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MARKETING FOOD THROUGH TRANSLATION: AN ANALYSIS OF A HUNDRED MENUS FROM LAZIO

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Abstract

A restaurant menu is both a business card of sorts and a showcase for any food service establishment. As such, it belongs to a complex genre of *info-marketing* communication and is as yet a form of food-related text that has received surprisingly little critical attention with regard to its semiotic and multimedial features. The verbal level of the menu – dish names in particular – has also so far been neglected by linguistic and pragmatic studies. In a previous study by Graziano and Mocini (2015) founded on Halliday's (1994) functional grammar as well as Floch's (1990) socio-semiotic framework, the peculiar morpho-syntactic and lexical structure of this form of brief text was analysed paying special attention to its twofold informative and persuasive function. The present study, conducted on the dish names of one hundred menus taken from the websites of as many restaurants operating in Lazio (Italy), confirms the presence of the previously identified promotional strategies on a wider scale, both from the quantitative and the qualitative point of view. A second point analysed is whether and to what extent the English versions of the same menus employ the same strategies. The translation analysis is conducted using a comparative linguistic approach applied to Language for Special Purposes, orientation strategies and translation procedures commonly identified in Translation Theories, and, in part, Error Analysis. It is to be concluded that, despite the emphasis traditionally placed on the culture-bound characteristics of food language, what establishes the pragmatics of this kind of text, therefore posing greater difficulties in translation, is the combination of syntactic order and sensory-metaphorical lexis.

1. Introduction

It is certainly no coincidence that the first example used by Roman Jakobson (1959) to start his seminal discussion on linguistic-cultural studies of translation was taken from the domain of food. The well-known case of the word *cheese*, borrowed from the logician Bertrand Russell, triggered Jakobson's thought on radical linguistic arbitrariness and, developed in the same essay through a comparative analysis with the Russian *sýr*, it originated the "equivalence in difference" concept as "the cardinal problem of language" and "the pivotal concern of linguistics" as well as a regulating factor in the practice of interlingual translation and a dynamic measure of the translatability of texts.

Taking their cue from Jakobson and moving on up to Cronin's *Eco-Translation* (2017), which posits the food/translation rapport as the primary component of what today is perhaps the most brilliant and ethically noble interpretation of the translator's work, and passing via Expo 2015, which saw an increase in studies on the cultural, linguistic, literary and media value of food and nutrition¹, Food Studies and Translation Studies have proven to be doubly connected. The two fields present analogies in their respective objects of study and offer possibilities in layered interpretations with interdisciplinary input from anthropology, sociology, aesthetics, cultural and communication studies and even the medical and biological sciences (Chiaro and Rossato 2015):

As food and cuisines – like ethnic groups, civilizations and languages – migrate and blend together or, by reaction, seek to maintain/reproduce an 'originating' identity, and as communication channels become increasingly multimedial, absorbing and transforming more traditional ones, the textuality derived from the contemporary obsession with food is enriched both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its old and new genres are increasingly subjected to practices of 'transference' ranging from simple intralingual rewording (i.e. the product label) and interlingual translation (i.e. the recipe in L2) to localization of television shows (*MasterChef* & co.) and internationalization of blogs, ending with extremely interesting back-version phenomena – for example, the various multimedia products of the Jamie Oliver supply chain, which for an Italian audience retranslates Italian gastronomy previously translated for the Anglophone context (Rossato 2015). In all cases, processes of 're-interpretation' and 'rewriting' come into play, involving the referent, the real product, and the linguistic-semiotic level of its description in a loop. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that no recipe really succeeds as it should – or better, is never like the one at home. Whether it is a question of ingredients or words, it is substantially non-transferable – yet almost infinitely adaptable.

Within the vast textuality related to food, this paper continues research on menus, and more particularly on dish names, inaugurated around Expo 2015. The intrinsically multimodal and multimedial nature and the important marketing role, which make the menu a distinctive element of the overall 'style' of a restaurant, deserve more in-depth analysis from the point of view of semiotic studies of communication than has been done so far (Lakoff 2006; Chau 2014)². And also dish names, which are different texts from simple food names – more complex and at the same time briefer than recipes and with a different purpose – have been neglected by pragma-linguistics³. Graziano and Mocini (2015) have described the peculiar composition strategies utilized in a bilingual

¹ See, among others, the special issues of three scientific journals under the editing of Proietti (2012, 2013); Chiaro and Rossato (2015); and Petrocchi (2015) (the latter including a bibliography of about 950 titles on Literary Food Studies).

² Management-oriented handbooks setting guidelines for the composition of successful menus are more common (for a review of such literature, see Ozdemir and Caliskan 2013). Other kinds of food-related textuality, such as cookery books or television shows, have had more luck in the semiotic field as well: see for example the numerous articles in the magazine of the Italian Association for Semiotic Studies *E/C*, edited by Gianfranco Marrone. The contribution of psychology is also interesting, ranging from Seaberg (1971) to the Gallup survey on the time spent in reading a menu, which is reckoned to be about 109 seconds.

³ There are some exceptions in Italian: Caffarelli (2002); Stefinlongo (2006); Bonazzi (2009). In English, besides the information that can be found in the above-mentioned manuals (see for example McVety, Ware and Lévesque Ware 2009) and journalistic articles (e.g. Dickerman 2003), Jurafski (2014) has studied dish names, recipes and menus above all from the historical-linguistic point of view.

