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On Dictionary Misuse

Abstract

This article analyses dictionary use through errors made in written exam papers by university students of English as a foreign language. Students used bilingual (English–Italian, Italian–English) dictionaries in connection with a translation test from English into Italian. Only lexicographically relevant errors – i.e. errors presumably due to the misuse of dictionaries – have been considered: the objective of their analysis was to verify whether and to what extent they are due, as hypothesized, to the students' lack of reference skills or to dictionaries' shortcomings. The final purpose was to identify areas in which a purposeful training in, and the formal teaching of, dictionary using skills could prevent students from making those errors.

1. Setting and methodology

1.1. Introduction

Previous research into dictionary use (for instance, among others, Tomaszczyk 1979; Béjoint 1981; Kipfer 1987; Ibrahim and Zalessky 1989; and, in Italy; Sora 1984; Coviello 1987; Marelllo 1989) has mainly focussed on users' attitudes and expectations which have often been investigated in detail, including, for instance, background habits connected with items such as when and in what circumstances dictionaries have been bought and where they are normally kept at home. In general, researchers have used questionnaires, sometimes backed by protocols (for instance Galisson, 1983) or by other data concerning the "subjects' personal history" (Quirk 1974) or the "users' profile" (Atkins and Knowles 1990), in order to get a better background knowledge of users' needs. The informants' or participants' knowledge of the foreign language(s) involved in each study has often been accounted for: the opportunity of relying on homogeneous groups has been stressed by Hatherall (1984) and equally felt by Atkins and Knowles (1990) who administered a placement test together with the dictionary research tests themselves. However, in spite of this attention towards the users', in particular students', 'linguistic' characteristics and their environment, hardly ever have these (and other) studies analysed the students' reference skills not in terms of their needs and of their approach towards dictionary using, but in connection with, or, rather, on the basis of, the results obtained.

Frequent errors made by students have been sometimes investigated and analysed in view of specific lexicographic projects or, anyway, in order to improve dictionaries and their performance (cf. Maingay and Rundel 1987),

rather than to make students' reference skills more effective. To my knowledge, apart from Maingay and Rundell's classification of students' errors in encoding activities, only Bensoussan and Sim (1981) and Hatherall (1984) have somehow considered students' errors as an intrinsic part of the interpretation of their data: Bensoussan and Sim came to the conclusion that, in connection with reading comprehension tests, there was no significant correlation between dictionary use and test score; Hatherall (who also used a protocol and a questionnaire concerning the translation passage which constituted the testing ground for his study) generalised certain users' behaviours and illustrated the "considerable improvements" (1984:188) in a few dictionaries presumably due to their compilers' awareness of learners' needs associated with translating into a foreign language, namely from English into German. However, none of them has considered students' errors as the starting point for an analysis of dictionary reference skills aimed at isolating inappropriate ways of tackling with the macro- and the microstructure: the underlying hypothesis of the present analysis, as reported in this paper, is that most errors are due to insufficient or inappropriate reference skills rather than to dictionaries' shortcomings.

1.2. Procedural features.

The papers analysed for this study¹ consist of translation passages, from English into Italian, on sociopolitical topics. The students concerned, all of whom attend the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Perugia, sat for a written exam² at intermediate level during the academic year 1992/93. These students had not had any specific formal instruction on *dictionary-oriented* activities, though they were supposed to be somehow familiar with dictionary use since part of their main course on reading skills was based on a few controlled *dictionary-based* tasks: some of these included the indication of the Italian equivalent in a number of different cases. It was assumed that these two factors, the level of the exam and the type of course, constituted a fairly reliable guarantee of the students' linguistic and 'lexicographic' homogeneity, even though it turned out that the range of their knowledge of the language varied from very good to absolutely insufficient.

