Summary of my dissertation

The aim of my dissertation was to analyse a corpus obtained from video recordings of the TV programme *Unomattina* relating to the invasion of Iraq in 2001, which involved the use of interpreters. Compared to conference settings, TV work requires considerable flexibility of interpreters, calling for particular standards of voice and message quality. It may also require interpreters to take on new roles which do not simply involve message transmission in the manner of conference settings.

One such case was the RAIUNO infotainment programme *Unomattina* in 2001, where perhaps for the first time in the history of Italian television, interpreters were asked to play the role of journalists, reporting about what they had seen and heard on CNN and Al Jazeera. 35 episodes of the programme were transcribed and encoded following the norms of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) so that they could be analysed as a corpus using XAIRA (Dodd, 2008). The corpus (40,365 words) was built with the objective of comparing three roles played by participants in the programme, interpreters-as-interpreters (ii, namely interpreters playing their traditional role, mainly in the simultaneous mode), interpreters-as-journalists (ij, namely interpreters relating news from CNN and Al Jazeera) and journalists-as-journalists (jj, namely foreign correspondents dealing with foreign information), and of assessing the extent to which talk in these different roles is similar.

If we assume that interpreters' and journalists' talk is judged by the same standards, those of TV newsreaders and commentators (Kurz, 1990: 169), any differences may be seen as failures on the part of the interpreters to sound as telegenic as journalists. Identifying such differences may therefore allow us to clarify what is needed, in addition to general training in interpreting schools and to experience in conference settings, to be able to meet TV requirements. In positive terms this means that knowing those differences, interpreters may be able to train themselves and to sound more telegenic.

To effect the comparison between jj and ij, and between ij and ii, 12 linguistic variables were selected on the basis of the literature on broadcast journalism (Diadori 1997, Maraschio 1997, Bonomi 2002, Petrone 2004 and Mazzei 2005). These variables were:

1. Parataxis and hypotaxis
2. Reported speech
3. Relatives
4. Discourse markers
5. Pronouns
6. Intensifying adverbs
7. C'è / ci sono
8. Truncations
9. Markers of explanation and second person reference
10. Reference
11. Turn-taking and overlaps
12. Pauses and emphasis

This final list of variables was the result of a double process of selection. On the one hand, variables were selected starting from a wider list of possible analysable linguistic features, and progressively sorting out those which were useful to analyse our corpus. The "indicative vs. subjunctive" variable suggested by Maraschio in her linguistic account of radio talk (1997), for instance, was not taken into consideration, since our corpus was not lemmatized and it would have been impossible to look for verbal tenses automatically. The same happened with Diadori's (1997) "tone" or Petrone's (2005) "body language", because a search for these kinds of variables would have required tagging data with information on the tone of voice or the gestures, which was not easy nor objectively quantifiable. The final list was therefore drawn screening a table of more than 40 variables and only keeping those which were likely to prove useful in our analysis. But this was not the only selection method. On the other hand, variables were selected while daily transcribing data. The "empirical observation of regularities" (Straniero Sergio, 1999: 323) helped me notice some recurrent linguistic features, e.g. intensifying adverbs, and made me decide for their inclusion in the final list.

As you may notice, with the exception of pauses and emphasis which were not taken into consideration in the discussion of results, the final list only includes readily and objectively quantifiable features. One may easily count the occurrences of hypotactic or paratactic conjunctions, or check the use of first person pronouns. The same would be for pauses and emphasis, which were both tagged in the corpus. The problem is, however, that neither pauses nor emphasis can be objectively transcribed. Another transcriber could hear a pause were I did not and vice versa, which made it extremely difficult to treat such subjectively perceived features. Excluding pauses and emphasis for the above-mentioned reasons, I ended up with 11 variables. Not only were these variables easily quantifiable, hence analysable using the software Xaira, but they were also indicators of "footing" (Goffman, 1981) changes and sociolinguistic phenomena involved in TV interpreting. To quote Levinson (1983: 40), "significant **functional** explanations can be offered for linguistic facts". The latter can therefore be used to quantify the occurrences of certain phenomena and subsequently provide their functional interpretation.

Before introducing and discussing results, it may be worth explaining how these variables were categorized, and why we decided to give them those three specific functional explanations. The following Figure shows how individual variables were connected with the functional interpretation we gave: features in purple are indicators of turn management, features in blue are indicators of care for the audience, and features in yellow are indicators of footing differences.