Italian-English corpus of menus from sixty of the best restaurants in the six major Italian art cities, using Floch's socio-semiotic tools, Halliday's functional linguistics and recent post-Iser studies on empirical reading. Taking up the premises of the previous study, the present investigation seeks further confirmation and demonstration of the inter-relation between food and language in the study of a wider, more varied corpus of dish names, albeit regionally circumscribed⁴, analysing if, how and to what extent it is possible to render the communicative intention of the original text in its translation into international English (ELF). The focus of this further research on menus thus shifts from composition to translation strategies and the analytical methodology includes the experience of comparative linguistics applied in particular to English for Special Purposes (ESP), of Translation Studies and, partially, of Error Analysis. It will be shown that this textual object of a non-literary but pragmatically complex nature, being both informative and persuasive, allows the application of strategies which from Schleiermacher to Venuti rewrite the eternal fluctuation between source- and target-orientation⁵, and in fact exemplifies many of the methods identified by translation theoreticians. The research concludes that a study of the characteristics and potential offered by such textuality is an integral part of the studies on tourism and *info-marketing* communication, offering the restaurant industry greater scope for its utilization for promotional purposes.

2. Marketing strategies

Before proceeding to analyse translation strategies and procedures used in the corpus of menus in the Lazio region, it will be useful to identify a taxonomy based on their Italian versions, cross-checking the criterion of quantitative exploitation of the nominal group composing the dish name with the qualitative criterion of marketing strategies, borrowed from Floch's (1990) socio-semiotics – that is, his *idéologies mythique, référentielle, substantielle* and *oblique*. Three types can be identified for the first criterion: 1) brief fairly conventional menus; 2) menus which precisely indicate ingredients, methods of preparation and condiments, at times through co-ordination, at times through modification achieved with one or more prepositional phrases; 3) menus which include highly complex syntax, often accompanied by refined vocabulary using both technical gastronomical expressions and culinary metaphors⁶. The following are examples of the first type:

⁴ The bilingual Italian-English corpus of a hundred menus in the Lazio Region was collected in 2014 by Debora Galassi and subjected to a first rudimentary analysis for her M.A. thesis, of which I was supervisor (Università della Tuscia, Viterbo). The selection of menus was circumscribed to the ones appearing on the restaurant websites for obvious reasons of digital compilation and was mainly focused on Italian and regional gastronomy, to the exclusion of ethnic or even fusion cuisines. At the same time the intention was to try and cover the widest possible typology of restaurants in terms of price and category, thus providing a control corpus to the former one, based on the top restaurants of major tourist destinations. The corpus has been re-examined and partly updated in the last three years, although the 'style' of such menus, along with the quality of the translations, has essentially remained unchanged. Given the large number of dishes provided in Italian, it was decided not to translate them into English to ensure greater fluency in reading the text, thereby reducing the risk of 'verbal indigestion'!

⁵ For a comprehensive comparison of terminology of orientation strategies, see Munday 2016: 311.

⁶ These types can include gradations and overlapping and are to be interpreted as general trends,

Grigliata mista, Rombo, Sogliola, Orata, Pescato del giorno (Antica Taverna, RM); Antipasto della casa, Carpaccio, Tartare, Ostriche, Tartufi (Assunta Madre, RM); Insalata, Patate, Rughetta, Verdura cotta, Pomodori (Il Castagneto, Fiuggi, FR); Abbacchio, Manzo, Baccalà al forno, Piccione (Open Colonna, RM); Tiramisù, Crème caramel, Crostata alla frutta/cioccolato, Pastiera napoletana (Taverna Quintilia, Tivoli, RM).

Such menus, minimal even in the dishes' verbal presentation, are typical of long-popular restaurants in Rome or of those located in touristic locations boasting a tradition. The compositional strategy aims to emphasize the elements of gastronomic tradition and conservation and targets a type of clientele – including foreigners – seeking typically Italian or even local flavours. In more extreme cases of conciseness there is almost no information (the cooking method of a meat or fish is evidently entrusted to the cook's improvisation or the client's taste); while more often these menus like to alternate conciseness with rhetorical devices such as antonomasia and eponymy, at times used together:

I tortelli di ortica "Biscetti"; I Tortelli all'Etrusca. (Biscetti, Bagnaia, VT)
 Tagliere Cavatappi, Pennette Cavatappi. (Cavatappi, Tarquinia, VT)
 L'Insalata di mare, Il Prosciutto e melone, Il Pollo alla griglia, Le Alici fritte, Il Parmigiano Reggiano, Il Sorbetto al Limone; Le "Fregnacce del Gatto", Il "Risotto della Volpe". (Il Gatto e la Volpe, Formia, LT)

Both are referable to Floch's (1990) *idéologie mythique*, which, by exploiting the mental associations of symbols and legends or heroic or mythological figures, speaks to the collective consciousness and cloaks the product with a dream-like aura. Eponymy in particular recurs at least once in almost all the menus and for all types of dishes:

Fettuccine Romolo e Remo. (Romolo e Remo, RM)
 Suppli di Aldo, Polpettine di "Nonna Lella", Tonnarelli alla Cuccagna. (Sora Lella, RM)
 Filetto di manzo alla Sophie. (La Taverna dei Fori Imperiali, RM)
 Cime all'Amerigo Vespucci, Radiatori all'Andrea Doria. (La Cantinella Gaetana, Gaeta, LT)
 Zuppa etrusca con ortaggi, legumi, orzo perlato, cavolo nero aromatizzato alle erbe. (Giò, RM)

Even though, as in the last example, the dish components are often specified, generally the more traditionalist menus tend to take the actual content of a dish for granted, concealing it in the 'dead metaphor' of a preparation method assumed to be universally known. The ever-present *alla bolognese*, *all'amatriciana*, *alla carbonara*, *alla giudia*, *alla romana*, *alla milanese*, *alla cacciatora*, etc. also fulfil the promotional function which makes traditional Italian cooking a shared myth.

