TRANSLATING ENGLISH VERBS OF COGNITIVE ATTITUDE INTO ITALIAN: THE DIFFICULTIES OF MAPPING TWO APPARENTLY EQUIVALENT COMPLEX SYSTEMS

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1. Introduction

Translating is always a very complex task, even when two languages seem to display a very similar organization of the linguistic resources for the expression of certain conceptual domains. If we adopt a view of the lexicon as a complex dynamic system, the reasons behind these difficulties are immediately evident: when we decide to translate, we are essentially faced with the task of mapping one complex system onto the another, an operation which is not always easy, even when the systems are apparently "similar".

I will exemplify this claim through the analysis of some of the problems arising in the translation of some verbs which lexicalise universal conceptual domains, fundamental both in communication and cognition: epistemicity and evidentiality. In particular, I will first apply the theory of lexical complexity to the class of English verbs of cognitive attitude, and then I will address the problem of translating these verbs into Italian. I will then focus on problems relating to non-equivalence at the pragmatic and semantic levels, exemplifying my claim through the analysis of the translation of the verbs *think* and *assume*. Finally, I will explain how a theory of lexical complexity can help explain and overcome or, at least, reduce problems in translation, helping preserve the original intended interpretation.

2. The class of English verbs of cognitive attitude

The class of English verbs of cognitive attitude includes 24 verbs[1] that lexicalise the "existential" qualification of states of affairs in terms of evidential and epistemic qualifications. The verbs belonging to this category are:

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[1] The list of verbs included in this class was defined as part of my PhD research and this choice was based on dictionary entries, on several syntactic and semantic criteria, and on the judgement of native speakers who were given several batteries of tests.

assume	expect	imagine	sense
believe	fancy	judge	suppose
bet	feel	know[2]	surmise
conjecture	figure	presume	think
consider	gather	reckon	trust
doubt	guess	see	wonder

Verbs of cognitive attitude play a fundamental role in communication. First, they allow the speaker to *signal* his own epistemic qualification of a state of affairs and, at the same time, to mention the sort of evidence he has for it; second, they also allow the speaker to *describe* his past "epistemological" qualifications of states of affairs and to *describe* (or *ascribe to*) somebody else's cognitive attitude.
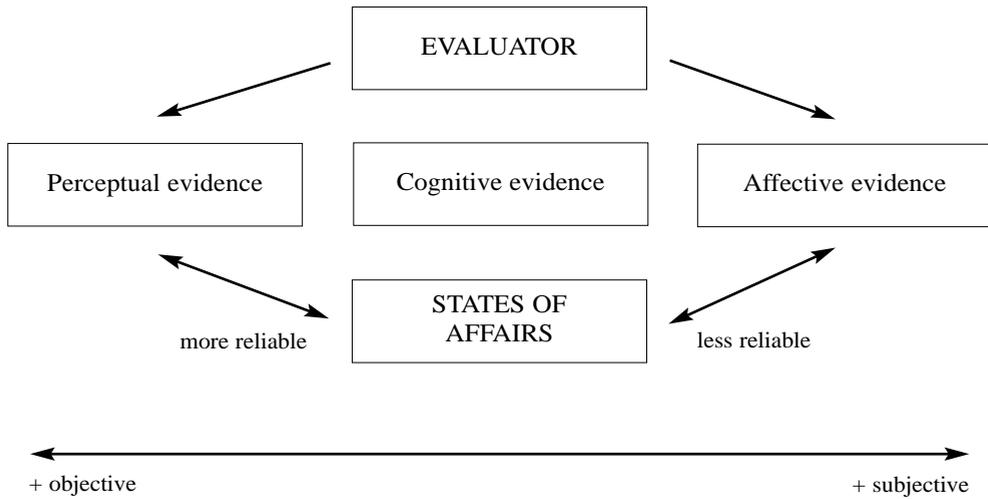
Verbs of cognitive attitude play a fundamental role in cognition too, as they lexicalise two conceptual domains that can reasonably be considered universal. Human beings need to record information in a sort of "belief box" (Shiffer 1981; Sperber 2000), a database where mental representations of actual states of affairs are stored in order to be treated as data and used as premises in inferences. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the "existential status" of every chunk of information with which the human mind comes in contact – no matter how it is retrieved – needs to be assessed in order to be stored in this database and then used in reasoning. Human beings rely enormously on communication both in order to retrieve information and to assess the status of information gathered (Sperber 2000). Thus, in the communicative situation, we probably assess every chunk of information that we receive, as well as any information we can retrieve from the communicative setting and from other relevant contextual dimensions.

Verbs of cognitive attitude have a very important function, as, in their qualificational use (i.e. in the first person of the simple present tense) they allow the speaker to signal his own epistemological evaluation of a state of affairs, leaving to the hearer the choice of either trusting him as a reliable source and, consequently, of storing that piece of information in his "belief box", or else, of performing the verification process on his own in order to assess the status of the information retrieved against a number of variables (e.g. contextual and communicative clues, prior knowledge, values and attitudes, etc.).

3. Verbs of cognitive attitude as a complex dynamical system

Verbs of cognitive attitude lexicalise the interplay of several dimensions pertaining to the conceptual domains of epistemicity and evidentiality (Cappelli 2005). If we borrow from the natural sciences the theory of complex systems and apply it to the theory of the lexicon, we can envisage this latter as a complex system in which every lexical item is itself a dynamic micro-system with a certain degree of com-

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[2] The verb *to know* is included only inasmuch as it represents one of the poles of the epistemological dimension, and see and wonder can be considered members of the class only when they occur in particular syntactic patterns, namely *I can't see that...* and... *I shouldn't wonder*.

plexity and internal organization[3]. We can, therefore, describe verbs of cognitive attitude as micro-systems lexicalising a low number of dimensions, but gradable and very abstract in nature.

3.1. *The conceptual domains lexicalised*

In order to understand the semantics of verbs of cognitive attitude, it is necessary to say a few words about the conceptual domains of epistemicity and evidentiality. The epistemic domain can be envisaged as a "scale" having knowledge as one of its extremes. An evaluating subject can have two "extreme" epistemological stances towards a state of affairs: he can either "know that p" or he can "not know that p", or rather, he can be "certain that a given state of affairs is the case" or "uncertain that a state of affairs is the case" in always increasing degrees until he is "incapable of epistemically assessing the status of a state of affairs". We could therefore represent the epistemic scale as a line between two extremes:

The epistemic domain, however, cannot be conceived of as a linear category, but only as a complex system in itself, as it involves an *evaluator* and a *state of affairs* that is evaluated. The evaluator can be more or less certain (o rather *uncertain*) that the state of affairs is more or less likely to be the case. We can therefore hypothesize that the epistemic scale develops along two independent but interacting lines:

The evidential domain is related to the other essential element in the picture envisaged here: the validation context. We can hypothesize that any epistemic evaluation follows from some kind of *verification process*: an evaluative operation over available evidence, which is "assessed" against the validating context (Bertuccelli Papi 1987, Sperber 1997). The *source of the information*, the *validating context*, as well as the *verification process* are all questions which fall under the domain of evidentiality, which, like the epistemic domain, can be envisaged as a multi-dimensional system spanning along the "objectivity line" according to the type of evidence at issue, which can be more or less objective. In Cappelli (2005), I proposed to represent evidentiality as follows:

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[3] See Bertuccelli Papi and Lenci, this volume. The theory of lexical complexity is presently being investigated by the research group of the University of Pisa within the wider interuniversity project named "*CoFin 2004: Glossari, dizionari, corpora: lessicologia e lessicografia delle lingue europee*".

