THE SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH CULTURAL KEY WORD *RIGHT* AND ITS EQUIVALENTS IN ITALIAN

Natalija Moisejeva

Department of English Philology
Faculty of Philology
Vilnius University
Lithuania
natalja86@gmail.com

The present research paper aims at providing an insight into the nature of the English cultural key word *right* and its expression in Italian. The analysis carried out during the research is based on the theory of Cultural Key Words elaborated by Anna Wierzbicka and Cliff Goddard in the 1990s, who claimed that apart from common words which are clear to everyone, there exist certain culture-specific concepts which are fully understandable only to members of a specific culture. The main attention of this article, therefore, is focused on revealing the meaning groups of the concept *right* and their expression in Italian. The source of the data is the original version of George Orwell's *1984* and its Italian translation. Preliminary results show that the cultural concept *right* is manifold and mostly used to refer to instances from the meaning groups of precision, correctness and well-being. This analysis also suggests that the concept *right* is indeed specific to English culture since Italian culture employs different lexical means in order to convey the ideas underlying this concept.

1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of linguistic relativity postulated by Edward Sapir (1921) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) has been one of the dominant paradigms in linguistics for many years. Their main hypothesis concerns the possibility of a relationship between language, thought, and culture: culture may deeply influence our use of language, which, in turn, has an impact on our patterns of thought. In their pivotal work, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), for example, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson stress that our conceptual systems may vary not only from one human being to another but also among different cultures.

The approach has been of crucial importance for Cliff Goddard (1997; 2002; 2006; 2007) and Anna Wierzbicka (1997; 2001; 2006; 2008), whose extensive research into culture-specific concepts led to the emergence of several new notions concerning cross-cultural specificity of conceptualization, i.e. that of 'cultural key concepts', which are peculiar to a particular cultural space as well as the framework of 'cultural scripts' that represent a set of cultural assumptions and values.

However, despite the increase in research in the field of cultural key concepts, little is known about the cross-cultural translation of specific culture-laden words from one language to another. Although there have been attempts to establish parallels between particularly English concepts and their equivalents in other cultures, e.g. Russian or Polish (Wierzbicka 1997; 2001; 2002; Zalizniak 2006), little research has been carried out to provide a thorough insight into how certain English key words are expressed in another language on the basis of a specific text. The aim of the present article is to establish and analyze the links between the English cultural concept *right* and its equivalents in Italian. For this purpose a specific English text, namely George Orwell's *1984*, was chosen and compared with its Italian translation in order to find out to what extent the key word *right* is specific to English culture as well as to develop the system of classification for various meanings that this key word implies. The reason for choosing these two languages for cross-linguistic analysis was the assumption that English culture should possess a rather different hierarchy of values in comparison with Southern European Italian culture. Therefore, this article will not only contribute to the present knowledge of the subject but also provide certain conclusions on the cultural peculiarities of different nations and how these peculiarities are reflected in the language they use. The hypotheses of the present article are the following:

- It is assumed that the concept *right* encompasses a great variety of meanings apart from the most obvious ones;
- It is difficult or even impossible to find precise equivalents of this particularly English concept in Italian culture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The concept of cultural key words

The perspective of cultural specificity is elaborated in several of Wierzbicka's works (1997; 2001; 2006; 2008): she repeatedly touches upon the idea that so-called 'cultural key words' (Wierzbicka 2008, 15) exist in the mental lexicon of the speakers of any language. These words are exclusive to a particular culture and form the basis of speakers' integration into a certain cultural space. Furthermore, cultural key words also help to determine the relevant values and priorities of a specific culture, which would prevent representatives of other cultures from biased perceptions and interpretations. It is further stated that certain cultural concepts may often be grossly misinterpreted because of the absence of corresponding concepts in another culture, such as the Japanese *enryo* 'restraint' or Russian *istina* 'truth' (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997; Wierzbicka 2006).

Cultural key words are usually taken for granted by native speakers of a language since they presuppose the existence of equivalents of such words in other languages.

