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# “All’s Well That *Starts* Well”: An Intralinguistic and Interlinguistic Perspective on the Use and Translation of *Well*

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## Abstract

*Well* is one of the most widely used, versatile pragmatic markers. Given its multiple functions, it may pose translation challenges, especially in hybrid oral texts translated to be read rather than heard. This paper investigates the presence and function of the pragmatic marker *well* in a parallel, aligned corpus of English *TED Talk* transcripts and their Italian translations. All occurrences of *well* in the English subcorpus were identified and classified to observe whether and how this marker was translated in the Italian transcripts. In the English subcorpus, *well* is found in sentence-/clause-initial position to introduce (a) rhetorical questions, (b) fictitious turn-takings between the speaker and other fictitious addressees, and (c) quotations. It was generally translated through a limited set of equivalents, which testifies to the standard approach used to transfer the pragmatic meaning of *well* into Italian, mostly relying on dictionary-based direct equivalents, e.g. *beh* and its orthographical variants.

## Keywords

well – oral and written discourse – English/Italian – translation – corpus analysis

## 1 Introduction

Pragmatic markers are linguistic items we use “out of consideration for our readers or hearers” to “help them process and comprehend what we are saying” (Hyland, 2017: 17).<sup>1</sup> Though variously referred to as (meta)discourse markers/particles, modal particles, punctors, connectives, pragmatic particles/expressions, hedges, boosters, fumbles, conversational greasers, illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), pragmatic force modifiers (PFMs), to highlight the linguistic categories they belong to and/or the function(s) researchers focus on from time to time, they are generally regarded as words or phrases that preserve the common core meaning of, but do not add propositional meaning to, an utterance (Fischer, 2006). They are particularly frequent in oral discourse to catch the audience’s attention and get them involved, to make the argumentation clearer, and as discourse fillers. In a narrower sense, they convey a speaker/writer’s comment on the propositional content of a sentence without affecting the truth condition(s) of the sentence itself (Bazzanella, 2001b; Bazzanella, 2006: 449; Huang, 2012: 235–36).

Choosing the term ‘pragmatic markers’ over the others in this context is meant to stress the perspective from which we investigate phenomena in discourse. Specifically, translation is an area where it is not only necessary to analyse the co-text and cohesive aspects of utterances, but also take account of the relevant contextual features in the interaction (Bazzanella, 2001b). In line with Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003), Johansson (2006) and Cuenca (2008), our working hypothesis is that analysing texts and their translations can contribute to throwing light on the functions of pragmatic markers. Being typical of oral rather than written discourse – also in the domain under investigation here, i.e. astronomy<sup>2</sup> – the main focus of this paper is on *well* and the strategies used to translate it as observed in a corpus of hybrid oral texts translated to be read rather than heard, i.e. English *TED Talk* transcripts and their Italian translations.

1 Carla Quinci wrote paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 6.1, 6.2, and 7; Maria Teresa Musacchio wrote paragraphs 1, 2, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.

2 This is confirmed, for instance, by the analysis of a corpus (768,010 tokens and 583,631 types) of English popular science articles on astronomy appeared on British and American newspapers (i.e. *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The New York Times*, *The Times*, *The Washington Post*) collected by translation students at the University of Padua, where *well* as a pragmatic marker has very few occurrences (3 hits), all of which in direct speech utterances.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 *Previous Work on the Pragmatic Marker Well*

Among English pragmatic markers, *well* is one of the most widely used (Zarei, 2012; Beeching, 2016) and versatile (Aijmer, 2011). Its pragmatic functions originated from propositional uses of the adverb, with early examples dating back to Old English (Jucker, 2017). Though widely researched (Schiffrin, 1987; Bolinger, 1989; Jucker, 1993; Schourup, 2001; Blakemore, 2002; Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2003; Johansson, 2006; Cuenca, 2008; Kirk, 2018, to name but a few of the contributions that are more relevant in our case), *well* is a source of disagreement when it comes to its pragmatic aspects. In early studies of *well*, a basic distinction can be drawn between research based on the notion that *well* carries unified meaning (Carlson, 1984; Bolinger, 1989) and investigations relying on pragmatic/interactional functions of *well* (Schiffrin, 1987; Jucker, 1993; Smith and Jucker, 2000; 2002). Schiffrin (1987) sees *well* as a device to create coherence, while Jucker (1993: 438, 450) suggests that the background of *well* has to be reconstructed in order to decide what is its most relevant context. Bolinger (1989: 332) transfers the locutionary meaning of *well* as "relatively good" to the illocutionary level describing it as a gestural interjection which implies conformity to a norm. Jucker (1993) and Smith and Jucker (2000; 2002) present *well* as a facilitator that necessitates renegotiation of common ground in the propositional attitudes of participants in the conversation. Schourup (2001) is a case apart since he deals with *well* as an interjection.

In different ways, all these approaches establish a relationship with the meaning of *well* as an adverb. This is useful to make comparisons with similar devices in other languages for the purposes of translation, but partly overlooks the fact that – as Schourup (2001: 1038) suggests – these lexical ties of *well* as a pragmatic marker have faded over time. Schourup, however, recognises the epistemic nature of *well*, which aligns with Bolinger's view in a broad sense with reference to exclamations, prompts, uses in sentence-initial position, in expressions of disagreement, or as harmonizer. He then adds his own interpretations of *well* as a continuative and as a mental-state interjection "indicating a variety of epistemic-prospective consideration" (Schourup, 2001: 1046) possibly hinting at divergence from the hearer's expectations. As can be seen, these later studies provide a more and more complex picture of *well* and pragmatic markers in general.

In short, *well* may be regarded as a frame marker (Hyland, 2005) or topicalizer (Crismore et al., 1993) indicating a transition or a shift in topic. In addition, it may be used to raise an objection, preface a dispreferred response or indicate turn-taking (Beeching, 2016: 53–55). As a marker of insufficiency

or uncertainty, it also modifies or qualifies a previous utterance in other- or self-correction (Beeching, 2016: 52, 55) and face-threatening mitigation, and can function as a delay device (Jucker, 1993) or gap filler for pausing and planning (Aijmer, 2011: 237), e.g. to express hesitation (Beeching, 2016: 53). Given its multiple functions, *well* may pose considerable challenges to translators, as suggested by studies involving translation.

From an interlinguistic perspective, Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003: 1127) propose a functional, system-integrated account that relates *well* to its corresponding adverb meaning and “is comprehensive enough to deal with all contextual meanings and translation equivalents.” Though they use translation corpora, the main aim of their study is to throw further light on *well* as a pragmatic marker, not to focus on equivalents of *well* in the two languages investigated, Swedish and Dutch. First, they describe uses in terms of epistemic modality, which focuses on evidentiality, either showing degrees of reliability or mode of knowing and source of knowledge. Second, *well* is regarded as an option involving an accommodation to context exhibiting its textual features as a boundary marker or a topic introducer or exhibiting interpersonal features as a marker of politeness. Further, *well* can express positive attitude in interactions where divergent interpretations or different expectations are present, expressing enthusiasm or reluctance, agreement or disagreement. Results of the study suggest that there is a large number of equivalents in both languages, probably as a consequence of the fictional nature of texts, that one equivalent is more frequent than the others, that omissions are very common in Swedish and hapax legomena in both Swedish and Dutch. In Swedish no direct equivalent of *well* was found, while translations expressed its core meaning or a reversal of meaning to express disagreement. By contrast, an equivalent with very similar functions to *well* does exist in Dutch. Finally, translations highlighted a ‘doubling function’ of *well*, that is “utterances in which the meaning of *well* is also expressed by other lexical or grammatical means” (Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2003: 1153).

