Translating English compound adjectives into Italian: problems and strategies

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Abstract. The paper deals with English compound adjectives, seen as a problem when translating into Italian because of the typological differences between the two languages. In English, they are quantitatively numerous, show a wide range of morphological patterns and a high degree of productivity. In Italian, they constitute a small number of items exhibiting a very limited set of productive morphological patterns. The study is based on a corpus of selected types of compound adjectives extracted manually from *Under the Dome* (2009) by Stephen King and their renderings in the Italian translation (2010). The aim is to analyse the translation strategies adopted and to determine if any regularities can be detected, when translating each type of adjective.

Keywords: compound adjectives, translation problem, translation strategies, English into Italian translation.

1. Introduction

The typological differences between English and Italian in terms of conceptual and morphosyntactic structures also emerge in word-formation, where English privileges compounding and Italian affixation (Pierini, 2012, pp. 118-129). In English, compound adjectives are quantitatively numerous, show a wide range of morphological patterns and a high degree of productivity. In Italian, they constitute a small number of items, exhibiting a very limited set of productive morphological patterns.

In English, compound adjectives constitute a powerful device to compress information into a lexical unit consisting of two (occasionally more) bases. Their morphological patterns express a number of different semantic relationships between the constituents, while leaving implicit the syntactic links between them; within the same pattern, the relationship between the constituents can sometimes vary. The success of these compounds depends on the fact that they permit economy (the packing of the maximum content in the minimum number of words), constitute an open-ended subsystem, and provide a means to create neologisms and occasionalisms.

With regard to the distribution of compound adjectives across registers, Biber *et al.* (2000, p. 535-36) have shown that these are commonly used in attributive position, and occur more frequently in written registers, namely, news, fiction and academic prose. The frequent use of attributive compound adjectives is motivated by their fulfilling an information-packing function (Adams, 2001, p. 97): they permit the replacement of postmodifiers (relative clauses, *-ing* clauses, prepositional phrases)with shorter premodifiers. In specialist texts, economy is one of the features of discourse achieved by means of syntactic and morphological resources (Gotti, 2005, pp. 40-41, 69-81), and compound adjectives are one of these resources (e.g. *malaria-infected cells*).In newspaper and magazine articles, which are texts with considerable space concerns (Ljung, 2000), compound adjectives contribute to space

saving. They are used to describe aspects of the real world (e.g. *quake-prone countries*), but they are also one of the devices contributing to the vivid style of news writing aimed at entertaining readers (e.g. *neon-splashed Tokio*).In fiction, they are usually found in the descriptions of people and places, and are employed by writers to produce pragmatic effects or to increase the colour and the expressive power of their style. They are sometimes exploited as markers of viewpoint expressing perception or evaluation (e.g. *sad-coloured garments* in Jenn, 2007, p. 45).

Because of the asymmetries between English and Italian, English compound adjectives can be considered a major translation problem, and hence a key point to take into account in translator training. Dictionaries only list lexicalised units; but many of the compounds encountered in written discourse are new formations, and some patterns are not described in major handbooks (Bauer & Renouf, 2001). So it is necessary first to raise translator trainees' awareness of the translation problem and then to provide them with the tools for solving it. We are referring to a set of potential strategies that can be identified by observing translation practice, as we intend to do in this empirical-descriptive study.

This paper is based on a corpus of selected types of compound adjectives extracted manually from *Under the Dome* (2009) by Stephen King and their renderings in theTullio Dobner's Italian translation, published with the title *The Dome* (2010). The text was chosen because rich in adjectives following a variety of morphological patterns, thus providing a substantial amount of data for our investigation. The aim is to analyse the translation strategies employed and to determine if any regularities can be detected, when translating each type of adjective. The structure of the paper is as follows: section 2 offers an overview of compound adjectives in English and Italian; section 3highlights the potential translation problems arising from the asymmetries between the two languages as evidenced by the range of translation equivalents provided by a bilingual dictionary; section 4 is devoted to the analysis of the corpus data. The final section attempts some conclusions.

2. Compound adjectives

Our sketch of compound adjectives in English and Italian is to be intended as a working tool for identifying them in the step of extracting data from our corpus. It is based on the relevant literature on compounding and describes the morphological patterns by specifying the lexical categories of their constituents and the syntactic-semantic relationship between them.