However, in this case significant 'mismatches in cultural assumptions' (Wierzbicka 2006, 13) may be overlooked, which could lead to considerable misunderstandings and distortion of meaning. For instance, Wierzbicka (2001; 2002) and Zalizniak (2006) concentrated on the analysis of some particularly Russian cultural key concepts, such as *poshlost'* (proposed translations into English are 'pettiness' or 'dreary pretence') or *iskrennost'* ('sincerity', 'kindness', 'innocence'), etc. and found out that these words do not have precise equivalents in English since they represent a part of another hierarchy of cultural values.

In most cases several translations of one and the same cultural key word are possible, even though neither of them can convey the exact meaning implied in the word under investigation. However, the absence of the word does not mean the absence of the concept since such nuances as the difference between *grust'* and *pechal'* can be captured only by representatives of the Russian culture or bilingual witnesses while members of other cultures may notice some other distinctions. As Sapir (1921, 26) states, 'distinctions which seem inevitable to us may be utterly ignored in languages which reflect an entirely different type of culture, while these in turn insist on distinctions which are all but unintelligible to us'.

All in all, it is of crucial importance to be able to grasp the key concepts of one's own culture, which are usually represented by abstract rather than common words, in order not to fall into the trap of taking them for universal concepts. Besides, key cultural concepts may help to facilitate integration into another culture as well as lead to a more fluid interpersonal communication that takes into account shared social attitudes and realities based on past experience, peculiarities of the 'national character' (Wierzbicka 2002, 1) and the ways of living and thinking that are characteristic of a given society.

2.2. English cultural key words

Specific English cultural key concepts, or the 'habits of mind' (Malouf quoted in Wierzbicka 2006, 300) shared by different varieties of English (the 'shared language' as Malouf calls it, or, in Wierzbicka's terms, 'Anglo cultural dictionary') are exemplified by everyday characteristically English words like *right* and *wrong*, *facts*, *evidence*, *reasonable*, *fair*, *exactly*, *precisely*, *really*, *impartial*, *bias*, *commitment*, *compromise*, *opportunity*, *efficiency*, *presumably*, *alleged*, *negotiations*, *deal*, *agreement*, *deadline*, *feasible*, *probability*, *performance*, *okay*, *resources*, etc. as well as some epistemic phrases such as *I think*, *I believe*, *was perceived to be*, *in the eyes of* to mention just a few. These are important instances of words which establish specifically Anglophone values across other cultures worldwide and are 'used automatically and yet contain a wealth of history and pass on a great deal of cultural heritage' (Wierzbicka 2006, 10). Broadly speaking, anglo values are most visible in the documental language of international diplomacy, business, finance, science, economics, geopolitics, etc.

These particular words attained the status of Anglo key cultural concepts due to several reasons. First, it is claimed that English society has always valued accuracy, level-headedness and rationality, which is available to everyone. Second, the acknowledgment of science as an ultimate authority leads to the perception of the limitations of one's knowledge (hence phrases such as *to the best of my knowledge*) and the need for producing careful and accurate statements. Moreover, scientific authority also gives rise to the following distinction: facts, as representations of general knowledge, based on experience and observation and verified empirically (e.g. hence such phrases as *in fact*, *as a matter of fact*, *in actual fact*, etc.) are distinguished from personal knowledge and even truth. The reason to be aware of such tendencies and phrases is based on the widespread mistaken assumption that the English language can be used as a neutral way of communicating one's ideas cross-culturally and that no prior cultural requirements are needed to start learning it (Wierzbicka 2006).

3. DATA AND METHODS

The present investigation into the peculiarities of expression of the English cultural concept *right* in Italian is based on a two-fold examination. Firstly, qualitative and quantitative analysis of instances containing the cultural key word *right* is carried out in order to construct the framework of various meanings conveyed by the English culturally specific concept and its Italian equivalent. Then, on the basis of this analysis, judgments are made about the presupposed impossibility of finding precise correspondences between the concepts in two cultures.

As instruments for gathering the data for the current investigation, two electronic versions of George Orwell's *1984*, the original and its Italian translations, were analyzed on the basis of the chosen key word. Although translation is not a very reliable source, owing to inevitable inaccuracies, it was still of great importance for this research since it provided valuable insights into how different languages convey the same idea. Furthermore, the reason to choose the key word *right* was its presumed high frequency, while the reason for comparing English cultural concepts with their Italian equivalents was due to the assumption that these two cultures are rather different in terms of their respective cultural values.

