis for their work are still marginalised by the mainstream guiding principles of Translation Studies. However, as claimed by Pokorn, the practice of inverse translation is nothing new: for example, translators of the Old Testament from Chaldean into Greek were hardly Greek native speakers, and also the first

translators of the Roman Empire were seldom native speakers of Latin (Pokorn, 2005:56).

One of the strongest justifications for the possibility of translating towards one's L2 lies, as already mentioned above, in the fundamental difference between the concepts of language competence and translation competence. While the former is partly an innate ability, directly acquired by children in the first years of their lives, the latter can be defined as an expert knowledge, acquired through a learning process which is essentially cyclical rather than linear (Alves, 2003:16). Very few studies have been carried out on this theme, and even fewer have proposed a solid theory to describe what actually constitute translation competence. An empirical attempt to do so was made by members of the PACTE research team (Process in the Acquisition in Translation Competence and Evaluation) in 1998, with the elaboration of a holistic model describing translation competence, which, in the authors' view, was not to be seen as a single human ability, but rather as a system including a series of sub-competences such as:

[...] a language sub-competence in two languages, an extra-linguistic sub-competence, an instrumental/professional sub-competence, a psycho-physiological competence, a transfer sub-competence, and a strategic sub-competence (PACTE, 2003:55).

In particular, the core of this hierarchical cognitive structure was identified in transfer competence, namely the capacity of re-elaborating the meaning of a text from one language into another, also taking into account external factors like the type of readership the text is destined to and the purpose of the translation act itself (PACTE, 2003).

Of course, the perfect translation could ideally only come from a fully bilingual translator; however, people with equal language proficiency in two languages are so rare that they do hardly constitute a valid case study. Moreover, as argued by Campbell (2013:6)

bilingualism is not politically, socially, or economically neutral – the world is not constructed in such a fashion that each language has equal status. Except for some notable examples where official language planning has conferred ‘equal’ status on two languages, for the most bilinguals in the world one of their languages will be characterized by as having lesser status in some sense. Similarly, the relationship between source and target language in translation are seldom in balance.

A preference for one between the source and target language seems to be inevitable. This, however, does not automatically imply that translations are always biased in one sense or the other, but rather that the acquisition of a solid translation competence should also come across the evaluation of text objectivity by the translator him/herself. Final quality assessment of translations is the final step of the translation process, and is one of the skills which should be considered as part of translation competence. According to House, the key concept related to translation quality assessment is that of ‘equivalence’: the TT needs to convey the content of the ST with as much accuracy as possible. Another element to be preserved in the passage from one language to the other is textual function, which, in its turn, is based on linguistic evidence to be analysed in its syntactic, lexical and textual dimension (House, 1977:104). Such an important aspect should be included in all proposed models for translation competence acquisition, which are nowadays still very few.

One interesting issue have been raised by Campbell on the concept of interlanguage, framed within the domain of Second Language Acquisition studies. According to the definition by Selinker, an interlanguage is a separate linguistic system elaborated by an adult second language learner in order to express and transfer meanings from L1 into L2 (Selinker, 1972). Campbell’s aim was to apply the notion of interlanguage to translation studies, in order to investigate interference and cross-linguistic influence in second language translation (Campbell, 2013:11). Results of this studies may help to define a viable education programme for student translators.

To sum up, we can say that, like in all new fields of research, even the practice of translation into a non-native language remains a highly controversial issue, one that lacks a shared theoretical basis. Nevertheless, L1>L2 translation is likely to represent the new horizon of translation, especially in a contemporary world which is becoming

more and more globalised. For the time being, we will consider in particular the methodological side of the question, with a brief description of one of the most important tools that translators can benefit from today, namely the use of translation memories and corpus linguistics.

## **2.6. Corpus linguistics: corpora as an essential tool for translating into non-native language**

Corpora are fundamental for translations in every language combination, and by now, for all domains of texts. The next paragraphs will be devoted to the description of what a corpus is, the criteria according to which it is compiled, and the advantages it can bring in terms of accuracy and adherence to the ST in a translation. However, the first step for ensuring an in-depth understanding of corpus functioning and utility is to have a general idea on the basic principles of terminology, in actual fact the very discipline on which corpus linguistic is based.

Terminology as an independent field of research was first defined at the beginning of the 1990s, when the boom of technological innovations and the establishment of an increasingly high number of business partnerships made it necessary to create a common ground of words defining the new concepts which were shared by the emerging specialist audience. This, in its turn, called for a standardisation of language (Pearson, 1998:34), and triggered a separation between the concepts of language for general purposes (hereafter LGP) and language for special purposes (hereafter LSP). While the former includes all vocabulary contained in non-specialised communicative exchanges, the latter might be defined as a category comprising terms which are used in a given domain to explicitate concepts of that field. One of the major scopes of terminological studies is the recognition of terms and their features in comparison to normal words. The first attempt to do so was proposed in 1906 by the International Electrotechnical Commission, through the compilation of a *Vocabulaire électrotechnique international*. Later developments were achieved thanks to the work by Wüster, whose aim was to investigate the motivations leading to and the guiding

principles for the creation of new terminology. His theory was based on what was to become the classical definition of terms, namely:

They are a separate class which operate as labels and appear to work in much the same way as a system of proper names works in general language. There is a one-to-one correspondence between the term as label and the concept as mental construct and, ideally, a term refers uniquely to one and only one concept within a given subject field. As labels, terms are protected, set apart from language in use (Pearson, 1998:25).

Although the classical approach to terminology has nowadays given way to a more pragmatic one, Wüster's theoretical assumptions have remained up to now valid and largely implemented in contemporary terminological research. Nevertheless, the concept of terminology maintains an intrinsically polysemic meaning, as this term can be applied to three different notions, pointed out in Sager (1990:56): first of all, terminology can refer to the methodological issues and processes related to the collection and analysis of terms; secondly, it can designate a theory illustrating the connection between terms and their related concepts, and eventually it might define the vocabulary of a particular specialised field.

These basic notions of terminology were intended to provide a brief introduction to a subsequent general overview of the domain of corpus linguistic, as the need to analyse and categorise terms was among the first motivations triggering the creation of corpora. Corpus linguistic is one of the disciplines that took the most advantage from the technological innovations of the last decades. Its objects of study are, of course, the compilation and use of corpora in the study of language. To begin with, a definition of what is meant with the term 'corpus' is highly recommendable. Originally a Latin word for 'body', the significant of 'corpus' has shifted today to a set of texts collected together, usually stored in a computer memory where they can be consulted and analysed. According to Sinclair (1991:33), a corpus is:

A collection of pieces of language that are selected and ordered according to the explicit linguistic criteria in order to be used as sample of the language.

Many ideas have been provided throughout the years by various scholars on this subject; however, three main features of corpora can be identified in most cases, namely the fact that they contain a set of authentic texts, their being representative of one language or variety and lastly their electronic format (Sepora, 2010:27). The first characteristic is crucial for maintaining the objectivity of research based them, and ensuring that data in it included actually mirror the language in its everyday use or a specific context. The second feature, i.e. representativeness, is linked to the size and number of text included in the corpus. Briefly, the greater the size of a corpus, the more representative it is, and this in its turn may also determine the possibility or the inability of formulating general hypothesis on the basis of its data. Early corpora were meant to provide an objective basis for the study of word frequency, i.e. the number of occurrences of a given term in a series of texts, an essential issue for language learning and for the study of language varieties. Raw frequency is just the basis for the calculation of normalised frequency, which is determined in relation to a predefined standard (e.g. tokens per million words) and ordinal frequency, namely a comparison between the frequencies of inter-related words (De Cock & Gaetanelle, 2011). The relevance of frequency studies was first appraised already in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although analysed corpora were significantly smaller and rather inadequate to draw a general picture of linguistic phenomena. This was obviously due to the lack of computer and other state-of-the-art technological devices that we presently can take advantage of. In terms of language learning, the usual correspondence sought after by scholar was the one stating that a more frequent language pattern was also more important to be learnt (Leech, 2011).

Criticism toward corpus linguistics came from Chomsky, who claimed that frequency derived more from a matter of linguistic performance, rather than competence. His famous example on this fact was represented by the comparison of the two sentences *I live in Dayton, Ohio* and *I live in New York*: the higher number of occurrences of the latter statement do not have any linguistic relevance, and is more linked to a concrete fact in the real world, namely the higher number of people actually living in New York. In Chomsky's words, "probabilistic considerations have nothing to do with grammar"

(Chomsky, 1957). However, Chomsky's opinion was reconsidered after the technological wave of innovations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the emerging possibility of elaborating corpora including a huge number of texts representing one given language or variety. But what is the underlying structure of such an extensive texts collection?

The first problem to be faced when compiling a corpus is that of clearly stating the purpose for which it is being elaborated (Sepora, 2010). For example, as we have seen in Chapter 1 of this thesis, corpora like VOICE and ELFA were developed with the aim of investigating the concept of English as a Lingua Franca, respectively in its spoken and academic forms of tracing its linguistic development, and finally formulating an organic theory of its structure and features. Eventually, the major advantage of contemporary corpora is, as mentioned above, their being available in an electronic form. This has completely revolutionised the methodological approach of both scholars and translators towards the language itself: if before the advent of machine-readable corpora, the main working tools for these types of analysis were monolingual dictionaries or published books to be found in libraries, nowadays everything is only a click away, and corpora allow us to obtain a result for any query in a matter of seconds by comparing of hundreds or even thousands of texts, so that the whole search procedure is significantly sped up, and a series of filters make it possible to find information on specific linguistic aspects or a combination of them.

The utility of corpora is not to be measured only in terms of user-friendliness, but is also due to the huge variety of information they can provide about a given language. Some of the most detailed studies about corpora have been carried out by Zanettin, who in his innovative works applied corpus research to translation studies, both at a descriptive and practical level. In particular, Zanettin explained how a 'translation-driven' corpus can be structured and employed either for the elaboration of theoretical assumptions or as tool in a translation process. An essential feature of such translation-driven corpora is their being constituted by two different sets of texts:



Corpora used in descriptive and applied translation studies usually involve the comparison of at least two main sets of data, which can be called corpus components or subcorpora. These can be texts belonging to different varieties of the same language (e.g. translations vs non-translations), or texts in different languages. These in turn can be translations, together with their respective original texts, or only texts originally produced in different languages. If translated texts are included in the corpus, these can all be translations of different texts from one language to the other, or multiple translations of the same text, in one or more directions of translations (Zanettin, 2012:67).

As we can see, Zanettin considers a lot of different possibilities for the structure and content of a corpus; however, for the purpose of this thesis, a special attention should be devoted to multilingual parallel texts, where two different sets of data can be compared and contrasted. Once the compilation of a corpus is completed and the data have been enriched through the addition of annotation or other metatextual information, a software is needed to analyse corpus content, and Zanettin chose WordSmith Tools 5 in order to illustrate this process. First of all, a list of concordances can be obtained, namely an index of all tokens of a specific word type, with most proximate linguistic context. Tokens are defined as the total number of running words in the corpus, while types are the total number of different words in a corpus (Sepora, 2010). Moreover, other linguistic information might be derived, regarding for instance collocations and colligations associated to a given term, word profiles or word clusters (these latter operations explained by Zanettin through the use of Sketch Engine) (Zanettin, 2012).

Summing up, corpora are a formidable tool in the hands of translation theorists and professionals, one which complement translation competence and offers the most rich set of data on linguistic structures and phenomena occurring in real-world texts. They can become even more essential in the case of translations into a non-native language, where they can compensate a possible lack of language competence by the translator in the TL. But what type of practical information can be derived in this sense by corpora? A list of possible benefits provided by corpora to professional translators has been compiled by Tengku Mahadi, and it comprises eight categories:

- 1) Collocational information, regarding the habitual co-occurrence of a particular word pattern;

- 2) Information on the frequency in the occurrence of words;
- 3) Conceptual information, enhancing a full and in-depth understanding of the source text we are translating from;
- 4) Terminological information, with the possibility of creating specific wordlists or glossaries;
- 5) Linguistic information
- 6) Orthographical information
- 7) Information on semantic prosody, oriented to the comprehension of word connotations and implied meanings or cultural references;
- 8) Information on cognates and false friends.

