

NORMS AND QUALITY IN MEDIA INTERPRETING: THE CASE OF FORMULA ONE PRESS-CONFERENCES

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1. Introduction

Research on quality in simultaneous interpreting (SI) seems to be polarized, if not paralysed, in the following two directions:

- 1) speculative studies which suggest how a text 'may', 'should' or 'should have been' translated
- 2) experimental and/or case studies which analyse individual SI performances to see whether they correspond to pre-established quality criteria

The first case is to do with *pedagogic quality*, which falls within the evaluation activity institutionally carried out by the teachers of interpretation. The features of a text are analysed, highlighting problems which give students useful suggestions on how to solve them. The second case is to do with *laboratory quality*. Through the hypothesis testing method, evaluation is limited to those aspects and variables selected and decided upon by the experimenter. Both cases deal with *simulated quality*, i.e. acts of evaluation which do not concern real communicative acts (speeches translated in real contexts), but *simulated acts* based on the 'as if' principle (cf. Straniero Sergio 1999a).

As will be shown later (cf. § 5), the elimination of the situational context – in which the interpreted event takes place – creates a gap between *ideal* (academic) *quality* and *situated* (real-world) *quality*. Conversely, adopting a *descriptive* (and not *prescriptive*) approach, we ask ourselves how a text 'has been' translated and not how it 'could be', 'could have been' or 'should have been' translated. Paraphrasing the title of Chesterman's article (1993), it is a matter of passing "From 'Ought' to 'Is'. The constant observation over time of the translational behaviour of interpreters (in real situations) will bring *norms* to the surface (Toury 1980, 1995; Baker 1993; Chesterman 1993; Schäffner 1999), which will define the concept of *quality* within the framework of an *ethics of translation*. As Pym (2001) writes:

[...] ethics is now a broadly contextual question, dependent on practice in specific cultural locations and situational determinants. It concerns people, perhaps more than texts. It involves dynamics, seeking specific goals, challenging established norms, and bringing theory closer to historical practice

To respond to the pressing need for authentic data on SI, I started (in 1998) to collect a large corpus on Media Interpreting (MI), made up of 1200

interpreters' performances (both in simultaneous and consecutive modes). The objective was to trace the history of MI, above all in its two fundamental genres: *talk shows* and *media events*, highlighting the characteristics which make MI different from both Conference Interpreting and other forms of Dialogue Interpreting.

For the purpose of this article, I will consider the SI of the press conferences that drivers give at the end of the Formula One Grand Prix (hereinafter to be known as FPC), broadcast live by the RAI (Italian Broadcasting Company). It is a representative subcorpus of MI in the sense that, like many media texts, it challenges the standard quality expectations of SI, raising interesting questions on the "fallibility" of SI (Pearl 1999), and questions its function on television. In the next paragraphs, after reviewing the main features of this media genre (§ 2), interpreters' performances will be analysed in terms of *regularities of translational behaviour* in order to identify the existence of norms (§ 3). Finally, the concept of quality will be discussed in the broader MI context (§ 4-5).

2. Textual features of FPC

FPCs can be described in terms of dialogicity, brevity, intertextuality and rituality.

- a) DIALOGICITY. It is a text which belongs to the "interview" genre and, more specifically, "the press conference" format. However, unlike Conference Interpreting, there is no shared situationality. Interpreters have no access to the primary participants who are totally unaware that in Rome a SI of their interview is going on.
- b) BREVITY. On average, each conference lasts four minutes with no more than six questions. The exchange is made up of very short turns. Questions follow one another, with no follow-up, i.e. the interviewer does not ask a question related to the answer. In many cases, the satellite link is established up to a couple of minutes after the conference has started. This means that the first question and/or the first answer – even entire sequences – may be omitted altogether. More often than not the voices of the reporters (on the circuit) and/or that of the presenter (in the studio) overlap with the images of drivers and the voices of the interpreters. Conferences usually terminate abruptly with the arrival of the signature tune which interrupts the interpreter mid-sentence.
- c) INTERTEXTUALITY. It is a text which presupposes the existence of a pre-text, i.e. the race which is re-experienced and explained through the words of its protagonists. Hence the importance of the intertextual dimension, i.e. the narration is based on continuous references to what happened during the race. Moreover, the conference is embedded in a larger text represented by the

talk show *Pole Position* which precedes and follows the broadcast of the Grand Prix¹.

- d) RITUALITY. It is a regular event which takes place fortnightly, throughout the season (from March to October). This temporal repetitiveness is matched with the rituality of answers and particularly of questions. The interviewer (voice off), congratulates the winners and asks them to express their feelings and to talk of the most exciting moments of the race. This is invariably followed by questions on the classification, testing and forecasts for the next Grand Prix. On their part, drivers express their satisfaction or regret, thank their teams and explain how the competition went.

2.1. Lexicon

FPC jargon is obviously characterized by the presence of technical terms. Most of them concern car components, driving features, the circuit, regulations and the team:

aerodynamics; aquaplaning; anti-stall system on the transmission; Arrows; attrition; backmarker; barge board; braking point; bump; chassis; chequered flag; chicane; circuit; cockpit; compound; corner; dashboard; differential; downforce; engine; escape road; floor; foot clutch; free practice; front suspension; front wing end plate; fuel-wise; g-force; gearbox; grandstands; grass; grid; groove (tyres); grip levels; hand clutch; handling (of the car); (to stay fairly consistent); intermediates; hairpin; kerb; lap; infield; marshals; left handers; nose cone; (the) officials; oversteering; parc ferme; pit; pit crew; pit lane; pit stop; pit wall; pole position; power steering; qualifying; racing line; revs; rpm; rubber; run-off area; set-up; slipstream; stadium section; stint; straight; third gear; throttle; track; traffic; tyres; underfloor diffuser; understeering; wall; wheelbase; wheelspin; to be red-flagged; yellow flags, the Safety Car; the people in the factory.

There are many verbs which describe the speed, the movements of cars, the actions taken by drivers, the lead they have etc. Often these expressions occur in synthetic syntactic constructions²

to back off; to beat s.o. off the line; to be beaten away from the line by s.o.; to be clear of s.o.; to be in the lead; to beat s.o. into the first corner; to break s.o. down; to build up a lead; to build up quite a gap; to catch up

1 This "textual" dependence has also to do with programming. If *Pole Position* is not aired (because of a strike or other reasons), then neither will FPC.

2 However there are very few noun strings of the "low downforce aerodynamic package" type, which would be typical of technical language.

with s.o.; to be caught out; to be caught behind s.o.; to carry along; to challenge; to chase; to clip an inside kerb; to coast round the corner; to crash off; to drive around the outside of s.o.; to drive flat out; to drive into s.o.; to drive away; to drive down inside s.o.; to ease off; to ease up; to find a way to past s.o.; to gain some track time; to get a tow from s.o.; to get off into the lead; to go round the outside; to get away; to go down the inside of s.o.; to go into the lead; to go on the inside; to go up front; to go sideways; to go wide; to hit a bit of traffic; to hang with s.o.; to have a clean run on s.o. on the outside; to have s.o. on one's tail; to hold the lead; to hold s.o. off; to hold station; to jump; to be leading to the points; to make a great getaway; to make headway; to make a big gap; to nip through; to out-accelerate s.o.; to outbreak one's competitors; to overshoot; to pass on the outside; to pass s.o. on the line; to pick up the pace; to pull the clutch in and coast round the corner; to put in two very fast laps; to race; to roll backwards; to roll forward; to run off (the circuit); to run wide; to run low wing; to shift revs; to slide wide; to sneak through; to spin off; to spit down; to squeeze back; to stay close; to step up a gear; to be tapped up; to throw the car through the corners; to tuck under s.o.'s car's rear wing.

Particularly frequent are the verbs "to close", "to push" and "to pull":

to close up; to close up on s.o.; to be closing on s.o.; to close back up on s.o.; to close the door on s.o.; to be close behind; to pull away from s.o.; to pull the car back; to pull in very tight to the inside of corner; to pull out a big enough gap, to pull out a useful lead; to pull out 20 seconds on s.o.; to pull over to get on to the line; to pull over and almost stop; to push hard; to push like hell to get s.o.; to push the car more to the limit.

The intensity of the actions is often conveyed by colloquial expressions and idioms:

to be going great guns; flat out all the time; to be on the ball; to get on to the marbles; to be at the back of the pack; to be behind the leading pack; to hang on by the skin of our teeth; to break the jinx of pole position after 12 races; you got squeezed out of a position at the start.

The technical jargon is, in fact, far from being the only register. Drivers frequently use metaphors, hyperboles and a colourful ordinary language:

I'm very happy, after the difficult start to the season. It is very much like oil on my soul (San Marino 1997); I was just bombing along to the finish (San Marino 1997); it was a question of pushing like a maniac (Europe 1997); I was so hyped up that I still went for it (Japan 1998); everything was pretty cool (Monaco 1998); last year was a bit of mess, but still the race was very good (Austria 1999); the car was understeering like a pig (Austria 1999); at the moment McLaren seems to have the legs on us

(Austria 1999); Mika's doing a blinding job and both titles could be on the cards (Germany 1999); I have never been psyched by the achievements of Mika or Michael, or anybody against whom I am competing (Monaco 2000); the car is so bloody fast (Australia 2000); in fact it's going to be close with Ferrari all year. So stay tuned! (Monaco 2000); I was saying to Giancarlo that I've never been behind such a messy car (Belgium 2001); Michael is a hell of a driver (Malaysia 2001); I had the upper hand the whole stint (Canada 2001); it was a hell of a race (France 2001); I was a bit pissed off (Malaysia 2002).

