

Through the CorIT looking-glass and what MA students found there

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Abstract

The present paper is a review of MA theses conducted on data collected in CorIT – Corpus of Television Interpreting (Straniero Sergio 2007, 2012; Falbo 2009, 2012), written by students of the SSLMITs of Trieste and Forlì between the years 2000 and 2011. It provides a snapshot of the number of possible issues to be investigated within the field of Television Interpreting Studies by relying on real-life data, with the aim of taking stock of what has been observed so far, as well as highlighting the great research potential of this branch of studies and the validity of the corpus-based research approach. CorIT MA theses cover a wide range of aspects, such as communication setting/discourse genre, discourse format, native vs. non-native, strategies and errors, interpreter's role and profile, specific interpreting issues and potentially problematic elements, interactional and pragmatic aspects.

Introduction

*The King:
Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop.*

This paper gives an account of a series of studies on television interpreting conducted on data collected in CorIT – Corpus of Television Interpreting (Straniero Sergio 2007, 2012; Falbo 2009, 2012). The studies are all MA theses

written by students of the SSLIMITs of Trieste and Forlì between the years 2000 and 2011.

By providing an account of the broad range of issues investigated within the CorIT project, the present paper aims at highlighting the great potential of research conducted on television interpreting performances, especially from the point of view of data comparability, as it is based on real-life interpreting performances that share one or more discrete features as a result of their belonging to a homogenous set of data (cf. Blanche-Benveniste 2000). CorIT corpora of analysis provide precisely this sort of data set, i.e. “‘high-exposure’ TV interpreting scenario[s]” (cf. Russo 2010). It also aims at proving the validity of the corpus-based approach applied to interpreting studies – CIS (cf. Setton 2011). Indeed, as underlined by Falbo (2012: 178) the creation of CorIT was inspired by the intent of providing “an opportunity to investigate television interpreting, an interpreting sector that is increasingly gaining momentum” and, at the same time, “tackling an issue highlighted by many (Shlesinger 1998), namely overcoming the limitation of single case studies and focusing on more comprehensive analyses”.

CorIT MA theses cover a wide variety of aspects (cf. Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012) pertaining to the communication setting/discourse genre (talkshow, presidential debates, breaking news, press conferences, interviews, special events coverage), discourse format (dialogue vs. monologue), native vs. non-native, strategies and errors (time-lag, false starts, self-repair...), interpreter’s role and profile, specific interpreting issues and potentially problematic elements (CBEs, rhetorical devices, syntax and lexicon, numbers, proper names, lists), interactional aspects (meaning negotiation, turns allocation, non-verbal communication, overlaps and interruptions, question/answer structure), pragmatic aspects (communicative ethos, detachment vs. involvement, discourse markers, face-saving strategies, metadiscourse, mitigation and/or strengthening, politeness, style).

The introductory section (cf. 1) will be dedicated to corpus-based television interpreting (TI) studies, including its research potential and focus, and the relevant methodological framework, with special attention devoted to the latest developments present in literature pertaining to this field. After a brief presentation of CorIT (cf. 2) and its main features (cf. 2.1), the focus will shift to an illustration of results which emerged from the MA-theses analysis (cf. 3) from various perspectives, i.e. IT analysis (cf. 3.1) and the interpreter’s role and impact (cf. 3.2).

1. Corpus-based IT studies

The Caterpillar: What size do you want to be?

Alice: Oh, I’m not particular as to size, only one doesn’t like changing so often, you know.

Almost fifty years have passed since the first interpreting performance on television (cf. Nishiyama 1988). Meanwhile, TI has been an object of countless studies, both as a collateral aspect of the analysis focus or as an object of investigation in its own right. TI studies have so far covered a wide range of features from numerous perspectives, such as the television interpreters’ role and

tasks (cf. Kurz 1991; Bros-Brann 1997; Katan/Straniero Sergio 2001; Mack 2002), quality in television interpreting (cf. Mack 2000) and users' expectations (cf. Kurz/Pöchhacker 1995), event- and setting-related difficulties (cf. Kurz 1993; Viaggio 2001; Straniero Sergio 2007), cognitive perspective in media interpreting in general and TI in particular (cf. Pöchhacker 2007), specific interpreting tendencies and abilities developed within the television environment (cf. Straniero Sergio 2012), possible classification of television interpreting modes (cf. Falbo 2009).

