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# Specialized Communication in English: Analysis and Translation

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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The rationale of this volume stems from reality, i.e. from taking on the challenges posed by teaching specialized communication and specialized translation to University students in Italy. In particular it originates from the course of *English specialised communication and translation* held within the master's degree programme in Languages for Communication in International Enterprises and Organization (LACOM), at the Department of Studies on Language and Culture of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy. The course has been jointly taught by the four authors over the years. The reason behind this clarification is twofold: on the one hand, the contents and the structure of the chapters try to meet students' actual needs; on the other hand, the teaching experience was the driving force behind the attempt to face the enduring conundrum between theory and practice. In this regard, the volume does not have the ambition to fill this gap, but the network of recurring heuristic tools, concepts, and strategies throughout the chapters, associated with examples and practical resources, disclose the strict connection between these two sides of the same coin.

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<sup>1</sup> The volume stems from the authors' many years collaboration in researching and teaching specialized communication and translation at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy. The general outline of the volume and the drafting of the introduction are the product of the joint efforts of the four authors. Chapter 1 was written by Marina Bondi, Chapter 2 by Annalisa Sezzi, Chapter 4 by Silvia Cacchiani, and Chapter 5 by Donatella Malavasi. Marina Bondi, Silvia Cacchiani and Annalisa Sezzi are also responsible for Chapter 3.

Innumerable other coursebooks attempt to do so, one might say. Yet, the peculiarity of this volume resides in the fact that it outlines a range of approaches to specialized discourse and translation, while focusing on the translation of two specific genres - CSR reports and contracts - whose similarities and divergencies open up readers' horizons over the complexity of specialized translation in general. Furthermore, the two working languages are Italian and English, and both the translation into one's own mother tongue and into a foreign language are taken into account. This is again one foot in reality, as specialized translators or enterprises' employees are often required to translate into English even if they are not native speakers.

These premises given, the chapters are organized as follows. Chapter 1 offers a general overview on some crucial issues of specialized communication, detailing important definitions, such as those of domain, register, genre, text-type, that might generate confusion and that are a necessary basis for understanding translation problems and strategies. It continues by looking at the developments of discourse and genre analysis, paying particular attention to notions relevant for specialized translation, such as the ones of discourse community and community of practice. Language and knowledge in specialized communication are subsequently investigated in different textual forms and the chapter ends with the reciprocal contribution of corpus studies and specialized discourse, thereby paving the way for Chapter 3.

Chapter 2 ideally builds a bridge between the previous general theoretical chapter by examining some of the concepts previously presented in the light of the progresses of Translation Studies, and by adding some other notions which are deemed important for specialized translation. As a matter of fact, without claiming to be exhaustive, the chapter focuses on those concepts and approaches that have contributed to the research on specialized translation and its features. The diachronic perspective provides readers with an historical background against which to interpret concepts such as equivalence or function. By the same token, it can make them become aware of how different approaches have developed and why.

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Chapter 3 is a transitional chapter on resources specialized translators can employ, such as corpora and CAT tools. Some of them are anticipated in the first Chapter and their effective use is, for example, shown in Chapter 5, when facing the translation from Italian into English. Again, it is part of that wealth of knowledge and toolbox that readers can draw from and transfer to their own specific situations.

Chapter 4 concentrates on legal translation. It firstly delineates the problems legal translators have to face, such as the ones connected to terminology and equivalence. A selection of legal genres is then presented, aware of the importance of the knowledge of genre-specific conventions for legal translation. A section on legal language features prepares for the discussions on legal theory and practices, focusing in particular on EU translation where the difference between translation and version is essential. Finally, structure lexis and phraseology are delved into, considering examples of translations from English into Italian.

Chapter 5, instead, sheds light into the translation of CSR reports considering the other direction of translation, that is, from the mother tongue to the foreign language, in this case English. Frequently disregarded or considered as inferior, it is nonetheless part of translators' professional experiences, with all the problems and concerns that the Chapter attempts to investigate. Some concepts of Chapter 1 and 2 are herein resumed and applied to the case of CSR reports, which are, first of all, described in terms of function, structure, and language. Again, as in the case of legal translation, problems connected to non-equivalence in specialized terminology are highlighted together with more genre-specific features such as the forms of self-reference that varies between CSR reports in English and Italian, thus showing the cultural aspects of some genre-conventions.

The volume ends with a limited but varied list of references that readers can use to deepen some of the topics faced.



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