The interaction takes place in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, in which speakers laugh, joke and slap each other on the back. Drivers address colleagues and mechanics using the first names or only the initials of the name. For example: "although I was behind Jos [Verstappen]" (Malaysia 2001), "after DC [David Coulthard] outraked me on the outside" (Malaysia 2000), "until RB [Rubens Barrichello] was out" (Canada 2000).

3. Emergency strategies as translational norms

Our subcorpus makes it possible to analyse 80 performances by 11 professional media interpreters over an extended time period (1997-2002). Two interpreters account for nearly 90% of the whole corpus (with respectively 31 and 30 SI each); three interpreters translated 4 and 5 FPCs each, and six interpreters put themselves through this ordeal only once. The analysis indubitably shows that FPC is a terrible experience for all the interpreters and none of them could be said to actually manage to convey the text thoroughly (cf. tab. 1-2). Suffice to say that out of 512 drivers' answers as many as 249 were incorrect. By "incorrect" we mean those interpreted answers which contain blatant distortions of the original sense and/or deletions of relevant information³. Interpreters performed better in the translation of questions: 403 correct vs 95 incorrect. This difference in performance was due to the fact that questions may be inferred by replies and, even though the questions are then generalised, reduced and/or summarized, their original meaning is less likely to be severely distorted. The factors accounting for such a poor performance in the translation of answers – in addition to those seen in § 2 – are the accents of the 11 non-English native drivers⁴, whose incorrect answers amount to 139. At the same time, however, the accents of the Scottish David Coulthard and the Irish Eddie Irvine (present in 53 of the FPCs analysed) create enormous difficulties for interpreters (cf. tab. 3-4): out of 132 answers, 110 were wrong and 22 correct. In particular, out

3 The data on *delivery* will not be discussed here.

4 See, for example, in [81], the problems caused by the pronunciation of "fourth" by the Finnish Mika Häkkinen.

of 82 answers by Coulthard, only 18 can be considered correct. The data on Irvine are even worse: 4 correct answers out of 50. Moreover, the two British drivers are the speakers with the highest speech rate and the highest density of technical words. The approach adopted in analysing the interpreters' performances is not that of *error analysis*, the focus being on the identification of a *common translational practice*. The data show that in order to cope with the constraints posed by FPC, all 11 interpreters adopt *emergency strategies*, i.e. strategies which usually are considered 'last resort' but in this type of SI they become *the norm*.

INTERPRETERS	FPC	ANSWERS	CORRECT	INCORRECT
1	31	188	132	56
2	30	196	65	131
3	5	32	17	15
4	4	30	25	5
5	4	30	11	19
6	1	5	3	2
7	1	8	3	5
8	1	3	0	3
9	1	5	2	3
10	1	8	3	5
11	1	7	2	5
TOTAL	80	512	263	249

Table 1

INTERPRETERS	FPC	QUESTIONS	CORRECT	INCORRECT
1	31	184	173	11
2	30	190	133	57
3	5	32	29	3
4	4	30	22	8
5	4	28	24	4
6	1	5	2	3
7	1	8	5	3
8	1	2	1	1
9	1	5	4	1
10	1	7	5	2
11	1	7	5	2
TOTAL	80	498	403	95

Table 2

INTERPRETERS	FPC COULTHARD	ANSWERS	CORRECT	INCORRECT
1	14	25	6	19
2	11	28	3	25
3	2	4	0	4
4	3	9	0	9
5	3	12	9	3
6	1	1	0	1
7	1	2	0	2
8	1	1	0	1
9	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	36	82	18	64

Table 3

INTERPRETERS	FPC IRVINE	ANSWERS	CORRECT	INCORRECT
1	4	9	3	6
2	14	35	1	34
3	2	4	0	4
4	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-
9	1	2	0	2
10	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	21	50	4	46

Table 4

3.1. Summarizing renditions

In an exchange where interviewer and interviewee share the same language, answers follow questions without interruption. The absence of inter-turn pauses together with a very high rate of speed put interpreters in the position of *always* being late. No wonder that all questions translated by interpreters are *systematically* "summarizing renditions" (Wadensjö 1992):

[1]

Q David, a great start put you into 2nd place at the first corner and you were happily following Mika from close behind. But you seemed to lose some of that pace in the middle section. Was there something wrong?

I *per te è stata una bella partenza sei arrivato subito (.) secondo dietro a::: ehm a Mika (.) hai avuto delle difficoltà nella fra- nella fase intermedia?*⁵ (Spain 1999)

[2]

Q [...] was that luck or does Benetton have a very skilled weather forecaster?

I [...] *è stato fortuna::: o cosa?*)⁶ (Canada 2000)

[3]

Q you set your personal fastest lap at the end of the first of your three stints and you never went as fast again in the following two. Was that because you were controlling the race or because the car's performance went off slightly?

I *nel primo (.) prima del primo pit stop hai trovato il giro più veloce poi non ce l'hai più fatta dopo come mai?*⁷ (Malaysia 2000)

[4]

Q Rubens, you too were involved in those incidents in the first few laps and it culminated in you having a very long pit stop. Talk us through all that?

I *Rubens anche tu::: (.) hai avuto: un pit stop così lungo come mai? cosa è successo?*⁸ (Malaysia 2001)

[5]

Q let's talk of tyres on the grid we saw a shot of your front right-hand tyre. When they took the tyre blanket off, it looked as though it had been blistered; is that the case?

I *parliamo delle gomme (5'17") le tue gomme avevano::: dei problemi?*⁹ (Australia 2002)

[6]

Q Michael (.) you came into the lead (.) you caught him up (.) and then had a spin (.) was that because you got too close to his wing ehm to his rear wing? and do you think that cost you the race?

I *Michael (7'50") cosa è successo quando a un certo punto::: (.) ti sei allontanato::: (.) ti sei girato: con: con Rubens?*¹⁰ (Europe 2002)

5 for you it was a good start you arrived at once (.) second behind::: ehm::: Mika (.) did you have (.) difficulties in the intermediate phase?.

6 was it luck::: or what?.

7 in the first (.) before the first pit stop you had the fastest lap then you didn't make it. How come?.

8 Rubens you too::: (.) had: such a long pit stop why? what happened?.

9 let's talk of the tyres (5'17") did you have::: problems with your tyres?.

10 Michael, what happened when at certain point::: (.) you moved away::: (.) you turned towards: towards: Rubens?.

3.2. Question/Answer matching strategies

It is a very well known fact that target texts (TTs) do not necessarily show the same cohesive ties as the corresponding source texts (Hatim and Mason 1990; Baker 1992; Aziz 1993; Shlesinger 1995). Interpreters, as producers of their own texts, may indeed re-organize the surface structure of the TP in different ways, by changing, adding, splitting or deleting some elements, as demonstrated in the two following excerpts:

- [7]
 Q *how much* were conditions changing lap by lap?
 A *quite a lot*. It was almost dry and then it started raining again [...]
 INTERPRETER
 Q le condizioni cambiavano:: giro dopo giro è così?
 A sì (.) è proprio così (.) ehm cominciava a piovere poi smetteva¹¹
 (England 2002)

- [8]
 Q and the two-stop strategy appeared to be *the way to go*?
 A fortunately we could say today it was *the way to go* and the car felt good. I must thank everyone [...]
 INTERPRETER
 Q la strategia del doppio pit stop *sembra aver funzionato bene*?
 A beh direi proprio di sì (.) posso dire che oggi:: è stata *la scelta giusta*: la:: vettura è andata benissimo e devo ringraziare tutti¹² [...]
 (Italy 2002)

The management of the dialogue format requires the adoption of ad hoc strategies for securing topical continuity and coherence between questions and answers. For example, if the interviewee answers a question by re-thematizing an interviewer's expression, it is important that the interpreter uses the same expression in the answer that s/he used in the question:

- [9]
 Q congratulations Michael. This is your sixth win of the season, even though the last of them was six races ago. You have done it in front of your home fans *and you must be delighted*.
 A yes, but *delighted* is the wrong word [...]

11 Q: conditions were changing:: lap by lap. Is that so? A: yes (.) exactly (.) ehm it would start to rain and then it would stop.

12 Q: the two pit stop strategy appeared to have worked well. A: well I would say so (.) I can say that today:: it was the right choice: the car went very well and I'd like to thank everybody.

INTERPRETER

Q Michael congratulazioni è la sesta vittoria della stagione (.) stavolta l'hai fatto di fronte ai tuoi tifosi: ed è stata forse *una cosa straordinaria*

A *straordinario* forse è sbagliato¹³ [...] (Italy 2000)

This textual device becomes crucial in MI dialogic contexts in which there are two or more interpreters involved. In these cases, the translation of questions and answers depends on the turn-taking strategies adopted by the team. Hence the problem of synchronisation and coherence with both the previous and the next interpreter's turn¹⁴. Compare, for example, the renditions of the same Q/A sequence delivered by two different teams, each made up of two interpreters (one responsible for Q and the other for A):

[A]

Q [...] penso che ci possano essere problemi:: burocratici pressoché insolubili (.)

ha sofferto veramente da questo punto di vista?

A *sofferto è un po' troppo forse:* (.) diciamo che era un po' difficile (.) ma è un paese effettivamente molto difficile¹⁵ [...]