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                            ┌──────────────────┐
                            │    EVALUATOR     │
                            └──────────────────┘
           ↙                                              ↘
┌────────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐
│ Perceptual evidence│  │ Cognitive evidence │  │  Affective evidence│
└────────────────────┘  └────────────────────┘  └────────────────────┘
           ↖            ┌────────────────────┐            ↗
            ↘           │    STATES OF       │           ↙
                        │     AFFAIRS        │
        more reliable   └────────────────────┘   less reliable
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←——→

\+ objective   + subjective

This schema indicates the type of evidence on which an evaluation can be based: perceptual *evidence* (also known as *source evidence*), *cognitive evidence* (i.e. inferential processes) and *affective evidence*. This latter dimension indicates a sort of evidence "internal" to the evaluator, who might want to signal that he is uttering a personal judgment based on no other evidence but his own personal evaluation or feelings. I take it to include impressions, irrationality and any other type of evidence depending on the *ego* of the evaluator. Moreover, in principle, we cannot exclude the possibility for the evaluator to lexicalise the fact that his evaluation is based on "negative evidence", i.e. on the absence of evidence.

3.2. *Verbs of cognitive attitude and lexical complexity*

The semantic space occupied by verbs of cognitive attitude can be said to show complexity at different levels. On the one hand, we can hypothesise a remarkable complexity at the *conceptual level* where we can envisage two quite abstract conceptual domains operating at a higher cognitive level (Nuyts 2001) which are internally articulated but which, presumably, have a weakly organised internal structure[4]. On the other hand, this complexity is inherited at the *level of the lexicalisation* of these conceptual domains, as the various degrees of a relatively limited number of dimensions are lexicalised in a relatively high number of lexical items showing very subtle differences in meaning. Therefore, at the level of the "semantic area", we observe a complex system with a fairly high internal organization. It is likely that certain areas within the system itself present a competing internal organization, due

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[4] Actually, we cannot say much about the internal organization of the conceptual domains, as they operate at a pre-linguistic level. We can hypothesize that the evidential domain, made up of few discrete dimensions, contributes to the organization of the system stabilising the more "nebulous" epistemic conceptual domain, which involves few very abstract and scalar dimensions and is capable in theory of combining in infinite ways.

to the relatively high number of lexical items sharing very few dimensions and having as their only distinctive feature the different ranking on the scales of the dimensions lexicalised.

A further level of complexity is retrievable at the *level of the single lexical items*, where each item can be envisaged as a complex and dynamic sub-system, which can reach a relatively stable state only if particular constraints act as organizing principles (i.e. syntactic and grammatical constraints, linguistic contextual constraints, *etc*.). And even when these constraints are at work, some of the verbs that occupy a more central position in the category (e.g. verbs which have a richer semantic potential and which can occupy different places along the epistemic scales like *think*), show a remarkable semantic "instability", which evidences a somewhat loose organisation within the system. This behaviour could be traced back to the complexity of the conceptual system itself, in that the high density of the semantic area and the subtle differences among the semantic dimensions lexicalised make each of these micro-systems a complex system endowed with high adaptivity to external pressures, such as that of contextual variables, which can change the strength of the epistemic evaluation, weaken or strengthen the evidence or the reliability of the evaluator in the hearer's eyes, and "push" a verb into the semantic space of another verb of the class, thus creating overlaps in the semantic area[5].

Table 1 in the Appendix provides a "visual idea" of the density of this class. It represents a graphical approximation of the lexicalisation patterns of the epistemic and evidential conceptual domains by verbs of cognitive attitude[6]. As is evident, this is a very dense area, with many verbs lexicalising nuances of a limited set of dimensions: no wonder that many dictionary definitions display a remarkable circularity and that most of these verbs are defined as synonyms differing only in register or variety of English. An extensive corpus study of the occurrences of these verbs and in particular of the co-occurrences with certain adverbs, shows clearly that there are indeed differences between each and every one of these verbs, which, however, sometimes can be overwritten by contextual effects (Cappelli 2005).

4. Translating verbs of cognitive attitude into Italian: two equivalent systems?

As we have already mentioned, since belief fixation, as a result of epistemic evaluation, is an essential process in human cognitive life, we can assume that the epis-

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[5] At this point, a clarification is needed. Preserving the physics metaphor, we could say that the claims made up to now about the semantics of verbs of cognitive attitude are mostly relative to a *specific stable state in the lexical micro-system*, that is to the use of these verbs in *qualificational contexts* rather than in non-qualificational ones (Nuyts 2001). By this I mean those occurrences of the verbs used to signal, describe or ascribe an evaluation of a state of affairs. Therefore, all those concurrencies in which these verbs can describe an actual mental act are not relevant to the present discussion.

[6] This schema was created during my PhD research, and it is based on the corpus study of over 10,000 occurrences of these verbs. Even if it can only be taken to represent a simplified version of a very complex lexicalisation area, in part because of its bidimensional nature, I believe that it helps in the understanding of the complex nature of the lexicon.

temic and evidential conceptual domains are universal and that they are rendered linguistically across languages, although through different means. Verbs of cognitive attitude are not the only means for the expression of what, following Hengeveld (1989), we can define as the "epistemological" status of a state of affairs: the English language lexicalises these dimensions through adverbs, adjectives and modal verbs as well, even though it has been demonstrated that different means serve different purposes (Nuyts 2001).

Italian and English seem to have two equivalent systems as far as the encoding of these essential domains is concerned. In Italian, as in English, there are modal verbs (*dovere*, *potere*), adjectives (*possibile*, *probabile*, *ovvio*, *evidente*, etc.), adverbs (*chiaramente*, *probabilmente*, *forse*, *veramente*, etc.) and verbs of cognitive attitude (*credere*, *pensare*, *supporre*, *ritenere*, etc.), which are organised in a very similar way to the lexical items of the English system. We could therefore hypothesize that translating from one language into the other would simply mean to map two systems of comparable complexity and internal organization.

A first look at the translations for English verbs of cognitive attitude makes it immediately clear that the question is not so simple, as table 2 in the Appendix shows. The image that we obtain if we try to connect the English verbs with their proposed translations in Italian is quite chaotic and the remarkable circularity and the repetitions in the definitions are revealed by the high concentration of lines ending on some of the verbs.

Providing a detailed analysis of the translation of the whole class would exceed the limits of the present contribution. Therefore, in what follows, I will comment on the translation of certain occurrences of *think* and *assume* in order to exemplify some of the problems that the translator may face when trying to map the English system onto the Italian one, and, finally, I will draw some conclusions relative to the relationship between lexical complexity and translation.

5. *I think*…: translating pragmatics

5.1. *The semantics of* think

The verb *to think* can be "construed" in several senses (Croft and Cruse 2004), but the most essential distinction to make is between its qualificational and non-qualificational reading, that is, between the construal in which the verb lexicalises the cognitive act of thinking (e.g. *Stop talking to me! I am thinking!*) and the construal in which it lexicalises the epistemic evaluation of a state of affairs (e.g. *I think that Mary will pass the exam*)[7].