The data analysis underwent the following stages: first of all, all instances of the cultural key word *right* were collected from the English and Italian text using the search function of Adobe Reader programme. Secondly, various meanings conveyed by the key word were grouped into certain semantic domains and the links were established between the two cultures based on specific examples from the texts. In the present analysis, English examples are numbered and followed by Italian examples (using a smaller font for easier distinction) and the key concept under investigation is put in bold in all examples. Finally, based on the results of the analysis, conclusions were made.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present cross-cultural analysis of various instances of this anglo key concept and its expression in Italian was of particular interest, especially considering the claim by Wierzbicka (2006) that the concept *right* does not have precise equivalents in other languages. Forty nine instances and their translations (i.e. 98 instances in all) were investigated and grouped into seven semantic fields according to the closely associated meanings which they convey in English.

It is also important to mention that the concept *right* was not only discussed in the form of an individual word, e.g. as an adverb, adjective or noun, but also together with other lexical expressions, e.g. various verbs and prepositions such as *in the right*, *right into/out/over/down/through/on*, *all right*, *put/set right*, *right enough*, etc.

4.1. Morality

Six instances of the key word *right* in the English version of the text are concerned with morality, with something that is appropriate according to the norms of society as is visible from the following instances:

> **(1)** *there was a lot of applause from the party seats but a woman down in the prole part of the house suddenly started kicking up a fuss and shouting they didnt oughter of showed it not in front of kids they didnt it aint **right** not in front of kids* (5).

> [It] *e si sentirono un sacco di battimani dalle file del partito ma una donna prolet cominciò a fare una scenata che no che non dovevano che non si poteva farlo vedere ai bambini che **non avevano diritto di farlo** vedere ai bambini* (6).

In example (1), the situation in which the word *right* (more precisely 'ain't right') is used concerns the showing of a particularly violent war film in front of the children. Indeed, this is not *right* because, on the basis of general knowledge, films of this type may not be good for the children's psyche. Therefore, the meaning of the expression *ain't right* in this case is something that runs contrary to the general rules of upbringing, something immoral. In the Italian version of the text, the expression 'it ain't right' is conveyed as '*non avevano **diritto** di farlo*' ('they did not have the **right** to do it') which partially alters the intended meaning from that of 'immoral' to something that is undue to a person by law.

Examples (2), (3), (4) and (5) represent the ambiguous cases of the use of the concept *right* since some doubts arise as to what the concept *right* implies in the 'right spirit', the 'right conduct', the 'right opinions', the 'right instincts', etc.

> **(2)** *Pretty smart for a nipper of seven, eh? I don't bear her any grudge for it. In fact I'm proud of her. It shows I brought her up in the **right** spirit, anyway* (135).

> [It] *Davvero in gamba, per una frugolina di sette anni, eh? Ah, non le porto mica nessun rancore, per tutto questo. A essere sinceri sono fiero di lei. Dimostra che l'ho allevata secondo **le giuste direttive spirituali del Partito**, a ogni modo* (175).

Bringing-up in the *right spirit* could either presuppose raising a child according to the moral norms of community or in an atmosphere which is beneficial to the child's well-being. The Italian translation gives a valuable clue as to what the 'right spirit' is supposed to mean, i.e. '*le giuste direttive spirituali del Partito*' or 'the right spiritual directives of the Party', which is closely connected with the issue of morality.

'The right conduct' in example (3), in turn, could either mean the right behaviour according to the moral principles of society or simply appropriate comportment in this specific situation. However, in this case the Italian variant does not provide a solution to this ambiguity since 'the right conduct' is translated word by word as '*la condotta giusta*':

> **(3)** *In somewhat the same way, the party member knew what constituted **right** conduct, and in exceedingly vague, generalized terms he knew what kinds of departure from it were possible* (177).

> [It] *In modo pressoché analogo, un membro del Partito sapeva quel che costituiva la condotta **giusta**, e in certi termini estremamente vaghi e generali egli sapeva quali generi di traviamenti erano possibili da essa* (229).

Example (4), on the other hand, although seemingly ambiguous as well, is explained by the Italian translation: the concept *right* in the phrases 'think right', 'feel right' and 'dream right' is expressed by *bene* which means 'well':

> **(4)** *From now onwards he must not only think **right**; he must feel **right**, dream **right*** (162).

