INTRODUCTION: UPDATING DISCOURSE/S ON METHOD/S

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The focus on the need to define the method of "rightly conducting one's reason, and seeking truth in the sciences" (in René Descartes' superb 1637 formulation) (Descartes 1965) has repeatedly been foregrounded during the evolution of English Studies, particularly in Italy. The broad domain of English Studies can encompass a wide variety of fields, including applied/applicable socio-linguistics, cultural studies, literature/s in the English language/s, film, gender, the history of the English language/s, humour, media, terminology and lexicography, theatre, translation, interpreting and language teaching. This rich panorama entails variations in methodological approaches that are also made necessary by the contemporary poly-cross-media environment(s), with its multifaceted, ever-emerging, technologically driven communicative resources.

Accordingly, the purpose of this special issue is to reconsider a number of methods and approaches with their theoretical grounding, functioning, socio-political implications and potential for cross-fertilization of ideas.

The contributions explore key contemporary concerns in the domain of research and language teaching and have been grouped into two main sections, discourse analysis and translation studies, the latter of which also features a study dedicated to the impact of blended (or entirely computer-based) teaching models and social media applications on English Language Teaching.

1. Discourse Analysis

Reconsidering the domain of discourse analysis in the contemporary mediascape, where communication synergically unfolds through many modes (visual, verbal, iconic, acoustic, haptic) and channels, ranging from more traditional media to more recent ones (e.g., Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, TikTok), where the boundary between medium and channel is not always clear-cut, can be a challenging task.

As the selection of studies included in this volume confirms, discourse analysis has increasingly become multimodal (MDA) – the verbal level being only one among multiple available semiotic codes. Accordingly, it can be profitable to use a multi-layered methodological approach to the texts under analysis that can encompass both the verbal and other levels.

In this light, the paper **The Need for Integrated Methodology – The National Museum of African American History and Culture**, by Lucia Abbamonte and Raffaella Antinucci, aims to show how, when dealing with semiotically complex topics of investigation such as museums, the need for an integrated analytical approach that enables the researcher to study the relationship between their different components and their social significance arises. This investigation required both the resources of MDA and the fine-grained tools of the Appraisal Framework for the verbal components, together with insights from museum studies, to effectively show how the multidimensional communicative domains of the NMAAHC succeeded in rescuing generations of African Americans from obscurity and demonstrating both their resourcefulness in the dire condition of slavery as well as their contributions to American progress in many fields.

How Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) shares concerns with ecolinguistics is shown in the study by Douglas Ponton, **Ecolinguistics and Positive Discourse Analysis: Ecological Farming and Mediating Nature**, which explores an eco-friendly farm in Norfolk, focusing on the long-running BBC programme 'The Countryside Hour'. Both ecolinguistics and PDA, as relatively new disciplines, stand in some need of definition, especially regarding their relationship with the more consolidated paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which, in turn, is itself not characterized by a general agreement on methodological matters (see Martin 2004; Flowerdew 2008; Stibbe 2017).

Ponton's study applies some of the notions found in the theoretical background and practical toolkit of CDA, such as framing, presupposition, metaphor analysis, pragmatics and relevance theory, and explores their functioning as heuristic methods in data that is regarded as ecologically 'positive'. Unlike traditional critical studies of harmful environmental practices, which position a social actor as occupying a negative position, exposing deviant discursive practices (Vasta 2005), the starting point of PDA is discourse that concords with current mediated notions of environmental sustainability. The aim is not simply to give such contexts, and such discourse, publicity, nor is it to seek solace in "discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens, discourse we like, that cheers us along" (Martin 1999: 51–52). Rather, it is to shed light on underlying processes at the level of *ideologies* (in the sense of Fairclough 2003: 9) and to make manifest thoughts, feelings and discourses that are felt to be 'positive' in a mirror image of what occurs in CDA studies.

In a similar vein, in Lucia Abbamonte's contribution, **Critical Discourse Analysis and Positive Discourse Analysis: Commonalities and Differences**, an integrated new perspective on the relationship between more traditional analytical methods and the more recent PDA approach is proposed. Indeed, CDA typically attempts to unveil the uses of language and semiosis in the service of power and is best known for its focus on ideologically driven discrimination.

