



*“The church was built on a basilica plan.”
Translating and mistranslating
Italian churches’ panels*

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ABSTRACT: Because of its very nature, the tourism experience involves contact with different contexts and cultures, which, once the destination has been reached, may pose cultural and communicative problems because the tourist has to rely on what can be found *in situ*. In this context, the quantity, and especially the quality, of the information offered can influence the tourist’s enjoyment of the whole experience. This calls for the presence, at an attraction site, of translations of informative texts, whose quality is regarded as an indication of the attention and care taken by the destination for the satisfaction of visitors’ needs.

Drawing on relevant scholars (Duran Muñoz; Sumberg; Cappelli “Translation”; Tognini and Manca) working in this context, this paper will investigate how texts provided as panels for visitors have been translated from Italian into English. Attention will be paid to panels found in a few Italian churches (in Milan), since, to the best of our knowledge, little if any research has been done on this topic. The focus of this investigation will be on the main linguistic features characterizing Italian texts and their English translations found on panels, including an analysis of lexical and syntactic elements employed by the authors to express the informative content of texts. Possible mistakes and inaccuracies in the translating process will be presented and explanations will be provided concerning how target language rules and conventions have been violated during the translation process. In addition, a series of possible solutions to improve the quality of this kind of specialized translation will be proposed, in order to suggest best practices.

KEY WORDS: translation studies; mistranslation; tourism discourse; corpora

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the development of international tourism, together with market globalization and the spread of electronic media, has revealed how language and communication are still at the core of any human activity. In particular, the success of the tourism industry is rooted in the continuous production and exchange of information between the different actors involved in this sector. Most of this constant flux of information is obviously directed towards the tourist, with promotional, commercial and informative content helping them navigate multiple, and often unknown (international), realities. The traveller's reliance on external actors for the provision of all those tools necessary for the understanding and interpretation of what they are experiencing increases considerably. Before departure, potential tourists have at their immediate disposal a large selection of sources that can satiate their need for information. Conversely, once tourists have reached their destination, this variety of choices may decrease considerably and tourists often have to rely on what can be found *in situ*. In this context, the quantity, and especially the quality, of the information offered can influence the tourists' enjoyment of the whole experience. For this reason, tourist destinations should take particular care when creating informative content, as the information needs to be not only as accurate and exhaustive as possible, but should also satisfy the linguistic and cultural requirements of visitors. The production of informative content in a language accessible to tourists has thus become one of the many services offered by destinations in order to satisfy customers' needs and be successful in the tourism industry. In this context, the translation of tourist texts has started to attract an increasing level of attention not only from the tourism industry, but also from scholars and theorists of an academic discipline that, until recently, had completely overlooked the potential of tourism translations as an object of analysis.

Translation can be seen as the reworking of a text written in one language into another so as to make available to a new audience something they would not otherwise be able to access (Liddicoat). Throughout history, discussions centred on the theories and methods of translation have developed alongside the study of language and communicative practices. Yet the study of translation as an academic subject did not start until the beginning of the twentieth century (Munday). This was due to the fact that it had long been considered merely an appendage to other academic fields, especially literature and the study of religious texts, and not an independent domain (Harris "Origins") until the second half of the twentieth century. For this reason, no acceptable and universally recognized term for this discipline existed. The term *translatology* (Harris "Traductologie"), which tried to fill this lexical gap, was soon eclipsed by *translation studies*, which became the accepted name for this discipline in the English-speaking world (Munday). Despite the establishment of translation studies as an autonomous area of research, studies on the application of translation processes to the tourist field only started to emerge in recent years. One of the main reasons underlying this oversight is the fact that study of the tourism phenomenon is relatively recent itself: the first studies started to appear towards the end of the twentieth century and mainly focused on five academic disciplines: economics, sociology, psychology,



geography and anthropology (Echtner and Jamal). It is only when tourism started to be recognized as a field in which the study of communication and language could contribute to the understanding and analysis of this phenomenon that the first works based on a linguistic approach started to appear. Dann's analysis on the language of tourism from a sociolinguistic perspective proved significant in the development of new methods of research and study. Once the language employed in the tourism industry started to be recognized as an independent system with linguistic and rhetorical features of its own, scholars began to analyse its different applications. The provision of promotional, commercial and informative content to tourists in more than one language is just one of them.