The valid papers eventually analysed totalled 264³, though, in the end, errors were selected from just 222 papers (see Section 2 below). They concerned 10 translation passages given in exam sessions held at different times (June, July, September, October 1993, February and April 1994). In order to check whether the hypothesis about students' lack of reference skills could be advanced, the percentages of passes and fails of these tests were compared with those of the previous academic year, when students were not allowed to use bilingual dictionaries for the same type of exam. The rate turned out to be roughly the same (cf. the data of Bensoussan and Sim (1981) and Atkins and Knowles (1990), although limited only to question 3/13 in their questionnaire): thus it seems that, at least judging from *prima facie*

results, not to (be allowed to) consult a dictionary and not to be able to consult it amount to the same thing. The difference is not, as hypothesized, between being or not being allowed to consult dictionaries, but between being or not being able to use them. To reinforce this hypothesis students' lexicographic errors (i.e. errors presumably due to the misuse of dictionaries) have been selected and classified according to their linguistic status and their lexicographic relevance (see Section 3 below). Then they have been checked against the dictionaries used (see Section 2 below). Finally they have been assessed in terms of reference skills.

2. Dictionaries used

Students, who had been requested to indicate the dictionary they were going to consult, used a variety of bilingual (English–Italian, Italian–English) dictionaries, among which the following ones were the most frequently reported.

The *Hazon Dictionary* (*Grande Dizionario Hazon–Garzanti Inglese–Italiano, Italiano–Inglese*, Milano, Garzanti) was used by 98 students. It is a monodirectional dictionary, a pioneer of this type in Italy, but unfortunately rather old by now. It was originally published in 1961 and subsequently reprinted several times with no major changes. An entirely new edition was published in 1990 (*Il Nuovo Dizionario Hazon–Garzanti*), but only 5 students used it (see below).

The second best was the monodirectional *Ragazzini Dictionary* (*Il Nuovo Ragazzini, Dizionario Italiano–Inglese, Inglese–Italiano*, Bologna, Zanichelli), used by 82 students in its second, 1984, edition. No student used the third, 1989, edition: on the other hand, 4 students used the first, 1967, edition.

As a poor third comes the *Sei Dictionary* (*Dizionario Inglese–Italiano, Italiano–Inglese*, Torino, Sei), used by 29 students. This monodirectional dictionary is a bilingualisation of the second edition of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1963). First published in 1977, it has been reprinted, though with no major changes, to take into account the third (1974) edition of its parental Oxford dictionary.

The fourth dictionary in this list is the *Sansoni Dictionary* in one volume (*The Sansoni Dictionaries: English–Italian, Italian–English*, Firenze, Sansoni). Unlike the other dictionaries above mentioned, it is a bidirectional dictionary, used by 13 students in its third (1988) edition.

Dictionaries used by lower percentages of students have not been considered when checking errors not only for reasons connected with their format and the number of students who used them (cf. note 3), but also with their publication dates in view of a comparison among them. It must be noted, however, that among them only two, namely the already quoted *Il Nuovo Dizionario Hazon–Garzanti* and the so called *Paravia's* (*Dizionario Inglese–Italiano, Italiano–Inglese* Torino, Paravia) used by 8 students on the

whole, were published in the late eighties or early nineties. It must also be stressed that all the other dictionaries used were published in the early seventies, apart from the only other bidirectional dictionary reported, the *Collins–Giunti (Dizionario Inglese–Italiano, Italiano–Inglese* Firenze, Giunti–Marzocco–Collins, known in Great Britain as the *Collins Italian Concise*) published in 1985 and used by 6 students. Another 30 students, bringing the total to 264, used a variety of other dictionaries, mainly concise editions, none of which in more than 8 cases.

From this data one element immediately comes to the fore: the majority of students, the 98 who used the *Hazon Dictionary* plus the 4 who used the first edition of the *Ragazzini Dictionary* made use of dictionaries going back to the sixties. This is not a remark connected with updating in terms of neologisms but in connection with lexicographical theory and practice. The shortcomings of dictionaries which are roughly thirty years old affect the microstructure rather than the macrostructure and are much more relevant in connection with userfriendliness and ease of retrieval than with regard to the number of (new) entries in purely lexical terms. In a sense it would be unfair to compare the performance of a dictionary such as the *Hazon Dictionary* with the other three, all published in the late seventies or in the eighties, but as a matter of fact no significant difference was found in the errors made by the students who used that dictionary as opposed to the errors made by the students who used the other dictionaries. In other words, in general the same error was made in the same proportion by students using different dictionaries. This does not show that the *Hazon Dictionary* is particularly good, still performing satisfactorily after so many years (or as satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily as the other dictionaries): it shows once more that what matters is the students' capability of consulting dictionaries, rather than dictionaries themselves. Most students lacked this capability quite independently of the dictionary they used, as the analysis of their errors shows.