[B]

Q [...] ci sono problemi burocratici immagino enormi (.) comunque l'immagine che si può fare di questo paese è un'immagine di un paese difficile (.) *ed è vero?*

A *sofferto ebbene è dire troppo è una- (.) pa-rola grossa* effettivamente è un paese molto difficile¹⁶ [...] (Cannes Film Festival 1998)

Cohesion is a property of a text and is objective, whereas coherence depends on the user's evaluation, is subjective (Hoey 1991), and negotiated by speakers (Gernsbacher & Givón 1995). Listeners are predisposed to form interpretations coherent with what they listen to, regardless of the cohesive ties present in the text (Brown & Yule 1983). This means that in the event interpreters' utterances lack of cohesion, televiewers will supply the missing links, such as in the

13 Q: Michael congratulations this is your sixth victory of the season (.) this time you did it before your fans: and that maybe was an extraordinary thing. A: extraordinary maybe is the wrong word.

14 These phenomena are also discussed by Amato (2002).

15 Q: I guess there are some insurmountable difficulties; you must have suffered from this point of view? A: suffered is maybe too strong (.) maybe it was a bit difficult (.) but it is actually a very difficult country.

16 Q: there are enormous bureaucratic problems I imagine (.) however the image we can have of this country is the image of a difficult country. Is that true? A: well to suffer is maybe too strong, it is a- (.) a big word, actually it is a very difficult country.

following fragment in which the interpreter has omitted "intermediates" in the question:

- [10]
 Q after your first pit stop *you put on intermediates*. Was that a disadvantage?
 A I am not sure about this but I think that most people were out in *intermediates* [...]
 INTERPRETER
 Q il primo pit stop sei uscito (.) è stato uno svantaggio per te?
 A credo che tutti sono usciti con: *gli intermedi*¹⁷ [...] (England 1998)

The omission of a textual unit in the question may only be temporary:

- [11]
 Q many congratulations, David, on your back-to-back victory in the British Grand Prix. You must feel *fantastic*
 A Yes I do. This is great [...]
 INTERPRETER
 Q David (.) come ti senti come ti senti?
 A mi sento benissimo (.) è *fantastico*¹⁸ [...] (England 2000)

As a rule, however, the recovery of a segment omitted in the question requires the insertion of extra textual material – such as connectives ([12]) the use of modal or introductory expressions ([13]-[14]) in order to restore coherence:

- [12]
 Q this was Bridgestone's 100th Grand Prix and victory on their home circuit must have been pretty special for them today?
 A it is, yes, and we have been together these past three or four days and it has been a wonderful season for them. They work very hard for us and we for them and it has paid off
 INTERPRETER
 Q questo era il tuo centesimo gran premio (.) e:: ehm (.) una vittoria (.) sarebbe stata davvero:: (.) speciale
 A beh:: nelle ultime tre quattro:: gare siamo stati molto insieme *anche con i tecnici* della (.) Bridgestone (.) ehm:: hanno: (.) lavorato (.)

17 Q: at the first pit stop you went out (.) Was that a disadvantage for you? A: I think everybody went out in:: intermediates.

18 Q: David (.) how do you feel how do you feel? A: I feel very well (.) it's fantastic.

benissimo per noi (.) sono stati (.) grandiosi e questo ci ha ripagato¹⁹
(Japan 2002)

[13]

Q before the second stop, you went a lot quicker. Why?

A just pushing you know. There was room in the car to go quick. The car was very positive, but I got it to handle so that I could drive it really smoothly and started to make up time. It was amazing.

INTERPRETER

Q ((omitted))

A *è possibile far correre di più (.) l'auto (.) ho deciso* appunto di ehm::
(.) tener duro e:: in questo modo ho avuto questo risultato²⁰ (Europe 2001)

[14]

Q after the start, when you were still in third place behind Eddie Irvine, Michael was disappearing down the road. *How worried were you* that you might not be able to catch up the lost time?

A *I don't know whether I would use the word worried* [...]

INTERPRETER

Q nella prima parte della gara sei stato dietro a Irvine e Michael andava avanti (.) qual era il tuo punto di vista a quel punto?

A *non credo di poter dire* che fossi preoccupato²¹ [...] (Luxemburg 1998)

In [15], the interpreter realizes he is too late to translate the question. So, he stops for a few seconds and starts to translate after listening to the first sentence of the answer ("well we couldn't have gone any quicker today"), thereby inferring the meaning of the question from the driver's reply and making it coherent with latter. Moreover, the speaking turns between questioner and answerer are marked by the connective "beh" (well), but above all by prosody:

[15]

Q obviously a couple of cars dropped out; where do you think the true level of performance of BAR is at the moment?

19 Q: this was your 100th Grand Prix (.) and:: ehm (.) a victory (.) would have been really:: (.) special. A: well:: in the last three four:: races we have been together also with the Bridgestone technicians (.) ehm:: they have: (.) worked (.) very hard for us (.) they were wonderful and this paid off.

20 it is possible to make the car go faster (.) I decided to ehm:: (.) hold tight and so I achieved this result.

21 Q: in the first part of the race you were behind Irvine and Michael was ahead (.) what was your point of view at that point?A: I don't think I can say I was worried.

A well we couldn't have gone any quicker today. The car was hard to drive but it looks like it was difficult for everybody so we're a little bit lucky [...]

INTERPRETER

Q/A dove pensi che avresti potuto migliorare? **beh**:: penso che non ci fosse: granchè da fare era molto difficile per tutti²² [...] (Spain 2001)

Failing to guarantee *intertextual coherence* (i.e. coherence in relation to the source text), interpreters strive to maintain an *intratextual coherence*, i.e. consistency between their own turns. For example, in [16], the impersonal form used in the question is reproduced also in the answer, whereas in [17], the interpreter answers a question he 'formulated himself' ("were you afraid?"..."I was afraid..."):

[16]

Q In the race itself, the key point for you seemed to be when you managed to get the lead when Ralf Schumacher had an engine problem. Can you talk us through that because it seemed *Juan Pablo* was momentarily confused?

A Well, to be honest, *I was confused as well* because I didn't know [...]

INTERPRETER

Q diciamo che la chiave della vittoria è: stata (.) all'inizio quando Montoya ha avuto quel problema: è *stat-* c'è stata un po'di *confusione*

A *beh c'è stata direi: sì (.) sicuramente della confusione* io non sapevo²³ [...] (Italy 2002)

[17]

Q after the bad luck you've been having for the last four races (.) were you listening to every noise at the back of the car for the last few laps?

A no, I was not doing that. But obviously this is a circuit where you tend to ride the kerbs quite a lot, and that can cause some problems for the tyres [...]

INTERPRETER

Q *aveva paura*:: alla fine ehm (.) visto che è stato così sfortunato negli ultimi gran premi?

22 Where do you think you could have improved? *well*:: I don't think there was much I could do there was- it was difficult for everybody.

23 Q: let's say that the turning point of the victory was: (.) at the beginning when Montoya had that problem: it was- there was some confusion. A: well I would say: yes (.) there was (.) certainly some confusion and I didn't know [...].

- A no: non realmente io mi sono concentrato sulla posizione (.) e: sono stato molto attento alle curve ovviamente (.) *e avevo paura* di eventuali problemi con i pneumatici²⁴ [...] (Hungary 1999)

Questions are formed not only as simple wh-questions, but also as declarative clauses, i.e. statements made by the questioner. Particularly difficult to render are *choice questions* and *leading questions*, i.e. questions which contain an indication of the preferred or expected answer (Berk-Seligson 1990; Adelswård 1992). Due to the tight time constraints, very often interpreters delete the candidate answer attached to the question, for example, "was that revenge?" ([18]) and "were there no ill effects from that?" ([19]):

[18]

Q David, at the start you made a very definite one move across the front of Michael Schumacher's car. *Was that revenge?*

A no ((laughs)) I just got too much wheelspin [...]

INTERPRETER

Q David (.) all'inizio hai fatto una (.) mossa (.) per tagliare Schumacher

A completamente no ho semplicemente avuto un eccesso:: di pattinamento²⁵ [...] (Germany 2000)

[19]

Q [xxx] a totally uneventful race I believed you hit the barrier (.) *were there no ill effects from that?*

A I touched the barrier at the swimming pool but it was on the inside wheel and I was pretty much sliding when it hit it so it just made me slide a little bit more, *but no ill effects at all*

INTERPRETER

Q cosa è successo:: (.) al- per quanto riguarda: le barriere a un certo punto (.) sei riuscito ad evitare (.) l'incidente (.) verso la fine

A no assolutamente no non ho avuto:: ho- avut- un leggero contatto ma non è successo nulla²⁶ (Monaco 2001)

24 Q: were you afraid:: in the end ehm (.) since you were so unlucky in the last grand prix? A: no: not really I concentrated on the position (.) and: I paid close attention to the corners obviously (.) and I was afraid of possible problems with my tyres.

25 Q: David (.) at the beginning you made (.) a move (.) to get in front of Schumacher. A: no, not completely, I just got too much wheelspin.

26 Q: what happened:: (.) at- as far as: barriers are concerned at a certain point (.) you managed to avoid (.) the accident (.) towards the end. A: definitely not, I didn't have: there was slight contact but nothing happened.

