

NEWS TRANSLATION AS A SOURCE OF SYNTACTIC BORROWING IN ITALIAN*

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In this article, I present results from an investigation of translation in the press from English into Italian. The investigation combines fieldwork carried out in an international news agency with the linguistic analysis of a corpus of translated news dispatches. The investigation revolves around three case studies concerning adjective position, passive constructions, and verbal -ndo forms. I use the case studies to determine whether (and to what extent) news translation could be a source of syntactic borrowing in contemporary Italian. The results are interpreted in the context of a larger project on syntactic borrowing in French and Italian. By situating the results in this broader context, I am able to draw theoretical conclusions about news translation as a source of linguistic change, and more generally about the linguistic outcomes of language contact.

KEYWORDS: *Italian, language contact, translation, journalism, syntactic borrowing, French*

INTRODUCTION

After the indigenous dialects of Italy, the English language has represented the strongest influence on the Italian language since the end of the Second World War. This contact naturally leads to the introduction of lexical borrowings into standard Italian. Most scholarly research into English influence focuses on this type of borrowing.¹ One of the most common findings is that lexical borrowings are relatively infrequent in Italian. Tesi, for example, finds that just 0.55 per cent of all words used during a day's transmission of three RAI radio stations are borrowings, of which 62 per cent come from English.² Results such as this are often used to support the claim that contact with English has a negligible effect on standard Italian. However, not all linguists share this assessment. Tesi, for example, notes that there is diachronic evidence which indicates that the frequency of lexical borrowing is increasing.³ In addition, lexical borrowings are thought to contribute to borrowing at other levels. Linguists have linked English influence to both phonological and morphological changes in standard Italian.⁴ They also recognize the existence of semantic borrowing (e.g. *realizzare* used with the meaning of *rendersi conto*). When it comes to syntactic borrowing, however, there has been little research and the question of its significance remains shrouded in uncertainty.

The most detailed discussion of syntactic borrowing in Italian is offered by Klajn.⁵ His position is relatively moderate: he claims that syntactic borrowing is limited to ‘piccole innovazioni sintagmatiche che non interessano il funzionamento dei meccanismi grammaticali di base’.⁶ Such caution has also been expressed more recently by Lepschy and Lepschy, and by Beccaria.⁷ Other commentators have made far stronger claims. For example, Dardano links a whole range of constructions to influence from English which promotes the use of ‘shorter sentence models’ and ‘a greater exploitation of nominal relationships’.⁸ This includes double *wh*-word constructions such as *che suona che*; the omission of the preposition (e.g. *Mario Rossi, 28 (anni)* instead of *Mario Rossi di 28 anni*); and comparative phrases that omit the secondary term (e.g. *X lava meglio*).⁹ Some of Dardano’s statements remain somewhat vague, especially when he elects not to provide examples: he states, for example, that ‘certain passive constructions often reveal an English model’ and that ‘the superfluous use of the possessive adjective often derives from English (and French) models’.¹⁰ This vagueness also characterizes certain other discussions of syntactic borrowing in Italian. Pulcini’s claim that ‘English short sentence patterns have prompted similar patterns in Italian’ is hard to interpret without perhaps referring back to Dardano’s comments.¹¹

The construction that seems to attract the most attention is the *stare + -ndo* verbal periphrasis. Cortelazzo offers the most recent treatment of the hypothesis that this periphrasis expanded under influence from English.¹² Although he rejects the hypothesis in favour of an internal explanation, his treatment of the previous literature illustrates the strength of the contact-explanation. There is little doubt that the *stare + -ndo* verbal periphrasis has expanded over time, to be used both more frequently and with a wider range of verbs.¹³ This expansion was famously linked to English influence by Durante, and the same link has since been made by Berutto, and by Brianti.¹⁴ However, several objections have been raised. Although Lepschy and Lepschy do not seem to question the essence of Durante’s claim, they do call its significance into question when they state that ‘non pare che abbia grandi implicazioni per la grammatica dell’italiano’.¹⁵ This is in stark contrast to Durante’s own assessment, since he calls this change ‘l’innovazione più importante nell’ambito della sintassi’.¹⁶ More problematic, however, is Bertinetto’s criticism which calls into question the basis of Durante’s hypothesis. He argues that Durante’s own examples undermine his claim that the periphrasis was used in the past only to refer to the durativity of a state; for Bertinetto, the example *sto scrivendo* contains a verb of activity and not a stative.¹⁷ The complexity of terminology used to refer to verbal aspect has certainly contributed to the debate about syntactic borrowing here. It is important that the most recent work by Cortelazzo does indicate that there has been an expansion in the types of verb appearing in the *stare + -ndo* verbal periphrasis. Moreover, Bertinetto does not seem to be ready to reject the idea that contact might have played a role; elsewhere he only goes so far as to note that it is not impossible to exclude an internal explanation.¹⁸ Cortelazzo’s own objection is based on the existence of a plausible internal explanation: he believes that the expansion in the verb types and frequency of the periphrasis can be seen simply as part of the internal evolution of the construction which has been slowly expanding since it was first used in Italian. However, this explanation is only convincing to readers who subscribe to the

theoretical assumption that contact can only be invoked as a reason for change in the total absence of a possible internal explanation. The debate about the impact of English influence on the *stare + -ndo* construction can therefore be seen to be ongoing.

The diversity of opinions and wide range of constructions linked to English influence can both be attributed to the paucity of research in this area. For the most part, discussions of syntactic borrowing are not based on extensive scholarly investigation; instead they tend to be impressionistic and rarely include anything more than anecdotal examples. Perhaps the clearest example of this comes from Fabbri's two articles on two different constructions that he attributed to English influence.¹⁹ Despite offering some interesting commentary on the specific constructions, neither article contained any more than five examples and neither is therefore likely to convince today's reader. Fabbri's claims are also undermined by the fact that, as he himself acknowledges, there are other plausible reasons to explain the introduction of the new constructions. This is a very common problem in work on language contact, but it is particularly difficult in the case of Italian because of the possibility that innovative usage is the result of influence from the dialects of Italy. It is worth noting that, even if dialectal borrowing appears to offer a more likely explanation, it is often just as difficult to provide *concrete* proof that the dialects are the source of the change. The lack of research into syntactic borrowing from English has also forced commentators to rely on previous suggestions. Time and again the literature shows that rather than formulating their own hypotheses based on linguistic data, commentators simply repeat previous assumptions, with or without acknowledging their source.

Despite all of these difficulties, I suggest that there is now sufficient evidence to justify an in-depth study of syntactic borrowing in standard Italian. To begin with, recent work in contact linguistics has demonstrated that syntactic borrowing is a very productive mechanism in linguistic change.²⁰ The existence of plausible alternative explanations is also no longer seen to outweigh the likelihood of contact-induced change. In fact, contact linguists increasingly recognize the potential for multicausation whereby internal and external factors combine to lead to change.²¹ This is not the position of scholars, such as Cortelazzo, who subscribe to the rule that it is only after excluding all possible internal explanations that it is possible to talk of contact.²² Linguists also increasingly point to the potential significance of indirect, or virtual, contact which takes place through both traditional and new media. I explored this possibility in a previous study of news translation from English into French.²³ The results of the investigation indicated that translation in the press could definitely lead to syntactic change in contemporary French. The press, and the media more generally, are known to play an important role in linguistic borrowing. As Rogato explains, 'un bisogno lessicale unito ad una urgenza lavorativa sarebbero dunque alla base della quantità di prestiti inglesi che abitualmente vengono utilizzati e nella stampa e negli altri mezzi de comunicazione'.²⁴ News translation is considered a particularly likely channel by which syntactic borrowing could enter the language because of the speed at which translations have to be produced in the news industry.

