

Interpreting conflict from speech to sign on Italian television

CYNTHIA J. KELLETT BIDOLI AND RITA SALA¹

SSLMIT, University of Trieste

Abstract

If research on the role of spoken-language interpreting in global news coverage is limited, the role of signed-language interpreting in this area is news in itself! This joint paper focuses on an aspect of international communication for Italian profoundly deaf and hard-of-hearing people: global news coverage through simultaneous Italian Sign Language (LIS) interpreting on television. It looks in particular at the transfer of news related to global conflicts across the linguistic and cultural divide between the deaf and hearing worlds. A comparative linguistic analysis was conducted on a small multimodal corpus (in both spoken Italian and simultaneously interpreted LIS) of brief video recorded Italian television news bulletins, to investigate textual features of interpreted news and the main linguistic challenges facing sign language interpreters in the domain of conflict such as terminology, foreign loans, foreign proper, toponymic and institutional names. These are some of the aspects covered by this paper to reveal how news crosses the international 'sound barrier'.

Introduction

Research on interpreting conflict-related news outlined in this paper, stems from work undertaken since 2002 in three successive Italian university research

¹ Although this paper is the outcome of joint research by the two authors, Cynthia Kellett Bidoli dealt mainly with the source text and Rita Sala with the target text.

projects. They involved a broad investigation on socio-discursive practices in spoken and written English discourse in Italy², including the use of English in the Italian Deaf Community. Regarding the latter, initial study began on the provision of interpreting for Italian deaf people in conference settings when English is used by speakers (Kellett Bidoli 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a). Attention was later directed towards other situations in which deaf Italians come into contact with English (Kellett Bidoli 2007b), including media settings. Regarding the media, our research focus shifted to aspects of British or American identity and culture contained in feature films and international news and how they are transferred to deaf audiences either through subtitling or Italian Sign Language (LIS) interpreting (cf. Kellett Bidoli 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

In order to investigate the provision of sign language interpreting on Italian television news channels and, initially, to see how Anglo-Saxon identity traits contained therein cross the deaf/hearing divide, a small corpus of video recordings of daily news bulletins was collected. The bulletins were found to incorporate a wide range of lexical and linguistic features to create a blending of generic styles. Because the very nature of news covers diverse topics of interest, the initial corpus terminology was found to fit into six broad domain-specific categories: politico-institutional (26.57%), science and technology (21.91%), law and crime (21.30%), sport (11.76%), conflict (10.95%), economics (7.51%). So far two of these categories have been investigated in detail: politico-institutional terms (cf. Kellett Bidoli 2009c) and terms associated with law and crime (cf. Kellett Bidoli 2009d).

The translation of terminology linked to conflict was taken as the basis for a paper presented in Australia in July 2009, at a panel on *Global news, interpreting/ translating and the projection of cultures* at the 3rd Conference of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) on *Mediation and Conflict: Translation and Culture in a Global Context* held at Monash University, Melbourne. This present paper reports our findings, however, discussion diverges from the 'English language focus' of the above mentioned research projects, in that this paper deals with interpreting in the Italian and LIS language combination. The only minor reference to English language use is to occasional English loans found in the conflict-related bulletins that are commonly used in spoken Italian and interpreted into LIS (cf. 4.4). Before turning to interpreting conflict from speech to sign, there follow a brief outline of research on media interpreting and a short section on sign language provision on Italian television.

- 2 Research has been conducted within three national projects coordinated by Professor Maurizio Gotti (University of Bergamo): MIUR project 2002104353 *Intercultural Discourse in Domain-specific English*; PRIN project 2005109911 *Identity and Culture in English Domain-specific Discourse*; PRIN project 2007JCY9Y9 *Tension and Change in English Domain-specific Genres*. Cynthia Kellett is a member of the Turin research unit, coordinated by Professor Giuseppina Cortese. Cf.: <<http://www.unibg.it/cerlis/progetti.htm>>. Rita Sala does not work within the PRIN units but has taught LIS for several years at the SSLMIT and is a freelance LIS interpreter with experience interpreting on Italian television.

1. Media interpreting research

Research on media interpreting is sparse. Spoken language interpreting in media settings is still a largely unexplored area (Gambier 2008: 20) and has not generated as much research interest compared to conference interpreting in institutional settings, or dialogue interpreting in business and public service settings. At media events, interpreters have to cope with many genres in a wide variety of workplace environments such as: live simultaneous film interpreting (Snelling 1990, 1996; Guardini 2000; Simonetto 2000; Viaggio 2001); on-screen television interpreter-mediated communication (among others Alexieva 1996, 2001; Kurz 1997, 2002, 2003; Mack 2001, 2002; Mayer 1994; Bros-Brann 1993; Chiaro 2002); interpretation during televised coverage of particular world events such as speeches by heads of state (Pöchhacker 1997, 2007; Wadensjö 2000; Amato 2002); Formula One press-conferences (Straniero Sergio 2003); television talkshow interpreting (Straniero Sergio 2007).

Research on sign language interpreting in media settings has focused principally on television, mainly in the British Isles, some examples are: a study of the sign language content of *See Hear*, the UK's longest running programme for deaf people (Woll/Allsop 1990); investigation into deaf people's responses to sign language on television from different parts of England and Northern Ireland (Allsop in Woll 1991); a wide national study in the UK involving returns from over 2,500 deaf and hard-of-hearing people on their opinions related to television viewing where international and national news was placed at the top of the list of priorities for access (Kyle 1992); Steiner's (1998: 100) investigation into British Sign Language (BSL) production and comprehension on television; Kyle/Dury's (2003) survey of viewing preferences in the Bristol area; Stone's (2005) examination of 'Deaf translation' by direct comparison between deaf and hearing translators on television news; a description of sign language news interpreting from the point of view of the deaf interpreter (Allsop/Kyle 2008). A broad survey of TV sign language in 17 European countries is reported by Kyle/Allsop (1997) and investigation into Austrian as well as other German-language broadcasters' services for the deaf and hearing impaired is provided by Kurz/Mikulasek (2004).

2. Sign language on Italian television

At present in Italy, television networks air little on-screen sign language interpretation, which is reserved mainly for brief news bulletins or the dissemination of information on voting procedures during election campaigns. During the 2009 European parliamentary election campaign, the European Disability Forum sent institutions its manifesto *Nothing About Disabled Persons, Without Disabled Persons*, which in its first proposal³ called for "The right to equal access for voting and participation in electoral campaigns" and "Electoral material and information must be delivered in fully accessible formats such as large print, braille, electronic format, sign language, easy-to-read language, subtitling of

3 Cf. <http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=138546&thebloc=19723>.

television programmes and audio description". On Italian television there were two electoral announcements per day in sign language to explain voting procedure. Some of the live televised electoral debates were subtitled (despite the problem of poor quality captioning), whereas only one debate, broadcast on RAI 2, *L'intervista* [*The Interview*], was interpreted into LIS, but could be viewed only on RaiNews 24 via digital terrestrial transmission.

The subtitling of films, series, and some other TV programmes is more diffuse meeting the needs of both signers and non-signers, as well as hearing immigrants unfamiliar with spoken Italian (listening and reading helps them learn the language; cf. Tucci 2000: 92). In 2007, according to the Italian Deaf Association's website and www.superabile.it the amount of subtitling on television was in the range of 35% of all programmes aired; more recent precise data are unavailable.

More sign language interpretation on Italian television is foreseen in coming years since an agreement reached in 2007 between the RAI and the Italian Ministry for Communications. It endorses access by Italian deaf people to at least 60% of all programmes broadcast with the aid of LIS or subtitling. Particular attention is to be focussed on educational and political information⁴. Commitments for 2007-2009 included one edition a day of signed or subtitled TV news on TG1, TG2 and TG3⁵ and one regional edition of news a day (there are 20 Regions in Italy). In coming years the amount of subtitling and sign language is expected to increase to cover 60% of all programmes; this percentage refers not only to pre-recorded programmes but also to real-time transmission including current affairs, political debates, sport and entertainment (Associazione Eurosordi Onlus 2007).

A clearer idea of deaf people's access to news is illustrated in Table 1, which compares the time allocated to news broadcast to regular RAI viewers (hearing) and news broadcast in LIS.

	Regular news bulletins per day	Minutes aired	LIS news Flash per day	Minutes aired
RAI TG1	11	195	1	3
RAI TG2	6	115	1	3
RAI TG3	7 (plus regional news editions)	255	1	3-4
Rete 4 TG4	4	120	1	8

Table 1. Amount of news aired per day calculated approximately from the TV Guide. (Source Kellett Bidoli 2010: 177)

It is clear from the officially programmed news that only a few minutes a day are broadcast in sign language. These are an average three minutes (excluding 8 minutes for channel 4) compared to approximately 25 minutes for each regular news bulletin per channel with several editions offered per day. In addition there

4 From the online ENS bulletin, <<http://www.ens.it>>.

5 TG stands for *Telegiornale*, i.e. TV news on the Italian national RAI television network, channels 1, 2 and 3.

is one daily subtitled edition of the regular news for each RAI channel. There is evidently, a great reduction in the amount of information that reaches deaf and hard-of-hearing people in LIS which for many deaf people is their first language. There is still a long way to go before broader access to the news is obtained by the Italian deaf community.