However, only recently the need has been stressed to observe interpreting – and, subsequently, television interpreting – using organized sets of real-life data that go beyond the case-study approach, and whose amount and structure provide for a solid, verifiable basis, on which the analysis may build:

The main reason behind the use of corpora [...] is identifying typical phenomena of translation and interpretation as a whole and on a wide scale, in a more or less overt attempt to confirm or disavow results from 50 years ago, resulting from the analysis of rather limited corpora or case studies. (cf. Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012: 10)

Thanks to the application of this new paradigm, TI is gaining new momentum in terms of relevance within media interpreting studies, as corpus-based studies bear a huge potential of providing for a systematization of outcomes obtained in the last decades of TI research. Moreover, *delimitation* in this area does not imply any sort of *limitation*. Indeed, the careful shaping and definition of this field of analysis results in an expansion – rather than reduction – of the analysis perspectives: what ultimately emerges from the discrete criteria that a collection of data must satisfy in order to be a corpus (cf. Blanche-Benveniste 2000) is the great variety of parameters to be taken into account prior to and during the investigation phases. Such is the case in CorIT, whose design and classification highlight how “television is not merely the situational setting in which the interpretation service is provided: it is also a specific environment, significantly influencing each performance” (cf. Falbo 2012: 155).

2. CorIT

Alice:
*I think I should understand that better, if I had it written down:
but I can't quite follow it as you say it.*

CorIT is an open, multimedia, partially parallel spoken corpus (Falbo 2009: 107). Indeed, it is constantly updated with new recordings of interpreter-mediated television material – *open*; it consists of audio-visual material and transcripts – *multimedia*; it consists of more than 2,700 interpretations (interpreted texts – IT) and some of their original texts (OT) – *partially parallel*; and it is currently being transcribed with the software WinPitch (cf. Martin 2001, 2005), in a way that provides access to CorIT content as a whole, i.e. “making audio and video tracks available simultaneously, as a constant reminder of the multimedia dimension of the text, as opposed to a simple transcript” (cf. Falbo 2012: 175). CorIT ITs consist of various interpretations delivered on Italian television in the last 50 years, from

various foreign languages into Italian, in different interpreting modes (cf. 2.1.1) and within various communication settings, i.e. interaction types (cf. 2.1.2).

2.1 Defining the corpus of analysis: CorIT main features

*The Mock Turtle: What is the use of repeating all that stuff, if you don't explain it as you go on?
It's by far the most confusing thing I ever heard!*

All interpretations (ITs) collected in CorIT were delivered on television within various broadcasts pertaining to different television genres (cf. 3.1.3). These features, i.e. a specific setting – television, and the specific role of at least one of the participants involved – interpreter(s), are ultimately discrete characteristics that render CorIT a homogenous corpus. Such features do not constitute the object of analysis of any CorIT theses, and yet emerge in each one of them as high-impact factors. Indeed, they are the very elements shaping the context in which interpreting performances take place, thereby determining the conditions from which analysed elements (cf. 3) arise. In the next sections, a brief overview of each feature, or macro-factor (Falbo 2012) – *interpreting mode, interaction type and spoken discourse / television genre* – offers a snapshot of the research environment in which MA students conducted their studies.

2.1.1 Interpreting mode¹

Interpreters on television may work in various modes, depending on the broadcast profile (cf. 2.1.3) and interaction type (cf. 2.1.2) they perform in. In this respect, CorIT does not substantially differ from any other interpreting corpus: indeed, here too the traditional distinction between the two main variants identified in literature (cf. Alexieva 1996, 2001; Kurz 2003; Mack 2001; Pöchhacker 1997), i.e. simultaneous and consecutive modes, applies, with simultaneous interpreting (SI) being selected mostly for the interpretation of institutional events (presidential debates, victory speeches, addresses to the nation), link-ups with foreign broadcasting channels (breaking news, briefings, press conferences) and media events (funerals, wedding ceremonies) and consecutive interpreting (CI) being usually selected for face-to-face interactions (talk shows, interviews, press conferences). However, if television is considered as the macro-setting of CorIT ITs, specific sub-settings require an adaptation of the above-mentioned modes to the situation (cf. 3.1.3) they are to be applied to. When interpreting simultaneously, for instance, interpreters may or may not actually ‘take part’ in the event they are translating, i.e. they “may or may not share space (*hic*) and time (*nunc*) with the other participants in the communication event” (cf. Falbo 2012: 163). Talk-show interviews generally require the physical presence of an interpreter either on-screen or off-screen, whose performance is therefore identified as a “simultaneous interpretation *in praesentia* (SIP)” (Falbo 2012: 163). Yet, this is not always the case. Not every television communicative situation