In studying translations in Norwegian and German in a bidirectional corpus of fiction, Johansson (2006: 117) regards *well* as a typical marker of (fictional) conversational interaction which presupposes a direct contact between speaker and hearer(s) and relevance of prosody for interpretation prior to translating. Interestingly, Johansson (2006: 119–20) analyses *well* in fictional dialogues or monologues and finds it to be used in declarative and interrogative sentences, to express agreement, disagreement or qualified agreement and to respond to a previous speaker’s move. As to his findings in translations, one Norwegian particle, *vel*, seems to be the most frequent equivalent (22% of occurrences), though zero correspondences (16%) are also found (Johansson, 2006: 121, 126).

Cuenca (2008) follows a path similar to Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003) and Johansson (2006), but uses translations of *well* from the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* into Catalan and Spanish, i.e. two languages that do not belong to the same language family as English. The main translation strategies are again the choice of a direct equivalent in both languages, the use of a continuative-consecutive marker and the omission of the marker. The author also finds a translational equivalent of the ‘doubling function’ above, which she calls ‘integration’ as a “specific translation strategy for *well* combined with other markers” (Cuenca, 2008: 1378). Considering the two main functions identified, structural and modal, when the former prevails, “it can precede opening or closing statements and indicate a pause or a change of topic or orientation in conversation. Although different equivalents are possible, structural meanings are typically translated as Catalan *be’* and Spanish *bien*” (Cuenca, 2008: 1381). If, on the other hand, the latter dominates, “*well* can indicate either (partial) agreement, doubt, (partial) disagreement, or contraposition. *Well* with a modal meaning and uncombined is more frequently deleted than when it has a structural function in conversation” (Cuenca, 2008: 1381). These findings are highly relevant in our case (see 5) as Catalan and Spanish are closely related languages to Italian.

Focusing on the translation of *well* into Italian, Bazzanella and Morra (2000) and Bazzanella (2001b) identify interactional and metatextual functions of discourse markers. For the purposes of our study, relevant interactional functions are those of fillers, requests for attention, modulations, and as phatic devices, forms of control of message reception and statements or requests of agreement or confirmation. Metatextual functions that can be deemed important in hybrid texts are topic introduction, transition to a different topic, digression and introduction of a citation, focus and reformulation devices. The authors then stress that in translation, equivalents need to be found at a functional rather than lexical level to reflect use in specific contexts in the target language. Specifically, Bazzanella (2001b) observed that in the Italian translation of the English novel *Brothers and Sisters* the marker *well* was largely omitted (39% of instances) or predominantly translated (49.5%) through a considerable number (46) of functional equivalents, of which 27 have only one occurrence.

## 2.2 *The Functions and Linguistic Features of Well*

Analysis of the debate on pragmatic markers and the wealth of attendant terminology outlined so far suggest that a possible way to approach the rendering of *well* in Italian translations is to identify recent work(s) that summarise the current take on the topic and use it as a framework for our investigation of translation strategies and products. This appears all the more

advisable considering the main focus of our research, which – unlike Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003) and Cuenca (2006; 2008) – is the translation strategies and equivalents used to translate *well*, rather than a contrastive analysis aimed to confirm or highlight pragmatic marker features of *well*. Among contrastive studies of *well*, we found the investigation of *well* in oral social interaction by Beeching (2016) to be a suitable framework to apply in our analysis of *TED Talk* transcripts and their translation. The reason is that *well* is seen as either retrospective, i.e. used to acknowledge previous discourse, or else prospective, i.e. used to anticipate upcoming discourse, which are both key functions in expert (popularizing) talks. Specifically, Beeching (2016) identifies uses of *well* that express hesitation, transition, change of topic, preface to a dispreferred option (*well* followed by *but* at some stage), turn-taking or polite interruption, correction of what others have said; self-correction and finally introduction of a quotation of direct speech (cf. 5).

Studying *well* in a corpus of hybrid oral/written texts (and their translations) also requires an analysis of the linguistic features of *well*. In syntactic terms, *well* is (largely?) found in sentence-initial position – as our title hints at – or clause-initial position. It also falls outside the syntactic structure or is loosely attached to it. For this reason, it can be regarded as syntactically optional. Semantically, it may carry little or no propositional meaning, though it is multifunctional and thus operates on several linguistic levels simultaneously. Indeed, from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective, Schiffrin (1987: 22–23) maintains that *well* fills a conversational slot by simply adding coherence to the text. In a sociolinguistic sense, being largely oral rather than written, it tends to be (quite) informal, highly frequent and stylistically stigmatized. It also varies with gender and seems to be used more frequently by female speakers (Beeching, 2016; see also 6.1).

### 3 A Hybrid Genre: *TED Talks*

Our investigation addresses the use of *well* in a special genre, i.e. the largely oral monologic *TED Talks*, where pragmatic markers are used in a fictitiously dialogic conversation between the speaker and the audience. As such, *TED Talk* transcriptions are hybrid texts as (a) they are written but preserve some features of the oral text they originate from; (b) they are similar to popular science articles, focussing as they do on findings rather than methods; (c) they resemble university lectures as planned speeches using visuals, film extracts, music and the like; and (d) they are similar to spoken popular science events

because they display a degree of informality and colloquialisms (Caliendo, 2014). As Scotto di Carlo (2014: 592) put it, “TED talks [...] are a new tool of popularization that breaches the typical ‘scientist – mediator – audience’ triangularization, bringing scientists directly into contact with their audiences.” Most talks are translated in a variety of languages; they are not dubbed, but time-coded transcripts are provided. The code switch from one language to another is then paired with a shift from the oral to the written medium that is not always reflected in the content, form, and style of the text.

In popularizing talks, such as the *TED Talks*, speakers try to anticipate the questions the audience would ask, the objections they would be likely to raise, etc. in fictitious dialogic interaction. In this context, *well* is one of the devices expressing stance and engagement used to create what Hyland (2010: 17) calls ‘proximity’. Proximity is a way to control rhetorical features in a text to display authority and position as an expert and respond to context. This way it is possible to construct speaker/writer’s personality, credibility or evaluation and keep the communication channel with the hearer/reader open based on the speaker’s perception of the audience’s sensitivity and engagement to and engagement in topics (cf. 6.1).

#### 4 Research Objectives

Our research combines a pragmatic approach to the study of *well* with a translational, cross-linguistic focus to provide insights into a still under-researched field of application of pragmatics, i.e. the approach and strategies adopted in the translation of *well* and the impact of its translations. The study thus offers a twofold perspective, which considers the use and functions of *well* from an intralinguistic perspective (6.1) and investigates the translation strategies used to deal with this marker from an interlinguistic viewpoint (6.2). The research questions addressed are the following:

- (1) To what extent and how is *well* used in transcribed popularizing talks delivered by experts?
- (2) To what extent and how is *well* translated in the corresponding Italian translations of the English transcribed talks?

The first research question aims to observe how *well* is used in science popularization by international English-speaking experts, i.e. with what frequency and for what purposes. The second question focuses on how often and in what ways *well* is translated into Italian to observe whether the translation strategies adopted consider and/or mirror its multiple pragmatic functions.

