

Retranslating Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* in Modernist and Post-modernist Italy: A Corpus-based Study

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Abstract

A corpus-based analysis is employed to study the evolution of literary style in eleven Italian retranslations of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. The aim is to examine how and to what degree the literary movements have affected the target texts. During the twentieth century, increasing criticism, scepticism, and distance concerning the traditional vision of the world and life were reflected in post-modernist literature, although in different ways across the European countries. New literary forms took place also in Italian literature. The modernist features of Woolf's novel are a case in point to test Berman's Retranslation Hypothesis, which states that further retranslations are the most source-oriented. The close reading analysis of this study confirms only partially the proposed theory also remaining relatively distant from the modernist and post-modernist experiments in Italy.

Keywords: Modernism, Postmodernism, Retranslation, Corpus-based translation studies, Empirical translation studies, Literary translation.

Introduction

The eleven Italian retranslations of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) considered in this study appeared over more than eighty years from the Fascist era to the present Web age. They offer an opportunity to clarify critical aspects of literary retranslation that are still unexplored. The rendering of the modernist features of Woolf's novel in the Italian retranslations and its progress over time have so far only are marginally discussed. In the Italian culture, modernism and postmodernism had a restricted diffusion among intellectual readers, although facing significant contributions by avant-garde artists and writers (Picchione, 2004, 2012; Gordon, 2005; Luperini, 2018). In the twentieth century, the term

"modernism" had been often used in Italy mainly to identify Catholic groups involved in tentative reforms of the Church and its doctrine in the light of the scientific and philosophical thought (Vian, 2012). In Italy, notwithstanding the limited spread of modernism and postmodernism in the general public, concepts such as the end of history, the death of ideology, and the cognitive crisis entered progressively into the literary discussion. Among the Italian writers, Italo Svevo was one of the foremost interpreters of the new perspective with his *La coscienza di Zeno* [Zeno's consciousness] (1923). Woolf's way of representing the consciousness of her characters is comparable not only with Svevo's modernist style but also with the modernism of other Italian precursors between the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, such as Giovanni Verga, Antonio Fogazzaro, Giovanni Pascoli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio. Notably, the celebrated Verga paved the way towards subjective visualisation by adopting an invented language close to the local dialect that extensively used the free indirect discourse (FID) and indirect interior monologue (IIM). The literary features used by Virginia Woolf can be found among the Italian writers such as Maria Grazia Deledda and Luigi Pirandello, both winners of the Nobel prize in literature, respectively in 1926 (one year before the publication of *To the Lighthouse*) and 1934. Deledda widely used narrative points of view with deixis, modality, transitivity, and free indirect discourse (Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, Pirandello is well known for the subjectivity of his characters with their fragile identities and challenging relativism in their perception of reality (Picchione, 2012: 110-112).

After World War II, two Italian modernist periods were identified (Donnarumma, 2012). The first period spanned from the turn of the 19th century to the mid-1950s, and the second one between 1964 and 1980 (Luperini, 2018: 11-33). Discussions on the Italian literary culture came from the *Gruppo 63* [Group 63] between 1963 and 1969, among their members (including Renato Barilli, Umberto Eco, Angelo Guglielmi, and Edoardo Sanguineti) and also involving external opponents (including Italo Calvino, Franco Fortini, Alberto Moravia, and Pier Paolo Pasolini).

Modernism has developed in a new phase called "postmodernism" also in Italy. Philosophers like Gianni Vattimo with *La fine della modernità* [The End of Modernity] (1985), *La società trasparente* [The Transparent Society] (1989) and *Addio alla modernità* [Farewell to Modernity] (2009) followed Nietzsche and Heidegger's ideas. Besides, the post-modernist Italian literature with writers like Italo Calvino, Antonio Tabucchi, Gianni Celati, and Aldo Nove has emphasised some modernist traits such as the absence of a narrative voice capable of making sense of the narrated events and thoughts and, in contrast with modernism, sometimes in search of the "complementarity of the opposites, with a view on the world

through the concordance of the antitheses" (Picchione, 2012: 134-152). In this context, Virginia Woolf could find the Italian audience more prone to understand her narrative but, as will be seen, her style remained only partially represented in the Italian translations of *To the Lighthouse*.