(Adapted from Sepora, 2010:45)

This short insight in the field of corpus linguistic was meant to explain the paramount importance that the use of corpora can have for translation nowadays, especially when considering that, given the increasing quantity of required translations and the short deadlines imposed by clients, being able to provide an accurate text in the target language and in a short time is essential for every translator. Moreover, corpora can help translators to become acquainted with terminology and style of LSP texts, which they might not be familiar with. We will see this in Chapter 3, in two case studies featuring tourist English and business English.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

In this second chapter I dealt with the challenges of translation, and in particular those of translating into a non-native language. The cognitive processes involved in translation were briefly described, and then we had an overview on translation services provided by the European Union and its institutional bodies. I then explored some of the emerging issues related to the practice of translation into a non-native language, especially with regard to the attempts by a group of scholars to justify it and provide a theoretical basis. As we have seen in the last paragraph, corpus linguistic is probably the

most promising field in this sense, which could add in terms of accuracy and linguistic information to the work of professional translators.

Despite the fact that many academic and professional environments remain sceptic on the validity and accuracy of translations by non-native speakers of the target language, there are a number of cases in which an in-depth knowledge of the source language might be essential and more important for the re-elaboration of the source text into another idiom. Among them, we quoted examples in the legal field and cases of highly idiomatic expressions. Moreover, the practice of translating into an L2 is inevitably going to become even more widespread for translations into English, a language nowadays spoken and used as means of communication by a huge number of people, transformed into the emerging variety of English as an International Language (EIL). This theme will be thoroughly dealt with in the next chapter, with the presentation of two case studies of translation from Italian into English.

# **Chapter 3 – Swimming against the tide: a personal experience of translation from Italian into ELF**

The final chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to a personal experience in the field of translation, and will therefore be a first-person account of the difficulties, challenges, and results obtained over a working period of six months. During the second semester of my last MA year at the University of Padua, I was offered an intern post at a local press and communication office based in Romano d'Ezzelino, in the north of Italy. The main task to be performed was to translate from Italian into English a series of small passages to be published on the Internet, concerning the advertisement of events held within the premises of the 2015 Universal Exhibition in Milan, namely Expo 2015. We will start with a general overview of the work environment and the services provided by the company, to then shift to an in-depth analysis of the translation work carried out on event advertisements and, later on, commercial websites.

In the absence of any previous experience as a translator, I heavily relied on the educational background acquired in the course of my MA studies, and, moreover, tried to gain some more information about translation as a profession from online articles and other publications available on this subject. In particular, a first step into the understanding of the job of a translator is provided by Samuelsson-Brown, who summarized in a list of “skills clusters” the capacities that a translator should possess or acquire in order to provide an impeccable service to his/her clients. Two of them are very significant, namely the cultural understanding cluster and the one concerning project management. The former includes the ability to understand the factors influencing the development of the source language and the national characteristics acquired by it in the country where it is spoken, besides the capacity of implementing the right linguistic strategies to avoid stereotypes in the target text. On the other hand, project management consists in resources coordination, terminology research,

administration and quality control (Samuelsson-Brown, 2010). Together, they provide a clear outline on how a translation process should develop from the beginning to the end. This is also the method I chose to carry out my work. In addition, another cluster, which is important nowadays for translators is the knowledge of the technological resources that they can benefit from, such as MT-systems, glossaries, corpora, other translation memories and, in the case of seeking job as a professional translator, proficiency in e-commerce. The general scheme elaborated by Samuelsson-Brown was structured as follows:



Figure 9. Samuelsson-Brown's Skills Cluster

Another fundamental aspect in translation jobs is the relationship between clients/employers and their translators. A dialogue must necessarily be established, so that the information provided by the former might be useful for the latter in the production of an accurate translation, one which could be both effective with regard to its purpose and suitable for the type of readership the text is destined to. A PDF-format guide for translation buyers was issued in 2014 by the British Institute for Translation and Interpreting to state some fundamental guidelines to be followed by people who are in need of getting a translation done and have no previous experience in the linguistic field. To begin with, translation of lengthy texts is not always necessary: sometimes it can be more useful to select and translate only a set of significant passages which might be of a certain relevance for foreign clients. Other suggestions made to employers are to consider the option of resorting to pictures in order to illustrate concepts, to consider a reasonable budget to be allocated for an accurate translation and to avoid the temptation of carrying out an important translation without resorting to a field expert. With regard to the translated text itself, it should be prevented from falling into national clichés and stereotypes, be written in an adequate style and be revised also under the point of view of orthography and typographical layout (Durban, 2014). Each norm stated in the guide is described by a concrete example as well, e.g. funny or embarrassing cases of inadequate translations, or, on the contrary, successful marketing strategies backed by catchy texts re-elaborated in the target language for the international market. The final remark by the guide's author summarizes all the problems and mistakes which can hinder the good outcome of a translation work:

There are hundreds of ways in which a translation project can go off track: ridiculous deadlines, ambiguities in source text amplified by the translator not asking questions, misapplied machine translation (MT), no proofreading of typesettext by a native speaker, blissful ignorance of an over-confident translator operating in a vacuum, poor coordination of large projects, poor cheap freelance translators, poor expensive freelance translator, poor cheap translation company, poor expensive translation company, no client input – and on and on (Durban, 2014).

Despite its being meant for use by employers, this guide can provide a convenient starting point for a student at his/her first experience in the field of professional translation, especially because it outlines a concise series of tips which can be easily

implemented also in the relationship with the client, e.g. the fact of asking questions about how the translation should be carried out, or clarifications on certain passages or terminology of the source text, etc. These norms are even more important for translations into a non-native language, where a pre-emptive action of ‘client education’ is required: the translator must inform his/her employer about the fact that (s)he is translating into a language other than the mother tongue, and about the limits and risks that this practice often involve, while on the other hand clearly stating one’s skills and level of experience in the field of translation. Honesty is one of the fundamental assets of professional ethics; this should be even more a radical choice to be made by translators and interpreters, who have the responsibility of effectively conveying messages between people who do not speak the same language. They actually are in charge of the creation of a bridge between two different cultures, one which could enhance communication and mutual understanding. In the case of translators, they also need to remember that written texts are preserved over time, they can be read time and again by a number of people, and receive multiple feedbacks by both a specialist and non-specialist readership about their accuracy and linguistic or cultural precision. These are the basic assumptions from which I started my first experience as intern at Officine Micro’.

### **3.1 Work environment and major projects performed by a press & communication office**

From March to October 2015, I was given the opportunity of working as an intern at Officine Micro’, a press and communication office whose activity started between 2014 and 2015 from the merging of a dynamic group of five young editors willing to provide advertising and web content services to private companies and public institutions from the Vicenza area, in the north-eastern part of Italy. One of the main income sources for the office is the collaboration with major Italian web portals such as Virgilio ([www.virgilio.it](http://www.virgilio.it)), Tutto Città ([www.tuttocitta.it](http://www.tuttocitta.it)) and Libero ([www.libero.it](http://www.libero.it)). The aim of such portals is to make available for their users maps and news covering the entire national territory, with additional information on restaurants, places of tourist interest

and miscellaneous events (sport, concerts, exhibitions, tourist promotional activities, guided tours, fundraising etc.). Every year, Officine Micro' is bound by contract to supply a minimum number of events to be advertised online in the above mentioned websites. All information about each event is stored in a dedicated database, named GPS, where every event is inserted in a data sheet, comprising various sections: title, subtitle, description, date&time, price, venue, photo, source of retrieval of information. The fact of having available such a large database with the description of events taking place in the national territory makes it easier to present them again whenever they are repeated in following years, just by changing the date in which they are scheduled. This is especially the case of minor fairs, religious celebrations or charity prize draws: briefly, all traditional events which may interest people at a local level.

GPS is a software developed by T-Net Consulting, a company providing IT services, also based in Romano d'Ezzelino. A strict collaboration has been established with Officine Micro' on the basis of a reciprocal advantage: while T-Net is more concerned with the technical aspects of online publications, the work of Officine Micro' is mainly represented by the supply of web contents; as a consequence, the two companies cooperate on a regular basis in order to offer their clients a complete IT package comprising both, for example, the creation of a website and its graphic layout and the texts or images in it included.

Once the event is published online and provided with a graphic layout, it is made available for in-detail view (see Fig. 2)



SPETTACOLI

## Maurizio Crozza torna ad esibirsi dal vivo

[f](#) Condividi con gli amici
 [m](#) Invia agli amici
 [t](#)
[G+](#)

**Al Palapartenope di Napoli**

Dopo due anni rinchiuso in un televisore, Maurizio Crozza torna ad esibirsi dal vivo, nei teatri e nei palazzetti di tutta Italia. Sarà un viaggio spericolato in un Paese sorprendente, che ha fame di passioni e pensioni da fame. Che ha una moneta unica, tanti modi per spenderla e sempre meno per guadagnarla. Un posto dove "Buongiorno" vuol dire veramente "Speriamo di cavarcela anche oggi". Insomma, sarà un viaggio su e giù per una penisola leggermente confusa, difficile da vivere ma divertente da raccontare, anche se forse sarebbe meglio il contrario.

Per maggiori informazioni  
 ☎ 0815700008 [SITO](#)

**Palapartenope**  
 Via Corrado Barbagallo 115,  
 80125 NAPOLI (NA)

03  
Giu

51.75 € I Poltrona Laterale Numerata  
 34.50 € li Poltrona Laterale Numerata  
 40.25 € Tribuna Numerata  
 63.25 € Poltronissima Numerata  
 28.75 € Ili Poltrona Laterale Numerata  
 57.50 € Poltrona Numerata

🕒 21:00

Figure 10. Example of event published in Virgilio

The number of events provided to web portals must necessarily reach the numbers previously agreed in the partnership contract stipulated with Officine Micro', and may vary every year. In 2015, this quantity was significantly increased, thanks to Expo 2015, the international exhibition held in the Milan area, and precisely in a dedicated site located in Rho. The internal organization and main features of Expo will be described below; for the moment, we will focus on the project to it related into which I took part as a translation intern. Early in February 2015, an official agreement was signed by Officine Micro' and Tutto Città for a supply of 2,500 events held within the Expo premises in Rho, 2,000 events organized throughout the national territory under the patronage of the Expo committee and another 700 events taking place in the metropolitan city of Milan within the context of "Expo in Città", namely a series of concerts, exhibitions, parties and other meetings dealing with the main theme of the 2015 edition of the international exposition: "Feeding the planet, energy for life". Every data sheet would have to be available in both Italian and English, so that it could also be consulted by a potential pool of non-Italian users visiting Expo.

The first step in this project was that of compiling a list of possible sources where information about the above-mentioned events could be retrieved. This was not an easy task, as this type of data was scattered among different websites with no connection between one another. I was in charge of drawing up a list of Internet pages and other references where news about events to be held inside the Expo site of Rho. Paradoxically for an event of this extent, the official website [www.expo2015.org](http://www.expo2015.org) only presented a general outline of the exhibition's structure, a brief presentation of participating countries and their pavilions and a photo gallery dedicated to the major visiting celebrities and other institutional meetings. Below is an index of the main websites where information about Expo events could be retrieved:

