A (twofold) contrastive analysis of collocations:
Fr. *patience* – It. *pazienza*

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Abstract
In our contribution, we shall present a twofold contrastive analysis of the collocational behaviour of French *patience* and Italian *pazienza*: The analysis is contrastive, not only in the sense that the comparison takes place between two languages, but also in that we shall approach the data from two quite different methodological perspectives. In the so-called "representational" approach, the emphasis lies on the language-dependent views on the *schematic representation* of a situation or "frame" expressed by the collocations. The "instrumental" approach focuses on the *sense* of the collocations in an utterance, i. e. what the hearer/reader can be expected to have understood hearing/reading the utterance. As far as the comparison of the collocations is concerned, there appear to be interesting (and sometimes striking) differences between French and Italian. Regarding the methodological level, it turns out that both the representational and the instrumental approach yield different, yet complementary results.

1 Introduction

The contrastive analysis to be presented is twofold: on the one hand, we shall compare the collocational behaviour of French *patience* and Italian *pazienza*, on the other we shall analyze the possibilities (and the limits) of two types of methodological approaches to lexical items: the one might be called "representational" (or, more traditional, "onomasiological"), the other "instrumental".[1]

The identification of collocations, or, rather, lexical-syntactic patterns is primarily based on the retrieval of statistically significant[2] collocations from two large corpora of Italian and French newspaper articles (*La Stampa* 2002, ~ 28 mio. tokens; *Le Monde* 2002, ~ 26 mio. tokens).[3] The choice of the collocates is based on several syntactic criteria taking into account a cohesion score threshold of 10.83.[4]

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[1] For such a distinction see Keller 1994.

[2] The cohesion scores have been calculated using the log likelihood ratio as association measure (cf. Oakes 1998, 172 and Manning/Schütze 2000, 173).

[3] The texts were part-of-speech tagged and lemmatized by means of the *TreeTagger* tool and the corresponding parameter files provided by the IMS Stuttgart. The TreeTagger can be downloaded free of charge from the IMS site <http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/DecisionTreeTagger.html>. The parameter files have been provided by Achim Stein (Department of Romance Linguistics, University of Stuttgart).

[4] This corresponds to the critical value assuming a confidence level of 0.001 (see Manning/Schütze 2000, 610).

As far as the analyzed nouns are concerned, they both derive from lat. PATIENTIA, thus one might suppose that *patience* and *pazienza* are quite equivalent as far as their meaning and their collocational behaviour is concerned. Yet, while such a supposition appears to be confirmed by the definitions given in current monolingual dictionaries (e. g. *PR* and *DISC*), an analysis of the collocations of both nouns casts some doubt on their equivalence: to give only one example, the comparison of the verbs which appear with *patience/pazienza* (collocational span: 3)[5] shows the context of *pazienza* to be much more "verby" than is the case with *patience* (cf. figures 1 and 2).[6]
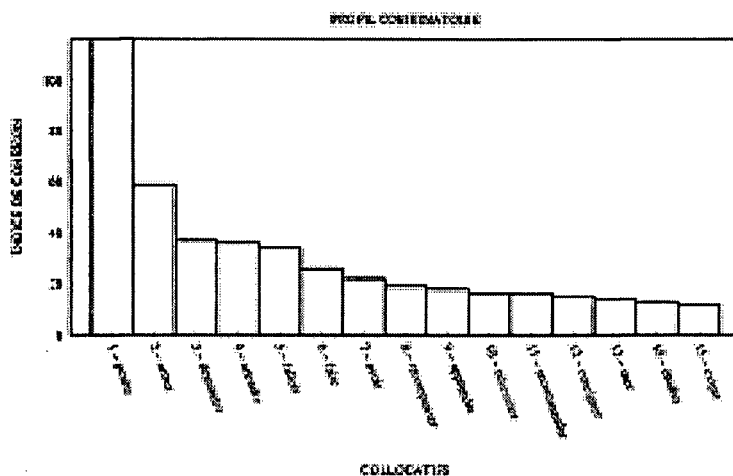