Access to information through sign language in Italy is closely linked to its full legal recognition which is lacking despite the European Parliament Resolutions on Sign Language. These Resolutions in 1988 and 1998, established among other requirements that in each member state there be official recognition of the sign language/s used by deaf people and recognition of sign language interpreting as a profession with the provision of full-time sign language interpreter training. A further requirement was the provision of sign language interpreting or subtitles on TV news programmes. In November 2009 the draft of a new Italian bill was rejected by the Italian Parliamentary Committee in charge of it because consensus by all parties involved was not reached over a specific article. A new attempt was made in June 2010 and again in 2011.

Despite a slow response in Italy to increase the number of programmes broadcast with the aid of LIS or subtitling, at least the requirement of one edition a day of signed TV news on TG1, TG2 and TG3 has been met. This paper looks closely at signed news on these channels. We focussed on news referring to conflict for the reasons described in section 1 and began by asking ourselves how and to what extent does news related to global conflicts cross the linguistic and cultural divide between the Italian deaf and hearing worlds. By 'how' we meant to look at some of the strategies needed to interpret TV news effectively in LIS, and 'by what extent' our aim was to discern whether the information was being transferred effectively and adequately. Thus, we selected relevant bulletins from our corpus and proceeded by looking firstly at the Italian source text (ST) and then comparing it to the LIS target text (TT) to discover features of interest in a hitherto unexplored area.

3. The TV corpus

A small corpus of video recordings of RAI news bulletins in spoken Italian simultaneously interpreted into LIS, was collected over two different periods of time. The first set of 18 bulletins, recorded from December 2006 to January 2007, last from two to three minutes each containing from four to seven items of news. The 104 news items were transcribed producing 4,603 tokens (all the words uttered by the newsreader) containing 1,808 types (single words used). A type may occur once or several times in a corpus. For example, there were 815 occurrences of the type *di* (of), 405 for *e* (and), 6 for *soldato/i* (soldier/s) and 1 occurrence of *carr* (tanks). The 104 items have since been expanded to 312, with additional bulletins recorded from RAI TG2 and TG3 as well as signed news from the independent Rete 4 network TG4 news programme. The total number of Italian tokens in the main TV corpus now stands at 19,350 composed of 4,516 types.

The spoken Italian in the 2006-2007 TG1 bulletins was transcribed from the RAI video recordings and manually aligned with glosses of the simultaneously interpreted LIS. We obtained the original studio scripts used by the sign-language interpreters for the 2008-2009 bulletins. We have so far only aligned the conflict-related bulletins in this part of the corpus.

In order to align the Italian and the LIS we looked for an electronic support system. Back in 2002 (in the first research project), a system was used which we had hoped would be capable of handling multimodal source data (sound, images and plain written text) but a number of problems arose. Although we used a system with voice recognition software to speed up the transcription process it was found that so much manual correction was needed that direct manual transcription was simpler and more reliable. Furthermore, although the system allowed images, sound and written text to be combined on the screen and synchronized to run simultaneously, the sign language was shown in an inset that was too small. Therefore, we abandoned the system preferring a normal wide screen TV or PC monitor to observe the macro signs and micro non-verbal communication (minimal movements and facial expressions) during the sign language transcription stage. To speed up the procedure, the sign glosses/labels were recorded orally on audiotape as they appeared on the video and subsequently manually transcribed from those sound recordings into an unpunctuated string of Italian words in upper case letters. The glosses were later broken down into meaningful punctuated segments according to the natural 'intonation' markers and pauses of LIS using a 'musical score' format to create parallel corpora containing: a transcription of the original discourse in Italian (in italics) and the LIS glosses (in upper case). The following example (from TG1 on 10/1/07) has been translated into English below for the convenience of an international readership:

Questa sera Bush illustra alla nazione in diretta televisiva
QUESTA SERA BUSH DISCORSO DIRETTA TV

la nuova strategia per l'Iraq.
NUOVA STRATEGIA PER IRAQ.

Pronto l'invio di nuove truppe.
PRONTO MANDARE SOLDATI

Intanto ci sono critiche da ONU e Unione Europea
ANCORA C'È CRITICA O-N-U U-E

per il raid Americano in Somalia.
PER AMERICA AEREI BOMBE "Soma".

Contrario al blitz Americano anche il Ministro degli Interni D'Alema.
ANCHE MINISTRO ESTERI NOSTRO D "D'Alema"

L'Italia non approva ha detto
ITALIA APPROVA NO.

ad iniziative unilaterali che potrebbero innescare nuove tensioni.
DOVE UNILATERALE POSSIBILE TENSIONE PUÒ

[This evening Bush will talk live to the nation
THIS EVENING BUSH SPEECH DIRECT TV
about the new strategy for Iraq.
NEW STRATEGY FOR IRAQ.

He is ready to send more troops.
 READY SEND SOLDIERS.
 Meanwhile there is criticism from the UN and EU
 STILL THERE-IS CRITISCISM U-N E-U
 for the American raid in Somalia
 FOR AMERICA AEROPLANES BOMBS “Somalia”.
 Also the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs D’Alema, is against the raid.
 ALSO MINISTER FOREIGN-AFFAIRS OURS D “D’Alema”
 He said that Italy disapproves
 ITALY APPROVES NO
 any unilateral initiatives that could spark new tensions.
 WHERE UNILATERAL POSSIBLE TENSION CAN.]⁶

The 55 news bulletins containing 312 separate items of news, report events over two similar winter time spans. A small subcorpus of items reporting conflict was extracted covering 17.31 % of the total. The areas of world conflict reported are illustrated in Figure 2, which clearly shows a primary concern with conflict in the Middle East, namely the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and great tensions between the Israeli government and Hamas. This is followed by Iraq and conflict with the U.S.A.

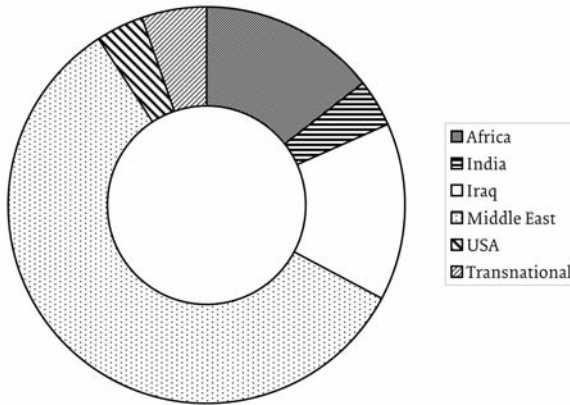


Fig. 2. Geographical source of conflict-related news in the subcorpus

Next, African conflicts are reported including coverage of fighting between various ethnic groups in the Congo and the Horn of Africa and between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Conflict in India is related to the terrorist attacks in Mumbai (November 2008) and hence, tension between India and Pakistan. Two reports on ‘American territory’ cover firstly, a terrorist attack (an explosion) at the American Embassy in Athens and secondly, the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base detainment camp where President Barack Obama pledged to end

6 Two glosses joined by a hyphen means that two words are needed to gloss one sign, single letters joined by a hyphen indicate use of the manual alphabet (fingerspelling) and words between double quotation marks in italics represent lexical items that were mouthed. Non-manual signals can be inserted in lower case letters above the glosses on a line if necessary but are not shown here.

torture by American troops at the base or anywhere in war. General transnational events in the subcorpus comprise news from international organizations (e.g. UN or EU) including three military-related items on the expansion of NATO bases in Northern Italy. Two reports on events in Greece on civil unrest and rioting were not counted among the items on military conflict as they lasted a few days and were managed by police. The historical conflict of World War II is mentioned in a couple of items on present day Middle Eastern events coincident with the Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27th January.

4. Textual features of interpreted news in the transfer from speech to sign

Today media discourse can be swiftly transmitted to an invisible nationwide audience through a variety of highly technological digital modes, via television, internet, and mobile phone technology. It belongs to the broad media genre but in the case of this corpus more specifically to the television news report subgenre, an informative genre, reporting events, facts and figures, of which LIS news bulletins can be considered a genrelet. The news items were reported in spoken Italian and interpreted simultaneously into LIS for a culturally homogeneous deaf audience. This interpreting mode shares similarities with conference interpreting, in that the newsreader, like the conference speaker, 'reads' from a pre-prepared source language text (ST) which the interpreter listens to and reformulates into the target language text (TT). However, in contrast to conference interpreters who generally deal with a focussed selected topic presented by each speaker, news interpreters have to cope with a wide range of topics covering different terminological domains within a restricted time span, which stretches their cognitive processing to a maximum with the added difficulty of having to switch from an oral/aural mode to a gestural/visual one.