Floch's (*ibid.*) *idéologie référentielle*, which in advertising aims to inform the client about the product's features as objectively as possible, can be said to inspire the vast majority of Lazio menus (probably Italian). The nominal group syntax is here exploited

which only at the extreme ends may be said to constitute a 'style', whereas in the same menu, apart from some exceptions, there may be discrepancies and varieties of strategic choices for Italian as well as English.

to the point where an explanation, including ingredients and their geographical origin or brand, method of preparation, condiments and various herbs, may become exaggeratedly detailed:

1. COORDINATION: Pesce spada olive capperi e pomodorino (Hostaria dell'Orso, RM); Pezzogna, foglia di cavolo melograno e aglio nero (Metamorfosi, RM); Uovo croccante, asparagi, crema al pecorino (Molto, RM); Couscous di farro e verdure, burrata e uova di salmone (Primo al Pigneto, RM); Asparagi bianchi e uova di quaglia, lattughina e stracchinato romano (Imàgo, RM); Zuppetta leggera di funghi prataioli tartufo nero di Norcia e piccione di Bresse (La Terrazza dell'Eden, RM); Mezze maniche Verrigni, mazzancolle limonate, bottarga di muggine e aneto (Antico Arco, RM).

2. PREDICATIVE AND/OR PREPOSITIONAL MODIFICATION: Risotto mantecato ai Funghi e Tartufo (Carrera, Fondi, LT); Prosciutto di Parma stagionato 24 mesi e mozzarella di bufala (Casa Coppelle, RM); Mazzancolle scottate con latte di cocco, pasta di curry piccante e verdure di stagione saltate al wok (Il Valentino, RM); Lonza di Maiale Friulano con Puntarelle, Salsa d'Acciughe e Burrata di Andria (Cristal, LT); Mousse al cioccolato Barry Callebaut Cuba al 75% con cuore al Bourbon (Doney, RM); Filetti di acciughe del Mar Cantabrico selezione Nardin con burro Echiré della Normandia e pan brioche (Baccano, RM); Riso Biodinamico delle Cascine Orsini integrale alla Zucca Gialla e Curcuma (Raphael, RM).

The typically Anglo-American tendency to reveal what is hidden behind fanciful or strongly cultural-specific names for dishes, along with the recent health-conscious fashion for organic food, food miles and controlled origin of products lead to extremely redundant menus, in which very simple dishes are presented with expressions like the following:

1 TONNO ROSSO STAGIONATO SOTT'OLIO: tonno rosso siciliano sott'olio cotto al vapore, stagionatura 2010 con carciofi romaneschi alla griglia e cipolline borrettane al balsamico.

CACIO E PEPE: tonnarello all'uovo con pecorino romano DOP, cacio di Moliterno, pecorino di fossa di Sogliano del Rubicone e pepe malesiano.

HAMBURGER DI CARNE: di razza Fassona alla piastra con bacon dorato, cheddar Farmhouse, maionese espressa, salsa di Bloody Mary e mostarda di Digione. (Roscioli, RM)

2 UOVA DI GALLINA LIVORNESE AL TEGAMINO CON ASPARAGI E LARDO: uova livornesi Peppovo Sora, asparagi Giobbi Ariccia, lardo Stefanoni Viterbo.

SPAGHETTI ALLA CHITARRA CON PESTO DI ZUCCHINE, NOCCIOLE E MENTA: pasta di nostra produzione con uova di San Bartolomeo Vetralla e blend di farine Capati Civita Castellana, zucchine e menta Giobbi Ariccia, nocciole Dea Nocciola Viterbo.

CHEESEBURGER URBANA 47: manzo Tenuta dell'Argento Civitavecchia, fiocco della Tuscia Chiodetti Civita Castellana, guanciale SANO Amatrice, maionese di nostra produzione con uova San Bartolomeo Vetralla, verdure a foglia e cipolle rosse Sacconi Nettuno. (Urbana 47, RM)

The expansion of nominal groups to include detailed referential information demanded by the modern tourist also induces the use of epithets, diminutives and qualifiers corresponding to the function which, with Floch (1990), we call *substantielle* – that is,

the appeal to the consumer's senses. In the above-mentioned examples, adjectives such as *croccante* (crunchy) and *leggera* (light) referring to the cooking method, introduce a value-judgement, while *lattughina* (baby lettuce) and *cuore* (heart) clearly elicit sensorial associations. Below are further examples from second and third type menus of this promotional strategy, based essentially on suggestions of colour, texture and aroma, often placed in contrast (Bourne 1982; Mohamed, Jowitt and Brennan 1982; Lawless 2000):

Crudo di spigola, salmone e gambero rosso su wafer croccante con spuma al "Margarita"; Crema tiepida di piselli con astice e cipolla rossa in agretto; Filetti di San Pietro con timballino di riso nero e pistilli di zafferano pregiato. (Aroma, RM)
 Spaghetti ruvidi, cacio e pepe con zucchine croccanti (piatto della tradizione romana). (Clemente alla Maddalena, RM)
 Tonnarelli fatti in casa con cacio romano, pepe nero grezzo, grana croccante e ricotta di Bufala; Tenero Gulasch di cinghiale con salsa al vino rosso con note piccanti; Elogio al cioccolato caldo con cuore morbido, servito su crema fredda alla vaniglia. (Divin Peccato, RM)
 Merluzzo carbonaro glassato al sakè, verdure in campo viola; Babà in sospensione e rum speziato, aroma di mandorla e zenzero. (Imàgo, RM)
 Ceviche di capesante e cannolicchi melone bianco e pomodoro verde. (Metamorfosi, RM)
 Variazione di crudo: Tartare di tonno su salsa alla pesca gialla e rosmarino, tartare di ricciola su rugiada di limone, gamberi bianchi Siciliani su pera grigliata. (Minerva Roof Garden, RM)

Finally, occurrences such as *elogio* (eulogy) and *rugiada* (dew) fall within Floch's (1990) *idéologie oblique*, in which linguistic elements from different cultural domains or from different sectors of the gastronomical domain are juxtaposed. Such a strategy engages the menu reader in a cognitive/interpretative effort as much as the substantial does on the physical plane of the senses.