Think is indeed a very "flexible" verb, which, probably by reason of its vagueness and the fact that it names the most fundamental human activity, i.e. cognition,

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[7]   Even if the present form of the verb is the result of the conflation between two Old English verbs of very similar meaning and form, i.e. *þencan* ("conceive in the mind, think, consider, intend") and *þyncan* ("to seem or to appear"), these two domains are probably strictly connected, and in fact, it is sometimes hypothesized that the OE forms might derive from one single older form.

can cover a large range of contexts. Following Croft and Cruse (2004), we could say that it has such a rich meaning potential that it can be construed in a large number of contextualised interpretations. If we consider the lexical item *think* in the perspective of the theory of lexical complexity that we are trying to develop, we could envisage it as a dynamical system of high complexity because of the vast amount of information required in order to describe all its possible states.

The constraints which force a certain meaning construal of the verb are numerous and they would definitely deserve further investigation in order to be able to provide an exhaustive, or at least a very comprehensive, list of them. The corpus analysis carried out during the course of my PhD research highlights some of them quite clearly. Thus, certain syntactic patterns block or favour the construal qualificational meaning of the verb: we can easily predict that when the verb is in a continuous tense, the sense construed will be that of "act of cognition", whereas, when it occurs in the first person of the simple present tense and it is followed by the complementiser *that*, it is more likely to be construed in the evaluative sense. Collocational patterns also act as constraints inducing relatively steady states in the system: when the verb co-occurs with prepositions such as *of* or *about*, we can quite safely expect it to be construed as a mental act, whereas if it co-occurs with certain epistemic adverbs like *certainly* or with viewpoint adverbs like *personally*, we can reasonably expect it to be construed in its qualificational sense. Contextual factors can act as constraining forces too, but they are more difficult to "census" and, certainly, to draw up a complete list of the contextual variables that can determine different construals of the verb meaning is, at a minimum, an ambitious task.

Leaving aside the possible construals of non-qualificational senses of the verb, I will try to provide a general overview of the lexicalisation of the epistemological evaluation of a state of affairs by *think*. This verb lexicalises the evaluator's assignment of a positive degree of likelihood to p – *yet* leaving the possibility open that he is wrong – and the fact that he is quite committed to his evaluation. Thus, in a sentence like:

(1)   (BNC - A0C 900) I honestly think that there is no sign of things getting better.

think lexicalises both a positive degree of likelihood that p and a high level of evaluator's commitment, probably because of the presence of the adverb *honestly*. Removing the adverb as in (2),

(2)   I think that there is no sign of things getting better.

the commitment would appear lower, but still present. The evidence that supports the evaluation is introduced in the picture by the evidential expression *no sign*, but it does not seem to be inherently lexicalised by the verb. (3) and (4) provide other examples of the occurrence of the verb *think* in its qualificational construal:

(3)   (BNC - A06 2237) Playing Richard is so bound up with physical attitude, and I think that as actors we are not well enough equipped to meet that kind of physical thinking in that kind of role.

(4)   (BNC - A0X 1531 A) <u>I think that</u> the design considerations of your notice board
        should be given some careful thought.

(1) and (2) might suggest that *think*, even in its qualificational construal, bears reference to cognitive work, to a sort of "computational process" over some sort of evidence, that has as an output the opinion of the evaluator on the basis of the available evidence. In (3) and (4), though, as well as in most of the other occurrences analysed during my research, there is neither reference to "computation" nor to any sort of evidence: most of the time, the only dimension which is construed is the personal "opinion" of the speaker which is put forward as a totally subjective judgement.

   Thus, whereas in the case of some verbs like *believe*, *know* or *suppose*, evidentiality is one of the dimensions lexicalised, *think* does not lexicalise evidential information. Consequently, whereas in the case of *believe* or *know* the dimension of commitment is generally fairly high, *think* allows the evaluator to express various degrees of commitment and it lexicalises general likelihood that the state of affairs evaluated is the case, covering a large range of positions on the epistemic scales, according to contextual variables. The evidential dimension is probably only involved because we hold it as logically necessary in order to evaluate the epistemic status of something, but I believe that the verb can be considered as a *purely epistemic verb* and the *prototypical member of the class of verbs of cognitive attitude*. By virtue of this loose organization of the 'complex micro-system *think*', it can be used in a remarkable span of situations and it can have several functions, ranging from the expression of the speaker's epistemic evaluation to the function of face-saving device, from discourse marker to rhetorical device which can even be used to strengthen an assertion rather than subjectivizing it.

   To summarize for the purpose of the present discussion, we can say that *think* is a basic verb encoding a very generic semantic potential, basically identifying the *rational ego* of the human being, compared for instance to a verb like *believe*, which would identify the *affective ego*. This basic nature makes it very context dependent so that it can be construed in many different senses all related to a central idea of cognitive activity. In the most "literal" case, *think* is construed as an action, the act of thinking, and in the most "metaphoric" case, it is construed as the subjective result of the act of thinking, as an indicator of opinion. In between these two extremes, discourse can constrain many construals of the semantic potential of *think*, situated along the scales of commitment and likelihood of the state of affairs. This is done via contextual constraints, according to which certain semantic dimensions are brought to the foreground and others are relegated to the background or dropped (Croft and Cruse 2003; Carston 2002).

5.2. *The functions of "*I think*"*

I think can have several functions[8]:
–   prototypical cognitive attitude verb function - *signalling epistemic evaluation. I think* qualifies "factual thesis", i.e. verifiable states of affairs, and it can be paraphrased with other expressions signalling probability (e.g. probably) It generally expresses tentativeness (Aijmer 1997):

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[8]   For a pragmatic analysis of *think* see Aijmer 1997. Simon-Vandenbergen 2000 provides an interesting account of the use of *I think* and its Dutch "equivalents" in political debates.

(5)   (BNC - KST) He won't be er, but she was so she said you're gonna chop the tree down, that tree whe, that he bumped into! But I think he won't do that again. [≈ *But he probably won't do that again*] Will he? Well he will go into something else. You know, he he could do. He's excitable isn't he? He's sort of He's determined

– bleached cognitive attitude verb function - *signalling the speaker's viewpoint. I think* occurs with non-verifiable, evaluative propositions and the epistemic scale of likelihood is not lexicalised or lexicalised only in the sense that p is considered generally true by the evaluator. The only dimension lexicalised is the commitment dimension and *I think* ends up signalling that what follows is the speaker's point of view.

(6)   (BNC - A05) So the piece was solicitous in trying to alleviate the shocks by explaining that the novelist himself was shocked. And I think it was right to argue that the book has its "strict disclaimers"' and that goodness of heart, chiefly Jenny's, is defensively displayed amid a welter of misconduct.

This use of *I think* is very common, especially in argumentative contexts such as political debates, where the tentativeness dimension disappears in favour of a more "deliberative" function (Simon-Vandenbergen 2000), signalling authority rather than uncertainty:

(7)   This president has left them in shatters across the globe, and we're now 90 percent of the casualties in Iraq and 90 percent of the costs. I think that's wrong, and I think we can do better.
(Senator Kerry, *The First Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate*, 30 September 2004)

When the proposition following *I think* is future-oriented and/or it includes deontic expressions of necessity, as in propositions relative to things which need to be done in the future, the strengthening effect of the viewpoint indicator still holds but, at the same time, the "belief" dimension prevalent in the prototypical function reappears, probably as a sort of presupposition. It is reasonable to presume that if an evaluator supports the idea that something is necessary, he also believes that it is probably necessary[9].