<b>Premises in Expo</b>	<b>Website</b>
Slow Food Pavilion	<a href="http://www.slowfood.com/expo2015/it/calendario-expo/">http://www.slowfood.com/expo2015/it/calendario-expo/</a>
Biodiversity Park	<a href="http://www.biodiversityparkexpo.bolognafiere.it/">http://www.biodiversityparkexpo.bolognafiere.it/</a>
Cascina Triulza	<a href="http://cascina.fondazionetriulza.org/it/schedule/">http://cascina.fondazionetriulza.org/it/schedule/</a>
San Marino	<a href="http://www.sanmarinoexpo.com/#">http://www.sanmarinoexpo.com/#</a>
Bio-Mediterranean Cluster	<a href="http://www.siciliabiomediterraneo.com/">http://www.siciliabiomediterraneo.com/</a>
Cocoa&Chocolate Cluster	<a href="http://www.coachocolatecluster.org/">http://www.coachocolatecluster.org/</a>
Angola Pavilion	<a href="http://en.expoangola.com/angola/">http://en.expoangola.com/angola/</a>
Argentina Pavilion	<a href="http://www.argentinaexpo2015.gob.ar/">http://www.argentinaexpo2015.gob.ar/</a>
Austria Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expoaustria.at/it.html">http://www.expoaustria.at/it.html</a>
Belgium Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expomilano2015.be/">http://www.expomilano2015.be/</a>
Brazil Pavilion	<a href="http://www.brasilexpo2015.com/">http://www.brasilexpo2015.com/</a>
Hungary Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expohungary.com/">http://www.expohungary.com/</a>
Chile Pavilion	<a href="http://expomilan.cl/">http://expomilan.cl/</a>
China Pavilion	<a href="http://en.expochina2015.org/en_index.html">http://en.expochina2015.org/en_index.html</a>
Holy See Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expoholysee.org/">http://www.expoholysee.org/</a>
Colombia Pavilion	<a href="http://www.colombiaexpomilan.co/">http://www.colombiaexpomilan.co/</a>
Ecuador Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expoecuador2015.com/it/">http://www.expoecuador2015.com/it/</a>
France Pavilion	<a href="http://france-milan-2015.fr/fr">http://france-milan-2015.fr/fr</a>
Germany Pavilion	<a href="https://expo2015-germany.de">https://expo2015-germany.de</a>
Japan Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expo2015.jp/it/">http://www.expo2015.jp/it/</a>
Iran Pavilion	<a href="http://en.iranexpo2015.ir/">http://en.iranexpo2015.ir/</a>
Israel Pavilion	<a href="http://expo2015israel.com/">http://expo2015israel.com/</a>
CNR Association	<a href="https://www.expo.cnr.it/it/eventi-in-expo">https://www.expo.cnr.it/it/eventi-in-expo</a>
Italian Pavilion	<a href="http://www.padiglioneitaliaexpo2015.com/it">http://www.padiglioneitaliaexpo2015.com/it</a>
Malaysia Pavilion	<a href="http://www.malaysiapavilion2015.com.my/">http://www.malaysiapavilion2015.com.my/</a>

Morocco Pavilion	<a href="http://www.maroc-milan2015.com/">http://www.maroc-milan2015.com/</a>
Mexico Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expomilanmexico.com/">http://www.expomilanmexico.com/</a>
Poland Pavilion	<a href="http://expo.gov.pl/">http://expo.gov.pl/</a>
Monaco Pavilion	<a href="http://monacopavilion.com/">http://monacopavilion.com/</a>
Qatar Pavilion	<a href="http://qatarpavilion.qa/it">http://qatarpavilion.qa/it</a>
United Kingdom Pavilion	<a href="http://www.ukpavilion2015.com/">http://www.ukpavilion2015.com/</a>
Romania Pavilion	<a href="http://www.romaniaexpo2015.ro/">http://www.romaniaexpo2015.ro/</a>
Russia Pavilion	<a href="http://russia2015.com/it/">http://russia2015.com/it/</a>
Slovenia Pavilion	<a href="http://www.exposlovenia.si/it/">http://www.exposlovenia.si/it/</a>
Spain Pavilion	<a href="http://www.pabellonespana2015.com/">http://www.pabellonespana2015.com/</a>
USA Pavilion	<a href="http://www.usapavilion2015.net/">http://www.usapavilion2015.net/</a>
Switzerland Pavilion	<a href="http://www.padiglionesvizzero.ch/">http://www.padiglionesvizzero.ch/</a>
Thailand Pavilion	<a href="http://www.thailandpavilionexpo2015.com/">http://www.thailandpavilionexpo2015.com/</a>
Waterstone Pavilion	<a href="http://www.expo.intesasanpaolo.com/calendar">http://www.expo.intesasanpaolo.com/calendar</a>
Aquae Pavilion (Venice)	<a href="http://www.aquae2015.org/?post_type=tribe_events">http://www.aquae2015.org/?post_type=tribe_events</a>
EU Pavilion	<a href="http://europa.eu/expo2015/">http://europa.eu/expo2015/</a>
Coldiretti Association	<a href="http://expo.coldiretti.it/">http://expo.coldiretti.it/</a>
Save the Children Pavilion	<a href="http://expo.savethechildren.it/eventi/">http://expo.savethechildren.it/eventi/</a>
Turkey Pavilion	<a href="http://www.turkeyexpo2015.com/">http://www.turkeyexpo2015.com/</a>
WE, Women for Expo	<a href="http://www.we.expo2015.org/">http://www.we.expo2015.org/</a>
Don Bosco Association	<a href="http://www.expodonbosco2015.org/">http://www.expodonbosco2015.org/</a>
Cibus Pavilion	<a href="http://www.cibusexpo2015.it/">http://www.cibusexpo2015.it/</a>
UN Pavilion	<a href="http://www.un-expo.org/it">http://www.un-expo.org/it</a>
Wine Pavilion	<a href="http://www.vino2015.com/">http://www.vino2015.com/</a>
Marinoni stand	<a href="http://www.mariamarinoni.com/">http://www.mariamarinoni.com/</a>
Netherland Pavilion	<a href="http://worldexpomilaan2015.nl/">http://worldexpomilaan2015.nl/</a>
Casa Corriere	<a href="http://www.corriere.it/expo-2015-milano/programma-casa-corriere/">http://www.corriere.it/expo-2015-milano/programma-casa-corriere/</a>
Alitalia Pavilion	<a href="http://www.alitalia.com/it_it/specialpromo/offerte-expo2015.html">http://www.alitalia.com/it_it/specialpromo/offerte-expo2015.html</a>

Figure 10.

### 3.2 General outline of the Milan Expo 2015

The first World Expo was in 1851 in London, and in a country, the United Kingdom, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led the way in terms of industrial innovations and economic development. The event was held in what has become known as the “Crystal Palace” in Hyde Park, and would be repeated in the following years in the most important cities, e.g. Paris, London again, Vienna, Philadelphia, Melbourne. In particular, the 1889 Expo

held in the French capital left its mark thanks to the construction of the Eiffel Tower, the monument which has by then become the very symbol of the city and of the entire nation. But how can we actually define a universal exposition? The institutional website of the Bureau International des Expositions (the institutional body in charge of the assignments of Expo locations and supervising the event's development) states that:

An Expo is a global event that aims at educating the public, sharing innovation, promoting progress and fostering cooperation. It is organized by a host country that invites other countries, companies, international organisations, the private sector, the civil society and the general public to participate. Due to the diversity of its participants, from top decision makers to children, Expos offer a multifaceted event where extraordinary exhibitions, diplomatic encounters, business meetings, public debates and live shows take place at the same time (BIE, 2016)

The 2015 World Expo was assigned to the city of Milan on the basis of a project featuring as main theme the topics of food and fair distribution of resources at a global level. The political outcome of the Expo theme "Feed the planet, energy for life" is summarized in the Milan Charter, containing a series of statements concerning the basic rights of individuals with regard to healthy and sufficient food, clean water, energy sources and the sustainability of industrial processes. Moreover, women were recognised a pivotal role in the fields of education and in particular food management (Expo, 2015). This document was written in cooperation with the Italian government and field experts, and was officially presented to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on the 16<sup>th</sup> October on the occasion of the World Food Day, celebrated at Expo with a series of dedicated events and thematic conferences. One of the main innovations introduced by the Milan Expo 2015 is its media resonance in Italy and the large use of social networks and other Internet channels for its promotion: Facebook posts, twitts and hashtags were the most important means of communication to describe life at Expo and the happenings of the day.

But how was Expo 2015 actually structured? I mentioned earlier that its location was set on a dedicated site at Rho, a small town at the outskirts of Milan. The plant was designed around two perpendicular alleys, named Cardo and Decumano, like the main streets in ancient Roman cities. Participants included 137 states from all over the world, 4

international organizations (United Nations, European Community, Caribbean Community and Pacific Island Forum), 10 civil organizations and other 25 between private companies and multinational corporations (Expo, 2015).



Figure 11. Plant of the Milan Expo 2015 (Expo, 2015)

54 national pavilions were built, whereas other countries decided to set their exhibition space within 9 Cluster pavilions, comprising different geographical areas under a common theme related to some of the most important foods and natural environment, e.g. coffee, rice, cocoa & chocolate, spices, islands – sea – food, etc. At the northern end of the Cardo alley stood the Tree of Life, rapidly became the very symbol of this Milan Expo with its fascinating light and water games repeated every hour throughout the day. At the main entrance of the Expo site visitors could find the Zero Pavilion, featuring an exhibition investigating the origins of life and of the human species in particular. Each state was free to organize their space with creative and innovative ideas related to the main themes of food and resources: some, like Oman, Japan or Mexico, decided to represent their national culture by offering visitors interactive tours inside the pavilion; others, like Austria or Morocco, preferred to recreate their respective environment and peculiar landscapes; some others decided to enrich their exhibition spaces with pictures, photo displays, technological devices or food tastings.

According to official statistics released after the Expo closed its doors at the end of October 2015, more than 21 million people visited the World Exposition site, among which 7 million non-Italian (Rizzato, 2015). Of course, this last group was quite heterogeneous, considering that it includes people with many different nationalities who travelled to Milan from European, American, African and even Australasian countries. This fact is bound to trigger a thorough reflection on how information about Expo 2015 was managed and spread in a way that they could be retrieved and understood by non-Italian visitors. In this sense, the official Expo website did not always provide a reliable source. Its English and French translations were heavily criticized by a number of professional translators and academics, who claimed that translated texts for the Expo website presented a number of grammatical mistakes, spelling errors and an incoherent use of verb forms. In an article on the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, journalist Giacomo Valtolina collected some of the funniest and ‘spine-chilling’ mistakes in the English texts of the Expo 2015 website:

“Dad, what will we do at the Expo?” Is the question from a child at the Universal Exposition who wants to have fun, learn and interact with visitors his own age. “We can ride on giant fruits, smell fragrant bells, and learn that food is a feast”. The Children’s Park will be the space dedicated to families and children through interactive games where the value of food can be learned (Adapted in the article by Valtolina, 2015).

Although the name of the translator responsible for such an inadequate and inaccurate rendering of an Italian text remains of course unknown, we may with a high degree of certainty presume that (s)he is not a native speaker of the target language, and that (s)he does not have a solid experience in translation works. Moreover, it is likely that no translation memory or other specific tools have been employed, and of course no proofreading activity has been carried out before the text was published online. The lack of translation competence and professional skills are even more unacceptable for the selected staff of an event such as Expo 2015, which was designed by field experts and professionals from all over the globe, and was bound to be promoted outside national borders as well.

It goes without saying, that the previous paragraph was not aimed at discouraging the use of translations by non-native speakers of English for the advertisement of relevant events in the Italian scenario. On the contrary, the case of Expo 2015 made peculiar by the fact that it attracted visitors from countries ranging from Germany to Russia, from Brazil to the USA. As a natural consequence – and given that, as mentioned above, it would be impossible for web contents to be translated in all the native languages of its readership – the English version should be based on the model of English as a *Lingua Franca* illustrated in Chapter 1 of this thesis or, rather, it should become an example of actual communication in English as an International Language. Coming back to the project I took part into during my internship experience at Officine Micro', the first thing that my colleagues and I realized when translating the first text from Italian into English was that the target text would have to be accessible for all foreign people visiting Expo. This was to be practically implemented through the removal of slang expressions and other nation-specific idioms. The type of English we needed to use was a simple and clear one, which could effectively convey the message contained in the source text without being too hard to read even for, say, a Chinese person who wanted to get information about Expo events. The next sections will try to illustrate the translation process I adopted and the crucial role played by translation tools such as Omega T.

### **3.3 Advertising Expo events for an international readership: a first-hand experience of ITA>ENG translation**

The translation project for Expo 2015 was developed at Officine Micro' by a group of three people including myself and my two colleague editors Matteo Piotto and Alberta Giusto. Together, we translated an average of 25 events per day from May until the end of October. The main disadvantage was that none of us was a native speaker of the target language; therefore, we decided that a double proofreading was required for every text: every translation we individually carried out was subsequently read and checked by the other two at the end of the working day, so that occurrence of spelling mistakes

or other grammatical imprecision could be detected and corrected before the texts were automatically forwarded to the Tutto Città servers by the GPS system. During my internship period, I collected 809 small texts of roughly 60-100 words each, which can be organized as a linguistic corpus.