2.1 English
The notion of 'compound adjective' is problematic because it covers a range of morphological patterns and the classification offered by scholars vary, either including or excluding certain formations. The sketch below relies on classical works (Marchand, 1969; Bauer, 1983; Adams, 2001), reference grammars (Huddleston &Pullum,2002, pp. 1656-1660;Biber *et alii*2000, pp. 533-536) and some articles (Mackenzie & Mel'čuk, 1986; Bauer & Renouf, 2001; Crocco Galéas, 2003). The following list of morphological patterns presents productive compounds whose head is an adjective, an –*ing* form or a past participle.

- [Adj + Adj] There are some lexicalised items with this structure (e.g. *bitter-sweet*). The pattern is highly productive, as in colour terms (*grey-green*), ethnic (*Swedish-Irish*) and technical/scientific formations *(concavo-convex)*. In these formations, the constituents are of equal status and the relationship between them can be

paraphrased as 'and'. There are also formations in which the first constituent modifies the second: its function is nuancing, as in colour terms (*dark blue*) or intensifying (*icy-cold*).

- [N + Adj]. Even if many items are lexicalised (e.g. *age-old),* the pattern is frequent and productive. The noun can play different roles: it can indicate a standard of comparison, whose function is to intensify (*crystal-clear*) or specify a particular shade of colour (*bottle-green*). It can also indicate a temporal or spatial extension of the adjective, literally (*week-long*) or metaphorically (*sky-high*). Then, there are formations that match constructions where the adjective is followed by a PP: e.g. *sugar-free* ('free from N')*, burglar-proof* ('proof against N')*,user-friendly* ('friendly to N'), *germ-resistant* ('resistant to N').
- [Adv + Adj] Semantically transparent, this pattern syntactically reproduces an adjectival phrase, e.g. *fiercely-competitive*.
- [Numeral + N + Adj]. These patterns are usually temporal or spatial measure terms, as in *three-metre-wide, ten-year-old*, and frequently occur in news (Biber *et alii,*2000, p. 535).
- [Adj + V-*ing*] In this pattern there is a good deal of lexicalisation, as in *good-looking*. The relationship is one between verbs (most frequently of perception, e.g. *look, seem, sound*) and their adjectival complements.
- [N + V-*ing*] This is a very productive pattern where the noun corresponds to the object of the verb (*animal-loving*), or to its complement (*theatre-going).*
- [Adv + V-*ing*] In this pattern, the left constituent, modifying the verb, can be an adverb (*never-ending*), or an adjective functioning as adverb (*hard-working*).
- [Adj + Past Participle] This pattern is of low productivity. In formations like *French-built, British-born*, the first constituent denotes nationality and the semantic relationship is one of agency ('built by French') or location ('born in Great Britain') (Mackenzie & Mel'čuk, 1986).In formations like *clean-shaven, high-set, plain-spoken*, it is not possible to identify a precise semantic relationship (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p.1659).
- [N + Past Participle] This is a highly productive pattern where the noun generally corresponds to a prepositional phrase of various type (agentive, locative, instrumental): *church-owned* ('owned by the church), *home-baked* ('made at home'), *hand-painted* (painted using hands').
- [Adv + Past Participle] The pattern, where the adverb modifies the verb, includes a number of lexicalised formations having *well, long, ill* as the first constituent (*well-known, long-established, ill-judged*), but is quite productive (*socially-oriented, psychologically-disturbed).*

Besides 'standard' compound adjectives, there are other types of productive formations used as adjectives (Bauer & Renouf, 2001, pp. 110-115), which we have found in our corpus. Two types were frequent enough in our data to make us decide to consider them:

- [[Adj + N] + *ed*] (*grey-haired)*, [[N + N] + *ed*] (*pearl-buttoned*), [[Numeral + N] + *ed*] (*four-roomed*), and [[V + N] + *ed*] (*pop-eyed)*. The four patterns, called 'derivational compounds' (Crocco Galéas, 2003) or –*ed* adjectives (Hudson, 1975), are productive and represent a peculiar class of formations resulting from a blend of

compounding and derivation. –*ed* is analysed as a derivational suffix attached to a nominal compound or, more rarely, to a verbal one. These patterns express the meaning 'possessing, provided with, characterised by X'.