In Italy, global news on foreign events is mainly based on information received from international English-speaking news agencies or directly from English-speaking 24-hour news networks like BBC World or CNN and subsequently translated into Italian. It is impossible to discern how much the original news was domesticated or foreignised⁷ (cf. Venuti 1995) in this probable transfer from English to Italian by the news script writers, and beyond the scope of this paper. Conoscenti (2004: 53) interestingly likens the role of the journalist (who in this case prepares the reports for the newsreader) to that of the translator:

In fact, as the public is made up of people that must be addressed as individuals, the main task of the journalist is then to translate the institutional language into an interpersonal communicative style, giving an impression of familiarity, which is typical of oral communication.

- 7 Domestication of a ST is when a journalist or translator adapts the TT to the target audience's culture in various ways such as embedding explanations of culture-bound references or using near equivalent institutional terms to bring the translation in line with the dominant conventions and expectancies prevailing in the target culture. Foreignisation leaves the TT essentially unaltered.

The news bulletins report events and factual information, but in order to do so often build on pre-existing reports revealing an evident intertextuality within the news narrative. Past events may be revoked and explained in brief or reference made to the previous day's or week's news in order to clarify the narrative before conveying additional events and facts. Therefore, sign language interpreters must keep fully up to date with current national and world news, be able to cope with a wide range of domain-specific terminology and promptly translate nationalities, foreign place and proper names correctly.

Investigation into the challenges sign language interpreters face when conveying news specifically related to conflict cannot remain divorced from the wider range of challenges they normally face during television interpreting and those strategies they adopt to convey the language of journalism in the most accurate way possible. In television interpreting there is a marked difference between interpreters who speak and interpreters who sign in terms of the strategies used and their location in the studio. Spoken language interpreters working via *chuchotage* are seated immediately behind or next to their clients in the studio and play a secondary role. With ever more frequent recourse to simultaneous interpreting during televised events, interpreters are becoming increasingly invisible, located at a distance from the speakers, often delivering their interpretation in oversound. Riccardi (2003: 120) rightly points out that although television programmes are 'live' events like conferences, the ensuing interpretation is different from conference interpreting and requires specific adaptations to the medium, such as working in restricted time spans. Spoken and signed language interpreters must and do adjust, according to televised or conference settings, but the principal difference between them lies in the fact that during the simultaneous mode the latter are always visible to the audience. This depends on the visual nature of sign languages, therefore, the sign language interpreters must be in constant full camera view in order for signs and gestures to be observed clearly by the public at home. This includes unhindered viewing of any mouthings which are part of the translation technique and of particular relevance in television interpreting as exemplified below.

Italian sign language interpreters are required to work on television according to the so-called 'American style' (screen shot down to the mid thigh or knees), allowing ample space for arm movements without the risk of cutting out signs beyond the viewing frame. Television news interpreting strategies are often linked to particular constraints absent at other interpreting events, to which the interpreters have to adapt: speed of the newsreader, brevity of information, conciseness of the news item, location in the studio and bulletin closing time. For example, there is little time for long lag (voice-hand span), the interpreter has to start and close almost simultaneously with the newsreader, so she is not cut off or creates an excessively prolonged 'silence' while the newsreader waits for her to finish. Linguistic challenges include the constant barrage of ST foreign proper and place names as well as exposure to a wide range of technical terminology and neologisms, found in the news corpus on national and international events, including global conflict the specific area covered by this paper.

In the conflict subcorpus six principle areas were found that contain particular linguistic and textual features that challenge sign language interpreters' cognitive

coping strategies, forcing them to adjust and find suitable solutions in the TT ranging from anticipation to reformulation or even omission of terms or chunks of information. These are:

- domain-specific terminology;
- Italian and foreign proper and institutional names;
- toponymic reference and nationalities;
- foreign loans;
- emphasis through facial expression;
- speed of enunciation and textual reformulation.

Each of these will be discussed according to ST and TT, looking at examples of how interpreters cope with the language transfer from speech to sign and to what extent their choices communicate effectively.

4.1 Domain-specific terminology

Conflict involves an intricate web of complex issues generating discourse focussed on war, civil unrest, territorial rights, resources, humanitarian crises, ethnicity, religion, terrorism, weaponry and among others peace. The ST domain-specific terminology clearly falls into five terminological subcategories or concept fields as illustrated in Figure 3.

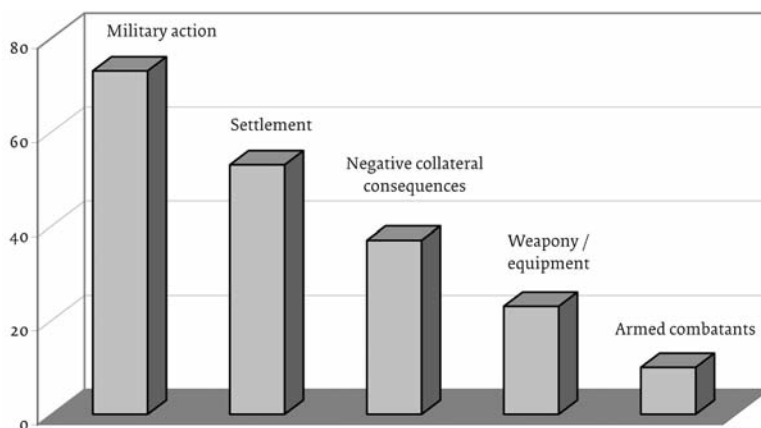


Fig. 3. Onomasiological division of conflict-related tokens (Source Kellett Bidoli 2010: 183)

The first and largest field, containing 75 tokens, comprises, as expected, terms related to military action: ‘advance’, ‘ambush’, ‘army’, ‘attack/s’, ‘barricade’(verb-vb.), ‘blitz’, ‘command’, ‘contingent’, ‘clashes’, ‘explosions’, ‘fighting’, ‘forces’, ‘hostility’, ‘incursion’, ‘offensive’, ‘to open fire’, ‘operations’, ‘raid’, ‘shots’, ‘strike’ (vb.), ‘soldiers’, ‘torture’, ‘tumult’, ‘troops’, ‘violence’ and ‘war’. It is worth noting that the key word ‘war’ (*guerra*) ranks 9th in terms of occurrences (5) and ‘conflict’ (*conflitto*) is totally absent.

Surprisingly, terms associated with the settlement of conflict and hence, positive developments in conflictual situations, comprise the second largest terminological concept field in Figure 3, of which three lexemes are the three top ranking terms: ‘truce’ (*tregua*, 13 occurrences), followed by ‘peace’ (*pace*, 11), ‘withdrawal’ (*ritiro*, 9), and ‘cease fire’ (*cessate il fuoco*, 8) not far behind. Other terms in this field, all related to the mitigation or settlement of conflict, are: ‘agreement’, ‘armistice’, ‘curfew’, ‘negotiations’ and ‘reconciliation’. However, concordancing of the node ‘truce’ (*tregua* always found with reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), highlights its instability in several of the 13 instances it is used, as shown in Table 3. For those readers unacquainted with Italian: the truce is ‘shaky’ among Palestinian factions (*vacilla* l.1); Israel ‘might’ call a truce (*potrebbe* l.2); the truce ‘seems’ to hold (*sembra* l.5); the truce is ‘fragile’ (*fragile* l.8, 6 and 11); the truce ‘has failed’ (*rompe la tregua* [breaks the truce] l.12). A more positive light is shed by the use of terms like: Hamas is ‘favourable’ to a truce (*favorevole* l.3); the truce is a positive sign/indication (*segnale positive* l.4); the truce ‘is holding’ (*regge* l.5 and 7).

1	Vacilla dunque la	TREGUA	tra le due fazioni Palestinesi.
2	Israele potrebbe annunciare una	TREGUA	unilaterale.
3	Hamas si dice favorevole a una	TREGUA	dopo il cessate il fuoco unilaterale proclamato
4	riprenderemo le ostilità. La	TREGUA	di Hamas è un segnale positivo,
5	sembra poter reggere la	TREGUA	dichiarata unilateralmente da Israele.
6	avrebbero aderito. Una	TREGUA	comunque ancora fragile per ora limitata
7	Regge la	TREGUA	nella striscia di Gaza mentre prosegue il ritiro
8	palestinese nonostante la fragile	TREGUA	il cessate il fuoco in vigore da 3 giorni che
9	Intanto regge la	TREGUA	nella striscia di Gaza mentre proseguono
10	il ritiro di Israele, a 4 giorni dalla	TREGUA	e dopo 23 giorni di pesantissimo
11	Gaza dove è in vigore una fragile	TREGUA	che comunque al momento regge.
12	Un attacco palestinese rompe la	TREGUA	ucciso in un agguato un soldato israeliano,
13	settimana dall'accordo per una	TREGUA	a Gaza, ancora morte e violenze nella striscia.

Table 3. Concordance to *tregua*

The third terminological concept field that emerged is related to the mortal consequences of conflict (‘dead’, ‘death/s’, ‘killed’, ‘massacre’ and ‘victims’) and other negative collateral developments and circumstances (‘evacuees’, ‘hostages’, ‘refugees’ and ‘wounded’) with 29 and 11 occurrences respectively.

Two smaller concept fields were identified, one containing lexemes for military weaponry and equipment (‘arms’, ‘aviation’, ‘bomb’, ‘helicopter’, ‘missiles’, ‘mortar’, ‘launch’ (vb.), ‘ships’, ‘tanks’, ‘white phosphorus’) and the other referring to armed non-military or paramilitary combatants: ‘guerrillas’, ‘militias’, ‘rebels’ and ‘terrorist/s’.