In the light of developments of such a cultural environment, questions arise over the influence of modernist and post-modernist periods on the retranslations of Virginia Woolf's works. Did the echoes of those literary debates can be found in those translations? Are Woolf's (1924: 83) "smashing and crashing" of the formal rules of writing preserved in the Italian retranslations of *To the Lighthouse*? Are variations among the retranslations following a trend towards the source-text orientation? The present article is part of a series of attempts to addresses these questions by adopting the corpus-based approach to descriptive translation studies (*e.g.*, Even-Zohar, 1990, Toury, 1995, Zanettin, 2013, Hu, 2015).

The entire digital corpus of eleven Italian retranslations of Woolf's novel along with the English source text is constructed to identify, align, and analyse their literary and linguistic features using a corpus-based method for descriptive translation studies. All retranslations are then compared through a computer-aided "close reading" analysis. The guiding principle is that rendering the semantic meaning of the source text into the target language can be under the influence of historical, social, and cultural conditions. After a brief description of the historical evolution of the target culture, and the hypotheses formulated on the retranslation phenomenon, some examples are presented of the results obtained in the descriptive analysis of the eleven Italian translations of Woolf's novel.

The Italian linguistic evolution from the Fascist era

A critical factor that has also influenced the Italian literary retranslations during the nineteenth century was linguistic changes. The process was undoubtedly affected by the industrial transformation of the country. Still, radical social changes due to the necessities of war and subsequent restoring times, political regimes, and related ideologies have imposed some transformations. Historical, social, and cultural changes were reflected in the linguistic evolution in a country that had always sported some peculiarities in the use of spoken and written language.

In Italy, the literature was elitist for centuries, ruled by rhetorical norms and selective forms due to a low number of cultivated people and a relatively limited number of readers (Marazzini, 2013: 197). Just because of its aristocratic features, the Italian language, contrary to the French language, did not fit consistently with popular literature (Borghi, 1971 [1855],

cited in *ibid.*). As a consequence, the Italian prose hardly met a broad audience of readers outside a coterie of literates. Notwithstanding the significant contributions by Alessandro Manzoni and writers like Giuseppe Giusti and Giovanni Faldella in addressing the low popularity of the Italian literature, the narrative was still unpopular in early twentieth-century Italy. Generally, the "classical" language was seen unnatural, stilted, and unfit to communicate with a broad audience. Furthermore, the use of dialect, considered as a natural language, was criticised for being an obstacle to the super-regional communication in the country.

Between the twenties and the forties of the last century, Fascism made a partially successful attempt to start a process of mass Italianization. The intention was to pursue a high and official language while completely refusing the many dialects and minor languages throughout the country and prohibiting the use of foreign words (*Ibid.*: 207). The Fascist regime, during which the first translation of *To the Lighthouse* appeared, has arguably disregarded a promising way toward useful popular literature and also developed a national language in search of a linguistic model within its cultural policy. Giovanni Gentile initiated this policy. He was a well-known philosopher who became the first minister of Public Education of Mussolini's government, and the designer of the long-lasting education system introduced in 1923. The use of foreign words was first contrasted with the publication by the *Accademia d'Italia* (Academy of Italy) of lists of proscribed words and their substitutes (now collected in Raffaelli, 2010).

Sharp criticism regarding the model language was put forward by the renowned philosopher Benedetto Croce, a colleague and former friend of Giovanni Gentile, but with increasingly anti-fascist views. He exercised a proper "intellectual hegemony" with the aesthetic norm of *'bello scrivere'*¹ [beautiful writing] in the Italian cultural world "in relation to received conventions of beauty, elegance and literariness" (Gordon, 2006: 58). Even the contemporaries recognised Croce's influence. Antonio Gramsci, in his *Letters from Prison* (1932), praised him for having exercised a literary hegemony both at home and abroad (Gordon, 2006: 61,174).

Croce opposed the literary novelties even from significant poets and novelists in Italy and other European countries (Croce, 1902, 1935, 1949). In the first fifty years of the twentieth century, the Italian culture was dominated by the philosophical current of neo-idealism. The

¹ *Bello scrivere* [beautiful writing] is a very old keyword dating back to the great rhetoric authors of ancient Rome and the *Dolce Stil Novo* of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio (Fornaciari, 1839: 11-12).

sense of Croce's research was in tune with a general need for balance in arts coupled with the official negative position of the Catholic Church towards the modernist tendencies inside the Catholic world itself (Vian, 2012). In his famous work *Aesthetics*, Croce in 1902 had already written "*Cercare la lingua modello è, dunque, cercare l'immobilità nel moto*"². He expressed his preference for classical forms of poetry in literature, and arts in general, which were far from those proposed by many modernists and avant-gardists in literature and figurative arts he considered as decadent.