"Raffaello" di fois gras, "Tiramisù" di patate e baccalà, "Rocher" di coda alla vaccinara. (All'Oro, RM)
Alternanza di pomodoro, bufala e basilico su julienne d'insalatina di campo. (Cabiria, RM)
Puzzle di Anatra con Cuore di Fegato brulata agli odori del bosco e Cambiamenti di Stagione; Manzo al Curry di Bacche di Bosco e Quadro di Verdure; Insalata immersa e Nuvole dell'orto. (Enoteca La Torre, RM)
Pepite di fegato grasso d'anatra...; Sfoglina di manzo su amaranto... (La Pergola, RM)
 Rombo confit con cappuccino di calamaro e cardoncelli. (Glass, RM)
Strudel ai carciofi, ricotta, pecorino e menta. (Grappolo d'oro, RM)
Frivolezza all'arancia con spuma di cioccolato bianco; Variazione al cioccolato; Impressio-
nismo di crema e zabaglione al caffè. (Vivendo, RM)

The greatest concentration of this promotional strategy is found in the third menu type, in combination with the referential and substantial functions, supported by long nominal groups made up of several prepositional phrases, where the head of the sequence is at times not a food, but an 'estrangement' element. Predictably, such linguistic sophistication reflects innovation and gastronomic creativity. Some dishes from the same restaurant (Brunello Lounge & Restaurant, RM) show that it is possible to utilize all four of Floch's (*ibid.*) ideologies with admirable variety in one menu:

Mythical: Zuppetta etrusca con ortaggi e legumi primaverili e crostone di pane casareccio;

Referential: Riso Carnaroli Bio selezione Acquerello alla crema di Grana Padano con ragout di maiale arrostito al mirto selvatico;

Substantial: Bavarese al cioccolato Amedei bianco, gianduia e fondente con frollino al cocco e crema soffice alle fragole;

Oblique: Seppie in guazzetto su passata di fagioli zolfini con tagliatelle di verdure al vapore; Guazzetto di frutta gratinata alla crema di Malvasia; Carpaccio d'ananas marinato alle spezie.

The complexity and potential of the single nominal group that makes up such “little texts” (Halliday 1994: 392) is evident. Particular ‘narrative’ attention to the collocation of the ingredient names within a dish definition – even more important for a language with a rigid syntax like English – along with an inclination for a sensorial lexis capable of stimulating synaesthetic emotion, can bring added value to the actual quality of the food and contribute to the national and international success of a restaurant. Thus, constant investment in professionally trained translators becomes vital⁷.

3. Translation strategies and procedures

Research similar to this study, on the translation of dish names as verbal text of menus from L1 to ELF, does not seem to be as plentiful as one might expect⁸. All studies traced agree on the dual (informative and performative) communicative function of the menu for the customer, and consequently on applying a functionalist and typological approach to the analysis both of the genre and the translations⁹. Nevertheless, in most cases the focus is on correctly rendering the information to the detriment of an investigation of the rendering of emotional and promotional effects: it is taken for granted that the menu translator’s “global decision” in terms of pragmatic strategies (Chesterman 1997: 107) is (or ought to be) to aim solely at the needs of a foreign clientele, ‘domesticating’ the lexis as much as possible to aid comprehension and foregoing any attempt to elicit the emotional response linked to promotional ideologies. If this is actually the global strategy of most of the translations, since in any case most of the menus are based on referential ideology, for the analyst to highlight just this aspect conceals the peculiar *info-marketing* nature of this textuality and the fact that even the

⁷ There has been no investigation of actual translators of menus in Lazio (and Italy), as has been done for example in the Tarragona area by Pouget 1999, following Catalan government regulations for the translation of menus into English, and in various regions of Greece, including Crete, by Grammenidis 2008.

⁸ Apart from accounts of personal experiences of translation (Altanero 2005; Epstein 2009; Orel 2013) and in addition to the two above-mentioned studies on Catalonia and Greece, some attention has been aroused by culturally distant cuisines like the Chinese (Mu 2010; Kang 2013; Peng 2015, to which I refer the reader for a list of at least a dozen Master’s theses and some important articles; Yang 2017); Thai (here too above all Master’s theses); and Persian (Ghafarian, Kafipour and Soori 2016). In Europe the most substantial academic studies are by the Polish linguist Padarowski (2010, 2017), whose work deals mostly with cookbooks providing an Anglophone corpus of comparison, and by two Lithuanian linguists (Ruzaitė 2006 and Kasparė 2012), whose corpora, while more limited than ours, provide similar methodological indications.

⁹ The most frequently applied theories – in analyses conducted by Asian scholars as well – are equivalence theories (e.g. Nida and Newmark), typological-functionalist approach (e.g. Nord and Reiss), and Skopos Theory (Vermeer); more recently foreignization and domestication strategies (e.g. Toury and Venuti).

referential ideology is a precise promotional and rhetorical strategy, especially in its most extreme forms. As Newmark (1988: 42, 48) underlines:

Most informative texts will either have a vocative thread running through them (it is essential that the translator pick this up), or the vocative function is restricted to a separate section of recommendation, opinion, or value-judgment; a text can hardly be purely informative, i.e. objective. [...] the vocative (persuasive) thread in most informative texts has to be rendered with an eye to the readership, i.e., with an equivalent effect purpose.