3. Students' errors

Students' errors, finally selected from 222 papers, have been divided into five different categories according to their lexicographic relevance. The five categories are mainly based on frequent problematic areas and typical pitfalls concerning both the macro- and the microstructure, in particular the location and retrieval of items and meaning discrimination (meaning in terms of equivalents) in connection with the type of test. The first category includes polysemous and homonymic items, the second derivatives, the third compounds, the fourth idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs (grouped together on the basis of their supposed common opaqueness). The fifth is a miscellaneous category including abbreviations, false friends and a number of English uses whose Italian equivalents are anisomorphic: for instance, ditransitive and ergative verbs, possible vs. impossible passivization etc. The

lexicographic relevance of the latter items in this category lies in the fact that analogous uses are impossible in Italian: therefore they should imply a careful consultation of dictionaries, though it is questionable whether the illustration of these items belongs in dictionaries (cf. Ilson and Mel'chuk 1989).

A number of errors belonging to the five categories just mentioned have been checked in the dictionaries used. They have been singled out on the basis of three elements: their linguistic status, their lexicographic treatment and their frequency of occurrence in students' translations. The majority of errors concerns the fifth category (anysomorphic uses and constructions) followed by the first (homonyms and polysemous words). As for the fourth category many errors concern phrasal verbs, whereas idiomatic expressions have generally been correctly translated. The second (derivatives) and third (compounds) categories in general present fewer problems than the others. The assumption was that dictionaries had actually been used, but this has sometimes been hard to prove. In fact in a number of cases dictionaries have most certainly not been used at all, as shown, for instance, by mistranslated false friends. In other cases, though, there is clear evidence that dictionaries have been used, though improperly, as shown by the following examples drawn from the categories already mentioned. For reasons of space only one (significant) example from each category or subcategory will be analysed.

3.1 Homonymic and polysemous entries

Homonyms, although not particularly numerous in the passages analysed, have usually created problems. In several cases students failed to identify the appropriate entry, as in the following example concerning the noun *spell* as occurring in:

His brief spell in the public eye did not last long.

7 students out of 17 wrongly translated it: in all cases they considered only its 'magic' meaning. In the three dictionaries consulted (nobody in this case used the *Sansoni Dictionary*) *spell* is given four (*Ragazzini*, *Sei*) or five (*Hazon*) entries: in all of them the meaning wrongly selected by students is recorded in the first entry. Most obviously students stopped there. It is also significant that in the case of *Ragazzini* the four entries are located in different pages: it seems that teachers and work-books should include in their recommendations something like "please turn over!".

Polysemous words have often caused problems, especially in connection with very frequent and well-known words, such as, for instance, *business* (cf. Nuccorini, forthcoming), *land* (as a noun) or *figure*. Contrary to expectations, collocations, which in this survey have been subsumed under polysemy, have usually been retrieved, as in the case, for instance, of *driving rain* or *wield power*. As an example of polysemy, *saving* offers many insights.

It appeared in a passage dealing with the proposal that Italian Cabinet Ministers enjoying double salaries should give up their ministerial pay, following the example of the then Prime Minister. Its immediate context, a comment on the proposal, was maybe not immediately clear:

The saving obviously will be symbolic.

6 students out of 16 mistranslated it just considering its spiritual, religious sense. 2 students used the *Ragazzini Dictionary*, 3 the *Hazon* and 1 the *Sei*. *Ragazzini* has three homonymic entries for the adjective, the noun and the preposition respectively: the students who used it correctly isolated the second entry as the relevant one, but then did not single out the second set of equivalents for the noun, those connected with its financial sense. *Hazon* has just one entry dealing with the adjective first and then the noun as a run-on: here too the correct equivalent is the second one, even though there is a morphological restriction on it, namely “generally plural”, which might have affected the choice. *Sei* has just one entry for the adjective with subentries for the noun and the preposition. Again the correct sense is the second listed in the subsection for the noun. It is interesting to notice that the only two students in this group who used the *Sansoni Dictionary* translated *saving* correctly: in this dictionary there is only one entry, with the noun treated first and the adjective and the preposition run-on. Significantly enough, the first sense given for the noun is the financial one, the appropriate one in this case.