Looking at this corpus as a whole, it is possible to identify some recurrent terminological patterns linked to a specific set of terms describing the internal organization of Expo 2015 and the activities in it scheduled: pavilion, Cardo, Decumano, Cluster, event, Tree of Life, Biodiversity Park, Pavilion Zero, Expo Centre, etc. One of the major advantages in projects comprising a series of translations on the same theme is the possibility to compile a glossary comprising the most frequent terms, and draw comparisons on how they have been used in different contexts. A huge help in doing so is provided by translation memory tools, which can automatically analyze and select the sequence in which a given term has been employed, or find a correspondence between terms in the source and target texts. We will deal with these very useful means that technology can nowadays offer in the next section. For now, we will analyze how translation has been carried out with regard to titles, the element that the reader use to immediately get the gist of the text below. As a crucial element for advertisements and online publications, their translation process is worth discussing in detail.

### ***3.3.1. Headline translation and the question of “speaking titles”***

During my initial week at Officine Micro’ I attended in-house training courses dealing with online communication, social media and tourist writing. One of the most frequently stressed concepts was that of headlines: as the first thing that comes to the reader’s eye when coming across a text, it is important that they are able to catch the attention through the use of captivating words, wordplays or an effective and concise summary of the article’s content. However, print headlines may vary from online ones both for in their functions and style. First of all, an online headline is bound to appear not only on top of the related article, but it will serve to create links to the article’s page, it could be viewed by mobile users in enlarged font size, it may be included in the



results of a web search, or be published in a social media page (Foust, 2005:183). For this reason, titles required in online publications need to be written in a straightforward, concise yet informative style: by reading it, the average Internet user should be able to understand the main topics the underlying text deals with, and as a consequence decide whether to continue reading it or click on another link.

Moreover, one important feature of online headlines is the fact that they must necessarily contain a certain amount of keywords which can be processed through search engine softwares to produce a list of results for any given search operated by users. In this sense, wordplays, slang expressions and other types of figurative language, if employed in the headline, may hinder the possibility for it to be selected for and come up in a list of results. With regard to Google, a valuable help in the choice of the most suitable terms to be inserted in a headline for online-publication purpose is a brief check through the AdWords Keyword Tool: the software will tell how many Google searches have been operated for any searched word or even for other semantically related terms. Alternative websites are also available for free use for all those who do not have an AdWord account. The higher the number of searches for a word, the more possibilities it has to be selected again by web users and, as a consequence, the more suitable it becomes for an online headline.

Henceforth, a few cases of problematic headlines translation from Italian into English will be analyzed. It is worth remembering that the potential readership of these advertisements did not only include native speakers of English, and therefore the type of English employed in the target texts would be bound to adopt the same features of ELF mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis.

Let us start with a straightforward example, where no substantial changes were required in order to make the title understandable for a foreign readership:

"Convivio Lucano": a tavola con Federico II

Proposed translation: Mealtime with Frederick II: a "Lucanian Banquet"

Of course, in the context of events promoted through the Tutto Città portal for Expo 2015 and given their elevated quantity, it was unlikely that they could individually appear as a result of a general web search; however, they had to compete for priority in searches operated by users within the portal itself. For instance, Tutto Città offers the possibility to sort out events according to a series of filters including location, price, duration, etc. For this reason, it is important for a title to contain at least one word indicating the type of event it related to. In this case, one possibility is represented by the translation of either the word *convivio* or *tavola*, respectively rendered with *banquet* and *mealtime*. Now, the latter word is much more common than the former, and should appear at the sentence's onset, as the upper left part of the page is the first focus point (Foust, 2005).

Now, other titles were more complicated to be translated into English, especially when they contained metaphorical Italian expressions or other culture-specific traits such as sayings and proverbs. One challenging example was the title:

Con le mani in pasta

Proposed translation: Kneading classes: making dough is fun!

Besides the fact that it is probably a poorly informative text in the source language as well, given the scarcity of information it provides to the reader, it is also difficult to be reported into English, as it is only composed by a metaphorical expression. The first thing to do, in this case, is to look back at the general context, i.e. the type of event it refers to and the reason why figurative language was considered appropriate for the headline by the source text's author.

Source text	Target text
Il weekend è ricco di attività ad Expo: al Parco della Biodiversità, la catena di supermercati biologici NaturaSi organizza	The rich weekend programme of Expo 2015 will include a number of activities: in the Biodiversity Park, the biological supermarkets

<p>una serie di laboratori teatralizzati, aperti a grandi e piccini, per imparare a impastare farine di cereali antiche e salutari e a preparare poi le tagliatelle da portare a casa e cucinare per tutta la famiglia.</p>	<p>brand NaturaSì will offer a series of entertaining workshops for children and adults as well, aimed at teaching how to knead the most ancient and healthy flours in order to prepare <i>tagliatelle</i>, a typical Italian pasta which participants will then take home and cook for the whole family.</p>
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The expression *con le mani in pasta*, literally *with one's hands in the dough* clearly refers to the workshop's theme. Now, the simplest and most logical solution for an accurate translation would be to verify if a correspondent expression is also used in the target language. Yet, in this situation the translator is also bound to consider that the potential readership of the ad will also include NNSs of English, and, consequently, the possibility to produce an adequate title is enhanced by the removal of any metaphorical expression. Nevertheless, this does not imply that titles should lack in creativity: on the contrary, during my training week I was encouraged to use semantic fields, synonyms and simple wordplays to create so-called "speaking titles", meaning short sentences which could effectively summarize the event's description while at the same time resulting agreeable and witty.

The first section of the headline is devoted to the activity's description, whereas the second part is aimed at conveying a message to the reader for him/her to attend it, or, at least, to scroll down to the main article's body below.

Finally, one last example of headline translation involved the problem of translating the name of typical Italian geographical locations or traditional foods. In the former case, the problem can be solved quite easily by verifying whether the proper noun of the city, town, river, mountain, etc. has a correspondent term in the target language. This is especially the case of important cities, e.g. Rome, Milan, Turin or other places with a particular topographical, cultural or historical significance, e.g. the Tiber river, the

Mount Vesuvius or the Adriatic Sea. For minor locations, the name usually remains unvaried. An example of this situation was represented by the title:

La biodiversità in Valchiusella: il prato a Expo

Proposed translation: Investigating biodiversity of Valchiusella: a grassland at Expo

Valchiusella is a small valley in the north-east of Italy which takes its name from the stream that crosses it, the Chiusella. After having ascertained that no equivalent name is available in English, it was simple to come to the above Italian translation.

The question is more complicated when the untranslatable word is a typical product or food. One challenge in this sense was the translation of the term *sorbetto* (a traditional Italian drink) in the following headline:

Il sorbetto al limone, scrigno di sapori degli agrumi di Sicilia

Proposed translation: Lemon sorbetto, a treasure of flavour from Sicilian citrus fruit

Of course, no equivalent term is available in the English language, and therefore the original word needs to be preserved, and whenever possible, supported by a brief definition in the target language. In this case, this definition could be easily incorporated in the second part of the sentence, dealing with the ingredients of *sorbetto* and the place where it is mostly produced, namely in southern Italy and Sicily in particular.

After this brief analysis of headlines translation for the Expo project, the next paragraph will focus on translation of the main article's body, supported by the use of CAT Tools.

### ***3.3.2. AntConc as support tool for translation: pros and cons for non-native translators***

The Expo translation project brought forward a number of challenges and difficulties to overcome throughout the 6 months it took to be carried out. In particular, the most complicated part was the translation of the article's bodies, we had to continually rely on the help of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and other online resources. However, while progressing with the work, we realized that source texts were actually quite repetitive, as they dealt with a limited type of events which took place every day at Expo: conferences, workshops, concerts, art exhibitions, activities for children and food tastings, just to quote some. Moreover, as previously mentioned, terminology concerning the internal structure of the Expo site (name of pavilion, structures, parks, etc.) was to remain unvaried in all texts.

For this reason, I launched the idea of using AntConc to speed up the translation process and optimize the few time we had at our disposal for the Expo project. The capacity of writing a pre-defined number of events per day was a crucial element, so any suggestion that could speed up translation process was warmly welcomed. In this sense, AntConc revealed itself to be a very valuable resource. AntConc was developed as an open-source software by Laurence Anthony, researcher in Applied Linguistics and presently a Professor at the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Waseda University, Japan (Laurence Anthony's Website, 2015). The first version of the AntConc project only included a freeware corpus analysis tool, but has nowadays expanded and a whole series of different softwares are today available for free download in Laurence Anthony's official website. For the purpose of the Expo project, only two of these softwares have been employed, namely the classis version of AntConc and AntFileConverter.

AntFileConverter is a tool that can convert Word.docx and PDF files into plain text (.txt), which is the only extension supported by the other corpus analysis tools.

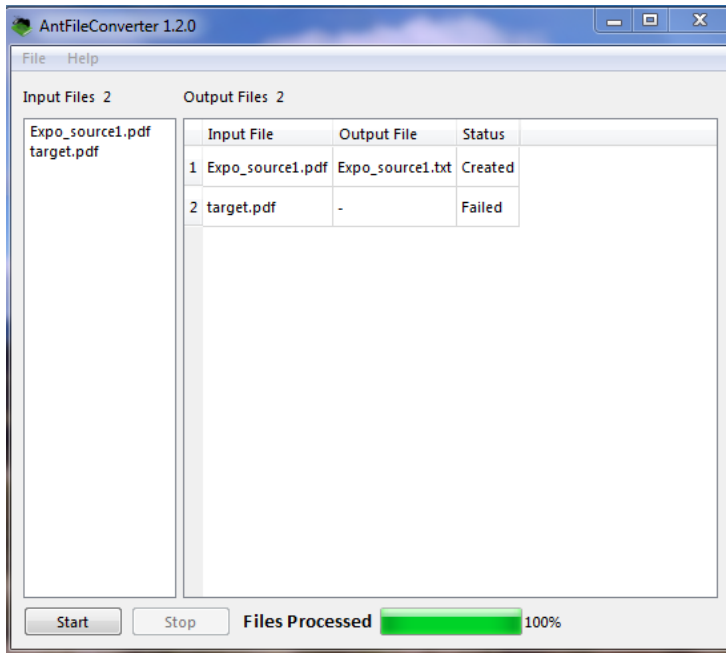


Figure 12. Conversion of the PDF file Expo\_source1 into plain text

Once the files containing the linguistic corpus have been converted into plain text, their analysis through AntConc is straightforward: as soon as the plain text has been selected as corpus file, it is possible to insert the word that we want to analyze and the software will sort out all the collocations featuring that term in the whole corpus, as shown in the Figure 6.

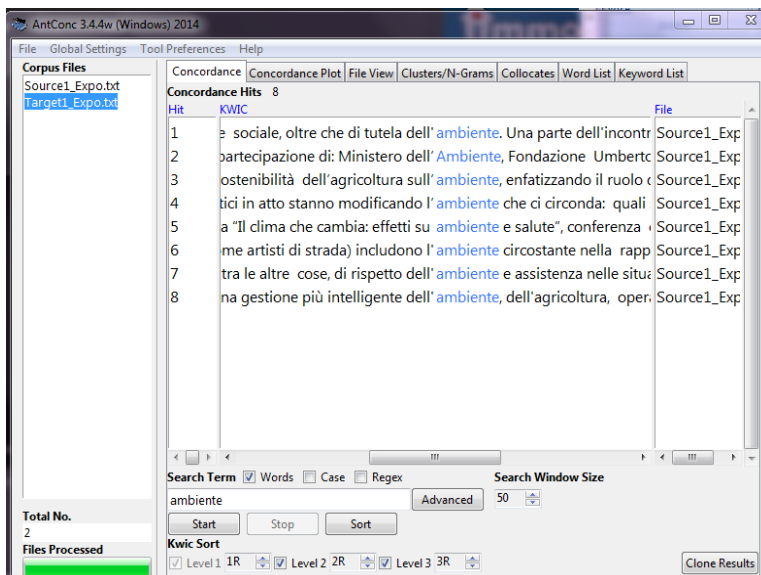


Figure 13. List of collocations for the Italian term *ambiente* (environment)

Corpus analysis through AntConc presents a number of advantages, one of which is linked to the translation of collocations. A good strategy for translating collocation will bring to a more accurate final outcome of the overall translation work; for this reason, a particular attention must be paid to this aspect, especially when translating into a non-native language. A lessened mastery of the target language may be the cause of collocation mistakes hindering the understanding of the text by creating cultural gaps or by interrupting the discourse's flow.