The translation of tourist texts is only one among several services that destinations prepare and provide as part of the unique experience offered to visitors. The presence, especially at an attraction site, of high-quality translations of informative and interpretive content is regarded as an indication of the attention and care taken by the destination for the satisfaction of visitors' needs. However, not all translated texts found at attraction sites adhere to and satisfy the parameters required for a good translation. Duran Muñoz points out that mistakes, mistranslations and the presence of inaccurate information can be easily detected during the analysis of tourist texts found at tourist sites.

Despite the proliferation of studies in the field of tourism, translation studies in relation to tourist texts did not become a subject of analysis until recent years, as claimed by Magris. For instance, Kristensen (193) laments the fact that "as a text type in its own right, tourist brochures constitute a somewhat neglected genre within 'serious' Translation Studies."

Nevertheless, research about translation studies related to tourism in a cross-cultural perspective have always been very active in Italy, in the last decade, as can be seen by investigations carried out by, for instance, Manca (*Translation*, "Immerse," "Translating"); Tognini and Manca; Denti; Palusci and Francesconi, Cappelli ("Translation," "Travelling," "Perfect Tuscan experience"); Maci; Manca and Bianchi. Magris attributes this increase in studies to the growing importance of the tourist sector within the global economy, together with the effects of globalization on tourists' behaviour. Moreover, the change of direction in translation studies encouraged by the work of Bassnett and Lefevere, with a new focus on the relation between translation processes and cultural aspects, led to a change of perspective in the analysis of tourist translation: Magris points out that a traditional linguistic analysis of a tourism translation could be improved by taking into consideration the differences between the cultures involved, and by identifying the most appropriate translation strategies to bridge that gap. In addition, Sumberg (332) underlines the fact that "a tourism text cannot be approached without an understanding of cultural differences and the difficulties these can create." The strict relationship between culture and language in tourism texts has also been evidenced by Manca ("Language," "Beauty," "From," "Aspetti," "Analysis," *Persuasion*, "Verbal techniques") who has carried out extensive research on the topic.



Providing a comprehensive bibliography on translation in tourism is not only an arduous task, due to the considerable amount of literature that has been produced and is still being produced on this subject, but it is also beyond the scope of this work. Below are mentioned only some of the works completed in this field: collections of studies from an English perspective can be found in Navarro Errasti's and in Palusci and Francesconi's works, as well as Agorni's ("Questions"); Nigro focused on tourism translation after providing historical and theoretical information on the language of tourism; Duran Muñoz and Merkaj analysed common mistakes and difficulties in the translation of tourist texts; and Sumberg considered the translation of brochures from French into English and how different approaches to target text production can enhance or detract from their effectiveness. According to Federici, a good translator should avoid miscommunication when translating. This does not mean to avoid cultural differences in language; on the contrary, "cultural differences [...] must be kept because they are signs and symbols of the place to be visited" (111; see also Palusci and Francesconi). Katan ("Translating the tourist gaze," "Translating for outsider tourists") considers the fact that tourists interpret what they see according to their own culture, thus disregarding much of what they experience abroad. Then, tourism industry translators must be competent interculturalists able to gauge the differences between Insider and Outsider tourist gaze direction. Strategies, therefore, should be adopted by translators, who are also cultural mediators, in order to make different cultural frames more intelligible and explicit to the tourist (Katan *Translating cultures*), achieved by modelling the different realities and switching perspectives (Katan "Translation"). Indeed, the role of the translator is that of bridging the gaps between cultures rather than letting them function as cultural barriers favouring the construction of stereotypes and encouraging misunderstandings (Davies). Meanings, in other words, when translated, must be negotiated, not transferred (Agorni "Tourism"; see also Manca "Translating"). In this respect, Sulaiman and Wilson ("Translating tourism promotional materials") and Sulaiman ("Misunderstood concept," "Translating nature tourism") have underlined that criticisms characterizing the translation of tourism promotional materials have been due to misconceptions about tourism translations, namely the fact that they have always been regarded as merely a linguistic process. Only if we consider the fact that translating from one language to another means also translating from one culture to another will we achieve success. For this reason, he proposes the Cultural-Conceptual Translation model based on the cultural conceptualization of the 'unconscious' level of the needs at the base of tourists' expectations (culturally-constructed) and the destination image. Indeed, as Liddicoat reminds us, when translating for a new audience which does not share the source language *and* culture, the translator cannot simply reproduce the meanings of one text in another language: s/he must rearticulate linguistic meanings and cultural framings.

