



NEGOTIATING COMMUNICATIVE STYLE, SITUATIONAL CONTEXT AND TT MODELS IN ADVANCED L2 CULTURAL MEDIATION PEDAGOGY: A CASE STUDY FROM THE ITALIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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Abstract: L2 translation is increasingly viewed as a legitimate and consolidated area of research within Translation Studies. In this paper, the feasibility of training L2 translators as cultural mediators is examined. The analysis is presented in the form of a case study of advanced L2 students translating from Italian into English. This sample was assessed primarily in terms of cultural mediation. Given this emphasis, the source text (ST) was taken from the domain of cultural information for the general public. The principal assessment criterion was the source language (SL) conventional metaphor “percorso”, a pervasive JOURNEY metaphor, widely used in that domain. This trope was chosen because it combines significant source culture (SC) attitudes to communicative style and expresses values attributed to official culture itself. The paper analyses how students responded to the challenge of negotiating between SC values, situational context, possible target language (TL) models and legitimate target text (TT) reader expectations. The sample is then assessed referring to Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Significantly different levels of cultural competence emerged, and these accounted for important differences in the effectiveness of the translations. On the basis of this preliminary case study, a tentative model of advanced L2 cultural mediators is proposed.

Keywords: L2 translation, culture, style, context, models

Özet: Çeviri Çalışmalarında, ikinci dilde çeviri giderek daha fazla geçerli ve kapsamlı bir araştırma alanı olarak görülmeye başlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, ikinci dil çevirmenlerinin kültürel arabulucu olarak eğitilmesinin mümkün olup olmadığı incelenmektedir. Analiz, İtalyanca’dan İngilizce’ye çeviri yapan ileri seviye ikinci dilde çeviri öğrencilerine dair bir durum çalışması şeklinde sunulmaktadır. Bu örneklem, ilk olarak kültürel arabuluculuk anlamında değerlendirilmiştir. Kaynak metin, genel halka yönelik kültürel bilgi alanından alınmıştır. Başlıca değerlendirme ölçütü, bu alanda sıkça kullanılan, kaynak dile ait alışlagelmiş “percorso” mecazi ve yaygın olarak kullanılan YOLCULUK mecazıdır. Bu mecaz, iletişimsel biçeme dair kaynak kültür tutumlarını biraraya getirdiği ve ait olduğu resmi kültüre ait değerleri ifade ettiği için seçilmiştir. Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin farklı kaynak kültür değerlerini bağdaştırma, durumsal bağlam, hedef dil modelleri ve geçerli hedef metin okuyucu beklentilerine dair zorluklara karşı nasıl davranış sergilediğini analiz etmektedir. Örneklem, ayrıca Bennett’in (1993) Kültürlerarası Duyarlılığın Gelişimsel Modeli kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Önemli ölçüde farklılık gösteren seviyelerde kültürel yeterlik ortaya çıkmıştır ve bu da çevirilerin yeterliğindeki mühim farklılıkları ortaya koymaktadır. Başlangıç niteliğindeki bu durum çalışmasına dayanarak, ileri seviyede ikinci dilde kültürel araçlara dair taslak niteliğinde bir model önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkinci dilde çeviri, kültür, biçem, bağlam, modeller

Introduction

In 2009, as part of an initiative to promote Rome's classical art heritage, Palazzo Massimo, which houses Italy's National Archeological Museum, was decked with immense banners featuring enormous photographs of classical sculpture, each bearing the logo “Once Were Romans”. Soon after their appearance, the Rome daily, *Il Messaggero* (2009), ran an article that began as follows:

Romani, italiani... barbari?

“Once were Romans” proclama orgogliosamente la campagna promozionale del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Palazzo Massimo a Roma. “Una a volta noi eravamo romani?”. “C'erano una volta I

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romani?” Incomprensibile...

Con assoluta incompetenza linguistica, i committenti dei cartelloni pubblicitari affissi da mesi intornal al museo, si autosegnalano, con non voluta ironia, come i nuovi barbari. A cosa altrimenti alluderebbero questi inutili (e sicuramente costosissimi) manifesti, che raffigurano alcuni dei piu bei pezzi del Museo, accompagnati dalla criptica e certo sgrammaticata scritta, nonché da sibilline allusioni alle opere rappresentate? Forse, sì, c'erano i romani, oramai ci sono i barbari, i nuovi barbari, certo.¹

The use of Anglicisms and loan expressions is increasingly widespread in promotional texts of all kinds in contemporary Italy. Now it would appear to be making inroads into the cultural heritage domain, too, as ever more aggressive advertising techniques are used to promote cultural heritage and cultural initiatives. The thinking behind this trend appears to be: if you want to increase the appeal or cachet of a cultural initiative, then a slogan in English will help greatly.

However, this strategy can easily backfire. The article in *Il Messaggero* describes the kind of exasperation and bewilderment it can generate in the SC community; it is equally likely that the Target Culture (TC) community of Anglophone visitors and tourists were similarly mystified by the message. It is, after all, an example of intertextuality, referring to *Once Were Warriors* (Scholes, 1994), a film that dwells on the decline and decadence of Maori culture in contemporary New Zealand. The (relatively few) text receivers who understood the reference would, forgivably, expect to see a collection of decaying works, rather than impressively intact examples of ancient sculpture –hardly the attraction the posters claim; those who understood the English, but not the reference, would merely be perplexed at the pragmatics of the logo.

I have described this situation at some length, because the issues involved overlapped with some of those addressed and explored in a semester-long course of second language (L2) translation, approached from the point of view of cultural mediation. Firstly, although it is not strictly speaking a translation, it is a glaring example of the kind of confusion that can occur as a result of an ineffective cultural mediation. By using the intertextual reference, the language professional responsible for choosing the logo probably hoped to kill two birds with one stone, but only succeeded in alienating two cultural communities at a single stroke. The result was that the SC community felt its heritage had been hijacked, while the TC community presumably felt it had been devalued. Secondly, this also reminds us that acts of cultural mediation depend on successfully matching TC models and trends with SC situational contexts. Cultural mediators, therefore, need to assess their linguistic choices against the context. Lastly, extreme though it may be, this example also shows that cultural mediation does not occur in a vacuum, that it can bring cultures together, but also alienate, or mislead them, and that a skilful and appropriate choice of language, communicative style, and generic convention is crucial to the outcome of the mediation.