The purpose of the present investigation is to determine if translation in the press could also represent a source of syntactic borrowing in Italian. As in my previous investigation of French, I explore only the process and product of

translation in the press and leave the question of the diffusion of any syntactic innovation to be addressed by future studies. This approach may appear unsatisfactory because it prevents me from determining whether there is evidence that the Italian language is changing under influence from English. However, I believe that some of the uncertainty surrounding syntactic borrowing in Italian is caused by an imbalance in the previous literature whereby the processes by which innovative syntax can enter the language have gone relatively unexplored. Commentators tend to focus almost entirely on innovative usage in Italian, linking particular examples to English where there is a convincing structural parallel. Although this has led to some very interesting suggestions — such as Durante’s hypothesis about the *stare* + *-ndo* construction — it is epistemologically problematic. I suggest that it is equally valuable to start to test the syntactic borrowing hypothesis by examining the processes such as code-switching and translation that are considered its probable sources. It will of course be important that future studies test whether any influence found in news translation spreads through the speech community. In the meantime, we can consider this diffusion at the very least possible — if not probable — because of the growing body of studies which testifies to the importance of the role played by the media in language change.²⁵

METHODOLOGY

This study of news translation from English into Italian replicates the methodology developed for my investigation of French by combining fieldwork with the linguistic analysis of a corpus. I carried out the fieldwork during a three-week period in December 2006 in the Rome bureau of the main Italian news agency ANSA (*Agenzia nazionale stampa associata*).²⁶ The purpose of the fieldwork was twofold: first, to observe the process of translation in the press and second, to compile a corpus of translated dispatches. I used the participant observation approach to verify that the practice of news translation remains relatively consistent across different news agencies translating into different languages.²⁷ The fieldwork and interview notes from the time spent at ANSA confirm key similarities. For example, we can be sure that the translated dispatches reach a wide audience because they are circulated for use by a range of media outlets across Italy and some are also made available online. There are also similarities when it comes to the people responsible for the translation of dispatches: they are relatively small in number, and they are all journalists with little or no formal training or experience in translation outside the news industry.

The corpus that I compiled contains every translated dispatch that appeared on the general and political newswire during the time that I spent at the news agency. Examples of stories appearing on this newswire during the fieldwork include a political coup in Fiji, the death of Augusto Pinochet, and the poisoning of a former Russian spy in London. In total, the corpus contains 173 dispatches in both their original and translated versions. This represents 73,000 words, of which the Italian dispatches make up 26,000 words.²⁸ Since the scope of the investigation is limited to the moment of innovation rather than extending to cover the diffusion of innovations, the analysis is designed to test not for *borrowing*, but for syntactic *influence*, defined in my previous study as ‘the impact that the presence of the

original has on the syntax of the translations'.²⁹ Following the previous investigation, the model of syntactic influence that I use is based on Johanson's concept of code copying which distinguishes between global and selective influence. Global influence involves the introduction of a new syntactic construction whereas selective influence affects existing constructions by altering their frequency, form or function.³⁰ Both global and selective borrowing have been previously predicted for Italian so the analysis is designed to capture both types of influence. The analysis involves three structures: the preposed adjective, the passive, and the verbal *-ndo* form.

INVESTIGATION

PREPOSING OF THE ADJECTIVE

Probably the best-known hypothesis about syntactic borrowing from English is that it will lead to an increased use of the prenominal position for adjectives in both Italian and French. The rules and tendencies governing adjective placement are — broadly speaking — very similar in these two Romance languages.³¹ Adjectives can appear both pre- and postnominally, and individual adjectives tend to be associated either with fixed or variable positioning. A number of factors affect the placement of variable-position adjectives, and it has been suggested that contact could be one of these.³² Klajn indicates that certain cases of preposing could partially result from contact because 'si allontana sensibilmente dalla norma' (e.g. *un invisibile ufficiale, i moderni apparecchi, una più funzionale segnaletica*).³³ Further evidence to support the hypothesis comes from other situations in which Italian is in contact with English. Baldassari points to the preposing of the adjective under English influence in Australia where 'l'italiano e l'inglese [...] sono in contatto intimo'.³⁴ Despite the similarities between the rules of adjective placement in French and Italian, preposing is less frequently associated with contact in Italian. The main reason for this is that preposing is already more frequent in Italian. This is clearly illustrated by Radatz and Stammerjohann's study of rates of preposing across five Romance languages.³⁵ They discovered that 41 per cent of adjectives were preposed in the Italian part of their corpus while only 26 per cent of adjectives were preposed in the comparable French section.³⁶

I analysed the corpus of translated news dispatches to test for evidence of syntactic influence affecting the position of the adjective. It emerged that 33 per cent of adjectives were preposed in the corpus. Not surprisingly, this is a higher rate of preposing than was observed in the French corpus; the rate of preposing in French was 13 per cent.³⁷ It is difficult to interpret this finding because there has been no study of adjective position in a comparable corpus of dispatches originally written in Italian. However, qualitative analysis showed that Italian is subject to greater influence from English than was French. In the French corpus, there were no tokens in which the preposing of an adjective normally associated with the postnominal position could be attributed with any certainty to English influence. In the relatively smaller Italian corpus, on the other hand, there were six such tokens. I used a native speaker questionnaire to judge the acceptability of the tokens: in three out of six cases the respondents unanimously preferred postposing, although no-one indicated that tokens such as (1) were 'impossible or incomprehensible'.

1. Due poliziotti sauditi di guardia davanti alla principale prigione di Gedda sono stati uccisi da uomini armati che si erano appostati in un **vicino edificio**. [07·12·2006, 19:51]

‘At 4 p.m. (1300 GMT) one of the guard posts around the Ruwais prison in the governorate of Jeddah came under fire from a **nearby building** that led to the martyrdom of two security personnel,’ the ministry said in a statement. [17·12·2006, 19:36]³⁸

In the other three cases, although some of the speakers preferred preposing, the majority opted for the version with the postnominal adjective.

The corpus also contains a handful of tokens that contravene what are taken to be rules governing adjective position in Italian (2)–(4). In (2) the fixed expression *Corte Suprema* is realised as *Suprema Corte*.