A model of national language was pursued since the beginning of the Fascist era and was followed long after its demise until the 1980s when the socio-economic and technological changes imposed a robust international integration with linguistic fallouts primarily within the European context (Vitiello, 2018). In fact, until the 1980s, the Tuscan model of the Italian language was generally used following the norm of *bello scrivere* with a high linguistic register also in translations of classic literature. From the end of the 1980s, this model had to face progressive changes with the diffusion of television. For the first time, the population was in daily contact with the national language, used in the same way throughout the country. In its evolving processes of modulation, the national standard language became a bit less high-level and cultured in its versatility and, in some way, closer to the spoken language with the adoption of a colloquial vocabulary (Berruto, 1987: 55).

The description of the Italian cultural context in the 1930s makes it evident that a successful reception of a modernist novel like Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* in its first Italian translation required the heightening of the linguistic register. Moreover, the needed interpretative effort by the reader, expected by Virginia Woolf, to understand her unannounced shifts of the characters' points of view could hardly occur, let alone appreciated.

Retranslating Virginia Woolf

In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf developed innovative literary techniques echoing Sigmund Freud's theories coming up at that time (Caws and Luckhurst, 2002: 340; Ellmann, 2010: 62-92; and Meisel, 2012). Woolf used free indirect discourse to capture the thought process of her characters. She tried to represent the universal features of the human soul and feelings in her description of an intimate family environment during a specific time. Difficulties of

² "Searching for the model language is, therefore, like searching for the immobility of motion" (citation taken from Marazzini, 1977: 177; the English translation is mine.)

transposition of Woolf's works in another language and culture add up to those that are typically found in translations (Pihl, 2013).

The question is whether the succession of eleven Italian (re)translations of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* has brought the target texts (TTs) closer to the source text (ST). The comparison analysis will test Berman's (1990: 1) proposition stating the so-called retranslation hypothesis (RH) that successive translations progressively would improve by bringing the TTs closer to the source text ST³. Furthermore, an examination will be carried out on how and why the Italian retranslation was reiterated by comparing the single translations to each other and the source text. This inquiry is useful in at least two respects. Firstly, it helps to clarify how the intended ambiguity in Woolf's original discourse and modernist style was dealt with in the multiple retranslations and, secondly, it contributes to the fast-growing field of parallel corpora analysis.

Multiple retranslations can empower the target readers with a broader knowledge and awareness of possible alternatives in the interpretation of the source text. Lefevere (1991: 130), for example, previously claimed that "[older] and different translations of one and the same text can be very illuminating." It is not so frequent to have texts retranslated into the same target language not only over a long time but also within a few years (Vanderschelden 2000: 12). In the case of multiple retranslations within a short period, it is impossible to appeal only to changes in the target language to find their motivations. The reasons behind the decisions of different publishers and translators to propose retranslations of this canonical text can vary from cultural to socio-economic types.

The first translation of *To the Lighthouse* appeared in 1934, seven years after the publication of Woolf's book. After sixty years, the first round of three versions within a surprisingly short time from 1992 to 1995 followed with the second round of other three retranslations from 2012 to 2015 with different publishers (**Table 1**).

³ The translation and/or retranslation hypotheses were extensively discussed in a number of studies. These include Lu (1935), Gambier (1994), Venuti (2004), Brownlie (2006), Gürçağlar (2020 [2009]), and Feng (2012, 2014).

Table 1 The eleven Italian (re)translations of *To the Lighthouse*

TT	Translator	Date	Title	No. of pages	Publisher	Edition	Place of publication
TT1	Giulia Celenza	1934	<i>Gita al faro</i>	227	Treves Garzanti	1934 4 th ed. 2000	Milan
TT2	Nadia Fusini	1992	<i>Al faro</i>	182	Feltrinelli	1992	Milan
TT3	Lucia Cucciarelli	1993	<i>Gita al faro</i>	194	Thema editore	1993	Bologna
TT4	Anna Laura Malagò	1993	<i>Gita al faro</i>	187	Newton Compton	1993	Rome
TT5	Anna Luisa Zazo	1994	<i>Gita al faro</i>	210	Mondadori	1994	Milan
TT6	Luciana Bianciardi	1995	<i>Gita al faro</i>	280	R.C.S. Libri	1995	Milan
TT7	Nadia Fusini	1998	<i>Al faro</i>	186	Feltrinelli	1998	Milan
TT8	Luce De Marinis	2012	<i>Gita al faro</i> 1 st revision	253	Baldini Castaldi	2012	Milan
TT9	Nadia Fusini	2012	<i>Al faro</i> 2 nd revision	176	Feltrinelli	2012	Milan
TT10	Anna Nadotti	2014	<i>Gita al faro</i>	211	Einaudi	2014	Turin
TT11	Paola Artioli	2017	<i>Gita al faro</i>	191	Rusconi Libri	2017	Milan

