Treatment of the pragmatic effectiveness of English interjections in English-Italian bilingual dictionaries.

My paper aims to investigate the treatment of English interjections in English-Italian bilingual dictionaries. Interjections are brief ejaculations of the spoken language, generally considered as a “minor word class” (Ballard 2001) which do not enter into syntactic structures and function outside the main clause structure. They are often uttered in isolation as a response to a comment, question or event, and this is why sometimes discourse markers are also classified as interjections (anyway, oh, okay, right, so, well).

It is Pragmatics that sorts interjections into “emotionally charged” exclamations, which subsequently prove difficult to be ‘naturally’ acquired by L2 speakers. Being “language specific and meaningful”, they are also studied by “cross-cultural” and contrastive grammar. Levinson (1983) identifies interjections in three different types of sentences: “exclamatives”, “imperatives”, and “optatives”. Wierzbicka (1983) points out the illocutory force of interjections and their culture-specific conventions” always related to the speaker’s mind state or process, suggesting a classification into “emotive, volitive, and cognitive” interjections.

The study of interjections is today a study field of Translation Studies as well. Recently, studies on audiovisual translation observe interlingual rendering of this anomalous word class-whose orality features are always maintained in scripts-and investigate suitable strategies to develop natural translation patterns. (Díaz Cintas-Remael 2007).

My study will start from the classification suggested by Wierzbicka. After having selected a certain number of interjections for each of the above cited categories, I will examine differences in Italian (Hazon Garzanti, Sansoni Rizzoli-La Rousse, Ragazzini Zanichelli) and non-Italian bilingual lexicography (Merriam-Webster’s English-Italian Translation Dictionary) in order to: 1. record any possible inclusions and/or exclusions, as well as misinterpretations and/or weaknesses; 2. observe definition of the contexts of usage and differences of meaning based on heterogeneous communicative situations; 3. evaluate the real effectiveness of lexicographic tools for the interlingual translation of interjections and their pragmatic force.

REFERENCES: