

# THE EDITING OF NON-NATIVE TEXTS AND TRANSLATION: EVIDENCE FROM THE EUROCOM CORPUS

SIMONA ANSELMINI

*Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano e Piacenza*

## **Abstract**

*Il presente contributo intende esaminare l'attività di revisione di testi redatti da autori non madrelingua al fine di verificare l'ipotesi secondo cui i testi che hanno subito un processo di revisione presentano tratti "universali" analoghi a quelli osservati nei testi tradotti. Illustrate le premesse cognitive e socio-culturali alla base di questo studio, l'ipotesi è testata su un corpus di testi inglesi prodotti nell'ambito della Commissione Europea da parlanti non nativi, e rivisti da editor madrelingua. L'analisi delle versioni revisionate, che sono confrontate sia con i testi di partenza che con testi inglesi "originali", rivela numerose strategie di implicitazione e di esplicitazione, una tendenza alla standardizzazione e alla semplificazione linguistica, nonché significativi fenomeni di interferenza.*

## **1. Introduction: edited non-native texts as mediated events**

The on-going spread of English as the language of international communication across Kachru's (1985) Expanding Circle societies has determined an unprecedented production of texts written in English by non-native speakers (NNSs) in various academic, professional and inter-governmental settings. This has fuelled the need for language support practices, such as editing and revision, by native speakers (NSs). In the EU institutions, for example, there is a growing demand for the editing of English texts written by NNSs and for the revision of translations produced out of the translator's mother tongue into English (Wagner 2005). This has opened up new niches for English mother-tongue editors, translators and revisers, but has also invested them with an unprecedented authority in the evolution of the English language. These language facilitators have indeed the power to either standardise the language used by NNSs to fit in with standard English norms or innovate the standard varieties of English by accepting, and thus authorising, the linguistic creativity of NNSs, who, having at least two language systems at their disposal, "have greater resources than the majority of NSs, and therefore a greater potential to innovate" (Jenkins 2005). The aim of this paper is to investigate the editing of non-native (NN) texts by native speakers, by focusing both on the changes that the editors make and the changes they do not make, thus letting NN traits infiltrate into the final drafts.

The investigation starts from a vision of editing as a form of communication which, constrained by a pre-existing text, on which it relies and which it has to amend and reword, is non-free, non-spontaneous and non-immediate. It is in fact a type of text production mediated by the intervention of an editor who, acting as a kind of literacy broker (Lillis, Curry 2006), helps an intended audience interact with an anterior text. Editing shares this mediated aspect with other practices of writing which recontextualise pre-existing discourses, both intralingually, such as the popularisation of specialised texts or criticism, and interlingually, such as the production of texts in a NN language or translation.

Among the practices of recontextualisation, or rewriting, as Lefevere (1992:9) called them with reference to literary texts, translation is "the most obviously recognizable" and "potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in

another culture". Besides, translation is the form of communication whose mediated dimension has been studied most extensively, mainly in the wake of Baker's (1993:243) intuition that exploiting the analytical tools of corpus linguistics could help elucidate "the nature of translated text as a mediated communicative event". Since then, parallel and comparable corpora have increasingly been used to test what are hypothesised to be typical characteristics of translated rather than original, non-mediated texts, most notably simplification, explicitation and normalisation. For these reasons, the present investigation into the editing of texts written by NNSs will be conducted from a translational perspective. More specifically the general patterns or regularities that have been found to be specific to translated texts, known in the literature as translation universals, will be tested on edited NN texts.

## **2. Backgrounds: the cognitive and socio-cultural basis of mediated discourse**

The hypothesis that "universal features of translation, that is features which typically occur in translated text rather than original utterances," (Baker 1993:243) might typically occur also in other mediated communicative events, such as edited texts, derives its plausibility from the types of explanation which have been put forward for the regular features of translational behaviour, and which may also be applicable to editorial behaviour. So far the regularities observed in translated texts have been accounted for on cognitive and socio-cultural grounds (Chesterman 2004; Malmkjær 2008; Pym 2005; Saldanha 2008).