TURN MANAGEMENT	**CARE FOR THE AUDIENCE**	**FOOTING**

1. Parataxis and hypotaxis
2. Reported speech
3. Relatives
4. Discourse markers
5. Pronouns
6. Intensifying adverbs
7. C'è / ci sono
8. Truncations
9. Markers of explanation and second person reference
10. Reference
11. Turn-taking and overlaps   (including Presenter's behaviour)
12. Pauses and emphasis

As you can see in the table, three main functional interpretation were given when discussing results for the 11 variables: turn management, care for the audience and footing.

As for turn management, the analysis of turn-taking and overlaps and the count of words per utterance in particular showed some noticeable differences between jj and ij, and between ij and ii. More precisely, we found that the words/utterance ratio was very different in the three roles: 103.5 in jj, 49.1 in ij and 55.9 in ii. These data suggest that, despite all the similarities we could find between the roles of jj and ij, and despite all ij's efforts to sound as journalistic as possible, a significant difference would however remain. Regardless of what they say and how they say it, journalists are allocated longer turns than interpreters-as-journalists or interpreters-as-interpreters. The functional explanation we gave is that turn management differs in the three roles, and that in spite of their being flexible enough as to adjust to added TV requirements, interpreters have turns that are half the length of journalists'. Which may be due to overarching features of the programme or to the fact that, as we will see when discussing footing, interpreters play the role of journalist but do not cover some of the footings covered by jj, probably those implying longer turns.

Under the label "care for the audience", we find 1) parataxis and hypotaxis, 3) relatives, 4) discourse markers, 9) markers of explanation and second person reference and 10) reference. This care was primarily called "cortesia didascalica", borrowing Mazzei's (2005: 169) definition of the attitude journalists should have with respect to their audience, one which includes a big use of repetitions and explanations. It was then turned into the more general "care for the audience" in order to cover, together with repetitions and explanations, a number of linguistic phenomena showing journalists' (and possibly interpreter's) awareness of working on two different planes of communication (Dodd, 1983): the Internal plane among participants in the programme and the External plane between participants in the programme and TV viewers at home. In his manual about radio and TV journalism, Mazzei (2005) lists a number of things journalist should do in order to be good journalists. Among those we find coordination, since coordination is easier to listen to, and discourse markers, since they help make the speech more easily comprehensible and mentally digestible. As for relatives, in her study on radio talk Maraschio (1997) pointed out that

the simple relative "che" is privileged to the complex "il/la quale" and "i/le quali". I therefore thought that the use of simple relatives rather than complex ones could show the effort to sound as clear as possible, paying attention at a non homogeneous public. As for reference, it was by reading Dodd (1983) and by observing transcriptions that I became aware of its importance, and of the role it can play in involving the audience. This is why reference was also considered as an indicator of care for the audience.

To conclude on footing, this functional interpretation was given on the basis of results for three variables: pronouns (specially first person pronouns), intensifying adverbs and presenter's behaviour and talk. Having found that jj use first person pronouns and intensifying adverbs a lot while ij do not, I interpreted this as related to footing changes. For Goffman a change in footing in discourse "implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present"(1981: 128). Bearing this definition in mind I thought that speaking "I" and using intensifying adverbs equals to expressing one's own opinions and personal stances. The fact that journalists, as you will see in the results' table, use first person pronouns and adverbs means that they are in a position, hence a footing, to do so. In spite of their playing a journalistic role, interpreters do not cover this – so to say – personal footing, but only the footing involving news giving and relating. This difference in footing was further shown by the different attitude presenters have when addressing jj and ij. Being generally very kind and friendly to jj, presenters talk more formally when addressing ij, who they call using the last name or expressions like "signora" or "CNN" instead of the first name as happens with jj. Once again, jj and ij play the same role, that of journalists relating news, but ij do not seem to include the footing of "friends taking part in the programme" which is so typical for journalists.