Thus, discussion of the problem of translation cannot be reduced to the question of the cultural specificity of some of the ingredient vocabulary and the search for the impossible equivalent. If instead the LSP component of such texts is given due consideration and their translation classified as first of all a matter of LSP/ESP translation (Scarpa 2008), it becomes clear that for the most part the culinary lexis – for example with reference to cooking methods – is technical and mono-referential when not formulaic and international. The search for direct equivalents can easily be resolved by consulting the excellent specialized dictionaries available even online (Cranchi 1983¹; Edigeo 2010; *Dizionario di cucina Inglese/Italiano*), which, at times, far from overdoing the culture-bound aspect, resort to a prestigious metalanguage such as French still is for the Western and Anglophone community in particular. Conversely, as the last part of our research shows, it is the syntactical level which presents the greatest difficulty in obtaining an “equivalent effect purpose”: it also shares LSP features, such as nominal density, but is in addition charged with marked semanticization.

With reference to the translation procedures identified by Vinay and Dalbarnet (1958), *literal/close translation* is applied to the majority of the menus, which are referential, from the simplest to the most detailed¹⁰. This type of translation, tending towards invariance, entails conceptual identity and standardized terminology (Snell-Hornby 1995: 34) and, from the point of view of syntax, the collocation of ingredients (with their possible toponyms and anthroponyms) and methods of preparation within the syntax of the English noun group:

Scarola con uvetta e pinoli = Batavian endive with raisins and pine nuts. (Baccano, RM)

Insalata di polipo e zenzero = Octopus salad with ginger. (Ditirambo, RM)

Carpaccio di filetto di bue danese con rucola e parmigiano, uova di quaglia e noci di pecan = Danish beef fillet carpaccio with rocket and parmesan cheese, quail eggs and pecan walnuts. (Il Valentino, RM)

Filetto di manzo ai ferri con salsa tartara e bernese, verdure gratinate e patate fritte = Grilled fillet of beef with tartare and béarnaise sauces, with vegetables au gratin and french fries. (Cabiria, RM)

Petto di pollo ruspante ai sentori di liquirizia con pera Spadone e insalata di spinaci novelli = Liquorice scented free-range chicken breast with Spadone pear and spring spinach salad; Profiteroles al liquore di limoni delle Peracciole = Cream puffs flavored with Peracciole lemon liqueur. (Vivavoce, RM)

¹⁰ Vinay and Dalbarnet's seven procedures – *borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence/idiomatic translation, adaptation* (also in Venuti 2000: 84-93) – have been revised and augmented by Newmark (1988: 69; 81-93), ultimately reaching 22 in Delisle *et al.* (1999).

FOIE GRAS: Terrina di fegato grasso d'oca cotto al vapore con pere cotte al karkadè e aceto balsamico di Reggio Emilia invecchiato 12 anni = FOIE GRAS: Terrine of steamed (goose) foie gras served with karkadè flavoured pears and 12 years aged balsamic vinegar from Modena. (Roscioli, RM)

The dictionary disambiguates the false friend *indivia/endive* with the precise identification of the ingredient, *Batavian endive*, or suggests the use of French words such as *tartare*, *béarnaise* and *au gratin*, and also helps in selecting the most elegant post-modifying sequences (*fillet of...*; *terrines of...*). On the other hand, only the translator's skill can explain the correct syntactical choice which collocates cooking procedures in pre-modifying position and keeps in post-modifying position the prepositional phrases introduced by *con/with*, at times replaced (and simplified) by coordination.

Remaining on the lexical level, when the technical terminology – transposed in the great majority of menus into their perfectly equivalent English or French forms (*emulsion*, *variation*, *reduction*, *grilled*, *braised*, *baked*, *boiled*, *fried*, *marinated*, *seared*, *stewed*, *steamed*, *sautéed*, etc., *consommé*, *emincé*, *julienne*, *escabèche*, *chutney*, *ceviche*, etc.) – is not found in dictionaries, the *transposition/recategorization* procedure, implying a shift in the part of speech without semantic variation, absolves the need to produce a translation and to assist the non-Italian customer in understanding, albeit with some loss of connotation:

Alici fritte con impanatura ai pistacchi = Fried anchovies with bread and pistachio crumbs. (Babette, RM)

Cartoccio di gamberi al sesamo = Sesame shrimps baked in tin foil. (Chez Cocò, RM)

Impepata di cozze = Mussels in black pepper sauté. (Hosteria dell'Orso, RM)

Battuto di frisona a coltello = Chopped "frisona" meat. (Risoamaro, Fondi, LT)

Guazzetto di dentice con peperoncino fresco = Stewed red snapper with fresh chilli. (Time, RM)

Tonno rosso scottato alla senape = Red tuna steak with mustard. (Quinzi & Gabrieli).

Vice versa, the challenge is by-passed with *omission*, frequently used not only for preparation methods¹¹, but also for many of those details which make up the referential 'style' of such menus, details connected to ingredient origin or brand, apparently not considered indispensable for comprehension, if not even counter-productive as a marketing strategy, given a certain awkwardness of hybrid language:

Prosciutto di Cinta Senese e melone = Ham and melon. (Cesare, RM)

Insalata di polpo alla ponzese = Octopus salad; Gamberoni Rossi di Mazzara = King Prawns. (La Veranda, S. Felice Circeo, LT)

Ravioli di melanzane aromatizzate al basilico con razza e carciofi = Ravioli pasta filled with aubergine with skate fish and artichokes; Rigatoni di Kamut con guanciale di Sauris, pomodori datterini e ricotta affumicata "da Noi" = Kamut "Rigatoni" pasta with cherry tomatoes, Sauris bacon and smoked ricotta cheese. (Aroma, RM)

¹¹ Some examples: Abbacchio al forno = Lamb (Il Castagneto, Fiuggi, RM); Filetto di manzo al Brandy scaloppato su insalatina = Fillet of beef with Brandy on salad (Oasi di Kufra, Sabaudia, RM); Polpettine di maialino da latte porchettato = Suckling pig meatballs (Molto, RM); Ravioli di baccalà mantecato con acqua di pomodoro e olive nere = Ravioli with cod in tomato water and black olives (Oliver Glowig, RM).