Among the most noteworthy cognitive explanations are the following: Blum-Kulka (1986:19), who views explicitation as inherent in the process of translation by reason of the process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text; Olohan and Baker (2000) who, drawing on Rohdenburg's (1996) complexity principle,<sup>1</sup> suggest that certain explicating patterns may be explained in terms of the cognitive complexity involved in translation; and, more extensively, Halverson (2003), who argues that a number of the "translation universals" may be explained with reference to general characteristics of human cognition, more specifically the existence of asymmetries in the cognitive organisation of semantic information. She claims that the patterns of simplification and generalization can be accounted for by the highly salient structures of prototypes and high-level schemas, which exert a gravitational pull on translators, and determine an overrepresentation, in translated language, of the linguistic structures corresponding to particularly salient areas. And she predicts that other patterns, such as normalisation, may be accounted for by the same cognitive structures.

What is more interesting, however, in the context of the present discussion is that these cognitive explanations are not specific to translation alone. Blum-Kulka for example views explicitation as "a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation, as practised by language learners, non-professional translators and professional translators alike" (1986:21). In a similar vein, Halverson (2003:225) implies that "translation" universals are not particular to translation, but also apply to other typically metalinguistic activities, such as second language acquisition, which, like translation, "involves reflexive awareness of linguistic activity". Reporting the findings of several studies of Second Language Acquisition, she demonstrates that cognitive asymmetries produce effects in learner language similar to those observed in translational language. Further broadening the range of application of translation universals, Chesterman (2004: 11) points out that "constraints on cognitive processing in translation may also be present in other kinds of constrained communication, such as communicating in a non-native language or under special channel restrictions, or any form that involves relaying messages, such as reporting discourse, even journalism".

Other reasons invoked to explain translation universals are more socio-cultural in nature. For Chesterman (2004:11) the causes of universals are to be found not only in human cognition, but also in the translators' awareness of their "role as mediators of messages for new readers", which

would make them want to reduce entropy, increase orderliness and write clearly. Malmkjær (2008) claims that the majority of the candidates for the status of translational universals can be explained in terms of the socio-cultural norms that guide translational behaviour. In particular, drawing on the Greenberg tradition, she argues that they can be explained in terms of processing ease or diachronicity. Pym (2005; 2008) provides an explanation for the phenomena of explicitation, standardisation and interference within a risk-management framework. For him, translators tend to avoid the risks of non-cooperation in communication by using more explicit and standard language, and/or channelling interference “if and when there are no rewards for them to do otherwise” (Pym 2008:326). Since most of these socio-cultural explanations can be applied to any form of language mediation which involve socialisation processes, such as editing, language learning and communicating in a NN language, it seems legitimate to “hypothesise that the notion of translation universals may be usefully replaced by that of *mediation universals* which may be identified in various kinds of mediated discourse” (Ulrych, Murphy 2008:150).

### 3. Materials and methods

The hypothesis that the universal features of translation may also apply to edited texts was tested on EuroCom, a 1-million-word monolingual parallel corpus of documents produced within the European Commission, which comprises a variety of specialised text types, mainly, but not exclusively, legislative in nature, on such diverse subjects as administration, agriculture, environment, economic and financial affairs, statistics and trade. The corpus includes a subcorpus of texts written in English by speakers of various mother tongues (the NN subcorpus) and a subcorpus of the same texts revised by NSs of the Editing Unit of the Commission’s DGT (the RV subcorpus).<sup>2</sup> The two subcorpora were compared manually and by means of WordSmith Tools software (Scott 2006).

Following Chesterman’s (2004:39) apt distinction of the features that distinguish translations from non-translations in S-universals, which refer to “universal differences between translations and their source texts”, and T-universals, which refer to “universal differences between translations and comparable non-translated texts”, this investigation was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the edited and non-edited versions were compared to verify whether they display patterns similar to those found when translations are compared to their source texts. At this stage, the investigation focused on both the differences and the similarities between the edited texts and their originals. In accordance with the methodology proposed by Chesterman for translations, the study of the differences was concerned with the changes made by the editors. The editors’ revisions were therefore examined in order to highlight the shifts that occurred during the editing process, and see whether they showed patterns comparable to those observed in translations. Special attention was given to two of the most widely studied patterns of translations, the explicitation hypothesis (Blumkulka 1986) and the law of standardisation (Toury 1995), which Chesterman indicates as potential S-universals.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, the study of the similarities focused on the unnatural features that the editors did not “naturalise” presumably by reason of the influence of the NN source texts. Certain unnatural features were thus tracked in the edited texts and compared against the source texts to ascertain whether they were attributable to the law of interference, another potential S-universals in Chesterman’s (2004) list.