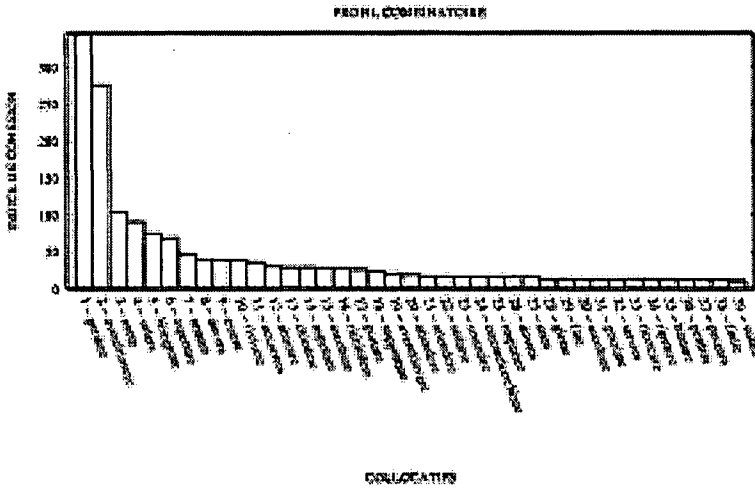**Figure 1.** Verb collocates of *patience*.

Figure 2. Verb collocates of *pazienza*.

2 The representational (onomasiological) approach

An investigation focusing on the significant Noun-Verb collocations involving *patience* and *pazienza* shows that they can be grouped into four categories, each of them representing a conceptual domain related to a different view on the schematic representation of the situation[7] (or "frame") typically denoted by the two nouns. The four categories are: EVENT CONTOURS AND CAUSATION (C1), LACK AND NECESSITY (C2), EVALUATION AND CONSEQUENCES (C3), ACQUIREMENT OF CAPACITY AND INSTRUCTION (C4).

Figure 3 illustrates a summarized sketch of the relevant part of the nouns' combinational profiles[8] indicating in addition the relative weight of the elicited onomasiological categories.

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[7] The concept of semantic valency and schematic representation of a situation defended here largely draws on the ideas presented in Apresjan (1992). The semantic valency of *patience* and *pazienza* respectively involves two participant variables, roughly speaking the EXPERIENCER (X) and the ACT (Y) X IS EXPECTED TO PERFORM or not.

[8] The combinational profile is defined by Blumenthal (2002, 116) as the schematic structure of the syntactic and semantic environment of a word as the result of an analysis on a large corpus.

Category	*patience*		*pazienza*	
	Collocates	Weight	Collocates	Weight
C1 (EVENT CONTOURS AND CAUSATION)	*perdre, s'armer, avoir ...*	0.669	*perdere, avere, armarsi ...*	0.834
C2 (LACK AND NECESSITY)	*demander, falloir ...*	0.226	*volerci, occorrere ...*	0.138
C3 (EVALUATION AND CONSEQUENCES)	*recommander, récompenser*	0.055	*chiedere, sedurre*	0.028
C4 (ACQUIREMENT OF CAPACITY AND INSTRUCTION)	*apprendre, enseigner*	0.051	-	0.000

Figure 3. The combinational profiles of *patience/pazienza*
with respect to their verb collocates' onomasiological categories

The first observation made is the lack of ACQUIREMENT OF CAPACITY AND INSTRUCTION verbs in the combinational profile of *pazienza*. Nonetheless, in both languages there are other statistically significant collocations (cf. e.g. *un esercizio di pazienza* and *école de patience*). The frame may be expressed in a different word class, yet the stated discrepancy pertains in relation to the overall onomasiological context (weight).[9]

A second observation is that at first glance there only seems to be a moderate contrast between the remaining onomasiological categories C1, C2 and C3: the noun *patience* only has a slightly more balanced profile than *pazienza*. Considerable differences become evident as soon as we start to consider the weight of each verb collocate in relation to the other members of the same category, as illustrated in figure 4.

Let us take a more striking example of divergent weight with the collocates *avoir* and *avere*. Both of them provide an event-focussing perspective on the situation denoted by *patience* and *pazienza* respectively. A closer look at the corresponding lexical-syntactic patterns reveals that *avere (la) pazienza (di V)* tends to occur in a deontic modal construction much more frequently than their French counterparts; see the corpus examples given in (1) and (2).

EVENT CONTOURS AND CAUSATION (C1)			
patience		*pazienza*	
Collocate	Weight	Collocate	Weight
perdre	0.622	*avere*	0.467
s'armer	0.286	*perdere*	0.440
avoir	0.072	*armarsi*	0.047
user	0.020	*abusare*	0.026
-	-	*portare*	0.020
-	-	*finire*	0.002

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[9] The cohesion scores of *un esercizio di pazienza* and *école de patience* are 26.901 and 23.621.