Cappellacci farciti con stracciatella di Andria e ricotta di bufala, su fonduta di pomodoro e basilico croccante = Home made large ravioli “Cappellacci” pasta with soft stracciatella cheese and ricotta served on a light tomato sauce with crispy basil; ...su crema di lenticchie di Castelluccio IGP... = ...on a layer of lentils [*sic*] cream... (Circus, RM)

The alternation of *direct* vs. *oblique translation* in Vinay and Dalbarnet’s (1958) terms – Venuti’s (1995) *foreignizing* vs. *domesticating* strategies – is observed above all in more markedly culture-bound menus, namely the more traditional group, apparently less complicated, but in actual fact more permeated with the mythical ideology. The most frequent procedure, *expansion/amplification*, transforms very concise menus in Italian into menus of the second type, resolving the culture-bound problems of national and local gastronomy, in particular the names of some typical dishes, through listing their ingredients or explaining the more traditional ways of culinary preparation, such as those expressed with the “alla + toponymic adjective/common noun/anthonym” periphrasis:

Pinzimonio alla romana = Fresh vegetables served with olive oil and vinegar. (Assunta Madre, RM)

Suppli al telefono = Rice croquettes with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese covered with bread crumbs and deep fried; Saltimbocca alla romana = Rolled pieces of veal, garnished with ham, sage, fired in butter and served with mashed potatoes. (Circus, RM)

Bombolotti alla Maga con Calamari e Zucchine = Macaroni with Squid and Courgette; Gnocchetti alla Pescatora = Small gnocchi with tomato sauce, Squid, Shrimps and Mussels; Penne alla Carbonara = Penne Carbonara with Bacon Eggs and Black pepper; Bucatini all’Amatriciana = Bucatini Amatriciana with Bacon and Tomato sauce. (La Veranda, S. Felice Circeo, LT)

Trofie alla puttanesca = Short pasta with olives, capers, tomato sauce; Filetto di manzo alla Sophie = Beef fillet with ham smoked cheese and marsala wine. (La Taverna dei Fori Imperiali, RM)

Penne “Mari e Monti” = Quills with porcini mushrooms and baby clams. (Taverna Quintilia, Tivoli, RM)

Fettuccine alla Tiberina = Homemade Fettuccine in a dried porcini, ham and meatsauce; Paccheri alla maniera “der Capitano Pescatore” = Paccheri with clams, mussels, squid, shrimps and tomato sauce; Coda di Manzo alla Vaccinara = Oxtail with celery and spicy tomato sauce. (Sora Lella, RM)

Gnocchi fatti in casa de’ Gasperino (salsiccia, pomodori pachino, pecorino) = Homemade gnocchi de’ Gasperino (with sausages, cherry tomatoes, sheepcheese); Rigatoni alla norcina (salsiccia, carotine, parmigiano) = Rigatoni norcina (with sausages, carrots, parmesan); Polpo alla Luciana (polpo, pomodoro, uva passa, pinoli, olive e spezie) = Luciana octopus (octopus with tomato, raisins, pine nuts, olives, pepper). (Ristoichico, RM)

As we can see, a wide variety of solutions prevail under the umbrella of *expansion/amplification*, ranging from additions (*homemade*), functional equivalents (*short pasta*) and generalizations (*macaroni*) to explicative paraphrasing of the preparation processes. When it comes to rendering the various types of pasta – an extremely cultural-specific aspect of Italian gastronomy – there is an incredible variety of solutions, due both to the use of different micro-strategies (ranging from omission, borrowing and technical equivalents to neologisms) and the combination of several micro-strategies, often classified under opposing macro-strategies of translation. The ‘domesticating’ *amplification*

and *generalization* are used alongside (and often compensate) the ‘foreignizing’ *borrowing* when putting the word *pasta* after the original name, even in cases of already consolidated loans in English food vocabulary (e.g.: *paccheri pasta* but also *tagliatelle pasta*, *calamarata pasta* as well as *ravioli pasta*, and even *spaghetti pasta*; and, absurdly enough, at least one occurrence was traced of *gnocchi pasta*!)¹². The same is true for preparation methods: *expansion* for explicative purposes alternates – also within the same menu – with *borrowing*, thus almost annulling the purpose of a menu in a different language, or with the typical “(in) noun/adjective + style” *calque*, which in any case leaves the cooking method unexplained:

Spezzatino alla romana = Beef medallions with carrots, celery, onions and tomatoes; Salmibocca alla romana = Veal topped with Parma ham and sage **BUT** Fettuccine Alfredo = Alfredo sauce. (Panzirone, RM)

Caprese di mare = Fresh mozzarella and tomato with fish; Pesce spada alla siciliana = Stewed swordfish with tomato sauce, olives and capers **BUT** Scampi alla cacciatora = Scampi cacciatora style. (Le Terrazze, Civitavecchia, RM)

Triglie di scoglio alla livornese = Fresh mullets in Livorno style. (Chez Cocò, RM)

Carciofi alla giudia = Jewish-style artichokes. (Casa Coppelle, RM)

Fettuccine alla Bolognese = Fettuccine Bolognese style; Pollo alla cacciatora = Chicken “cacciatora” style. (Time, RM)