- Dephrasal compounds(Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 1646), which consist of a phrase or a clause where the words are hyphenated. They are defined by Bauer & Renouf (2001, p. 108) "a piece of syntax that has been captured to be a premodifier" (*an if-you-really-want-to-know sneer*).

2.2 Italian

Adjective compounds are peripheral in Italian word-formation, and only briefly mentioned in reference works and handbooks. Scalise & Bisetto (2008, p. 118) and Dardano (2009, pp. 236-237) describe two productive patterns:

- [Adj + Adj] is the most common pattern (D'Achille & Grossmann, 2009), and the constituents are of equal status. It includes various lexicalised units (*sordomuto*), but is very productive. Three main subgroups can be identified: ethnic formations (*greco-romano)*; technical/scientific formations (*frontale-parietale*); colour adjectives combining two colour terms (*grigioverde*). The sequence of a colour term modified by an adjective (*grigio chiaro,verde brillante*) is considered an AdjP.
- [Adj +N] is a pattern producing colour terms that specify a particular shade of colour (*verde bosco, blu notte*) (Pierini, 2012, pp. 201-203).They involve a comparison, for example *verde bosco* means 'as green as a wood'. Some of these non-basic colour terms are lexicalised, but the pattern is productive.

In Italian, there are other types of compounds used as premodifiers, for example neoclassical compounds, e.g. *ignifugo* (Dardano, 2009, pp. 187-189), phrasal adjectives, e.g. (*persona*) *alla mano* (Voghera, 2005, pp. 66-67), and compounds [V + N], productive formations corresponding to a transitive verb and its object, e.g. (*film) strappalacrime* (Ricca, 2005).

3. Potential translation problems and lexicographic information

A key concept in the view of translation practice as a problem-solving activity (Wilss, 1998; Pierini, 2001) is 'translation problem' as opposed to 'translation difficulty' (Nord, 1997, p. 64): the former is objective, arising from linguistic/cultural asymmetries between the source language/culture and the target language/culture; the latter is subjective, originated from insufficient translational competence or lack of access to an information source. Pym (2002) highlights the social dimension of translation problems: since translation is a mode of mediation, problems require solutions to promote cooperation among different cultures.

In the phenomenon under investigation, potential translation problems arise from the asymmetries emerged from the comparison of English and Italian patterns. When adjectives are lexicalised, hence listed in dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries provide their translation equivalents. But when they are new formations, adjectives can pose a problem because of the many morphological patterns peculiar to English.

The pattern [Adj + Adj] (when the two constituents are of equal status) is the only symmetry between the two languages. An example of a potential problem is represented by the asymmetry in the pattern of colour adjectives: the English pattern [N + Adj] corresponds to the Italian pattern [Adj +N], e.g.

bottle green→ verde bottiglia. In rendering this pattern, the translator will make a syntactic transposition as well as a cultural adaptation when the selection of the noun functioning as colour referent is culture-specific. Consider, for example, *navy blue coat → cappotto blu notte, jet-black hair→ capelli corvini/color ebano* (Pierini, 2012, pp.207-208).

Not all asymmetries represent a problem. In two cases, namely [Adv + Adj] and [Adv + Past Participle], the English compounds correspond to parallel syntactic structures in Italian, and do not pose a translation problem, e.g. *fiercely-competitive→ fortemente competitivo, well-dresssed→ ben vestito*.

The question arising from the asymmetries observed is: what are the Italian translation equivalents of the many English compounds? A random analysis of a bilingual dictionary (Picchi, 2007) can give an idea of the types of equivalents, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. English standard compounds and their Italian equivalents.