3.3. Generalisation

The excerpts reported in the previous paragraphs already show that *generalization* is the prevailing strategy. Nearly all technical explanations are rendered with hyperonyms and generic terms:

[20]

O I lost all the downforce at the front

I effettivamente si *ho avuto delle difficoltà*²⁷ (England 1998)

[21]

O we decided to pit early because there were no issues really

I poi abbiamo avuto: *un: problema*²⁸ (Italy 2002)

[22]

O we were getting a lot of inside wheelspin

I abbiamo avuto *un po'di problemi*²⁹ (Germany 1998)

[23]

O four or five laps from the end I had a little bit of a problem with the throttle

I ho avuto *qualche problema* ehm verso la *fi:ne*³⁰ (Belgium 2000)

[24]

O the car was simply not what I expected because the floor was broken

I ora (.) devo dirvi francamente che *ci sono state delle difficoltà*³¹ (Austria 2000)

[25]

O he kept telling me that the white lines were dangerous

I beh ha continuato a dirmi::: che::: ehm dovevo evitare *tutti i pericoli: sulla::: sul circuito*³² (Monaco 1997)

[26]

O with the yellow flag situation and again with a very good pit stop

I vedendo qual era la situazione *iniziale*³³ (Austria 1997)

27 yes indeed I had some difficulties.

28 then we had: a: problem.

29 we had some problems.

30 I had some problems ehm towards the end.

31 now (.) I have to tell you honestly that there were some difficulties.

32 well he kept telling me::: that::: ehm I had to avoid all the dangers: on the::: on the circuit.

33 seeing how the situation was initially.

[27]

O we always knew that some of the others were on a lighter-weight low fuel strategy

I beh noi sapevamo che:: altri avevano *altre strategie*³⁴ (Italy 2000)

[28]

O because at that stage I was behind *Barrichello* and driving very slowly. If I had broken down then (.) the Italian press would have murdered me

I *perchè effettivamente dopo la cosa sarebbe stata molto negativa per me*³⁵ (Austria 1999)

[29]

O but then he pitted a lap later so that's why he got me

I *ma poi nel pit stop lui è riuscito a superare- a superarmi (.) è andato più veloce*³⁶ (San Marino 2002)

This strategy is often matched with *hedging operations* which reduce the truthfulness of ST utterances. Thus, in Gricean terms, both the maxim of quantity and the maxim of quality are being violated by interpreters:

[30]

O we were eight tenths slower on that lap than I had been up to that point

I *in un certo senso ero più indietro*³⁷ (Germany 1998)

[31]

O yeah I had a little bit of inconsistency set to set

I sì ho avuto *qualche problema per così dire*³⁸ (San Marino 2001)

[32]

O so automatically I did drop the RPM a couple of hundred revs

I automaticamente quindi:: *sono un pochino sceso*³⁹ (Canada 2000)

[33]

O after the pit stop the gap between me and Mika was 18 seconds

I dopo il pit stop la differenza che c'era fra me e Miga ehm *e:ra abbastanza*⁴⁰ (Canada 2000)

34 well we knew that:: others had other strategies.

35 because otherwise the whole thing would have been very negative for me.

36 but then at the pit stop he managed to pass- to pass me (.) he went faster.

37 in a way I was lagging behind.

38 yes I had some problems so to speak.

39 automatically therefore:: I stepped down a little bit.

40 after the pit stop the difference between me and e Miga ehm was: considerable.

[34]

- O it was probably only a matter of 0.3 second's difference
 I c'era una differenza di *molto di meno*⁴¹ (Hungary 2000)

[35]

- O I was able to overtake Michael and David before the first corner
 I sono stato in grado di ehm superare sia Michael che David ehm (.)
*quasi subito*⁴² (Hungary 2000)

[36]

- O [...] looking at Michael's car which was very nervous, I knew it was
 difficult for him to hold the pace.
 I [...] anche se il mio collega era *piuttosto* (.) ehm (.) *insomma*
 nervoso⁴³ (Canada 2001)

These procedures often lead to the deletion of the names of curves [40], [42], [75], [79]⁴⁴ and drivers (Barrichello [29], Mika [37] e [81], Alesi [38], Jacques [39], Fisichella and Heinz-Harald [40], Montoya [41], Eddie [43] e [80], Jenson [44], Gerhard [51], Heinz [54], Olivier [68], Michael [76], Ralph and Rubens [83], Nakano [101], Sato [103], Rubens [109]). The result is that most of the time it is not possible to understand "who did what to whom, where and why":

[37]

- O I didn't want to be lapped by *Mika*
 I *non volevo: assolutamente perdere altro terreno*⁴⁵ (Brasil 1999)

[38]

- O my problem at that stage was that I had been behind *Alesi* for quite a
 while and my tyres were finished
 I ed è stato qui che: avrei avuto *dei problemi* almeno ho pensato con::
 i miei pneumatici⁴⁶ (Germany 1997)

[39]

- O [...] all the competitors behind were catching up with me. I could
 manage to stay in front of them on the straight, but *Jacques* got close
 enough in the tow, which gave him a chance

41 there was much less difference.

42 I was able to ehm overtake both Michael and David ehm (.) almost immediately.

43 even though my colleague was a bit (.) ehm sort of nervous.

44 Virtually all the names of curves (*Adelaide, Becketts, Bridge, Coca Cola, Copse, Hangar, Straight, Rascarre, La Source, Les Combes, Lesmo, Loews, Mirabeau, Portier, Stavelot, Stowe, Turn 1, 2, 3* etc.) are systematically deleted.

45 I certainly didn't want: to lose further ground.

46 and it was here that: I would have problems with::: my tyres at least that's what I thought.

I [...] con i miei avversari che si avvicinavano: *e:: soprattutto quando avevano la scia (.) diventava molto difficile*⁴⁷ (United States 2000)

[40]

O it was a surprise when *Fisichella* was able to get past me down at the first corner and then when *Heinz-Harald* went through at *Turn 2*.

I e: quindi (.) ehm dopo la prima curva sono riusciti a passarmi e allora è stato un pochino più difficile⁴⁸ (Hungary 1999)

[41]

O and I was able to get the slipstream off *Montoya* as well so I had a perfect lap

I e nessuno è riuscito: (.) a:: (.) ad evitarmi e quindi ho fatto un giro perfetto⁴⁹ (Italy 2002)

[42]

O until I started pushing and although *Copse* felt fine when I went into *Becketts* the car went absolutely straight

I e quando spingevo ho visto che la macchina aveva delle difficoltà soprattutto nel girare⁵⁰ (England 1998)

[43]

O then *Eddie* didn't make it difficult for me to let me by

I devo dire che non ci sono state qui delle difficoltà⁵¹ (Italy 1998)

[44]

O because the Renaults got past me at the start and *Jenson* made a mistake at the last corner

I perché: (.) le Renault mi hanno passato all'inizio (.) e all'ultima curva loro hanno fatto (.) un errore⁵² (Brasil 2002)

Besides generalisation, there are many cases of *displaced reference*, as shown in the three following excerpts:

47 with my competitors who were coming closer: and:: above all when they had the slipstream (.) it was very difficult.

48 and: so (.) ehm after the first corner they managed to get past me and then it was a little bit more difficult.

49 and nobody could: (.) avoid me and therefore I made a perfect lap.

50 and when I was pushing I saw that the car had some difficulties particularly in steering.

51 I have to say that there were no difficulties here.

52 because:: (.) Renaults got past me at the start (.) and in the last corner they made (.) a mistake.

[45]

O [...] after the last pit stop coming out in front of *Damon* [...]I [...] dopo l'ultimo pit stop (.) quando: ero uscito davanti a:: a *David* [...] (Hungary 1998)

[46]

O because *I* was pushing hard into that cornerI perché *lui* spingeva molto⁵³ (Brasil 2002)

[47]

O [...] Rubens was on new tyres, I was on old tyres and the first few laps, as Michael says, there's a huge difference. He got by me into the chicane, *but he sacrificed the exit* and I had a good run at him into turn one and passed him again [...]I [...] Rubens aveva: (.) pneumatici nuovi io avevo pneumatici vecchi (.) c'era una differenza lui si è avvicinato molto alla chicane (3.40) mi sono: fatto passare *ho dovuto sacrificarmi* ma poi sono riuscito subito a recuperare⁵⁴ [...] (Japan 2001)

The dialogic format gives interpreters the opportunity 'to take short cuts', for example, by linking up to the question through proforms and blanket terms. In [48], the interpreter with the pro-adverb "così" (so/in this way) anaphorically (and wrongly) takes up the entire content of the previous question:

[48]

Q starting eighth I don't suppose you expected to be sitting here. You started by passing two cars into the first corner, in spite of a heavy fuel load. Talk us through those first four hundred meters.

A obviously *we've seen recently that our launch system* has been working very well [...]

INTERPRETER

Q hai cominciato dall'ottava posizione magari non ti aspettavi di essere qui (.) sul podio al secondo posto hai cominciato con molta benzina (.) tuttavia sei riuscito a superare due:: macchine (.) fin dall'inizio (.) fin dal primo giro in quattrocento metri

A sì chiaramente: *è andata così* (.) siamo riusciti ad andare molto bene⁵⁵ [...] (Canada 2002)

53 because he was pushing hard.

54 [...] I had to sacrifice myself [...]

55 Q: you started from the eighth position. Maybe you didn't expect to arrive here (.) second on the podium. You started with a lot of fuel (.) however you managed to overtake two:: cars (.) right from the beginning (.) from the first lap in four hundred meters. A: yes, that's what happened (.) we went very well.