> [It] *Non solo doveva pensare **bene**; ma doveva sentire **bene**, sognare **bene*** (210).

Therefore, only on the basis of its Italian translation is it possible to assign examples (2) and (4) to the group of 'morality'.

It has been claimed that many languages do not have exact equivalents for *right* and *wrong* (Wierzbicka 2006, 63): as can be seen from the examples quoted above, the word *right* in Italian is indeed translated by various means, such as *giusto*, *consentito*, and *bene*, with only the latter clearly linked to 'goodness'.

4.2. Intellectual judgment

This group of meanings deals with the use of the word *right* to denote intellectual judgment based on rational thinking, interpersonal knowledge, and the evaluation of evidence. In the English version, eight instances were found conveying this meaning, some of which can be seen in the following:

(5) *I think you're so **right**, I do so agree with you* (30).

[It] *Mi sembra che **abbiate** "proprio" **ragione,** sono "proprio" dello stesso parere anch'io.*

(6) *And yet he was in the **right**! They were wrong and he was **right*** (46).

[It] *Loro avevano torto e lui **aveva ragione.***

Both of the examples include the word *right* to denote something that is the result of logical deductions: in the Italian version, both the phrases 'to be right' and 'to be in the right' are expressed by the phrase '*avere ragione*' ('to have reason' or 'to be reasonable'), which is identical in meaning with the English concept in its emphasis on a rational conclusion, or, as Wierzbicka (2006, 10) claims, 'approval of another person's thinking with reference to some potential interpersonal knowledge'. It is only in example (7) that 'to be right' is translated as '*essere nel vero*' ('to be in the right'), accentuating the veracity of one's judgments and thus equating the English expressions 'to be right'/'to be in the right' with the Italian '*avere ragione*'/'*essere nel vero*':

(7) *And what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be **right*** (46).

[It] *E la cosa più spaventosa era che essi avrebbero ucciso non perché si pensava altrimenti da loro, ma perché avrebbero anche potuto esser **nel vero*** (58).

4.3. Correctness/exactness/appropriateness

The present group can be said to complement the previous one as it also reflects conclusions based on intellectual judgment, in particular the correctness of one or another notion or situation. All in all, nine instances of the concept *right* were obtained from the English version of the text: as can be seen, the word *right* serves as a modifier which adds to the overall exactness and appropriateness of an expression according to its circumstantial and conditional use:

(8) *Perhaps 'friend' was not exactly the **right** word* (27).

[It] *Forse "amico" non era la parola **esatta*** (38).

(9) *It is not merely that speeches, statistics, and records of every kind must be constantly brought up to date in order to show that the predictions of the Party were in all cases **right*** (124).

[It] *Non si tratta solo di aggiornare discorsi, statistiche e documenti d'ogni genere con diligente costanza, in modo da poter dimostrare, ad ogni momento, che le previsioni e le predicazioni del Partito erano **esatte e illuminate*** (160).

The Italian translation of examples (8) and (9), for instance, prove this hypothesis since in both translations the concept *right* is expressed by the word *esatto* ('exact') while example (9) also makes use of another modifier, *illuminate* ('illuminating'), thus

adding to the specificity of the expression: the predictions of the Party are supposed to be not only precise but also informative.

There are other ways of expressing the anglo concept 'right' in Italian as evidenced by the following examples:

> **(10)** *Winston was gelatinous with fatigue. Gelatinous was the* **right** *word. It had come into his head spontaneously* (106).
>
> [It] *Winston era diventato come gelatinoso per il lavoro massacrante. Sì, gelatinoso era* **proprio la parola giusta***. Gli era venuta in mente in modo affatto spontaneo* (134).
>
> **(11)** *One day—but 'one day' was not the* **right** *expression; just as probably it was in the middle of the night: once—he fell into a strange, blissful reverie* (161).
>
> [It] *Un giorno – ma "un giorno" non era l'espressione* **appropriata***, avrebbe potuto benissimo essere nel cuore della notte: sarebbe meglio dire "una volta" – egli s'abbandonò a un sogno tanto bizzarro quanto felice* (209).
>
> **(12)** *But it was evidently not the* **right** *move, because…* (171).
>
> [It] *Ma non era certamente la mossa* **giusta***, perché...* (221).