In the second stage, the edited texts were compared to texts written in English by native speakers to verify whether they displayed the same patterns that emerged from the comparison of translations with comparable non-translations originally written in English. For this purpose certain unnatural features identified in the edited texts were studied in WordBanks Online (2008), a general reference corpus of native English of about 553 million words. Particular emphasis was placed here on testing the simplification hypothesis, which is so far the most established T-type universal.

It should be pointed out, however, that in both stages the edited texts themselves were taken as the starting point of the investigation, in compliance with the target-oriented and retrospective approach of descriptive translation studies, which posit that the study of translation starts “with the *observables*, first and foremost, the translated utterances themselves [...] to end up reconstructing the *non-observables* at their root, particularly the exact processes whereby they came into being” (Toury 1995:145).

## 4. Findings

The findings resulting from the testing of the hypotheses above were divided into two sections, according to whether the edited texts were compared to their source texts, in which case the results obtained were classified under S-universals, or to texts originally written by native English writers, in which case they were called T-universals. The first section was further sub-divided into features of differences and similarities between the edited texts and their source texts.

### 4.1. S-universals of the edited texts

#### 4.1.1. Differences between edited and non-native texts

##### *Implicitation vs explicitation*

Explicitation is one of the most widely accepted hypotheses about translation universals, which has been studied at various levels of language – syntax, lexis and text, but also in culture-specific expressions (Mauranen 2008), in accordance with the broad definition of explicitation as “an overall tendency to spell things out rather than leave them implicit in translation” (Baker 1996:180). In the present investigation it was studied in its narrower interpretation, in line with Blum-Kulka’s (1986) explicitation hypothesis, and its wider reformulations by Séguinot (1988) and Klaudy and Károly (2005). The explicitation hypothesis

postulates an observed cohesive explicitness from SL to TL texts regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved. (Blum-Kulka 1986:19)

This hypothesis is explained in cognitive terms by Blum-Kulka, who views explicitation as an effect of the process of interpretation inherent in the act of translation, but also in the larger act of language mediation, as practised for example by language learners. This explanation was confirmed by the editors’ revisions, which, on the one hand, brought to light numerous cases of implicitation, on the part of the editors, of syntactic relations made explicit by the NN authors, who perform a type of language mediation which is similar in various aspects to language learning; on the other hand, they revealed a number of instances of explicitation of syntactic relations implicit in the source texts and whose explicitation is not required by English syntactic norms. The instances of implicitation observed include: the omission of optional syntactic elements, such as the relative pronouns *WH-/THAT* or the conjunctions *THAT, TO, SO AS / IN ORDER*, as illustrated in (1);<sup>4</sup> the deletion of discourse markers such as *INDEED, ALSO, BESIDES*, as in (2); the transformation of finite clauses into nonfinite, as in (3), where the relative clause is turned into a more compact nonfinite -*ed* participle clause; the reduction of clauses to phrases, as in (4), where a relative clause is replaced by an adjective phrase; and the transformation of two or several simple sentences into one complex sentence, as in (5):

(1) This is essential ~~in order~~ to achieve overall environmental effectiveness. (ENV 00001\_RV)<sup>5</sup>

(2) More specific eligibility criteria [...] are detailed in the respective Action Fiches. ~~Besides,~~ ~~o~~Other relevant and more specific eligibility criteria will be clearly stated (AIDCO 00025\_RV)

(3) Member States shall ensure that qualified entities within the meaning of Article 6 can bring an action for damages on behalf of injured parties ~~who suffered harm caused~~harmed by the same infringement of Article 81 (COMP 01154\_RV)

(4) This Communication includes a **pragmatic** Action Plan (COMM 00121\_RV)

This Communication includes an Action Plan, **which has a pragmatic approach.** (COMM 00121\_NN)

(5) **Although** Member States are [...] largely free to design their direct tax systems [...], **they have**, during the last decade, reached common agreement (TAXUD 01811\_RV)

Member States are [...] largely free to design their direct tax systems [...]. **But** during the last decade, they have reached common agreement (TAXUD 01811\_NN)