## 5 Material and Method

To answer our research questions, a corpus was needed which simultaneously implied mode switch and interlingual translation (Figure 1). *TED Talks* (cf. 3) appeared as the most suitable texts for this type of research. These are short live talks delivered by high-profile experts, which are freely available online and often accompanied by both intralingual transcriptions and their corresponding translations, with translators being credited. 56 transcribed English talks (145,078 tokens and 123,873 types) about astronomy and astrophysics<sup>3</sup> and their official Italian translations (134,716 tokens and 116,439 types) were collected, which formed a parallel corpus of approximately 280,000 tokens. The talks were delivered between February 2003 and April 2018 by 51 different native and non-native English-speaking experts (38 men and 13 women) and translated by 78 translators (2 per talk), of whom 17 translated more than one talk.<sup>4</sup>

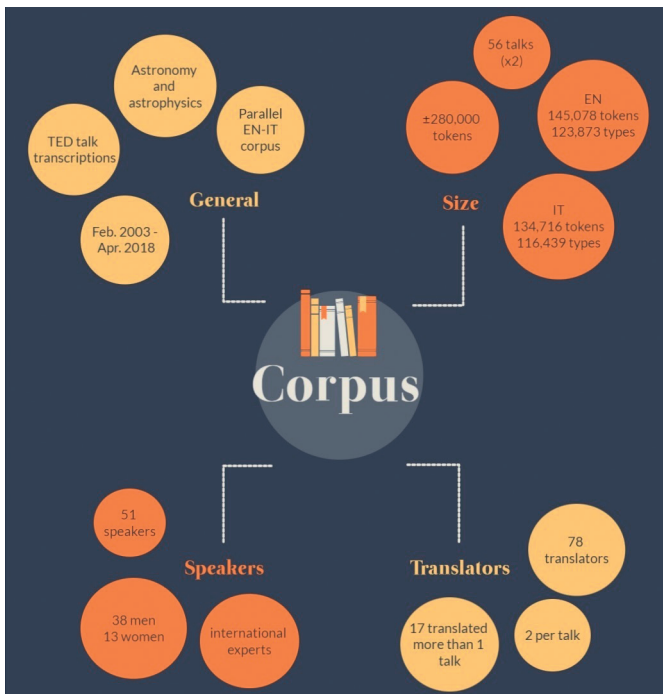


FIGURE 1 The corpus: facts and figures

<sup>3</sup> These two domains are also addressed in previous publications by Musacchio.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Appendix 1.



The presence of both native and non-native English speakers is here not deemed to bias our analysis since (a) our primary interest is not that of describing the use of *well* by native vs non-native speakers but to observe its functions and translations, and (b) all speakers are outstanding experts in their field and thus accustomed to using English (at least as a lingua franca) in their daily academic interaction. Despite our intent to balance the corpus with respect to both text length and the speakers’ gender, the English talks vary considerably in length – from 500 to 5,500 tokens – and were delivered mostly by male experts, who still represent the vast majority of scholars in the field of astrophysics and astronomy (cf. Sugimoto et al., 2013). Considering our specific research objectives (4), these imbalances were held to be mostly uninfluential when investigating the functions served by *well* and its translation into a different target language or were compensated for through data normalization, e.g. when exploring data from a sociolinguistic perspective to find possible associations between the frequency of *well* and the speaker’s gender (6.1).

From an intralinguistic perspective (6.1), the study considered the number and types of functions played by *well* in the English subcorpus collected for this investigation. Drawing on Beeching (2016) and considering also the multifaceted functions of *well* observed in the English subcorpus (cf. below the examples provided per each category and the set of additional mixed functions added to our list), a classification was developed jointly by the authors and implemented by comparing their personal analyses of the co-text of individual utterances until an agreement was reached. This includes the following functions:

- (a) Hesitation (Hes), when *well* is used as a delay device (Jucker, 1993) or gap filler for pausing and planning (Aijmer, 2011: 237), e.g. “I think that if you can instil some interest in science and how it works, *well*, that’s a payoff beyond easy measure” (TED48).
- (b) Transition (Trans), which refers to the introduction of additional information about the topic being addressed or related examples and sub-topics. E.g., “So, one particular question that we have is: ‘How does dark energy affect the universe at the largest scales? Depending on how strong it is, maybe structure forms faster or slower. *Well*, the problem with the large-scale structure of the universe is that it’s horribly complicated” (TED38).
- (c) Change of topic (ChT), when *well* is used to introduce new topics: e.g., “However, we do know that it must at least be strong enough to not fly apart as it rotates, so it probably has a density similar to that of rocky asteroids; perhaps even denser, like metal. *Well*, at the very least, I want to

- show you one of the beautiful colour images that we got from one of the ground-based telescopes” (TED40).
- (d) Objection (Obj), which refers to the use of *well* to counter a previous statement/hypothesis about positions other than the speaker’s, e.g. “You hear a lot of talk about how quantum mechanics says that everything is all interconnected. *Well*, that’s not quite right” (TED43).
  - (e) Preface to a dispreferred option (DisOpt), in which *well* introduces a concessive clause followed by an adversative one (mostly, *but*). E.g., “If the LHC finds new particles, but they don’t fit this pattern – *well*, that will be very interesting, *but* bad for this E8 theory” (TED39).
  - (f) Turn-taking (TT) or polite interruption, e.g. in real or fictitious conversation or in the Q&A session between the speaker and the audience or other experts on or as if on a stage, mostly with a rhetorical function. E.g., “And where in the world would you find such water? *Well* the Russians have a tank in their own backyard” (TED4).
  - (g) Self-correction (Self-C), in which *well* introduces further and/or more specific information as partial correction or specification with reference to the speaker’s previous statements, e.g., “Now, when I came last time, shortly after the landing [...] I told you I was surprised that those Rovers are lasting even a hundred days. *Well*, here we are four years later, and they’re still working” (TED20).
  - (h) Quotative *well* (Quot), which is used to introduce quotations from or beliefs of other experts and people, e.g. “And then somebody else said, *well*, what if the star had already formed planets, and two of these planets had collided, similar to the Earth-Moon forming event” (TED6).

The range of pragmatic functions performed by *well* was so varied that Beeching’s classification was expanded to account for the composite functions observed in the English subcorpus. More precisely, two subcategories were identified in the category turn-taking, i.e. (a) Turn-taking (rhetorical function introducing a Question), e.g. “*Well*, is this a typical place?” (TED17), and (b) Turn-taking (beginning), whenever *well* was used to open the talk, e.g. “*Well*, indeed, I’m very, very lucky” (TED44). In addition, six blended categories accounting for multi-functional pragmatic uses of *well* with two functions being performed simultaneously were identified, i.e.:

- Turn-taking (rhetorical function) + quotative *well*, e.g. “And I bet the answer you’re going to get, is ‘*Well*, I don’t know what the Higgs boson is, and I don’t know if it’s important’” (TED48);
- Turn-taking (rhetorical function introducing a Question) + quotative *well*, e.g. “But you can see the voids, you can see the complicated structure, and you say: ‘*Well*, how did this happen?’” (TED50);

- Turn-taking (rhetorical function) + hesitation, e.g. “So when it comes to other planets, other Earths, in the future when we can observe them, what kind of gases would we be looking for? *Well*, you know, our own Earth has oxygen in the atmosphere to 20 percent by volume” (TED45);
- Turn-taking (rhetorical function) + preface to a dispreferred option (*well ... but*), e.g. “What is the reason for this? *Well*, I don’t have time to tell you about all the mathematics, but underlying this is the social networks, because this is a universal phenomenon” (TED55);
- Preface to a dispreferred option (*well ... but*) + hesitation, e.g. “You can see, *well*, you can, kind of pick out all the major continents, but that’s about it” (TED50);
- Preface to a dispreferred option + quotative *well*, e.g. “You say: ‘*Well*, of course life ultimately must depend of quantum mechanics.’ But so does everything else” (TED3).