Some of the domain-specific ST terms described above have equivalents in LIS but for others rendering the original ST meaning requires the use of particular coping strategies. Sign language being a dynamic form of visual communication (i.e. it uses motion as opposed to the static graphics of written language) manages to convey detailed information about the movement or shape of objects through its particular ‘phonological’ and grammatical characteristics. For example, when

the Italian verb *portare* (to carry) is uttered, the LIS interpreter cannot simply translate it by using an equivalent sign but has to understand what is being carried or where or how it is being carried in order to choose which hand shape is the most appropriate to use for that single term in Italian. In other words, in LIS it is not always appropriate or possible to use a 'standardized' signed verb or noun (the pure equivalent of a spoken word that LIS interpreters call *il termine contenitore* [the container term] or citation form), but a verb-object fusion may be required producing a sign that is radically different to adapt the citation form to the context. In the subcorpus, citation forms related to military action, like the noun *attacco* (attack) or the verb *colpire* ('strike/hit', homonymic in Italian, also meaning 'to shoot'), undergo frequent modification. In the case of 'strike/shoot', the handshape changes according to whether 'a man strikes/hits another man', 'a bomb strikes from above', there is a 'missile strike', or whether shots are from a hand gun, machinegun or mortar. In each case the classifiers used (i.e. the specific shape the hand must assume for the sign corresponding to the verb 'strike/hit') will be different. In deciding which handshape to use the interpreters' 'world knowledge' is fundamental. This knowledge is acquired from previous news editions (that day, week etc.) and personal pre-broadcast preparation. An example of this is taken from the following news item:

Ventiduesimo giorno di attacco israeliano su Gaza. Colpito di nuovo un edificio dell'ONU. È una scuola. Dentro c'erano 1600 sfollati. 2 bambini sono morti. Israele potrebbe annunciare questa sera una tregua unilaterale. Unilaterale perché non accetta di trattare con Hamas ... (TG3 on 17/01/2009)

[Twenty-second day of the Israeli attack on Gaza. A UN building has been hit yet again. It was a school. Inside were 1,600 evacuees. 2 children died. Israel might announce a unilateral truce this evening. Unilateral because negotiations with Hamas are unacceptable ...]

For the sign HIT (COLPITO) the interpreter uses an indication of bombs falling from the sky with a closed 5 figure classifier (5-CL), as indeed she knows that the building was hit by an air strike though it was not explicitly stated in the item and no visuals – images or headlines – accompany signing on this channel.

Another example is the term 'to open fire' (*aprire il fuoco*):

Dopo il ritiro delle forze israeliane da Gaza, rimane alta la tensione nel territorio, è catastrofica la situazione umanitaria. Stamane una nave israeliana ha aperto il fuoco contro imbarcazioni palestinesi, accusate di trovarsi fuori dall'area di pesca loro consentita. (TG3 on 22/01/09)

[Following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, tension remains high in the territory; humanitarian conditions are catastrophic. This morning an Israeli warship opened fire on Palestinian vessels accused of being outside their permitted fishing area.]

Here the interpreter uses the sign BOMB combined with the -G- handshape, which can be used to indicate MISSILE or ROCKET.

There are some Italian nouns that may be translated by several distinct signs (synonyms) in LIS, for example, 'truce' (*tregua*) or 'cease-fire' (*cessate il fuoco*). Therefore, in the bulletins the signs for these two terms vary constantly: PAUSE, WAR SUSPENDED, SUSPENSION, or FIRING ENOUGH. The signs used for the interpretation of 'truce' are often the same as those used for 'cease-fire' unless both terms are present in the same item of news. In this case the interpreter has

to use a synonymous sign (even if slightly different in meaning) or omit one of them to avoid redundancy:

... Un rappresentante dell'esercito poco dopo ha fatto rientrare quella che sarebbe potuto essere un'emergenza smentendo che vi fossero stati attacchi nell'enclave palestinese nonostante la fragile tregua, il cessate il fuoco in vigore da 3 giorni che comunque continua a reggere. ... (TG4 on 20/01/09)

[... Shortly afterwards, an army spokesman solved what could have developed into an emergency situation, by denying that there had been attacks against the Palestinian enclave notwithstanding the fragile truce, or rather the cease-fire in place over the past three days which seems to be holding. ...]

Here the interpreter chooses to use FIRING ENOUGH once.

In the next example the term 'truce' is used in a different context denoting a 'break' in the situation, related to ongoing peace negotiations and hence, the interpreter signs PEACE BREAK which is semantically correct in the wider context of the news item:

Un attacco palestinese rompe la tregua, ucciso in un agguato un soldato israeliano, altri tre feriti ... (TG2 on 27/01/09)

[A Palestinian attack breaks the truce; an Israeli soldier was killed in an ambush, another three wounded ...]

4.2 Proper and institutional names

Wide use (86 occurrences) is made in the ST of 31 foreign proper names mainly of leading politicians and heads of state, 13 of which from the Middle East. The most frequent reference is made to the U.S. President either by name (full or short form) or by the lexeme 'president' accompanied by his name (8 times), or without (9 times: 'American President' – *presidente americano*, or 'U.S. President' – *presidente degli Stati Uniti*). Both full and short forms are also found in the case of better known leaders. In the case of the head of the Vatican, 'Pope' (*papa*) is used on 4 occasions in preference to 'Benedict XVI'.

Institutional names and terms related in some way to the conflict being reported occur 71 times composed of 27 tokens as illustrated in Table 4 which gives an idea of the variety the interpreter can be confronted with:

Al-Arabiya (1)	Islamic factions (1)	Oberoi Hotel (1) (Mumbai)
(Arab Emirates TV network)	Islamic militias (1)	Quirinal Palace (1)
Ambassador (1)	Israeli Rabbinate (2)	(Residence of the Italian President of the Republic)
Chigi Palace (1)	Lefebvrians (4)	Radical Left (2)
(Seat of the Italian government)	Mayer (1)	Revolutionary Tribunal (1)
Congress (1)	(Florentine hospital)	Special Tribunal (1)
Embassy (1)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (9)	Taj Hotel (Mumbai) (1)
European Commission (1)	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (1)	UN (7)
European Union (7)	Nariman House (1)	United Nations Security Council (2)
Fatah (2)	(Mumbai Jewish Centre)	White House (4)
Hamas (14)		
Holy See (2)		

Table 4. Institutional terms (originally in Italian).

They refer to international organizations, seats of government and diplomacy, political parties, factions, militias, religious groups or institutions, tribunals, a television network and particular locations such as a hospital or the hotels and Jewish centre involved in the Mumbai terrorist attacks. The most frequent of these terms is 'Hamas' with 14 occurrences followed by 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs' related to various countries.

In the TT fingerspelling is the strategy adopted to convey foreign names, surnames and also foreign geographical names with which the interpreter is unacquainted, or for which there is no specific sign, as well as brand names and other foreign terms. Sometimes it is used as a translation strategy to spell out new Italian terms for which no sign has been coined or for Italian terms in which the interpreter lacks fluency or immediacy in the translation into sign language. (Often creative or logical solutions are offered on the spot, such as the translation of 'white phosphorus'. There is no specific sign in LIS for 'phosphorus' so the interpreter fingerspells it adding the sign WHITE).

In the subcorpus most of the interpreters use the full fingerspelling of politicians' names or surnames, or alternatively, initialize one or both of them, by using the letter of the manual alphabet which corresponds to the first letter of the name or surname followed by mouthing of the full name. This strategy is necessary because of the temporal constraint which forces the interpreters to select the quickest solution, at least for those Italian names which are easily recognizable through mouthing and, therefore, can be easily lip read on screen by the deaf audience.

Besides fingerspelling names, there exists a culture-specific peculiarity within the deaf community (not just in Italy), which is reference to a member of that community by means of a 'sign name' which substitutes his/her real name with a sign. This sign name should not be considered a nickname⁸ because by identifying the community member in sign language, it becomes a proper name for that person within the community. Normally, each member of the deaf community has a sign name designated by others, but for practical purposes, sign names can also be given to outsiders, as in the case of politicians. A sign name may highlight some physical trait which might be considered funny or derisive by deaf people. It was noted that one interpreter uses the deaf community's sign name for the Italian Prime Minister Mr Berlusconi, whereas for the American President Barack Obama another interpreter uses the sign name coined by American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. At this point an ethical question arises (occasionally discussed among the Italian deaf community and interpreters alike) as to whether it is correct to use an informal sign name on television, especially if the person so named is unaware of it and furthermore it denotes some physical trait, as in the case of 'Berlusconi'. His sign name is a flat right hand (-B- sign) moving backwards caressing the side of the head, mimicking an adjustment of his seemingly lacquered and always impeccable hair. Opinions are divided on this issue. Some deaf people and interpreters contend that it is right to use such sign names as they are commonly used within the deaf community and, thus, interpreters should accommodate their sign language for easier

8 For further information cf. Russo (1997).

comprehension on television which provides a public service. Others believe that the use of sign names is not politically correct, as the names can be very ironic and unfair towards the unaware targeted person. Rita Sala after several years of experience interpreting the news on TG2, prefers to use the more formal, professional, approach of initialization of the name (in this case -B- for 'Berlusconi') followed by a clear mouthing of his name.