English adjective	Italian equivalent	type of equivalent
everlasting	*eterno*	simple adjective
poverty-stricken	*poverissimo*	inflected adjective (superlative)
water-proof	*impermeabile*	derivational adjective
breath-taking	*mozzafiato*	compound [V + N]
card-carrying	*tesserato*	past participle
easy-going	*accomodante*	present participle
far-reaching	*di vasta portata*	PP
earth-bound	*incapace di volare*	AdjP
sea-sick, hair-raising	*che soffre di mal di mare; da far rizzare i capelli in testa*	relative or other type of clause

What emerges from Table 1 is the wide range of equivalents: simple words, inflected or derivational words, various types of phrases and clauses, and rarely compounds. So Italian seems to select either shorter or longer means, exploiting morphological or syntactic resources. Because of a typological difference between the two languages, premodification in English often corresponds to postmodification in Italian. So the translation of compound adjectives in attributive position requires recourse to the strategy of syntactic transposition. A potential procedure is the following: the translator will untie the information compressed in the compound adjective and make the relationship between the constituents explicit by adding lexical material (e.g. prepositions).The unfolding of information can also involve semantic modulation and cultural adaptation.

We have so far dealt with potential problems in systemic terms, that is, in terms of the resources available in the two language systems. But translators have to do with the reality of texts and with aspects such as register, metaphorical meanings, creative formations and cultural values. If these aspects are generally relevant, they are crucial in literary texts where authors exploit the aesthetic dimension of language (Snell-Hornby, 1995, pp. 48-51, 119-123) and style is meaningful *per se.* In a functionalist approach (House, 2004), the source text will be transferred with the necessary modifications to achieve effects in the target text functionally equivalent to the ones in the source text, by taking into account the needs and characteristics of target receivers in their cultural setting.

4. Analysis

4.1 The corpus

A large electronic corpus is the best resource when exploring language use. But the variety of the patterns and constituents of English compound adjectives makes the search feasible only with specific items selected by the researcher, or with patterns that can be searched for by using wild cards, e.g. *free or *-*ing. Conversely, a small corpus provides a partial insight into a phenomenon, but can be scanned manually so that the collection of data does not leave out any formation or pattern.

Our body of data consists of the selected types of adjectives extracted manually from *Under the Dome*, a science fiction novel set in a small Maine town. It tells a multi-character story of how the town's inhabitants contend with the calamity of being suddenly cut off from the outside world by an impassable, invisible barrier. The text is characterized by informal dialogues and references to popular culture, two features that also emerge from the adjectives examined. They show a strong preference for attributive position and belong to all the patterns described in Section 2.The most frequent formations are derivational compounds, dephrasal compounds and the patterns [N + Past Participle], [N + V-ing] and [N + Adj]. The data reveal an interesting range of items, and the use of established (e.g. *old-fashioned*) as well as new formations: the former anchor the text to a shared vocabulary while helping creative formations come out.

4.1 Translation strategies

Our analysis starts from derivational compounds, common in literary texts. As predictable, we have found them mainly in descriptive passages where they are used to portray the physical or psychological qualities of people, less frequently, the characteristics of non-human entities. One aspect needs to be mentioned: some compound adjectives from the corpus can be analysed in two different ways. For example, *tobacco-stained* can be interpreted as the derivational compound [[*tobacco +stain*] + *-ed*] or as a participial compound [*tobacco + stained*], because *stain* can function as a noun or as a verb. In cases like these, we have considered them as following the pattern [N + Past Participle].The data concerning the four patterns are presented in separate tables below.

Table 2.1. [[N +N] + *-ed*].

Source text	Target text
(1) a big black smear – **candleflame-shaped**	una grande macchia nera **a forma di fiamma di candela**
(2) with the **bullet-headed** brood	con la prole **dalla testa a pera**
(3) the **pamphlet-sized** local phone book	lo **smilzo** elenco degli abbonati
(4) if he's **bullheaded** about making a frontal assault	se è così **imbecille** da tentare un assalto frontale

Table 2.2. [[Adj +N] + *-ed*].

(1) wretched, **red-eyed** mother	madre straziata e **con gli occhi rossi**
(2) a **middle-aged** Republican lady	una signora repubblicana **di mezza età**
(3) in the **high-backed** chair	nella poltrona **a schienale alto**
(4)the only part-timer I'd call really **able-bodied**	l'unica part-time che definirei veramente **abile**
(5) the generator – small, **old-fashioned**	un generatore, piccolo, **antiquato**
(6) a **mild-mannered** druggist	un **mansueto** tossico
(7) it made him look like a **cold-eyed** Jack Benny	era **una esagerazione caricaturale da attore d'avanspettacolo**

Table 2.3. [[V +N] + -*ed*].