2. La **Suprema Corte** del Botswana ha respinto oggi il ricorso dei boscimani, il popolo piu’ antico del mondo, che chiedevano di tornare nella Riserva centrale del Kalahari, la loro terra ancestrale da dove sono stati cacciati a forza dal governo centrale. [13·12·2006, 12:07]

Botswana’s **High Court** ruled on Wednesday against some 1000 San Bushmen who say the government illegally forced them from their ancestral hunting grounds in the Kalahari desert to make way for diamond mining. [13·12·2006, 11:34]

Suprema corte is found on one other occasion in the corpus, while the fixed expression retains its usual order in two further tokens. The presence of two tokens of *Suprema corte* is striking because it reflects a strong level of English influence. Tokens (3) and (4) also display clear evidence of influence, this time leading to a different kind of innovative usage. In both tokens, the adjective *diversi* is used prenominal despite the fact that it is functioning attributively.³⁹ It is generally agreed that when *diversi* functions as a specificational adjective in Italian it will be preposed, but when its meaning is attributive it is found postnominally. For example, Nespor contrasts *persone diverse* and *diverse persone* where it is the postnominal position that means ‘non uguali’ whereas the prenominal position means ‘parecchie’.⁴⁰

3. Ieri sera i militari si erano limitati a comunicare che dieci soldati Usa erano morti in **quattro diversi incidenti**, senza fornire precisazioni. [07·12·2006, 11:47]⁴¹

4. ‘Privatamente, chiamo i giornalisti con **diversi nomi**, ma in questo caso non era certamente una descrizione del suo aspetto, perche’ si puo’ ben dire che lei e’ il contrario’, ha aggiunto. [15·12·2006, 22:00]

‘Privately, I call journalists **different names**, but in this case it was definitely not a description of her looks, because you could say she is the opposite.’ [15·12·2006, 15:43]

There are a further fifteen tokens of *diversi* in the corpus and they all correspond to the expected norm. The tokens in (2)–(4) may not be particularly frequent in the corpus — there are only four such tokens in 26,000 words — but their presence is noteworthy because they suggest that the effect of contact with English on the position of the adjective could be more significant in Italian than it is in French.

There were no clear cases of English influence leading to preposing in the French corpus: fixed expressions retained their standard order, and preposing in all other cases could be attributed to internal factors. Although perhaps not valued as highly agrammatical, tokens (2)–(4) do not lie on what Nelde and Darquennes call ‘the permissible side of the line’ and are thus more striking than any examples found in the French corpus.⁴²

THE PASSIVE

Both the Italian and French passives have been linked to borrowing from English.⁴³ The prototypical construction in all three languages is formally equivalent: it is formed with the verb *to be/essere/être* and the past participle (5).

5. numerosi attentati sono stati compiuti⁴⁴

This construction has been linked to two types of selective borrowing, affecting form and frequency. Although Dardano’s comments about the passive are relatively vague, they imply that the form of the Italian passive could be affected because constructions can ‘reveal an English model’.⁴⁵ The possibility that contact will affect the frequency of the passive has been evoked on a number of occasions. Klajn, for example, suggests that contact could lead to an increase in use of the prototypical passive at the expense of the pronominal passive in Italian.⁴⁶ I test for both types of influence in the present study. The individual hypotheses are based both on previous predictions and on contrastive analysis of the passive in English and Italian. Two types of selective influence affecting form were hypothesized: the passivization of indirect transitive or intransitive verbs, and the non-agreement of the past participle with the grammatical subject.⁴⁷ As in the French corpus, there was no evidence of either effect in the translated news dispatches.⁴⁸ There was, however, evidence of syntactic influence at the level of frequency.

The principal hypothesis is that the relatively higher frequency of the passive in English will lead in Italian to an increase in its use and to a concomitant reduction in the use of closely related constructions such as the pronominal passive. Table 1 displays the relative frequency of the passive among other voice types in a 150-clause sample from the corpus.⁴⁹ Table 2 presents the frequency data for the prototypical passive alongside three closely-related constructions across the corpus as a whole. The closely related constructions are the prototypical passive with postverbal subject, the *si passivante* and constructions with *farsi / lasciarsi / vedersi / sentirsi* + infinitive.⁵⁰

TABLE 1. Frequency of verb types in 150-clause sample

<i>Voice</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
Active	125	83.33
Passive	16	10.67
Pronominal	9	6.00
Total	150	100.00

TABLE 2. Frequency of passive constructions in the corpus

<i>Construction</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Frequency per 1000 words</i>
Prototypical with preverbal subject	165	82.50	6.333
Prototypical with postverbal subject	26	13.00	1.000
<i>Si</i> passivante	8	4.00	0.308
<i>Farsi</i> etc. + infinitive	1	0.50	0.038
Total	200	100.00	7.679

The data presented in Table 1 support the hypothesis that English influence has led to an increase in use of the prototypical passive: at 11 per cent, the frequency of the passive is considerably higher than figures given for other corpora. Cresti, for example, observes a frequency of 1.66 per cent in her corpus of contemporary narrative prose in Italian.⁵¹ A similar increase in use was also seen to affect French: the passive is present in 22 per cent of clauses in a comparable sample of translated French dispatches and this is considerably higher than other figures cited for French.⁵² Table 2 shows that the prototypical passive is the most frequent construction, but that the alternative constructions together still constitute 17.5 per cent of tokens. The lack of information on typical frequencies of these alternative constructions in this discourse type in Italian makes it impossible to draw a firm conclusion here. From a comparative perspective, however, the data are noteworthy because they show that the alternative constructions are used more frequently in Italian than they were in the French corpus. In French, the alternative constructions accounted for only 3 per cent of all passives.⁵³ This suggests that, if English influence leads to a reduction in the frequency of the other passive constructions in Italian, the consequences may be less significant than for French.

A second type of selective influence at the level of frequency affects not the frequency of the prototypical passive but the selection of formal variants. This affects both the rate of expression of the agent, and the animacy features of the subject and agent in the corpus. Previous studies have shown that the agent is expressed more often in Italian than in English. This leads to a reduction in the rate of expression of the agent in the corpus.⁵⁴ The agent is expressed in 26 out of a total of 165 passives; a rate of expression of just 16 per cent. Table 3 presents comparative data for two other types of written Italian.⁵⁵ It is clear that the agent is expressed more frequently in the two corpora of original Italian than in the translated news dispatches.⁵⁶ This result supports the hypothesis that English influence leads to a reduction in the rate of expression of the agent in Italian.

A similar effect is observed when it comes to the animacy features of the subject and agent in Italian. Influence from English has almost eliminated the normal tendency in written Italian for the subject of prototypical passives to be animate and the agent to be inanimate.⁵⁷ Table 4 provides the animacy data for tokens where the agent is expressed. The small size of the corpus means that the figures are very low. Nevertheless, the data in Table 4 show that there is no strong preference in the corpus for the animate-inanimate order. This is consistent with the hypothesis because this trend operates to a lesser degree in English.⁵⁸ It seems

TABLE 3. Expression of the agent (adapted from Cresti)

	ESSAY		NARRATIVE	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
+ Agent	81	41.54	76	30.89
- Agent	114	58.46	170	69.11
Total	195	100.00	246	100.00

likely that in both cases the selection of formal variants is affected by influence from the original; trends that are normally present in standard written Italian either operate to a lesser degree or not at all in the corpus.