As with the previously discussed example (10), sentences (11) and (12) are concerned with modifying the word *word* or *expression* in order to emphasize that the word which is being used by the speaker corresponds to his/her intentions, as well as the present situation. It is therefore reasonable to claim that *giusto* ('correct'), *esatto* ('exact') and *appropriato* ('appropriate') are synonyms. On the other hand, if instance (12) is taken into account, the Italian concept *giusto* does not properly express the exactness of the movement but rather its appropriateness to the current situation. This meaning is also reflected in the Italian translation of the concept *right* in instances (13) and (14):

> **(13)** *With just a few dabs of colour in the* **right** *places she had become not only very much prettier, but, above all, far more feminine* (82).
>
> [It] *Con due o tre segni di colore* **dove ci voleva***, era diventata non solo molto più carina, ma soprattutto molto più donna* (106).
>
> **(14)** *She might, thought Winston, be his mother. She was about the* **right** *age and physique…* (132).
>
> [It] *Sì, avrebbe potuto essere proprio sua madre, pensò Winston. L'età e il fisico* **potevano***, a un dipresso,* **combaciare** (171).

The concept *right* in example (13) is expressed in Italian by the phrase '*dove ci voleva*' ('where it was supposed to be') in relation to the colours, which, if put in the correct place, made the heroine look more beautiful. The sense of 'appropriateness' is visible in instance (14) where the word *right* is used to correlate the age and physical characteristics of a woman with the stereotypical image of a mother. *Right* in this case thus means matching some established pattern or criteria: the Italian translation includes the word *combaciare* ('matching') in support of this hypothesis.

4.4. Spatial orientation

Another group of meanings which the key word *right* conveys was not discussed by Wierzbicka, but should nevertheless be established, taking into account the rather high frequency (i.e. 9 instances) of this meaning in the text under investigation. This group encompasses nine instances where the word *right* is combined with a verb and is used for accuracy of expression, especially concerning spatial orientation. The meaning of the word *right* in these cases is not concerned with either morality, or any intellectual judgment or conversational routine, but rather with the accuracy of explanation in order to be as reliable as possible, as well as to intensify the description given. Indeed, the expressions would not be so convincing if the word *right* was omitted. As for the Italian translation, it varies from one case to another: it is important to mention, however, that in almost all cases the concept *right* is omitted since the verb itself carries sufficient meaning. The word *right* is not mentioned at all in example (15):

> **(15)** *little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow* **right** *into her* (5).
>
> [It] *bambino strillava impaurito e nascondeva la testa tra i seni di lei proprio come se volesse scavarsi* **un rifugio dentro il suo corpo** (12).

The effect that is produced by the original sentence in contrast with its translation is different: due to employing the word *right*, the English sentence seems more detailed and, therefore, more precise and convincing. Thus, the word *right* serves as an intensifier in order to produce a more vivid image which is true-to-life. The concept *right* is also omitted in the Italian version of the following examples:

> **(16)** **Right** *over from the hips, please, comrades* (19).
>
> [It] **Giù dai** *fianchi, prego, camerati* (26).
>
> **(17)** … *then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up* **right** *up into the air* (5).
>
> [It] … *poi una bellissima ripresa del braccio d'un bambino che se ne volava su su su* **sempre più** *su* (12).

Instance (16) is concerned with expressing the direction of a movement: in the English example *right* adds to the immediacy of the action as well as emphasizing the specific point at which the movement starts or ends. The expression 'up up right' in example (17) is expressed in Italian by the phrase, '*su su sempre più su*' ('up up always more up'), which conveys the meaning of continuation rather than precision.

In example (18), the concept *right* is used to express a sort of movement which needs to overcome some barriers. In the following example, the barrier is represented by the human body:

(18) *Once when they passed in the corridor she gave him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce **right** into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror* (5).

[It] *Una volta, che s'erano incontrati, appunto, nel corridoio, lei gli aveva dato un'occhiata di straforo che gli pareva l'avesse passato **da parte a parte**, e che per un momento l'aveva riempito d'un sacro terrore* (7).

The concept *right* in this case is expressed in Italian by the phrase '*da parte a parte*', which also puts emphasis on overcoming some difficulties on the way.