3.2 Derivatives

Derivatives have usually been successfully dealt with by students, most probably for two reasons: (1) a lot of them, in particular suffixal derivatives, had been thoroughly analysed during the course, both from the linguistic and from the lexicographic point of view; (2) most of the derivatives occurring in the tests were main entries in the dictionaries used. Occasionally there have been interesting cases, such as the next example connected with the occurrence of *refuge* and *refugee* in two clauses of the same text, as follows:

*the only way for an individual to achieve refugee status ...
people who have found refuge in a secure third country ...*

Refugee is somehow different from the other derivatives ending in *ee* since there exists no verbal form with which *ee* can combine: therefore *refugee* cannot be paraphrased by a passive construction using the base verb, as in *employee* (‘someone who is employed’). Semantically it might belong to the category in which the suffix *ee* “seems to be synonymous with *er*” (Bauer 1983:247), as in *escapee* (‘someone who has escaped’), but again, the suffix *er* usually combines with a verb form. There are also other limits to its

analysis⁴. However, independently of its heavy, almost exclusive, political connotation, according to which other non-linguistic conditions are necessary to form its meaning (as the text itself explains), it could be paraphrased in terms of “someone who has found, or has been given, refuge”.

Unlike its linguistic status, the lexicographical treatment of *refugee* is clear: independently of the way derivatives are treated in each dictionary, *refuge* and *refugee* are given two different entries in all the dictionaries used, the first immediately preceding the second for alphabetical reasons. In spite of this, 25 students out of 98 somehow mistranslated it and 15 of them translated it in the same way as *refuge*. Some confusion might have been created by the occurrence of the two items at a short distance from each other in the same text, though the context of *refuge* actually explains the meaning of *refugee*. A few students, 8 on the whole, hypothesized a misprint: question marks have been placed next to the word *refugee* in their texts. This should have been a further stimulus to check the word in their dictionaries, which seem not to have been consulted at all in these cases: on the other hand, the remaining students did consult their dictionaries, as highlighted by the wording they used to adjust to the context the use of the Italian equivalent for *refuge*. Thus, either dictionaries have not been consulted at all (the Italian word *rifugio* is not a false friend) or they have been misused: students did not go as far as the appropriate entry.

3.3 Compounds

Usually compounds have been recognized as such and successfully located in dictionaries, but for a very few cases in which either the linguistic status of the item and/or its lexicographic treatment were somehow ambiguous, as for instance *home care* (verging on the class of noun phrases rather than on that of compounds and treated as a compound only in the *Sansoni Dictionary*) (cf. Nuccorini, forthcoming), or *taxpayers*, which also embodies an element of derivation, (inexplicably mistranslated or left blank by all the students using the *Hazon Dictionary*).⁵

The following example confirms, somehow *a contrario*, the general trend about compounds. It concerns *belttightening* as occurring in

... that everyone must prepare for a year of belttightening.

The compound is not recorded in any dictionary. The figurative expression *to tighten one's belt*, on the other hand, is recorded in all of them either under *belt* (*Sansoni*), or under *tighten* (*Hazon*, *Sei*, *Ragazzini*). The majority of students, 17 out of 22, translated it correctly, showing at the same time that they had understood the linguistic status of the compound and that they had consulted their dictionaries appropriately. The remaining 5 students left it

blank, somehow showing that they were aware of their incapability of analysing and retrieving it.

Linguistically *belttightening* belongs to the very productive type of compounds consisting of a noun plus a verb form, where the noun is the object of the verb (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:1571). It would thus be impossible to list them all in any dictionary. The reformulation of *belttightening* in terms of “everybody must tighten their belts” is essential for a correct Italian translation. To this purpose the lexicographic help expressed by the infinitive clause reported in all dictionaries was a necessary step. Students located and interpreted it successfully: entries for either *belt* or *tighten* are not particularly long in the dictionaries consulted, but *to tighten one's belt* is recorded in all of them towards the end, so that students had to analyse the microstructure rather carefully.