The resort to corpus analysis certainly does not relieve the translator from the responsibility of correctly reporting a given passage as faithfully as possible in the target language through his/her own skills and research efforts; nevertheless, it can help avoiding superficiality both in the initial identification of collocates and in the final revision. As for the first case, the translator can select or search collocations containing one term and compare them with other similar or contrasting passages in the text. Awareness of the presence of such expressions can help planning a more accurate research in dictionaries or other sources. In the second case, concerning the final revision of the translation work, AntConc searches are a valid method to isolate all occurrences of a term throughout the text, so that it is becomes possible to have a parallel look on how it has been translated in different contexts and whether the proposed translation solutions actually match the correspondent expression in the source text.

Of course, possible uses of AntConc is not limited to the two above mentioned softwares; on the contrary, the range of programmes presently available is much more rich and varied, with programmes developed in collaboration with other experts dealing with the analysis of adverbials and text segments, parallel corpus analysis and other interesting options that can definitely provide an essential contribute to translation activities in the present era of technological innovation.

### **3.4 Challenges and methods for the translation of company websites from L1 into L2**

During my internship at Officine Micro', I was also given the opportunity to translate into English the content of two commercial websites, namely for the companies Universal srl. And Tekno Stamap srl., respectively producing and selling professional cooking systems and industrial dough-processing machinery. Both their headquarters are located in Grisignano di Zocco, a small town of the Vicenza area. Italian source texts were written by my colleagues, who were invited to visit the factories twice in the month of July 2015 and were in charge of discussing various proposals for the website's structure with both companies' boards. Translation into English had not been initially foreseen, but it was required afterwards by the clients themselves. Deadlines for the preparation and final presentation of the two websites were quite short: as a matter of fact, agreements between the two companies and Officine Micro' stated that the project should have been ready in one month time. The actual time at my disposal for the translation into English of Italian contents was of ten days.

Despite the fact that a ten day deadline is a very short one for a first attempt in professional translation, this project revealed itself as very interesting and full of opportunities to learn how to design a commercial website and arrange meetings with the office's clients. Before going on to the analysis of the translation process, a word must be spent on the theme of professional relations with translation clients, especially in the light of what has been written in the previous chapter about transparency about how the translation work will be carried out, and the possible hinders it may encounter. In this case, the main problem was represented by the fact that I, as appointed translator, was not able to guarantee a perfect outcome in the target language (i.e. English), also because of my inexperience in the field. On the other hand, I could assure full commitment to the project and the knowledge of the basic issues related to translation derived from my university studies.



Once all this had been communicated to the clients and after their acceptance of the above-mentioned conditions, one more difficult step was to obtain their collaboration with regard to some necessary clarifications from me required on terminological questions in order to perform the translation task in the best possible way. My impression was that the translation into English of Italian text was only perceived as a mechanical task, which only required the simple transposition of single words from one language into another; as a consequence, the answers given to my e-mails (despite the effort to reduce them to a minimum number) were slow, rushed, and sometimes incomplete. This comment is not aimed at criticizing the companies' behaviour: of course, a business activity has many other priorities to fulfill during a working day; nevertheless, my point is that a translator can only claim to perfectly do his/her job if (s)he is able to make the client understand the fundamental role played by a mutual cooperation in order to elaborate the perfect translation.

First of all, a brief description of the two companies is required, in order to understand the type of website they needed and the messages they wanted to convey in it, starting from Universal. Founded in the early 1980s by Antonio Baldovin and Remigio Dante, Universal produces professional cooking systems which are sold worldwide to both retailers and private companies operating in the fields of restaurant industry and catering services. Figure 14 shows the homepage of their new website, published online at the end of October 2015:



Figure 14. Homepage of Universal's new website

On the other hand, Tekno Stamap was founded together with Universal from the idea of the same two founding members; however, the two companies are today operating in two different sectors, and Tekno Stamap is specialized in the supply of machinery and other equipment for dough processing. It is nowadays an affirmed reality at an international level, with its branches in Europe, Japan, South Africa, Asia and America. Its most popular products include dough sheeters, planetary mixers and moulding machines for industrial use. Its board of directors is today fully independent from Universal's one, and the company is trying to reinforce its presence in overseas countries by the development of new products and by carrying forward an innovative process of modernization of the marketing strategy. Figure 18 shows the homepage of their new website, published online in October 2015 as well:

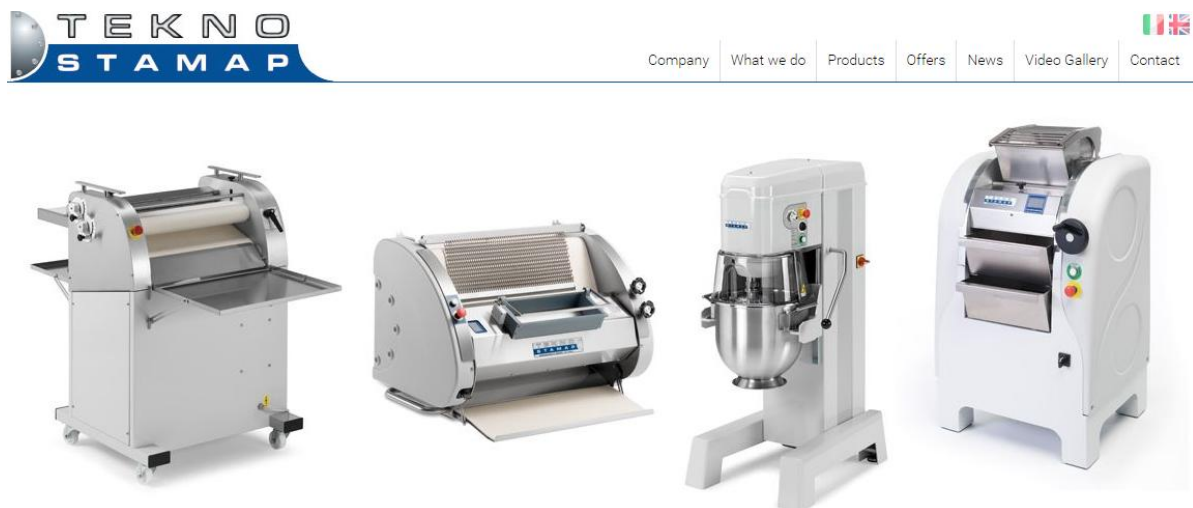


Figure 15. Homepage of Tekno Stamap's new website

Web contents provided by Officine Micro' for both websites (whose design and graphic layout were arranged by an external partner providing IT services) only concerned some sections, namely the ones devoted to the company presentation, mission statement, products and contact information. After the final draft of Italian texts written by my colleagues was approved and revised by the client, it was possible to start the translation. Besides the usual equipment of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries,

online resources, company catalogues and technical sheets, one fundamental tool I had at my disposal were another 6 AntConc programmes, which enhanced a detailed analysis of both source and target texts and smoothen the translation process in itself and the final revision of it as part of the quality assessment of the overall work. The translation outcome was moreover bounded to consider some technical features linked to the creation of commercial websites, in order for them to capture the reader's attention and ensure that (s)he will visit other additional sections in addition to the initial homepage.

### ***3.4.1 Structure and features of commercial websites: an insight into marketing strategies***

When looking up the term 'commercial website' on the Internet, a countless number of pages will come up, advising on how to create the perfect web page for one's company, enlisting marketing strategies and proposing IT services. In the present era of social media and technological innovation, every company willing to stand a chance against competitors both in the national and international market must have its own commercial website, and must employ a share of its internal and financial resources to shape it in a way that it could result attractive for potential online customers and web users. In order to obtain this, a few rules must be followed, concerning the website structure and content. In order to do so, a specialized staff is required, one which can understand and effectively manage web dynamics. The other important part of the page beside graphic layout are contents (also defined within technical environments as *copy*). And they call for a team of professionals as well, as

...poor spelling or grammar immediately deters the reader from continuing – mistakes or waffle reflect badly on the professionalism of your site and surfers will be quickly looking for the "back" button. Your copy must be informative with good headings, subheadings, , layout, images, easy to use links and navigation etc. The copy is also what search-engines use to index and categorize your site (Cowie, 2008:14).

The distribution of information over various dedicated sections is also essential; this will enhance clarity and an orderly presentation of data. Nowadays commercial websites

tend to present a quite standardized set of sections, enlisted here with a brief definition of their main features:

- **HOMEPAGE:** it the first page that appears on screen when a user clicks on a link redirecting to the company's website. It should have an attractive layout and a clear structure, so that the reader gets involved and will want to read more. A list of the links to the different sections is usually placed in the upper-right corner of the page. Generally, the homepage does not contain a great amount of information, but tend to focus on a few central elements, such as the company's name, the products that it can offer, and a catchy slogan or motto. From there, the reader will decide whether to continue reading by clicking on other links or to abandon the page.
- **WHO WE ARE/OUR COMPANY:** in this section, the bulk of information is represented by a detailed company presentation. The reader should be able to understand when the company was founded, by who, and its development and growth during the years of activity.
- **PRODUCTS:** by clicking on this link, the reader will get an insight on the range of items that the company is offering. A general description of the various items will then be followed by a general catalogue or technical sheets.
- **MISSION:** this section is dedicated to the company's vision, i.e. the values by which its work is animated, the code of conduct it maintain in its business relations, the ethic code it adhere to. Briefly, the philosophy underlying all its commercial actions by means of its board of directors and employees.
- **CONTACTS:** here the reader will retrieve the company's address, telephone numbers, e-mails and all other useful info to get it touch with it.

For the writing of Italian texts, my colleagues faithfully followed all these instructions and were also very attentive in choosing some keywords to be repeated in the various sections with the aim of both providing a pattern recognizable to external search engines and to stand out as the most significant elements in the

paragraph. These terms obviously had to be maintained in the English version of the website, and a valuable help in this sense was given by the use of the translation memory Omega T.

### ***3.4.2 The use of Omega T: CAT Tools as a valuable resource***

The repetitive nature of source texts represent the perfect condition for the use of assisted translation tools such as Omega T. In particular, this is defined as an open-source translation memory application written in Java. Its many functions include fuzzy matching, match propagation, simultaneous processing of multiple-file project and simultaneous use of multiple translation memories (Omega T, 2015). If used correctly, it can significantly simplify the translation process through its spell check, tags and glossaries. Besides, after having accumulated a sufficient amount of translation work, the programme will automatically run a computer memory which could be employed in future translation works to process any correspondent text segments. In the next paragraphs the first steps into the use of Omega T will be described, in order to explain how they can improve translations carried out by non-native speakers.

Translating with Omega T is quite simple, as explained in the instruction manual for CAT Beginners:

A segmentation function displays one “segment” of source text at a time (usually a sentence), and the translation is done with the target text on the screen directly below the source text. This is very useful for 1) making sure you don’t skip text; 2) checking your work; and 3) putting both source and target text in a font and size that are comfortable for you (Welsh & Prior, 2014:5).