Finally, instance (19) is the closest to the sense of precision in its purest form, expressed in Italian by the word *proprio*, which in this case means 'exactly':

(19) *She must have fallen **right** on the injured arm* (60).

[It] *Doveva essere caduta **proprio** sul braccio offeso* (78).

4.5 Conversational response

This is the last sub-group closely connected to the expressions relating to intellectual judgment. Three instances were detected in the original version of the text, all of which were translated into Italian through a diversity of lexical means. Two instances, namely (20) and (21), include the expression *that's right*, which presupposes comprehension, as well as affirmation of another person's suggestions, suppositions or beliefs:

(20) '*I know that building,' said Winston finally. 'It's a ruin now. It's in the middle of the street outside the Palace of Justice.'*
*That's **right**. Outside the Law Courts* (56).

[It] "*Conosco questo edificio,*" *disse Winston infine.* "*Adesso è una rovina. Sta in mezzo alla strada davanti al Palazzo di Giustizia.*"
***Proprio così**. Davanti all'ingresso delle Corti d'Assise* (73).

(21) '*Isn't there a stream somewhere near here?' he whispered.*
'*That's **right**, there is a stream'* (70).

[It] "*C'è un ruscello, qua vicino, da qualche parte?*" *disse con un sottilissimo bisbiglio.* "***Certo**. C'è un ruscello*" (91).

The sense of supporting another person's statements is similarly realized in the Italian variants: '*proprio così*' in relation to the speaker's guess can be translated back to English as 'exactly the way you are saying it', while *certo* in example (21) means 'certainly', which eliminates any possible doubts about the validity of the interlocutor's assertion.

Comprehending one's interlocutor, however, does not necessarily entail approval of their thinking but, rather, plain understanding of his/her line of thought. This is particularly visible in the following example, where the phrase 'all right' merely states that the interlocutor understands another person rather than endorsing a particular point of view:

(22) *'What time?'*
'Nineteen hours.'
*'All **right**'* (64).

[It] *"Che ora?"*
"Diciannove."
*"**Bene**"* (84).

The phrase *all right*, however, does not exclude some shade of satisfaction about what the listener has just heard, as is evidenced by the Italian translation *bene* ('well'), which bears a positive rather than neutral meaning.

4.6 Improvement

This group is concerned with the meaning of *right* as something 'corrected', 'improved', 'repaired' or 'made better', as in the following three examples:

(23) *Of course if Tom was home he'd put it **right** in a moment* (12).

[It] *Naturalmente, se Tom fosse stato a casa l'avrebbe **aggiustato** in un momento* (18).

(24) *As for the third message, it referred to a very simple error which could be set **right** in a couple of minutes* (22).

[It] *Quanto alla terza comunicazione, si trattava d'un semplicissimo errore che avrebbe potuto essere **rettificato** in due minuti* (32).

(25) *… which it was necessary to put **right** in the interests of accuracy* (23).

[It] *... che era necessario **correggere** nell'interesse della precisione* (33).

The Italian translation of these instances of the word *right* does not deviate from the originally intended meaning: 'put it right' in example (23) is translated as *aggiustato*, the phrase 'set right' in example (24) is conveyed by *rettificato*, while 'to put right' in instance (25) is expressed by *correggere*, all of which can be translated back to English as 'to put in order'. Therefore, the concept *right* in these cases means the ideal condition or state of affairs that should be striven for in order to achieve satisfactory results.

4.7 Well-being

This group of senses is connected with the physical and/or mental condition of a person rather than a moral or intellectual judgment, and the expression which is encountered in this group is *all right* rather than simply *right*. All in all, nine examples were found in the text and instances (26), (27), (28) are especially illustrative:

(26) *'You're hurt?' he said.*
*'It's nothing. My arm. It'll be all **right** in a second'* (60).

[It] *"Vi siete fatta male?" chiese.*
*"Non è niente. Il braccio. **Sarà passato** in un secondo"* (78).

(27) *'You haven't broken anything?'*
*'No, I'm all **right**. It hurt for a moment, that's all'* (60).

[It] *"Non vi siete ferita?"*
*"No, **sto benissimo**. Ha fatto male per un minuto. Adesso è finito"* (78).