With the technological developments of computer science and the digitization of information, tourist promotion has established its presence on the World Wide Web, changing the way potential consumers have access to tourist content. The spread of websites disseminating informative and promotional material in multiple languages prompted the emergence of studies focused on tourist translation on the Web (see, for



instance, Tognini and Manca; Manca "Language," *Translation*, "From," "Translating," "Verbal techniques;" Pierini; Cappelli "Translation;" Hogg *et al.*).

It is not the purpose of this paper to conduct a detailed analysis of translation studies on the Web. I will, on the contrary, focus on a more traditional context and try to conduct a linguistic analysis of how translation has been carried out on a small corpus of texts provided to visitors at specific attraction sites. To the best of my knowledge, in fact, little investigation has been conducted on translation processes applied to the informative content provided by Italian churches to international tourists. This work will thus try to identify some of the most significant patterns of translation within the corpus of analysis, focusing in particular on the identification of mistakes and inaccuracies that occur during the translation process in an attempt to offer explanations of how target language rules and conventions have been violated during the translation process, because the latter has been considered in its linguistic aspect only, without taking into consideration the cultural perspective. In addition, a series of possible solutions to improve the quality of this kind of specialized translation will be proposed, in order to suggest best practices.

The paper will be developed as follows: the second section will present the texts comprising my corpus—Italian texts and their English translations; the third section will conduct an in-depth investigation and presentation of the major mistakes and mistranslations found in English translations. The analysis will focus on five main areas of interest: technical vocabulary; lexical inaccuracies; syntax; and content modification. Mistakes and inaccuracies will be presented through the inclusion of parallel excerpts in Italian and English taken from the texts of the corpus, and this will provide explanations of how the rules and conventions of the target language have been violated during the translation process. In addition, a series of possible solutions to improve the quality of this kind of specialized translation will be proposed, in order to ensure as perfect a correspondence as possible between the content provided to Italian and foreign visitors, and the creation of informative texts in English that adhere to the rules, conventions and requirements of the target language. The final section will make some concluding remarks.

THE CORPUS

Italy is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of cultural and artistic heritage and its success in the international tourism market is strictly interwoven with the diverse and unique features it offers to foreign and Italian tourists alike. More specifically, international tourist flows represent a significant part of tourism demand in Italy which reported, in 2018, an increase in international arrivals, especially from the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China; see UNWTO). In this context, it is imperative to offer services and products that cater for the needs and expectations of foreign visitors, including the creation and presentation of translated content.



In order to restrict the area of analysis, all texts in the corpus were collected in 2015 from three churches in Milan, Italy:

1. Santa Maria delle Grazie;
2. Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio;
3. Chiesa di San Simpliciano.

These churches provide historical and artistic information to visitors using interpretive panels and signs, positioned both inside and outside the buildings. The panels address Italian and foreign visitors alike: an original Italian text is paralleled by an English translation. Signs are the only providers of informative content in all three churches and no other interpretive media are employed, since no brochures or leaflets are available *in situ*. There are also no information attendants or audio guides, as is becoming increasingly frequent in other major places of interests, such as Milan Cathedral, where printed information has been replaced by audio devices.