1 Romans, Italians...Barbarians?

“Once were Romans” proudly proclaims the advertising campaign run by the National Archeological Museum in Palazzo Massimo, Rome.” “We were Romans once?” “Once upon a time there were the Romans?” Incomprehensible...

With a display of total linguistic ineptitude and unintended irony, whoever commissioned the hoardings that have been hanging outside the building for some months, has shown that they are the “new barbarians”. How otherwise explain these useless (and certainly very costly) posters, which depict some of the finest pieces of the collection, accompanied by this cryptic and undoubtedly ungrammatical text, together with other sibylline references to the works shown in each poster? There may well have been Romans once, but now there are the barbarians, the new barbarians.

The following paper considers the outlook for L2 translation pedagogy if it continues to consistently overlook or minimize the importance of the cultural aspects of communicative competence. After a brief review of the principal literature on L2 translation pedagogy, and of the scholarly debate on the most appropriate kinds of materials for L2 translation training, it is suggested that the time is now ripe for a more systematic focus on cultural mediation in the teaching and assessment of L2 translation. The paper then moves on to explain why the choice of criterion for assessing students' intercultural sensitivity in L2 translation fell on conventional metaphor and, more specifically, why the conventional metaphor "percorso" was held to embody stylistic and cultural values in the ST that made it an effective gauge for assessing students' levels of intercultural sensitivity. The paper then describes how this assessment was carried out with reference to Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. To do this three student assignments are compared and defined in terms of Bennett's model, underlining the importance of developing students' abilities to match TC sources and discourse models to the SC context. The results of the case study indicate that the student sample actually corresponded to different levels of cultural competence identified by Bennett. What is more, they suggest that cultural competence does not automatically correspond to linguistic ability in advanced L2 students; thus it can be regarded as a decisive factor in accounting for differences between their performances. As a consequence, a slight modification of Bennett's Model is proposed, so that it can be applied to advanced L2 students

L2 translation and cultural mediation

The ineffectiveness of the example above as an act of cultural mediation is in all likelihood attributable to the limitations of an L2 mediator. The greatest flaw would be an inability to understand the pragmatics of the intertextual reference given the context of use. It is true that this appears to be the work of what Katan (2004:17) calls a "writing consultant" and not a translator; however, as much cultural mediation is achieved (or compromised) through translation, including translation into the second language, the purpose of this paper is to propose possible criteria for training, assessing and categorising trainee L2 translators as cultural mediators, rather than as mere linguistic copiers (Katan, 2004: 17). Indeed, cultural mediation is increasingly viewed as a litmus test of proven ability as a translator (Katan, 2004, Hatim and Mason 1997). Accordingly, it would appear reasonable to expect that training in and assessment of the cultural aspects of "communicative competence" (Hatim and Mason; 1990: 33) also be factored into L2 translation pedagogy. If this does not occur, it would appear equally reasonable to expect that this directionality will be increasingly consigned to a backwater of the translation training process and programmes, or even demoted to an auxiliary role in language acquisition, for example, in the study of comparative grammar or syntax. This would entail a return to a traditional application of L2 translation and relegate its status within translator training programmes. It could also conceivably entail more examples of the *Once Were Romans* type, where L2 language professionals without sufficient training in the issues of cultural mediation make ill-judged decisions that prove both costly and ineffective for text users, and misleading for text receivers.

The cases for and against L2 directionality

The counterproposal is not, of course, an unproblematic one, especially in view of a fairly installed scepticism as to the validity and effectiveness of professional L2 translation. Christopher Taylor (1998: 298), in his influential guide to translation in the Italian-English language pairing, acknowledges that L2 translation is widespread in the domain of cultural heritage promotion. Of point to the present discussion is his observation that very often such

translations are marked, if not seriously marred, by glaring errors, especially a failure to emulate the features of a particular genre of text (1998: 301). Furthermore, he adds (1998: 301) “it is tempting to assume that this translation (and thousands of others like it) must have been the work of a non-native speaker with no chance of revision”. Katan (2004: 115), who has produced a seminal study of the need to factor cultural mediation into translation training, concedes that this imperative is far less easy to achieve for L2 translators:

Translators and Interpreters will always be disadvantaged compared to mother-tongue speakers with regard to culture-bound styles and meaning. This is even truer when translating into the 'B' language.

Nevertheless, the last fifteen years have seen increased interest in this directionality, accompanied by a significant groundswell of academic opinion running counter to traditional theoretic assumptions about the place and feasibility of L2 translation (Campbell, 1998; Malmkjaer, 1998; Grossman *et al*, 2002; Pokhorn, 2005). Pokhorn (2009) provides an admirably clear review of the academic case for this directionality. Essentially, it rests squarely on the fact that L2 translation is increasingly widespread and expected. Pokhorn (2009: 190), for example, sees the growing interest in L2 directionality as a logical response to “the actual situation in translation markets in many countries and linguistic communities where translation into the 'B' language is expected and demanded”.

Issues in L2 translation pedagogy: materials selection

Recognition of L2 translation's place in the language market has also been accompanied by significant scholarly literature on the possible approaches to L2 translation pedagogy that this entails. One important area of debate is material selection criteria. In Campbell's study (1998) L2 students are largely assessed on the basis of their ability to develop various competencies through translation of a range of newspaper articles. Since then, various scholars have attempted to define with greater delicacy the kind of material most appropriate for L2 translation pedagogy. The general recommendation would appear to be that texts should resemble probable commissions as closely as possible. Klein-Braley and Franklin (1998: 60), for example, suggest the inappropriateness of newspaper articles in L2 translation training because, as they observe of translations from German into English, “practically no-one transfers German texts about England into English for money”. Weatherby (1998: 25) recommends that realistic texts be used because they “provide a good motivation for teaching and learning”. A further refinement is proposed by Schaffner (1998: 124), who notes that in much L2 translation teaching, especially when it is oriented to language acquisition, extracts are widely used; this prevents students encountering the kinds of texts that hypothetical real-life clients might commission and pay to have translated.