LACK AND NECESSITY (C2)			
patience		**pazienza**	
Collocate	**Weight**	**Collocate**	**Weight**
demander	0.460	*volerci*	0.637
falloir	0.419	*occorrere*	0.200
nécessiter	0.096	*richiedere*	0.135
exiger	0.025	*servire*	0.029

Figure 4. The weight of the verb collocates of *patience/pazienza* inside C1 and C2

(1)   Quando il dato non è di buona qualità, e deve ancora essere affinato, *bisogna avere la pazienza di aspettare*.

(2)   I pompieri stanno facendo oltre le loro possibilità per aiutare i paesi più colpiti, ma di acqua [...] non ce n'è per tutti. "Ci hanno detto – spiega Ferrino – che *dobbiamo avere pazienza*, che dobbiamo metterci in coda e aspettare. Prima di noi ci sono altri già prenotati".

This tendency seems to be even more noteworthy if we also take into consideration that, with respect to the entire inventory of elicited conceptual categories, the French verbs collocating with *patience* and expressing the idea of NECESSITY are of greater weight than the Italian verbs collocating with *pazienza* (the proportion being 0,226: 0,138; see fig. 3). An in-depth analysis reveals how these verbs can be used to express the deontic modality of obligation with regards to the situation denoted by *patience/pazienza*. In particular, we emphasize the various possibilities, provided by different lexical-syntactic patterns, to encode the semantic valency[10] which can be derived from the schematic situational representation related to these two nouns. To give but one example, *pazienza* can be used in constructions such as *ci vuole/occorre pazienza* while in its French counterparts it appears to be necessary to specify the EXPERIENCER (X) and/or the ACT EXPECTED TO BE PERFORMED (Y) (*il faut de la patience à X pour faire Y*). Thus, one might suggest that, at least in certain lexical-syntactic patterns, *pazienza* is more saturated in a Fregian sense[11] than *patience*.

3 The instrumental approach

What insights can be gained from an instrumental point of view? First of all, what is called "instrumental approach" here, consists in a theoretical perspective ("theoretical" in the sense of "theory of language") which assumes communication to be the central purpose of language use.[12] "Communication" here means an act performed by a speaker A with the in-

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[10] Cf. note 7.

[11] Cf. Frege 1969, 66 ssq.

[12] That an "operational" approach could have any value of his own, has been often denied; cf., e. g., Ullmann 1962, 55 and 67. As it will become clear from what follows, there are instances of language use (preaching, certain literary texts) which have quite different purposes.

tention to initiate a process of interpretation (of A's utterance(s)) in his interlocutor B in order to identify the goal A pursues by his act, i. e. to understand the sense of A's utterance(s).[13] A text, then, can be seen as a highly conventionalised structured trigger for performing cognitive operations.[14] Furthermore, in this approach a given combination of linguistic units (an utterance) is considered to be a *medium* by which a specific communicative intention is realised, i. e. by which it is possible to give such an intention a recognisable linguistic *form*.[15] To give an example, the collocation *pazienza se...*, which has by far the highest cohesion score in the corpus (431.941!), has less to do with "patience" in the sense of "atteggiamento, disposizione interiore di chi sopporta avversità, difficoltà, contrattempi ecc. con rassegnazione e serenità, senza fretta" (*DISC*), but serves regularly to express that "A is well aware of the current state of affairs (and their possible consequences) which, in turn, stand in contradiction to what might have been expected":

(3) a. [...] Nicole Kidman, che per aver eccelso in "Moulin Rouge" e "The Others", si può tranquillamente proclamare l'attrice del 2001: *e pazienza se le giurie di Cannes e di Venezia si sono perse l'occasione di premiarla.*
   b. Meglio tenersi stretta la Provincia, *e pazienza se sarà in condominio con Forza Italia e gli altri.*

One might well argue that what is of relevance here, is rather the encoding of particular messages (*parole*) than the lexical meaning of *pazienza* (*langue*),[16] yet one must not forget that *pazienza se* is a statistically significant, recurrent pattern, completely absent with *patience*. The collocation *armarsi di pazienza* (cohesion score: 47,149), in turn, has *s'armer de patience* (cohesion score: 59,352) as its seeming French homologue, but here, too, one finds a remarkable difference. Let us compare the examples given in (4) and (5):

(4)   Per comprendere l'ordito criminale delle nuove Brigate Rosse *occorre armarsi di pazienza* e [...] leggere la lunga risoluzione diffusa ieri [...].
(5)   Lui [Bruno Mégret] qui misait sur la disparition politique du leader de l'extrême droite pour émerger et en devenir le chef a réalisé, dimanche soir, qu'il lui faudrait *s'armer de patience.*

Armarsi di pazienza appears to be used when talking about situations where 'being patient' normally is not a quasi-necessary condition in order to successfully perform the action

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[13] Cf. Keller 1994, 105 sq. for more details. In fact, this seemingly complex definition not only describes what normally has occurred when B says that he has understood what A wanted to say, but covers also the contrary case (B didn't understand what A wanted to say): the process of interpretation, then, could not be brought to an end such as to identify the communicative goal pursued by A.