The second translation by Nadia Fusini (1992) TT2 appeared 58 years after Celenza (1934) TT1, soon followed by two other retranslations by Lucia Cucciarelli (1993) TT3, Anna Laura Malagò (1993) TT4, Anna Luisa Zazo (1994) TT5, Luciana Bianciardi (1995) TT6. Twenty years after the second round of retranslations was proposed by Luce De Marinis (2012) TT8, Anna Nadotti (2014) TT10, and Paola Artioli (2017) TT11. It is worthy to note that reprint editions of the early (re)translations by Celenza's TT1 in the 4th edition (2010), Malagò's TT3 in the 3rd edition (2010) and Fusini's TT2 in the 14th edition (2012) also appeared on the market.

This wealth of comparable texts spanning over eighty years makes up a corpora database offering the rare occasion of investigating, among various exciting aspects of retranslation, whether the time effect is essential in maintaining or improving the presence of a literary work into a foreign culture⁴. More specifically, the proposed sub-groups of retranslations within short periods elicit retranslation studies controlling for the time effect by contrasting the textual comparisons *between* and *within* historical sub-periods.

⁴ Examples of studies of bilingual retranslations of literary works over a long span of time are offered by Deane-Cox (2014) in her comparisons of eight English (re)translations of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* over 135 years and seven (re)translations of Sand's *La Mare au diable* over 159 years.

The reasons for the Italian retranslations of *To the Lighthouse* can be examined within the general debate in the field of descriptive translation studies (Toury, 1995: 166; Venuti, 1995: 205-224; and Fantinuoli and Zanettin, 2015, Hermans, 2020). Furthermore, a text could be retranslated for commercial purposes (Venuti, 2000). For instance, the costs of new retranslations of classics are relatively low and give prestige to the publisher. Retranslations of a text published while different versions of it already exist, Venuti (2004: 25) argues, "justify themselves by establishing their differences from previous versions." He considers retranslation as an act of differentiation that could have the purpose to convey specific values in cultural, economic, or religious grounds, which seek to reassert the authority of individual social institutions. In particular, those retranslations "designed deliberately to form particular identities and have particular institutional effects," such as the retranslation of religious texts that "define and inculcate" the doctrinal values of canonical texts (Venuti, 2004: 26). Venuti (2004: 30) claimed that the decision of retranslation "may be motivated by no more than the retranslator's appreciation and understanding of the foreign text, regardless of trans-individuals' factors."

Extensive discussions also were stimulated by two volumes edited respectively by Kahn and Seth (2010) and Monti (2001) with their case studies on literary texts retranslated from French. These publications showed renewed interest in the topic of retranslation while filling a lacuna in translation studies (Dean-Cox, 2014).

The Retranslation Hypothesis

After a decade of poststructuralist thinking about the theme of untranslatability and incommensurability of cultures (*e.g.*, Venuti, 2012: 185-190), a special issue of *Palimpsestes* was dedicated to the theme of retranslation, where Antoine Berman (1990) and Paul Bensimon (1990) made assumptions considered by other authors such as Gambier (1994), Brisset (2004), and Brownlie (2006) as the foundations of the so-called Retranslation Hypothesis (RH), a term coined by Chesterman (2000, 2004). For Berman (1990: 1-7), a translation is an "incomplete act, and it can only arrive for completion through many different retranslations." In his view, retranslation is a process that can evolve only through later translations. As Berman contends, subsequent translations become *progressively more source-oriented* by paying more attention to the original letter and style of the source text. Bensimon (1990: ix) added that the first translations have many differences in comparison with subsequent retranslations. He claimed that the first works of translation are "naturalisations of foreign works" ["*naturalisation de l'oeuvre étrangère*"], which have the

purpose of reaching the target culture and integrating one culture into another, granting a positive reception of the work. Late translations will pay more attention to the ST and keep a cultural distance between the retranslation and its source.