(8)   I think that there needs to be checks and balances in a democracy, and made that very clear that by consolidating power in the central government, he's sending a signal to the Western world and United States that perhaps he doesn't believe in checks and balances, and I told him that.
(President Bush, *The First Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate*, 30 September 2004)

– Politeness strategy - "*corrective face-work*" (Brown and Levinson 1987; Goffman 1967), *hedge* or *downtoner*:

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[9]   This explains why in the first Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate most of these types of propositions are introduced by *I believe* rather than *I think*.

(9)   (BNC - A0F 1751) <u>I think</u> we'd better have a talk

(10)   (BNC - KST) How on earth did she get out? <u>I think</u> I don't know. She must have thrown herself down the stairs! She 's a strange sort of cat!

(11)   (BNC - KSR) I mean they said, they they feel that it's no point anyway, it's already been decided. Well, <u>I think</u> they're wrong really. To a degree they're probably right. Well I think they are, yeah. To a degree I mean, I think they 're right. I think they're wrong.

–   Cognitive discourse marker (Chafe 1993): *I think* is quite rare in this use and it is generally in co-occurrence with some other discourse marker:

(12)   Well, <u>I think</u> – listen, I fully agree that one should shift tactics, and we will, in Iraq. Our commanders have got all the flexibility to do what is necessary to succeed. (President Bush, *The First Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate*, 30 September 2004)

5.3. *Translating* I think *into Italian:* pensare *or* credere*?*

The occurrences of *I think* in the parallel corpus MultiSemCor[10] are mostly translated with *penso* or *credo*, which are generally considered to be the verbs corresponding to *think* and *believe*. The two English verbs, though, as I mentioned before, lexicalise different dimensions, as *believe* lexicalises affective evidential information as well as epistemic information. *Think*, on the other hand, lexicalises only the epistemic dimension. Here are some examples:

(13.EN) <u>I think</u> the big thing about the game was that our kids for the third straight week stayed in there pitching and kept the pressure on.

(13.IT) <u>Credo</u> che la cosa importante nella partita sia stata che i nostri ragazzi per la terza settimana di seguito sono rimasti lì a lanciare pitch e hanno fatto pressione continua.

(14.EN) Assistant coach John Cudmore described victory as "a good feeling, <u>I think</u>, on the part of the coaches and the players".

(14.IT) L'assistente del coach John Cudmore ha descritto la vittoria come "una buona sensazione, <u>penso</u>, da parte degli allenatori e dei giocatori.

(15.EN) <u>I think</u> you stink, Tom Lord!

(15.IT) <u>Io credo</u> che tu sia un fetente, Tom Lord!

(16.EN) "<u>I think</u> you're wrong, Eddie", he said finally.

(16.IT) "<u>Penso</u> che tu ti sbagli, Eddie", disse finalmente.

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[10] The Italian translations for the English occurrences of the verbs were retrieved from the MultiSemCor. Alternative solutions are not provided, even though there is definitely room.

The choice of *pensare* and *credere* does not seem to follow from the different functions of *I think*. As a matter of fact, most of the time, the boundaries between the epistemic evaluation and the viewpoint marker function are not so evident. We can therefore hypothesize that *credo* would be more appropriate when both the commitment dimension and some sort of evaluative operation are lexicalised, whereas *penso* would be preferable when the personal responsibility of the evaluation is the dimension which is more prominent.

Since both *penso* and *credo* are found when *I think* lexicalises the same dimensions in English, we have to conclude that either the translation fails to render the exact meaning of the English original or that the choice between *penso* and *credo* is largely dependent on the translator's personal preferences.

Credo is generally preferred. We could hypothesize that, when *I think* is used to signal the viewpoint of the speaker as in political discourse, that is, when it strengthens the assertion rather than mitigating it, it "inherits" from the context that sort of affective strength which is also typical of *I believe*, and that therefore, *credo* is the perfect choice. However, it could also depend on the fact that in Italian *credere* is more frequent than *pensare*. Thus, in political discourse, this latter is less used than the former.

In the transcripts of the Europarliament sessions there are 6008 occurrences of *penso*, 3745 of which are followed by the complementiser *che*, versus 16,000 occurrences of *credo*, of which 10,748 are followed by *che*. *Ritengo che* is also more frequent than *penso che*, with 7231 occurrences of the 12,544 total occurrences of *ritengo*. This could be because *pensare* is more informal than *credere* and therefore less suited to formal oral contexts. However, even in the BADIP (*Banca Dati dell'Italiano Parlato*), *credo* occurs 389 times and *penso* 233 times. What is interesting is that, in spoken Italian, the expression *secondo me* is also used more frequently than *penso*: in the BADIP it occurs 316 times.

If we exclude the Europarliament sessions, the only case of translation of *I think* with *secondo me* to be found in the texts that were analysed is the following from the first Bridget Jones movie:

(17.EN)   I think, basically, Latin music is on its way out.

(17.IT)   Secondo me la musica latina ormai è praticamente finita

This is symptomatic of the fact that even when translating scripts that reproduce the spoken language, translators tend to be influenced by the written language of the script. *Secondo me* in spoken Italian is more frequent than *penso* and it is very common as a hedge in parenthetical constructions, just like *I think* in English, and it signals that the evaluation is the speaker's personal opinion. Still, translators rarely choose it and we can hypothesize that this happens because *secondo me* is not a verb and it is less formal than *penso*.

In order to properly understand the choice of *credo* or *penso* in Italian, a much more detailed analysis of the Italian system would be necessary. However, in principle, it seems that the choice between the two verbs is based on personal preferences rather than on the semantics of the verbs. In general, I believe that *I think*

could be better rendered with *credo* when both evaluation and commitment are prominent, whereas *penso* would be more suitable to translate pure viewpoint occurrences or hedges where strong commitment or evaluation is not lexicalised. This hypothesis derives from the reflection on a "controversial occurrence" retrieved from the MultiSemCor, which, at least in "my" Italian, does not seem "right". I will not linger too much on this aspect because the judgement of other native speakers of Italian is not unanimous and it would require further investigation.

(18.EN) Personally, <u>I think</u> we ought to set up an immediate naval blockade of Cuba.	(18.IT) Personalmente, <u>penso</u> che dobbiamo organizzare un immediato blocco navale verso Cuba.

To my native speaker's ear, *personalmente penso* is (at least partly) redundant, whereas, *personalmente credo* would be fine. This could be explained, if we take *pensare* to have only the function of marker of the speaker's viewpoint, and *credere* as the real equivalent of *think* in this case.

5.3.1. *More problematic translations of* I think
I will now move to some more problematic cases, in which the translation does not parallel exactly the English texts. These are mostly cases of politeness strategic uses of *I think*[11]. The mapping of the two lexical systems, the English and the Italian, seems to encounter some difficulties when the translator must translate the use of *I think* as a politeness strategy device or discourse marker.