Regarding the sign for 'Obama', it conveys no physical features but was assigned arbitrarily in the U.S. (as often happens there) with the initials of name and surname (-O-B-) being slightly horizontally modified to render the signing more fluid. The choice to use the ASL sign in the corpus was made by only one interpreter, probably after she had seen how the newly elected president's name was signed in ASL. Loans from other sign languages occur frequently for foreign names. However, when loans are used on television, the interpreter cannot be sure the deaf community will officially endorse them, such as the ASL sign name for Obama.

As far as these two examples are concerned, 'Berlusconi' is signed 'formally' in the subcorpus by all but one interpreter (who uses the informal sign name) by initialization of the surname followed by mouthing of his name (-B- "Berlusconi"). This is the strategy used in most cases for the names of Italian politicians such as ministers (Fini or Frattini: -F- + mouthing). In the case of 'Obama', all but one interpreter (who chose the ASL sign), fingerspell his surname in full (O-B-A-M-A), thus omitting his first name or, as in a couple of cases, adding the -B- initial of 'Barak'. For other foreign proper names most interpreters opt for the strategy of initialization with full name mouthing unless there is time for complete fingerspelling. Sometimes the name is rendered by utilizing more than one letter plus mouthing before or after *e.g.* Williamson – "Williams" O-N; Mubarak – M-U "Barak"; Olmert – O-L "mert".

4.3 Toponymic reference and nationality

A peculiarity of the ST owing to the international nature of the news reports is the large number of toponymic references (names of countries) mentioned: 164 tokens composed of 56 types. A few toponyms are not directly associated with the geographical areas of conflict in Figure 2. For example, 'Brussels', 'New York' and 'Washington' are mentioned in connection with conflict-related negotiations at the European Union Commission, UN Security Council and the U.S. executive. Also nouns and adjectives denoting nationality are abundant in 99 tokens composed of 18 types, the most frequent as expected being 'Israeli', 'Palestinian', and 'American'.

Interpretation of toponyms and nationality in LIS follows similar choices to those described for proper names, i.e. recourse to fingerspelling (the whole word or initial letter) or adoption of a place sign name. In Italy the choice of which sign an Italian sign language interpreter uses is often determined by his/her geographical residence and the working environment most frequently encountered. The influence of the surrounding signing community weighs heavily in determining lexical choice according to factors such as age and regional

background. Television sign language interpreting is influenced by many signed dialects which encroach upon 'standard' LIS (itself originally based on the Roman signed dialect) and may be regarded as a major linguistic variable greatly influencing and shaping language usage within the Italian deaf community today as the TV audience is spread nationwide.

As happens in all languages, sign languages coin new terms that may substitute old, obsolete or politically incorrect ones. Similarly, in LIS changes have occurred over time in the signing of the names of countries and continents which in the past highlighted the physical features of inhabitants like the old sign for 'Africa' (indicating the darkness of the face) or for 'China' (indicating oriental eyes). We noticed this in the corpus. Today the sign for 'Africa' has been transformed into a representation of the triangular shape of the continent (outward facing palm of the right hand with closed fingers) and for 'China', a movement across the chest representing the buttoning of the Chinese 'Mao' jacket (indicated by an upturned L), which has spread throughout Italy. In the former case the old sign is still quite common within the deaf community and interestingly, in the subcorpus for the term 'Congo', the letter -C- precedes the old sign for 'Africa' (-C- AFRICA, i.e. -C- + a hand momentarily covering the face indicating the dark colour of the skin).

This dilemma of sign transformation has been analysed by Stewart *et al.* (1998: 127) who state:

Although the new signs show greater sensitivity to the feelings of others than the older signs, they do not permeate a community of signers overnight. It took several years for the polite sign for China to make its way into the vernacular of ASL signs, and some deaf adults still use the former sign.

They then ask and try to answer:

What sign, then, should an interpreter use, the old or the new sign variation? Is it the interpreter's responsibility to introduce the newer, more acceptable version of a sign to the deaf participants? While interpreting, interpreters are not in a position to endorse or teach a new sign. When there is some uncertainty about which sign is suitable, some interpreters use two sign variations consecutively; as the assignment continues, the participants can indicate which sign they prefer (Stewart *et al.* 1998: 128).

The solution they propose may work during conference interpretation where the interpreter can observe the feedback from participants or see one or two older signs used by a few deaf people present in the audience, but in the television studio this is not possible; the audience is remote. On air choices have to be made rapidly, conditioned by stringent temporal constraints which induce the interpreter to eliminate anything superfluous and certainly not add extra signs to cater to both elderly and young viewers. This is one of many choices an interpreter has to make according to the work setting. Furthermore, Italian interpreters generally agree with their American colleagues that it is certainly not the job of the interpreter to teach new signs to the deaf community.

Turning back to the names of countries or regions, it was noted in the subcorpus that most interpreters prefer to interpret names through full or partial fingerspelling, mainly in the case of countries directly involved in conflict and especially for the Arab states. This is because there are no corresponding sign names in LIS. The same holds true for frequently mentioned, foreign, non-

geographical names such as *Hamas* or *Shoa* (Holocaust) increasingly present in recent years in conflict-related news.

'Gaza' or 'Gaza Strip' is always fingerspelled in full and when necessary, preceded by the LIS sign STRIP. If this name is repeated several times in a news item, the sign for the letter -G- is preferred, or deictic reference is made to the previous spatial location of the fully fingerspelled name. This second option is adopted on TG4 when the speed of the newsreader increases owing to a greater number of news items. This was certainly a stylistic choice of strategy which enabled the interpreter to convey the information correctly and keep pace with the newsreader. This is confirmed by the fact that on the other channels, where the news was read at a slower pace, interpreters chose to fully fingerspell G-A-Z-A every time it was repeated. The same can be said for 'Iraq' another conflict zone. However, in the case of other frequently named states 'Israel', 'Egypt' and the 'United States', as well as the city of 'Jerusalem', respective sign names which exist in LIS are used.

An example of switching strategies in the same bulletin (determined by the pace of enunciation and need for clarity) is offered by one interpreter who in two separate bulletins either fully fingerspells 'Guantanamo' (an extremely long name to spell out only time permitting) or uses the letter -G- followed by PRISON. This is a strategy similar to that adopted for 'Congo' (-C- AFRICA) which permits all information to be conveyed when a conventional sign is lacking.

Another instance of sign transformation was noted regarding the sign for 'Palestine' which is technically an old geographical term (area between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Jordan), politically outdated when referring to the contemporary scene. The 'Palestinian territories' comprise two separate zones: the Gaza Strip and West Bank under the Palestinian National Authority. In LIS however, 'Palestine' is still used and is normally translated by a sign which denotes its Arab origin, or rather the particular male headwear in Arab countries. Yet, on one occasion in the subcorpus it is translated by an alternative iconic sign: a -P- drawing a veil across the forehead to indicate the characteristic Palestinian female headdress. Here it is not clear whether this is a politically correct new sign or not. The Middle East has only entered the daily news for the Deaf in Italy over the past few years of conflict and LIS signs have been slow in adapting to the evolving political scene.

Yet another country with old, new and more recently signed variants is Israel. The old sign for 'Jew' is no longer used even to name the State of Israel. Today there are two main variants for 'Israel'. Firstly, the sign for 'Jew' related to the shape of a beard using a -B- handshape with the thumb closing on the chin, or secondly, a different sign that conveys the same information using a curved -V- handshape that touches first the left part of the chin and then the right part with the knuckles.

4.4 Foreign loans

Foreign loans are commonly found in spoken Italian and found several times in the news corpus. Foreign loans may cause problems for interpreters depending

on their frequency in Italian everyday speech (i.e. whether they are commonly used and easily recognized terms or not) or their pronunciation by the newsreader. A conflict-related anglicism is ‘raid’ for which there is no sign in LIS. It is semantically conveyed as AEROPLANES (-Y- hand shape on the left and right hand) + BOMBING (-B- hand shape closed). A second is ‘leader’ signed as HEAD. A LIS sign does exist for LEADERSHIP borrowed from ASL but is not used in this corpus. ‘Blitz’ of German origin uttered once, is omitted in LIS as obviously deemed redundant owing to the term ‘raid’ preceding it in the same news item.

The Arabic word ‘rais’ is used when referring to Saddam Hussein. It is interpreted once by indication of Saddam’s location in the signed discourse, and twice by the sign for ‘ex/former’ + -R- accompanied by mouthing “rais”:

The biblical Hebrew term ‘Shoah’ meaning desolation, catastrophe or disaster, is uttered in reports referring to the Jewish Holocaust in a couple of items on Middle East events where mention is made of the historical conflict of World War II on the Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27th January. It is always fully fingerspelled S-H-O-A-H.