This has raised the number of functions identified in the corpus to 16.

From an interlinguistic perspective (6.2), we focused on how often and through which equivalents *well* was translated into Italian. First, our analysis aimed to observe how this versatile pragmatic marker fared in the interlingual shifts from English to Italian in this hybrid genre and whether translations reflected its multiple pragmatic meanings and functions or rather adopted a more standardised approach. Finally, the analysis also considered any correlations between the decision (not) to translate *well* and individual translators to understand whether these decisions depended on the linguistic and communicative context in which *well* appeared or rather the translator’s stylistic preferences.

## 6 Results and Discussion

The results of our research are described in the following sections, which focus on the intralinguistic (6.1) and interlinguistic (6.2) analyses of data, respectively.

### 6.1 *Intralinguistic Perspective*

In the English subcorpus, *well* was observed having a pragmatic function in 192 different utterances<sup>5</sup> in over 70% of the talks (i.e. 41 out of 56), which confirms

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5 All the occurrences of *well* were first retrieved through SketchEngine concordance search and then manually checked to discard the cases in which the item *well* was used as an adverb and not as a pragmatic marker.

its pervasive presence in English oral discourse (Zarei, 2012; Beeching, 2016). It was found in sentence-initial position in the vast majority of cases (81%) and only occasionally (19%) in clause-initial position, mostly to introduce fictitious direct speech, i.e. to introduce a quotation by simulating an imaginary turn-taking between the speaker and the audience or other experts as if on stage.

As shown in Figure 2, the vast majority of occurrences serve a turn-taking function in which *well* introduces the answer to a rhetorical question, i.e. TT(A). Second, *well* was used to signal a transition in the argument (Trans), while the third and fourth most frequent functions introduce an objection to a previous statement (Obj) and a dispreferred option (DisOpt) through the sentence structure “*well ... but*”, respectively. The quotative function of *well* (Quot) was instead observed in 6.8% of cases, while in 5.7% of cases *well* was used to introduce a rhetorical question, i.e. TT(Q). Finally, the categories of self-correction (Self-C) and turn-taking to introduce a quotation (TT+Quot) applied to approximately 5% of occurrences, while the remaining functions under the label “other” – i.e. hesitation, change in topic, and beginning a new turn-taking – each only represent 0.5–1% of occurrences.

In short, in the English subcorpus *well* can be said to perform two main functions, i.e. the turn-taking and the transitional ones (cf. Beeching, 2016). When simulating turn-taking, *well* is mostly used to introduce an answer to a rhetorical question – e.g., “Why time? *Well*, time is about origins ...” (TED12) – while only occasionally does it introduce a rhetorical question – e.g., “*Well*, what is dark energy and why does it exist?” (TED12).

Interestingly, in some cases both the rhetorical question and the following reply were prefaced by *well*, e.g., “*Well*, what does that mean? *Well*, look out even further than we’ve just been ...” (TED17).

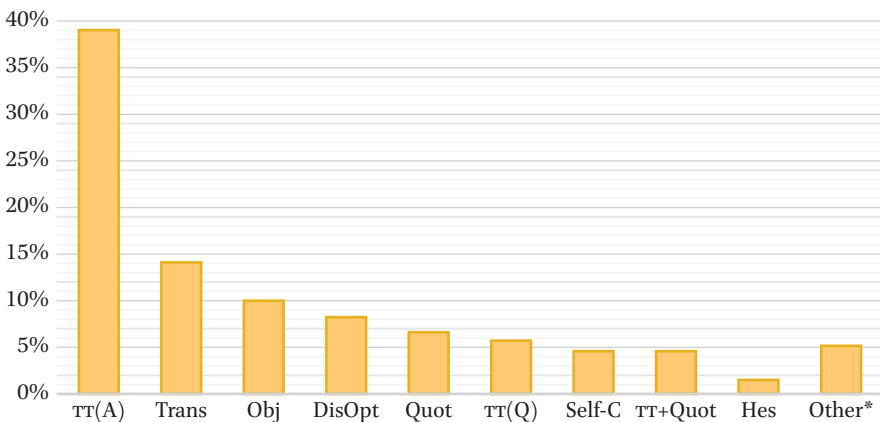


FIGURE 2 Functions of ‘well’ in the English subcorpus

Finally, in this type of fictitious turn-taking *well* was also used to introduce the audience's supposed replies to the speaker's rhetorical questions, e.g. "Why aren't we in empty space? You might say 'Well, there's nothing there to be living'" (TED10). In this case, *well* performs two functions, i.e. introducing a turn in a fictitious conversation (TT) between the speaker and the audience, in which the speaker gives voice to or 'quotes' (Quot) the audience's supposed reply (TT+Quot). Whenever signalling a new turn in the fictitious monological conversation created by the speaker (TT), and/or prefacing quotations (Quot) from (fictitious) interlocutors, *well* also appears to serve specific (fictitious) phatic and rhetorical purposes. Phatic utterances are those that help to maintain "contact between the speakers where 'contact' is the physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling them to enter and stay in communication" (Jakobson, 1960, cited in Kulkarni, 2014: 119). If we consider that the physical channel can be interpreted as "the attention that speakers must pay towards each other" and psychological connection as the attitudes "showing interest and expressing agreement" (Kulkarni, 2014: 119), *well* can be said to keep the (virtual) communication channel open by simulating the audience's interest and attention. This is crucial for the successful delivery of a monologic talk aimed to inform and entertain silent audiences as "[i]t is only when the other interlocutor is attending to the conversation that a speaker can continue" (Kulkarni, 2014: 119).

In a fictitious turn-taking, *well* can be described as phatic as it simulates the audience's contribution to the imaginary conversation under way and reassures the fictitious addressees as to the consideration given to their possible doubts and objections. Moreover, in this case *well* serves multiple pragmatic/rhetorical purposes as it (a) gives prominence to a specific argument by making it stand out from the surrounding talk, (b) makes the talk more engaging and entertaining, and (c) mitigates the impact of potential objections to the argument by anticipating criticism, providing additional information and clarification.

The pure quotative function is the third most frequent function in our corpus, accounting for approximately 9% of occurrences. In the English subcorpus, quotative *well* was used to introduce the audience's thoughts and considerations, e.g., "Now, you may be wondering, OK, Tabby, *well*, how do aliens actually explain this light curve?" (TED6) or "You might say: *Well*, maybe things just smoothed themselves out" (TED10). In a narrative context, it also introduces other scholars' theories, objections and considerations to make past events happen before the audience and other scholars relive – e.g., "So Kaluza said, *well*, maybe there are more dimensions of space" (TED26); "Einstein comes along and says, *well*, space and time can warp and curve – that's what gravity is" (TED26) – or reproduces the speaker's own past thoughts and considerations – e.g., "And I thought: "*Well*, maybe there is Lithium-6 in

this star, which is an indication that this star has swallowed a planet” (TED33); “So when I saw that, I said: ‘Well, this is such a shame, because it’s a very, very good idea” (TED36).