When quoted, excerpts taken from texts comprising this small corpus will be accompanied by the acronyms IP (Italian panel) and EP (English panel). All acronyms will be followed by the number assigned to each text, in the order in which they are first introduced. The English text in the new proposed translation will be indicated with the acronym PRO_EP (*proposed English Panel*)

The churches selected for this analysis rely on the use of what falls in the “on-trip written media” category included in Dann’s classification (143-144): panels. The panels contain parallel texts in Italian and English that show no major variations, in terms of length, in the information provided to national and international tourists. They play a role that is usually assigned to tour guides, subtly dictating the path chosen by tourists during their visit to a church.

While visitors may not be particularly affected by the form in which information is offered, the selection of the medium can be a major concern for those people in charge of management of the attraction. Panels may satisfy tourists’ needs, but some features must be borne in mind when considering the most effective way to present interpretive and informational content to visitors. For example, information provided by panels can be limited by the lack of space available in a way that does not happen with brochures or pamphlets. The dimensions of the panels can vary from small to medium size, according to their function: especially inside buildings, signs should be clearly visible without being too intrusive or monopolizing too much of visitors’ attention. They have to find a way to fulfil their role of providers of information while avoiding becoming a physical barrier between the attraction and the tourist’s gaze. For this reason, explanations are usually written in a telegraphic and concise style. This is also due to the fact that visitors tend to read the panels while standing up (Tilden), often scanning the information briefly before moving on to the next object of interest. Therefore, writers should strive to achieve both brevity and clarity in order to provide content without losing the reader’s attention along the way. In some cases, there are also bigger panels, in which the text is of a significant length in order to include more in-depth information, usually concerning not only the building but also the city in which it is located. For example, the panels placed outside the Basilica of Sant’Ambrogio follow this format when they are used to give detailed historical information about Milan, the church and the life of Sant’Ambrogio. Alongside the written text, these panels also include images,



even though they are generally uncommon in this type of tourism genre, especially when the signs are placed inside buildings. However, they are often used in bigger panels in order to “catch and keep people’s attention and assist in articulating important messages” (Timothy and Boyd 220). They can also help to provide visual assistance to visitors while explaining artworks and objects of interests that are currently kept somewhere else and therefore not actually immediately available to the tourist’s gaze. In some cases, panels share some similarities with tourist itineraries, a genre often characterized by the combination of verbal text, images and iconic elements (Maci). In one of the panels outside the Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio, tourists can consult a map depicting the most famous monuments in Milan, thus creating an itinerary that people can decide to follow after their visit to the church; in addition to the most basic information about various attractions, the panels also provide estimates of the walking time needed to reach each one of them, a feature frequently found in many itineraries. Another example is provided by a vertical panel outside the church of San Simpliciano, where tourists can consult a stylized map of the city showing the position of other relevant points of interest.

The Milan corpus also shows how the size of panels has a direct influence on the way the content is organized and presented: for instance, a larger panel gives writers the opportunity to choose a more discursive style than the one usually employed on written signs, as they are not limited by the panel’s dimensions.

During the on-trip stage of travel, the promotional purpose of tourist media may temporarily take a back seat to the interpretive function; therefore, all texts in the corpus place a considerable focus on the informative purpose, as they provide historical and artistic content to national and international tourists in order to enhance the quality of the experience.

The presence of parallel texts in panels reveals how the information provided is roughly the same in terms of length and content, which suggests that there are no major changes from the source texts to their translations and that the content has not been adapted, in a significant way, for a foreign audience. One of the few exceptions is the Basilica of Sant’Ambrogio where the outdoor panels provide, at times, an abridged version of the Italian text when translated into English.

The main informative function of the panels as a tourist text is always achieved, through a combination of written and visual content, as the aesthetic elements help in conveying “items of information that the verbal component cannot express” (Maci 189).

ANALYSIS

The presence of parallel texts allows us to identify the similarities between source and target texts, in terms of length and structure of the content, and to compare with relative ease the resulting English translation with the original Italian source.

Following the classification of translation errors done by McAlester, Naqvi and Duran Muñoz, in my analysis I will concentrate on those mistranslations made in the attempts to render target texts of more immediate comprehension to the tourist. In



each excerpt provided I will focus on the fault most relevant to the section I am dealing with at that moment.