[14] Cf. Schmidt 2¹996, 139. From this point of view, communication and cognition are regarded as two substantially different, yet interdependent systems.

[15] The distinction "medium – form", as it is intended here, is discussed in Luhmann 1997, 165 sqq.

[16] Cf. Ullmann 1964, 24 sq.

in question (cf. read a text), while *s'armer de patience* implies a situation well involving patience (cf. *mettre sur la disparition*), but where, after all, a greater deal of patience is necessary. With this explanation in mind, one may get a better understanding of the essence of the following examples:

(6) Ogni volta ci dovremo porre il quesito sulla tipologia di *treno che dobbiamo prendere*, sperando di azzeccare la stazione esatta. O rischiamo, una volta arrivati a Porta Susa, di *armarci di pazienza* e bagagli per trasferirci al Lingotto e prendere un treno per la Riviera.

(7) Cette quête du dimanche entraîne les acquéreurs potentiels dans *une course de longue haleine*, jusqu'au jour où ils trouveront leur bonheur, fruit d'un compromis entre le souhaitable et le possible. [...] Le système en vigueur [...] n'arrange rien à l'affaire. *Aussi faut-il s'armer de patience*.

Common to both Italian and French "patience" is also the collocate *perdere/perdre* (cohesion score: 116.278/345.923), but here again, one finds a significant difference: *perdere la pazienza* announces a rather drastic change, e. g. in the behaviour of somebody (cf. "arrabiarsi" in *DISC*), while *perdre la patience* is to be interpreted more literally ("having been patient for a long time ..."):

(8) La Maratona è stata ammirevole nell'incitare la squadra fino allo 0-2. Poi, *ha perso la pazienza e nel mirino sono finiti tutti*: naturalmente la dirigenza, ma anche i giocatori e pure Ulivieri, il sostituto di Camolese che sta facendo peggio del predecessore.

(9) En revanche, Hugo Chavez accepte le principe d'un "référendum révocatoire" qui, conformément à la Constitution, pourrait avoir lieu *en août 2003*. L'opposition *a perdu patience* et veut obtenir la démission *immédiate* de ce président.

Is there any feature common to the examples (3)-(9)? The usage possibilities of *pazienza* are far less conditioned by the preceding events than is the case with *patience*. *Patience* is much more bound by the foregoing context: its uses can be quite easily reflected as a clear-cut dictionary definition: "une activité, un travail de longue haleine" (*PR*). Further evidence for such a difference between the Italian and the French nouns can be obtained from the collocation *aspettare/attendere con pazienza* which is statistically significant and also quite frequent in *La Stampa*, while *attendre avec patience* is completely missing in *Le Monde*, where one usually finds *ne pas avoir la patience d'attendre*. Thus, *patience* seems to contain the aspect of "time (elapsing)" in, at least, a higher degree than its Italian counterpart.

4 Conclusion

Since any method necessarily has its blind spot, this is also the case for the two approaches presented here: it is difficult if not impossible in a representational framework to systematically account for the results obtainable within the instrumental approach, which in turn must assume as "given" the state of affairs designated by the lexical unit under investigation. This problem can be easily reduced by combining two quite different methods.

The emphasis, here, is to try and show that in spite of Ullmann's critical (and scarcely contradicted) opinion regarding the instrumental approach, this approach is not just ancillary, but has in fact a fair amount of explanatory power.[17]

The results obtained in §§ 2 and 3 not only turned out to be non-contradictory and complementary, but also to converge: the less saturated character of *patience* with respect to *pazienza*, as emerges from the onomasiological analysis, fits well with the fact that the use of *pazienza* is less dependent on the preceding events. The latter observation is even more important, because the convergence of the results yielded by these two methodologically independent approaches provides quite strong evidence that the difference stated between *pazienza* and *patience* belongs indeed to language and is not an artifact of description.

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[17] Cf. Keller 1994 and also the "instrumental" analysis of the Italian *euforia* and *entusiasmo* in Fesenmeier 2005.