This confirms that *well* is flexible and versatile, serving both actual and fictitious pragmatic, phatic and rhetorical functions, which makes it a highly sophisticated discursive device.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, *well* was used by 39 speakers, i.e. 76.5% of the presenters and, more precisely, by 77% of female speakers (10 out of 13) and 76% of male presenters (28 out of 39). Although these data seem to counter previous research suggesting a more frequent use of *well* by women (Beeching, 2016), more specific gender-based analysis highlighted possible patterns of association with the use of *well*. Given that transcriptions vary highly in length, the incidence of *well* in each talk was calculated as the ratio between the occurrences of *well* and the number of tokens in the talk. Data (Figure 3) seemed to suggest that female speakers tend to use *well* more frequently than their male colleagues do, with in-group mean values being 0.22% for female presenters and 0.18% for male scholars, respectively. Further, 50% of female speakers scored above-the-mean and above-the-median (>0.22%) ratios, while most male speakers scored under-the-mean (<0.18%) and under-the-median (<0.14%) ratios.

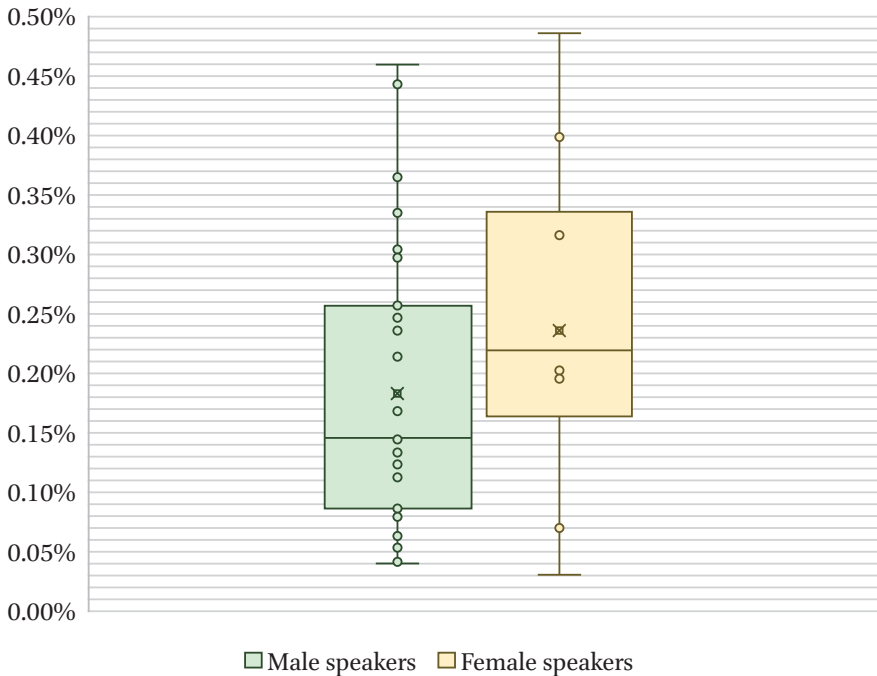


FIGURE 3 Incidence of ‘well’ in female and male speakers’ talks

However, as Figure 3 shows, exceptions also apply, with one female presenter scoring the lowest ratio, another female speaker featuring a comparatively low ratio of 0.7%, and two men scoring the second highest values. Yet, the statistical significance of these findings was not confirmed by one-tailed Mann-Whitney U test.<sup>6</sup> Hence, we cannot draw statistically valid conclusions from our socio-linguistic analysis to support previous observations (Beeching, 2016) about the more frequent use of *well* by female speakers.

6.2 *Interlinguistic Perspective*

Our analysis of the parallel Italian subcorpus was aimed at observing how often and how differently *well* is translated and whether the translation of this marker affects the naturalness and readability of the target text. From a quantitative viewpoint, *well* is more often translated than not, with 76 occurrences (39.58%) out of 192 left untranslated.

Despite the variety of functions *well* was observed to have in the English parallel subcorpus (6.1), Italian translations reflect a standardised approach which relies on a restricted number of equivalents, amounting to 11 but dropping down to 7 when considering orthographical variants or spelling mistakes, i.e. *bene/ebbene, beh, be', be, \*bè* (Figure 4).

Hence, a core equivalent – i.e. *bene/beh* and its variants – appears to cover 91% of the total translated occurrences of *well* (i.e. 105 out of 116), similar to what was observed by Cuenca (2008: 1381) in relation to Catalan (*bé*) and Spanish (*bueno*) and Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003: 1144) in relation to Dutch (*nou/nou ja*). Most importantly, these equivalents do not reflect the wide array of semantic, rhetorical and pragmatic nuances covered by *well* in

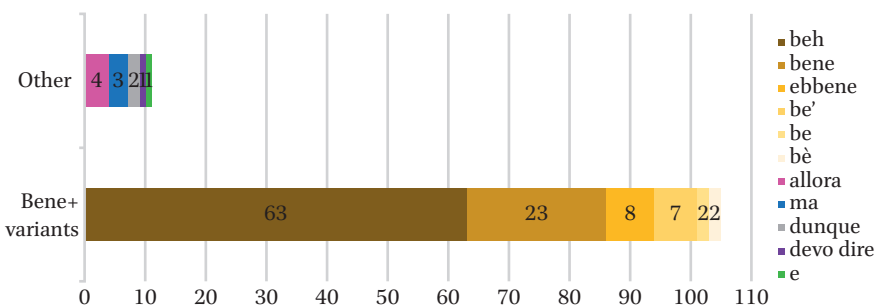


FIGURE 4 Translations of ‘well’

6 Given that two male speakers, Cox and Greene, delivered two talks each, the test was repeated twice, first by considering all men’s talks (U-value = 113) and then by excluding Cox’s and Greene’s talks with the lowest incidence of *well* (U-value = 109). Statistical significance was not confirmed in either cases.

the English subcorpus. *Beh* (and its orthographic variants) can be considered colloquial short forms for *bene* (Serianni, 1991) or *ebbene* and mostly signal turn-taking, mitigation or concession (Bazzanella, 2001a, Jafrancesco, 2015: 16, Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana online, Il Nuovo De Mauro online, Dizionario Treccani online). These would thus cover only some of the functions performed by *well* and would not be equally suitable to introduce, for instance, quotations, objections, transitions or changes of topic. This suggests the adoption of a one-fits-all translation strategy, which does not fully consider the specific communication context to select tailor-made equivalents, and goes against the main translation principle, i.e. translating contextualised meaning instead of adopting a word-based approach.

This is even more apparent when observing individual target texts in isolation, i.e. when considering the strategy and equivalents used within individual target texts. The data did not highlight any patterns of association between specific translation strategies and individual (duos of) translators, also because the texts were translated and revised by two different translators and there is no indication as to their roles and the extent of their intervention/cooperation.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, three main different approaches to the translation of *well* emerged, which can be summarised as follows:

- (1) All occurrences were translated by using the same or very similar equivalents, e.g. orthographical variants (16 talks, 39%).
- (2) No occurrences were translated (9 talks, 22%).
- (3) Only selected occurrences were translated by using different equivalents (7 talks, 17%).

The first and second strategies are the most radical, and possibly result from two opposite approaches, i.e. the translators' adherence to a standardised dictionary-based approach in which the most common direct equivalents – e.g. *beh* – are (perhaps uncritically) implemented or, conversely, their adherence to the norms of written texts instead of to the traits of oral discourse. The first strategy is exemplified in Table 1, where all 7 occurrences of *well* in the same speech are translated by using the equivalent *be'* irrespective of the different functions *well* performs in each utterance.

Objections, at least in the example in Table 1, could be expressed through more specific equivalents, e.g. *insomma*. In addition, the use of an interjection such as *be'* to translate the turn-taking and quotative function (TT+Quot) of *well* is not suitable in the Italian context, where indirect (and not direct) speech is used. Interestingly, a similar standardised approach was observed also in 8 other talks (20%), where some instances of *well* were left untranslated, while

<sup>7</sup> The data about the transcription/translation process are available on TED's website (e.g. <https://www.ted.com/participate/translate/get-started>, accessed December 2022).



TABLE 1 First strategy: all occurrences are translated by using the same equivalent

Function	EN text (TED20)	IT translation
<i>TT+Quot</i>	Naturally, they blew up a shack, and Caltech, <i>well</i> , then, hey, you go to the Arroyo and really do all your tests in there.	Naturalmente, fecero esplodere un capanno, e il Caltech, <i>be'</i> , allora ... Ehi, andateviene ad Arroyo e fatevi tutti i vostri test là.
<i>Obj</i>	Some people tell me to do it; I think, <i>well</i> , that's not really proper, you know, these days.	Alcuni mi dicono di farlo; io penso, <i>be'</i> , non è molto appropriato, sapete, al giorno d'oggi.
<i>TT</i>	<i>Well</i> , the way I think about it is fairly simple.	<i>Be'</i> , il mio punto di vista è molto semplice.
<i>Self-C</i>	<i>Well</i> , here we are four years later, and they're still working.	<i>Be'</i> , ci ritroviamo quattro anni dopo, e sono ancora in funzione.
<i>DisOpt</i>	<i>Well</i> , I always say it's important that you are smart, but every once in a while it's good to be lucky.	<i>Be'</i> , io dico sempre che è importante essere bravi, ma ogni tanto è bello essere fortunati.
<i>TT+Quot</i>	And I know many of you, kind of, last time afterwards said <i>well</i> , that was a cool thing to have – those airbags.	E so che molti di voi, l'ultima volta avete detto che <i>be'</i> , quella è una cosa forte da avere ... quegli airbag.
<i>Trans</i>	<i>Well</i> , there were two satellites which were particularly interesting.	<i>Be'</i> , c'erano due satelliti che erano particolarmente interessanti.

others were translated by using, again, always the same equivalent. This would increase the percentage of translations in which only one equivalent of *well* is used throughout the whole text to 59%.

As for the second strategy, an example is provided in Table 2, with none of the occurrences of *well* being transferred in the target text. Considering the specific context in which translation takes place, i.e. the translation of transcribed oral texts, this strategy appears more reasoned than the first one. Given that oral texts are translated to be read (rather than heard) by people who do not have a full understanding of the source language while watching the video, redundancies and inessential verbal elements are often omitted or reduced in number so that viewers can follow and understand the talk more easily.

Finally, a blended approach can be observed in Table 3, where two of the objections introduced by *well* are translated with markers signalling

TABLE 2 Second strategy: no occurrences are translated

Function	EN text (TED10)	IT translation
<i>Quot</i>	You might say <i>Well</i> , maybe things just smoothed themselves out.	Potreste dire: Forse le cose si sono appianate da sole.
<i>TT(Q)</i>	<i>Well</i> , what is the implication of that?	Cosa implica ciò?
<i>Quot</i>	He said, <i>well</i> , entropy increases because there are many, many more ways for the universe to be high entropy, rather than low entropy.	Egli disse che l'entropia aumenta perché ci sono molti, molti più modi per l'universo di avere un'entropia alta, piuttosto che bassa.
<i>Obj</i>	<i>Well</i> , if that's true, Boltzmann then goes on to invent two very modern-sounding ideas – the multiverse and the anthropic principle.	Se fosse vero, Boltzmann ha partorito due idee che sembrano molto moderne – il multiverso e il principio antropico.
<i>TT+Quot</i>	You might say, " <i>Well</i> , there's nothing there to be living," but that's not right.	Potreste dire: "Non ci sarebbe nulla per vivere lì", ma avreste torto.

disagreement, and different equivalents are used to better mirror the diverse functions of *well* in the specific context. Still, *bene* accounts for five out of eight instances.

Flexible strategies considering the communicative and linguistic context testify to a greater understanding of the pragmatic meaning of the text on the part of the translator and ultimately increase the readability and naturalness of the Italian text by reducing redundancy as compared to standardised approaches, which exclusively rely on *beh/bene/ebbene* (and their variants). By way of example, consider the attested translations in Table 4 – also including alternative versions – which all rely on the same equivalent (*beh/bene*) irrespective of the different functions performed by *well*. In the first example, *well* is used to introduce a final consideration and anticipate a change in topic, while Italian interjection *beh* here appears to convey more a sense of resignation. In this case, the suggested option *insomma* (lit. 'in short', 'well') would have better suited the context and conveyed the sense of transition/conclusion implied in *well*. In the second example, the marker *bene* results in redundancy, much less tolerated in Italian as compared to English. Specifically, the very

TABLE 3 Third strategy: not all occurrences are translated and different equivalents are used

Function	EN text (TED45)	IT translation
<i>Obj</i>	<i>Well</i> , the biologists get furious with me for saying that, because we have absolutely no evidence for life beyond Earth yet.	<i>Devo dire [I must say]</i> che i biologi s'infuriano con me se mi sentono dire questo perché non possediamo ancora alcuna prova della vita extraterrestre.
<i>Obj</i>	<i>Well</i> , if we were able to look at our galaxy from the outside and zoom in to where our sun is, we see a real map of the stars.	<i>Ma [But]</i> se fossimo in grado di guardare la nostra galassia dall'esterno, zoomando sull'area dove si trova il sole, vedremmo una vera mappa delle stelle.
<i>Obj</i>	<i>Well</i> , science fiction got some things wrong.	<i>Bene [Well]</i> , la fantascienza ha commesso degli errori.
<i>Obj</i>	<i>Well</i> , we don't need to travel at warp speeds to see other planet atmospheres, although I don't want to dissuade any budding engineers from figuring out how to do that.	[ <i>OMISSIS</i> ] Non abbiamo bisogno di viaggiare a velocità di curvatura per osservare le atmosfere degli altri pianeti, anche se non voglio scoraggiare i nostri giovani ingegneri dal capire come riuscirci.
<i>TT+Hes</i>	<i>Well</i> , you know, our own Earth has oxygen in the atmosphere to 20 percent by volume.	<i>Bene [Well]</i> , sapete, la nostra Terra ha ossigeno nell'atmosfera per 20 per cento del volume.
<i>Trans</i>	<i>Well</i> , I had my own crazy theory.	<i>Bene [Well]</i> , io ho già la mia pazza teoria.
<i>TT</i>	<i>Well</i> , I emailed a Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine and he said, "Sure, come and talk to me."	<i>Bene [Well]</i> , io ho scritto a un premio Nobel in Fisiologia o Medicina e lui mi ha detto: "Certo, vieni a parlargliene".
<i>TT</i>	<i>Well</i> , in the best case, we will find an image of another exo-Earth.	<i>Bene [Well]</i> , nella migliore delle ipotesi, troveremo un'immagine di un'altra eso-Terra.