Such a proposition followed a previous distinction made by Berman (1985 [2012]) between the process of transmissibility in translation. He considered the "ethnocentric" translating as a mystifying act responsible for deforming the original message by assimilating it to the target culture at the expense of its character of "foreignness." In Berman's view, preserving the foreign character in the source text "*is the sort of success—not quite impossible, certainly difficult—to which every translator of a novel ought to aspire*" (*Ibid.*: 252, emphasis added). He defined twelve deforming tendencies that are most frequently encountered in translation: rationalisation, clarification (similar to Toury's, 1991 concept of "explicitation" among his "laws and different types of universals" of translation), expansion, ennoblement and popularisation, qualitative and impoverishment, quantitative impoverishment, destruction of rhythms, destruction of signification, destruction of linguistic partnering, destruction or "exoticisation" of vernacular networks, destruction of expressions or idioms, superimposition of languages.

In the RH, it is implied that a reiteration of translations can only achieve the full recovery of the ST's linguistic, stylistic, and cultural aspects. This paper will test the RH to study the evolution over time of some specific features of the Italian retranslation of the examined Woolf's book.

Empirical results

The analysis is performed using the digital techniques of corpus-based translation studies (CTS) as first envisioned by Mona Baker (1993: 243-247) who, based on Even-Zohar's (1979: 77) polysystem theory and Toury's (1991: 50) universals and translational norms, suggested to study the features of a literary translation, further discussed by Zanettin (2013) and Hu (2015). These universals comprise the categories of *disambiguation* and *simplification* of the source text, *explicitation* of what is implicit in the ST, *normalisation* to conform to the features into the target language, and *levelling out* by bringing the text to gravitate to the centre of the meaning. Another Baker's (2000) article is considered as the first step towards devising a corpus-based study of the translator's style (Olohan, 2004: 23-34; Hu, 2015: 14). Moreover, Chesterman (2004) classified the universals into two subgroups: *S-universals*, i.e. the "universal differences between translations and their source text," and *T-universals*, i.e. the features that generally characterise the translated texts irrespective of the source text. The S-

universals include *lengthier TTs* than the ST, the *dialect tending to be normalised*, *explicitation* of information that is implicitly contained in the ST, *reduced word repetition*, *ST-orientation of retranslations*. The *T-universals* include lexical variety and *simplification*, *moving away from non-typical patterns* within the source text, *under-representation of culture-specific components of the target language*.

The very few corpus-based investigations made so far on literary translations could produce only propaedeutic results if seen from the viewpoint of the complex operation of "organisation" (Venuti, 1998) of Virginia Woolf's writings. The critical evaluation of literary translation cannot be carried out without considering the features explicitly. Previous attempts in this direction also include the descriptive translation studies by Snell Hornby (1988) and more recently by Cadera (2017). Style, meaning, and semantics are to be critically analysed regarding the chosen literary forms. The typical narrative features are therefore identified, selected, aligned and analysed using the corpus technology.

The association of the *literary, linguistic, and translation studies* proposed here is aimed at performing a fully-fledged literary "close reading" of Woolf's stream of consciousness as a narrative mode to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings in the characters' minds using their self-oriented monologue. In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf frequently uses free indirect discourse as a technique for introducing the character voice mediated by the author's voice, which drifts in and out the characters' minds even in the same sentence. In this narrative form, it is often difficult to distinguish whose voice is speaking. The frequent shift of perspectives together with the unconventional use of punctuation contribute to creating a certain degree of ambiguity, which poses a challenge to translators.

So far, the Italian translators have tended to clear the ambiguity of the text trying to "replace" some inverted commas and change the free indirect discourse into a more traditional direct discourse. This attitude is typically found in Celenza's first translation, where almost all the FIDs were changed into direct discourse. Her abiding by the literary norms of fascist rules at the time in Italy is transparent in the loss of the ST's elusiveness in her rendering. Celenza puts effort in transforming the original modernist prose into traditional narration. Furthermore, De Marinis TT8 surprisingly reflects the same unexpected attitude for her time. This "normalisation" is arguably consistent with Toury's concept of translational "norm". The other translators put much effort toward a balance between the source text and target text in terms of readability.

Close reading analysis

Through a close reading analysis, some relevant differences in the Italian translations of Virginia Woolf's literary features, such as the interior monologue technique and free indirect discourse, were identified. Computer-aided extensive comparisons of the source text with its translations starting from Celenza's in 1934 and all the successive retranslations in the 1990s and the 2000s were executed. Example of Woolf's modernist prose rendered into Italian is shown in **Table 2**. Here, Celenza's (1934) TT1 distinguished itself from all the retranslations in rephrasing sentences containing the character's interior monologue while losing the flavour of the original modernist style.