These implicating shifts reflect the attempt of the editors to counter the tendency of NNSs towards greater explicitation, which has been attested by corpus-based research into ELF (Seidlhofer 2004; Mauranen 2007). Interestingly, however, these forms of implicitation are counterbalanced by symmetrical forms of explicitation, revealing a similar propensity among the editors to resort to explicating strategies to make texts more explicit. Among the most recurrent forms of explicitation found are the inclusion of optional syntactic features, ranging from the conjunctions THAT after verbs such as DEMONSTRATE, SHOW, CONSIDER, as in (6), and TO after verbs like HELP, as in (7),<sup>6</sup> to the addition of the relative pronoun, as in (8):

(6) ECJ considers that there is no ground to apply particularly demanding requirements (COMP 02965\_RV)

(7) ODA is a key factor in helping developing countries to reduce poverty (DEV 05006\_RV)

(8) Proposals [...] demonstrate the value that the proposed Safer Internet Centre expects to add (INFSO 00039\_RV)

Another recurrent form of explicitation is the addition of conjunctions or sentence adverbs such as AND, THUS, CONSEQUENTLY, ACCORDINGLY, illustrated in (9):

(9) They shield participants from competition, thus allowing them to raise prices (COMP 02965\_RV)

Another highly-recurrent explicating shift is the expansion of phrases, especially noun phrases, into clauses, which, as shown in (10) entails the shift from nominal to verbal style, as recommended by the booklet *How to write clearly*, one of the reference works used by the DGT's editors.

(10) Member States shall check **that the beneficiaries comply** with the aqua-environmental commitments (SJ 10246\_RV)

Member States shall check **the compliance of the beneficiaries** with the aqua environmental commitments (SJ 10246\_NN)

The examples above clearly point to the conflicting tendency of the editors to make syntactic relations both more implicit and explicit. And whether, as seen above, the tendency towards greater implicitation may be due to the need to counter the extra redundancy of the NN authors, the tendency towards greater explicitation can be almost unequivocally read as an inherent aspect of the metalinguistic activity performed by the editors, and their greater focus on the language compared to original TL writers. Further evidence, however, is needed to exclude that certain implicating shifts may also be connected with the metalinguistic nature of editing.

### ***Standardisation***

According to Toury's (1995:268) law of growing standardisation

in translation, textual relations obtaining in the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored, in favor of [more] habitual options offered by a target repertoire.

Basically, this law, also known as the "conversion of textemes into repertoremes" (1995:267), states that in translation features that are specific to the original text (textemes) tend to be transformed into typical features of the repertoire of the TL (repertoremes).

Investigations of the editors' revisions provided evidence in support of this law. In fact, they showed that the editors tend to intervene in the source texts not only to standardise the language used by the NN authors to fit in with the norms of NSs of English – by normalising the deviant use of articles and prepositions or replacing false cognates – as it is expected from their role, but also to convert less common, although perfectly correct, lexical and grammatical patterns into more typical ones. For instance, an analysis of the revisions of word combinations revealed a tendency among the editors to replace certain collocations with more habitual ones, as shown in (11):

(11) INSPIRE has ~~stimulated~~ **the encouraged** further development of the infrastructure (ESTAT 141\_RV)

A study of the collocations ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT and STIMULATE DEVELOPMENT in WordBanks Online showed that DEVELOPMENT occurs as object of ENCOURAGE on 298 occasions and STIMULATE on 126, pointing to the propensity of the editors to modify collocational patterns that exist and are used by NSs in favour of more typical options.

Another finding that emerged from the analysis of the revisions, and which is consistent with the editors' tendency towards growing standardisation, is a systematic substitution of lexical items of Greco-Latin origin with their more frequent Anglo-Saxon counterparts, exemplified in (12), where EXPEDITE is changed into the more frequent SPEED UP:

(12) The Commission [...]will examine further ~~expediting~~ **of ways to speed up** aid delivery (DEV 05006\_RV)

The substitution of more formal lexical items derived from Latin or Greek with the more common Anglo-Saxon equivalents in highly specialised texts, such as a Communication from the Commission to The European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, from which example (12) is taken, characterised by a high degree of formality, confirms the tendency among the editors to opt for more conventional patterns of the TL rather than textual relations which may be more specific to the source text, and lends further support to the hypothesis of extending the law of standardisation to the process of editing. Moreover, as it has been suggested for similar patterns observed in translated language (Halverson 2003:218), the tendency of the editors to adopt more familiar lexical structures can be accounted for by the idea of the gravitational pull exerted by highly salient TL structures.