In some cases such as (19) and (20), the translator chooses to translate *I think/I don't think* as *credo/non credo*.

(19.EN) - I hope he's good enough for our little Bridget. - <u>I think</u> I can say with total confidence absolutely not.	(19.IT) - … - <u>Credo</u> di poter dire ancora una volta con assoluta certezza "assolutamente no".
(20.EN) - Mark, stay. We… - <u>I don't think</u> I will.	(20.IT) - … - <u>Non credo</u> che resterò.

(21.IT) represents an interesting choice of the translator:

(21.EN) Well, <u>I just think</u> you should know that, um… there are lots of prospects here for a talented person.	(21.IT) <u>Pensavo</u> dovessi sapere che… che ci sono molte possibilità qui per…

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[11] The examples below are once again taken from the first Bridget Jones movie. *Credo* is preferred to *penso* even in this case.

Here, the translator, interestingly, chooses to translate *think* with *pensare*, and to recreate the hedge function conjugating the Italian verb in the *imperfetto* tense, which in Italian can be used as a hedge in the same way as *I think* in English. Both the semantic and the pragmatic information encoded in the English sentence are preserved.

In other cases, *I think* is not translated with an Italian verb, but the translator finds some good alternatives which preserve the meaning and the function of the lexical item. In (22.IT), the translator chooses an Italian adverb used as a discourse marker, *bene*, to translate *I think*, and the English sense is perfectly preserved.

(22.EN) <u>I think</u> we should pack, shouldn't we?

(22.IT) <u>Bene</u>, dovremmo fare i bagagli no?

In (23.IT) and (24.IT), though, whereas the semantic information is probably preserved, much of the pragmatic information is lost.

(23.EN) <u>I think</u> you know what I mean.

(23.IT) Sai perfettamente a cosa mi riferisco.

(24.EN) Come and look at your gravy, Pam. <u>I think </u>it's going to need sieving.

(24.IT) Dai un'occhiata alla salsa dell'arrosto Pam, bisogna filtrarla!

In (23.IT) the strength of Bridget's assertion is rendered by the imperative tone and by the adverb *perfettamente*, but of course, the hedging or downtoning effect of any sort is lost. The character comes across as being very confrontational. The translator here had to lose the cultural specificity: the common use of hedges and mitigation in English, which is much less common in Italian.

(24) provides a very interesting example. The whole scene is played around an ambiguous situation. A friend of Bridget's mother's tries to convince this latter to leave Bridget and the man she is chatting with alone. To do this, she invents an excuse, but Pam misunderstands her intentions and she ends up reacting as if it were actually a criticism, that is, in its "most literal meaning". In (24.EN), *I think* is interpreted as a politeness device concealing a mischievous remark by Pam's "friend" about her gravy. In Italian, the attitude of the "friend", who is essentially questioning in public the woman's ability to prepare gravy (notably a remarkable flaw for an Englishwoman!), is rendered by the irritated tone of the woman and the strong deontic character of the assertion. The result is that the woman's comment ends up sounding rude rather than "malevolent" and she comes across as a grumpy old lady rather than a competitive and dubious friend. This is a significant loss as it does not clearly render the misunderstanding between Bridget Jones's mother and her friend, who in fact did not intend to be mean at all, but only to convince Pam to leave the

daughter alone. Moreover, it leaves out important information about Bridget's family environment, which in the original version contributes significantly to the irony of the whole movie. By leaving out this pragmatic information, in the translation a number of inferences are blocked. The ambiguity is resolved with the choice of the translator and part of the information contributing to the portrait of the main character is lost.

5.4. *Concluding remarks about the translation of* think

Think and its translations illustrate some of the problems connected with the mapping between two complex systems quite well, in this case between the systems of the class of English and Italian verbs of cognitive attitude. The examples proposed show how there is no easy one-to-one mapping between the complex micro-system *think* and what it is generally considered its Italian counterpart, i.e. *pensare*.

If we take *think* as a lexeme, we can map it onto several areas of the system of Italian verbs of cognitive attitude, and this is the type of information that dictionaries try to provide. However, if we consider the verb in a particular form, i.e. *I think*, the number of possible successful mappings is smaller as we are faced with a more precise set of "stable states" of a complex dynamical system and with the necessity of reproducing that dynamical system in that particular state. This is not straightforward, because, as we saw, many contextualised meaning construals preserve little or nothing of the fundamental cognitive and epistemic information lexicalised by the verb in its prototypical uses. This means that in order to perform a correct mapping between the two complex systems, in some cases we need to resort to other conceptual domains, such as the deontic domain, for instance. Nevertheless, in some cases, it seems inevitable that the pragmatic effects will be lost and, most importantly, so will the information we can derive from them.

6. *Assume*: translating argumentation

6.1. *The semantics of* assume

Assume lexicalises dimensions of the epistemic and evidential domains. In the epistemic domain, the verb lexicalises high commitment and high likelihood that the state of affairs holds. As for evidential information, it indicates that the evaluation is based on some sort of prior or encyclopaedic knowledge or on commonplace premises. Most importantly, it lexicalises the absence of the validation process: using *assume* the evaluator indicates that he takes a state of affairs to be the case without carrying out any verification on the evidence he has.

These dimensions are lexicalised in all the forms and uses of the lexeme, and this has important consequences as far as the function of the verb is concerned. Given the information *assume* encodes, it is often found in antagonistic contexts where the speaker wants to convey a sense of reproach towards the attitude of the "assuming subject". In these contexts, it is common to find lexical items evoking typical situations, scarce consideration of evidence, and fallacy of the reasoning.

Generally, when *assume* is used in these antagonistic contexts, it supports the whole argumentation, as it indicates that the evaluator underestimates or does not bother to verify evidence and obtains overly simplistic or even false conclusions deriving from a careless consideration of the premises. Sometimes it even creates a sort of "counterfactual effect". Let's consider the following passage from the MultiSemCor parallel corpus.

(25)   The design of orthographies has received *much less attention* from linguists *than the problem deserves*. There has been a *tendency* on the part of many American linguists <u>to assume that</u> a phonemic transcription will *automatically* be the best possible orthography and that the *only real problem* will then be the social one of securing acceptance. This seems *naïve*. Most others have been *content* to give only the *most general attention* to the broadest and *most obvious* features of the phonology when designing orthographies. *Apparently* the feeling is that anything more would be involvement in technical abstrusenesses of possible pedantic interest but of *no visible significance* in practical affairs.

    The *result* of this attitude has been the domination of many orthography conferences by such considerations as *typographic 'esthetics'*, which usually turns out to be nothing more than certain *prejudices* carried over from European languages. Many of the suggested systems seem to have only the most tenuous relationship to the language structures that they purport to represent.

    Linguists have *not always* been *more enlightened than "practical people"* and sometimes have *insisted* on *incredibly trivial points* while *neglecting things of much greater significance*. As a *result*, many people have been confirmed in their conviction that orthography design is not an activity to which experts can contribute anything but confusion.