TECHNICAL TERMS

Lexical errors represent one of the main obstacles to achieving natural sounding translations. The language of tourism often employs expressions and vocabulary that do not differ greatly from general language; at the same time, however, the creation of tourist texts requires at the very least a superficial knowledge of other disciplines that are often interwoven with tourism, such as art and history. In such cases, the translator is faced with texts that combine the lexicon of everyday life with terms and expressions belonging to more specialized discourses. As a result, translated texts are often interspersed with faulty or inaccurate terminology.

Inaccuracies in the lexicon belonging to the architectural field are common in the texts characterizing my corpus, because the translator has to deal with a subject in which the source language often has a wider vocabulary than the target language. In some cases, the Italian terms are used more frequently in everyday language than their English counterparts.¹

[1a] Nelle *vele* degli archi che sorreggono il soffitto a ombrella [...] (IP1, my emphasis)

In architecture, the Italian term “*vela*” indicates one of the cells into which a vault is divided. In the English version, the expression has been rendered as

[1b] In the *wings* of the arches supporting the ceiling [...] (EP1, my emphasis)

The term ‘wing’ does not convey the meaning carried by the Italian expression: in English, ‘wing’ is commonly used in architecture to refer to a lateral component, extension or complement of a structure or building. When talking about arches, vaults or other architectural elements, this term is not an appropriate choice: ‘wing’ is related to a part of a building rather than to a part of a vault. The term ‘panel’ appears to be a more suitable choice:

[1c] In the *panels* of the arches supporting the ceiling [...] (PRO_EP1)

Similar cases of mistranslations of technical terms are encountered throughout the texts of the corpus, especially when dealing with the architectural features of churches. “Column,” for instance, is used for the more specific ‘pilaster strip’ to translate the Italian term “*lesena*.” In Italian, the terms ‘*colonna*’ (column) and ‘*lesena*’ (pilaster) refer to different architectural elements. ‘Pilaster’ designates shallow rectangular columns projecting from the wall in which they are built (OED), whereas a ‘column’ is a cylindrical body erected vertically as a support for part of a building (OED). In the same

¹ In the excerpts that follow, [a] always refer to the Italian source text, [b] to the English target text and [c] to the English *suggested* target text.



way, the translation of “volta” as “ceiling” does not seem to be justified by any specific problem, as the Italian “volta” corresponds to English ‘vault’ and translating it as “ceiling” does not make any sense.

In some instances, the terms adopted in translations appear to follow a certain pattern: words that may be seen as too specialized are constantly downplayed in the target text and replaced with less specific expressions belonging to general language. Therefore, we find “pyramid” which translates “timpano piramidale”—even though the term ‘tympanum’ can be found in the English language—often accompanied by collocates that are clearly related to the architectural field, such as “mosaic,” “carved,” “sculptures,” “cathedral” etc., which have probably entered common use as more general words. It can be argued that the choice of using less technical terms has been made for the sake of the tourists, who can thus understand the technicalities found in a source text thanks to a facilitated targeted text. Nevertheless, the expression “ordine gigante,” which indicates the architecture order whose columns or pilasters span two storeys, has been translated as “soaring archway,” without resorting to the available expression ‘giant’ or ‘colossal order.’ The term “soaring archway” is an architectural element but it is an ‘archway’ and therefore lacks the connotations that the more specific ‘giant order’ conveys, simply due to the fact that it belongs to the same specialized language found in the Italian text. In the same way, the Italian “sacello”—a term which is, admittedly, considered uncommon in everyday speech and refers to a small shrine—is translated as “chapel,” despite the existence of the term “sacellum” (*OED*). Here, the choice of a word belonging to everyday speech, instead of one taken from a specialized language, is more understandable than in the previous examples, as the literal translation can be considered an archaism, thus preventing full comprehension of the text.