Overall, CDA has not offered productive accounts of alternative forms of social organization, nor of social subjects, other than by implication.

A different orientation is provided both by Kress (2000) and by Martin (2004). Martin's perspective on language and semiosis aims "to make the world a better place – which I refer to as Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA), [… and] is oriented not so much to deconstruction as to constructive social action" (2004: 180–181). Other instantiations of PDA can be found in both Macgilchrist (2007), who investigated strategies for propelling marginal discourses into the mainstream news media, and Bartlett (2012), who considered the potential of linguistic and discourse analysis for facilitating positive intervention in social issues. Central notions in Bartlett's vision, as well as in Rogers' (2017), are to give voice and access to dominant discourses to less privileged, racialized social groups and then to re-shape such discourses.

Largely, Abbamonte highlights how the major difference between CDA and PDA is found in topic selection: in CDA's selection of only discriminatory discourses to be deconstructed, there is no scope for positive critical thinking, whereas, from a PDA orientation, new transformative meanings can emerge.

The possible role of Cognitive Linguistics (Wittgenstein 1958; Rosch 1978; Lakoff 1987; Taylor 1995; Ran and Duimering 1997) is investigated in Stefania D'Avanzo's paper, **The Role of Cognitive Linguistics in Corporate Narrative Research: A Methodological Perspective**, the focus of which is on its applicability to business communication and corporate narrative/storytelling research. In this study, corporate identity claims are related to linguistic language positioning – *positive*, *negative* and *neutral positioning* along with *movement* and *interaction* processes (Glaser and Strauss 1968; Ran and Duimering 2007) since cognitive categorization can help to better understand promotional attitudes and corporate identities.

Corporate storytelling has previously mainly been explored from the perspective of both marketing studies and corporate communication, with a focus on the role played by narratives in building corporate identity. The novelty of D'Avanzo's study consists in addressing the issues related to the mental categorization involved in corporate identity narratives, which are developed through storytelling strategies.

An example of the cross-contamination of methods and theories apparently as diverse as Queer Linguistics, Critical Discourse and Corpus-based Studies unfolds in Serena Santonocito's **Queer Affordances in the Discursive Analysis of Collective (Mis)Representations.** While considering the much-criticized incorporation of Queer Theory (QT) into linguistics (Wiegman 2012), the study constitutes a further attempt to question QT's negative reputation as anti-identarian nihilism and anti-speciesism. Such criticisms are mitigated in the light of poststructuralist "plurality, multivocality and non-fixity of all meanings" (Baxter 2003: 6), with a focus on the socio-cultural and political structures stabilizing and simultaneously challenging the orders of discourse (Foucault 1980). Hence, QT and its linguistic affordances can function as antiparadigms for uncovering dominant discourses shaping collective meaning-making and (mis)understandings.

The applicability of MDA and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) studies to gender bias is explored in Annarita Taronna and Laura Centonze's **Multimodal Analysis for Gender-Biased Representations: The Case of Italian and British TV Advertisements.** In this study, semantic asymmetries and discriminating gender identities are investigated in the light of the most influential contributions to the study of language and gender (Lakoff 1975; Goffman 1979; Cameron 1995; Christie 2000; Lazar 2005; Jeffries 2007; Baker 2008; Mills 2008; Machin, Caldas-Coulthard and Milani 2016). In particular, the comparison between advertising messages disseminated in regional, national and international territories allowed the researchers to define the extent to which the presence of gender stereotypes and the sexualization of the female body are occurring in regional and national advertising in some European countries. Reference is thus made to English advertisements in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries. The results of interlinguistic and comparative research have highlighted useful data for the definition of pragma-linguistic patterns characterizing ELF in advertising.

2. Translation Studies

Within the plurality of existing approaches and perspectives, contributions to this section are mainly devoted to reflections on Translation Studies, whose growth has been described as "a success story of the 1980s" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1992: xi).