Assessment and error analysis

Material selection also entails the thorny issue of assessment and error analysis. Two diametrically opposed positions appear to have merged here. Zhong (2006: 158) appeals for “a reorientation from the product to the process of learning” in translation instruction. He calls for a move away from “a traditional system of assessment based on the end product and on the accurate/adequate construction of equivalence” and advocates, instead, “an alternative system centred around the learner, i.e. how he/she performed in a process of learning” (2006: 169). In the opposing camp we find Schopp, who insists on the need for low tolerances in any translation teaching context outside L2 language acquisition (2006:177):

[...] the didactic approach – *which is only appropriate at the level of foreign language learning* – [my italics] - of accepting as many of the students solutions as possible [...] can be fatal, because it leads to the target text not meeting the expectations and conventions for texts in that genre that are prevalent in the

target culture and the client will not get the best possible text for his or her purposes. This in turn strengthens the common impression that translations are qualitatively inferior texts.

This polarity is to some extent due to the different contexts in which L2 translation is viewed by each of these scholars. Zhong (2006: 159) sees translation as one of the liberal arts and views translation training from a humanistic standpoint. Schopp (2006), on the other hand, approaches the issue of correction and assessment from an avowedly vocational viewpoint, a didactic context in which anticipating clients' needs and striving for customer satisfaction are the ultimate aims. The latter position is closer to the orientation of the translation training provided in the teaching context that provided the data for this paper.

L2 translation training and cultural mediation

Didactic adjustments tend to lag behind theoretical advances in the field of translation studies, and this tendency is probably even more pronounced in L2 translation. This is likely to be so for a combination of reasons, some of which have been touched on above. To briefly recap, these include a tendency to see language acquisition as the primary focus of L2 translation pedagogy; or to see it as part of a wider humanistic educational vision. Moreover, L2 translation is widely taught by mother tongue teachers, and Pokhorn (2009: 205) has also considered how this process might ultimately deprive the L2 trainee translator of greater autonomy because it instils in students a habitual dependence on the trainer's intuitive 'insider' knowledge and, possibly more importantly, it encourages trainers to rely on this for convincing short-term *ad hoc* solutions divorced from a long-term systemic approach that might ultimately make L2 students more independent, especially as future professionals. She compares the performances of mother tongue teachers of L2 translation with the approach of their non-native speaker counterparts for the same directionality and envisages the use of SL native speaker and TL native speaker trainers for different stages in students' training. These recommendations are a further sign of the increasing maturity of L2 Translation Studies.

After a predictable time-lag, then, and following the emergence of full-length seminal studies on the issues involved in training translators as cultural mediators, the time would appear ripe for sustained scholarly enquiry into the feasibility of L2 cultural mediation training, in the form of case studies that describe and assess the effectiveness of methods and approaches conceived to further and monitor this process.

Data Selection Criteria

There were three main criteria behind the data selection for the case study described in this paper. Firstly, advanced language skills were regarded as a basic requirement, so that it would be possible to concentrate on cultural mediation aspects of translation rather than on language acquisition. Secondly, as might be anticipated from section 1.4, cultural mediation is conceived within a vocational context and with a view to assessing students who actually intend to become language professionals; thirdly, as outlined in section 1.3, assignments in such a context should be comparable with the kinds of commissions that students might feasibly expect to work on in their professional careers.

Student sample

The students involved in this case study were all in their third semester of a four-semester Master's degree in Translation, run jointly by *Milano Lingue* (formerly the *Istituto Superiore di Interpreti e Traduttori*) and the Université Marc Bloc in Strasbourg in the 2009-2010 academic year. Some of the students had already completed the three-year degree course at *Milano Lingue* and been admitted to the Master's degree after an entrance exam; others were

graduates of less vocational and more traditional university degree courses, like languages or humanities. All, however, expected the Master's degree in Translation to further their ambitions to become professional translators, and a questionnaire revealed that a very high percentage of the sample desired and expected to work professionally with the B language, in which the same amount of tuition was received as the A language (in all cases Italian).

Course material selection criteria

In line with the material selection issues outlined in section 1.2, it was decided to work with texts that were minimally authentic, insofar as they resembled the kinds of texts students might reasonably be expected to translate in a professional capacity. Taylor (1998: 298-301) has noted that, for whatever market reasons, tourist information texts in Italy are apparently frequently translated by L2 translators, often with unsatisfactory results. As the focus of the semester was cultural mediation, the choice of didactic material fell on cultural heritage information texts, in particular on permanent or temporary exhibition guides. There is ample evidence that texts like these are regularly translated by L2 translators with uneven results.

A further reason for choosing these texts was that the museum is the official face of national cultural identity, presenting a version of it both to the nation and to the world at large. As such, the information texts produced in this context reveal prevailing attitudes to official culture in the SC itself and afforded opportunities to assess issues involved in the transfer of the cultural values enshrined in such texts.

The next criterion was context. The data used for this paper is taken from a small learner corpus of translations of a quick guide (not translated at the time of the study) to a permanent exhibition at the *Museo nazionale preistorico etnografico "Luigi Pigorini"* (the Luigi Pigorini National Prehistoric Ethnographic Museum) in Rome. The context was felt to be an issue in the cultural mediation, and context of situation was expected to be a key factor in assessing students' sensitivity to the complexity of issues involved in cultural mediation. The final criteria was that, as Wilkinson (2005) has suggested, students appear to enjoy translating texts on cultural topics and can be expected to respond fairly enthusiastically to them.