This investigation of the passive shows that of the two types of influence predicted, it is only selective influence at the level of frequency that is present in the corpus. Influence from the originals affects both the frequency of the prototypical passive and related constructions, and also the selection of formal variants. The very same effects were found in the corpus of translated French dispatches.⁵⁹ In general, however, the effects of the influence were stronger in French. The same types of influence can therefore be observed in both corpora, but there is a difference of degree: the effects are less significant in Italian.

TABLE 4. Animacy features of subjects and agents

	SUBJECT		AGENT	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Relative Frequency</i>
Animate	14	53.85	11	42.31
Inanimate	12	46.15	15	57.69
Total	26	100.00	26	100.00

VERBAL -*ndo* FORM

The verbal *-ndo* form is known as the *gerundio* in Italian and it is formed with the root of the verb and either *-ando* or *-endo* (e.g. *parlando*, *volendo*). As was seen in Section 1, this form has been linked to English influence because contact is thought to have led to an expansion of its use in the *stare* + *-ndo* periphrasis. Despite the uncertainty that surrounds this posited locus of contact, it is this link to English influence that inspired the original investigation of the effects of contact on the equivalent verbal *-ant* forms in French.⁶⁰ Although there is no equivalent to the *stare* + *-ndo* periphrasis in French, I suggested that it was important to investigate whether the verbal *-ant* form was affected by contact in other ways since it had clearly emerged as an area of the Romance grammar that could be affected by

contact.⁶¹ Since the verbal *-ant* forms in French had not previously been linked to English influence, the investigation functioned as a wild card, or control. A broad range of hypotheses were tested, focusing on the frequency, form, and function of the verbal *-ant* forms across a range of constructions. I turn here to the verbal *-ndo* form in Italian to test whether it is also affected in other ways by contact with English today.

The corpus contained 142 tokens of the verbal *-ndo* form, as listed in Appendix C (Supplementary Material).⁶² In neither the French nor the Italian corpus was there any evidence of the verbal *-ndo* form being used in innovative constructions; global borrowing is once again ruled out. There is no suggestion that a new construction involving *essere essendo* will be introduced as a calque of the English *to be being* construction. Neither is there any suggestion that the *-ndo* form will be used nominally like the English *-ing* form.⁶³ There was only one non-standard token (6).

6. Le fonti militari americane hanno affermato di **star controllando** le notizie.
[15·12·2006, 16:53]

The U.S. military said it was checking the report. [15·12·2006, 14:16]

All of the native speakers consulted judged this token to be ‘comprehensible but slightly awkward’, and they consistently preferred the reformulation *hanno affermato che stanno controllando*. Despite not being a direct calque of the English original, *star controllando* could still be a product of contact because it is used to reproduce the English progressive *was checking*. As Brianti notes, the *to be* + *-ing* construction in English is more frequent than the *stare* + *-ndo* periphrasis in Italian.⁶⁴ This is reminiscent of an effect I observed in the French corpus that is a form of ‘syntactic priming’ whereby ‘features of the original English dispatches [influence] choices made in the translations’.⁶⁵ The use of the progressive in English triggered the use of the verbal *-ant* form in French in cases where it would not otherwise have been found.

The selection of tenses also emerged as a potential locus of influence in French. There is just one example of this effect in the Italian corpus (7).

7. Queste elezioni **erano viste** come una [*sic*] banco di prova per i partiti in vista delle elezioni parlamentari del prossimo anno e delle presidenziali del 2008. [09·12·2006, 16:57]

All-out victories for the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), would have boded well for the party’s prospects in parliamentary elections next year and the 2008 presidential poll. [09·12·2006, 13:31]

The imperfective in (7) is an unusual choice; the simple past *furono viste* or composite past *sono state viste* would be expected in this context. I suggest that *erano viste* is simply a direct translation of the English perfective passive *were seen*.⁶⁶ This is exactly the type of influence that I observed in French.⁶⁷ In (7), however, there is no strong evidence of English influence because the original contains a somewhat unusual construction in English, namely *would have boded well for*. It is only by interpreting (7) in the light of the data from French that English influence emerges as a possible cause. Although tense usage was not a

focus of either investigation, individual tokens from both corpora clearly indicate that it is a possible locus of influence in news translation.

When it comes selective borrowing, the parallels between French and Italian disappear entirely. To begin with, the most significant finding of the previous investigation was that contact led to a reversal of the contemporary preference for the *gérondif* over the present participle in French.⁶⁸ The same effect could not be produced in Italian because the morphologically distinct present participle is not in alternation with the *gerundio*. Instead, it functions as the de-verbal adjective does in French. Most of the other types of influence found in the French corpus were also absent in Italian. To begin with, there was strong evidence that contact led to the use of the verbal *-ant* form after verbs of perception instead of the more usual relative or infinitive constructions.⁶⁹ In the Italian corpus, on the other hand, no such effect is seen.

8. Ne da' notizia oggi il quotidiano 'al Hayat', secondo il quale quando i passeggeri del volo della Saudi Arabian Airlines — una compagnia che fa solo voli interni — si sono visti i topolini sgattaiolare dappertutto, fra i piedi e sopra le loro teste dagli scomparti per i bagagli a mano, 'le urla hanno superato il rumore dei jet'. [15·12·2006, 14:01]

Al-Hayat newspaper reported on Friday that the mice escaped from the bag of a traveller on the internal Saudi Arabian Airlines flight and started falling on the heads and scurrying between the feet of panic-stricken passengers. [15·12·2006, 11:38]

In (8) the standard construction with the infinitive is used instead.

There is only one type of possible influence that was shared by both corpora and it involves the functions of the verbal *-ant* and *-ndo* forms. In both corpora these forms are used in the reporting speech which accompanies quotations. In (9), for example, *precisando che* accompanies the reported speech *le discussioni sulla sua possibile composizione continuano*.

9. 'Dobbiamo avere un cessate il fuoco, un processo politico e poi una forza credibile [...] una forza efficiente che possa fare la differenza sul terreno', ha sottolineato il capo del 'peacekeeping' Onu, *precisando che* le discussioni sulla sua possibile composizione continuano. [06·12·2006, 03:03]

'We must have an efficient force which can make a difference on the ground,' Guehenno said. Discussions continued over its possible composition, he said. [06·12·2006, 00:01]

The reporting speech function is not normally associated with these forms in either language.⁷⁰ Although it is not possible to conclude with any certainty that this usage is a result of contact, its potential impact is great. Not only would it represent the introduction of a new function, but it also leads to the *-ndo* form being used to denote a non-simultaneous event or action: Guehenno first states the need for an efficient force, and then notes that discussions about its composition are continuing. The list of verbal *-ndo* forms in Appendix C (Supplementary Material) clearly shows that accompanying reporting speech is a relatively common function in the corpus: verbs such as *accusare*, *affermare*, *aggiungere*, and so on are all used on several occasions to introduce reported speech.