(1) the **straggle-haired** wino	quel beone **scarmigliato**
(2) He sat **cross-legged**	Sedeva **a gambe incrociate**

Table 2.4. [Numeral +N] + -*ed*].

(1) a **one-armed** hug	un abbraccio **con un braccio solo**
(2) **two-wheeled** dolby platform	un carrellino **a dueruote**

Our findings largely confirm the data in Conti (2006), carried out on a larger corpus of literary texts. The compounds are rendered in Italian in two ways:

a) a prepositional phrase introduced by *di* / *con* / *a*/ *da*, as in (1)-(2) in Table 2.1, (1)-(3) in Table 2.2, (2) in Table 2.3, (1)-(2) in Table 2.4. The PP in example 2 (Table 2.1) incorporates a cultural adaptation by which *bullet* becomes *pera* ('pear') in Italian.

b) an adjective, usually simple, in the other examples.

The two strategies are adopted regardless of the pattern of the formation, except for [[Numeral + N] + -*ed*] which can be translated with a PP only. The factors determining the selection of the strategy are not clear; even if our data are limited, we suggest that simple adjectives are preferred when the English compounds are evaluative, as in (4) in Table 2.1 and (4) in Table 2.2, or describe abstract/ psychological features of people, as in (6) in Table 2.2.

(7) in Table 2.2 is an example of the unpredictability of some renderings. The compound modifies the name of a person which functions as a cultural reference. Jack Benny was an American entertainer and comedian, famous for his radio and television programmes, popular from the 1930s to the 1960s. On the basis of his interpretation of the whole clause, the translator omits the compound and the name of the comedian, opting for a re-writing of the clause which involves cultural adaptation and substantial semantic/lexical and syntactic modifications. The result is a functional equivalent that incorporates the reference to a genre (*avanspettacolo),* which is a form of popular theatre entertainment, similar to a variety show, no longer staged in Italy since the 1960s.

The second group is that of dephrasal compounds which seem to be a feature of King's style.

Table 3. Dephrasal compounds.

(1)the **ha-ha-you're-going-to-hell-and-we're-not** stuff	quelle balle **a base di ah-ah-voi-andate-all'inferno-e-noi-no**
(2) his usual expression of **oh-boy-going-for-a-ride** delight	la sua solita espressione **di oh-ragazzi-che-bello-farsi-una-corsa-in-macchina**
(3) her usual **gosh-the-world-is-wonderful** brightness	la sua solita vivacità **da mamma-mia-com'è-bello-il-mondo**
(4) Searle was wearing a vacant **going-to-the-county-fair** grin	sorrideva con l'aria vacua **di chi si appresta ad andare alla fiera della contea**.
(5) he was in full **one-day-at-a-time** mode.	la sua attuale filosofia di vita era quella **dell'un giorno alla volta**
(6) a weak **luncheonette-at-midnight** glow	Il fioco bagliore **di uno spuntino a mezzanotte**
(7) the **not-ready-for-the-prime-time** look	con l'aria **un po' dimessa e distratta**

The formations found in the corpus occur as pre-modifiers only and are occasionalisms. The syntactic chunks that function as compounds are of variable length and structure (clauses and phrases of different types), and can be divided into two groups. Many reproduce stretches of informal speech that can be recognised by readers as utterances, as in (1)-(3). Other formations are complex phrases (verbal, adjectival, prepositional, other), as in (4)-(7).

The different nature of the two types is evidenced by the Italian renderings which show a regularity in the adoption of two different modes of translation. In (1)-(3), the strategy consists in the creation of corresponding utterances in which the words are connected by a hyphen and the renderings are functional equivalents reproducing features of informal Italian speech. In (4)-(6), the compound is rendered as if it were a regular 'free' phrase with no hyphen. All cases involve syntactic transposition: the Italian renderings are post-modifiers, and in (1)-(6), there is also the adding of a preposition (*di/del/da*). The Italian rendering in (7) is different: the compound has a metaphorical meaning and the translator renders its sense by means of two simple adjectives.

The next group is constituted by compounds whose head is an adjective. These formations are employed, in particular, to describe colour hues, measures and features of people and characteristics of objects. Our analysis starts from the only type of compound found in both languages (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 [Adj + Adj].