Assessment Criteria

Culture is a big word and a vague one, too. It was necessary to be as clear as possible about what cultural aspects of the text sample would be used to test students' abilities as mediators and to make them aware of exactly what facets of 'culture' they were being assessed on. Broadly speaking, the main challenges were not terminological. This was so because, despite the national context and language, the cultural content of such texts is also part of the western world's shared heritage and for this reason can be frequently sourced and translated relatively accurately. Indeed, this student sample showed that it had acquired considerable expertise in dealing with terminological searches in online reference works, data banks, specialised glossaries and parallel texts, and this aspect of the translation process rarely emerged as problematical.

Culture in style

Katan (2004: 289) observes that "cultures vary in their orientation towards expressive or instrumental communication". The main intercultural issues in this study were bound up with how culture is conveyed to the general public in a fairly typical context, rather than what specific information about culture museum texts convey, and the extent to which this coincides with trends in the Anglophone contexts that students will be likely to refer to as models. It was felt that the translation of form as opposed to content in this domain might be

more revealing and testing of students' abilities as cultural mediators. This involved assessing students' capacity to make decisions about communicative style and then gauging how effectively given stylistic devices were translated by striking a compromise between the demands of situational context and available models from the TL and TC.

Conventional Metaphor

Style is also a wide and rather unwieldy criterion. It was subsequently decided to further narrow the focus of this case study to a single stylistic feature that was felt to adequately reflect a series of cultural values embodied in the way cultural information is written and to express attitudes to cultural subjects in the Italian context. The choice of stylistic parameter fell on conventional metaphor, because this trope appears to be somewhat 'invisible' to the eye of the translator, and this involves a number of issues. Knowles and Moon (2006: 5) describe the main difficulty as follows:

[...] conventional metaphors [...] are metaphorical usages which are found again and again to refer to a particular thing [...] these kinds of usages are institutionalised as part of the language. Much of the time we hardly notice them at all, and do not think of them as metaphorical, when we use or encounter them [...] The term dead metaphor is sometimes referred to conventional metaphors, especially those which people do not recognize as metaphorical in ordinary usage.

The choice of conventional metaphor was then further narrowed down to the TL metaphor "percorso" (path, way, route, trail, process). There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, on the basis of a comparative study of conventional metaphor use in Italian and English, carried out by the author, it emerges that conventional metaphor occurs three times more frequently in an Italian corpus of museum texts than in a corresponding English corpus. Without going into the distinction between conventional and conceptual metaphor, "percorso" belongs to what has been called the "PATH image schema" (Semino 2008: 91); in other words, it is a source domain that is widely used to reconstruct many target domain concepts in terms of a JOURNEY. In each of the two reference corpora the source domain JOURNEY was indeed the most frequently occurring conventional metaphor, used to reconstruct the target domains of A VISIT TO A MUSEUM or THE HISTORY OF A MUSEUM, though it was used just over twice as frequently in the Italian corpus. Of the lexical items used to realise this source domain, "percorso" was the most frequent, accounting for 38% of instantiations of the domain out of a total of 17 lexical items used to realise it in the whole corpus. The most closely corresponding equivalent ("journey") occurred only twice in the corresponding English corpus.

Conventional metaphor and equivalence

Conventional metaphors also represent considerable and extensive problems at the level of equivalence in L2 translation. Because conventional metaphors have largely become lexicalised, they are less likely to be 'picked up' by translators whose L1 is the same as the ST language. As Cameron (1999: 24) states, "to label a particular metaphor 'dead' is to assign to it a very low probability of being given active analogical processing by members of a particular discourse community". In a chapter devoted to the translation of metaphor across languages, Knowles and Moon (2006: 82) refer to "distracting lexical devices" as one of the principle consequences of the unawareness of problems entailed in L2 translations of conventional metaphor. One of the main difficulties they (2006: 91) refer to derives from the polysemous nature of conventional metaphor, often resulting in the use of "non-institutionalised metaphorical equivalents" in the TL. Equivalence is frequently not achieved because students may fail to distinguish between a lexicalised meaning and a core meaning. Above word level, the most frequent loss of equivalence occurs at the level of collocation,

especially when the SL conventional metaphor collocates are translated literally, or when the conventional metaphor is translated with a sufficiently institutionalised equivalent but the collocate is not, and *vice versa*, resulting in infrequent and highly marked combinations. Another particular effect of low “figurative awareness” (Knowles and Moon: 2006: 90) is the tendency of L2 students to choose corresponding metaphors that differ in their frequency or formality in a given discourse.

Conventional metaphor and cultural values and attitudes

Aside from issues of equivalence, germane to any discussion of translation, a conventional metaphor like “percorso” is also a useful parameter for assessing students’ intercultural sensitivity, or for helping them to increase it. There appear to be two main reasons for this. The very fact that conventional metaphor use in the Italian corpus for this domain is far more frequent than in the corresponding English one, suggests that it is a marked stylistic preference. One significant datum emerging from a comparative analysis of the corpora is that Italian realises the source domain of JOURNEY with almost twice the number of lexical items used in the English one. This would appear to be connected with certain stylistic preferences involved in achieving textual cohesion. Repetition of a lexical item is widely considered an inferior form of textual cohesion in written Italian, where synonymy and the use of other sense relations is preferred for that purpose. English, on the other hand, relies more frequently on repetition, combined with pro-forms for textual cohesion, as the narrower spread of synonyms in the relevant corpus would appear to confirm.

The more extensive metaphor use may also reflect other cultural values and attitudes underlying stylistic preferences. Newmark (1988: 110), one of the few translation scholars to approach metaphor systematically, touches on the vagueness that “stock” metaphor allows the writer, a tendency he is critical of, in a rather ethnocentric fashion. However, it is important to bear in mind that what may be regarded as undesirably vague from a cultural standpoint like Newmark’s, may be considered unduly blunt, simplistic or even patronising from another. Limon (2008: 60) comments on this aspect of cultural mediation in the context of the Slovenian-English translation pairing:

There are, for example, differences between cultures as to whether responsibility for effective communicative [sic] is seen to lie primarily with the writer or the reader. In English there is a tendency towards the former – if the communication fails we do not blame the reader for not making enough effort, but assume what was said was insufficiently clear or well-organized. In other cultures it is seen as the reader’s responsibility to understand what the writer intended to say and writers prefer to offer hints and nuances rather than make direct statements.