Seppie alla Marinara = Cuttlefish “sailor’s style”. (Piperno, RM)

Risotto alla pescatora = Rice fisherman’s style. (Zigaetana, RM)

Abbacchio a scottadito = Lamb roman style. (Meo Patacca, RM)

The last dish on the list, one of the most typical in Roman cooking, most frequently expanded with the clarification *Grilled (spring) lamb (from Lazio)* or with the functional equivalent *served hot (from the grill)*, opens up the possibility of using the *calque* creatively to transpose the sensorial function of the ‘dead metaphor’: *Grilled “finger burnt” lamb ribs* (Cesare, RM), *Grilled lamb cutlets “burnfingers”* (Grappolo d’oro, RM). In actual fact, *omission* is the most frequent solution to rendering the various rhetorical techniques: at times due to the objective incompatibility of the morphologies of the two linguistic systems, at others because of a probable underestimation of their promotional importance. For example, in the English menus, almost no trace remains of the definite article used to create antonomasia¹³ and of alternatives used with substantial ideology¹⁴.

¹² Falling within this combination of strategies are all the cheeses and cured meats, solved in the great majority of cases by putting the genus term in English next to the species in Italian: for example, *grana cheese*, *provola cheese*, *gorgonzola cheese*, *tomino cheese*, *burrata cheese*, etc. (including occurrences of *parmigiano cheese* and *mozzarella cheese*, instead of the more simple and common *parmesan* and *mozzarella*, and the tautological – to the Italian ear – *cacio cheese*!); *Parma ham*, *Culatello ham*, *Cinta Senese ham/salami*, etc. In addition, examples like *porcini mushrooms*, *cannellini/borlotti beans*, *friggirelli peppers*, *focaccia/schiacciata/panzanella bread*, *misticanza salad* and also *rucola salad* instead of *rocket salad* or simply *rocket*. To these are added many toponyms used alone in Italian (e.g.: *Madeira wine*, *Marsala wine*, *Moscato winecream*, *Castelmagno cheese*, *Angus beef*, etc.).

¹³ La spigola = Seabass (Le Jardin de Russie, RM); Bombolotti con la vera pajata = Bombolotti (short pasta) with pajata (Divin Peccato, RM); Le melanzane alla parmigiana = Aubergine in parmesan sauce (Biscetti, Bagnaia, VT); Il pollo ruspante = Wild range chicken; Il maialino da latte = Suckling pig (Molto, RM); L’abbacchio romano e il carciofo = Roman lamb and artichokes (Doney, RM).

¹⁴ In such cases only *polipetti* (baby octopus) and *carotine* (baby carrots) are rendered, but not: *agretto* (as a condiment), *caponatina*, *cicorietta*, *cipollotti*, *insalatina*, *lasagnetta*, *lombatina*, *polpettine*,

Compared to very few attempts at *literal translation*, where the adjective or image is not only traceable to a shared trans-cultural heritage but is also linguistically equivalent, the translation procedure least used is *adaptation*, that is, the creative rendering of linguistic (and culinary) innovation, with a net loss of elements appealing to the emotions and imagination if not informative ones. While it is still possible to take one's chances with the *heart* metaphor (...*chocolate mousse with a bourbon whiskey heart*; ... *tiramisù with coffee and chocolate heart*) or the aroma of food, almost no menu dares to render *polvere di verdure*, *neve di baccalà*, *aria di prezzemolo* or *sabbia di olive*, not to mention *quadro di verdure*, *nuvole dell'orto* or *ricordo di tiramisù*, without obtaining truly 'macaronic' results.

Rosso d'uovo poché, ricotta, cavolfiore e mille punti di tartufo nero = Poached egg, ricotta cheese, cauliflower and black truffle. (Antico Arco, RM)

Biscotto agli arachidi con morbido alla vaniglia e salsa al croccantino = Peanut biscuit with vanilla and crunchy nougat sauce; Millefoglie di rombo in crosta di pistacchi... = Turbot in a crust of pistachios... (Circus, RM)

Cofanetto di ricotta e noci in manto di patate = Potatoes filled with ricotta cheese and nut; Sformatino di cavatelli in manto di melanzane con pomodoro fresco e cuore filante = Aubergines filled with Cavatelli pasta, tomato and mozzarella cheese; Tegame di cilegine di agnello... = Lamb chops... (L'Olimpo, RM)

Zuppetta di piselli con involtino di pesce spatola, quenelle di pappa al pomodoro e trasparenza di guancia = Peasoup with flag fishroll served with "pappa al pomodoro" and bacon; Ravioli agli scampi e caviaie di melanzane fumé con ciuffetti di calamari e finocchietto su cremoso di bufala = Ravioli with scampi & smoked aubergine served with squid, creamy buffalo mozzarella and dill. (Minerva Roof Garden, RM)

Cappellacci cicoria e salsiccia, aria di mozzarella di bufala e acciughe = Cappellacci chicory and sausage with buffalo mozzarella and anchovies; Prosciutto di Bassiano, salvia, patate e clorofilla di prezzemolo = Ham of Bassiano, sage, potatoes and parsley. (Risoamaro, Fondi, LT)