#### **4.1.2. Similarities between edited and non-native texts**

##### ***Interference***

The similarities between the edited texts and their source NN texts can be assumed to be evidence of interference, a phenomenon which has been partly neglected by research into translation regularities, also because of its exclusion from Baker's (1993:243) proposed translation universals, defined as features "which are not the result of interference from specific linguistic systems". Recently, however, it is attracting increasing attention also thanks to new hypotheses, such as Tirkkonen-Condit's (2004) Unique Items Hypothesis, which postulates that TL specific items tend to be underrepresented in translated texts, because source texts do not provide adequate input to

trigger them. As Laviosa (2008:232) observes, this hypothesis, as well as the ones put forward by Mauranen (2000), can be subsumed under Toury’s law of interference, which states that

in translation, phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text. (Toury 1995:275)

According to this law, translators tend to produce a translated utterance by retrieving the TL, not via their own linguistic knowledge, but directly from the source utterance. The transfer of source text features is thus seen as a universal tendency of translation, yet it can have either a *negative* manifestation, when it produces “deviations from normal, codified practices of the target system”, or a *positive* manifestation, when it results in “greater likelihood of selecting features which do exist and are used in any case” (Toury 1995:275). As Mauranen observes (2004), negative and positive transfer can be conceived as points on a cline, with the former representing gross deviations from the TL norm, and the latter being practically indistinguishable from original TL texts. Since this study is focused on the features that are specific to the edited production of NN writers and that distinguish it from the original production of English writers, the negative type of transfer was considered here.

In particular, the hypothesis of negative transfer was tested to see whether, and to what extent, features pertaining to NN texts and deviating from the English norm find their way unobserved in the final versions, in spite of the editors’ task to remove them. Two types of transfer can be distinguished in relation to the editing process: a *passive* form, which occurs when the editor, consciously or, more likely, unconsciously, tolerates deviant features of the NN text, without intervening and normalising them, and an *active* form, in which the editor uses linguistic features which are stimulated by the source text. The present research mainly focused on the first, and most likely, type, leaving the latter for future research.

In order to find potential candidates for interference, a number of unnatural features were first selected by reading the edited texts as final autonomous English texts, without looking, at this stage, at the editors’ revisions. A feature thus noticed was a frequent occurrence of linking words in initial sentence position to introduce a new topic, such as WITH REGARD TO, AS REGARDS, CONCERNING. The impression that these topic introducers were used more often in the edited EuroCom texts than in texts originally produced in English was confirmed by a comparison of their frequency in the RV subcorpus and WordBanks Online, which, as shown in Table 1, revealed a significantly higher proportion of topic introducers in the edited texts.

|                   | EuroCom RV | WordBanks Online |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| AS REGARDS        | 118        | 0.4              |
| WITH REGARD TO    | 45         | 0.6              |
| REGARDING         | 32         | 1.4              |
| CONCERNING        | 23         | 0.5              |
| AS TO             | 6          | 2.1              |
| IN RELATION TO    | 6          | 0.3              |
| WITH REFERENCE TO | 4          | 0.2              |

Table 1. Frequency per million words of topic introducers in sentence initial position in EuroCom RV and WordBanks Online

Besides, to make sure that the overuse of topic introducers in the edited texts was not attributable to the highly specialised typology of the texts included in EuroCom, nor to their specific topics, a smaller subcorpus of economic reports was extracted from EuroCom and compared to a subcorpus

of annual reports of British companies, taken from AnCoR, a corpus of annual company reports from twenty multinationals operating in different fields (Piotti 2009). Interestingly, a study of the frequency of the topic introducers listed above in these comparable subcorpora revealed an even greater overuse of these markers in the edited subcorpus of EuroCom, lending support to the hypothesis that such a high frequency, which differentiates the edited texts from texts originally written in English, can be assumed as evidence of interference from the NN source texts. This assumption is confirmed by a comparison of the use of these topic introducers in the RV and the NN subcorpora. As illustrated in Table 2, the overall number of topic introducers is almost the same in the RV as in the NN subcorpus, indicating that the editors tolerated the NNSs' overuse of these markers.

|                          | EuroCom RV | EuroCom NN |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| AS REGARDS               | 118        | 102        |
| WITH REGARD TO           | 48         | 39         |
| REGARDING                | 32         | 41         |
| CONCERNING               | 23         | 33         |
| AS TO                    | 6          | 17         |
| IN RELATION TO           | 6          | 6          |
| WITH REFERENCE TO        | 4          | 4          |
| <b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b> | <b>237</b> | <b>242</b> |

Table 2. Frequency per million words of topic introducers in sentence initial position in the RV and NN EuroCom subcorpora

The overrepresentation of topic introducers in the RV subcorpus can thus be explained by the influence of the source texts on the editors, who did not intervene to conform the NN texts to the frequency norms of English texts, limiting themselves instead to replace certain markers with others.