Katan (2004: 245-259) indicates how such micro-cultural preferences may be attributable to macro-cultural orientations. In particular, he distinguishes between High Context Communication (HCC) cultures and Low Context Communication (LCC) cultures. The former give greater importance to indirectness, while the latter place more emphasis on directness. In his view Italy is a good example of HCC, while “the English language itself, is decidedly LCC in comparison with many other languages” (Katan 2004: 251). In view of these comments, it is legitimate to suppose that differences in cultural orientation underpin the different ratios of text to conventional metaphor likely to be encountered in Italian and English texts for this domain.

The last reason for selecting the conventional metaphor “percorso” as a benchmark for assessing cultural sensitivity is semantic. Of the usual figurative meanings attributed to “percorso”, one of these is the abstract meaning of “process”, or more specifically “formative

process”, as can be seen from the following definition taken from the online version of the authoritative *Treccani* dictionary:

Con uso fig., evoluzione, processo di graduale avanzamento e trasformazione: *il p. culturale di uno scrittore; procedere in un p. spirituale. P. di lettura*, modo di lettura e di interpretazione di un testo letterario o di un’opera d’arte.

Thus, Italian texts that reconstruct a visit to a museum in terms of the source domain of JOURNEY also supply connotations of a formative process, which would convey the general attitude that the visit is educational and that this of itself is an improving and worthy experience. This reveals a widespread attitude to culture in initiatives in the SL context, which might be described as serious, if not solemn.

Moreover, this cultural orientation is not only reflected in the connotations of this lexicalised metaphor, but frequently corresponds to a more traditional and conservative museum concept, especially when compared with current trends in museology in Anglophone cultures, where the lines between entertainment and education, and between culture and leisure are becoming increasingly blurred, very often for market reasons. As will be seen from details emerging from the case study, this cultural orientation also had to be negotiated and became a useful index of students’ abilities as cultural mediators into the L2.

L2 Cultural Mediation Assessment Model

With the cultural mediation criteria in place, it was necessary to decide on a model that would make it possible both to assess the L2 translators’ performances as mediators and to ultimately chart their progress. The model chosen for this was Milton Bennett’s (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Katan (2004: 330-340) has already extensively explained how this model can be used to gauge students’ degree of Intercultural Sensitivity, and this paper is indebted to his explanation and commentary, although in this case, the Model is applied to furthering and charting the development of L2 translators exclusively, while that distinction is not made in Katan’s study. Katan (2004: 329) neatly outlines the structure and purpose of Bennett’s Developmental Model as follows:

The Model predicts a change of identity as the translator moves from a personal local reaction to global sensitivity. A fundamental aspect of the model is linked to a change in the natural core belief in ethnocentricity, i.e. superiority or centrality of one language-culture over another – towards that of ethnorelativity, the belief in mediation between text, reader and context culture.

Progress along this developmental path follows the stages in the following table:

Table 1: Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (as cited in Katan 2004: 330)

Ethnocentric stages

1. denial
2. defence
3. minimization

Ethnorelative stages

4. acceptance
5. adaptation
6. integration

A further criterion for assessing students was also the appropriateness of the sites they used to source their translations. As should be clear from the initial anecdote, text or lexis that does

not originate in a discourse and/or context comparable to the original one, especially when the latter is to be encountered by the TC text interpreter in the SCulture context, is likely to be inappropriate, culturally speaking. To this end, students were also required to provide a list of online literature and sites that they consulted and decided to actually use as source material for their translations. This was done to promote an awareness of the importance of context in cultural mediation, as opposed to straightforward linguistic competence, or even excellence.

The data

The source text

The source text for the small learner corpus of translations is an extract (see Appendix) from the online quick guide to the *Museo nazionale preistorico etnografico* in Rome. Compared with the names of counterparts like the *Museum of Mankind* in London, the name of this museum alone is suggestive of an august and sober, if not academic and scientific orientation, typical of such institutions in Italy. It was decided to work with the online guide, because it also furnished significant contextual information in the form of photographs of the museum environment, including displays and layouts, also deemed an important parameter in mediating between the two cultures. The extract chosen is a description of the various collections housed in the museum, how they are organised, and where they are situated in the building. Although this was apparently a fairly straightforward translation task, significant differences emerged in the ways students responded to the cultural attitudes and values embodied in the conventional JOURNEY metaphor of “percorso” that, moreover, acts as a framing metaphor within the segment of sample text, in that it is used to structure and organise the order in which the information in the text is presented and internally connected.

The TT sample

The student translation data is presented and commented upon following the order of Bennett’s Developmental Model².

Example 1.

[...] Furthermore, in the art gallery on the mezzanine, the Museum presents the trail “Lo splendore del Guerriero. Armi africane antiche” (“The glory of the warrior. Ancient African weapons”)
 [...] The Oceanian department presents a trail that stretches through the whole continent. The objects are exhibited according to thematic and geographical criteria; each section houses a given ethnological topic which is illustrated through the materials indicative of a particular region.
 [...] The American department shows the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and the ancient Andean world. It houses an introductive trail on the peopling of the Americas and their first contacts with European populations.

Example 1 typifies a more ethnocentric approach. This is particularly evident in the attempt to maintain the framing metaphor “percorso” with the referent “trail”, a choice that subsequently entails problems both at the level of contextual and lexical collocation. In English, for example, “trail” collocates most frequently with outdoor contexts of exploration or aspects of the leisure and entertainment industry, like “adventure” or “nature trail”, both of which are inappropriate in this context: firstly because it is an indoor situation; secondly because the text is describing a rather sober ethnographical museum. Additionally, this example confirms Hatim and Mason's (1990: 232) point about the difficulty of achieving equivalence above

² All data maintain any spelling, grammatical, and collocation errors students may have made in their translations.

word level when translating extended or framing metaphors: “any literal rendering is likely to result in a set of low-frequency collocations and coherence will be therefore more difficult to recover”.