4.5 Emphasis through facial expression

In sign language facial expression conveys grammatical and semantic information. A sentence can be rendered interrogative through a brow raise. A widening or narrowing of the lips can indicate the size of an object. In most cases, prosody, speed and emphasis are conveyed through particular facial expressions, but to date little research has been done in this area on LIS. The management of facial expression is a problematic area in sign language interpreting and is particularly important when conveying news on conflict where emotions, reactions and the intensity of conflict have to be transmitted in some way and we found that the interpreters were doing so.

Below are some examples from the ST and where emphatic facial expression (its duration in small capitals) is used to effect in the LIS equivalent message on hearing the Italian ST:

Nella Repubblica Democratica del Congo, dove SONO IN CORSO DA MESI FEROCI COMBATTIMENTI tra le forze governative ed i ribelli (TG3 on 21/11/09)

[In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where FIERCE FIGHTING HAS CONTINUED FOR MONTHS between government forces and rebels ...]

Dopo il ritiro delle forze israeliane da Gaza, rimane alta la tensione nel territorio, È CATASTROFICA LA SITUAZIONE UMANITARIA. (TG3 on 22/01/09)

[Following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, tension remains high in the territory; HUMANITARIAN CONDITIONS ARE CATASTROPHIC.]

Solenne celebrazione al Quirinale nella giornata della memoria, nell’occasione Napolitano ha parlato delle DRAMMATICHE SETTIMANE DELLA GUERRA A GAZA. (TG3 on 27/01/09)

[Solemn celebrations at the Quirinale Palace on the Holocaust Remembrance Day where President Napolitano spoke of the DRAMATIC WEEKS OF WAR IN GAZA.]

In all three examples, emphasis determined by the Italian adjectives ‘fierce’, ‘catastrophic’ and ‘dramatic’, is accompanied by appropriate facial expression to convey their semantic force. In the first example the adjective ‘fierce’ (*feroci*) is

emphasised by facial expression well before the noun ‘fighting’ (*combattimenti*) it premodifies is signed. It takes the form of: an intense brow squint; face turned slightly to the left as if to avoid observing forward; lips turned downwards; and the addition of a sign/gesture which can be defined as a ‘cover-all’ term that in this context can be translated as ‘terrible’ (i.e. two hands in 5-CL⁹ that move twice from centre outwards). In the second example, the sign TERRIBLE is again present but accompanied by the truncated mouthing of ‘catastrophe’ (*catastrofe*) with a lowered brow. In the third example, this same sign is used again but accompanied by facial expression that conveys the intensity of the adjective ‘dramatic’, thus, semantically emphasising the news contained in the item.

Another way to emphasise the gravity of a given situation is the use of Special Oral Components (SOC), or rather, the use of verbal segmentals such as “pah”, that have no phonetic connection to the Italian word being translated. However, when such a segmental is used in conjunction with a sign, it adds intensity or emphasis. For example:

... *mentre Hamas ha detto di voler tornare ad armarsi il primo possibile per COLPIRE IN PROFONDITÀ il territorio israeliano.* (TG3 on 19/01/09)
 [... whereas Hamas has expressed the wish for a return to arms as soon as possible TO STRIKE AT THE VERY HEART of Israeli territory.]

The interpretation of ‘strike at the very heart of’ (literally in Italian: ‘to strike deeply into’) is conveyed in LIS with the appropriate sign for STRIKE to convey the idea of INTERVENTION/ASSAULT, accompanied this time not by facial expression but by this particular, concisely mouthed segmental “pah”. It intensifies the meaning and comprehension of ‘deep/profound’.

4.6 Speed of enunciation and textual reformulation

Media are managed through a series of language strategies that journalists learn to use to report news, but because of the time constraint for news flashes, there is very limited space for any journalistic creativity, superfluous language or major “linguistic engineering” (Conoscenti 2004) by those who prepare the scripts for LIS news. “Linguistic engineering” is the adoption of various stylistic and rhetorical strategies like choosing particular lexemes, for example those that generate emotional reactions such as ‘school’ and ‘children’ (as victims of war). We found only two examples in the subcorpus which in both cases could have been omitted:

Colpito di nuovo un edificio dell’ONU. È una scuola. Dentro c’erano 1600 sfollati. 2 bambini sono morti. (TG3 on 17/1/09)
 [A UN building has been hit yet again. It was a school. Inside were 1,600 evacuees. 2 children died.]

Ieri 5 morti e 12 feriti tra i quali diversi bambini. (TG1 on 20/12/08)
 [Yesterday, 5 dead and 12 wounded among which several children.]

9 Both hands with open extended fingers and thumb.

In an average three minutes of reporting, time is the enemy, limiting the reports to a series of facts. The communicative style of the ST has to be concise and brief, yet sufficiently informative. There is generally a lead sentence followed by topic oriented discourse including some background information and connections to possible follow-ups before moving on to the next news item, as for example:

A poche ore dall'insediamento del presidente Obama, l'ultimo dei soldati israeliani ha lasciato la striscia di Gaza. Completato così prima dell'alba il ritiro di Israele, a 4 giorni dalla tregua e dopo 23 giorni di pesantissimo intervento militare. L'esercito israeliano ha anche avviato un'inchiesta interna per l'uso del fosforo bianco secondo i vertici militari, utilizzato solo da un contingente di riservisti e all'insaputa dei comandi. (TG3 on 21/1/09)

[Only a few hours since the inauguration of President Obama, the last Israeli soldiers have left the Gaza Strip. The Israeli retreat was completed before dawn four days after the truce and after 23 days of intense military intervention. The Israeli army has started an investigation into the use of white phosphorus, which according to the military authorities was used only by a contingent of reservists without the knowledge of headquarters.]

It is not so much the conciseness and brevity of the news items which challenges news interpreters but the speed at which the news is read. ST delivery rate is related to quality in spoken-language interpreting from the point of view of meaning accuracy (cf. Gerver 1971; Galli 1990) as well as fluency of delivery (Pio 2003) and length of ear-voice span (lag time). In sign-language interpreting Cokely (1986) found evidence of a relationship between lag time and miscue occurrence during sign language interpretation: shorter lag times led to an increase in errors except omissions whereas longer lag times improved performance despite an increase in omissions. In news flashes it is the brevity of the time slot available which determines the speed of the ST especially if time is running short.

A draft copy of the news bulletins should always be made available to the interpreters beforehand to enable them to fully comprehend the events about to be reported, assimilate the information and prepare their signed rendition. Unfortunately, more often than not, this is not the case. Information aired in LIS news flashes is principally based on the regular midday and evening news broadcasts, condensed and edited right up to the last moment, which means that the interpreters have to watch the regular news in order to prepare for the flash before they see the final script, if at all. Auto cues were used up to a few years ago to provide a written text that could be seen and not just heard, in case of an emergency (e.g. a miscomprehension or the change of a name). In any interpreting event interpreters have to stretch their memories, but since the auto cue has been abandoned (owing to editorial changes allowing the presence of a newsreader in the studio) their memory is taxed to an even greater extent, adding to the stress caused by having to close with the newsreader within the required transmission time.

We noticed in the subcorpus TT that many interpreters choose to risk anticipating their reformulation of the news to gain time and better redistribute their resources in order to achieve a satisfactory interpretation. This is a "compensatory strategy" described by Faerch/Kasper (1980: 92) among "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a

problem in reaching a particular communicative goal". The strategies mainly adopted by interpreters working in television settings (not only those analyzed in our subcorpus) are indeed anticipation and reformulation where the interpreter foresees what will be read thanks to redundant elements in the text and semantic clues. Anticipation allows the interpreters to immediately focus on the news content by using their memory of previous reports to gain time in order to utilize other strategies such as reformulation which allows them to construct the target language according to its correct rules of grammar. In the subcorpus this strategy is adopted especially during the welcome and salutation at the opening and close of the flash (a well known routine) and at the beginning of each item where the interpreters often divide chunks of information in two parts anticipating the second.

This technique requires good memorization that permits maintenance of a long lag, allowing them time to restructure the sentence in a semantically clear way before it is read completely and finish more or less at the same time as the newsreader. For example:

La giustizia irachena ha confermato la condanna a morte di Saddam Hussein. (TG1 on 27/12/06)
[The Iraqi judiciary has confirmed the death penalty for Saddam Hussein.]

Here the interpreter divides the sentence in two parts using chunk-strategy (cf. Riccardi 1999):

SADDAM HUSSEIN DEATH PENALTY – JUDICIARY IRAQ(I) CONFIRM(ED)

She begins with the proper name of the receiving agent (the indirect object in the original Italian), which is structurally more correct in LIS, permitting her to immediately link it to the static photograph of Saddam Hussein on the screen behind her and to the underlying headline *Sarà impiccato* (He'll Be Hanged). Another example is:

Tutti liberi, compresi i 7 italiani, i 148 ostaggi a Mumbai. (Tg3 on 28/11/2008)
[All 148 Mumbai hostages freed, including the 7 Italians – in the original Italian the word order is: 'All free, including the 7 Italians, the 148 hostages in Mumbai'.]