The advantage of translating a text divided into smaller parts is that they are easier to manage; besides, Omega T allows to have a simultaneous view of the source and target texts, in a way that they can be readily compared and revised whenever necessary. This is even more important for a non-native translator, as shorter segments require less time to be processed and grammar mistakes can be detected and edited more effectively. Other functions include, as explained above, the matching of correspondent segments in the current project and previous translation works; however, this result can be obtained

only when a sufficient amount of translation projects have been completed, so that memorized data reach a certain degree of repetition. As a matter of fact, Omega T is the perfect tool to translate texts with recurrent word patterns or with similar terminology. The image below shows how a project in Omega T looks like:

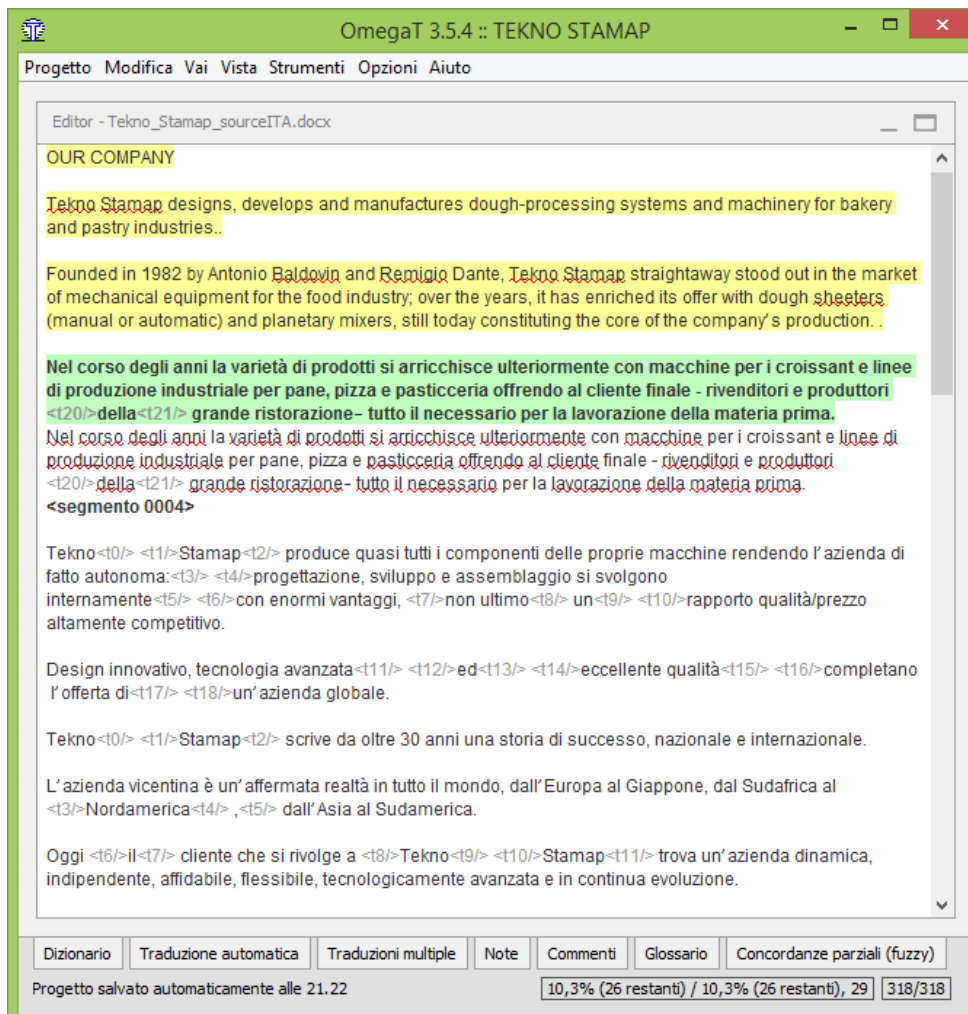


Figure 16. Translation project open in Omega T

The bottom bar displays all the available functions of Omega T, which can be used in parallel pages to the main project. For example, by using the dictionary option, a spellchecker can be automatically run. Moreover, by the use of formatting tags it is possible to arrange the graphical layout of the target document so that it perfectly matches the source one.

Omega T and other CAT Tools completely revolutionized the field of professional translation, bringing forward a radical change in the type of equipment that every translator should have at his/her disposal, and the very approach to a translation task. In particular, CAT systems and translation memories represent an indispensable resource for people translating into their L2, for whom mastery of the target language can be weaker, and whose first attempts into translation are usually tentative.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This third and last chapter was aimed at giving a general overview on a first-hand experience of translation from L1 into L2 (Italian into English) which can serve as a practical example of what has been said in chapters 1 and 2. Translation into a non-native language is more challenging under many points of view; nevertheless, it can be carried out all the same, especially if we take advantage from the translation tools that are nowadays available for free download. We have seen that softwares such as AntConc and Omega T can facilitate the translator's task by performing spell check functions, corpus analysis and automatic translation of correspondent segments.

However, the thorny question about translation into a non-native language still remains: may it ever reach the quality standards of an identical work carried out by a native speaker? The answer is probably no, with the admirable exception of some sporadic cases where the translator has acquired a competence in the target language that can be similar to that of a NS. Besides, mastery of the language must always be accompanied by equal skills in translation competence.

Despite all these negative premises, and taking into account the evidence of professional realities in the translation field, translating into an L2 has become today not only an occasional practice, but a concrete necessity. The root cause of this lies, on the one hand, on the scarcity of native English translators, which are heavily outnumbered by the amount of translation work required, while, on the other part, the type of English

adopted as target language must be modified and adapted to the potential readership of the target text. As a consequence, we are moving toward the standardization of a new type of English as a Lingua Franca, which is rapidly becoming more than simply a mean of communication between people who do not share a common idiom, but rather a new type of Global English, featuring independent grammatical rules and vocabulary.

This is even more a remarkable phenomenon if we consider all possible implications at a socio-cultural level. It is rather hard to tell where this trend will lead us in the future; for the moment, what we know for sure is that the development of Global English has brought forward important consequences on the way we translate in professional environments and who can be considered as 'suitable' for translating into English. Very few studies are presently available on this topic, but academic interest in this theme has undoubtedly already be raised by the substantial changes occurring in the professional field. The formulation of an organic theory on translation into English as a non-native language will require time, but is cannot possibly be avoided.





# Final Remarks

Research on the theme of translation into a second language is still far from being completed, especially with regard to the formulation of a unitarian theory on translation competence and the definition of a set of translation universals. This thesis, while it certainly does not have the ambition of being exhaustive, was aimed at casting light on some of the main aspects concerning translation into a non-native language, and on the possibility of translating into Global English. Criticism on this issue is widespread, at the point that in some academic environment the very existence of a distinct variety of English as an International Language is put into question. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it represents a very promising research path for the near future, especially because the use of English in international contexts as means of communication between people who do not share a common mother tongue will undoubtedly enhance the definition of a set of grammatical and lexical rules of ELF.

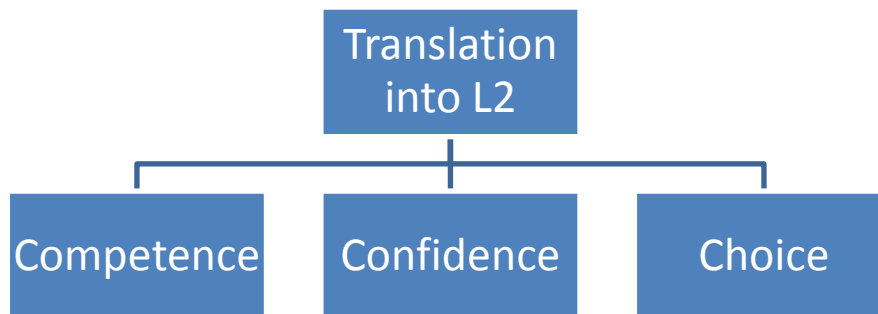
As pointed out by Chesterman, translation studies today seem to have shifted from a pejorative attitude towards the analysis of translated texts into a descriptive approach, whose objective is to evaluate them separately from source texts (Chesterman, 2010). Notably, every translation is a piece of writing to be evaluated in itself, and there is much more to be taken into account than the simple transfer of linguistic messages from one language into another: a good translator will also reflect on the type of readership, cultural norms of the target language, metaphorical expressions, slang, grammatical and textual complexity, etc. Nowadays, there are a number of tools at our disposal, that can lighten the burden of a translation task, such as the above-mentioned AntConc and Omega T. Current research into corpus linguistics will bear fruit over the next years, thanks to contributions by IT experts. Research in applied linguistics and translation is bound to touch themes related to a number of different domains, in a way that valid

results can be obtained only through the collaboration of field experts in the various disciplines.

Going back to the issue of translating into one's non-native language, I have claimed that it has become by now an affirmed reality in the professional field. Nevertheless, skepticism on the quality and accuracy of the final outcome of this process is still alive; overconfidence on the part of the translator may as well be dangerous and bring to negative consequences in the relation with clients and for one's reputation as trustworthy provider of translation services. Therefore, as suggested by free-lance legal translator Karine Rückert during a conference at the University of Trieste, a set of questions should find an answer when translation into a second language is involved, and before the actual translation part takes place. The first one is: must you? This depends on the type of company one is translating for, their business needs and the marketing strategies they plan to implement. In this sense, the type of contract offered to a translator is crucial, as it needs to state all these elements in a clear and straightforward way.

The second question is: can you? There is no easy answer, especially because it heavily relies on the translator's individual field knowledge and his/her perception or awareness of them. According to the survey carried out by Rückert for her MA final dissertation, non-native speakers of a language tend to make more errors of fluency but less semantic ones. Besides, company's expectations come again into play, as many clients are happy even with machine translation services, which have been developed over the last decade. Therefore, a part of the translator's work also consist in client education, meaning that they should be informed on the fact that a translation into an L2 will take more time than a normal into a first language, as a final proofreading is required; moreover, the quality of a translation must be proportional to the aim of the target text itself. Sometimes, educating the client also means changing the expectations of the translation market, as of course clients are not field experts and they must be conscious of the various factors influencing the final outcome of a translation work.

Finally, the third question proposed by Rückert is: will you? L2 competence, the most important element informing the answer, is a complex issue, which can be summarized in the intermingle of three concepts, namely translation competence, confidence and choice.



Now, further studies on the theme of translation into a second language will definitely be carried out, as such a widespread phenomenon cannot possibly be ignored by scholars. One fascinating aspect of translation theories is that they are inevitably bound to take into consideration theoretical and practical factors at the same time; this combination makes of translation studies one of the most interesting and complex disciplines in the linguistic domain.

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# Riassunto

Il nostro mondo è al giorno d'oggi intessuto di quella che potremmo definire una rete di connessioni, che si instaurano fra individui, gruppi e culture diverse in funzione di scambi comunicativi che avvengono quotidianamente. Il pervasivo fenomeno della globalizzazione, unito allo sviluppo tecnologico degli ultimi decenni, ha infatti incentivato quella che è stata definita dagli studiosi “comunicazione interculturale”, la quale viene ulteriormente rafforzata dalla vasta circolazione di informazioni attraverso Internet e media. In questo modo, ciò che avviene in una parte del pianeta può essere comunicato nello spazio di pochi secondi a migliaia di chilometri di distanza, in altri Paesi e addirittura in altri continenti, cosa fino ad un secolo fa impensabile.

Tutto ciò può essere considerato una vera e propria rivoluzione, se pensiamo che, nel corso della storia moderna, l'Europa ha visto nascere al proprio interno movimenti nazionalistici il cui manifesto era rappresentato dai valori di difesa della patria e da un esasperato senso di etnocentrismo, il quale diventa un ostacolo per la comunicazione, dato che chi ritiene che la propria cultura e civiltà sia centrale e superiore alle altre, chiude la propria mente a nuove informazioni (Taylor, 2006), ovvero altre mentalità e stili di vita. Sul piano politico, tutto questo ha avuto conseguenze catastrofiche, come nel caso delle guerre intestine fra Paesi europei e il colonialismo delle grandi potenze, che nel corso del XVII e XVIII secolo si espansero in vasti territori dell'Asia e dell'Africa.

Questa tesi si occuperà di comunicazione internazionale nell'ambito della traduzione, un settore in continua espansione grazie, appunto, al crescente bisogno di trasferire messaggi e informazioni fra persone che non condividono una stessa lingua madre. In questo senso, uno dei fattori da tenere in maggiore considerazione è la straordinaria

espansione nell'utilizzo dell'inglese a livello globale e la conseguente ampia necessità di fornire testi e notizie disponibili in questa lingua. In particolare, l'inglese svolge oggi la funzione di codice intermediario fra parlanti di lingue diverse che vogliono comunicare fra loro, ovvero diventando una vera e propria lingua franca. Ecco quindi che il ruolo del traduttore assume un'importanza strategica; tuttavia, il numero di traduzioni richieste verso la lingua inglese supera abbondantemente la disponibilità di traduttori madrelingua. Violando la norma generale per cui le traduzioni dovrebbero essere sempre indirizzate da una L2 verso una L1, la soluzione è stata trovata nel fatto di tradurre anche in senso contrario, cioè verso l'inglese come L2.

La ricerca da me condotta ha come scopo di dimostrare che questa operazione è del tutto giustificata nell'odierno contesto professionale della traduzione, supportando questa ipotesi in tre fasi: in primo luogo, verrà analizzato l'utilizzo dell'inglese come lingua franca internazionale (ELF in linguaggio tecnico), le motivazioni e le conseguenze di tale fenomeno ed infine accennando alla standardizzazione dell'ELF come varietà linguistica distinta, con caratteristiche proprie anche in ambiti di ampio utilizzo come quello commerciale e turistico. Il secondo capitolo sarà invece dedicato ad un breve excursus sulla complessità cognitiva del processo di traduzione, seguito da un accenno all'organizzazione del Directorate General for Translation dell'Unione Europea, organo che processa testi in 23 lingue ufficiali, divenendo così uno dei più importanti fornitori di servizi di traduzione al mondo. Il fulcro di questa seconda parte sarà rappresentato da una breve relazione sugli studi oggi esistenti sul tema della traduzione verso una L2, argomento molto dibattuto e controverso, la cui pratica a livello professionale incontra molte critiche da parte sia dei traduttori stessi, che da parte di linguisti e accademici. Il terzo ed ultimo capitolo tratterà invece un'esperienza pratica di traduzione da me svolta presso un ufficio stampa e comunicazione, in cui ho lavorato per un semestre traducendo brevi inserzioni riguardanti gli eventi organizzati all'interno del sito milanese di Expo 2015 e siti commerciali per due aziende con sede in provincia di Vicenza.