(1) the sky to the west is a **red-orange** inferno	a ovest il cielo è un inferno **rosso-arancione**
(2) a paperback with a **sweet-savage** cover	un tascabile **del genere** *Dolce amore selvaggio*
(3) a **foxy-good** soccer player	un calciatore **di volpesca bravura**

In (1)-(2), the constituents are of equal status, and regularities are observed when compounds convey a denotational meaning, as in (1): we find the same type of compound in Italian too. But when the compound expresses a cultural meaning, as in (2), the choices of the translator are no longer predictable. The English compound is interpreted in its linguistic context where it stands as a cultural reference to romance novels having typical front covers. The translator opts for a strategy of explicitation rewriting the text segment: he substitutes the source phrase (*with a sweet-savage cover*) with a reference to the literary genre by inserting the title of a romance novel (*Dolce amore selvaggio*), which is the Italian translation of *Sweet Savage Love* by Rosemary Rogers. (3) is an example of a compound where the first constituent modifies the second one functioning as an intensifier. Since this type is not found in Italian, the translator renders it with a PP.
The next pattern is illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 [Adv + Adj].

| (1) **almost-new** Honda Odyssey Green | l'Odyssey **quasi nuovo** |
| (2) [the battery] had been a **long-dead** soldier | [la batteria] era **morta e defunta** |

In (1), we find a parallel syntactic structure in Italian, as predicted in Section 3, where we argued that the [Adv + Adj] and [Adv + Past Participle] patterns correspond to parallel structures in Italian, and do not pose a translation problem. In (2), the metaphorical meaning triggers an idiomatic, functionally equivalent rendering.

Let us now consider the pattern [N + Adj] (Table 4.3), which appears to be frequent in our data.

Table 4.3 [N + Adj].

(1) **fishbelly-white** skin	pelle **bianca come il ventre di un pesce**
(2) [...] had been **grave-quiet**	erano rimasti **muti come tombe**
(3) the **blood-sticky** flesh	la pelle **appiccicosa di sangue**
(4) [if she was a tick tock over nineteen...] too young for a man of thirty summers, but perfectly **street-legal**	[...] ma **legalmente fattibile**
(5) this goddam **cop-happy**, **gun-happy** town	questa maledetta città **di sbirri facili dal grilletto facile**

The meaning compacted in this type of compound is untied in two ways. When the compound implies a comparison, as in (1)-(2), the recurrent structure is an adjective followed by a comparative phrase consisting of *come* (marker of comparison) + NP. When the compound is originated from a PP as in (3), the typical rendering is an adjectival phrase. In (4)-(5),the meaning of the adjectives is not literal; these are interpreted considering their contexts, and the renderings are unpredictable because resulting from the creativity of the translator. In (4), we find *street-legal* which, in its literal use, is referred to vehicles complying with safety standards. The adjective is here extended to the act of just looking at a very young girl, which is 'legally allowed'; the Italian rendering conveys this sense (*legalmente fattibile,* 'legally feasible'). In (5), the head *happy* takes on the meaning 'showing excessive enthusiasm for something'. The Italian translation is a functional equivalent where the adjective *facile* ('easy') occurs twice, like *happy* in the English source, and well contributes to the overall informal tone.

Table 4.4 [Numeral + N + Adj].

(1)) their **five-year-old** [daughter]	la loro figlia **di cinque anni**
(2)a grief-stricken **twenty-year-old** girl	una **ventenne** sconvolta
(3) a scrawny **thirteen-year-old** genius	un **tredicenne** genio pelle e ossa
(4) her **sixty-pound-overweight** bulk	i **venti e rotti chili di troppo** del suo corpaccione

Regularities are observed when the head of the compound is *old*, as in (1)-(3). There are two Italian equivalents – a PP or a lexicalized compound – which are subject to restrictions in use. For numbers 1-9, the equivalent is a prepositional phrase only, as in (1). For numbers within the 10-99 range, the equivalent can be a PP or a compound whose pattern is [Numeral + *enne*] where –*enne* comes from Latin –*enne(m)*, 'anno' ('year'). The compound, which can be used as a noun, as in (2), or an adjective as in (3), is only referred to people. The PP can be used with both people and objects; when the adjective is referred to objects, the only equivalent is a PP, e.g. *80-year-old tree→ albero di 80 anni*, or a relative clause, e.g. *che ha 80 anni.* (4) shows an unpredictable rendering involving a cultural adaptation and a syntactic transposition: the measure is converted to the metric system and becomes a NP followed by a PP. (It is worth noting that the translator adds a highly informal tone using *e rotti* ('or so') and the altered noun *corpaccione* [*corpo* + pejorative suffix –*acc* + augmentative suffix –*one*].