The most important achievements in Translation Studies took place with the (ongoing) shift from translation 'theory' to translation 'science' during the second half of the 20th century, when an ever-growing community of translation scholars and an increasing number of congresses and publications gradually led to the institutionalization of Translation Studies as a relatively autonomous scientific discipline at a university level.

Ever since its onset, Translation Studies has used a number of concepts that appeared in previous epochs, variously approached on the basis of "the dominant philosophy of the time and/or underlying conceptions of the nature of translation and how the translated text will be used" (Schaeffner 2001: 5). Furthermore, both the practice and theory of translation have generally been aligned with various disciplines, straddling a range of fields, including literature, rhetoric, grammar, poetics, hermeneutics, linguistics, comparative literature and anthropology, as well as (apparently) less related ones such as mathematics, functionalism, cultural studies and cognitive theory. These various connections, which arise from the complex nature of the translation process, are usually viewed as a result of the historical acknowledgement of translation as a utilitarian tool serving a range of purposes, from interpreting biblical texts and disseminating religion to learning foreign languages and practising grammar. In the first half of the 20th century, for instance, literary critics mostly regarded translation as a useful device to both interpret (older) texts and shed light on dubious, corrupt passages through the comparison of different translations.

Accordingly, theoretical considerations on translation were initially dominated by philology, then by the philosophy of language. In the 1930s, however, the extension of international cooperation in scientific, technical, military and diplomatic fields required that attention be given to problems of specialized, non-literary translation. In response to various influences and morphological and syntactical problems coming from outer stimuli (including machine translation), "a more systematic approach to translation was needed, and the discipline with the theoretical and language tools necessary to address the problem was first provided by linguistics" (Gentzler 2001: 67). Despite this 'golden age' of the linguistic approach to translation (Fawcett 1997), linguistic investigation proved inadequate to offer satisfactory answers, as Vermeer says:

> Linguistics alone won't help us. First, because translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process. Secondly, because linguistics has not yet formulated the right questions to tackle our problems. So, let's look somewhere else. (Vermeer 1987: 28)

Semantic issues, in particular, required the linguistic approach to be backed up by extralinguistic information, and the work of the Polysystem group, inspired by Itamar Even-Zohar (1978), Gideon Toury (1978) and James Holmes (1978), investigated the role played by translated literature in the wider social system of culture and set forth the need to broaden the object of study beyond the immediate frame. Bassnett defined this as "A shift from a more formalist approach to translation to one that laid greater emphasis on extra-textual factors" (2007: 13), thus signalling the 'cultural turn' in translation, where the cultural aspect of translation became predominant and "the object of study has been redefined; what is studied is text embedded within its network of both source and target cultural signs" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 11–12). Extensive literature has been devoted to the investigation of various aspects of cultural manifestation: differences between cultures apparent in various types of translation and the mutual influence of culture on translation and translation on culture (among many, see; Nida 1993, 1996; Toury 1995; Bassnett and Lefevere 1998; Gentzler 2001; Bassnett 2005; Hatim and Mason 2005; Katan 2008; Cranmer 2015). More recent approaches in translation studies include the so-called 'anthropocentric turn' (Dürbeck and Hüpkes 2020) and eco-translation, which refers to

> all forms of translation thinking and practice that knowingly engage with the challenges of human-induced environmental change. […] Food security, climate justice, biodiversity loss, water depletion, energy security, linguicide, eco-migration, resource conflicts, global monocultures, are only some of the issues that will be at the heart of environmental debates in the twenty-first century and that will need to be addressed by scholars and practitioners of translation alike. (Cronin 2017: 2–3)

The ever-increasing exploitation of technology in the translation process and the use of translation in creating such products as computer games, mobile

applications, website interfaces, etc. have also resulted in the emergence of new paradigms in translation theory (Gambier 2008, 2016).