The first translation appears to conform with both an *S*-universal such as *explicitation* and a *T*-universal such as *moving away from non-typical patterns*. In this case, as in many other instances across the TT1, descriptions of thoughts and feelings are simply told by the narrator's voice rather than "plunging into them" (Morini, 2014). Neglecting Virginia Woolf's willingness to reveal her characters' minds, Celenza's rendering is much more TT-oriented. The modernist attitude of Woolf posed quite a challenge to the Italian translator in the thirties during the Fascist era, making it rather difficult to accommodate this author into the national culture at the time. All successive retranslations, from the first by Fusini (1992) TT2 to Artioli (2017) TT11, tried to restore some modernist aspects of the original narrative becoming more ST-oriented than Celenza (1934) TT1.

Table 2. Indirect interior monologue

<p>V. Woolf (1927, para. 263)</p> <p>Of course, she said to herself, coming into the room, she had to come here to get something she wanted.</p>
<p>Celenza (1934, para. 280)</p> <p><i>Entrò con la sensazione d'andare in cerca di qualcosa che le occorreva.</i></p> <p>[She entered the room with the feeling of searching for something she needed]</p>
<p>Fusini (1992, para. 263)</p> <p><i>Naturalmente, si disse entrando nella stanza, era qui che doveva venire per avere quello che cercava.</i></p> <p>[Of course, she said to herself entering the room, it is here that she had to come to get what she was looking for].</p>

Cucciarelli (1993, para. 258)

Certo, pensò, entrando nella stanza, era qui che doveva venire per ottenere quello che voleva (TT3, 166).

[Of course, she thought, entering the room, it was here that she had to come to obtain what she wanted].

Malago' (1993, para. 268)

Certo, disse tra sé entrando nella stanza, doveva venir qui a prendere qualcosa di cui aveva bisogno.

[Of course, she said to herself entering the room, she had to come here to take something she needed].

Zazo (1994, para. 266)

Naturalmente, si disse, entrando nella stanza, doveva andare là per avere qualcosa che voleva.

[Of course, she said to herself, entering the room, she had to go there to get something she wanted].

Bianciardi (1994, para. 261)

Di sicuro, si disse la signora Ramsay entrando nella sala, doveva venire qui per avere quello che voleva.

[Certainly, Mrs Ramsay said to herself entering the room, she had to come here to get what she wanted].

Fusini (1998, para. 267)

Naturalmente, si disse entrando nella stanza, era qui che doveva venire per avere quello che cercava.

[Of course, she said to herself while entering the room, it is here that she had to come to get what she was looking for].

De Marinis (2012, para. 267)

Naturalmente, si disse entrando nella stanza, era andata lì per cercare qualcosa che le occorreva.

[Of course, she said to herself entering the room, she had come there to look for something she needed].

Fusini (2012, para. 259)

Naturalmente, si disse entrando nella stanza, era qui che doveva venire per avere quello che cercava.

[Of course, she said to herself while entering the room, it is here that she had to come to get what she was looking for].

Nadotti (2014, para. 268)

Naturalmente, disse fra sé, entrando nella stanza, doveva venire qui per avere ciò che voleva.

[Of course, said to herself, entering the room, she had to come here to get what she wanted].

Artioli (2017, para. 266)

Certo, disse tra sé, entrando nella stanza, doveva venire qui a prendere ciò che voleva.

[Of course, said to herself, entering the room, she had to come here to take what she wanted].

In *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf used purposely repeated words or short expressions. At the same time, Celenza (1934) TT1, in her formal style, tried to avoid repetitions by replacing them with synonyms to keep her register high and elegant as much as possible. An example is shown in **Table 3**, where we find that TT1 conforms to a *T*-universal such as the lexical variety.

Table 3. Repetition of words in the source text

Woolf (1927, para. 104)

She had been admired. She had been loved. (Emphases added)

Celenza (1993, para. 114)

Ella aveva destato ammirazione, amore.

[She had aroused admiration, love].

In this example, apart from Celenza, the other translators, from Fusini (1992) TT2 to Artioli (2017) TT11, were faithful to repetitions made by Virginia Woolf: *Era stata ammirata. Era stata amata* [She was admired. She had been loved] except for Malagò (1993: 57) TT4, who translated: *Lei era stata oggetto di ammirazione. D'amore* [She was the object of admiration. Of love], and De Marinis (2012: 42) TT8 with *Aveva destato ammirazione. Era stata amata* [She aroused admiration. She had been loved], with the different auxiliaries "aveva" [had] and "era" [was] breaking the original assonance.