TABLE 4 Standardised translation of 'well'

Function	EN text	IT translation	IT alternative translation
<i>ChT</i>	Think about Toyota. It was, for a long time, revered as the most reliable of cars, and then they had the big recall incident. And Tiger Woods, for a long time, the perfect brand ambassador. <i>Well</i> , you know the story. (TED11)	<i>E beh</i> , sapete come è andata a finire.	<i>Insomma</i> , sapete come è andata a finire.
<i>TT</i>	<i>Well</i> , we understand this very well. (TED55)	<i>Bene</i> , noi lo sappiamo molto bene.	<i>E noi lo sappiamo molto bene.</i>
<i>TT(Q)</i>	<i>Well</i> , what about 10 <sup>22</sup> ? (TED52)	<i>Bene</i> , ora dove si trova 10 alla 22esima?	<i>Quindi/Allora</i> , dove si trova 10 alla 22esima?
<i>TT+Quot</i>	So, you might think, <i>well</i> , does this make the planet cease to exist? (TED53)	Potreste pensare: " <i>Beh</i> , questo fa in modo che il pianeta cessi di esistere?"	Potreste pensare: " <i>E/Quindi/Dunque/ Allora</i> questo fa in modo che il pianeta cessi di esistere?"

same word, *bene*, is used as both a marker in sentence-initial position and an adverb in sentence-final position. This could have been easily avoided by using the conjunction *e* (lit. *and*), which is a typical marker stressing self-evident or consequential considerations. *Bene* is also used in the third example, where more specific markers, such as *quindi* (hence) or *allora* (then), could have been used to make the logical link between the previous argument and the question being asked by the speaker<sup>8</sup> explicit. Finally, the fourth example shows how the

8 The context of the utterance is the following: "And, if even all of the planetary systems in our galaxy were devoid of life, there are still 100 billion other galaxies out there, altogether 10<sup>22</sup> stars. Now, I'm going to try a trick, and recreate an experiment from this morning. Remember, one billion? But, this time not one billion dollars, one billion stars. Alright,

standard equivalent *beh* is preferred over other logical linkers, such as *quindi* (thus), *dunque* (hence) and *allora* (then), which would have better expressed the causal relation implied in 'so' (which is omitted in the Italian translation) between the previous utterance and the speaker's rhetorical question. These final examples, where the use of different equivalents makes the various functions of *well* more evident, also show how *well* implicitly carries logical meaning, or at least reinforces the logical structure of the text, thus functioning also as a cohesive device and enhancing textual coherence (Schiffrin, 1985).

## 7 Conclusions

Drawing on previous research on pragmatic markers and their classification (cf. 2.2 and 5), our analysis aimed at observing how and to what extent the wide variety of functions covered by *well* in oral discourse are (not) translated into Italian in a unique translational setting, i.e. the transcription and translation of *TED Talks*, where oral texts are transcribed and translated to be read rather than uttered and/or heard. To the best of our knowledge, our investigation represents the first study shedding light on the use and translation of *well* in such a hybrid setting, which thus constitutes the original contribution of this paper to the investigation on the marker *well* from a cross-linguistic perspective. It considered a parallel corpus of 56 English *TED Talks* and their Italian translations, which were analysed from both an intra- and interlinguistic perspective. The intralinguistic analysis of our English subcorpus showed that *well* was uttered in over 70% of the talks, in either sentence- (81%) or clause-initial (19%) position. It was mostly used as a rhetorical device to create fictitious turn-taking between the speaker and the audience/online viewers or the speaker and other experts/people not on stage. This implied the use of two main strategies, i.e. (a) the (occasional) use of rhetorical questions and answers and (b) the inclusion of quotations of the audience's potential questions and/or objections as well as considerations from other scholars and people not on stage. In this context, *well* also appeared to perform a phatic function by keeping the (virtual) communication channel open and simulating the audience's interest and attention. Additionally, in this sense, it served as a rhetorical device which not only engages, entertains and reassures the fictitious addressees as to the consideration given to their possible doubts and objections, but also anticipates potential objections and/or gives prominence to specific arguments.

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one billion stars. Now, up there, 20 feet above the stage, that's 10 trillion. *Well*, what about  $10^{22}$ ? Where's the line that marks that? That line would have to be 3.8 million miles above this stage."

Quotative *well* also proved useful when narrating past events to make them happen before the audience in a sort of historical dramatization, e.g. when the speaker quotes in fictitious direct speech other scholars, his/her own past thoughts or interactions with other colleagues/people. Finally, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the interlinguistic analysis initially seemed to point to a more frequent use of *well* by female speakers, but testing did not confirm the statistical significance of this trend and variation was also observed within the two gender groups.

Interlinguistic analysis of the parallel corpus revealed that *well* was translated in 91% of cases (105 out of 116, see Figure 4) by resorting to an extremely limited set of equivalents, which mostly include spelling variants. This testifies to the standard approach largely used to transfer the pragmatic meaning of *well* into Italian, which seldom considers the variety of functions and the position of *well* within the source text. Translators adopted three main approaches: they (a) translated all instances of *well* with one or a very limited number of equivalent(s), (b) left all instances of *well* untranslated or (c) decided whether (not) to translate *well* only in specific utterances, and selected more varied equivalents to reflect the pragmatic, rhetorical and logical function(s) expressed in the source text.

Both standardised approaches, i.e. (a) and (b), often resulted in a failure to transfer the diverse pragmatic and logical functions performed by *well* in different contexts. Conversely, flexible strategies considering the communicative and linguistic context as well as the constraints typical of the hybrid translation setting under consideration appear more effective in this respect. The analysis of standardised translations in which the adoption of the same equivalent fails to mirror the multiple functions of *well* suggests that this marker can also reinforce the logical structure of the text, thus serving as a cohesive device and enhancing textual coherence (Beeching, 2016). Clearly, this calls for a specific linguistic analysis prior to translation, which is essential to identify tailor-made equivalents (e.g. the Italian markers *dunque*, *quindi*, *allora*) which cannot be considered full equivalents of *well* as a pragmatic marker, but rather mirror its implied logical function(s) and reinforce textual coherence in specific contexts. As Bazzanella (2001b) suggested, equivalents should be selected based on functional criteria and the specific context in which *well* appears.

It can then be concluded that *well* does pose specific translation problems requiring the adoption of flexible strategies, which consider the specific context of utterance as well as the wide array of pragmatic and rhetorical functions performed by this marker.

This type of analysis then throws light on and raises awareness about aspects that might otherwise pass unnoticed or be underestimated – as observed in this paper – by translators working in intermodal and/or (fictitiously) interactional

contexts. It can also serve pedagogical purposes in both second-language and translation training to foster students’ pragmatic competence, on the one hand, and their ability to identify context-based solutions instead of relying solely on direct dictionary-based equivalents, on the other.

The limitations implied in the research design, concerning the investigation of a single domain (astronomy and astrophysics) and a single target language (Italian), could be overcome by replicating the study to investigate whether (a) the function of *well* observed in the English subcorpus are typical of the specific subject field considered or rather of the hybrid genre of *TED Talks* in general, and (b) the same standardised approach is also adopted in translations other than Italian. The sociolinguistic analysis could also be further expanded by considering samples including a higher number of female speakers and/or by exploring the relation between the use of *well* in native and non-native *TED Talk* speakers, which was beyond the scope of this investigation.