3.4. Scripts and the reconstruction of the sense

According to the original definition by Schank & Abelson (1977: 41), "a script is a structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context". Scripts serve to establish expectations of what is going to happen (anticipation), structure our comprehension when listening and guide recall of events or information (remembering). In our case, however, scripts are looked upon as specific-genre stereotyped formulas or rhetorical routines to which interpreters resort in order to make up for a lack of understanding of the ST. This technique consists in stating the existence of problems and their successive solution, hoping for a positive outcome, expressing satisfaction for the result, referring to commitment, the effort made ("to push", "to hold on", "to do well", "to do one's best") and the determination to win:

[49]

O he was obviously much quicker on his fresh set of tyres

I *e: anche lui ha cercato di spingere*⁵⁶ [...] (Hungary 1999)

[50]

O despite that I just went into wheelspin and made a mess of it

I *ma a parte questo (.) io ho cercato di spingere al massimo*.⁵⁷ (Japan 1999)

[51]

O yes because I was stuck in traffic behind Gerhard for a while [...]

I *sì sì però ho capito che potevo farcela*⁵⁸[...] (Austria 1997)

[52]

O I think even on the start if Ralf had started from second position he would have just beaten me into the first corner

I *io penso che anche nella seconda partenza (3.28) anche se: insomma se avessi avuto: (.) ehm Ralph vicino penso che sarebbe stata dura*⁵⁹ (Belgium 2001)

[53]

O in the end I went to rain tyres

I *ed alla fine però ce l'abbiamo fatta*⁶⁰ (England 1998)

56 and he too tried to push.

57 but apart from that (.) I tried to push very hard.

58 yes yes but I realised that I could make it.

59 I think that at the second start as well (3.28) even though: I mean if I had: (.) ehm Ralph next to me I think it would have been very difficult.

60 and in the end we made it.

[54]

O I dived down inside him at the hairpin and we made a bit of contact but I managed to keep going and Heinz didn't, for a change

I c'è stato questo contatto *però ce l'ho fatta a resistere* ho continuato⁶¹ (Monaco 1998)

[55]

O and if I had wanted to do so I could have tried to pass on the outside

I e: ho cercato per: quanto possibile *di: di fare del mio meglio*⁶² (Luxemburg 1998)

[56]

O I had to try and stay close enough to force the drivers in front into making a mistake

I *noi abbiamo cercato di spingere ho cercato di dare (.) del mio meglio*⁶³ (Ungheria 1999)

[57]

O it feels good to win it obviously, and particularly here at Silverstone because I drive for an English team and in front of an English crowd. We made a great show.

I è molto bello per me aver vinto (.) soprattutto qui a Silverstone in Inghilterra (.) *e ho cercato di fare del tutto del mio meglio e abbiamo (.) veramente siamo riusciti a centrare il bersaglio*⁶⁴ (England 2001)

[58]

O the marshals here in Austria did a good job with the blue flags

I devo dire che in Austria *siamo andati molto bene*⁶⁵ (Austria 1999)

[59]

O but it was still a worry until the end

I e devo dire *che ho fatto bene*⁶⁶ (Spain 2001)

[60]

O [...] so basically I had to calm down and go again

I [...] quindi fondamentalmente: *ho dovuto semplicemente: rassegnarmi ed aspettare*⁶⁷ (Malaysia 2001)

61 there was this contact but I could resist and I continued.

62 I tried as: much as I could: to do my best.

63 we tried to push I tried my utmost.

64 it is great for me to win (.) especially here at Silverstone in England (.) and I tried to do my best and we have (.) really we managed to hit the bull's eye.

65 I have to say that in Austria we went very well.

66 I have to say that I did very well.

67 [...] so basically: I simply had to: give up and wait.

[61]

O but thank God the tyres stayed together

I *le cose sono andate molto bene*⁶⁸ (Germany 2002)

[62]

O I think it was very important that the out lap was quick and that I stayed ahead

I *nel complesso è stato un buon weekend*⁶⁹ (Belgium 2002)

[63]

O once again like Monaco their prediction was correct and I gained those two places quite easily

I quindi come a Monaco la previsione è stata proprio questa e e::: è andata bene così⁷⁰ (Canada 2002)

[64]

O obviously they do enjoy the few we had

I e quindi naturalmente:: (.) mi è piaciuto molto *come è andata*⁷¹ (England 2002)

[65]

O but once my car had settled down I was able to play to the strenghts that I had. I was very good under brakes and we ran quite low wing to be quick at the of end the straight

I sono stato in grado comunque di poter: continuare *siamo andati molto bene*⁷² (France 2000)

[66]

O I was able to lean the engine out early on after the first few laps and save quite a few laps of fuel

I ed ecco perché sono stato in grado di:: *andare avanti così tanto (.) ho spinto parecchio::*⁷³ (Austria 2001)

[67]

O as we saw in previous races we were just caught out by a bit of bad luck

I come abbiamo visto nelle gare precedenti *noi abbiamo lavorato molto duro*⁷⁴ (San Marino 2001)

68 everything went pretty well.

69 all in all it was a good weekend.

70 so like in Monaco that was just what the prediction was and and::: that was fine

71 and so of course:: (.) I am very happy with how it went.

72 however I was able: to go on we did very well.

73 that's why I was able to:: go on so well (.) I pushed very hard.

74 as we saw in the previous races we worked very hard.

[68]

- O so then I was just trying to stay in Olivier's tow so he could carry me along
- I e quindi (.) *diciamo che la cosa è andata molto meglio*⁷⁵ (Germany 2001)

The tendency to thematise 'difficulty' surprisingly often leads interpreters to overstate the actual difficulties as related by the drivers:

[69]

- O [...] after the Safety Car made its second appearance we just settled for the one-two [...]
- I [...] dopo la Safety Car abbiamo avuto (.) anche *alcune difficoltà*⁷⁶[...] (Belgium 1998)

[70]

- O but I don't know why they brought the safety car out because they could have rolled the car backwards, the BAR
- I ma d- ehm forse il problema più che altro era la Safety Car perché chiaramente *questo mi ha molto:: mi ha molto rallentato::*⁷⁷ (Canada 2002)

In [71], the interpreter, for example, associates the use of the emergency Safety Car once again with problems. Even though the driver was looking forward to the rain (which arrived) and had put on slick tyres, the interpreter said the following:

[71]

- O because it just rained on the lap when I was coming in. The way I looked at it, there was a cloud dead in front of me. Everything had been coming that way, so I just guessed and hoped that it would come straight over the track. And it did!
- I perchè io vedevo che c'erano delle nuvole io comunque ((sospirando)) speravo (.) pensavo *che tutto si risolvesse per il meglio*⁷⁸ (Europe 1999)

Also, in the following case the interpreter perceived the rain in terms of potential problems:

75 and so (.) let's say that everything went much better.

76 after the Safety Car we had (.) some difficulties as well.

77 but ehm maybe the problem was mainly the Safety Car because this clearly made me:: slow down.

78 because I saw that there were some clouds, however ((sighing)) I was hoping that everything would be fine.

[72]

O we had this drizzling rain and sure, on the lap that we came in there was a lot of water but it could well have stopped immediately and then we should have stayed out on slicks

I *io non ero sicuro che questa (.) poca pioggia (.) avrebbe: (.) potuto: creare:: dei fastidi: o:: forse potevamo restare anche con le slick*⁷⁹ (England 2002)

In the following extract the interpreter resorted to his own "archived" stock question:

[73]

Q Rubens, today you benefited from a fight between Michael and his brother. *Would you say you owe this win to Michael?*

I Rubens (.) hai potuto beneficiare (.) di questo:: lite che c'era stata tra i due fratelli (.) *pensavi di poterci arrivare al podio?*⁸⁰ (Spain 2000)

In other cases, interpreters, drawing upon the repertoire of standard statements, thematize descriptions and concepts which drivers typically refer to: the warm-up qualifications of the previous day ([74]), the tactics of 'managing the race' ([75]), 'holding on to the lead' ([76]), the importance of 'concentration' ([77] and 'saving tyres' ([77] -[78]):

[74]

O we made some modifications to the chassis

I *e siamo riusciti a fare delle buone qualifiche*⁸¹ (Hungary 2000)

[75]

O yes, due to the guess we had about a possible problem, and because we wanted to be safe, we had put the brake balance completely to the front. That meant that I locked up the front going into Turn 1 and I couldn't stop the car anymore. It's such an easy run-off area that I decided not to risk anything, not put the car into a spin, and come back [to the track by driving] through the gravel

I noi avevamo più o meno indovinato che magari ci potevano essere dei problemi comunque noi volevamo semplicemente:: andare sul sicuro ed effettivamente (.) *io (.) ho cercato semplicemente come dicevo di:: ehm non avere delle difficoltà ho cercato semplicemente*

79 I was not sure that this (.) drizzling rain (.) would (.) have: caused:: some bother or we might have continued with the slicks.

80 Rubens (.) you could benefit (.) from this::: fight between the two brothers (.) did you think you could get on the podium?.

81 and we managed to have good qualifications.