The results presented in this section show quite clearly that the effect of English influence on the verbal *-ndo* form in Italian is considerably weaker than its effect on the verbal *-ant* form in French. At first, this finding appears surprising because the investigation of French was originally inspired by the suggestion that the equivalent form was affected by contact with English in Italian (and also in Spanish). However, in most cases it is possible to explain the different outcomes of contact because of structural differences between French and Italian. It was clear, for example, that the most significant effect observed in the French corpus was not reproduced here because Italian does not have an equivalent present participle / *gérondif* distinction. Similarly, I suggest that the verbal *-ndo* form is not used after verbs of perception in Italian as it was in French because there is a stronger constraint in Italian that the subject of the *-ndo* form be controlled by the subject of the governing verb.⁷¹ It is not surprising that there are few similarities between the effects of English influence on the verbal *-ndo* and *-ant* forms in Italian and French because the two languages differ more with respect to their use of these forms than with respect either to adjective position or to the passive.

DISCUSSION

Focusing to begin with on the Italian data alone, the corpus certainly contains evidence that news translation has the potential to lead to syntactic borrowing in Italian. Several types of syntactic influence were observed in the translated dispatches, including the preposing of adjectives that are not normally associated with the prenominal position, and selective influence affecting the frequency of the passive and its formal variants. Although the evidence was less robust, it also pointed to two potential instances of influence that merit further investigation. The first concerns the selection of tenses, and the second concerns the use of the verbal *-ndo* form in reporting speech. Of course, further research will be required to determine whether and to what extent any such influence can spread to the rest of the population. The most that can be said today is that what we know about the workings of the contemporary news industry indicates that this is definitely possible.

It is also possible to make some more general observations about language contact by comparing the findings for Italian with the results of the previous investigation of French. The most important differences between the results concern the position of the adjective and the verbal *-ndo/-ant* forms. The effect of contact on adjective position in Italian differs from its effect on French by a matter of nature and not just of degree, because it leads to the preposing of adjectives that are normally always postposed. There was no evidence of this kind of influence in the French corpus. I suggest that the effect of English influence is greater in Italian because adjective position is already more free in Italian than in French. Since there is already more variation in the placement of adjectives, the journalists can be affected by English usage without their being aware of it. A similar effect is seen in the investigation of verbal *-ant* forms in French: it is the existence of both variants, the *gérondif* and the present participle, that allows English influence to make an impact on usage in the French corpus, while its effects remain minimal in Italian. I suggest that the existence of internal variation is a factor that plays an important role in this particular type of language contact because of the requirement that

news agency dispatches conform to normative usage; as I noted in the French study, journalists are unlikely to introduce syntactic innovations that would be clearly marked as non-standard.⁷² The presence of internal variation could also be a factor that operates in other types of language contact. Even in cases where global borrowing is not blocked by the strength of the norm, internal variation could still facilitate borrowing in certain areas of the grammar. The presence of internal variation is a factor related to the nature of the source language that could be included in lists of factors that determine the outcome of contact such as the one given by Harris and Campbell.⁷³

The second observation that emerges from a comparison of the results of the two investigations is that even very closely related languages can be affected in very different ways by contact with the same variety. From a broad cross-linguistic perspective, Italian and French can be considered to be extremely closely related. They are also in almost identical contact situations with English: neither France nor Italy is geographically contiguous with an Anglophone country, but Anglo-American culture plays a dominant role in domains such as the media and technology, and contact is primarily indirect. However, the parallel investigations being discussed here have shown that although they are probably influenced by English to a similar degree in news translation, it is in different areas of their grammars that French and Italian display that influence.

It is also notable that neither the French, nor the Italian corpus contains evidence that contact might lead to an innovative construction calqued on the *to be being* construction in English. In this way, both of these Romance languages differ from Spanish where it is widely held that the equivalent *estar siendo* construction was introduced by contact with English.⁷⁴ Pountain, in contrast, favours an explanation that takes into account the aspectual system of Spanish, whereby the introduction of this construction serves to fill a gap 'at least by comparison with English'.⁷⁵ The results of my investigation cast a doubt over Pountain's explanation since this 'anomalous structural gap' also exists in French and Italian, and yet there is no evidence of it being filled in either of these varieties in a context that we can expect to favour this innovation, namely translation from English.⁷⁶ The fact that this construction is not found in Italian also shows that it is not just the continued presence of reflexes of STARE that facilitate its use because *stare* also remains in Italian. This is a further illustration of the fact that even closely related languages in very similar contact situations can react in very different ways to the same external influence.

CONCLUSION

This investigation of news translation from English into Italian confirms several of the conclusions reached for French. To begin with, both sets of results indicate that translation in the press could lead to syntactic borrowing if the influence observed were to spread to the rest of the speech community. The second similarity in the results concerns the type of influence observed: it is for the most part selective. The only exception to this in the Italian corpus concerns adjective placement because it could potentially lead to the preposing of a type of adjective not previously found prenominal. This can be considered a type of global influence. There is obviously an urgent need for more research in this field. In particular, investigations should

now focus on expanding the range of structures analysed and on testing whether syntactic influence in news translation can spread to the rest of the speech community. Nevertheless, this study adds weight to the call for translation in the press — and indeed in other domains — to be considered serious potential channels for syntactic borrowing.

It is almost a trope of discussions of English influence on Italian to conclude with a comparison to French. Although there is public awareness that Italian is influenced by contact with English, the negative reaction is not as widespread in Italy and there is no equivalent institutional support to guard against English influence.⁷⁷ Commentators frequently claim that these differences between Italy and France mean that the Italian language is affected to a greater degree by contact with English. I am not aware of any convincing proof of this difference; the comparative evidence cited tends to be anecdotal. For example, Rogato claims that ‘i francesi si difendono in maniera commovente, cercando sempre gli equivalenti nazionali delle parole di importazione (*boutique franche* al posto di *duty free*)’ whereas the Italians ‘sempre ossequiosi verso gli invasori, abbiamo invece ceduto su tutto il fronte’.⁷⁸ This single example is far from sufficient proof of a consistent difference between the languages; there are doubtless numerous cases in which the same term has been borrowed into French. It was never the aim of this study to test the effectiveness of institutionally supported linguistic protectionism. In the light of the frequency of the comparison, however, it should be noted that the results of this investigation do not support the suggestion that Italian is affected to a greater degree by English influence at the level of syntax. Contact may well affect different parts of their grammars in different ways, but the two languages are affected to similar degrees. Future research will be required to determine whether the same is true of lexical borrowing.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF
PREPOSED ADJECTIVES

affollato	caloroso	duro
alto	cattivo	eccitante
altro	certo	ennesimo
analogo	chiacchierato	enorme
apparente	choccante [<i>sic</i>]	estremo
aspirante	clamoroso	eventuale
aspro	corto	ex
assoluto	cosiddetto	famigerato
attuale	costante	forte
audace	crescente	fragile
basso	cruciale	futuro
breve	denso	generale
brillante	deplorable	gigantesco
buono	destituito	grande
	difficile	grosso
	diretto	imminente
	diverso	importante