> [N]ew translation technologies such as translation memories, data-based machine translation, and collaborative translation management systems, far from being merely added tools, are altering the very nature of the translator's cognitive activity, and professional standing. (Pym 2011: 1)

Translation Studies is thus an interdisciplinary, still evolving science which is made even more intricate owing to the nature of the translation activity as a whole and to differences among different types of translation: "The development of Translation Studies must be viewed as spiral movement: at each new cycle translation scholars embrace new aspects of eternal problems, their approaches to solving translation problems change, they approach the problems with a fresh perspective" (Sdobnikov 2019: 299)

Space constraints prevent a fully-fledged, interpretative account of the state of the art and an address of the manifold issues that may be of interest to translation scholars. Nonetheless, the articles in this section aim to sketch an overview of some of the most recent and meaningful approaches to translation and discuss issues and new trends in translation related to and/or generated by the wide use of information technologies and their role in diversifying Translation Studies. The case studies/examples investigated in this section also attempt to deal with some of the questions regarding the inclusion of an empirical approach in Translation Studies and provide a way of validating theoretical hypotheses. In this perspective, modern Translation Studies can also serve as a basis for developing the didactics of translation, an increasingly felt need. In particular, "the audiovisualisation trend must also be felt in the translation profession and academia, to the extent that we could also talk of a process of audiovisualisation in translation" (Díaz Cintas 2013: 119).

Within this perspective, the study by Flavia Cavaliere, **Coping with Untranslatability in AVT**, investigates the complexity and difficulties of the audiovisual translation (AVT) process, which are particularly relevant as "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (Nida 1964: 157). Cavaliere's article presents a detailed examination of translation problems posed by linguistic and speech units with a cultural component (i.e., realia such as objects, customs, habits and other cultural and material aspects that have an impact on shaping a certain language such as puns, idioms, metaphors, etc.) arising in particular when translating and adapting a text for the screen. The author analyzes qualitative examples, chosen on the basis of their untranslatability, of English audio scripts of well-known films/TV series and their subtitled/dubbed Italian version and illustrates how untranslatability in AVT may variously result from differences between the linguistic structures, socio-cultural motivations and "genre expectations/constraints" of the medium (Cavaliere 2019: 11). The problems inherent in all translations are in fact at their most evident in AVT because the obstacles posed by the issue of 'unshared knowledge' between SL and TL audiences are made even more challenging by

technical restrictions. The in-built time and space limits imposed by subtitling necessarily require a "constrained translation" (Titford 1982). Both prevent the provision of a "thick translation" (Appiah 1993: 399) and impede the audience from back-tracking in the text in order to retrieve meaning.

Nonetheless, despite some untranslatability issues, the translation process remains vital to inform readers about a foreign culture (Levý 2011: 96). Cavaliere's study thus highlights how a renewed emphasis on connections among translation, linguistics, philology, philosophy and socio-cultural issues may offer students stimulating (cross)curricular initiatives, especially at advanced undergraduate and graduate levels, by means of striking easy-to-grasp examples in AVT. Indeed, "Audiovisual exchanges are appealing because they communicate complex messages in a ludic and entertaining way. It is the composite, semiotic, audio and visual nature of the material that gives it the edge over simply written communication [...] where sounds and visuals coalesce in a winning combination over other formats, particularly among younger generations" (Díaz-Cintas 2013: 119).

The crucial role of a technology-enhanced learning environment is addressed in Marco Canani and Tania Zulli's **ELT and Social Media: Integrating TikTok into Class Practice**. Their timely study regards research connectedness and L2 teaching/learning and, in particular, the impact of social media applications on English Language Teaching and their inclusion in classroom practice. This survey-based pilot study conducted among 110 students at the "Gabriele d'Annunzio" University in Chieti aimed to investigate the learning strategies offered by TikTok accounts, such as those of the Italian TikTokers Davide Patron and Norma Cerletti, who share videos on English language, pronunciation, vocabulary and idioms that can also be exploited to target L1 interference on L2 pronunciation. Thanks to the short duration of these videos and their conflation of sound, text, gesture and body language, a variety of learning/teaching techniques can be employed, which are investigated both from a linguistic and a metacognitive perspective. Given the students' perceptions of the usefulness of these profiles, the authors foreground the multiple advantages of using self-study paths and the value of such videos as an innovative and appealing alternative to the audiovisual materials traditionally employed in Presentation-Practice-Production coursebooks and classes.