1 For a detailed illustration of CorIT classification criteria, cf. Falbo (2012).

staging some sort of interaction between participants does, in its original form – i.e. OT – necessarily require the presence of an interpreter: broadcasts originally designed and taking place abroad, and then shown on Italian television within an Italian “quoting broadcast” (Falbo 2009: 110-112) are a case in point. So, for instance, American and French presidential debates are broadcast in the US and in France respectively, obviously without any interpretation service. Only subsequently does the Italian broadcaster recruit the interpreter(s’ *équipe*), namely when it comes to broadcasting the above-mentioned events on Italian television. In these cases, interpreters perform a “simultaneous interpretation in absentia (SIA)” (Falbo 2012: 164), as they do not “share the *hic*, nor sometimes the *nunc* (when the broadcast is not live) with the American or French [...] candidates, who do not require any translation to communicate with each other”.

Consecutive mode on television, as already mentioned, is mainly found in face-to-face interactions broadcast live, where interpreters sit next to the guest and translate questions and answers without taking notes. Consecutive mode in CorIT ITs is therefore identified as CIWN, i.e. “consecutive interpreting without notes” (Falbo 2012: 162).

2.1.2 Interaction type

There has been a recent increase of attention regarding the classification of types of interaction. Numerous scholars (Linell 1998, 2005, 2009; Salazar-Orvig 1999; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2005; Falbo 2007, 2009, 2012) have investigated this subject, reaching almost equivalent conclusions. Illustrating their results and respective positions goes beyond the purpose of the present study. Any observation on this subject will therefore be strictly related to CorIT classification and interrogation. The definitions applied to CorIT items by Falbo (2012: 168) are *dialogue-like interaction*, that “include[s] recordings of press-conferences, debates and interviews”, and *monologue-like interaction*, “which do not allow for any reply – cover declarations of war, inaugural speeches, addresses to the Nation. Both groups include dialogism phenomena, such as sociolinguistic quotes of someone else’s words”. The main difference between the two categories is based on Kerbrat-Orecchioni’s (2005: 17-20) concept of *degré d’interactivité* [degree of interaction], that considers every dialogue-like exchange as interactive, as opposed to monologue-like discourses, which – according to the author – never are².

An interesting case appears in Boccaccio’s (2004) analysis of interpretations delivered during the Cannes Film Festival. In her study Boccaccio specifically focuses on Theo Angelopoulos’ press conference – and the respective ITs – which, despite displaying a typical dialogue format, is subject to a decrease in terms of interaction degree in the target language (TL). Indeed, while the original discourse (i.e. press conference) involves many speakers and follows a turn-taking scheme based on the function of each turn (e.g. question/answer) the interpreted

2 An in-depth illustration of the distinction between monologue- and dialogue-like discourse, i.e. *monologal/dialogal* and *monologique/dialogique* may be found in Falbo (2007, 2009, 2012).

discourse is produced by only two interpreters alternating every 30 minutes, which gives rise to a “monologisation effect” (cf. Straniero Sergio 2007).

2.1.3 Spoken discourse and television genres

Within the monologue- and dialogue-like groups verbal production takes up various forms, with dialogue-like interactions covering debates (e.g. presidential debates in Bassanese 2001), press conferences (e.g. Academy Awards interviews in Zanarini 2001) and interviews (e.g. talk-show interviews in Lentini 2008); and monologue-like discourse being mostly represented by speeches (e.g. Gorbachev’s speech for the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in Bizzocchi 2007) and declarations (e.g. US presidents’ speeches on victory in Gnani 2003) of all sorts.

For the classification of television genres present in CorIT, reference will be made here to Falbo (2012) and Milan’s (2008) MA thesis (cf. footnote 1).