(28) *'Don't go out into the open. There might be someone watching. We're all **right** if we keep behind the boughs'* (70).

[It] *Non andare fuori, all'aperto. Ci può essere qualcuno di guardia. **Siamo al sicuro**, se stiamo al di qua dei rami* (91).

The phrase *all right* in these cases takes into account a hypothetically ideal situation in which a person feels at his/her best and can function optimally in all senses and realize his/her needs: in example (26) 'all right' means that the pain will pass (*sara passato*) and the person will feel better. The sense of physical and mental well-being is also present in other instances and realized in Italian by diverse phrases, such as *benissimo* ('very well'), *meglio* ('better'), *bene* ('good'/'well'), as well as *sicuro* ('safe'), all of which are instances of more or less positive terms.

Sentences (29) and (30) are slightly different, as evidenced by the Italian translation involving the words *nulla* and *niente*, both of which mean 'nothing'. This suggests that well-being in these particular situations presupposes the absence of any negative factors which might disturb a person's equanimity:

(29) *He started to his feet with a malignant glance at Winston, whom he evidently suspected of having tripped him up. But it was all **right*** (64).

[It] *In un attimo, l'omiciattolo era di nuovo in piedi, con un sorrisetto maligno diretto a Winston, che evidentemente fu sospettato d'averlo fatto inciampare. **Ma non successe nulla*** (83).

(30) *There's always the chance of one of those swine recognizing your voice. We're all **right** here* (68).

[It] *C'è sempre pericolo che uno di quei porci fottuti riconosca la voce. Qui **non c'è da aver paura di niente,** invece* (88).

Finally, 'all right' in instances (31) and (32) is translated into Italian by the expression *a posto*, meaning 'in order', and also contributes to the overall well-being of a particular person. This meaning could, at first glance, be included among the previous group of 'improvement', but was left in this group as it is closely connected with the human being rather than object:

(31) *Everything was all **right**, there was no more pain, the last detail of his life was laid bare, understood, forgiven* (141).

[It] *Tutto era **a posto**, non c'era più sofferenza: gli ultimi particolari della sua vita erano scoperti, compresi, perdonati* (131).

**(32)** *But it was all **right**, everything was all right, the struggle was finished* (172).

[It] *Ma ogni cosa era **a posto**, ora, tutto era definitivamente sistemato, la lotta era finita* (223).

To summarize, in the course of the present investigation into the nature of the English concept *right*, it was found that there are numerous ways to express one and the same concept in different cultures. It is also reasonable to claim that Italian expressions are not always identical in meaning with their English counterparts. However, it can be argued that the majority of instances analyzed in the present research paper can still be considered to be quite close equivalents. This tendency can be explained by presupposing that such equivalents are debatable since, in the Italian variant of the text, the most obvious translations of the word *right* were chosen depending on the context, e.g. '*la parola giusta*' for 'the right word' in example (10).

Furthermore, in several cases it was problematic to find equivalents of the expression *right* in Italian, as evidenced by the results from the semantic field of 'precision'. Indeed, this meaning group encompasses specifically English spatial expressions, usually in the form of phrasal verbs, which are hardly literally translatable into Italian.

Finally, it was mentioned before that the Italian version of Orwell's text includes numerous variants of expressing the English concept *right*: these differ from one case to another and it is rather difficult to establish a pattern of regularity of a certain translation. *Figure 1* is an attempt to illustrate more frequent translations of the concept *right* in Italian, keeping in mind that this should not be taken as a generalization but is specific to the text under investigation:

Figure 1. Most Frequent Italian Translations
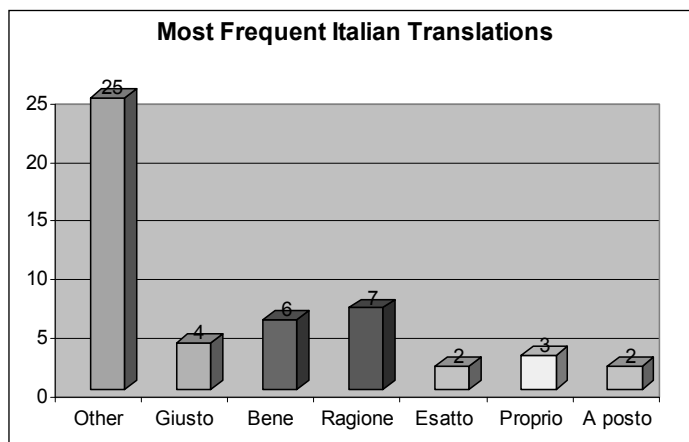
As can be seen from *Figure 1*, apart from the obviously prominent column of 'Other', which encompasses a diverse array of expressions, some of which are close synonyms, while others are not connected to any extent, one of the most frequent translations of the concept *right* in Italian is *ragione* ('reason') and the phrases that go together with it, such as '*avere ragione*'. Such a high percentage is due to numerous instances in the semantic field of 'intellectual judgment', almost all of which were translated using this