Repetitions are generally considered as not to conform with the Italian norm of translating the classics that judges repetition inaccurate in literary prose, even in translation. In that view,

Celenza (1934) TT1 sometimes used even precious synonyms following the norm of *bello scrivere* [beautiful writing] prevalent at the time. The other translators, apart from some exceptions, tried to avoid repeating words or short sentences and preferred elegant synonyms or rephrases conforming to the *S*-universal "dialect normalisation" and the *T*-universal "lexical variety." An example of repetition is shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Repetition of words in translation

<p>Woolf (1927, para. 308)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Through the short <i>summer</i> nights and the long <i>summer</i> days (Emphasis added)</p> <p>Celenza (1934, para. 327)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Durante le brevi notti estive e i lunghi giorni canicolari</i> [During the short summer nights and the long sweltering days]</p>

The introduction of the word "sweltering" in the second part of the sentence, offered Celenza (1934) TT1 the chance to escape the redundant term "summer." Furthermore, Fusini (1992: 120) TT2, Cucciarelli (1993: 180) TT3, Fusini (1998: 120) TT7, De Marinis (2012: 173) TT8, and Fusini (2012: 121) TT9 avoided using repetitions of the word "summer." In acknowledging the importance of the norm of *bello scrivere* [beautiful writing] still current, they also kept a high register. The other translators Malagò (1993: 129) TT4, Zazo (1994: 135) TT6, Bianciardi (1994: 173) TT5, Nadotti (2014: 134) TT10, and Artioli (2017: 122) TT11 translated the sentence repeating the word "summer" (*estive*, referred to the nights and *estivi* referred to the days) to translate Virginia Woolf's modernism. This change in translation appears to conform to the *T*-universal of moving away from non-typical patterns.

Differences are noted in the use of lexical variation. The register used in the retranslations from the 1990s to 2000s is closer to Virginia Woolf's informal language, although within a general high style that was never abandoned in conformity with *T*-universal of "under-representation of the source culture."

In the case reported in **Table 5**, Celenza (1934) TT1 translated the word "sorrows" with "*mesti presagi*" [sad omens]. In her effort toward a literalisation as claimed by Berman (1990: 39) and more specifically an ennoblement of a canonised work (*Ibid.*: 57), the translator used the Italian adjective "*mesti*", which was (and was still) not very common in the colloquial

Italian language and above all it does not sound to fit in the register used in the source ST. Here, again, the *S*-universal of dialect normalisation and the *T*-universal of “moving from non-typical patterns” are both represented.

Table 5. Lexical variation between retranslations

<p>Virginia Woolf (1927, para. 2) ST: “let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand”.</p>
<p>Celenza (1934, para. 2) TT1: “[...] <i>lascia che i lieti o mesti presagi del futuro annebbino quanto va realmente accadendo</i>” [“[...] let the happy or sad omens of the future cloud what is really going on”]</p>
<p>Fusini (1992, para. 2) TT2: “[...] <i>lasciano che le immaginazioni del futuro, con le loro gioie e dolori, offuschino ciò che è a portata di mano</i>” [“let the imaginations of the future, with their joys and sorrows, obscure what is at hand”]</p>
<p>Cucciarelli (1993, para. 2) TT3: “[...] <i>lasciano che i progetti futuri, con le loro gioie e i loro dolori, annebbino il presente</i>” [“[...] let future projects, with their joys and their sorrows, cloud the present”]</p>
<p>Malagò (1993, para. 2) TT4: “[...] <i>lasciano che le prospettive future, penose o gioiose che siano, offuschino ciò che è già presente</i>” [“[...] they allow future, painful or joyful perspectives, to obscure what is already present”]</p>
<p>Zazo (1994, para. 2) TT5: “[...] <i>non può impedire alle prospettive future, con le loro gioie e le loro pene, di distendere una nube su quanto è a portata di mano</i>” [“[...] they cannot prevent future prospects, with their joys and their pains, from spreading a cloud over what is at hand”]</p>
<p>Bianciardi (1995, para. 2) TT6: “[...] <i>lasciano che le prospettive future, con le loro gioie e dolori, annebbino ciò che effettivamente è</i>” [“[...] let the future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what it actually is”]</p>

Fusini (1998, para. 2) TT7: “[...] piuttosto lasciano che l’immaginazione del futuro, con le sue gioie e dolori, offuschi ciò che è a portata di mano”
[“[...] rather they let the imagination of the future, with its joys and sorrows, obscure what is at hand”]