Linguistically speaking, this is by no means a poor L2 translation; but it is a perfect demonstration that linguistic ability is no guarantee of intercultural competence, though it does make it easier to acquire and put into practice. With the exception of the conventional metaphor, it achieves most of the levels of equivalence defined by Mona Baker (1992) in her seminal guide to translation: word level, above word level, grammatical, textual and pragmatic equivalence. However, the markedness of the translated metaphor testifies to the difficulties of negotiating between SC values like communicative style, situational context, and target reader expectations, which ultimately should not be misled by the translation. This sample could be defined as an example of Bennett's (as cited in Katan 2004: 334) minimization strategy, in that “it acknowledges cultural differences but suggests that these are minimal”. Indeed, when asked to explain and describe the approach taken to the translation, the student stressed the time and effort spent trying to successfully translate the “percorso” metaphor, and deemed that the aesthetic function of the text, and the cultural values associated with it, were a priority. Significantly, this student did not include a list of sites consulted in the search for compatible contexts that might serve as stylistic models for the translation. The reason given for this was that the text did not seem to be problematic and that the student expected to successfully render the SC values embodied in the style without consulting TC models. The limitations of this translation as an example of cultural mediation are due to the excessive importance attributed to SC aesthetic values, which ultimately created a slightly distorted impression of the context TL visitors might expect to encounter.

Example 2

Explore **Africa, Oceania** and the **Americas** permanent exhibitions in the Ethnology department on the first floor.

Africa is divided into three areas: [...].

Then, on the mezzanine floor, discover “The warrior greatness. [...].

Explore all the **Oceania** continent with the Oceania itinerary. The objects displayed are organised both thematically and geographically. Discover the particular themes and materials of each area: [...].

In the Americas collection you will discover the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and of the Andean world. It starts with a preliminary itinerary to make you learn about the settlement of the Americas and the first contact with Europe.

This TT reveals considerably more Intercultural Sensitivity. This is evident in the way the student attempts to maintain the JOURNEY source domain by replacing “percorso” with verbs in the imperative mood, a solution that enables the student to avoid the kinds of collocation problems identified in *Example 1*. These decisions were clearly based on research into how public information about cultural heritage is frequently presented in Anglophone contexts at the moment, as this example from some of the source material accessed by the student makes clear:

Example 3

Looking for something fun and enlightening to do? Check out our events and exhibitions, many of which draw on the Library's rich collections.

We host talks, workshops, films, guided tours and more, for audiences across all age groups. Many of our events – including our exhibitions – are free. We also run specialised learning programs for students and adults.

Featured events

Wednesday 20 April 2011, 10:15am - 12:30pm

[Finding families: genealogy workshop](#)

Learn family history research skills in the genealogy centre.

Wednesday 20 April 2011, 11:00am - 11:45am

[Baby bounce sessions](#)

Share stories and songs with young children (up to two years) to enhance language development.

Such models can exert a strong pull on trainee translators working towards the L2, especially the risk-takers (Campbell 1998: 107), who feel that they have, so to speak, discovered the 'Holy Grail' of cultural appropriateness. Nevertheless, the highly interactive "synthetic personalization" option (Fairclough 2001: 52) cannot really be deemed an entirely convincing instance of cultural mediation. Firstly, because it does not correspond to a context in which the museum and exhibition experience probably fails to provide the sort of thrills and excitement implied in the deontic modality and interactive style of the TC model. In other words, once inside the museum, visitors are likely to be somewhat less entertained than the translation would lead them to expect. What may be appropriate in one cultural context may not square with the approach to cultural heritage information in the SC one. Secondly, this choice involves a marked unevenness in tenor and mode in the target text itself, which oscillates between the interactive familiarity of the imperatives and more impersonal and academic descriptions of the criteria underpinning the organisation of the collections. This prevents the text achieving convincing coherence – a risk anticipated by Hatim and Mason (1990: 232-233). Nevertheless the student is, encouragingly, an experimenter. Although it is an attitude that involves contextual inappropriateness, it is the right kind of inappropriateness when viewed against the ultimate aim of instilling cultural sensitivity, because it indicates a readiness to take on board alternative cultural models.

In terms of Bennett's developmental model (as cited in Katan 2004: 334), this student is in the acceptance stage of the ethnorelative phase, in which:

The translator begins to perceive that his/her ethnocentric model of the world is not the only one, and that the text-based copying, though possible, will not communicate the same message across cultures. The translator's model of the world is now framed to include local contexts of situation and culture.

However, the precise degree of ethnorelativity in this student's work actually entails aspects of "complete and unquestioning reversal" (as cited in Katan 2004: 333), which Bennett sees as the reverse of the most extreme ethnocentric position of "superiority". In short, it embodies the opposite side of the coin to minimisation, and it is marked in this case by the "assumption of the superiority of a different culture (as cited in Katan 2004: 333). In this instance, a widespread TC model is held to be innately preferable, despite the contextual discrepancy.

Example 4

On the first floor is the section dedicated to **Ethnography**, with a permanent exhibition on **Africa, Oceania and the Americas**.

The exhibition devoted to **Africa** is organised around four topics [...] In addition to these collections, the mezzanine floor houses [...]

[...] The exhibition **Oceania** provides a complete picture of the continent. Objects are thematically and geographically arranged and each section features a specific ethnological topic by displaying objects related to a particular area [...]

Objects on display in the exhibition **Americas** refer to the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and the Andean region, the first part providing an introductory overview of the peoples who settled this area and their first contacts with the Europeans.