Ma procediamo con ordine. Come già affermato, al giorno d'oggi la lingua inglese è utilizzata a livello internazionale come mezzo di comunicazione fra parlanti di lingue diverse. Eppure, vi sono molte altre lingue molto diffuse, come per esempio il francese, lo spagnolo oppure il cinese o l'hindi. Da cosa deriva il successo planetario della lingua inglese? La risposta è data da due eventi storici chiave, ovvero la creazione dell'Impero Britannico e l'ascesa degli Stati Uniti come superpotenza al termine del primo conflitto mondiale. Il primo avvenimento, perlopiù svoltosi durante il lungo regno della regina Vittoria (1837-1901), ebbe come principali caratteristiche l'assoggettamento di popoli indigeni in ampie aree del continente asiatico e africano e una capillare opera di imposizione culturale e linguistica della civiltà britannica. In epoche successive, ondate di flussi migratori dalle colonie verso la madrepatria provocheranno uno sconvolgimento degli equilibri politici e sociali nel Regno Unito. Il secondo fenomeno, ovvero il boom economico statunitense iniziato già alla fine dell'Ottocento, ma pienamente maturato nel corso degli anni Venti, esso rappresentò un momento di cruciale importanza per il riassetto degli schemi di potere a livello globale. Il ruolo essenziale della lingua inglese è anche testimoniato dal fatto che essa sia stata scelta come veicolo dalle maggiori organizzazioni internazionali, come ad esempio Nazioni Unite, FAO e OMS.

La prima lingua franca documentata nella storia europea era quella parlata tra il XV e XIX secolo dai marinai che attraversavano il Mediterraneo per commerciare nelle varie città costiere sparse fra Italia, Spagna, Nord Africa e Grecia. Tale linguaggio nasce quindi da necessità di ordine pratico e lo stesso è avvenuto per l'inglese nel corso dell'ultimo secolo. Inoltre, per forza di cose, l'inglese utilizzato in contesti internazionali è destinato a perdere alcune delle norme lessicali e grammaticali che lo caratterizzano nella comunità di parlanti nativi. Tuttavia, questo non deve essere necessariamente percepito come un impoverimento: al contrario, l'interazione con altri idiomi è sempre un'opportunità da cogliere per un arricchimento culturale, dettato dalla commistione di idee, concetti e valori diversi. Per i parlanti di ELF, questo processo porta anche ad una ridefinizione della propria identità personale e collettiva, con la perdita di alcuni punti di riferimento e l'acquisizione di nuovi. Come affermato da Hall,

è possibile affermare di appartenere alla stessa cultura quando si condivide in senso ampio una stessa rappresentazione del mondo, grazie alla quale si possono condividere significati e costruire un ambiente sociale in cui vivere armoniosamente assieme (Hall, 1997).

La diffusione della lingua inglese nel mondo è stata declinata in una serie di varietà, descritte da Kachru attraverso un modello schematizzato in tre cerchi concentrici, dove al centro sono collocati i parlanti nativi, definiti anche come coloro in grado di definire norme linguistiche; ad un livello intermedio troviamo parlanti che vivono in Stati dove l'inglese è impiegato come lingua istituzionale come conseguenza della colonizzazione britannica; infine, nel cerchio più esterno si posizionano coloro che apprendono l'inglese come L2 o lingua straniera, per i quali le norme grammaticali relative alla lingua sono calate dall'alto, ovvero dagli appartenenti al cerchio interno. Questo modello, seppure innovativo per gli anni in cui venne elaborato, è stato in seguito criticato da alcuni studiosi per la netta separazione fra Centro e Periferia, in cui i parlanti nativi hanno la prerogativa di modificare la lingua e sentirla propria, mentre i non nativi sono destinati a percepirla semplicemente come una lingua straniera a cui non poter apportare alcun contributo. La divisione Centro-Periferia è stata messa in discussione dalla teoria di Brutt-Griffler, secondo la quale anche i parlanti non nativi possono essere considerati come agenti del cambiamento linguistico (Brutt-Griffler, 1998) e quindi essere parte integrante dello sviluppo linguistico dell'inglese a livello globale. Sulla base di questa nuova prospettiva, un modello alternativo a quello kachruviano è stato proposto da Modiano, che pone al centro dell'attenzione il concetto di competenza linguistica, sostituendola alla separazione nativo/non nativo, la quale perde il ruolo fondamentale detenuto per anni.

Nel 2016, possiamo quindi sostenere che l'inglese utilizzato in contesti internazionali è divenuto a tutti gli effetti una lingua globale, la quale si sta progressivamente standardizzando, assumendo gradualmente una serie di norme e caratteristiche proprie che la distinguono dalle varietà britannica e americana. L'attenzione degli studiosi su tale argomento risale solamente agli ultimi anni, ma varie proposte di ricerca sono già

state pubblicate in ambito accademico. Da un punto di vista fonologico, Jenkins sostiene che la pronuncia dei parlanti nativi (Received Pronunciation e General American) non sono le più efficaci per una conversazione in contesto non nativo e, al contrario, possono creare difficoltà e fraintendimenti nello scambio comunicativo. Jenkins individua una serie di caratteristiche fonologiche essenziali per la reciproca comprensione fra parlanti di ELF, da lei chiamate Lingua Franca Core. Altri aspetti della pronuncia di parlanti nativi sono da considerarsi superflui e in alcuni casi addirittura controproducenti. Su un piano lessicale e morfologico, una lista di caratteristiche dell'ELF è stata compilata da Seidlhofer, la quale include, tra le altre, anche la caduta della -s alla terza persona, l'omissione di articoli e l'uso eccessivo di verbi dal valore semantico generale. Per quanto riguarda la sfera relativa al linguaggio idiomatico, le metafore e altre espressioni figurate sono spesso utilizzate dai parlanti nativi per marcare la propria appartenenza ad una data comunità linguistica o gruppo sociale (Prodromou, 2008). Sarebbe quindi logicamente corretto ipotizzare che il loro uso tenda ad essere limitato quando l'inglese viene impiegato come lingua franca. Eppure, le cose sono alquanto diverse: secondo ricerche condotte da Pitzl, le metafore nell'ELF esistono e possono essere elaborate dai parlanti da zero, ovvero creando un'immagine per uno scopo comunicativo preciso, oppure attraverso un processo di "rimetaforizzazione", o trasferendo espressioni figurate direttamente dalla propria L1 (Pitzl, 2009). Un ultimo campo preso in considerazione da linguisti ed esperti è quello pragmatico, con la definizione di alcune strategie comunicative messe in atto dai parlanti di ELF per incentivare la ricezione del messaggio trasmesso: si tratta di quelle che Jenkins definisce come parafrasi, autocorrezione e ripetizione (Jenkins, 1997).

Abbiamo qui descritto le caratteristiche generali attribuite ad una varietà di inglese che è al giorno d'oggi anche nota come Global English. Ma quali sono i motivi per cui interlocutori di lingua diversa decidono di utilizzare l'inglese? Ovviamente non c'è una risposta univoca a questa domanda, in quanto gli scopi comunicativi che i parlanti intendono perseguire variano enormemente e sarebbero lunghi da elencare. Tuttavia, possiamo individuare due settori economici chiave in cui l'ELF è entrato a far parte dell'ordinaria amministrazione, ovvero quello commerciale e quello turistico. Per



quanto concerne il commercio internazionale, l'inglese è spesso utilizzato per comunicazioni all'interno delle aziende (soprattutto nel caso delle grandi compagnie multinazionali) e all'esterno per la gestione dei rapporti con fornitori e clienti e le strategie di marketing e pubblicità. La lingua scelta è determinante per la formazione di un'identità aziendale solida e condivisa fra i dipendenti ed è quindi naturale che una serie di norme in tal senso sia stata elaborata nel corso degli anni. Tali regole sono sintetizzate nel concetto di International Business English. Nell'ambito turistico, le dinamiche sono simili, in quanto l'inglese rappresenta al giorno d'oggi il mezzo più efficace per comunicare con agenzie di viaggi, reperire online informazioni turistiche o per fornire e partecipare a visite guidate. Il linguaggio turistico è stato inserito da Gotti nell'elenco dei linguaggi specialistici, in quanto presenta molti elementi distintivi, tra cui segnaliamo la monoreferenzialità dei termini, ovvero la corrispondenza biunivoca fra significante e significato e una tendenza alla sinteticità.

In conclusione, tutti gli elementi finora analizzati ci permettono di affermare che il Global English è oramai ampiamente utilizzato in ambito internazionale nelle conversazioni dove almeno uno degli interlocutori sia un parlante non nativo. Seppure non ancora completamente standardizzato, la sua evoluzione continuerà nei prossimi anni, con risultati che fino a poco tempo fa erano impensabili. Da questo possiamo inferire come l'importanza delle traduzioni verso la lingua inglese abbia assunto un ruolo essenziale per il mantenimento delle relazioni interpersonali e interculturali fra persone, aziende o istituzioni di ogni parte del mondo.

Per molti, l'attività di traduzione è semplicemente un'operazione di trasferimento di una parola dalla lingua A alla lingua B. In realtà, le cose sono molto diverse e, come ogni professionista del settore potrà affermare, un testo può essere tradotto efficacemente solo mettendo in pratica una serie di specifiche competenze linguistiche, conoscenze sul piano culturale, sociologico e implementando processi cognitivi di problem-solving. La peculiarità del campo degli studi di traduzione risiede nella necessità di combinare teoria e pratica nella formulazione di qualsivoglia teoria organica. Per quanto riguarda invece l'attività di traduzione in sé, essa richiede un approccio multi-disciplinare, nel

quale un ruolo fondamentale hanno i processi mentali logici, per cui il traduttore deve essere in grado di inferire le premesse logiche del passaggio su cui sta lavorando, siano esse esplicite o implicite (Newmark, 1981). E' inoltre necessario possedere una solida conoscenza di lingua e cultura sia del testo di partenza che di quello di arrivo. Infine, ma non meno importante, il traduttore deve anche acquisire le competenze grammaticali, morfosintattiche, lessicali e testuali per la produzione di frasi corrette sia dal punto di vista formale che contenutistico. Tali competenze vengono acquisite dal traduttore con il tempo e l'esperienza; non dimentichiamo, tuttavia, che alcune difficoltà permangono, tra cui quelle che vengono definite da alcuni studiosi come *interruzioni*, ovvero gap cognitivi che si verificano nel trasferimento di messaggi particolarmente complessi dalla lingua di partenza a quella di arrivo. Come affermato da Angelone, che nomina tali interruzioni come *problem nexus*, ciò deriva da un deficit cognitivo (Angelone & Shreve, 2011) risolvibile tramite le stesse strategie di problem-solving a cui ricorriamo quotidiana per risolvere incomprensioni o ostacoli comunicativi.