#### 4.2. T-universals of the edited texts

##### *Simplification*

The comparison of the edited versions of the NN texts with texts originally written in English was meant to verify the hypothesis of lexical simplification in translation, defined by Blum-Kulka and Levenston as “the process and/or result of making do with *less* words” (1983:119). This hypothesis was tested as a T-type universal by Laviosa (1998), who found that translated English displayed lower lexical density, a higher proportion of high-frequency words, greater repetition of the most frequent words and less variety in the lemmas most frequently used. These “core patterns of lexical use” are consistent with the hypothesis that

largely independent of the influence of the source language translators seem to restrict the range of words available to them and use a relatively higher proportion of high-frequency lexical items. (Laviosa 2008:226)

To test this hypothesis on the edited texts, certain high-frequency lexical items, which, as evidenced by the analysis of the revisions, were frequently inserted by the editors, were compared in the RV subcorpus and in WordBanks Online. The comparison revealed a greater use in the RV subcorpus of certain high-frequency items such as the verbs *HELP* and *NEED* than in the reference corpus. Besides, a comparison of the frequency of these verbs in EuroCom RV and NN confirmed that



these verbs are used less by the NN authors than the editors, who add 101 occurrences of HELP and 47 of NEED to replace a variety of options used by the NN writers, as shown in examples (13a), (13b) and (13c), for HELP, and (14a) and (14b) for NEED:

(13a)  
Promoting more equal sharing of family responsibilities [...] will **help** bridge the gender gap in employment rates (EMPL 01161\_RV)

Promoting more equal sharing of family responsibilities [...] will **contribute** to bridging the gender gap in employment rates (EMPL 01161\_NN)

(13b)  
The Steering Group will play a role in developing the four pillars identified above to **help** develop the EU strategy. (ENV 00119\_RV)

The Steering Group will play a role in developing the four pillars identified above in order to **facilitate** the ongoing development of the EU strategy (ENV 00119\_NN)

(13c)  
The EU should **help** interested developing countries gain experience in emissions trading (ENV 00001\_RV)

The EU should **assist** interested developing countries in gaining experience with emissions trading (ENV 00001\_NN)

(14a)  
To face the new challenges for the EC, a radical change **is needed** to existing State aid practices (COMP 00600\_RV)

To face the new challenges for the EC state aid policy **requires** a thorough modification of the existing state aid practices (COMP 00600\_NN)

(14b)  
To make the dramatic cuts in global emissions **needed**, it is likely that we will have to draw on the widest possible range of reduction options (ENV 00078\_RV)

The **necessary** deep cuts in global emissions will likely have to draw on the widest possible range of reduction options. (ENV 00078\_NN)

The examples above clearly point to the fact that the editors' preference for high-frequency words and their propensity to repeat them more often is not triggered by the source texts, which display, in these cases, greater lexical variety.

Following Mauranen's (2008) suggestion that word combinations should also be studied to capture the whole picture of lexical simplification, which cannot be captured by the study of word frequency counts alone, the simplification hypothesis was also tested on collocations. Certain high-frequency verb noun collocations which were found to occur frequently in the edited documents were studied in EuroCom RV and in WordBanks Online. The comparison brought to light certain high-frequency collocations which occur with a much higher frequency in the edited texts than in WordBanks Online, such as PLAY ROLE, with its 170 occurrences in EuroCom RV versus 37 occurrences per million word in WordBanks Online, and PAY ATTENTION, with 41 occurrences in EuroCom RV versus 20 occurrences in WordBanks Online. A study of these collocations in EuroCom NN, however, revealed that while PAY ATTENTION occurs with a higher frequency in the edited versions than in the non-edited (41 versus 31), PLAY ROLE occurs 2 times more in the non-edited texts, indicating that the greater repetition of this high-frequency collocation is a NN feature which is accepted by the editors. But, whatever the origin of lexical simplification, what is of interest in the present context is the attested tendency of the edited texts towards greater repetition than texts originally written in English.

## Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has shown that the language used, or accepted, by the editors of texts written in English by NN authors share a number of patterns in common with that of translators, some of which have also been observed in the language used by NNSs themselves and language learners. The study of the differences between the edited texts and their source texts has revealed that in many instances the edited texts, like translations, display a greater cohesive explicitness. It has, however, also brought to light numerous implicating shifts on the part of the editors, who try to counter the explicitating tendency of NN authors. These conflicting patterns suggest that explicitation is a by-product of the metalingual activity performed by both the editors and the NN writers in English, thus confirming its status as an inherent process of language mediation. Besides, the comparison of the edited texts with their source texts has shown that, like translators, the editors tend to normalise the language of the source texts by opting consciously or, more likely, unconsciously for more standard formulations.

On the other hand, the study of the similarities between the edited texts and their source texts has uncovered instances in which the editors tend to tolerate non-standard or non-native-like uses of certain discourse features, suggesting that their activity is influenced by the source texts they edit. What Mauranen says in relation to the translation process, which “as a bilingual processing situation, interferes with or upsets the spontaneous, or ‘ideally monolingual’ processing of a native speaker” (2008:44) can thus also be referred to the process of editing NN texts.

Finally the study of the differences between the edited documents and texts originally written in English has confirmed the hypothesis that the edited texts, like translated texts, tend to use a simpler vocabulary. And while certain patterns of lexical simplification can be ascribed to the interference from the NN texts, which display a similar tendency towards lexical simplification, the reasons for other simplifying patterns can only be sought in the cognitive processing underlying editing and in its socialising function.

## References

- Anselmi S., forthcoming, “Translational perspectives on non-native and edited English: a corpus-based analysis of mediated discourse”, in S. Nuccorini, G. Di Martino, L. Lombardo (eds), *Challenges for the 21st Century: Dilemmas, Ambiguities, Directions*. Proceedings of the XXIV Conference of the Associazione Italiana di Anglistica, 1-3 October, 2009, Rome.
- Baker M., 1993, “Corpus linguistics and translation studies. Implications and applications”, in M. Baker, G. Francis, E. Tognini Bonelli (eds), *Text and Technology*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 233-250.
- Baker M., 1996, “Corpus-based Translation Studies: The Challenges that Lie Ahead”, in H. Somers (ed.), *Terminology, LSP and Translation*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 175–186.
- Blum-Kulka S., 1986, “Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation”, in J. House, S. Blum-Kulka (eds), *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication*, Gunter Narr, Tübingen, pp. 17-35.
- Blum-Kulka S., Levenston E. A., 1983, “Universals of lexical simplification”, in C. Faerch, G. Casper (eds), *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*, Longman, London/New York, pp. 119-39.
- Chesterman A., 2004, “Hypotheses about translation universals”, in G. Hansen, K. Malmkjær, D. Gile (eds), *Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 1-14.
- Collins Wordbanks Online*, 2008, Harper Collins Publishers, <http://wordbanks.harpercollins.co.uk>.
- Halverson S., 2003, “The cognitive basis of translation universals”, *Target*, 15, 2, pp. 197-241.
- Jenkins J., 2005, “ELF at the gate: the position of English as lingua franca”, *Humanising Language Teaching*, 7, 2, <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/mar05/idea.htm>, retrieved February 3, 2010.