This text provides the perfect example of the type of context in which *assume* occurs and of its fundamental role in the structure of the argumentation. The first sentence sets the tone, as the author states clearly that the problem of orthography has received much less attention than it deserves. And the reason why this has happened is that some American linguists have the tendency to assume that it is not important. Here we already have the reference to the type of evidentiality on which the epistemic evaluation lexicalised by *assume* is based: a "tendency", some non-specified unverified evidence. The counterfactual effect that I mentioned above allows the reader to expect that the proposition "a phonemic transcription will be the best possible orthography" is false. The rest of the passage relies on the expectation introduced by *assume* and explains why the conclusion based on some unverified (and in this case incorrect) premises is false. The critical tone of the writer is preserved throughout the text via lexical items that are typically found in co-occurrence with *assume*, such as adverbs like *automatically*, which underline the lack of verification. Lack of verification is related to the fact that certain problems are underestimated, as indicated by additional expressions present in the text like *the only real problem*, *naïve*, *others have been content*, *no visible significance* and several others. Some other expressions and lexical items evoke the type of evidence on which the evaluation is based, that is, common beliefs or encyclopaedic knowledge, such as *most*

obvious features and *prejudices*. The word *result* occurs twice to introduce the false conclusions deriving from the wrong assumption.

Of course, assume is not only used in very antagonistic contexts. It is very common in scientific and academic texts as well, where, in most cases, the epistemic dimension is more prominent and the evidential dimension and some of the effects that it produces are "bleached", so that the counterfactual and critical dimensions are generally not construed. In such contexts, *assume* is often used to signal that the evaluator is using some premises that he does not have time to verify or that he does not wish or care to verify, but that the arguments which follow, and which generally gain more prominence in this "comparison" with the premises which are "not worth" spending too much time on, will be based on such premises. In these cases, the verb is used in the first person of the present simple, i.e. *I assume*, or in "impersonal" constructions, i.e. *it is reasonable to assume*.

Since the absence of the verification process is still lexicalised, this "mitigated" effect can be the result of the reliability we attribute to scientific research and to the fact that when the verb lexicalises the speaker's attitude, the context is not antagonistic as the evaluator is the bearer of the attitude. The effect we obtain is rather that of a backgrounding of some information used as premise and the foregrounding of the evaluator's conclusions or of the reasons why the evaluator chooses to present some other information. Let's consider the following cases retrieved from the British National Corpus:

(26)   Most of you, <u>I assume</u>, already know what *Viz* is about. But in the event you
        washed ashore even more recently than I, you'll be delighted to know that *Viz* is
        about farts, tits and gonads.
        Esquire. The National Magazine Company Ltd, London (1991-04).

Here *assume* is used in order to avoid having the information provided by the writer be considered superfluous by the reader. He clearly wants to provide this information to give a certain tone to his contribution but he does not want it to be gratuitous as *Viz* is a very popular magazine in the UK. This type of use is very common and it is generally produced by the co-occurrence of *assume* and *but*.

The fact that *assume* can be used to assign to a premise the status of valid premise for inference and that it seems to produce a sort of "information backgrounding" could also explain the high frequency in the imperative mood (i.e. *let's assume*), which explicitly invites the hearer to perform a cognitive operation. We can hypothesise that with *assume* the hearer is invited to consider a fictional state of affairs as true, and, at the same time, to avoid evaluating whether or not this is actually possible and its implications. The speaker is asking the hearer to suspend his evaluations, i.e. to avoid carrying out the verification process, and to just take a state of affairs for granted, and concentrate on the rest of the argumentation.

6.2. *The pillars of argumentation:* assume*,* suppose *and* presume

In the class of verbs of cognitive attitude *assume*, *suppose* and *presume* are often treated almost as synonyms, but they are actually three distinct "pillars of argumentation" in English as they lexicalise different "combinations" of the same conceptu-

al dimensions pertaining to the domain of epistemicity and evidentiality. I have already presented *assume* in detail, and I will now sketch a very simplistic picture of the other two verbs, for the sake of the present argumentation.

Suppose lexicalises a low degree of commitment of the evaluator and a generally positive degree of likelihood of the state of affairs. Just like *think*, *suppose* is a verb that can occupy many different positions along the epistemic scale, as it is very sensitive to contextual variables. As far as the evidential information lexicalised is concerned, *suppose* indicates an ongoing inferential process. In certain cases, it can be used to indicate a suddenly reached conclusion based on inferential work following from the evaluation of available evidence of various sorts. In argumentative texts, it can be used like *assume* in imperative contexts and in this case what the writer is asking the reader to do is to treat a premise as true but in such a way as to continue evaluating all new information in order to revise the status of the premise if necessary. Whereas with *assume*, we store a certain state of affairs in the belief box without the verification process, with *suppose* we keep the state of affairs "on hold".

(27)   One of the obvious conclusions we can make on the basis of the last election, <u>I suppose</u>, is that we, the majority, were dissatisfied with Eisenhower conservatism.

(28)   But <u>suppose</u> that a week later we revert to the incident in thought and make our statement again.

In the first sentence, *I suppose*, signals the inferential process through which the evaluator has reached the "obvious conclusion", whereas in the second sentence, the writer is asking his readers to repeat the whole process that can lead them to some sort of conclusion. The biggest difference with *assume* is that the premise here is in focus and is not a secondary aspect in the argumentation.

Presume can be considered to be somewhere in between *assume* and *suppose*. As far as the epistemic dimensions are concerned, the verb lexicalises high commitment of the evaluator and a fairly high likelihood that the state of affairs is the case. As for the evidential dimensions, *presume* indicates that the evaluator, despite not having properly verified the validity of his premises, thinks that the evidence on which he can base his inferential process or the inferential work itself are reliable enough for him to accept those premises as valid for the argumentation. He leaves the possibility open for revision, as in *suppose*, but at the same time, he is ready to risk using those premises as the foundations of his reasoning. This dimension of "risk" is probably related to the non-qualificational meaning of *presume*, which is essentially "to behave arrogantly or overconfidently" and it also influences certain politeness strategic uses of the verb. The first two examples below are taken from the BNC and the last one from the Weekly Telegraph:

(29)   <u>I presume</u> they would have to pay tax?

(30)   <u>I presume</u> she feared – rightly, I suspect – that in some schools where children spoke in dialect the teachers might decide it was never appropriate.

(31)   <u>Let's presume</u> that the Beijing men understand the meaning of a submissive government in Nepal.

The first sentence is an occurrence of *I presume* which functions as a hedge; the second sentence provides the most frequent type of occurrence of the verb in its full cognitive attitude construal and the last sentence is provided in order to compare the type of cognitive work the evaluator asks of his interlocutors when he uses *presume* rather than *suppose* or *assume*. He is essentially asking the reader to treat the proposition as true while telling him that it is still subject to further proof.

6.3. *Translating* assume*: an impossible match*

Assume exemplifies the problems of the mapping between two complex and nested systems quite well. Despite the fact that at the conceptual level the systems are certainly comparable for the domains involved, for their internal organization and for the way in which English and Italian linguistically encode these domains and the interplay of their dimensions, at the lexical level the picture is more complicated. As we have said, both English and Italian have a class of cognitive attitude verbs lexicalising the interplay of epistemicity and evidentiality, but the internal organisation of these complex systems is different. Whereas in the case of *I think* the translator had to face the problem of non-pragmatic equivalence rather than the problem of finding the right Italian word to translate the verb, probably also because it can occupy so many positions on the epistemic scale that its exact sense is always hard to determine, in the case of *assume*, the translator has to face the fact that Italian does not have a verb which lexicalises the same interplay of epistemic and evidential information.