The final example reflects a high degree of intercultural sensitivity. Significantly, the student has abandoned the conventional JOURNEY metaphor, opting, rather, to translate the target domain concept, a strategy advocated by Knowles and Moon (2006: 91). In the TT the original metaphorical decoration has either been stripped away entirely, or replaced with convincing conventional metaphors for a similar target domain, or concept, in the TT, as in the case of providing a “complete picture”, in place of the JOURNEY metaphor, responsible for distracting collocations in the other examples. By translating the target domain of the TL metaphor, rather than prioritising any cultural connotations or aesthetic values it implies, the student has achieved a convincing compromise. The effectiveness of this translation also depends on the appropriateness of the models sourced. The following example of the kind of sources drawn on by the student indicates how important the search for appropriate contextual models is:

Example 5

On the first floor, The Victorian Gallery houses porcelain made at the Severn Street factory, starting with armorial and cabinet wares made by Chamberlain. A small section displays wares made by the Grainger factory and the main part of the gallery, concentrates on the early productions of Royal Worcester. The central space is dominated by the intricate enamel work of Thomas Bott, flanked by decorative and useful objects in almost every known style and material, including one off exhibition pieces such as the Shakespeare Service and the Potter's vases. Passing the enormous Chicago Exhibition vase, the next display illustrates the marvels of the pierced work of George Owen. The final display, a cluttered Victorian parlour, illustrates how, by the end of the 19th century, porcelain was used to make almost every type of object imaginable.

Overall, this student's approach and work appear to strike the right balance between the risk-taking in *Example 2* and the resistance in *Example 1*. This is particularly evident in the decision to use exhibition/museum as the Actor, rather than the Beneficiary of an impersonal agent, a strategy that communicates an appropriate level of dynamism without the more contextually inappropriate exaggeration, or 'hype' of the imperative. Defining this translation in terms of Bennett's model, I would rank it as an example of advanced acceptance, in which the translator has been able “to reference or access alternative world maps” (as cited in Katan 2004: 336) and choose the right one. I would also place it on the cusp of adaptation, specifically, the level of empathy, where “the translator [...] is able to automatically construct a virtual text, based on a number of 'others': client, publisher, readers and so on” (Katan 2004: 336). As yet, this process is not automatic, but this student appears to be progressing steadily in that direction.

Concluding Remarks

By choosing the wide-scope conventional metaphor (Kövecses, 2002: 108-109) “percorso” as a criterion for assessing L2 students as cultural mediators and by classifying their work by referring to Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, it proved feasible to define a taxonomy of trainee L2 cultural mediators within the student sample. The examples in this paper represent three broad categories that emerged in the study as a whole: a relatively ethnocentric one, where the student prioritises the SC values perceived as being 'enshrined' in the conventional metaphor; an intermediate, ethnorelative one, where the student maintains the metaphor but changes the word class, opting for the deontic modalities, typical of the directive text functions used with increasing frequency in cultural heritage information texts in Anglophone cultures. In many cases, such model texts reflect a concept of museum that

might be classed as interactive rather than static, entertaining rather than traditionally didactic. In texts like this, culture and learning shade into leisure and entertainment, and as such they embody the process of “marketisation” (Fairclough, 1995: 130-166) of institutional contexts characterised by the phenomenon of “synthetic personalisation”. The study suggests that automatic adoption of dominant genre conventions in the TC (Limon 2008: 65-66) will often be inappropriate contextually, in that the kind of expectation built up by the text function may not correspond to the situational context of the SL. The third category is the most convincing in ethnorelative terms, because it shows how it is possible for students to choose from a series of alternative cultural maps in the TC and select the one that provides the most appropriate linguistic, stylistic and contextual template for the mediation.

Bennett (as cited in Katan, 2004: 338) suggests the stages of intercultural competence should ideally correspond to different levels of linguistic competence and instruction. The following table (cited in Katan, 2004: 338) indicates the recommended stage of intercultural instruction for each broad language competence level:

Table 2

Language Level	Likely intercultural awareness level	Focus
Novice	Level 1: Denial and Defence	Cultural similarities, support world view
Intermediate	Level 2: Minimisation	Exploring perception, acceptance, self-awareness exercise
Advanced	Level 3: Adaptation and integration	Experiential learning, cultural contrasts, value systems.

In this model the instruction is linked to clear-cut divisions in linguistic ability. This presumes a homogenous student population or sample, whereas in the context of the student sample used for this study, the intake is more heterogeneous, made up of students who have attended different kinds of translation courses. While the linguistic level would be defined as advanced, because it is a requirement for selection and for passing the entrance exam, such students reveal different levels of intercultural sensitivity, which appear to be spread over the various levels of stages 2 and 3. To more accurately reflect the relation between linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity levels likely to be encountered in L2 students on such courses, the table might be modified in the following way:

Table 3

Language level	Likely intercultural sensitivity level	Likely outcomes
Advanced	Level 1: minimisation	Prioritising contextually inappropriate aspects of ST communication style
	Level 2: acceptance (reversal)	Prioritising contextually inappropriate aspects of TL communication style
	Level 3: Adaptation	Selection of contextually appropriate communication style

The above study suggests that if it is possible to divide L2 translation students into categories of L2 cultural mediators, it is also possible to define why some students are (at the time of the study and for that text-type) more successful than others. It is hoped that these findings will be regarded as encouraging by L2 translator trainers, because they show that L2 students can be trained to cross the threshold from bilingual copying to bi-cultural mediation in the second

language and that criteria can be established for assessing how effectively they do so. To achieve this, it appears that it would be fruitful to show them how intercultural sensitivity involves carefully assessing the different options available for the translation of communicative style into the Target Culture, and the need to choose the most appropriate model of discourse for the translation of the ST, striking a compromise between the situational context and TC user expectations; in other words, matching models of genres and discourses as precisely as possible to the context, without distorting its identity and without setting up false expectations in the TT text receiver.

Example 3 would suggest that with due focus on the intercultural aspects of L2 translation pedagogy L2 students can learn how to “improve cross cultural communication, and build trust and understanding between communities” (Katan 2004: 337). In fact, in subsequent work in this domain, such a student is unlikely to unduly prioritise marginal aesthetic considerations, or to impose inappropriate hegemonic models that mislead TT readers about the SC context.

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Appendix

The following appendix comprises the ST used for the study, the full student sample TT's and TT models sourced by students and cited as examples in the paper.

Source Text

<http://www.pigorini.beniculturali.it/>

Al primo piano si aprono Africa, Oceania e Americhe, esposizioni permanenti del settore etnografico. L'Africa è divisa in tre aree: "La scoperta della costa occidentale. Primi oggetti africani in Italia", "L'esplorazione dell'interno del continente. Le raccolte etnografiche" e "La scoperta dell'Arte Negra". Inoltre, lo spazio espositivo del soppalco ospita "Lo splendore del Guerriero. Armi africane antiche". L'Oceania ha un percorso che si snoda attraverso tutta il continente. Gli oggetti sono esposti seguendo un criterio tematico e geografico; ogni sezione presenta un particolare tema etnologico attraverso i materiali di una regione specifica: "Case degli Uomini", "Arte, rito e società", "La sacralità del potere" e "Le culture aborigene dell'Australia". Le Americhe si riferiscono alle culture archeologiche della Mesoamerica, dell'America Centrale e del Mondo andino. Prevede un percorso introduttivo sul popolamento e sui primi contatti con gli europei.

Student TT: example 1

The African department is divided into three sections: “*La scoperta della costa occidentale. Primi oggetti africani in Italia*” (“The discovery of the West coast. The first African objects in Italy”), “*L’esplorazione dell’interno del continente. Le raccolte etnografiche*” (“The exploration of the inner part of the continent. The ethnographic collections”) and “*La scoperta dell’Arte Negra*” (“The discovery of the Afro-american art”). Furthermore, in the art gallery on the *mezzanine*, the *Museum* presents the trail “*Lo splendore del Guerriero. Armi africane antiche*” (“The glory of the warrior. Ancien African weapons”).

The Oceanian department presents a trail that stretches through the whole continent. The objects are exhibited according to thematic and geographical criteria; each section houses a given ethnological topic which is illustrated through the materials indicative of a particular region: “*Case degli Uomini*” (“Houses of man”), “*Arte, rito e società*” (“Art, ritual and society”), “*La sacralità del potere*” (“The sacredness of power”) and “*Le culture aborigine dell’Australia*” (“The aboriginal cultures of Australia”).

The American department shows the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and the ancient Andean world. It houses an introductory trail on the peopling of the Americas and their first contacts with European populations.

Student TT: Example 2

Explore **Africa**, **Oceania** and the **Americas** permanent exhibitions in the Ethnology department on the first floor.

Africa is divided into three areas: “The west coast discovery. The first African objects in Italy” (*La scoperta della costa occidentale. Primi oggetti africani in Italia*), “The exploration of the interior of the continent. Ethnographic collections” (*L’esplorazione dell’interno del continente. Le raccolte etnografiche*) and “The discovery of Nigro art” (*La scoperta dell’Arte Negra*). Then, on the mezzanine floor, discover “The warrior greatness. Old African weapons” (*Lo splendore del Guerriero. Armi africane antiche*).

Explore all the **Oceania** continent with the Oceania itinerary. The objects displayed are organised both thematically and geographically. Discover the particular themes and materials of each area: “Men’s houses” (*Case degli Uomini*), “Art, rite and society” (*Arte, rito e società*), “Sacred power” (*La sacralità del potere*) and “Aboriginal cultures of Australia” (*Le culture aborigine dell’Australia*).

In the **Americas** collection you will discover the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and of the Andean world. It starts with a preliminary itinerary to make you learn about the settlement of the Americas and the first contact with Europe

Student TT: example 4

On the first floor is the section dedicated to **Ethnography**, with a permanent exhibition on **Africa**, **Oceania** and **the Americas**.

The exhibition devoted to **Africa** is organised around four topics: “La scoperta della costa occidentale. Primi oggetti africani in Italia” (“Discovering the West coast. The first African objects used in Italy”), “L’esplorazione dell’interno del continente. Le raccolte etnografiche” (“Discovering the continent’s interior. The ethnographic collections”) and “La scoperta dell’Arte Negra” (“Discovering the Black Art”). In addition to these collections, the

mezzanine floor houses “Lo splendore del Guerriero. Armi africane antiche”. (“The Warrior’s splendor. Ancient African weapons”).

The exhibition **Oceania** provides a complete picture of the continent. Objects are thematically and geographically arranged and each section features a specific ethnological topic by displaying objects related to a particular area: “Case degli Uomini” (“The men’s houses”), “Arte, rito e società” (“Art, rites and society”), “La sacralità del potere” (“The sanctity of power”) and “Le culture aborigene dell’Australia” (“The native Australian cultures”).

Objects on display in the exhibition **Americas** refer to the archaeological cultures of Mesoamerica, Central America and the Andean region, the first part providing an introductory overview of the peoples who settled this area and their first contacts with the Europeans.

TT Source model sample 3

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/whats-on>

Looking for something fun and enlightening to do? Check out our events and exhibitions, many of which draw on the Library's rich collections.

We host talks, workshops, films, guided tours and more, for audiences across all age groups. Many of our events – including our exhibitions – are free. We also run specialised [learning programs](#) for students and adults.

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[Baby bounce sessions](#)

Share stories and songs with young children (up to two years) to enhance language development.

TT Source model Sample 2a

<http://www.worcesterporcelainmuseum.org.uk/collections/galleries/>

On the first floor, The Victorian Gallery houses porcelain made at the Severn Street factory, starting with armorial and cabinet wares made by Chamberlain. A small section displays wares made by the Grainger factory and the main part of the gallery, concentrates on the early productions of Royal Worcester. The central space is dominated by the intricate enamel work of Thomas Bott, flanked by decorative and useful objects in almost every known style and material, including one off exhibition pieces such as the Shakespeare Service and the Potter's vases. Passing the enormous Chicago Exhibition vase, the next display illustrates the marvels of the pierced work of George Owen. The final display, a cluttered Victorian parlour, illustrates how, by the end of the 19th century, porcelain was used to make almost every type of object imaginable.