indiretto	rituale	allontanare	I
influyente	rustico	annunciare	2
infortunato	sanguinoso	approvare	I
insano	sconosciuto	arrestare	2
insolito	scorso	assassinare	I
intenso	secondo	assegnare	I
intero	secondario	attaccare	I
libero	serio	attribuire	I
lungo	sesto	aumentare	I
lussuoso	settimo	avanzare	I
maggiore	simile	avvertire	3
massimo	singolo	bruciare	I
meraviglioso	sospetto	cacciare	2
migliore	sostanzioso	chiamare	2
non precisato	stesso	colpire	3
noto	stretto	compiere	I
numeroso	successivo	concepire	I
nuovo	supremo	condannare	2
pacifico	terzo	confermare	I
parecchio	tormentato	considerare	2
particolare	tradizionale	controllare	2
perdurante	travagliato	costringere	2
pesante	tremolante	criticare	I
piccolo	ulteriore	curare	I
pieno	ultimo	destituire	I
possibile	unico	dichiarare	I
potente	vario	dirigere	I
potenziale	vasto	dimettere	I
poverissimo	vecchio	disperdere	2
precedente	venerato	donare	I
presente	vero	eleggere	I
primo	vice	emanare	I
principale	vicino	esortare	2
probabile	violento	esporre	2
progressivo	vivo	estendere	I
proprio		estromettere	I
prossimo		fare	I
pubblico		ferire	II
quarto		fissare	I
quinto		fucilare	I
rapido		gestire	I
recente		gettare	I
regolare		giudicare	I
ricco		governare	I
ripetuto		identificare	2
rispettivo		ignorare	2

APPENDIX B: LIST OF VERBS USED IN PROTOTYPICAL PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS WITH PREVERBAL SUBJECTS	
Verb	Frequency
accompagnare	I
accusare	I
alimentare	I

infiltrare	1
informare	1
ingaggiare	1
inviare	1
ispezionare	1
issare	1
liberare	1
mettere	1
operare	2
osteggiare	1
porre	1
portare	1
prelevare	1
prendere	1
preparare	1
pronunciare	1
punire	2
raggiungere	1
rapire	5
riclassificare	4
registrare	1
rendere	1
respingere	1
restaurare	1
riconoscere	1
ricoverare	2
ricreare	2
rilasciare	3
rimettere	2
rivelare	1
salvare	1
scarcerare	1
sconfiggere	4
scoprire	2
segnalare	2
sentire	1
sequestrare	1
soccorrere	1
sostenere	1
sottoporre	3
spostare	1
tenere	1
tollerare	1
trattare	2
trovare	6
uccidere	13
valutare	1
vedere	2

vendere	1
Total	165

APPENDIX C: LIST OF
VERBAL *-NDO* FORMS

-ndo form Frequency

accampando	1
accusando	3
acquistando	1
affermando	4
aggiungendo	3
aiutando	1
allontanando	1
andando	2
approfittando	2
arrestando	1
assistendo	1
attaccando	1
avvertendo	1
battendo	1
cambiando	2
causando	1
chiamando	1
circondando	1
citando	3
combattendo	3
conducendo	1
conoscendo	1
continuando	1
controllando	1
costruendo	1
criticando	1
danneggiando	1
definendo	1
denunciando	1
difendendo	1
dilagando	2
disarmando	2
diventando	1
erigendo	1
esprimendo	1
essendo	1
facendo	6
ferendo	3
giocando	2
impedendo	1
incontrando	1

indagando	3
infilando	1
intervenendo	1
lanciando	4
leggendo	1
mancando	1
mettendo	1
minacciando	2
obbligando	1
parlando	14
partecipando	1
pensando	1
perdendo	1
portando	2
precisando	4
prendendo	1
preparando	1
producendo	1
progettando	1
promettendo	1
proponendo	1
reagendo	1
recintando	1
relazionando	1
rendendo	1
ribadendo	1
riconoscendo	1
ricordando	1
riducendo	1
riferendo	1
rifiutando	1
rilevando	1
scalando	1
scatenando	1
sequestrando	1
smentendo	1
sottraendo	1
sottolineando	1
spostando	1
stimolando	1
sviluppando	1
tentando	1
trascinando	1
uccidendo	8
venendo	1
viaggiando	1
vincendo	1
Total	142

NOTES

- * The research for his article was carried out as part of my Ph.D. thesis under the direction of Wendy Ayres-Bennett and Adam Ledgeway. I thank them both for their help and guidance. I would also like to thank the journalists at ANSA for welcoming me into their newsroom and taking part in the investigation.
- ¹ For recent bibliographies on contact with English, see S. Laviosa, 'Studying Anglicisms with Comparable and Parallel Corpora', *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 21 (2007), 123–36, and G. Rogato, 'Anglicismi nella stampa italiana', *Italica*, 85.1 (2008), 27–43.
- ² R. Tesi, *Storia dell'italiano: la lingua moderna e contemporanea* (Bologna, Zanichelli, 2005), p. 244. Tesi only includes direct borrowings; the percentage would increase if adapted borrowings and hybrid compounds were included.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 245.
- ⁴ See, for example, T. De Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Bari, Laterza, 1963), p. 169, and A. L. and G. Lepschy, 'Anglicismi e italianismi', in *L'amanuense analfabeta e altri saggi*, ed. by A. L. and G. Lepschy (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki, 1999), pp. 169–82 (pp. 175, 180).
- ⁵ I. Klajn, *Influssi inglesi nella lingua italiana* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1972), pp. 185–95.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188.
- ⁷ Lepschy and Lepschy, 'Anglicismi e italianismi', p. 180, and G. L. Beccaria, *Per difesa e per amore. La lingua italiana oggi* (Milan, Garzanti, 2006), pp. 187–88.
- ⁸ M. Dardano, 'The Influence of English on Italian', in *English in Contact with other Languages*, ed. by W. Viereck and W.-D. Bald (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), pp. 231–52 (p. 233).
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ V. Pulcini, 'Italian', in *English in Europe*, ed. by M. Görlach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 151–67 (p. 152).
- ¹² M. A. Cortelazzo, 'La perifrasi progressiva in italiano è un anglicismo sintattico?', in *Studi in onore di Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo per i suoi settant'anni*, a cura degli allievi padovani (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007), pp. 1753–64.
- ¹³ See Cortelazzo, 'La perifrasi progressiva', Section 1. For detailed quantitative evidence of this expansion, see P. M. Bertinetto, 'Le perifrasi progressiva e continua nella narrativa dell'Otto e Novecento', in *Studi offerti a Luigi Blasucci dai colleghi e dagli allievi pisani*, ed. by L. Lugnani, M. Santagata, and A. Stussi (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 1996), pp. 77–100.
- ¹⁴ M. Durante, *Dal latino all'italiano moderno: saggio di storia linguistica e culturale* (Bologna, Zanichelli, 1981), pp. 268–69; G. Berruto, *Sociolinguistica dell'italiano contemporaneo* (Rome, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1987), p. 73; G. Brianti, *Périphrases aspectuelles de l'italien: le cas de andare, venire, et stare + gérondif* (Bern, Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 20, 238–39.
- ¹⁵ Lepschy and Lepschy, 'Anglicismi e italianismi', p. 179.
- ¹⁶ Durante, *Dal latino all'italiano moderno*, p. 269.
- ¹⁷ Bertinetto, 'Le perifrasi progressiva e continua', p. 89 n. 19.
- ¹⁸ See Cortelazzo, 'La perifrasi progressiva', Section 1.
- ¹⁹ A. Fabbri, 'Un costrutto dell'italiano contemporaneo: la concordanza ad sensum del participio congiunto', *Lingua nostra*, 47.1 (1986), 21–24, and A. Fabbri, 'Un costrutto di recente diffusione nell'italiano: il tipo "affascinato dalla, e invischiato nella, regola"', *Lingua nostra*, 48.1 (1987), 17–19.
- ²⁰ The foundational texts in this field include S. G. Thomason and T. Kaufman, *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); A. C. Harris and L. Campbell, *Historical Syntax in Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995);