Our next group includes compounds whose head is a past participle (Table 5.1). The examples are few and no regularity in their rendering into Italian has been identified.

Table 5.1 [Adj + Past participle].

(1) biggest ideas […] suddenly burst forth, often **full-blown**	all'improvviso germogliano e spesso **in piena fioritura**
(2) panties, fashionably **high-cut** on the sides	mutande**, belle sgambate** per essere alla moda

In (1), the metaphor by which producing ideas is like blowing bubbles, is translated by employing another image (ideas are plants that bloom) and the rendering is a PP. In (2), the rendering is a derivational adjective (*sgambate[1]*) accompanied by an emphasizer (the adjective *bello*), typically used in informal spoken Italian.

Table 5.2 below presents some examples of a type of compound which is frequent in our data and shows a good deal of regularity.

Table 5.2 [N + Past participle].

(1) the **goddarn** farmer	quel **dannato** vaccaro
(2) **generator-powered** industrial fans	ventilatori industriali **alimentati da generatori**
(3) six fat **home-rolled** cigarettes	sei grasse sigarettone **rollate a mano**
(4) the same **stethoscope-equipped** time-server	lo stesso lavativo **armato di stetoscopio**

The Italian renderings are past participles usually followed by a PP, as in (2)-(4). The compound in (1) (from *God-damned*) occurs several times in various variants (*gosh-darn, goddamned, goddam*) and is usually translated as *dannato*, sometimes as *maledetto*.

The last type of compound in this group is illustrated in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 [Adv + Past participle].

(1) a **well-worn** path	un sentiero **molto battuto**
(2) a **long-abandoned** house	una casa **abbandonata**
(3) [Rust] spat a **half-clotted** loogie into the grass	sputò un fiotto **rossastro** nell'erba

A common rendering is shown in (1), i.e. the parallel structure Adverb+ Past Participle. (2) and (3) are examples of subjectivity in translation. In (2), *long* is omitted, although it could have easily been rendered with *da (lungo) tempo*. In (3), *half-clotted*, which could be translated as (*sangue*) *semi-coagulato* (prefixoid *semi-*+ past participle) is rendered with the adjective *rossastro* that refers to the colour of blood.

The final group is that of compounds having an –*ing* form as their head. We start examining the least numerous group (Table 6.1) where the first constituent can also be a past participle functioning as an adjective, as in (2) and (3), and the -*ing* form corresponds to verbs of perception, usually *look*. The examples listed are evidence of their distinctive role as markers of viewpoint.

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[1] There are two suffixes –*to* in Italian – the inflectional suffix attached to verbs to form past participles (see Table 5.2), and the derivational suffix attached to nouns to form adjectives (e.g. *dentato, baffuto, pepato*) expressing the meaning 'provided with X'. Because of the prefix *s-*, *sgambato* literally means 'not provided with legs'.

Table 6.1 [Adj + V*ing*].

(1) computer-generated and very **professional-looking**.	elaborati al computer e **dall'aspetto molto professionale.**
(2) some **crooked-looking** guy	un tizio **dall'aria poco raccomandabile**
(3) the picture switched to a **concerned-looking** Charlie Gibson.	sullo schermo apparve il volto **preoccupato** di Charlie Gibson.

The data in Table 6.1 reveal a tendency to translate the compounds with a PP, as in (1) and (2), with the variant *aspetto/aria*. In (3), we find a past participle commonly used as an adjective.

The second group includes compounds whose pattern is [Adv + V*ing*] (Table 6.2), where the first constituent can be an adjective functioning as an adverb.

Table 6.2 [Adv + V*ing*].

