

Translation and Language Change: The Interplay of Diachronic and Synchronic Corpus-Based Studies

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Key Aspects

- Corpus-based methodology for the investigation of differences and similarities between translated, non-translated and source texts.
- Changes occurring through time: translation as a language contact phenomenon.
- Translation of popular science texts: a unidirectional process from English into less widely spoken languages.
- Changes in non-translated texts that might have been encouraged through translations from English.

The TROY Corpus

The **TROY Corpus** (TRAnslation Over the Years) is a corpus of non-translated and translated Greek popular science articles and their English source texts.

TROY Corpus	
Size	500,000 words
Temporality	1990-2010
Division	1. 1990-1991 2. 2003-2004 3. 2009-2010

Original Aspects of the TROY Corpus

- One of the first diachronic corpora in translation studies, first involving Greek data
- First attempt to combine all corpus-based methodologies:
 - Diachronic: same texts - different points in time
 - Synchronic: different texts – same point in time
 - Comparable: non-translated vs translated
 - Parallel: source texts vs target texts

Corpus Methodology

Language change
in Greek

The role of
translation

The role of
source texts

- Diachronic analysis of a monolingual corpus.
- Non-translated articles are compared at different points in time.
- Synchronic analysis of a comparable corpus.
- Translated articles are compared with non-translated ones.
- Synchronic analysis of a parallel corpus.
- Translated articles are compared with their source texts.

Applications

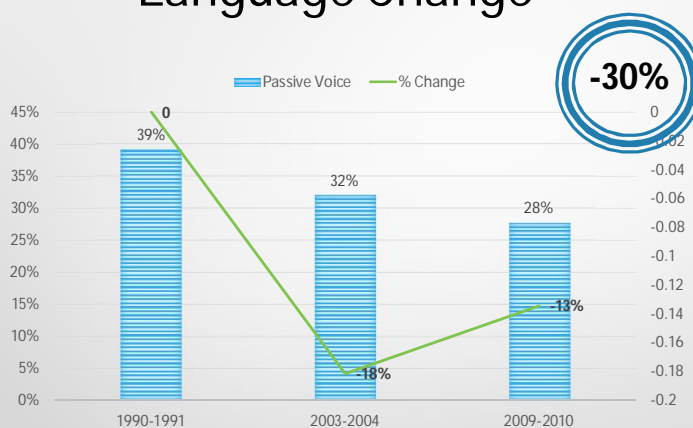
- Translation-specific features: Linguistic features that belong to the target language, but are under the obvious influence of the source language.
- Examine their dissemination in the target language.
- Understand translation as a language contact phenomenon that might encourage change.
- Understand how genres develop in the target culture.

Focus of Analysis

- **Passive voice:** plays a central role in the way in which information is constructed and presented in different languages.
- **Reporting verbs:** 10 most common reporting verbs in the Greek and English sub-corpora.

Greek	English
Λέω (say/tell)	Say
Θεωρώ (consider)	Know
Απαιτώ (demand)	Call
Υποστηρίζω (maintain)	Think
Γνωρίζω (know)	Suggest
Αναφέρω (report)	Tell
Εξηγώ (explain)	Mean
Διαπιστώνω (ascertain)	Ask
Δηλώνω (state)	Learn
Μαθαίνω (learn)	Explain

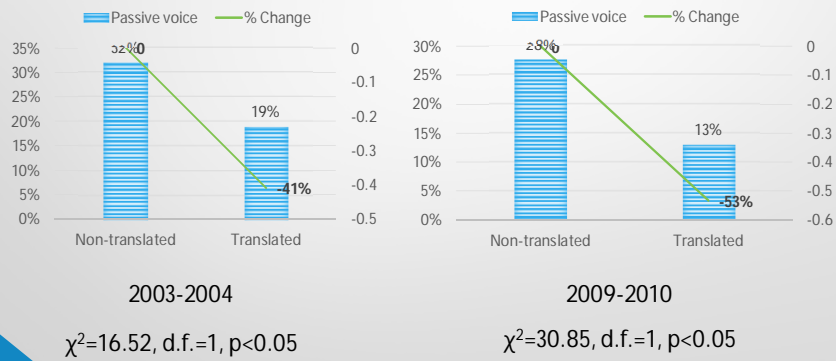
Language Change



$\chi^2=8.63$, d.f.=2, $p<0.05$

The Role of Translation

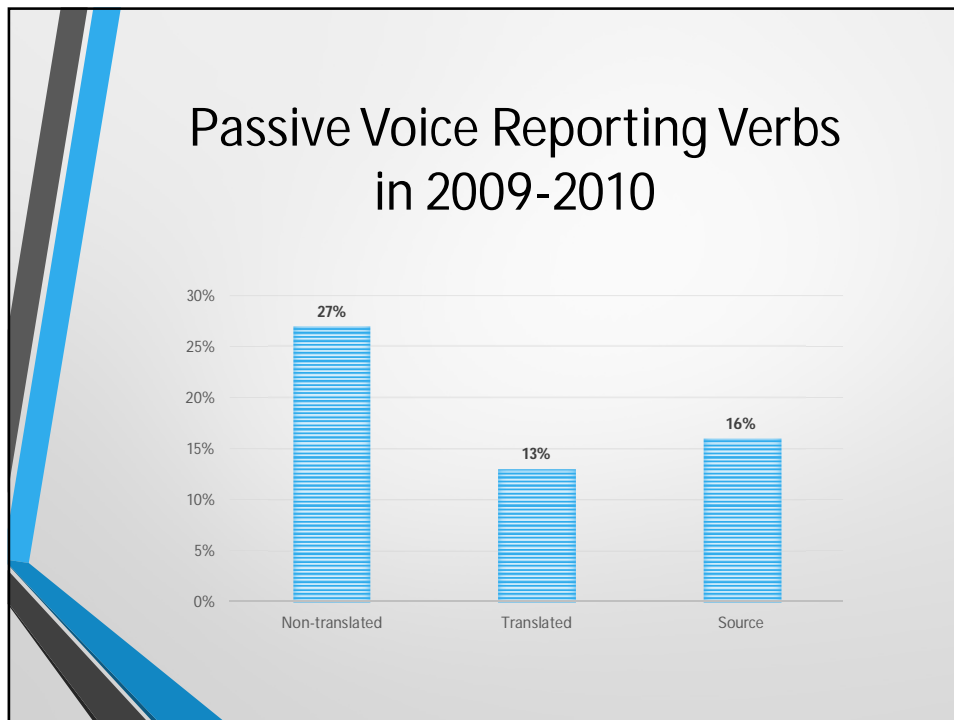
The frequency of the passive voice in Greek non-translated and translated popular science articles



The Role of the Source Texts

The frequency of the passive voice in Greek translated popular science articles and their English source texts





- ### Change in the Frequency of Passive Voice Reporting Verbs
- Language change in Greek
 - There is substantial change in the frequency of the passive voice reporting verbs in Greek.
 - The role of the translations
 - Translations seems to encourage this change.
 - The role of the source texts
 - Influence can be traced back to the English source texts.

So what?

- Translation as a linguistic and social activity, i.e. a social circumstance facilitating change.
- Combination of corpus-based methodologies can assist in understanding
 - the similarities and differences between translated, non-translated texts and originals
 - how certain genres have developed through time

Thank you!

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