- Kachru B., 1985, "Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the Outer Circle", in R. Quirk, R.G. Widdowson (eds), *English in the World: Teaching and learning the language and the literatures*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 11–30.
- Klaudy K., Károly K., 2005, "Implication in Translation. Empirical Evidence for Operational Asymmetry in Translation", *Across Languages and Cultures*, 6, 1, pp. 13-28.
- Laviosa S., 1998, "Core patterns of lexical use in a comparable corpus of English narrative prose", in S. Laviosa (ed.), *L'approche basée sur le corpus/The Corpus-based Approach*, Special Issue of *Meta*, 43, 4, pp. 557-570.
- Laviosa S., 2008, "Corpus studies of translation universals: a critical appraisal", in A. Martelli, V. Pulcini (eds), *Investigating English with Corpora*, Polimetrica, Monza, pp. 223-238.
- Lefevere A., 1992, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Routledge, London/New York.
- Lillis T., Curry M. J., 2006, "Professional Academic Writing by Multilingual Scholars", *Written Communication*, 23, 1, pp. 3-35.
- Malmkjær K., 2008, "Norms and Nature in Translation Studies", in G. Anderman, M. Rogers (eds), *Incorporating Corpora*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 49-59.
- Mauranen A., 2000, "Strange strings in translated language. A study on corpora", in M. Olohan (ed.), *Intercultural Faultlines. Research Models in Translation Studies 1: Textual and Cognitive Aspects*, St Jerome, Manchester, pp. 119-141.
- Mauranen A., 2004, "Corpora, Universals and interference", in A. Mauranen, P. Kujamäki (eds), *Translation Universals. Do they Exist?*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 65-82.
- Mauranen A., 2007, "Hybrid voices: English as the Lingua Franca of academics", in K. Flottum, T. Dahl, T. Kinn (eds), *Language and Discipline Perspectives on Academic Discourse*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Cambridge, pp. 244-259.
- Mauranen A., 2008, "Universal Tendencies in Translation", in G. Anderman, M. Rogers (eds), *Incorporating Corpora*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 32-48.
- Murphy A., 2008, *Editing Specialized Texts in English*, LED, Milano.
- Olohan M., Baker M., 2000, "Reporting *that* in translated English: evidence for subconscious processes of explicitation?", *Across Languages and Cultures*, 1, 2, pp. 141-158.
- Piotti S., 2009, *Exploring Corporate Rhetoric in English: Hedging in Company Annual Reports*, EduCatt, Milano.
- Pym A., 2005, "Explaining Explicitation", in K. Károly, A. Fóris (eds), *New trends in translation studies*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, pp. 29-34.
- Pym A., 2008, "On Toury's laws of how translators translate", in A. Pym, M Shlesinger, D. Simeoni (eds), *Beyond Descriptive Translation Studies*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 311–328.
- Rohdenburg G., 1996, "Cognitive Complexity and Increased Grammatical Explicitness in English", *Cognitive Linguistics*, 7, 2, pp. 149-182.
- Saldanha G., 2008, "Explicitation Revisited: Bringing the Reader into the Picture", *trans-kom*, 1, 1, pp. 20-35.
- Scott M., 2006, *Wordsmith Tools 4*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Séguinot C., 1988, "Pragmatics and the Explicitation Hypothesis", *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 1, 2, pp. 106-114.
- Seidlhofer B., 2004, "Research perspectives on teaching English as a lingua franca", *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, pp. 209-239.
- Tirkkonen-Condit S., 2004, "Unique items – Over- or under-represented in translated language?", in A. Mauranen, P. Kujamäki (eds), *Translation Universals. Do they Exist?*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 177-184.
- Toury G., 1995, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Benjamins, Amsterdam.
- Ulrych M., Murphy A., 2008, "Descriptive Translation Studies and the Use of Corpora: Investigating Mediation Universals", in C. Taylor Torsello (ed.), *Corpora for University Language Teachers*, Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 141-166.

Wagner E., 2005, "Translation and/or Editing – The Way Forward?", in G. Anderman, M. Rogers (eds), *In and Out of English: For Better, For Worse?*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 214-226.

---

<sup>1</sup> The complexity principle states that "in the case of more or less explicit grammatical options the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favored in cognitively more complex environments" (Rohdenburg 1996:151).

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed description of the corpus, see Murphy 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Both these hypotheses, however, have also been studied as T-type universals. Toury's law of growing standardization is indeed associated with Baker's conventionalisation, or normalisation, which is defined in relation to authentic texts in the TL, most obviously when it hypothesises a tendency among the translators to exaggerate typical patterns and practices of the TL. Likewise, the explicitation hypothesis has also been tested comparing translations with authentic texts written in the TL (Olohan, Baker 2000).

<sup>4</sup> A quantitative analysis of the occurrence of IN ORDER TO in EuroCom is given by Murphy (2008).

<sup>5</sup> In the case of minor changes between the NN and RV versions of a text, the RV version is cited, with the revision and tracking functions activated; conversely, in the case of more substantial changes, the RV and NN versions are juxtaposed.

<sup>6</sup> For a quantitative analysis of the use of the complementiser TO after HELP in EuroCom, see Anselmi (forthcoming).

10/09/2010, version 2.

Simona Anselmi, via Fulgosio, 23 - 29100 Piacenza  
simona.anselmi@unicatt.it