A seguito di questa breve premessa sulle difficoltà e la complessità dell'attività di traduzione, procediamo con un accenno alle politiche linguistiche e relativi servizi di traduzione di una delle più avanzate e innovative organizzazioni politiche moderne, ovvero l'Unione Europea. Ufficialmente fondata nel 1993 con il Trattato di Maastricht, essa riunisce oggi 28 Paesi, sotto l'egida di una comunità democratica basata sui valori di giustizia sociale e laicità. Di conseguenza, i provvedimenti messi in campo a livello europeo in campo linguistico non potevano che aderire agli stessi principi fondanti, per cui ogni Paese aderente all'UE ha il diritto di veder riconosciuta tra propria lingua come ufficiale anche nel contesto comunitario. Di conseguenza, le lingue ufficiali sono oggi 24 in totale, anche se alla verifica dei fatti solamente 3 sono definite come procedurali, ovvero inglese, francese e tedesco, usate per velocizzare il lavoro della Commissione Europea, l'organo esecutivo dell'Unione. La gestione dei servizi di traduzione è affidata al Directorate General for Translation (DGT), la cui importanza è cresciuta proporzionalmente all'entrata di nuovi Stati membri nell'UE. Oggi, il DGT offre traduzioni da e in tutte le lingue ufficiali, con un numero di combinazioni linguistiche pari a 506. I tipi di testi tradotti spazia da iniziative legislative, documenti parlamentari,

volantini, pubblicazioni online e molto altro. Allo scopo di gestire efficacemente l'enorme massa di informazioni da processare, il DGT ha messo a punto un sistema di traduzione automatica, il quale, seppur ancora carente per quanto riguarda l'aspetto stilistico e lessicale dei testi di arrivo prodotti, è oggi un servizio indispensabile per poter tradurre in modo immediato documenti destinati a politici o funzionari per una lettura rapida e superficiale, atta a cogliere solamente i punti principali del testo.

Come abbiamo visto, l'importanza del settore della traduzione è cresciuta esponenzialmente nel corso degli ultimi anni per necessità pratiche derivate dall'esigenza di comunicare con parlanti, aziende o istituzioni che non condividano una stessa lingua madre. Di pari passo, anche la teorizzazione della metodologia e i processi cognitivi e linguistici attraverso cui la traduzione ha luogo sono stati fortemente incentivati. Uno dei dibattiti attualmente più controversi riguarda la definizione di quelli che potrebbero essere definiti come universali della traduzione, ovvero un set di norme e principi fondamentali che siano alla base di qualsiasi attività traduttiva da e verso ogni lingua esistente. Il fatto stesso che tale formulazione possa aver luogo è oggetto di forti perplessità, in quanto molte delle ipotesi proposte sono successivamente state confutate attraverso l'analisi di corpus di testi tradotti. Secondo Chesterman, lo studio degli universali è utile non solo da un punto di vista formale e pedagogico, ma anche per modificare l'approccio agli studi sulla traduzione da peggiorativo a semplicemente descrittivo; per questo motivo, propone una classificazione delle varie proposte di universali proposte finora in due grandi gruppi: da una parte gli *S-Universals*, riguardanti il processo di analisi del testo iniziale da parte del traduttore, dove la lettera *S* sta per *source*, mentre dall'altra i *T-Universals*, cioè riguardanti la stesura e lo scopo comunicativo del testo di arrivo tradotto (*target text*). Per la prima categoria, un esempio da citare potrebbe essere l'ipotesi di esplicitazione avanzata da Blum-Kulka, secondo la quale la lunghezza del testo di arrivo sarebbe sempre superiore a quella del testo di partenza.

Da un punto di vista pratico, il settore della traduzione è imperniato su una serie di norme che definiscono la deontologia professionale a cui ogni traduttore dovrebbe

attenersi. Secondo questa guida etica, il processo di traduzione dovrebbe essere sempre indirizzato da L2 ad L1, in quanto la competenza linguistica del parlante nativo sarebbe indispensabile per produrre buone traduzioni. In realtà, come ci dimostra il sondaggio IAPTI (International Association of Translators and Interpreters) pubblicato nel gennaio 2015 e portato avanti da un team di ricerca condotto da Attila Piroth, in campo professionale la tendenza a tradurre verso una lingua diversa dalla propria L1 è già diffusa e in continuo aumento. Statistiche calcolate sulla base di 780 interviste online a traduttori con vari gradi di esperienza e livello di conoscenze stimano che il 44,5% svolge abitualmente tale operazione nella propria attività di traduttore. Tuttavia, la maggior parte degli intervistati sostiene che qualsiasi traduzione effettuata in una lingua non nativa debba necessariamente essere soggetta a proofreading finale da parte di un traduttore madrelingua. E in tal senso, il numero di professionisti disposti a prestarsi per una tale collaborazione con un traduttore di lingua 2 si dimostra restio a correggere ciò che a suo parere possono risultare fastidiosi errori di stile, registro e sintassi.

I principali motivi che potrebbero legittimare la traduzione in L2 sono da ricercarsi nel bisogno di dare priorità ad un'approfondita conoscenza di una specifica terminologia tecnica nella lingua madre, tralasciando quindi alcuni aspetti stilistici del testo di arrivo. Questo potrebbe essere particolarmente valido per la traduzione di documenti del settore legale o testi inerenti a discipline scientifiche ad alto livello di specializzazione, come ad esempio nel caso delle nuove tecnologie o di campi come l'astrofisica o la chimica. Altre cause a monte della scelta di tradurre in una lingua diversa dalla propria lingua madre potrebbero essere basati sulla considerazione del tipo di pubblico a cui il testo di arrivo sarà rivolto. Per esempio, nel caso di un testo destinato ad un pubblico internazionale, la traduzione in lingua inglese dovrebbe essere maggiormente volta verso le convenzioni e i nascenti standard dell'inglese come lingua franca.

Come Campbell scrive, il traduttore di oggi non dovrebbe essere rappresentato sul piano teorico come un semplice intermediario neutro fra lingua A e lingua B, ma piuttosto come un fattore attivo del processo di traduzione, in quanto le sue conoscenze e competenze possono avere enorme influenza sulla traduzione finale (Campbell, 2013).

Tale affermazione è ulteriormente sostenuta dallo stesso Campbell mediante il concetto di interlingua, ovvero il sistema linguistico che viene costruito nella mente di chi apprende una lingua 2 nel corso del trasferimento delle informazioni da un codice all'altro.

Inoltre, come sostenuto da Pokorn, il processo di traduzione inversa non è così snaturato come si vorrebbe far intendere; al contrario, esso era largamente diffuso già dai tempi antichi, quando i primi testi della Bibbia vennero tradotti dal caldeo al greco, probabilmente ad opera di parlanti non nativi. Un decisivo passo verso l'idea che solo la traduzione verso la lingua madre fosse praticabile venne compiuto nel XIX secolo con la nascita dei regimi nazionalistici europei, che con le loro ideologie derivate dal movimento romantico, sostenevano il diritto dei madrelingua ad essere i soli legittimi traduttori di un brano verso una lingua straniera sono i parlanti nativi della lingua di partenza stessa.

Un grande passo avanti nella traduzione verso una lingua straniera può essere rappresentato dall'evoluzione della linguistica dei corpus, la quale si avvale delle più recenti tecnologie informatiche per processare enormi quantitativi di dati e compararli secondo una serie di filtri linguistici. Dettagliati lavori sul tema sono quelli inerenti al campo della terminologia e la costruzione di un corpus linguistico, tra cui quelli di Federico Zanettin.

Ora, sia la teoria dell'inglese come lingua franca e quella della possibilità della traduzione L1>L2 possono essere combinate, quando la traduzione verso la lingua inglese di un dato testo sia destinata ad un pubblico di lettori non madrelingua inglesi, nel qual caso sia quindi necessario implementare le regole dell'ELF per garantire il successo dell'azione comunicativa. In questa tesi tale combinazione è stata introdotta attraverso un esempio pratico, ovvero un'esperienza di lavoro nel settore della traduzione da me svolta presso Officine Micro', ufficio stampa e comunicazione con sede a Romano d'Ezzelino, nel nord-est dell'Italia. Nel corso del mio stage semestrale, ho avuto il compito di tradurre una serie di circa 800 piccoli testi per la

pubblicizzazione di eventi tenuti all'interno di Expo 2015, l'Esposizione Universale tenutasi in un sito appositamente costruito alla periferia di Milano e il cui tema principale era "Nutrire il pianeta. Energie per la vita". Officine Micro' collabora con vari portali web, come ad esempio Virgilio e Tutto Città, a cui fornisce una serie di descrizioni di eventi organizzati sul territorio nazionale attraverso l'inserimento ed invio di tali testi in un database apposito, il GPS.

Expo Milano 2015 ha riscosso un discreto successo, specialmente nell'ultimo trimestre, con picchi di visitatori nei giorni festivi. I partecipanti al progetto comprendevano 137 stati e varie altri fra organizzazioni internazionali, istituzioni pubbliche, compagnie private e grandi multinazionali. Il sito espositivo era organizzato longitudinalmente e attraversato da due vie principali, denominate Cardo e Decumano sul modello delle antiche strade delle città romane. 54 padiglioni nazionali, 9 Cluster e varie altre strutture popolavano il sito Expo, offrendo percorsi multimediali, mostre, ristoranti e varie attrazioni.

Il mio compito durante lo stage era principalmente legato alla traduzione di piccoli testi sulle attività svolte all'interno di Expo 2015 dall'italiano all'inglese, in modo da fornire un canale di informazione unitario per i visitatori stranieri che giungessero a Milano in vista dell'Esposizione Universale, soprattutto perché le informazioni a riguardo erano frammentate in una serie di siti web dedicati ai vari padiglioni o strutture, creando così grande dispersione. Tenendo in considerazione il fatto che questi brevi testi erano destinati ad un pubblico internazionale, mi era stato espressamente richiesto dai miei superiori di non utilizzare nei testi di arrivo troppe espressioni metaforiche o altri tipi di linguaggio figurato che potesse ostacolare la comprensione del testo stesso per un parlante con una lingua madre diversa dall'inglese. Ora, tutto ciò si ricollega perfettamente all'argomentazione addotta nei precedenti paragrafi riguardo allo sviluppo di una nuova varietà di inglese utilizzata a livello globale. Ecco perché, nelle mie traduzioni, ho cercato di applicare le regole di semplificazione e neutralità culturale dell'ELF, pur mantenendo un'accuratezza grammaticale e stilistica il più elevata possibile. Oltre ai vari dizionari cartacei e online, un valido aiuto è stato l'utilizzo di

AntConc, programma open-source per l'analisi di corpus linguistici. Esso consente infatti di ricercare termini specifici all'interno di un determinato corpus inserito, fornendo l'intero contesto in cui esso è inserito. Ciò permette al traduttore di avere una visione d'insieme sulle varie collocazioni nel testo di partenza e/o di arrivo, a seconda del tipo di programma AntConc utilizzato.

Un'altra interessante esperienza di traduzione da me svolta ad Officine Micro' era relativa a siti web commerciali: mi è stata infatti offerta l'occasione di tradurre dall'italiano verso l'inglese i nuovi siti online di due aziende della provincia di Vicenza, ovvero Tekno Stamap, produttrice di sfogliatrici meccaniche ed altri macchinari per la produzione industriale di dolci e sfoglie e Universal, fornitrice di forni e sistemi di cottura industriali. La difficoltà principale di questo compito è stata la comunicazione con il cliente per quanto riguarda chiarimenti sulla terminologia del testo di partenza, in quanto spesso l'intento comunicativo di alcuni passaggi deve necessariamente essere chiaro al traduttore per poterlo poi rendere il più fedelmente possibile nella lingua di arrivo. Secondo la struttura convenzionale dei moderni siti aziendali, per entrambe le ditte era prevista una homepage con le informazioni principali, da cui poi accedere a varie sezioni dedicate alla storia dell'azienda, prodotti, servizi e contatti. In questo caso, la traduzione è stata da me svolta direttamente in Omega T, uno dei cosiddetti CAT Tools per la traduzione assistita. Questo programma offre un valido supporto in quanto permette di spezzare il testo in piccoli segmenti da tradurre in successione, formattare il documento di arrivo, eseguire controlli ortografici e aggiungere glossari personalizzati. Tuttavia, la sua funzione più importante consiste nell'archiviazione di dati e la successiva creazione di memorie di traduzione che potranno suggerire soluzioni nel caso in cui un segmento già tradotto in passato si ripresenti in un lavoro di traduzione futuro.

In conclusione, questa tesi intende proporre un'ulteriore argomentazione per la possibilità di tradurre verso l'inglese come L2, ovvero il fatto che, con lo sviluppo dell'inglese come lingua di comunicazione internazionale, vi possono essere testi scritti in questa lingua ma destinati ad un pubblico più vasto dei parlanti nativi, cosa a cui lo

stile e le strategie comunicative del testo di arrivo devono adattarsi. Inoltre, le moderne tecnologie e lo sviluppo dell'analisi dei corpus informatizzata può sicuramente dare un grande aiuto al traduttore che decida di operare da L1 a L2, aumentando la qualità complessiva delle traduzioni, correggendo eventuali errori ortografici e molto altro.