Four television macro-genres may be identified in CorIT, namely information, entertainment – and their combination, i.e. the “infotainment” hybrid genre – fiction and education-culture. Some of their subcategories have been mentioned in the previous paragraphs and include TV news and news coverage, reports, information, entertainment magazines, public service broadcasts, talk shows, analysis features and special news broadcasts. A particular category is made up by media events (cf. Dayan/Katz 1993), namely exceptional events organized by an entity other than television itself – e.g. institutions – that intrude in and interrupt the regular programme schedules. Media events may pertain to the political sphere, such as the coverage of US elections and are identified as *competitions* (cf. Dayan/Katz 1993). They may be exceptional events or celebrations, such as US presidents’ inaugural speeches and are identified as *conquests* (cf. Dayan/Katz 1993). Finally, they may take up the form of public events other than competitions and conquests, like wedding ceremonies or funerals – i.e. *crowning* (cf. Dayan/Katz 1993), such as Lady Diana’s eulogy.

It should be noted that genre classification does not necessarily match the category indicating the topic addressed in a given event. A case in point is the Italian talk show *Che tempo che fa* (cf. Zangoli 2007), in which foreign guests frequently include prominent political personalities: these interviews, despite being political content-wise, pertain to the entertainment genre according to CorIT macro-genre classification.

3. CorIT MA theses³

Doorknob:
Read the directions and directly you will be directed in the right direction.

MA dissertations discussed in the present paper share a non-prescriptive approach to both process- and product-oriented analyses, with the aim of

3 Milan’s (2008) work, carried out within the compilation of her MA dissertation, “Il contributo delle tesi di laurea allo studio dell’interpretazione televisiva” [The

obtaining empirical and data-driven outcomes. Such outcomes should enable the analyst to identify more or less regular features in the interpreters' output within the television setting, allowing him/her to investigate the reasons behind their occurrence (cf. Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012). However, as clearly formulated by Straniero Sergio/Falbo (2012: 22), "corpora findings may tell us *how* translators translate, but not *why* they translate the way they do. Hence the need to go beyond mere linguistic description and look for cognitive, ethical, social, cultural and even ideological explanations outside translated texts". This is precisely the principle driving the design of CorIT MA theses.

The analysis in CorIT MA theses focuses on two main aspects: analysis of the IT, i.e. interpreter(s)'s rendition/performance, and analysis of the interpreter's role and function. As far as CorIT macro-factors (cf. 2.1) are concerned, they influence the analysis in various ways: they may serve as a frame, within which more punctual aspects are observed, such as in Meacci's (2009) thesis, in which the rendition of individual problem-triggers – proper names, numbers, lists – is observed from the specific perspective of television interpreting; there are cases in which the above-mentioned macro-concepts are the very object of investigation, in terms of their relation to and influence on the overall interpreting performance, as in Simeone (2003), whose intent is to observe the influence of the type of event – Colonel North's court deposition – on the interpreters' work and performance on television. Finally, there are theses in which these macro-concepts constitute the link between investigation and evaluation, as analysis categories are directly derived from them: in Gandino (2007), for instance, the analysis of the ITs of Bill Clinton's court deposition in the Sex Gate proceedings aims at studying IS in real-life working conditions, identifying and evaluating lexical translational choices in terms of plausibility and coherence.

3.1 IT analysis: interpreter's rendition and performance

Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

The Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to

Alice: I don't much care where.

The Cat: Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.

Alice: ...so long as I get somewhere.

The Cat: Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough

A first example of IT investigation is to be found in the analysis of culture-bound elements, or CBEs (cf. Viezzi 1996). As their very definition suggests, CBEs are strictly related to the source-language (SL) linguistic and cultural system, thus representing potential problem-triggers in the course of the interpreter's activity. CBEs are not only lexical in nature: language in itself is culturally determined, at its primitive stage as well, i.e. the way in which thoughts are formulated and uttered. Indeed, in their traditional form, CBEs refer mainly to the expression of

contribution made by MA theses to the study of television interpreting] provides a detailed list of CorIT MA theses completed between 2000 – 2007 and has provided an extremely useful analysis tool for the present paper.