Focusing finally on syntax, it is important to emphasize that not more than a dozen menus in Lazio – and not necessarily those of top restaurants – demonstrate constant awareness of the functional constraints of English syntax and the semantic possibilities offered at the same time by such norms. *Literal/close translation* does not always succeed in respecting the distribution of Classifier (in pre-modifying position) and Qualifier (in post-modifying position), in terms of Halliday's (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) grammar, and almost never in balancing within the Qualifier space purely informative communication with promotional rhetoric. The various nominal syntagms which enrich the brief dish name text are invariably put to the right of the Head Noun in Italian, following a more or less logical sequential order generally reflecting the ingredients' importance, which nevertheless can be extremely free or even random; in English, on the other hand, they are distributed both to the right and left following precise rules of standard syntax. More or less significance or informativeness is automatically estab-

scamponi, *spinacetti*, *timballino*, *tortino*, *verdurine*, *zuppetta*, etc. False alternatives are quite a different case: *broccoletti*, *calamaretti*, *guazzetto*, *gamberoni*, *raviolini*, *raviolone*, *seppioline*, *spaghettone/i*, and perhaps *cicoretta* (different from *cicoria* or *cicorione*) where, in my opinion, diminutives or augmentatives denote different food items, and therefore an attempt at translation should be made.

lished depending on whether they are placed to the right or the left of the Head Noun. The following is Halliday's logical/experiential scheme applied to dish names, which contains some of the most frequent occurrences:

Pre-modifier				Head	Post-modifier
<i>Deictic</i>	<i>Post-deictic</i>	<i>Epithet</i>	<i>Classifier</i>	<i>Thing</i>	<i>Qualifier (Prepositional Phrase or non-finite clause)</i>
Our	classic	fresh	grilled	pasta	with
The	typical	best	beef/veal/lamb	salad	served with/stuffed with/filled with/flavoured with
	original		fried	spaghetti	from
			homemade	fish	on
			smoked	ravioli	cooked with/under/at
			roast/ed	carpaccio	marinated in/with

Adjectival participles and nouns with attributive function occurring as Classifiers generally denote the most common cooking techniques of primary ingredients or the species of which the Head Noun is the genus – as it was for pastas, cheeses and cured meats – and all precisely define the type of food served, in this responding to the common syntactic use of the English language. It is therefore correct to say: *Veal escalope*, *Deep fried calamari*, *Baked suckling pig*, *Roast potatoes*, etc.; less correct: *Scampi steamed or grilled*, ...*with vegetable mixed*, *Wild clams sautéed*, *Season vegetables boiled* or *Endive salad*, *pears and nuts*, with many other such 'errors' in word order. Vice versa, with regard to the position of the indication of origin, so often present in referential menus, there is an option, but not pragmatically indifferent: *Umbrian olive oil*, *Pachino/Vesuvian tomatoes*, *Sicilian broccoli*, *Roman chicory* denote a different variety of agricultural product, while *Pasta from Gragnano*, *Pecorino cheese from Fossa*, *Red onion from Tropea*, *Fassone beef from Piedmont*, *Anchovy fillets from the Cantabrian Sea* add a connotation of authenticity and uniqueness, bordering on exoticism, which aptly fulfils the *info-marketing* potential inherent to such texts.

As a consequence, moving the cooking procedure to the Qualifier slot for particular preparations, with the addition of side ingredients, possibly in their turn enriched by emotional adjectives, and special and select aromas, means knowing how to best use simple but effective thematic organization. Given the short time spent on reading a menu, the customer's attention and curiosity should be driven towards the end of the sequence, towards those noun phrases collocated in post-modifying positions, which carry the weight of appeal and/or innovation in gastronomy, those more capable of making mouths water and stimulating a desire to try the dish:

Maialino al forno in crosta di sale = Suckling pig roasted in salt crust. (Ditirambo, RM)
 Stinco di maiale marinato alla birra con castagne croccanti = Roasted pork shank marinated in beer with crunchy chestnuts (Grappolo d'oro, RM)
 Sauté di frutti di mare e quinoa su crema di zucchini al basilico ed olio allo zafferano = Sauteed seafood and quinoa served on a cream of zucchini with basil and olive oil perfumed with saffron (Circus, RM)
 Gnocchi di patate all'amatriciana = Homemade gnocchi in a classic Roman sauce with cured pig's cheek, tomatoes and Roman pecorino cheese. (Sora Lella, RM)
 Fegato d'oca con chutney di mela annurca e Sauternes aromatizzato allo zafferano = Goose foie gras with Annurca apple chutney and Sauternes wine jelly infused with saffron. (La Terrazza dell'Eden, RM)

Trancio di spigola su passata di melanzane alla parmigiana con asparagi e carotine riduzione al caciucco = Sea-bass fillet on a pureed parmigiana-style eggplant with asparagus and baby carrots on seafood broth reduction. (Vivendo, RM)

Tiramisù ai lamponi e pepe rosa glassato al frutto della passione = Raspberry and pink pepper tiramisù served in a passion fruit glaze. (Minerva Roof Garden, RM)

4. Conclusions

More or less explicitly, the tradition of Italian food service and catering has always been inspired by the constitutive nutrition and economic principles orienting a movement like Slow Food and summed up in the three keywords of its philosophy: good, clean and fair¹⁵. The movement, which started in Piedmont about thirty years ago, has been opposing the diffusion of ‘fast food’ habits, trying to preserve local productions, promoting healthy food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life. A leading organization of thousands of projects in biodiversity and food and taste education all over the world, it now has the power to influence the very concept of a global event like Milan Expo 2015. However, when we observe the *info-marketing* purport of many Italian restaurant menus, even if we leave aside actual errors and mistakes – at times glaring and offensive, at times more subtle and interesting from the didactic viewpoint, to which our research project will in future dedicate further consideration – it becomes clear that, in order to fully succeed in its conquest of modern culture and economy, the Slow Food movement would benefit from joining forces with one as strong in resisting the “mass, industrialized production of translated language” through CAT or Google Translate (Cronin 2017: 4). While Slow Food is already a consolidated international reality, the concept of Slow Language/Translation (Cronin 2015; 2017) definitely seems to be still struggling to succeed – at least in the restaurant business of the Lazio Region.

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¹⁵ See <https://www.slowfood.com> for more details.

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