*di amministrare la gara non ci sono stati mai dei ve- veri e propri problemi per me*⁸² (Canada 2000)

[76]

O [...] when I hit a bit of traffic the damage was done. By the time Michael came out in front of me on fresh tyres after his third pit stop, with same fuel load as me, it was impossible

I [...] e devo dire che comunque ci sono stati anche ehm: dei: ehm danni provocati appunto a livello proprio di equipe con l'uscita dalla: pit stop *ormai il danno era stato fatto e non potevo altro che cercare di mantenere la distanza*⁸³ (Hungary 1998)

[77]

O there was not a lot of time to enjoy it because I had to go flat out

I non ho avuto troppo tempo per divertirmi (.) *sono dovuto:: ho dovuto concentrarmi molto*⁸⁴ (United States 2000)

[78]

Q after your first and second pit stop you were very quick straight out of the pits *did your tyres heat up super fast?*

I (l'audio dell'interprete arriva improvvisamente) ... pit stop ma: sia dopo il primo dopo il secondo sei andato molto veloce sono (.) stati:: *è merito degli pneumatici?*⁸⁵ (San Marino 2001)

[79]

O the biggest problem for me was that the idle had been set up too high to get around Loews

I *e ho cercato di guidare in modo da risparmiare le gomme per quanto possibile*⁸⁶ (Monaco 1997)

Gile (1995: 201) defines *parallel formulations* as the introduction of a textual unit "compatible with the rest of the source-language speech but not a faithful reflection of the problematic source-language speech". This strategy – according to Schjoldager (in Shlesinger 1998: 751) – is a typical SI norm:

82 we sort of worked out that there may be problems however we simply wanted:: to be safe and actually (.) I (.) simply tried as I said to:: ehm not to have difficulties I simply tried to manage the race there were never re- real problems for me.

83 and I have to say however that there was also ehm: some: ehm damage caused at team level with the exit from: the pit stop, the damage was done and I could nothing but hold on to the lead.

84 I had not too much time to enjoy myself (.) I was:: I had to concentrate.

85 ... the pit stop but: both after the first after the second you were very fast were (.) there:: was that due to your tyres?.

86 and I tried to drive in such a way as to save my tyres as much as possible.

[...] the interpreter is allowed to say something which is apparently unrelated to the source-text item in question [...] provided that s/he can say something which is contextually plausible. The existence of such a norm is probably peculiar to simultaneous interpreting.

Parallel ("contextually plausible") formulations are very often organized by selecting a key word such as "qualifying" in the following fragment:

[80]

O once again you had a poor qualifying but then showed a superb race pace. Is this going to continue to be a problem for Ferrari?
I *come: è andata a finire (.) per la qualifica?*⁸⁷(Germany 1999)

In [81], the interpreter confuses "forth" with "false" and, on the basis of this misperception, reconstructs a 'possible' (plausible) sense of the original utterance:

[81]

O [...] but *Eddie* I understand was: *fourth* (.) so:: [xxx] ehm: [xxx] (.) interesting for the rest of the season
I [...] *e- (.) devo dirvi che (.) io:: avevo: (.) avuto una falsa impressione al- a livello di partenza e devo dire che questo ha fallà-falsato un pochino tutte le impressioni ma renderà (.) senz'altro la stagione molto più (.) interessante*⁸⁸ (Belgium 1999)

In the two following extracts, both interpreters formulate their renditions elaborating the concept of "chance":

[82]

O there is far too much at stake to go for glory by locking up the brakes on the inside and getting it all wrong. I don't need that for my championship and Mika doesn't need it for his. In the end we had a good fight but there wasn't much chance of us overtaking
I e quindi ((2.55)) siccome c'è troppa posta in gioco non era certo il caso di spingere troppo magari puoi rovinare: la gara e quindi (.) alla fine (.) *abbiamo avuto forse fortuna*⁸⁹(Germany 1998)

87 how: did the qualifications go?.

88 and- (.) I have to tell you that (.) I:: had: (.) a false impression a- at the level of the start and I have to say that this distart- distorted a little bit all my impressions but it will (.) certainly (.) make the season much more (.) interesting.

89 and so since there is too much at stake it was certainly not the case di push too much because you can spoil: the race and so (.) in the end (.) maybe we were lucky.

[83]

- O so despite me making a mistake at my first pit stop, which is why I dropped behind Ralph and Rubens, the guys made a good decision by calling me early for the second stop, in order to get me track position after that second stop
- I poi anche con il primo pit stop *ho avuto: fortuna effettivamente::: sono: stato in grado di poter conquistare delle posizioni*⁹⁰ (Spain 2000)

As can be seen also from the previous examples, scripts and noncommittal strategies frequently occur in the final position, serving as neutral finishes, which allow interpreters to bring their utterances to an end:

[84]

- O I didn't ask the question and maybe there was no need for me to know *because I don't try to hit barriers deliberately*
- I io non ho fatto nessuna domanda (.) *e loro non mi hanno detto niente*⁹¹ (Monaco 2000)

[85]

- O you've got to believe there's always going to be a way through somewhere if you can get there (.) and: ehm if someone makes a mistake (.) there's always a chance of getting through
- I bisogna credere che possono esser fatti comunque errori *che possono essere presi in considerazione*⁹² (Austria 1999)

[86]

- O to win would have been fantastic *but I've never been that good around Suzuka so it isn't a bad result*
- I certo aver vinto sarebbe stato il massimo però (.) *non si può chiedere troppo*⁹³ (Japan 2001)

[87]

- O but otherwise we could have fought with the big guys
- I ma: altrimenti *non ero poi così::: (.) pessimista*⁹⁴ (San Marino 2001)

90 then with the first pit stop too I was: lucky actually::: I was: able to gain some positions.

91 I didn't ask any questions (.) and they didn't tell me anything.

92 you've got to believe that you may make mistakes which could be taken into account.

93 of course to win would have been great but (.) you can't ask for too much.

94 but otherwise I was not so::: (.) pessimist.

[88]

O first I said I wanted to go for wets *because the conditions were already marginal*

I prima avevamo deciso per il bagnato *perché pensavamo che fosse una cosa (.) abbastanza giusta*⁹⁵ [...] (Europe 1999)

[89]

O in qualifying I thought maybe I would get DC but then on that quick lap I lost the rear end which gave me a sore neck for today

I dopo le qualificazioni ho pe- pensato che avrei potuto superare Coulthard *e che sarebbe stata una cosa:: piuttosto:: piuttosto buona*⁹⁶ (Japan 1999)

[90]

O and I was lucky but if I am lucky once a year then it is not a bad thing

I e sono stato un po' fortunato e sono riuscito a superarlo mah ((sospirando)) *questo: insomma nulla da dire contro: contro la fortuna*⁹⁷ (Giappone 2002)

The use of neutral finishes may be idiosyncratic. Notice, for example, how the same interpreter tends to close his turns, by stating: "there was not much I could do" (cf. also [15]):

[91]

O I benefited from other people's misfortune, but you accept that because that's motor racing

I io diciamo che ho tratto vantaggio dalla sfortuna degli altri (.) e: lo accetto *perché non c'è gran (.) grande altro da fare*⁹⁸ (Spain 2002)

[92]

O there was a lot of traffic at that point. You know, it was incredible. I've never seen so many cars that have to be lapped. So I think it helped that the Ferraris were going through the traffic first of all and helped clear a little bit of space for me

I no in quel momento c'era molto traffico appena io: sono: uscito dal pit stop (.) non ho: mai visto così tante macchine davanti a me dopo

95 we first decided on the slicks because we thought it would have been a fairly good thing to do.

96 after qualifications I thought I could pass Coulthard and that it would have been a fairly good thing to do.

97 and I was a bit lucky and I managed to overtake him well (sighs) this: well I have nothing to say against: against luck.

98 let's say that I took advantage of others' misfortune (.) and: I accept that because there was not much I could do.

un pit stop e quindi (.) ho subito pensato: non: non ci sarebbe:: stato
 granchè da fare⁹⁹ (United States 2002)

[93]

- O I don't actually know what the problem was but I'm presuming it was an oil pressure or engine related problem because I was asked to short shift and slow my pace down by three seconds a lap so I guess the other thing might be that not all the fuel went in at the pit stop but I just need to go back to the team and find out afterwards.
- I beh: non so esattamente cosa sia successo (.) penso che ci sia un: (.) un problema non so se di pressione a::gli pneumatici o un problema di propulsore (.) potrebbe essere una delle due cose non so non ho idea (.) e però: certo a quel punto ho smesso di spingere perché mi sono reso conto che era abbastanza inutile¹⁰⁰ (France 2002)

3.5. Metatextual glosses and tautological repetitions

Generalisation is also realized through *metatextual glosses*, which directly refer to what happened in the course of the race, thereby relying upon viewers' knowledge. However, these glosses may misleadingly suggest that the goal of the primary speakers' utterances is not that of being informative:

[94]

- O [...] obviously we then had the safety car situation and [...]
- I [...] giustamente la situazione (.) la conoscete bene l'auto era appunto (.) quella non regolare¹⁰¹ [...] (Australia 2001)

[95]

- Q do you feel one stop was the right way to go, given that everyone ahead of you was on two?
- I è stato giusto: ehm (.) s:: seguire la strategia che avete scelto?¹⁰² (Europe 2001)

[96]

- O Kimi Raikkonen's engine had blown
- I quello che è successo a Kimi Raikkonen¹⁰³ (United States 2002)

99 no at that moment there was a lot of traffic as soon as: I came out of the pit stop (.) I have never seen so many cars before me after a pit stop and so (.) I immediately thought: that there was not much I could do.

100 but : of course at that point I stopped pushing because I realised that it was fairly pointless.

101 of course you know (.) the situation very well, the car was actually (.) not regular.

102 was it right: ehm (.) to- to follow the strategy that you chose?