experiences specific to a given (SL) socio-cultural or language community, which are not shared by the TL community; on the other hand, they may refer to a wider dimension, covering, for instance, geographical names, proper names, or cultural references, i.e. elements that may carry a unique connotative value for a given community in a given culture (cf. Example 1). Di Giovannantonio (2008) focuses precisely on the rendition of CBEs in order to verify the importance of culture and language knowledge for interpreters' training and their influence on IT quality. Di Giovannantonio (2008) draws mainly on Pedersen's (2007) study and distinguishes between transcultural, monocultural and microcultural CBEs to indicate their degree of interpretability – i.e. *transculturality*. On the basis of the identified strategies applied in the analysed ITs, Di Giovannantonio observes that, despite a relatively high-quality level of the overall interpreters' rendition, CBEs are rarely translated in a fashion that allows the TL audience to understand and appreciate them. Indeed, the most frequently applied strategies are omissions and official equivalents, with a general tendency to foreignization directly proportional to the degree of rootedness of a given CBE in the SL culture. This holds true not only for highly connotative formulations, such as official institutional names (Example 1), but also for proper names (Example 2):

ORIGINAL	INTERPRETER 1	INTERPRETER 2
MCCAIN: CONGRESSMAN John Lewis, an American hero [...] And SENATOR Obama, you didn't repudiate those remarks.	INT: (.) il mio COLLEGA John Lewis è una un eroe americano [...] queste menzogne perchè non state eh ripudiate dal mio COLLEGA [my COLLEAGUE John Lewis is a an American hero [...]] these lies why were they not rejected by my COLLEAGUE]	INT: il SENATORE John Lewis un eroe (.) americano [...] e speravo che il SENATORE Obama avesse ripudiato queste affermazioni del (.) MEMBRO DEL CONGRESSO John Lewis [SENATOR John Lewis an American hero [...] and I hoped SENATOR Obama would reject these statements by the MEMBER OF CONGRESS John Lewis]

Example 1. official institutions (omission and official equivalent)

ORIGINAL	INTERPRETER 1	INTERPRETER 2
KERRY: but like NANCY REAGAN and so many other people – you know, I was at forum with MICHAEL J.FOX the other day in NEW HAMPSHIRE, who's suffering from Parkinson	INT: (.) NANCY REAGAN e così tanti altri (.) er appunto hanno preso la parola su questo argomento per quanto riguardava ad esempio il :er la malattia del Parkinson [NANCY REAGAN and so many others indeed have addressed this topic as regards for instance Parkinson's disease]	INT: ho parlato con con l'ex attore MICHAEL J.FOX che voi conoscete che soffre di Parkinson [I spoke with former actor MICHAEL J.FOX whom you know who suffers from Parkinson]

Example 2. proper names (omission)

As a result, the interpreter's role as mediator, i.e. "human link across a cultural frontier" (Chesterman 1993: 74), is *de facto* put into question. The rendition of proper names has been investigated also by Meacci (2009), although with a different aim, namely confirming or disclaiming previous results present in literature. Despite a slight difference in the identification of interpreters' tendencies – which are defined strategies by Di Giovannantonio (2008), whereas Meacci distinguishes between error and strategies – the outcomes of Meacci's analysis seem to confirm Di Giovannantonio's results, i.e. a general tendency to omission and specification of proper names. However, given the purpose of Meacci's study – and the general aim of the present paper – another issue emerging from her findings needs mentioning: despite the great variety of results pertaining to this subject, a contrastive analysis is hardly reliable, as relevant studies greatly differ in terms of analysis parameters and classification criteria. This is one of the main problems of Interpreting Studies, namely the "different ways in which the same findings may be interpreted depending on the variables on which individual researchers choose to focus" (Baker 2004: 167). The creation of interpreting corpora may contribute to tackling this issue by providing an unprecedented "opportunity for productive synergies in view of the much sought-after ecological validity" (cf. Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012: 40), as they may increase the degree of results comparability.

A further culturally relevant aspect pertaining to the cognitive perspective is humour: in her analysis of excerpts from interviews held during the Academy Awards ceremonies in 2000, Zanarini (2001) includes CBEs in the list of laugh-triggers that constitute humour in spoken discourse. Once again, culture-bound references proved extremely problematic in terms of rendition in the TL. In order to verify her hypotheses and results, Zanarini developed two questionnaires, to be completed by a SL and a TL audience respectively. Individuals from both groups had to identify (SL and TL) and evaluate (TL) laugh-triggering passages and their rendition in the TL: 67% of the TL audience found the IT humour passages recognizable and only 47% found them funny⁴.