De Marinis (2012, para. 2) TT8: “[...] non riesce a governare le proprie emozioni, poiché incapace di discernere ciò che va realmente accadendo dalle prospettive future, siano esse liete o cupe”
[“[...] he cannot manage his emotions, because he is unable to discern between the future perspectives, whether they are happy or gloomy, and what is really happening”]

Fusini (2012, para. 2) TT9: “[...] piuttosto lasciano che l’immaginazione del futuro, con le sue gioie e dolori, offuschi ciò che è a portata di mano”
[“[...] rather they let the imagination of the future, with its joys and sorrows, obscure what is at hand”]

Nadotti (2014, para. 2) TT10: “[...] lasciano che i progetti futuri, con le loro gioie e dolori, oscurino ciò che invece possiedono”
[“[...] let future projects, with their joys and sorrows, obscure what they possess”]

Artioli (2017, para. 2) TT11: “[...] non può fare a meno di lasciare che le prospettive future, con le loro gioie e dolori, adombrino ciò di cui si gode al momento”
[“[...] he cannot help but let the future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, foreshadow what they currently enjoy”].

The other translations did use a now-a-day language rather than an aulic Italian, moving towards the ST-orientation and away from the *T*-universal of “specific components of the target language.” Although they also relied on a general embellishment of the text, they kept a closer adherence to Virginia Woolf’s colloquial lexical register. In particular, Fusini (1992) TT2, (1998) TT7, (2012) TT9, Cucciarelli (1993) TT3, Bianciardi (1994) TT6, Nadotti (2014) TT10, and Artioli (2017) TT11 used the words “*dolori*” to render precisely the meaning of Virginia Woolf’s word “sorrows” without feeling the necessity for more cultured words, which was an attitude requested from the first translator during Celenza’s time. Malagò (1993) TT4 used the adjective “*penose*” [painful], and De Marinis (2012) TT8 used the adjective “*cupe*” [gloom], both referring to qualify perspectives. Zazo (1994) TT6 used the noun

“pene” [pains] referring to what the perspectives will carry out. The above words used in retranslations are not outdated and aulic, as in the case of Celenza’s (1934) TT1, but are rather common in the postmodern Italian literature.

Conclusion

The iconic case of the Italian retranslations of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* is amenable to critical evaluation from various points of view. The modernist features within the source text do not lend themselves to an easy translation and understanding in the Italian cultural context. Moreover, as recognised openly by the source author, the allusive techniques of the free indirect discourse and the indirect interior monologue of the novel’s characters require an effort of active and unconventional cooperation from the readership. This task may be unlikely performed by the audience of a foreign country. Mainly because of these reasons, in a post-modernist age, the translated texts tend to clarify the implicit and obscure source text through moving towards and sometimes away from the source-text orientation while showing tendencies classified as “universals” of translation. More specifically, the universal characteristics of literary translations defined in the theoretical literature, such as *normalisation* to conform with the target language, *ennoblement*, *simplification*, *explicitation*, *lexical variety*, *dialect normalisation*, *reduced word repetition*, except *lengthier translated texts* were confirmed in the first translation. Mitigation of these characteristics was found in all successive retranslations with a tendency to compromise between using the postmodern language and recovering the original modernist features of the novel.

Moreover, the domestic concept of classics appears to be a cultural constrain on translations, which prevented a complete rendering of Woolf’s modernist style. The Italian aesthetic principles about translating a classic with high register and style were established predominantly via the influence of literary studies conditioned by a kind of “intellectual dictatorship” of *bello scrivere* [beautiful writing] through the works of the philosopher and liberal thinker Benedetto Croce (1902, 1935, 1949). His influence was marked in the first half of the twentieth century. The impact of his works can also be traced in the second post-war period even in the translations of *To the Lighthouse* considered here. At the same time, it endured in the unconscious expectations of the readers until today to testify that historical, social, and cultural factors are essential in explaining some specific features of retranslations.

Testing the retranslation hypothesis against the serial Italian retranslations of *To the Lighthouse* scored a relatively good outcome. Many modernist features have disappeared in the first translation, regardless of the evolution of the hosting post-modernist culture. The

technique of close reading using computer-aided corpus-based analysis of digital texts has allowed testing the Retranslation Hypothesis exhaustively by considering the rendering of the modernist literary features in translation. The comparative analysis has shown how the succession of eleven Italian (re)translations of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* has not brought the target texts so definitively closer to the source text. There is some evidence of source-text orientation in the latest retranslations, but there are also some opposite instances. For this reason, it could be said that, in the case of retranslations of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* into Italian, the RH was not entirely confirmed.

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