phrase. Consequently, the concept *right* tends to be linked to another English key word *reasonable* when translated into Italian. Another recurrent variant is the word *bene* ('good/well') and its derivatives *meglio* ('better'), *benissimo* ('very good/well'), *troppo bene* ('too well'), etc. as well as the word *giusto* ('right/correct').

5. CONCLUSIONS

Having carried out the semantic analysis of the English cultural key word *right* and its equivalents in Italian, several important conclusions should be drawn on the basis of the hypotheses presented at the beginning of the paper. The first hypothesis regarding the polysemantic nature of the concept *right* has been fully proved: indeed, in the course of investigation, eight semantic fields were established encompassing different meanings of the same concept. It should be stated, however, that translations into Italian tended to be ascribed to one or another semantic group in agreement with the meaning conveyed by the original text. Vice versa, in several cases, only on the basis of the translation was it possible to include the original phrase into a specific meaning group. On the contrary, a few instances of the original text became more confusing once one or another translation was considered.

The second question of the present research paper was concerned with finding out whether it is problematic to establish fully corresponding expressions for the concept *right* in Italian culture. It can be claimed that this hypothesis has also been verified since, as can be seen from the results of the analysis, a large number of different translations were used to convey the meaning intended by the word *right* and none of them can be unequivocally defined as an equivalent for this concept. However, it is reasonable to mention that, in most cases, the meaning conveyed by the Italian version of the English phrase containing the word *right* was close enough to the one intended in the original text. However, in several cases, especially concerning English phrasal verbs with the word *right*, it was impossible to translate them due to the absence of such a phenomenon in Italian.

To sum up, it should be stated that despite the limitations of the present research, such as the need to choose this particular translation of the text rather than another, this article could be a contribution to the ongoing research in the field of cultural concepts. A suggestion for further research would be to carry out a similar investigation into Italian cultural concepts and their translations into other languages.

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KERTINIO ANGLAKALBĖS KULTŪROS ŽODŽIO *RIGHT* IR JO ATITIKMENŲ ITALŲ KALBA SEMANTINĖ ANALIZĖ

Natalija Moisejeva

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikiama kertinio anglakalbės kultūros žodžio *right* samprata, kuri išryškėja palyginus anglų kalbos žodį *right* su itališkais šio žodžio atitikmenimis. Analizė atliekama remiantis „kertinių kultūros žodžių" (angl. *cultural key word*) teorija, kurios atstovai Anna Wierzbicka ir Cliffas Goddard'as teigė, kad, be pagrindinių žodžių, kurie yra aiškūs kiekvienam, egzistuoja vadinamosios kertinės kultūros sąvokos, visiškai suprantamos tik tam tikros kultūros atstovams. Straipsnyje aptariamas sąvokos *right* reikšmių grupių nustatymas ir klasifikavimas anglų kalba, taip pat šių reikšmių perteikimo italų kalba būdai. Analizė daroma remiantis George'o Orwello kūrinio *1984* tekstu originalo kalba ir jo vertimu į italų kalbą. Preliminarūs rezultatai rodo, kad sąvoka *right* yra įvairialypė ir jos raiškos būdai skiriasi. Rezultatai taip pat rodo, kad labiausiai išreikštos yra tikslumo, taisyklingumo ir gerovės semantinės sritys. Remiantis šia analize, galima teigti, kad žodis *right* yra dažniau vartojamas anglų kultūroje, o italų kultūra turi kitokių leksinių priemonių idėjoms, kurias perteikia ši sąvoka, reikšti.