In other cases, the wording of the original text does not help translators in their work: if the meaning is blurred, unclear or improperly phrased in the source language, its transposition into a different language may become an arduous task. The translator may also have limited knowledge of a specific subject dealt with in the text (Munday): in tourist texts, informative content may cover different topics, from history to art and architecture, often requiring the knowledge and ability to use specific terminology in an appropriate way. If the subject of the source text causes comprehension problems, then there is less chance of achieving an accurate translation, as, for example, in the excerpt below:

[2a] *Modulato su proporzioni geometriche*, il coro è ornato con i graffiti originali, scoperti nel 1935. (IP1, my emphasis)

[2b] *Modulated on geometrical progression*, the choir is decorated with the original graffiti discovered in 1935. (EP1, my emphasis)

In describing the choir of the church, the source text uses the expression “modulato su proporzioni geometriche,” a sentence that does not quite seem to be self-explanatory: the reader has to grasp at the general sense the phrase conveys, especially when we try to understand what “proporzione geometrica” means in architecture. By employing “geometrical progression,” the translator seems to have decided to avoid a



literal meaning of the source text. However, a “geometric(al) progression” is “a sequence of quantities in which the ratio between successive quantities is constant” (*OED*). A literal translation would not be advisable, as it too has a mathematical meaning, since the term “proportion” refers to the “relationship between pairs of quantities in which the ratio between the first pair is the same as that between the second” (*OED*). In architecture, when a building has geometrical proportions, it means that it is kept in proportions, so it is ‘geometrically modulated’. Probably, a translation like the following would be acceptable:

[2c] *Geometrically modulated*, the choir is decorated with the original graffiti discovered in 1935.
(PRO_EP1)

LEXICAL INACCURACIES

There are lots of typos, as can be seen in [3] below:

[3] The structure is *analogous* to that of the Palatine Hall of Treviri and some say the Christian building was designed to recall the imperial one. (EP3, my emphasis)

Apart from that, most inaccuracies occur when we move away from a strictly specialized terminology and focus on terms and expressions belonging to general language, even though they are still associated with the arts field:

[4a] Leonardo [...] crea un senso di continuità tra lo spazio reale e quello *dipinto*. (IP1, my emphasis)

[4b] He [...] created a sense of continuity between the real space and the *painting* space. (EP1, my emphasis)

In this excerpt, the translator proceeds to render the Italian “dipinto” with the expression “painting space.” In the source text, “dipinto” is an adjective, because it modifies the implied “spazio” (space) that is mentioned just before in “lo spazio reale” (the real space). Here, the author of the text wants to highlight the connection between “lo spazio reale” (the real space) and “quello [lo spazio] dipinto” (and the painted one), without having to repeat the substantive. However, the absence of the substantive in the source text may have contributed to the translator’s misunderstanding, who seems to have confused the adjective with the substantive ‘dipinto’ (‘painted’ vs ‘painting’). As a result, in the target text we find “painting”—which in English is usually a substantive, unless it is employed as a pre-modifier with the meaning “that paints”—where “painted” would have been more appropriated, as we suggest in [4c]:

[4c] He [...] created a sense of continuity between the real space and the *painted* space.
(PRO_EP1)



In some cases, the similarities between an Italian word and its English counterpart can lead to mistakes in translation. In the excerpt below, the term “recupero” (recovering) has been translated with the expression “recuperating,” probably a false-friend:

[5a] I restauri ottocenteschi, rivolti al *recupero* delle preesistenze rinascimentali, hanno notevolmente alterato gli interventi realizzati in epoca barocca. (IP2, my emphasis)

[5b] Nineteenth-century restoration works aimed at *recuperating* pre-existing Renaissance elements, significantly altered changes made in the Baroque period. (EP2, my emphasis)

The term “recuperate” in the sense of ‘restore’ is nowadays obsolete and mainly used with reference to health or in contexts related to money recovery (*OED*), as confirmed by the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and the the British National Corpus (BNC). In order to convey the same meaning expressed by Italian “recupero,” a possible solution would be the use of the verb “to recover”:

[5c] Nineteenth-century restoration works, aimed at *recovering* pre-existing Renaissance elements, significantly altered changes made in the Baroque period. (PRO_EP2)

A similar lexical inaccuracy can be seen in the excerpt below:

[6a] Nell’atrio sono reimpiegati e *custoditi* frammenti di sarcofagi, epigrafi e sculture provenienti dall’area della basilica e dal rifacimento ottocentesco della pavimentazione. (IP2, my emphasis)

[6b] Fragments of sarcophagi, inscriptions, and sculptures from the area of the basilica and from the XIX century replacement of the pavement have been reused and *cared* for in the atrium. (EP2, my emphasis)

Apart from the translation of the adjective “ottocentesco” as “XIX century,” which in English should be “19th century,” here, “custoditi” (kept), the past participle form of the verb “custodire” (to keep), has been translated as “cared for.” Considering the fact that the main subject of the sentences is an inanimate object—fragments of sarcophagi, inscriptions and sculptures—the verb ‘to care for’ commonly used when talking about animate objects is not the most appropriate choice, given the context. A better translation would contain the verb ‘to keep’ in its meaning as ‘guard,’ ‘preserve’:

[6c] Fragments of sarcophagi, inscriptions, and sculptures from the area of the basilica as well as from the 19th century replacement of the pavement have been reused and *kept* in the atrium. (PRO_EP2)

Sometimes, a mistranslation is the result of an attempt to translate an Italian expression literally, thus resulting in “clumsy” language with signs of non-nativeness” (Pierini 96), as shown below:

[7a] La chiesa del Solari *si apre* frontalmente nella luminosa tribuna del Bramante e, a sinistra, nella primitiva cappella della Madonna. (IP1, my emphasis)



[7b] Solari's church *opens itself* on the bright Bramante's tribune and, on the left, into the Virgin Mary's chapel. (EP1, my emphasis)

The expression 'to open oneself on [something]' is found in English in the information technology field, when documents or applications open automatically without any prompt from an external source. Thus, in excerpt [6b], the use of a more appropriate expression would help removing the sense of 'awkwardness' derived from an inaccurate translation:

[8c] Solari's church *is in front of* the bright Bramante's tribune and next to the Virgin Mary's chapel, on the left. (PRO_EP1)

SYNTAX

The English language consistently follows a subject-verb-complement (SVC) order of construction. There are, of course, instances in which the language diverges from the canonical order, as happens when we are dealing with interrogative sentences, but when it comes to affirmative clauses in the active form, the normal SVC order usually prevails. In the excerpts below, we can see how the translator decided to deviate from the canonical English order, probably in response to the influence of the sentence structure found in the source text:

[9a] Pala d'altare: La Crocifissione di Giovanni Demio da Schio; *sono sue le vele delle volte* con i 4 Evangelisti e 8 Sibille; le lunette laterali: "Noli me tangere" a destra, i Discepoli di Emmaus a sinistra. (IP1, my emphasis)

[9b] Altar-piece: the Crucifixion, by Giovanni Demio of Schio; *to him belong the wings of the vaults* with the 4 Evangelists and 8 Sibyls; the lateral lunettes: "Noli me tangere" on the right, Disciplines of Emmaus on the left. (EP1, my emphasis)

Here, we can see how the Italian structure "sono sue le vele delle volte" found in excerpt [9a] follows a VCS order, which is transposed with a semi-literal adaptation in the English version:

V	C	S
sono	sue	le vele delle volte
C	V	S
to him	belong	the wings of the vault

Despite the fact that Italian is an SVC language, other types of word order can be employed for reasons of emphasis or style. As a result, Italian has a relatively free word order because Italian is an analytic language. In contrast, English is a so-called synthetic language. Therefore, while both [9a] and [9b] diverge from the SVC order usually employed in the two languages, the English translation sounds far more awkward than the Italian sentence. The online *Cambridge Dictionary* points out that English readers



usually expect the typical SVC word order, especially if the active form is employed, in which the subject of the clause is the agent. Furthermore, the use of “belong” cannot indicate one’s copyright but rather possession (*OED*). Excerpt [9c], below, offers a more English-like translation:

[9c] Altarpiece: the Crucifixion, by Giovanni Demio of Schio, *who also painted the vault panels, with the 4 Evangelists and 8 Sybils. Lateral lunettes: on the right, “Noli me tangere”; on the left, Disciplines of Emmaus. (PRO_EP1)*