The verbs which are generally used to translate *assume* are *supporre*, *presumere*, and *presupporre*, and, less often *ipotizzare*, *pensare*, and *dare per scontato*. We can make two hypotheses, that is, that Italian lexicalises the same exact "mix" of dimensions in one of these verbs so that they are "false friends" of the English counterparts *suppose*, *presume* and *presuppose*, or that Italian does not lexicalise that exact "mix" and that therefore it is necessary to resort to some other verb which is close in meaning and to the context.

Let's consider some examples of translations of *assume* taken from the MultiSemCor in order to see whether the argumentative role of *assume* is preserved in the Italian translation.

In (32.EN) the writer is essentially stating that we cannot consider true that p and therefore use it as a valid premise for our argument.

(32.EN) He seems to have at least a few 30 – and 50 – megaton bombs on hand, since we cannot <u>assume</u> that he has exploded his entire stock.	(32.IT) Pare che egli abbia a disposizione almeno alcune bombe da trenta e da cinquanta megatoni, poiché non possiamo <u>supporre</u> che egli abbia fatto esplodere la sua intera riserva.

The whole article from which this passage is taken is built around the assumption that the bombs have not been destroyed. Does the Italian verb *supporre* lexicalise the same information and does it allow the writer to use it as a valid premise? The dictionary published by *Garzanti* defines *supporre* as "ammettere provvisoriamente,

in via di ipotesi, che una cosa sia o possa verificarsi in un dato modo" (literally, "to admit provisionally, as a hypothesis, that something is, or could be, in a certain way"). Is this what *to assume* means in English? I think not. *Assume* does not involve anything provisional: on the contrary. *Supporre* seems to be much closer to the meaning of *suppose* than to that of *assume*. A possibility is that *supporre* lexicalises something less definitive than an assumption and more committed than a supposition.

Let's now consider *presumere* as a possible translation of *assume*. The definition for the Italian verb is "trarre da un dato che si conosce argomenti in base ai quali indurre l'esistenza di un dato ignoto" (literally, "to derive from known data arguments on the grounds of which we can infer the existence of some other unknown data"). This seems very different from the meaning of *assume* and much more similar to the English *presume*, which, as I have explained above, involves some sort of inferential process like *suppose* leaving the verification process "pending". In (33.EN) *assume* is used to create that sense of reproach which with the Italian *presumiamo* is lost.

| (33.EN) | And yet this is exactly the risk we run when we <u>assume</u>, as we too often do, that we can continue to preach the gospel in a form that makes it seem incredible and irrelevant to cultured men. | (33.IT) | E tuttavia è esattamente questo il rischio che corriamo quando <u>presumiamo</u>, come fin troppo spesso facciamo, che possiamo continuare a predicare il vangelo in una forma che lo faccia sembrare incredibile e irrilevante agli uomini di cultura |

Generally, the act of *presumere* does not carry significant consequences, because we are ready to rectify. *Assume* does not involve revision, though: this is why the effects are negative. The only aspect that could be taken to preserve the criticism implied is the clear relation, still perceivable in Italian, of *presumere* and *presuntuoso* (i.e. "presumptuous, self-opinionated").

(34.EN) is taken from an article about the fact that in the community of Jewish teenagers attending Brookline College, girls have better results than boys, even though this is hardly believable given a series of other factors that the journalist presents.

| (34.EN) | One can <u>assume</u> that some of the brightest boys are out of town. | (34.IT) | Si può <u>presupporre</u> che alcuni dei ragazzi più dotati siano fuori città. |

The occurrence in (34.EN) is a single statement that the journalist uses to close this discussion and move on to consider some other aspects. *Presupporre* in Italian requires that some sort of argumentation follow. Thus, in this context, this translation does not seem appropriate at all. Moreover, the verb is generally used in logic argumentations where it means "to require as a necessary precondition".

On the other hand, the choice of *dare per scontato*, i.e. "to take for granted", in (35.IT) seems to be a very good choice.

(35.EN) "People automatically <u>assume</u> that I'm in college", a nineteen year old machinist observed irritably.

(35.IT) "Le persone <u>danno</u> automaticamente <u>per scontato</u> che vada alla scuola superiore", osserva con tono irritato un'operaia di diciannove anni.

It allows the translator to express both the lack of verification process and the stereotypical evidence: dimensions that, as I explained, are quite relevant in *assume*. It could have been a good translation for the occurrence of *assume* in (33.EN) as well, as the context is antagonistic and the conviction that the gospel can be preached as it was preached for centuries is based on some sort of commonplace belief. On the contrary, it would not work in (34.EN), where the prominent aspect is the truth-value assigned to the proposition and not the evidential information attached.

In (36.IT) the choice of *ipotizzare* does not seem to translate the meaning of *assumed* in (36.EN) as it brings about a sense of tentativeness that *assume* does not lexicalise.

(36.EN) It was <u>assumed</u> that the sampling procedure was purely random with respect to the personality variables under investigation

(36.IT) È stato <u>ipotizzato</u> che la procedura di campionamento fosse puramente casuale per quel che riguarda le variabili di personalità in analisi

The same can be said of the choice of translating *assume* in (37.EN) with the Italian *pensare*.

(37.EN) He had <u>assumed</u> that all these buildings had been divided into apartments, but this one, from a glance at the hall furnishings, was obviously still a functioning town house, and its owners were in residence; that made it doubtful as the hiding place of a man whose plans had to be made in advance.

(37.IT) Aveva <u>pensato</u> che tutti questi edifici fossero stati divisi in appartamenti, ma questo, dopo un'occhiata ai mobili dell'entrata, era ovviamente una casa a schiera abitata, ed i proprietari erano in casa; il che metteva in dubbio la possibilità di usarlo come nascondiglio per qualcuno i cui piani dovevano essere fatti in anticipo

Whereas *assume* in the English sentence can cause the reader to conclude that the subject had used the assumption as a basis to draw conclusions about the possibility that the houses could make good hiding-places – which would then justify further intervention on the part of the subject – the Italian *pensare* tells us only that the subject had considered it possible that somebody could use those houses to hide, but the premise is much weaker and it would probably not justify any consequent intervention.

To conclude this excursus on the proposed translations of *assume*, I would like to consider the translation of part of the passage (25) used above to illustrate the meaning of the verb:

(38)   La struttura delle ortografie ha ricevuto molta meno attenzione dai linguisti di quanto meriti il problema. C'è stata una tendenza da parte di molti linguisti americani a <u>presumere</u> che una trascrizione fonemica sarà automaticamente la migliore ortografia possibile e che l'unico vero problema sarà poi quello sociale di assicurarne l'accettazione.

Ciò pare ingenuo.

La maggior parte degli altri si sono accontentati di dare solo l'attenzione più generale alle caratteristiche più grandi e più ovvie della fonologia nel concepire le ortografie.

Apparentemente la sensazione è che qualsiasi cosa in più sarebbe un coinvolgimento nell'astrusità tecnica di possibile interesse pedantesco ma nessun significato visibile negli affari pratici.

Il risultato di questo atteggiamento è stata la dominazione di molte conferenze sull'ortografia da parte di considerazioni quali l'estetica tipografica, che solitamente risulta essere niente più di certi pregiudizi riportati dalle lingue europee.