Now we have explained variables and their functional explanations, let's sum up the main differences we found in the occurrences of these variables in each role. It may be worth remembering at this point that variables were retrieved and quantified using Xaira, then analysed in order to test our null hypothesis, namely that there were no differences between journalists' and interpreters' talk:

$$H0 = H1 = H2$$

$$H0 = \text{Journalists' talk} = \text{Interpreters' talk}$$

VARIABLES	jj = ij	VARIABLES	ij = ii
1. Parataxis and hypotaxis	≠	1. Parataxis and hypotaxis	≠
2. Reported speech	≈	2. Reported speech	≈
3. Relatives	≠	3. Relatives	≠
4. Discourse markers	≠	4. Discourse markers	≈
5. Pronouns	≈	5. Pronouns	≠
6. Intensifying adverbs	≠	6. Intensifying adverbs	≈
7. C'è / ci sono	≈	7. C'è / ci sono	≠
8. Truncations	≈	8. Truncations	≠
9. Markers of explanation and second person reference	≠	9. Markers of explanation and second person reference	≈
10. Reference	≠	10. Reference	≠
11. Turn-taking and overlaps	≈	11. Turn-taking and overlaps	≠
12. Pauses and emphasis	?	12. Pauses and emphasis	?

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As you can see from the table, where ≈ stands for "similar"and ≠ stands for "different" (by rule of thumb we only considered noticeable differences of more than 3 occurrences/1,000), the comparison between jj and ij and between ij and ii both showed that differences in frequencies for the variables we had chosen noticeably outweighed similarities. We therefore concluded that the null hypothesis was disconfirmed

$$H0 = H1 \neq H2$$

H0 = Journalists' talk ≠ Interpreters' talk

and tried to provide functional explanations of these results.

The analysis seemed to suggest that while some differences, which I have labelled "care for the audience", may directly depend on interpreters, others, mainly under the label "footing", appear linked to the TV context and therefore not directly controllable by the interpreter.

As far as "care for the audience" is concerned, we found in jj a major use of coordination, discourse markers, explanations, second person reference and *che* relatives, and we stated that those variables might signal the journalists' recipient designed talk. The noticeably lower frequencies for those variables in ij seemed to suggest that interpreters generally design their talk only for people on the Internal axis of communication (those participating in the programme), whereas journalists also address the recipients of External communication (the audience at home). The different use of Internal and External planes of communication (Dodd, 1983) may have, we shall argue, consequences in the viewers' degree of involvement and hence affect their judgements. By trying and using the above-mentioned features more, e.g. using more discourse markers which tend to make their talk more recipient-digestible, interpreters could sound closer to journalist's talk and consequently be positively judged by viewers, who are on the external, but fundamental, plane of communication.

On the other hand, there are features which may not fall directly under the interpreter's control. This is the case for some linguistic variables, such as turn-length, first person pronouns, intensifying adverbs and informal talk which, we shall argue, could indicate footing shifts within the same role. More precisely, jj take longer turns than ij, which suggest their role allows them to; they use *io* and *noi,* which indicates that their role allows them to express their personal opinions and experience; they often intensify what they say, which again shows they can take a personal stance on what they relate; and finally, they are well-known figures addressed by name and with friendly language, who relate the latest news from the field, and are therefore in the position of being able to provide further information or to answer specific questions by the presenters. Despite their playing a journalistic role, ij are the opposite in many of these respects: they have shorter turns, they never use first person pronouns, they avoid intensifying adverbs, they are more rarely addressed with first names and friendly talk and they are not in a position to provide further information or answer specific questions, since they are not foreign correspondents talking from

the field but rather reporters far from the scene. This could mean that jj and ij are not symmetrical roles, since jj allows for certain footings which are not equally tolerated in ij. With respect to footing, ij talk is subject to overarching principles regulating the programme and its participants, and they can do nothing but accept their new, and limited, role of journalists.

Conclusions were drawn in terms of the meaning of interpreter flexibility, as identified in our corpus, and the gap between working in conferences and on TV. Establishing the differences between the three roles examined clarified what interpreters may need in order to meet the requirements of TV programmers and recipients, namely a greater use of coordination, "che" relatives, discourse markers, explanations and second person reference.

My dissertation investigated only one of the possible manifestations of flexibility in media settings, identifying only a limited range of variables for analysis, to determine some quantifiable differences between the roles of jj, ij and ii. Nonetheless it seemed able to provide useful information for would-be TV interpreters, potentially helping them become aware of what they can do to sound more telegenic, and of what they should know to fit in television contexts.

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