Here the interpreter chose to start with the introduction of the location of the event INDIA MUMBAI, anticipating the newsreader and continuing with the most important fact, 148 HOSTAGES FREE and ending with 7 ITALIANS. (Interestingly, this is closer to our translation in English). LIS structure requires that the location of the news event be signed first, followed by the event itself. If any numbers are involved, the smaller numerical referent is placed after the larger one which can be transliterated here as "148 hostages, among them, 7 Italians". Such reformulation of word order is normal when interpreting from one language to another, be it signed or spoken. In the subcorpus reformulation strategies are frequently correlated to the temporal constraints of television interpreting, as previously mentioned.

5. Concluding remarks

The aim of this paper was to explore signed news on 4 Italian television channels with a focus on items of news referring to conflict. To our knowledge, no previous detailed research has been undertaken on signed Italian media interpreting so we began by looking at some of the strategies interpreters use on-screen to get the ST message effectively and adequately across to a deaf audience. In particular we focussed on six areas that we felt contained particular linguistic and textual features of interest in the transfer of information from speech to sign.

- domain-specific terminology;
- Italian and foreign proper and institutional names;
- toponymic reference and nationalities;
- foreign loans;
- emphasis through facial expression;
- speed of enunciation and textual reformulation.

Each area was broadly discussed providing some examples of how the interpreters coped with the language transfer and overall it was found that on all four channels the little information that was provided in the ST was conveyed adequately into the TT notwithstanding the technical and cross cultural/linguistic difficulties imposed by the medium and languages involved. However, more precise quantitative studies would be necessary to measure the quality of the interpreting provided, including user assessment, which was not the aim of this paper at this stage of our research.

Despite the requirement for the provision of more sign language interpreting (or subtitles) on Italian TV news programmes, there remain only three TG news flashes interpreted into LIS on the three national RAI channels and the brevity of the bulletins is still a major obstacle to communication. Having included Rete4 LIS news in our corpus, the channel with the longest airing of news in LIS, we were dismayed to learn on March 1st 2010 that after sixteen years the programme was shut down and replaced with a subtitled edition. Such a decision has been explained by the Channel as a renewal of its general programme schedule and the adoption of subtitling as in other European countries. However, although it is true there is much subtitling in other European countries for deaf viewers, the tide is turning and many EU member states are working towards augmenting and improving provision of news on television in sign language. Even the Italian association of interpreters Anios (www.anios.it) and other associations and individuals have joined ENS in protest at this turn of events, but so far the result has been that instead of improving sign language interpretation on Italian television, a daily edition of news in LIS has been lost and Italian deaf people (especially those that struggle to read written Italian) now have a reduced access to information in their own language.

In December 2008, the Integration of People with Disabilities Division, Directorate General of Social Cohesion, Social Policy Department, of the Council of Europe, published a new set of recommendations offered by Krausneker Verena, from the University of Vienna (Austria): *The Protection and Promotion of Sign Languages and the Rights of their Users in Council of Europe Member States: Needs*

Analysis¹⁰. It states with regard to the participation of deaf people in the communication of mass media information that:

Spoken language (radio, television) and written language (printed media and subtitles) are rarely fully accessible for many Deaf people. The right to information (e.g. via national television and sign language interpreters or signed homepages) is therefore mostly fulfilled only on a limited scale.

Recommendation 20 on *Barrier-free information and news* states:

Information on daily politics, state developments and news should be made available to sign language users. This should be secured by in-vision sign language interpreters and subtitling in television; and/or by creating broadcasting formats/media (on TV or the Internet) made by sign language users in sign language(s).

In recent years there has been an increase in the presence of sign language on media channels other than television: the Internet owing to Videologs and on-line messages that many deaf people use. Italian websites are www.vlog-sordi.com or the ENS website (www.ens.it) and to access YouTube, look for 'lingua dei segni italiana'. Regarding signed information on-line in LIS, in mid 2009 a website was opened by the Italian motorway association (www.autostrade.it) in collaboration with Anios (*Associazione interpreti di lingua dei segni italiana* [Association of Italian Sign Language Interpreters]) to provide a service in LIS to inform deaf people about motorway traffic. Unfortunately, there are no other similar on-line services in Italy at present.

In order to provide more LIS interpreting on television, not only will more interpreters have to be trained in future, but also the television networks should be encouraged to consider the participation of deaf people in the gathering of news, preparation of scripts and even the interpretation of the news itself. The lack of a constant and significant presence of sign language on Italian television and few members of the deaf community working within the mass media in general has hindered the development of 'LIS journalese'. Perhaps a greater presence of deaf journalists or expert panels including deaf people would lead to the development of specialised signed terminology within the news genre. Such figures, backed by staff (deaf and hearing), could work on the correct journalistic register to use in sign language and develop new signs in response to new, frequently reported names and terms.

It should be noted that in Italy experience in this kind of interpreting is acquired on the job as there are no *ad hoc* courses to train sign language interpreters in the skills required of media interpreting apart from one offered in 1996 by the University of Bologna (Forlì) in cooperation with the Mason Perkins Deafness Fund and a second in 2007 at the University of Tor Vergata, Rome, organized by a group of professional interpreters. Among the recommendations mentioned above, in Recommendation 25 on *Professional sign language interpreting* it is stated:

For linguistic minorities like the sign language communities interpreters are the key to participation in society. More and better interpreters are needed in nearly every

10 Cf. <http://www.coe.int/t/e/social_cohesion/soc-sp/Report%20Sign%20languages%20final.doc>.

Council of Europe member state. Universities should be strongly encouraged to create sign language interpreter training programmes and the existing interpreter organizations should be encouraged to help organise professional sign language interpreting standards.

At present in Italy there are some curricular university sign language courses: e.g. University of Trieste¹¹, University Cà Foscari in Venice¹², the University of Bologna (SSLMIT – Forlì)¹³, the University of Foggia, and the University for Foreigners (*Università per Stranieri*) in Siena which teaches LIS to foreign deaf students. However, there is to date no curricular university course in sign language interpreting in Italy¹⁴. This might seem in complete contradiction with the European recommendation to provide university training in this field, but it is necessary first to provide widespread LIS language courses at university level in Italy before quality interpreter training can be offered to sufficient applicants. Anios which safeguards the interests of its members and the sign language interpreting profession in general, is working in close collaboration with European interpreter associations and local institutions to accomplish this aim so that, in the short term, Italy can join those European countries which already provide university level sign language interpreter training which will hopefully include training for media interpreting too.

Acknowledgements

The original studio scripts used by the sign-language interpreters were obtained with their permission apart from the 2006-2007 TG1 bulletins which were manually transcribed from video recordings of the public television service. We sincerely thank our colleagues for permitting us to analyse their interpreting for the purpose of this paper which we hope will provide a stimulus for research on Italian sign language interpreting or on general media studies with signed languages in other Italian universities and elsewhere.

- 11 University of Trieste, at the Advanced School of Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators (SSLMIT - *Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori*) since 1998/99, a year after LIS was officially recognized by ministerial decree as a university discipline (hidden within two discipline groupings: Glottology and Linguistics and Didactics of Modern Languages rather than a language in its own right).
- 12 It offers a Bachelor's degree in *Lingue e Scienze del Linguaggio* [Languages and Language Science] within the curriculum on *Linguistica per la sordità e i disturbi del linguaggio* [Linguistics for Deafness and Language Disabilities] where LIS can be chosen as an A, B or C language, cf.: <<http://venus.unive.it/lingdida>>.
- 13 Like the Trieste SSLMIT, it offers LIS as an option.
- 14 In the academic year 2005/06 the University Suor Orsola Benincasa in Naples offered a two-year Master's degree to train interpreters working with deaf state school pupils which failed to attract sufficient applicants. From 2006-08 the University Cà Foscari offered a training course with a certification in sign language interpretation but it is not recognized as a University degree. Those same years the SSLMIT in Trieste twice offered a one year Master's degree in Sign Language Interpreting with the same disappointing result as Naples.