Molti dei sistemi suggeriti sembrano avere solo la relazione più debole con le strutture linguistiche che pretendono di rappresentare.

I linguisti non sono sempre stati più illuminati della "gente pratica" e a volte hanno insistito su punti incredibilmente futili mentre trascuravano cose di importanza molto maggiore.

Di conseguenza, in molte persone si è rafforzata la convinzione che il modello di ortografia non è un'attività cui gli esperti non possono offrire che confusione.

If somebody *presumes* that something is the case, it does not imply any course of action, whereas, on the contrary, *assume* seems to imply that the evaluator bases his actions and/or choices on his assumptions. Essentially, it seems reasonable to conclude by saying that Italian does not have a verb which allows the effect of backgrounding of the premise in favour of what follows from it that English has in *assume*.

7. Concluding remarks on lexical complexity and translation

We have observed two types of difficulties that the translator can encounter when translating verbs of cognitive attitude: lack of pragmatic equivalence and lack of semantic equivalence. I believe that we can safely claim that the class of verbs of cognitive attitude opens a door onto a highly complex system, requiring much information in order to describe it. This system displays all the traits of complex systems: it is characterized by a remarkable nestedness among the various levels (we have counted up to four, but there may be more), by differences in the type of organisation observable at the different levels, by high adaptivity to external pressures, by non-linearity (i.e. cotextual and contextual effects, individual sensitivity, etc. can

produce large-scale alterations, such the reorganisation of the system with shifts in meaning and function and the creation of areas of semantic overlap).

Translating this system into Italian requires mapping it onto a system of equal complexity, but which could (and in some cases has) a completely different organisation and different ways of adapting to pressures, of displaying non-linearity, etc. Many difficulties derive, in my opinion, from differences in the organisation of the systems. Even when we have a (relative) semantic equivalence, sometimes the simple mapping fails to reproduce the original sense, as in the case of the politeness strategic uses of *I think*. In these cases, if we want to reproduce the original effect as closely as possible, we are forced to leave the original system and to project onto a different conceptual domain, often with poor results.

Identifying (at least) some of the organising principles, could help us understand better what forces certain meaning construals (i.e. what stabilizes the system at a certain time t_1) and to retrieve some regularities in the system. This could be very useful for translation, because it could help us render more faithfully the original conceptual and procedural information and preserve the pragmatic contribution to the text.

As the few examples of translation of English verbs of cognitive attitude in Italian demonstrate, these lexical items are quite close in meaning, collocational and syntactic patterns, and the distinctive features within the class often need to be searched for at the level of lexical pragmatics, in particular in the pragmatic effects they create and in the implicit meaning that they evoke. The translator is faced, therefore, with the difficult task not only of finding the best mapping in terms of the dimensions lexicalised, but also of trying as best he can to render *markers* (Nord 1997) or the *communicative clues*, that is "the properties that the communicator builds into his text and that will lead the audience to the intended interpretation" (Gutt 1991: 127). Verbs of cognitive attitude have a very important role as communicative clues, and the choice of one over the other, as well as the occurrence in particular contexts, are important clues that reveal the intentions of the communicator and that guide the intended interpretation. It is self-evident that in argumentative texts this is essential.

Investigating lexical complexity and the functioning of the system in search of patterns of regularity will hopefully help us identify textual properties functioning as communicative clues. We can then hope to map these properties of the system more precisely with similar properties of the target system, without increasing the target audience's processing effort (e.g. choosing unnatural expressions or structures of the target language), and with the hope of helping the target audience retrieve the originally intended meaning. This will require a good understanding of the way in which the systems function, of the audience's background knowledge and of the way in which this latter relates to the principles which organize the "form" of the system, such as schemata, frames, models, etc.

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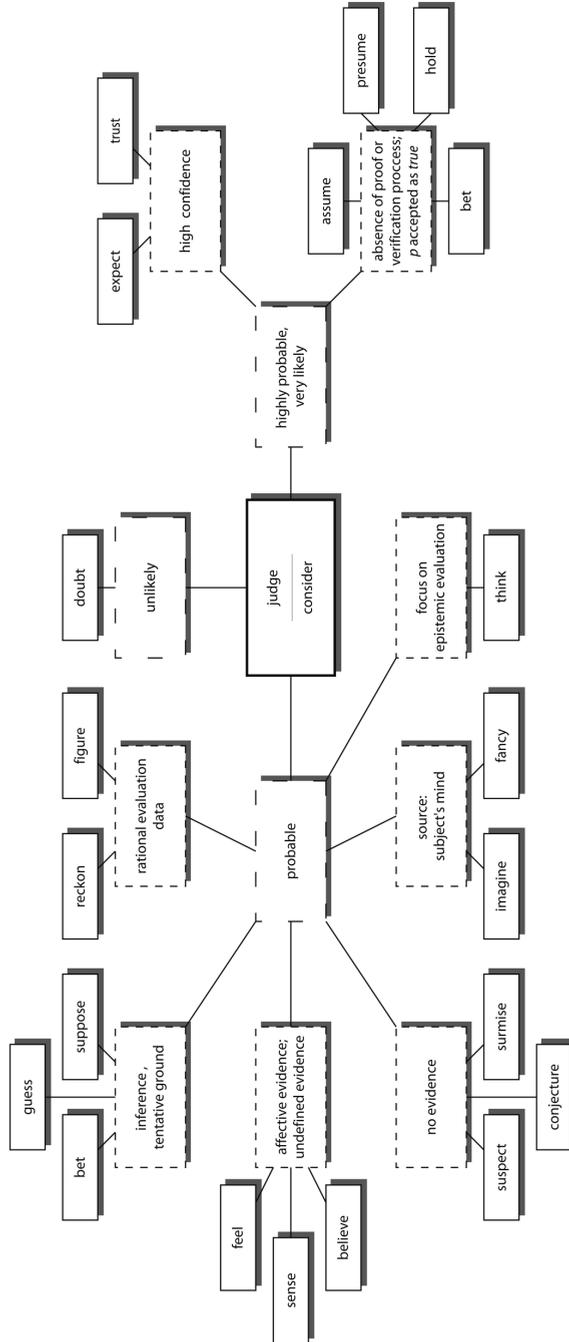
Appendix

Table 2

English	Italian
Assume	apprendere
Believe	arguire
Bet	aspettarsi
Conjecture	assumere
Consider	avere fede/fiducia in
Doubt	avere la sensazione
Expect	avere l'impressione
Fancy	avvertire
Feel	capire
Figure	cogliere
Gather	concludere
Guess	congetturare
Imagine	conoscere
Judge	considerare
Know	credere
Presume	dedurre
Reckon	desumere
I can't see	dubitare
Sense	essere al corrente
Suppose	essere convinto
Surmise	figurarsi
Suspect	fiutare
Think	giudicare
Trust	immaginare
I shouldn't wonder	intuire
	ipotizzare
	meravigliarsi
	mettere in dubbio
	pensare
	percepire
	presumere
	presupporre
	prevedere
	rendersi conto
	reputare
	ritenere
	scommettere
	sentire
	sorprendersi
	sospettare
	stupirsi
	subodorare
	supporre
	vedere
	venire a sapere