(1) close to the **still**-**burning** truck	vicino al camion **in fiamme**
(2) **high-flying** reconnaissance planes	aerei da ricognizione **ad alta quota**
(3) a **never-ending** cataract of energy	una cascata **incessante** di energia
(4) his shack's **west-facing** front door	la porta **che era rivolta a ovest**
(5) a leftover from the **free-spending** Clinton years.	un residuo degli anni **spendaccioni** di Clinton.

The above examples show common types of renderings: a PP in (1) and (2), a present participle in (3), a relative clause in (4). In (5), we find an altered adjective in Italian [*spende*+ pejorative suffix –*acc* + augmentative suffix –*one*], typically used in informal speech, which conveys a negative connotation.

The third and most numerous group includes [N + V*ing*] adjectives (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 [N + V*ing*].

(1) a couple of **cotton-picking** gunshells	quella coppia di siluri **pidocchiosi**
(2) He had felt at least one bullet whicker right in front of his **mother-fucking** eyes.	[...] davanti agli occhi, **Madonna santissima.**
(3) his hobby of **secretary-fucking** way	Il suo hobby di **tromba-segretarie**
(4) the **Eggo-loving** dentist	il dentista **patito di waffle**
(5) The fall foliage on the other side was **heart-breaking** in its brilliance	Dall'altra parte i colori dell'autunno erano brillanti **da spezzare il cuore**.
(6) **heart-warming** reunion vignettes	**commoventi** scenette di riunione familiare
(7) the soupy, **jock-smelling** air	l'aria densa e **puzzolente di sudore**

Examples (1)-(3) illustrate a feature of informal speech present in the text, i.e. the use of offensive or vulgar words. These items are usually culture-specific and involve some adaptation to the target culture, thus producing non-predictable renderings. In (1), we find *cotton-picking,* an offensive word originated in the southern states of the USA, which occurs several times in the mouths of those *Under the Dome* characters that are described as negative (see sheriff Big Jim). The Italian rendering is always *pidocchioso,* an offensive word (from *pidocchio,* 'louse'),which is a functional/cultural equivalent. In (2), the rendering of the English compound, interpreted as an intensifier by the translator, is a culture-specific exclamation expressing surprise and fear. (3) is interesting from a purely linguistic point of view: the rendering is a semantically equivalent compound [V + N]. In Italian, this type of compound occurs as a noun or as an adjective (see Section 2.2). In (3), the Italian compound is used as a noun denoting an activity, but it could be used as an

adjective in other linguistic contexts. We have seen another case of translation equivalence between [N + V*ing*] and [V + N] in Table 1, i.e. *breath-taking*→ *mozzafiato*. So an equivalence can be established between English [N (object) + V(transitive)*ing*], (usually) when expressing a denotative meaning, and Italian [V + N].For example, if we wanted to translate a recent buzzword used in Italian media, that is, *decreto salva-Italia*, we could render it as *Italy-saving decree*.

Examples (4)-(7) show common types of renderings: an adjectival phrase in (4), a clause (preposition *da* + infinitive + NP) in (5), and a present participle alone in (6), followed by a PP in (7). The compound incorporating a cultural reference in (4) is rendered with a phrase where an explicitation strategy is adopted: instead of the company name (*Eggo*), probably unknown to Italian receivers, the rendering mentions the type of food produced by the company.

5. Conclusions

In this study, after describing the 'problem space' represented by English compound adjectives, we have noticed different modes of translating them into Italian since various factors operate in the translating process — linguistic, pragmatic and cultural. A crucial issue is constituted by the linguistic/cultural asymmetries between English and Italian: most English adjectives have been translated by adopting the strategies of transposition, cultural adaptation or explicitation. Another important factor is the use of compounds for expressive ends: for example, the items belonging to informal spoken English have been transferred into the Italian text using functionally equivalent items of informal spoken Italian. Finally, there are the translator's individual choices which result from creativity and subjectivity, inherent to the process, but strongly at work in the case of literary texts. We have also identified some regularities in the renderings of compounds that express denotative meanings. The renderings of compounds that convey metaphorical meanings or cultural values seem to be less predictable: in the former case because meaning is subject to the translator's interpretation, in the latter case because cultural filtering usually determines a reformulation. Creative and personal solutions seem to characterize both cases.

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