- S. G. Thomason, *Language Contact* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001); and Y. Matras, *Language Contact* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- ²¹ See, for example, K. Farrar, 'Explanations for Word Order Change in Modern German', *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik*, 66 (1999), 1–30 (p. 28), M. C. Jones, 'Mette ahaout dauve la grippe des Angllais: Convergence on the Island of Guernsey', in *Language Change: The Interplay of Internal, External and Extra-linguistic Factors*, ed. by M. C. Jones and E. Esch (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002), pp. 143–67 (pp. 154–55), and B. Heine and T. Kuteva, *Language Contact and Grammatical Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 266.
- ²² See Cortelazzo, 'La perifrasi progressiva', Section 3.
- ²³ M McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French: A Linguistic Analysis of News Translation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2011).
- ²⁴ Rogato, 'Anglicismi nella stampa italiana', p. 31.
- ²⁵ See, for example, A. J. Naro and M. M. P. Scherre, 'Contact with Media and Linguistic Variation', in *Sociolinguistic Variation: Data, Theory and Analysis: Selected Papers from NWAV 23 at Stanford*, ed. by J. Arnold et al. (Stanford, CA: Centre for the Study of Language and Information, 1996) pp. 223–28.
- ²⁶ Agencies such as Reuters and ANSA are responsible for most of the translation that takes place from English into Italian in the press; very few news stories are translated by individual media outlets.
- ²⁷ For a description of the process of translation in the press as it takes place from English into French in another international news agency, see McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, ch. 1.
- ²⁸ It is not surprising that fewer than half of the words come from Italian dispatches because news agency translations tend to be shorter than their originals (*ibid.*, p. 21).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24. On the code-copying framework, see L. Johanson, 'Contact-Induced Change in a Code-Copying Framework', in Jones and Esch, *Linguistic Change*, pp. 285–313.
- ³¹ The similarities of adjective placement in the national Romance languages have also been highlighted by G. Cinque, *The Syntax of Adjectives: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: MIT Press, 2010), p.72. He does nevertheless acknowledge some 'limited differences' between languages such as French and Italian (*ibid.*, p. 77), and, like many others, he points to the dialects and previous stages of the national languages as instances of greater variation (*ibid.*, p. 73). Another comparison of the two systems is provided by T. Alisova, 'Studi di sintassi italiana. II. Le posizioni dell'aggettivo nel gruppo sintattico del sostantivo', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 25 (1967), 250–313.
- ³² There have been many attempts to explain adjective placement in Italian. Introductory overviews of internal reasons for preposing are offered by M. Nespò, 'Il sintagma aggettivale', in *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*, ed. by L. Renzi et al., 3 vols (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1988), 1, pp. 439–55 (p. 440), and by M. Maiden and C. Robustelli, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian* (London: Arnold, 2000), p. 51. See also discussions of adjective placement offered by Alisova, 'Studi di sintassi italiana', N. Vincent, 'La posizione dell'aggettivo in italiano', in *Tema-Rema in Italiano: Symposium, Frankfurt am Main, 26/27–4–1985*, ed. by H. Stammerjohann (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1986) pp. 181–95, and by P. Crisma, 'On Adjective Placement in Romance and Germanic Event Nominals', *Rivista di grammatica generativa*, 18 (1993), 61–100. The comparative account that Cinque (*The Syntax of Adjectives*) provides is parti-

cularly useful for this comparative study because he discusses the Italian data in the Germanic/Romance context.

- ³³ Klajn, *Influssi inglesi*, pp. 185–87.
- ³⁴ L. Baldassari, 'La lingua italiana d'Australia e il suo studio', *Rivista italiana di dialettologia*, 18 (1994), 137–51 (p. 142).
- ³⁵ H.-I. Radatz and H. Stammerjohann, 'De la Rhétorique à la typologie et vice versa: le jeu de la position de l'adjectif dans les langues romanes', *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica e applicata*, 25·3 (1996), 521–31.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 523. Note that rates of pre- and post-posing vary considerably and that Radatz and Stammerjohann's figures should not be taken to represent an average figure for Italian. The value of their work for the present study lies in its comparative approach. Their results can be compared to those of Scarano who finds that only 24% of adjectives are preposed in both parts of her corpus, the literary written part and the spoken part. See A. Scarano, 'Aggettivi qualificativi, italiano parlato e articolazione dell'informazione', in *Tradizione & innovazione. Il parlato: teoria — corpora — linguistica dei corpora. Atti del VI convegno SILFI, Gerhard-Mercator Universität Duisburg 28 giugno–2 luglio 2000*, ed. by E. Burr (Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 2005), pp. 277–92 (p. 281).
- ³⁷ For information about preposing in the French corpus, see McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, p. 41. The difference in the rate of preposing in the French and Italian corpora is also reflected at the lexical level: 144 lexical items were preposed in 238,000 words of French, while 129 lexical items were preposed in 26,000 words of Italian. The list of adjectives preposed in the corpus is given in Appendix A (Supplementary Material).
- ³⁸ Tokens are cited from the corpus in Italian alongside the original English where possible. Each version is accompanied by the date and time of publication on the ANSA newswire.
- Note that tokens are reproduced as they appeared on the newswire which means that the formatting of accents and speech reporting differs from the rest of this article.
- ³⁹ In (3) the presence of *quattro* indicates that the meaning of *diversi* is attributive. In (4) the context makes this clear: the Polish president is trying to justify why he was overheard referring to a female journalist as the 'monkey in red'. He is emphasizing the fact that he uses a different name for each journalist in private, rather than suggesting that he uses a range of different names.
- ⁴⁰ Nespó, 'Il sintagma aggettivale', p. 447.
- ⁴¹ Note that the original English text of the dispatch cited in (3) is not reproduced here because of an error in the compilation of the corpus that led to the original not being downloaded in this case. It is unfortunate that we do not have access to the source text in this instance but there is nothing in the fieldwork notes to indicate that there was anything different about the production of the Italian version: it was definitely the product of a translation from English carried out in the same circumstances as all of the others.
- ⁴² P. H. Nelde and J. Darquennes, 'German in Belgium: Linguistic Variation from a Contact Linguistic Point of View', in *Language Contact at the Romance-Germanic Language Border*, ed. by J. Treffers-Daller and R. Willemyns (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002), pp. 65–79 (p. 74).
- ⁴³ The Spanish passive has also been linked to contact with English. See, for example, J. N. Green, 'On the Frequency of Passive Constructions in Modern Spanish', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 52 (1975), 345–62 (p. 345); C. Pratt, *El anglicismo en el español peninsular contemporáneo* (Madrid: Gredos, 1980) (pp. 209–10); cf. C. J. Pountain, 'Syntactic Anglicisms in Spanish: Exploitation or Innovation?', in *The Changing Voices of Europe*, ed. by M. M. Parry, W. V. Davies, and R. A. M. Temple (Cardiff: University of