3.4 Idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs

Idiomatic expressions have usually been correctly translated. Very few students did not locate them in their dictionaries, in spite of their sometimes objectively ‘difficult’ treatment. For instance only 2 students out of 32 mistranslated *follow suit*, and *easier said than done* (a proverb rather than an idiom, labelled as such only in the *Sei Dictionary*, but treated as an idiom in all dictionaries) was correctly translated by all students, in spite of the fact that it is recorded under *do* in the *Hazon Dictionary*, under *say* in the *Sansoni*, and under *easy* in *Ragazzini* and *Sei*. However, here transparency is likely to have played a major role. In one case, though, 5 students out of 12 mistranslated *come into force* as occurring in the following clear context:

... *the treaty which came into force* ...

3 of those students used the *Ragazzini Dictionary*, which records the expression at *force* in the run-on section for idioms. It is interesting to note that none of the 3 students who used the *Sei Dictionary* mistranslated it, in spite of its difficult retrieval: it is in fact recorded under the phrasal verb *come into*, itself a subentry of *come*.

Contrary to idioms phrasal verbs were not always recognized as such but mistaken for prepositional verbs and therefore not located in the dictionaries, particularly in those cases in which the verb is a very common one, considered as transparent, such as for instance *call* in *call for* or *take* in *take to*. This is obviously a case in which linguistic rather than lexicographic capabilities are challenged.

3.5 Miscellaneous items

Supposed transparency has definitely to be considered responsible for the extremely frequent mistranslations of false friends, showing clearly the

non-use⁶ of dictionaries in these cases, in connection, in particular, with the *Ragazzini Dictionary* which has a yellow-paged appendix on “falsi amici”. On the other hand, dictionaries have often been misused in most cases concerning abbreviations, most of them clearly opaque. Abbreviations are listed in appendixes differently located in the *Hazon* and in the *Ragazzini Dictionaries*, and are inbuilt in the alphabetical order in the *Sansoni*. Some of them are also listed in the alphabetical body of the dictionary in *Sei*, where one in particular, *i.e.*, which was often left blank, is not recorded. Nevertheless there is no difference between the proportion of errors in this area made by students using this dictionary and those using the others⁷.

A great number of errors, both in general and in the fifth category, concerns mistranslations of ditransitive and ergative verbs. Ditransitive verbs do not exist in Italian: this implies the impossible passivization, very frequent in English, with the indirect object as grammatical subject. Passivization is frequently made with an impersonal verbal form: if the indirect object is a pronoun this occurs in its dative form before the verb and the grammatical subject is placed after the verb: for instance *I was offered a job* becomes *Mi è stato offerto un lavoro*. Otherwise the indirect object must be preceded by a preposition. There are also other use restrictions connected with preferences about active or passive forms, but these elements have not affected students' translations.

Though it is questionable, as has already been said, whether these elements belong in dictionaries, all four dictionaries considered here report example.⁸ showing these constructions and their appropriate translational equivalents: *Ragazzini* also records them among idiomatic uses (cf. for instance, *tell*). In spite of this, all students mistranslated the passive construction of *tell* in

The dreamers of Maastricht are being told to wake up.

Again the transparency of *tell* might have been the cause for non-use, but, at the same time, the resulting impossible Italian constructions should have prompted a careful consultation: if dictionaries were consulted they were misused.

The same arguments apply in the case of ergative verbs, whose treatment, in the English-Italian case, does belong in dictionaries (cf. Ison and Mel'chuk 1989, and Marellò 1992) and which very often imply pronominalization in Italian. They are fairly well treated, though in different ways, in the four dictionaries analysed. Their frequent mistranslation cannot be due to presumed transparency at least in two cases: *restrain*, because it also presented other problematic features connected with the lexicographic treatment of the prefix *re* (cf. Nuccorini, forthcoming) and *collide*, because the equivalents used for it are of clear lexicographic origin. Thus in these cases dictionaries have definitely been misused.

4 Conclusions

Certain errors have sometimes been made by few students, but it must be borne in mind that they are representative of recurrent typologies. On the other hand it must be stressed that students worked with their dictionary during exams, thus under pressure, both from the psychological point of view and because of time limits. Data gathered in these circumstances does not shed any light on how students behave when they consult dictionaries without constraints. In addition to this there is no clear evidence that dictionaries have actually been used in all cases: good or bad translations are not necessarily due to good or bad reference skills respectively. However, whenever errors themselves have made it possible to ascertain that dictionaries had actually been used, they have also evidenced a number of problematic issues definitely more connected, as hypothesized, with students' lack of reference skills than with dictionaries' shortcomings.