103 what happened to Kimi Raikkonen?

[97]

O we weren't very quick here in qualifying and clearly in the race we weren't a match for them either, so it was really recovery position this weekend and try and understand how we can improve for Magny Cours.

I le qualifiche (.) ehm (.) *hanno dato il risultato che hanno dato* (.) e e: naturalmente si può sperare sempre in un miglioramento¹⁰⁴ (Europe 2001)

[98]

O but it was just way too far back and sometimes it's better to be lucky than good

I (.) e poi:: (.) *alla fine come avete visto* il duello: è stato molto:: molto combattuto e (.) c'è stata anche un po' di fortuna¹⁰⁵ (Germany 2002)

[99]

O I think a Toyota or something had blown up their engine or something was there just oil and I locked up the front wheel the front right and Michael got past

I ehm: ci doveva essere dell'olio da McNish:: (.) e: (.) ehm: io non sono andato lungo *come avete visto* e:: Michael ehm mi ha superato¹⁰⁶ (France 2002)

Sometimes these formulas take on a tautological value: "what happened happened" (Italy 1997); "he knew he'd arrive where he did" (San Marino 1998), "the margin was what it was" (Italy 1998), "I didn't really think that things would go as they did" (Europe 1999, Malaysia 1999), "things went as they did" (Hungary 2001). Another expedient is: "I can't even remember now", "I don't know what to say" (Canada 1999), "I have no idea what would have happened" (Germany 2001), which like the other hedges alter the pragmatic force of the drivers' utterances. The same function of fillers and problem-disguising techniques is performed by *redundant repetitions*¹⁰⁷:

[100]

O I selected first gear on the formation lap and the engine turned itself off. It was a shame because I thought of Barcelona again, not having the ability to start but when [...]

104 the qualifications (.) ehm gave the result that they did (.) and and: of course you can always hope to improve.

105 and then in the end as you saw the duel: was very:: very tight and (.) we were also a bit lucky.

106 ehm: there was some oil from McNish:: (.) and: (.) ehm: I didn't go wide as you saw and:: Michael ehm got past me.

107 See also the repetition/elaboration of "damage" in [76].

I diciamo che io s- ho: (.) selezionato la prima marcia durante- dopo il giro di:: (.) ricognizione e poi *non: sono riuscito a partire è stato un peccato perché non sono riuscito a partire poi quando*¹⁰⁸ [...]
(England 2002)

[101]

O I could only push hard for a few laps because the tyres were heating up in a strange way. I could push, then slow down, then push again. Towards the end Nakano was in my mirrors and I didn't want to be looking in the mirrors all the time so [...]
I io: (.) ho sentito che ho potuto spingere solamente per alcuni giri poi *ho dovuto rallentare* la: macchina non (.) ce la faceva più *dovevo: rallentare* (.) d'altra parte dovevo cercare di arrivare alla fine ed è per questo quindi¹⁰⁹ [...] (Europe 1997)

[102]

O I was just trying to back up as little as I could just because the brakes were marginal, we think. We'll know whenever we take the car apart and see how marginal they were
I ho cercato semplicemente di contenere la *situazione i:: i freni erano arrivati praticamente in condizioni* (.) *ehm::* (.) *erano: erano: praticamente* (.) *in condizioni terribili*¹¹⁰ (Italy 2002)

[103]

O and he's expressed that opinion and I've apologised for squeezing him but I had to pull out of the slipstream from Sato and it was always going to be marginal for the last chicane
I e:: *io espresso la mia opinione* su quella specie di incidente che c'è stato:: *e ho espresso la mia opinione* ci siamo scusati *ci siamo assolutamente chiariti* (.) ma comunque:: era proprio all'ultima chicane¹¹¹ (Canada 2002)

108 let's say that I s- I (.) selected first gear during- after the:: (.) the formation lap and then I couldn't start it was a pity because I couldn't start then when [...].

109 I: (.) I felt I could push during some laps only then I had to slow down, the: car (.) had had it, I had: to slow down (.) on the other hand I had to try to make it to the end and for that reason therefore [...].

110 I simply tried to control the situation, the:: the brakes were practically in conditions (.) ehm they were: were: practically (.) in terrible conditions.

111 and:: I expressed my opinion on that sort of accident that happened:: and I expressed my opinion we apologized we absolutely cleared things up (.) but anyway:: it was at the very last chicane.

[104]

O I just came off the brakes and I (.) you know it was very risky because it's very tight so I had a good line out of one (.) and then I saw the Williams fighting

I ho visto una McLaren che passava: all'esterno e *ho dovuto prendere dei rischi*:: ho fatto una buona frenata *ho preso dei rischi* e poi ho visto entrambe le Williams che stavano lottando una contro l'altra¹¹² (Europa 2002)

[105]

O obviously, I feel sorry for Kimi because I think from where I was sitting - I don't know how it looked on television - but I thought it was a great race we were all having, the Ferrari, the McLarens and the Williams running so close together. I was really enjoying myself. I thought he drove really well up front and obviously got caught out on the oil

I io: comunque mi- mi dispiace per Kimi perché *ho: visto:: (.) in televisione (.) che::: è stato molto sfortunato e::: (.) ho visto le immagini poi alla fine (.) e::: (2.50) devo dire che lui è stato veramente sfortunato*¹¹³ (France 2002)

These repetitions result in utterances, which are the photocopy of the preceding ones. Thus, in [106], the interpreter repeats what she has already translated in the immediately preceding sentence ("my start was so terrible"). Excerpt [107] is nothing but a re-elaboration of the driver's turn-initial concept ("Mika is definitely a great champion"), which the interpreter had already translated ("Mika is an extraordinary champion"). Similarly, [108] contains a reiteration of the expression of congratulations:

[106]

O instead of getting a good take off the wheels just slipped

I invece di fare una bella partenza *è stata veramente una partenza disastrosa*¹¹⁴ (Italy 1998)

[107]

O I am very disappointed to see such a manoeuvre that nobody would expect such a guy to have done because I was really challenging Mika

112 I saw a McLaren passing on the outside and I had to take risks:: I braked pretty well, I took risks and then I saw both Williams fighting.

113 however I- I am sorry for Kimi because I: saw:: (.) on television (.) that::: he was very unlucky and::: (.) In the end I saw the images eventually (.) and I have to say that he really was unlucky.

114 instead of making a good start it really was a disastrous start.

I sono molto deluso (.) di aver visto una manovra da un: (.) da un pilota che nessuno (.) si sarebbe aspettato (.) *comunque* (.) *complimenti a Mika*¹¹⁵ (Japan 1999)

[108]

O but obviously big congratulations to Michael because it's an extraordinary record that he has in Formula One and I think his speech there to his guys was very fitting so I think a good day all round.

I *e:: posso fare comunque i miei complimenti a:: Michael perché ha un record incredibile di Formula Uno (.) e non ci sono parole per dire quanto sia stato veramente bravo posso soltanto fargli i complimenti*¹¹⁶ (France 2002)

Reference to the question – as shown in [48] in § 3.3 – may be a safety anchor which makes the answer easier to translate. In the following excerpt, not grasping the acronym DNF ("didn't finish"), the interpreter repeats the final part of the question with a slightly interrogative-rhetorical intonation:

[109]

Q [...] any chance you can turn that around?

A you never know. *If Rubens has one DNF* things could change around, turn around really quickly [...]

INTERPRETER

Q [...] *per il secondo posto hai qualche possibilità?*

A beh non si sa mai (.) *qualche possibilità di arrivare secondo* (.) beh: le cose possono cambiare rapidamente da una gara all'altra¹¹⁷ [...] (Belgio 2000)

4. The function of SI on television and media consumption patterns

Conference Interpreting may be considered mainly as an "intra- o inter-professional discourse" (Linell 1988), i.e. the interpreters work with a discourse produced by professionals, either of the same or of other professions. Conversely MI is mainly a "professional-lay discourse", i.e. a discourse which addresses an undifferentiated mass audience within an entertainment logic. In a real meeting interpreter users closely follow the interpreter in front of them (or

115 I am very disappointed (.) to see a manoeuvre from a: (.) driver who nobody (.) would expect (.) anyway (.) compliments to Mika.

116 and:: I can only congratulate Michael because he has an incredible Formula One record (.) there are no words to say how good he was I can only congratulate him.

117 Q: For the second place have you any chance? A: Well you never can tell (.) any chance to arrive second (.) well: things can change rapidly from one race to another.

with headphones), so that they can reply to express agreement/disagreement, to accept/reject a proposal, to vote a motion, to sign an agreement, and so on.

On the other hand, the tele-users listen within the frame of "attentional inertia" (Pozzato 1992: 68). It is couch viewing characterized by discontinuous behaviour. Moreover, viewers are particularly interested in enjoying the show, including that of watching how the interpreter on the spot survives. This orientation underlies the consumption not only of talk shows (cf. Straniero Sergio 1999b; Katan & Straniero Sergio 2001), but also of media events such as, for example, the presidential debates¹¹⁸ and trials (what is known as Court TV)¹¹⁹. The outcome of these speech events is independent of interpreters' performances because the Italian audience (the only receivers of the SI) are not called upon to give a verdict nor do they have to vote for a candidate. In other cases, SI serves as a mere support – if not background noise – to the images and voices of newsreaders and correspondents who specify, integrate, correct or rephrase what is being said by interpreters (cf. Katan & Straniero Sergio 2003). In the coverage of wars and other disaster events¹²⁰, the SI from foreign broadcasting companies – especially CNN – is used intermittently to fill in the idle slots between correspondents' reports and the comments made in the studio. Interpreters translate a maximum of five minutes; then their voices are faded out by the newscaster who hands over to a correspondent, leads into a report or sight translates the news coming from international press agencies.