In Simeone (2003), questionnaires on users' expectations and perception of the IT has a different function: it is used as a tenet by which IT quality is measured, especially in terms of interpreters' ability of mastering and successfully combining different linguistic registers, i.e. court talk and TV talk. Simeone's survey on quality has been conducted on a group representing a close equivalent to a potential audience of the analysed IT and required a precise definition of user-oriented quality criteria. The survey's outcomes highlighted the users' appreciation of the interpreters' performance in terms of register and dialogue format management (turn-taking strategies and elocution speed).

A further investigation into the possible differences between broadcast and non-broadcast events with respect to interpreters' work can be found in Vassallo (2006): in her study on live simultaneous interpretations of French presidential debates, Vassallo looks for specific aspects distinguishing televised communicat-

4 Data pertaining to the answers provided by English mother-tongue interviewees were not included in the statistical analysis carried out with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and will not, therefore, be discussed in the present paper.

ive events from their non-broadcast equivalent, in order to investigate the influence of the television setting. Vassallo refers to quality in terms of audience perspective exclusively, thus casting a merely cursory glance at information content rendition. Vassallo registers a high incidence of omissions, mostly due to miscomprehension of the OT, or in correspondence of overlaps or excessive time-lag, and underlines the difficulties arising when interpreters have to work *in absentia*.

Pietracaprina (2007) applies a different approach to the evaluation of the IT's rendition of cognitive elements: in her study of interpretations of the 2000 US election night coverage, Pietracaprina gives an account of both linguistic (false starts, self-repair, CBEs, strategies, errors, coherence, cohesion, register) and paralinguistic (prosody, pronunciation, pauses) features through a quantitative analysis. By comparing the results of the three interpreters' *équipes*, Pietracaprina identifies the best performance and rendition, deriving a profile of the ideal IT that can be delivered by IS interpreters on television.

Aspects pertaining to rendition and performance are indeed the most immediate and tangible elements through which quality in interpreting may be measured. Among others, CorIT MA theses focusing on the quality level of ITs concentrate on time-lag (cf. Casalini 2009), linguistic register (cf. Gandino 2007), native vs. non-native (cf. Bizzocchi 2007, Babič 2008), strategies (cf. Zangoli 2007), self repair (cf. Papa 2010) and false starts (cf. De Riva 2003). Despite their differences, these studies share a collateral outcome, both subsequent and parallel to the chosen topic for the analysis: Casalini (2009) notices that time-lag values greatly vary from interpreter to interpreter, thus providing for an indicator of an interpreter's personal style (cf. Straniero Sergio 2012) or at least a constitutive element of his/her profile. The same holds true for Gandino's (2007) study on linguistic register: in his study on the ITs of Clinton's deposition before the Grand Jury, Gandino focuses on lexical choices in the rendition of problematic passages. As far as the cognitive aspect is concerned, the ITs analysis underlined the direct impact of teamwork on the overall quality of an IT, which, in turn, appears to depend mainly on single interpreters' voice, style, register, and telegenicity. These factors typically determine quality of ITs delivered on television, rather than aspects and requirements pertaining to a court interpreting environment. Hence, their value as style indicators, regardless of the topic at hand. The pivotal role played by presentation skills in interpreting emerges also from Bizzocchi's (2007) study on native vs. non native accent: a native accent and an adequate register are often sufficient to reach a high level of quality in the IT, and, ultimately, win users' appreciation. Babič (2008) as well highlights the importance of a native accent to provide for a high-quality presentation level – although the non-native delivery scored higher in the contrastive analysis in terms of completeness of content. However, no substantial difference between native and non-native interpreter's deliveries emerged from Babič's analysis of the error rates, thus suggesting a close relation between IT quality and individual strategic decisions taken under contingent conditions. Native and non-native accents do not appear, therefore, to have a significant influence on the quality of the interpreter's output. Individual strategies have been thoroughly investigated by Zangoli (2007): in her case study on the Italian talk show *Che tempo che fa*, Zangoli focuses on systematic aspects of

talk-show interpreting by tracing a profile of the broadcast official interpreter, Paolo Maria Nosedà. Nosedà's style and strong points are mainly related to his rhetoric ability and telegenicity (e.g. use of strategic pauses and omissions, high register, context recycling in a way that is suitable to the subject matter, context and circumstances). Indeed, the well-nigh absence of false starts and self-repair interventions is crucial to ensure users' appreciation and constitutes a determining factor in outlining an interpreter's profile and stylistic strong points. De Riva (2003) as well observes that context is relatively less influential than interpreters' idiosyncrasies when it comes to identifying an interpreting style. Indeed, the high incidence of false starts and self-repair interventions recorded by De Riva in her analysis of the interpretation of American presidential debates broadcast on television depends mainly on specific interpreters' translational behaviour rather than the communicative event itself.