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### Appendix 1

ID	Speaker	Title	Date	Mins	Translators
TED1	Adams Allan	The discovery that could rewrite physics	March 2014	5	B. Chiamenti; D. R. Quivu
TED2	Adams Allan	What the discovery of gravitational waves means	Feb. 2016	11	M. Bidussi; M. Panicucci
TED3	Al-Khalili Jim	How Quantum Biology Might Explain Life’s Biggest Questions	June 2015	16	V. Grassi; C. A. Dettori
TED4	Ananthaswamy Anil	What it takes to do extreme astrophysics	Dec. 2010	14	N. Pruiti; E. Montrasio
TED5	Beacham James	How we explore unanswered questions in physics	Sept. 2016	16	B. Chiamenti; J. Guidi

ID	Speaker	Title	Date	Mins	Translators
TED6	Boyajian Tabetha	The most mysterious star in the universe	Feb. 2016	14	L. Martellini; A. C. Minoli
TED7	Brain Dave	What a planet needs to sustain life	Sept. 2015	14	L. Pasquale; I. Cubalchini
TED8	Burchat Patricia	Shedding light on dark matter	March 2008	16	A. Pagani; P. Marcazzan
TED9	Cabrol Natalie	How Mars might hold the secret to the origin of life	March 2015	16	A. D'Onofrio; A. C. Minoli
TED10	Carrol Sean	Distant time and the hint of a multiverse	Jan. 2011	16	L. Leotta; E. Montrasio
TED11	Cobley Dan	What physics taught me about marketing	July 2010	8	L. Gnesi; S. Tovani
TED12	Connolly Andrew	What's the next window into our universe?	March 2014	18	E. Magni; D. Serrentino
TED13	Cowley Steven	Fusion is energy's future	July 2009	10	C. E. Giartosio; C. Boschi
TED14	Cox Brian	CERN's supercollider	March 2008	15	M. Gianella; P. Giusti
TED15	Cox Brian	What went wrong at the Large Hadron Collider	Feb. 2009	3	N. J. Wilson; E. Montrasio
TED16	Cox Brian	Why we need the explorers	April 2010	16	A. Pagani; M. Donadelli
TED17	Deutsch David	Chemical scum that dream of distant quasars	July 2005	19	A. Pagani; G. Romano
TED18	Diaz Merced Wanda	How a blind astronomer found a way to hear the stars	Feb. 2016	11	D. Fazzini; A. Fumanti
TED19	du Sautoy Marcus	Symmetry, reality's riddle	July 2009	18	V. Politi; G. Finocchiaro
TED20	Elachi Charles	The story behind the Mars Rovers	May 2008	28	G. Boschi; G. Garavagno
TED21	Freedman Wendy	This new telescope might show us the beginning of the universe	Oct. 2014	16	C. Iacomelli; M. Petrarca
TED22	Gell-Mann Murray	Beauty, truth and ... physics?	March 2007	16	M. Gianella; G. Romano
TED23	Ghez Andrea	The hunt for a supermassive black hole	July 2009	16	E. Jikina; P. Chiti

ID	Speaker	Title	Date	Mins	Translators
TED24	Giudice Gian	Why our universe might exist on a knife-edge	May 2013	14	A. C. Minoli; A. M. Perez
TED25	Green James	3 moons and a planet that could have alien life	Nov. 2015	11	M. De Bonis; A. Tadiotto
TED26	Greene Brian	Making sense of string theory	Feb. 2005	19	N. J. Wilson; M. Gianella
TED27	Greene Brian	Is our universe the only universe?	Feb. 2012	21	E. Montrasio; E. De Keyser
TED28	Harry Cliff	Have we reached the end of physics?	Dec. 2015	14	C. Coletta; M. Bidussi
TED29	Hawking Stephen	Questioning the universe	Feb. 2008	10	M. Gianella; A. Fare
TED30	Hurley-Walker Natasha	How radio telescopes show us unseen galaxies	Oct. 2016	15	V. Fappani; G. Patricola
TED31	Isler Jedidah	How I fell in love with quasars, blazars and our incredible universe	March 2015	4	A. Tadiotto; S. Ila
TED32	Isler Jedidah	The Untapped Genius That Could Change Science for the Better	Aug. 2015	14	E. Pillon; M. Panicucci
TED33	Israelian Garik	How spectroscopy could reveal alien life	July 2009	16	A. La Tessa; S. Gulgen
TED34	Jansen Fred	How to land on a comet	March 2015	18	G. Finocchiaro; C. Rios
TED35	Janvier Miho	Lessons from a solar storm chaser	Aug. 2017	6	D. Marsicola; C. B. Poecksteiner
TED36	Laberge Michel	How synchronized hammer strikes could generate nuclear fusion	March 2014	13	A. C. Minoli; A. Andreocci
TED37	Levin Janna	The sound the universe makes	March 2011	18	M. Gitto; E. Montrasio
TED38	Lin Henry	What we can learn from galaxies far, far away	Nov. 2013	7	V. Buda; I. Diana
TED39	Lisi Garrett	An 8-dimensional model of the Universe	Feb. 2008	21	B. Cima; P. S. De Castilia

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TED40	Meech Karen J.	The story of 'Oumuamua, the first visitor from another star system	April 2018	13	L. Giusepponi; E. Cavallo
TED41	Mutlu-Pakdil Burçin	A rare galaxy that's challenging our understanding of the universe	April 2018	5	S. Frascioni; S. Manunza
TED42	Nugent Carrie	Adventures of an asteroid hunter	Feb. 2016	6	G. Carroni; A. Micillo
TED43	O'Connell Aaron	Making sense of a visible quantum object	March 2011	8	M. Scalici; D. Buratti
TED44	Sasselov Dimitar	How we found hundreds of potential Earth-like planets	July 2010	18	M. Donadelli; G. Boschi
TED45	Seager Sara	The search for planets beyond our solar system	March 2015	16	L. Izzo; F. Felli
TED46	Sharma Vikram	How quantum physics can make encryption stronger	Dec. 2017	12	G. Patricola; A. Tadiotto
TED47	Shields Aomawa	How we'll find life on other planets	March 2015	5	B. Chiamenti; N. Alemanni
TED48	Shostak Seth	ET is (probably) out there – get ready	April 2012	19	S. Miotto; A.C. Minoli
TED49	Smolin Lee	Science and Democracy	Feb. 2003	12	G. Finocchiaro; P. Marcazzan
TED50	Smoot George	The design of the universe	May 2008	19	P. Marcazzan; A. Caprini
TED51	Susskind Leonard	My friend Richard Feynman	Jan. 2011	15	F. Bornatici; A. C. Minoli
TED52	Tarter Jill	Join the SETI search	Feb. 2009	21	G. Finocchiaro; G. Cicoli
TED53	Tripathi Anjali	Why Earth may someday look like Mars	Nov. 2015	12	R. Mazza; F. Minelle
TED54	Villani Cédric	What's so sexy about math?	Feb. 2016	16	A. C. Minoli; G. Ruggieri
TED55	West Geoffrey	The surprising math of cities and corporations	July 2011	18	A. M. Pérez; D. Buratti
TED56	Wolfram Stephen	Computing a theory of all knowledge	Feb. 2010	18	A. De Carolis; G. Garavagno

### Biographical notes

Carla Quinci holds a PhD in Interpreting and Translation Studies from the University of Trieste and currently is Research Fellow in English Language and Translation at the University of Padua (Italy). Her main research interests and publications are in the field of translation and revision, with special reference to the definition and development of translation competence, translation quality and error assessment, empirical research in Translation Studies, corpus linguistics and IT applied to translation and revision. She is the author of a recently published Routledge monograph entitled *Translation Competence: Theory, Research and Practice* (2023).

Maria Teresa Musacchio is Full Professor of English language and translation in the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies at the University of Padua. Her research focuses, in a functional, pragmatic and cultural perspective, on issues in specialised translation and attendant fields of special languages, terminology and translation pedagogy. Since 2002 her corpus-based/driven investigations have specifically explored communication, discourse and register analysis in the language and translation of popularization of science and technology. From 2014 to 2017 she was head of the Padua unit of EU FP7 Project Slándáil – Security System for Language and Image Analysis – on emergencies and social media.