On television, SI often coexists with other transfer modes (free narration, voiceover, subtitling), sometimes giving rise to hybrid forms of language mediation which may also entail a redefinition of the professional roles and the corresponding underlying norms. This happens when the presenter/reporter takes on the role of the interpreter (cf. Straniero Sergio 2000), or when the interpreter is assigned a quasi-journalistic role. For example the interpreter may be asked to follow the CNN throughout the programme. He or she is omnipresent, seen seated watching the monitor. Whenever the presenter asks, the interpreter is ready with a lightning summary (up to 30 seconds) of the latest breaking news.

118 Reagan-Mondale (7.10.1984), Mitterand-Chirac (28.4.1988), Bush-Dukakis (13.10.1988), Bush-Clinton-Perot (11.10.1992, 15.10.1992 and 19.10.1992).

119 Colonel Oliver North's Deposition on the Iran-Contras (8.7.1987), William Kennedy trial (10.12.1991), Clinton's Deposition in front of the Grand Jury on the Monica Lewinsky case (21.9. 1998).

120 The Gulf war (1991), Moscow coup d'etat (1991), The news of Lady Diana's death (1997), Nato attack against Iraq (1998), Nato attack against Serbia (1999), terrorist attack against the Twin Towers (2001), Afganistan war (2001), the air crash in New York (2002), the terrorist attack in Moscow (2002).

On many occasions, simultaneous interpreters autonomously decide to speak in the third person and switch from direct to reported speech (free narration), thereby violating the generally accepted *norm*, according to which 'the interpreter always speak in the first person' (cf. Harris 1990). FPCs share many features of MI, including that of being a *polyphonic text* (in the sense of Bachtin), i.e. a complex mixture of professional voices. According to Bell (1991: 33) the media "offer the classic case of language produced by multiple parties". Formula One drivers do not address insiders but an audience, made up of Formula One fans, more interested in 'seeing' their idols and catching their emotions rather than actually being informed. TV reporting of the race in Italy is not limited to the four-minute interview of the drivers. With reference to the previously mentioned intertextuality (cf. § 2), FPCs are embedded in the *Pole Position* talkshow broadcast before and after the race. During the show, experts comment on the race making use of slow motion to discuss the various phases in intricate detail. We should not forget that the race itself is followed and commented on live by reporters with great attention to technical detail. Finally, a reporter on the track interviews, and translates, the drivers themselves before and immediately after each Grand Prix. The questions asked are often similar to those asked during the FPC.

The function of SI is therefore mainly phatic (like most MI), or rather what is important is not so much what is being said as the fact that communication does not break down. Hence the accurate rendition of 'technicalities' is not the exclusive, nor even the main, communicative function of this speech event.

5. From ideal quality expectations to real world criteria

I will mention only two examples which illustrate the dichotomy between *ideal quality* and *translation practice* (cf. § 1). The first concerns an essay by Viezzi (2001) on the SI of political speeches, based on a theoretical analysis of a speech by Blair, and on the evaluation of another speech by the British Prime Minister read out by a teacher and interpreted by a student. The author maintains, and rightly so, that in this type of communication, *form* is as important as *content* and it is not enough to convey *the sense*. Interpreters should be aware of the idiolect of each political personality and the ideological overtones attached to words; and render also the nuances, including those transmitted by adjectives and other modifiers. Clearly, though, the reality of interpreting is very different to the simulated world of university classrooms. In fact, in Conference Interpreting, interpreters are always given the text of the speeches by heads of state and therefore have at the very least a few minutes to prepare. However, in televised interpreted events, where the politicians that

count are more often seen things are very different. Barring few exceptions,¹²¹ interpreters never have the opportunity to see the text. So, interpreters are in a situation of "unfair competition" (Pearl 1999) whereby they have to translate speeches either read or tele prompted at breakneck speed: for example, from Russian Parliament speeches, all inauguration speeches, nation addresses and State of the Union speeches by the Presidents of the United to all Nato briefings. My analysis of these SIs demonstrates that interpreters invariably fail to reproduce the rhetorical style; they generalize or omit particularly elegant and *recherché* adjectives, and they neutralize metaphors and other figurative expressions. The *norm* here in the real interpreting world is the rendition of the essentials¹²².

My second example is closely related to FPCs. In her experimental study, Romeo (2001), assumes that the SIs of FPCs are often not up to standard because of the lack of extralinguistic knowledge (and prior preparation) by interpreters. In order to test this hypothesis, 25 subjects (16 students and 9 professional interpreters, of which only 1 media interpreter) were asked to translate a previously recorded (and manipulated) 16-minute interview with George Ryton (chief designer for Minardi). The interpreters' performances were then evaluated on the basis of the rendition of 147 segments (including individual words), which were *a priori* considered 'problem triggers'

In Romeo's study the only interpreter with "an absolute completeness of information" (*ib.* 114), "no difficulties in delivering a complete and correct translation" (*ib.* 117) and only "some not necessarily evident inaccuracies" (*ib.*), was, in fact, the interpreter who in our subcorpus had translated the largest number (31 out of the 80) of the FPCs (cfr. § 3). Romeo concludes that such an outstanding performance was possible thanks to the interpreter's extralinguistic knowledge and familiarity with the subject matter.

However, these results are in sharp contrast with the data of our subcorpus. Tables 1-4 and the extracts reported in § 3 clearly show that for this interpreter too, the SI of FPCs is anything but plain sailing. There are, in fact, errors which concern the rendition of technical terms, including FPC-specific (e.g. [15], [17], [23], [40], [41], [66], [68]), but also common errors, such as those relative to discourse reference (e.g. [12], [44], [47], [64], [105]). Moreover, this interpreter – like his colleagues – regularly resorts to *emergency strategies* (e.g. [3], [27], [31], [49], [50], [61], [78], [91], [92], [93], [100], [104], [108], [109]).

121 For example, the Vatican press office always sends the Pope's speech to the RAI at least an hour before it goes on air (personal communication).

122 The same is true of the numerous commemorative speeches which make up my corpus, such as the eulogies to Lady Diana (6.9.1997), Mother Theresa (13.9.1997) and the Queen Mother (9.4.2002).

That being said, this interpreter is still the best performer, having reported the highest percentage of correct questions and answers (cf. tab. 1-2), particularly if compared to the second interpreter (in terms of number of FPCs). On the other hand, the interpretation of Coulthard and Irvine's answers (cf. tab. 3-4) show that both interpreters are on the same level of performance, considering that the second interpreter translated as many as 30 answers more than the first interpreter.

From the foregoing, it is clear that in the literature on SI, quality tends to be expressed in terms of an ideal world, which we might, kindly, call wishful thinking. Experimental studies, too, can only evaluate an interpreter's performance in a 'sheltered' environment, ignoring those variable that interpreters cannot control such as speed and the accent of speakers. Moreover, these studies are often not only based on self-prophesising hypotheses, but the hypotheses themselves are hardly valid.

As the errors made by "the best performer" in practice (rather than in the experimental setting) demonstrate, the problem is the recognition of technical words in the flow of the speech and not the extralinguistic knowledge *per se*, the latter being part and parcel of any SI, particularly of a technical nature. Interpreters clearly use their knowledge to activate scripts and other emergency strategies.

In conclusion, quality standards should be adjusted to concrete SI situations. We should, therefore, frame the conditions in which the interpreter has to translate a particular text, and, consequently, consider and decide the *achievable quality* of the interpretation. It is, at this point, unrealistic to think that:

SI is *infinite* and only fails on those rare occasions when the customer complains, and that when he does, the customer must be right and the interpreter at fault [...] It is the, in a sense, flattering assumption on the part of participants that a simultaneous interpreter's capacity to handle anything that is thrown at him or her is 'infinite' that actually increases his or her 'fallibility'. (Pearl 1999: 7)

Interpreters' performances are closely dependent on the working conditions, which, to a large extent, determine the quality of a given SI. Interpreters cannot be held totally responsible for the achievement of this objective. This means, for example, that the criteria of accuracy of content and completeness (usually ranking first in all quality evaluation grids) may not necessarily be fully met, nor are they always the primary objective of SI. A great number of media texts may be defined as 'limited quality' texts. Ross Perot is a case in point. The three interpreters (experienced media professionals) who translated him on three different occasions (see footnote 118) had unsurmountable difficulties due to the rate of speech (an average of 200 wpm) and a strongly marked Texan accent.

And once again, the *norm* was the adoption of *emergency strategies*, especially the reconstruction of the sense of almost every single speaking turn of the American candidate (with a very high number of omissions). And yet, the interpreting community and broadcasters were favourably impressed by these performances.

Therefore, in many cases it would be wiser to foreground evaluation criteria such as, for example, the capacity to sum up and deliver an apparently smooth and coherent discourse while keeping up with the, at times frantic, pace. These skills, in fact, together with fluency and voice quality, are precisely those which typify the 31 SIs of the most experienced FPC interpreter.

So, in reality, the norm is that media interpreters are judged not for interpreting a speech correctly but convincingly well. Ultimately, though I am not suggesting throwing the quality baby out with the accuracy bath water, it is the *form* and not the *content* that both broadcasters and viewers respond to.

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