An example of the cross-fertilization of approaches can be found in Laura Diamanti's **Eco-translation: Raising Ecolinguistic Awareness in Translation,** where the translation process is reconsidered from the perspective of ecolinguistics. In this interpretive analysis, the author takes her trajectory from Arran Stibbe's influential studies on ecolinguistics, which combine epistemological knowledge and ethical tenets concerning the relation between human beings and other species living on Earth (2014: 119–121), wherein language assumes a crucial role in how it affects and effects this interrelationship (Stibbe and Alexander 2014: 104). Diamanti accounts for both Philippe Lynes' claims that eco-translation studies and the field of ecolinguistics are related and Lynes' Ecosystemic Translation theory (2012), which involves "the ecology of translation" in the analysis of languages in their historical and social background. Lynes also investigates "the translation of ecology" in the linguistic patterns

translated from an ecological perspective, which supports the foreignization of the source text and contrasts its domestication when translated into the dominant language as being entirely oriented to the receiving culture (Lynes 2012: 5–6). Attention is also paid to Peter Mühlhäusler's ecological theory of language maintenance, upholding a composite and interconnected system of languages. In this sense, the relation between languages preserving their ecological and cultural diversity is functional to their effective coexistence (Mühlhäusler 1996: 322–323). Correspondingly, Michael Cronin's view of translation is considered as an 'interdiscipline' operating "as craft" that resists a conventional approach of domestication and protects the identity of languages, becoming a further means to preserve their subsistence (2017: 134). In light of these views, Diamanti advocates an ecological interpretation based on cognitive and ethical assumptions in the process of translation to retain the cultural value of the source-text language by avoiding the assimilation of its metonymic structures into the target-text language.

An innovative integrated methodological approach is utilized in Dora Renna's **Methodological Challenges in Audiovisual Translation: Experimenting New Software for Multimodal Corpus-based Analysis.** AVT translation has long struggled to strike a balance between corpus-based analysis of large amounts of text and the need to systematically integrate multimodality within its research scope in order to fully acknowledge the complex nature of the audiovisual product (Gambier 2006; Chiaro 2008). Delivering results able to combine these two aspects has proven to be a particularly challenging task (Ramos Pinto and Mubaraki 2020). Renna reports on the ongoing experimentation at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, with the collaboration of the University of Mannheim, that utilizes existing software for AVT. The main aim is to ensure that this software is able to support the researcher in transcribing, tagging, adding metadata, and managing and querying text, audio and video files. The software has been used for single-language and multi-language corpora and has proven its efficacy in fields such as pragmatics, bilingualism and interpreting, whose corpora share some requirements with AVT. However, this tool has not yet been used for parallel aligned audiovisual text. The researcher shows the potential and limits of the tool in the field of Translation Studies and AVT and discusses the results of the experiment, which requires linguistic variation and multimodality to be taken into consideration simultaneously.

Finally, Luisa Marino's contribution, **Stylistic Approaches to Translation: An Overview**, proposes a reassessment of stylistics in the context of Translation Studies. At first sight, Stylistics has played a relatively small role in translation theory (Boase-Beier 2006, 2011). However, the study of style is one of the main linguistic tools that scholars of Translation Studies employ to understand "textual-conceptual functions" (Jeffries 2014), recognize them in translation, and investigate how linguistic resources are used to produce meanings and how these meanings are recontextualized through translation. From this viewpoint, Marino's paper outlines an overview of stylistic approaches to translation, both exploring the origins of the interaction between Stylistics and Translation Studies and looking at its current developments. Narrowing the focus to the application

of the stylistic framework to literary translation, the study highlights the need to reach a greater synergy between Stylistics and Translation Studies, whereby the latter is seen as both a theoretical discipline and a professional practice. The study also provides an example of how applying a stylistic framework to literary translation can help bring to light the social and political implications that are sometimes concealed or disguised in the creation of a fictional world.

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