MODIFYING ITALIAN TEXTS

Sometimes, translators are aware of mistakes contained in source texts and modify the target text in such a way as to correct the mistakes (though, syntactically, other mistakes may remain). An example is in the Santa Maria delle Grazie panel, which includes a description of the location of Leonardo’s *Last Supper*:

[10a] L’Ultima Cena di Leonardo da Vinci si trova *sul piazzale della chiesa, a sinistra dell’ingresso principale*. Essa non appartiene alla chiesa, è un museo di stato. (IP1, my emphasis)

[10b] Leonardo’s *Last Supper* is *outside the church on the right, in the square*. It does not belong to the church, but it is national museum. (EP1, my emphasis)



Fig. 1. Santa Maria delle Grazie and Cenacolo main entrances. “Il Cenacolo / Last Supper.” *Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie*, legraziemilano.it/il-cenacolo. Accessed 24 Feb. 2019.

The source text explicitly states that Leonardo’s *Last Supper* is outside the church *on the left*, while in the panel’s English version, the translator, besides changing the word order, positions Leonardo’s *Last Supper* on the *right*. The Italian and English texts therefore adopt two different perspectives: while in the Italian sentence the fresco can be found on the left of the church’s main entrance, in the English version the fresco is on the right of the church’s main entrance. Considering the spatial configuration of the square (see Fig. 1 above), it is evident that the reason behind the diverging perspectives lies in the different assumptions made by the source text author and the translator when writing the two sentences: if the visitor is already in the square, facing the church, the building where *The Last Supper* can be found would be on the left of the church’s main entrance; if we assume instead that the visitor is in the church—where the panel giving



directions is situated, facing the church's main entrance but the other way round—then, from the reader's perspective, the building where Leonardo *Last Supper* is would be on the right side of the church.

The English translation would have been better rendered if a few changes had been made: the addition of the indefinite article 'a' before the noun phrase "national museum," and the replacement of the adversative conjunction "but" with the subordinate disjunct clause of reason (see Quirk *et al.* 1999) introduced by 'as'. Indeed, the painting does not belong to the church because it is a national museum; the two clauses do not have a contrastive relationship—as that would suggest the use of "but":

[10c] Leonardo's Last Supper (Cenacolo) is *in the building next to the church, on the left of the main entrance*, when looking at it. Cenacolo does not belong to the church, as it is a national museum. (PRO_EP1)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The presence of panels at attraction sites makes them one of the least promotional genres among tourist text types, as they mainly offer informative content. However, the analysis of how Italian church panels are translated into English has revealed some interesting features. As we have seen, technical vocabulary is sometimes mistranslated; lexical inaccuracies can occur; syntactical mistakes and content modifications are present. Overall, as we have seen from these few examples, there seems to be a tendency to underestimate the complexity of translation in tourism discourse. Mistranslations are apparently related more to superficial knowledge of the architectural topics featured in the text. In other cases, mistakes have been caused by the superficiality with which language itself is treated, with the presence of false friends ("recuperare" translated as "recover;" "aprirsi" translated as "open itself") or by syntactical misplacements and mistakes (as in "sue sono le vele" rendered as "to him belong the wings," disregarding the SVC order of the English language and specialized terms). Lastly, mistakes occur because of the wrong assumptions translators make regarding directions: saying left or right with respect to the position of the monument may change the whole perspective and tourist's orientation. The alternative translations offered are tentative suggestions of how good translations should be carried out, taking into consideration the source and target languages and cultures, mediating between the two, maintaining differences and opting for omissions or additions in order to create a text which accompanies the tourist into the new reality described in the panel.

This requires the presence of skilled translators aware of the challenges posed by interlinguistic translation within the specialized field of tourism. The cultural features of the intended audience have to be considered alongside those lexical and syntactic structures that separate the source and target languages. The final goal of each translation process in tourism discourse should be the creation of a text bridging the gap between visitors' daily life and tourists' destination reality, without overlooking the cultural elements of the target audience.



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