Errors in each category reveal a somewhat different lexicographic attitude in connection with both the macro- and the micro-structure, though they have shown more problems with the latter than with the former: students tend to consult dictionaries rather carefully whenever they face supposed opaque items (thus mainly idiomatic expressions and most compounds); they usually consult dictionaries in a rather superficial and ineffective way in the case of polysemous and homonymic items, of derivatives and of 'contrastive constructions' (such as ditransitive verbs); they hardly ever consult their dictionaries in the case of supposed transparent items (such as false friends) and of very frequent, supposedly well-known (often polysemous) words⁹. Thus it seems that a better knowledge and awareness of what is in a dictionary and the overt, explicit teaching of dictionary using skills are desirable and maybe necessary in order for students to avoid a number of errors.

Notes

- 1 This study originates in the findings of a previous research project concerning a three-month seminar on dictionary use held in the Spring of 1993 with a different group of students. The main conclusion of that project was that students basically lack reference skills. A report on the seminar was presented under the title *The Teaching of Dictionary Reference Skills* at the second international ESSE (European Society for the Study of English) Conference held in Bordeaux in September 1993. The organizers of this Conference made it clear that no Proceedings would be published and that authors were free to submit their papers elsewhere. A slightly modified version of this paper, adapted to the needs of a different public, is forthcoming in the *Annali della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università di Perugia* under the title *Dictionary Reference Skills*.
- 2 The written exam did not consist of a translation passage only, but for its other parts no dictionary could be used.
- 3 About 80 papers have been excluded for the following reasons (from more to less frequent): 1) the requested bibliographical data concerning dictionaries used had not been reported; 2) a very poor knowledge of the language which would not cast any light on dictionary use; 3) unreliability of dictionaries used (for instance pocket or even smaller editions); (4) a number of students sat for the exam more than once during the academic year (for instance they either failed the first time or they refused the proposed mark); (5) dictionaries used only

once or twice: this would not have allowed any generalization nor any comparison both with other dictionaries and with other papers based on the use of the same dictionary; (6) use of monolingual instead of bilingual dictionaries.

- 4 The word *refugee* comes from French *réfugé*: the *New Shorter OED* considers its ending as "assimilated" into the English language. This element, in addition to the lack of the usual morphological (deverbal nouns) and semantic (someone who is affected by, or performs, an action) attributes of *ee*-derivatives confirms the unclear linguistic status of *refugee*. In a recent volume on *Word Formation* (Collins Cobuild English Guides, 1991) it is listed separately from all other 'regular' *ee*-derivatives in a section entitled "Words with other meanings". However the suffix in the other French loan words in this section (*soiree*, *matinee*, *toupee* etc.) is pronounced differently.
- 5 A possible explanation would rely on the fact that the *Hazon Dictionary* records compounds (preceded by a star-shaped symbol) as run-ons, written in italics like the examples, whereas for instance in the *Ragazzini Dictionary* (all students who used this dictionary produced correct translations) they are printed in bold type and therefore they stand out on the page. For Italian speakers *taxpayers* is semantically transparent but morphologically opaque, since its Italian equivalent, *contribuenti*, is a lexeme morphologically unrelated with both *pagare* and *tax* (*tassa*).
- 6 Analogous evidence of misuse (but it could also be considered as a borderline case between non-use and misuse) is offered by mistranslations of geographical names, differently recorded in the various dictionaries: however, in these cases, students very often lack the necessary encyclopedic knowledge, as shown, for instance, when *Baltic* became the equivalent for *Balkans* and *Latvia* remained *Latvia* (Italian *Lettonia*).
- 7 Abbreviations and acronyms constitute a very productive area of lexical innovation (not in the case of *i.e.*, *however*). Obviously recent abbreviations are not recorded, for example, in the *Hazon Dictionary*. However, most of them are the same in Italian as in English. Moreover most of those occurring in the texts analysed here (for instance *MP*, *EEC* etc.) are fairly well-known to students of Political Science, learning English for academic purposes. Surprisingly, *i.e.* was not.
- 8 If the arguments put forward by Ilson and Mel'chuk can be applied to these cases, examples are the only places where they could be accounted for.
- 9 The frequent, and frequently inappropriate, overuse of English loan words in Italian, which should lead to a careful use of dictionaries, made one student translate *spokesman* into *speaker*!

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