- Wales Press, 1994), pp. 109–24 (pp. 112–14).
- ⁴⁴ Maiden and Robustelli, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian*, p. 278.
- ⁴⁵ Dardano, 'The Influence of English on Italian', p. 241.
- ⁴⁶ Klajn, *Influssi inglesi*, p. 194.
- ⁴⁷ Only a restricted number of intransitive verbs allow passivization in Italian.
- ⁴⁸ Note that the French corpus did contain tokens reflecting both types of non-normative use but neither was attributable to English influence. See McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, ch. 3.
- ⁴⁹ A list of the verbs found in prototypical passive constructions in the corpus is provided in Appendix B (Supplementary Material).
- ⁵⁰ These alternative constructions were chosen as the closest equivalents to the constructions included in the investigation of French: the impersonal passive, the pronominal passive and the *se faire* passive (see McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, pp. 61–64). An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the clitic left dislocation structure might be considered another alternative to the prototypical passive. Although I do not have statistics on the use of this construction in my corpus, it is certainly found in the language of news agency dispatches. A future investigation could be used to explore the use of dislocated constructions in this genre in general, perhaps still in a comparative perspective given the fact that they are used more frequently in Italian and French than in English, the language of the source texts. Such a study would be a useful complement to the present investigation since the hypothesis would be the opposite of the one tested here: the relatively low frequency of dislocated constructions in the source language would lead to their being underrepresented in translated dispatches.
- ⁵¹ A Cresti, 'Il passivo in italiano', *Romanische Forschungen*, 111 (1999), 161–77 (p. 166).
- ⁵² See McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, pp. 61, 74 n. 16.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 61, table 6.
- ⁵⁴ Bazzanella cites a range between 25 per cent and 30 per cent for written Italian. See C. Bazzanella, 'Il passivo personale con e senza cancellazione d'agente: verso un approccio multidimensionale', in *Tra rinascimento e strutture attuali: saggi di linguistica italiana*, ed. by L. Giannelli et al. (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1991), pp. 373–85 (p. 374). For English, in contrast, the figures are between 15 and 20 per cent. See G. Stein, *Studies in the Function of the Passive* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1979), p. 126, and R. Quirk et al., *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), pp. 164–65.
- ⁵⁵ The data in Table 3 are adapted from Cresti, 'Il passivo in italiano', p. 168.
- ⁵⁶ The chi-squared test shows that the difference is significant for both sets of results. For narrative $\chi^2 = 11.33$ to 1df, $p = 0.0007$ so $p < 0.05$. For essay-based texts $\chi^2 = 27.21$ to 1df, $p = 1.82e-7$ so $p < 0.05$.
- ⁵⁷ See Bazzanella, *Il passivo personale*, p. 380.
- ⁵⁸ For the same reason, there is no evidence of the normal preference in written Italian for the subjects of short passives to be animate: only 54 per cent (or 74 out of 138) of short passives in the corpus have animate subjects.
- ⁵⁹ See McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, pp. 61, 67–68, 74 n. 16.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 4.
- ⁶¹ The equivalent *-ndo* form in Spanish has also been linked to English influence. For example, see Pratt, *El anglicismo en el español peninsular contemporáneo*, pp. 209–10, and Pountain, 'Syntactic Anglicisms in Spanish', pp. 116–18.
- ⁶² This is equivalent to 0.82 tokens per dispatch or 5.42 per 1000 words.
- ⁶³ It was perhaps less likely that this would happen in Italian than in French because the nominal infinitive is still in widespread use in Italian

- whereas it is no longer productive in modern French.
- ⁶⁴ Brianti, *Périphrases aspectuelles de l'italien*, p. 222. Brianti's observation might be valid for standard written Italian — the variety under investigation here — but it is not necessarily true of all other varieties. For a summary of the literature on variation in the frequency of this construction, see Cortelazzo, 'La perifrasi progressiva', Section 2.1; the studies that he cites provide evidence of both diachronic and diaphasic variation.
- ⁶⁵ McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, pp. 84–85.
- ⁶⁶ An anonymous reviewer pointed out that further supporting evidence for influence in this case can be found at the lexical level, since verbs such as *ritenere*, *considerare*, or *giudicare* represent more natural choices in Italian.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–67.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 83–85.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.
- ⁷⁰ Grammars of Italian often provide lists of adverbial functions for verbal *-ndo* forms. See, for example, M. Dardano and P. Trifone, *La nuova grammatica della lingua italiana* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1997) pp. 406–20. See also G. B. Moretti and G. R. Orvieto, *Grammatica italiana*, 2 vols (Perugia, Benucci, 1979–83), II, pp. 181–89. For references to equivalent discussions for French, see McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, pp. 86–88.
- ⁷¹ The relative strength of the constraint in Italian can be seen by comparing accounts of the verbal *-ant/-ndo* forms in the two languages. See, among others, A.-J. Henrichsen, 'Quelques remarques sur l'emploi des formes verbales en -ant en français moderne', *Revue Romane*, 2 (1967), 97–107 (p. 105); H. Bonnard, 'Le Gérondif', in *Grand Larousse de la langue française*, ed. by L. Guilbert et al. (Paris: Larousse, 1973), pp. 2221–25 (p. 2222); Maiden and Robustelli, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian*, pp. 308, 309 n. 14; M. Grevisse, *Le bon usage*, reworked by André Goosse, 3rd edn (Paris: Duculot, 1993), p. 1306; and M. Riegel, J.-C. Pellat, and R. Rioul, *Grammaire méthodique du français* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), pp. 341–42.
- ⁷² McLaughlin, *Syntactic Borrowing in Contemporary French*, p. 110.
- ⁷³ Harris and Campbell, *Historical Syntax*, ch. 6.
- ⁷⁴ See, for example, Pratt, *El anglicismo en el español peninsular contemporáneo*, p. 209–10.
- ⁷⁵ Pountain, 'Syntactic Anglicisms in Spanish', pp. 116–18.
- ⁷⁶ This is not the only potential problem for explanations for change at levels other than the lexical that are based on the concept of a gap. See, for example, K. Farrar, 'Some Constraints on the Borrowability of Syntactic Features (and Why None of them Work)', in *Historical Linguistics 1995, Vol II: Germanic Linguistics*, ed. by R. M. Hogg and L. van Bergen (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995), pp. 89–100 (pp. 90–91).
- ⁷⁷ See M. A. Cortelazzo, *Italiano d'oggi* (Padova, Esedra, 2000), pp. 205–07, and G. L. Beccaria, *Per difesa e per amore*, pp. 146–97.
- ⁷⁸ Rogato, 'Anglicismi nella stampa italiana', p. 28.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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