References

- Alexieva B. (1996) "Interpreting mediated TV events", in K. Klaudy / J. Kohn (eds), *Transfere Necesse Est*, Budapest, Scholastica, 171-174.
- Allsop L. / Kyle J. (2008) "Translating the news: a Deaf translator's experience", in C. J. Kellett Bidoli / E. Ochse (eds), *English in International Deaf Communication*, Bern, Peter Lang, 383-401.
- Amato A. (2002) "Interpreting legal discourse on TV: Clinton's deposition with the Gran Jury", in G. Garzone / P. Mead / M. Viezzi (eds) *Perspectives on Interpreting*, Bologna, CLUEB, 269-290.
- Associazione Eurosordi Onlus (2007) *Contratto di Servizio RAI: Prima vittoria ENS in commissione di vigilanza venerdì*, 16 febbraio 2007, <http://www.eurosordi.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=1>.
- Bros-Brann E. (1993) "Simultaneous interpretation and the media: interpreting live for television", in C. Picken (ed.) *Translation – The Vital Link*, London, Institute of Translation and Interpreting 11, 267-271.
- Chiaro D. (2002) "Linguistic mediation on Italian television. When the interpreter is not an interpreter: a case study", in G. Garzone / M. Viezzi (eds) *Interpreting in the 21st Century. Challenges and Opportunities*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 215-225.
- Cokely D. (1986) "The effects of lag time on interpreter errors", *Sign Language Studies* 53, 341-376.
- Conoscenti, M. (2004) *Language Engineering and Media Management Strategies in Recent Wars*, Roma, Bulzoni Editore.
- Faerch C. / Kasper G. (1980) "Processes and strategies in foreign language learning and communication", *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin* 5, 47-180.
- Gambier Y. (2008) "Recent developments and challenges in audiovisual translation research", in D. Chiaro / C. Heiss / C. Bucaria (eds) *Between Text and Image: Updating Research in Screen Translation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 11-33.
- Galli C. (1990) "Simultaneous interpretation in medical conferences: a case study", in L. Gran / C. Taylor (eds) *Aspects of Applied and Experimental Research in Conference Interpretation*, SSLMIT, Università degli Studi di Trieste, Udine, Campanotto Editore, 61-82.
- Gerver D. (1971) "The effects of source language presentation rate on the performance of simultaneous conference interpreters", in E. Foulke (ed.) *Proceedings of the 2nd Louisville Conference on Rate and/or Frequency Controlled Speech*, University of Louisville, 162-184.
- Guardini P. (2000) "La traduzione simultanea del film: produzione e percezione", in C. Taylor (ed.) *Tradurre il cinema*, Trieste, DSLIT, 117-126.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2004) "Intercultural features of English-to-Italian Sign Language conference interpretation: a preliminary study for multimodal corpus analysis", in C. Candlin / M. Gotti (eds) *Intercultural Discourse in Domain-specific English*, Textus 17/1, Genova, Tilger, 127-142.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2005a) "Investigation into linguistic and cultural mediation between the English-speaking world and the Italian Deaf signing

- community”, in M. Bondi / N. Maxwell (eds) *Cross-cultural Encounters: Linguistic Perspectives*, Roma, Officina Edizioni, 159-173.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2005b) “A multimodal approach in a multilingual context: interpretation from English to Italian to Italian Sign Language”, *ESP Across Cultures* 2, 94-105.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2007a) “The linguistics conference setting: a comparative analysis of intercultural disparities during English to Italian Sign Language interpretation”, in G. Garzone / C. Ilie (eds) *The Use of English in Institutional and Business Settings: An Intercultural Perspective*, Bern, Peter Lang, 331-349.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2007b) “English in the invisible city”, in L. Jottini / G. Del Lungo / J. Douthwaite (eds) *Cityscapes Islands of the Self: Language Studies*, Cagliari, CUEC, 185-201.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2008) “Transfer and construction of identity and culture in audiovisual feature film translation for the Italian Deaf community” in C. J. Kellett / E. Ochse (eds), *English in International Deaf Communication*, Bern, Peter Lang, 403-432.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2009a) “Constructing identity through multimodal narrative for the Italian Deaf community: cinema and TV”, in G. Di Martino / V. Polese / M. Solly (eds) *Identity and Culture in English Domain-specific Discourse*, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 261-280.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2009b) “Multisemiotic transfer of cinematic American identity to deaf Italians” in N. Vasta / C. R. Caldas-Coulthard (eds) *Identity Construction and Positioning in Discourse and Society*, Textus 22/1, Genova, Tilgher, 113-132.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2009c) “Transfer of institutional and political identity through tv news reporting for the Italian Deaf”, in G. Garzone / P. Catenaccio (eds) *Identities across Media and Modes: Discursive Perspectives*, Bern, Peter Lang, 311-336.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2009d) “Cross-cultural/linguistic transfer of legal terminology on film and television to the Italian Deaf community”, in S. Cavagnoli / E. Di Giovanni / R. Merlini (eds) *La ricerca nella comunicazione interlinguistica. Modelli teorici e metodologici*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 489-508.
- Kellett Bidoli C. J. (2010) “Interpreting from speech to sign: Italian television news reports”, *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 15, 173-191.
- Kurz I. (1997) “Getting the message across – simultaneous interpreting for the media”, in M. Snell-Hornby / Z. Jettmarová / K. Kaindl (eds) *Translation as Intercultural Communication* Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 201-206.
- Kurz I. (2002) “Physiological stress: responses during media and conference interpreting”, in G. Garzone / M. Viezzi (eds) *Interpreting in the 21st Century. Challenges and Opportunities*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 195-202.
- Kurz I. (2003) “Live TV Interpreting – A high-wire act?”, in Á. Collados Aís / J. A. Sabio Pinilla (eds) *Avances en la investigación sobre interpretación*, Granada, Comares, 159-169.

- Kurz I. / Mikulasek B. (2004) "Television as a source of information for the deaf and hearing impaired. Captions and sign language on Austrian TV", *Meta* 49/1, 81-88.
- Kyle J. G. (1992) *Switched On: Final Report to BBC/ITC*, Bristol, Centre for Deaf Studies and ITC.
- Kyle J. G. / Allsop L. (1997) *Sign on Europe: A Study of Deaf People and Sign Language in the European Union*, Bristol, Centre for Deaf Studies.
- Kyle J. G. / Dury A. (2003) *See Hear Now, Final Report to BBC*, Bristol, Deaf Studies Trust.
- Mack G. (2001) "Conference interpreters on the air: live simultaneous interpreting on Italian television", in Y. Gambier / H. Gottlieb (eds) *(Multi)Media Translation. Concepts, Practices and Research*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 125-132.
- Mack G. (2002) "New perspectives and challenges for interpretation: the example of television", in G. Garzone / M. Viezzi (eds) *Interpreting in the 21st Century. Challenges and Opportunities*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 203-213.
- Mayer H. F. (1994) "Live interpreting for television and radio", *The Jerome Quarterly* 9/2, 1-11.
- Pio S. (2003) "The relation between ST delivery rate and quality in simultaneous interpretation", *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 12, 69-100.
- Pöchhacker F. (1997) "Clinton speaks German. A case study of live broadcast simultaneous interpreting", in M. Snell-Hornby / Z. Jettmarová / K. Kaindl (eds) *Translation as Intercultural Communication*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 207-216.
- Pöchhacker F. (2007) "Coping with culture in Media Interpreting", *Perspectives* 15/2, 123-142.
- Riccardi A. (1999) "Interpretazione simultanea: strategie generali e specifiche", in C. Falbo / M. Russo / F. Straniero Sergio (eds) *Interpretazione simultanea e consecutiva. Problemi teorici e metodologie didattiche*, Milano, Hoepli, 161-174.
- Riccardi A. (2003) *Dalla traduzione all'interpretazione. Studi di interpretazione simultanea*, Milano, LED.
- Russo T. (1997) "Segni nome e identità culturale nella comunità sorda di Roma", in A. Zuccalà (ed.) *Cultura del gesto e cultura della parola. Viaggio antropologico nel mondo dei sordi*, Roma, Meltemi, 69-83.
- Simonetto F. (2000) "Esperimenti di interpretazione simultanea di film", in C. Taylor (ed.) *Tradurre il cinema*, Trieste, DSLIT, 157-188.
- Snelling D. (1990) "Upon the simultaneous interpreting of films", *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 3, 14-16.
- Snelling D. (1996) "The simultaneous interpretation of films", in C. Heiss / R.M. Bollettieri Bosinelli (eds) *Traduzione multimediale per il cinema, la televisione e la scena*, Bologna, CLUEB, 333-338.
- Steiner B. (1998) "Signs from the void: the comprehension and production of Sign Language on Television", *Interpreting* 3/2, 99-146.
- Stewart D. A. / Schein J. D. / Cartwright B. E. (1998) *Sign Language Interpreting. Exploring its Art and Science*, Needham Heights, MA, Allyn and Bacon.

- Stone C. (2005) *Towards a Deaf Translation Norm*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bristol.
- Straniero-Sergio F. (2003) "Norms and quality in Media Interpreting: the case of Formula One press-conferences", *The Interpreters' Newsletter* 12, 135-174.
- Straniero-Sergio F. (2007) *Talkshow Interpreting. La mediazione linguistica nella conversazione-spettacolo*, Trieste, E.U.T.
- Tucci L. (2000) "... a pagina 777 di Televideo", in C. Taylor (ed.) *Tradurre il cinema*. Trieste, DSLIT, 91-100.
- Venuti L. (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility*, London/New York, Routledge.
- Viaggio S. (2001) "Simultaneous interpreting for television and other media: translation doubly constrained", in Y. Gambier / H. Gottlieb (eds) *(Multi)Media Translation*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 23-33.
- Wadensjö C. (2000) "Co-constructing Yeltsin. Explorations of an interpreter-mediated political interview", in M. Olohan (ed.) *Intercultural Faultiness. Research models in Translation Studies¹, Textual and Cognitive Aspects*, Manchester, St Jerome Publishing, 233-252.
- Woll B. (1991) *Sign Language on Television: Final Report to Channel 4*, Bristol, Centre for Deaf Studies.
- Woll B. / Allsop L. (1990) "Recent variation in BSL in the light of new approaches to the study of language", in J. G. Kyle (ed.) *Deafness and Sign Language into the 1990s*, Bristol, Deaf Studies Trust.