The investigation of cognitive aspects within CorIT clearly suggests a shift in methodology and data observation: from a mere qualitative IT evaluation, still inevitably marked by the long-standing dominance of the prescription-oriented approach, analysis naturally glides towards a "more neutral (evaluation-free) and description-oriented" approach (cf. Straniero Sergio 2012: 211), which will be discussed in the following section. Within this framework, communicative context does not represent a fixed template, imposing norms and behavioural attitudes to participants – interpreter included; it is rather the lens, through which interactional and translational attitudes are to be understood and evaluated. In this respect, meta-discourse contributions may prove extremely useful, as they constitute one of the extra-textual sources (Toury 1995: 65) that allow the analyst to investigate aspects pertaining not only to "the interpreter's orientation towards the ST (adequacy) or the TT (acceptability)" (Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012: 26) but also to what "[interpreters] are there for" (Marzocchi 2005: 102).

3.2 Interpreter's role and function

*The Queen:
Now, here you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place.
If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.*

Television interpreting implies a higher degree of involvement for interpreters than conference interpreting, both at personal and professional level (cf. Straniero Sergio 2007: 530). Interpreters' visibility is enhanced by the very nature of the communicative setting they work in, due to the ostensive dimension of television (cf. Straniero Sergio 2007: 530). Moreover, their performances are often commented on by the national press the following day (Katan/Straniero Sergio 2003). This invariably leads to the shaping of a television interpreter's profile and, ultimately, the identification of norms⁵ based on the perception of the

5 Toury (1995: 55) defines norms as "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a certain community - as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate - into specific performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to specific situations".

communicative needs of a given setting (cf. Marzocchi 2005). A case in point is Lentini's (2008) MA dissertation on mediated television communication. Lentini asks herself to what extent interpreters' contributions can be described as essential for communication and where the line can be drawn between interpreters' ratified presence and *mal nécessaire*. Through a contrastive analysis of mediated, partially mediated and non-mediated television interviews, Lentini tries to identify specific pragmatic aspects – self-repair, other-completion and reformulation (cf. Schegloff *et al.* 1977), that may serve as indicators of the main differences between mediated and non-mediated discourse⁶, as they are present in any form of spoken interaction. Lentini observes that the most important aspect distinguishing mediated interviews from non-mediated interaction is the interpreters' ability to convey a specific message in a way that is both comprehensible to the TL audience and adequate to the communicative setting and television genre, instead of merely allowing to communicate with each other. The interpreter's presence invariably contributes to the degree of telegenicity of the interview. Hence, the relevance of the identification of interpreting norms and interpreter's role features, in order to enhance television interpreters' awareness as regards their status and tasks, as well as the situational conditions they need to adapt to when operating in the television environment (cf. 3.1).

Equivalent outcomes are obtained by Borgna (2005) in her study on journalist-mediated Formula 1 track-side interviews (cf. Straniero Sergio 2003). In investigating the journalist's role as mediator in terms of applied strategies and adopted techniques, Borgna observes a higher degree of confidence in the journalist-mediator's translational choices as opposed to interpreters' performances. Yet, journalists proved frequently unable to distinguish between mediator and journalist (i.e. reporter)'s role, as their ITs often include comments and additions that have little to do with what the interviewee is actually saying. Similarly, Niemants (2007) illustrates point by point the main differences between journalists and interpreters through a contrastive analysis of CNN link-ups broadcast within the Italian quoting programme *Unomattina*. Link-ups are interpreted by interpreters, commented on by interpreters or summed up and commented on by journalists. Among the indicators of differences in speaking behaviours of the two professional categories are discourse markers (also in Serusi 2010), politeness interventions, turn-allocation and distribution interventions, overlaps and pauses. Niemants notices a great degree of variation in the incidence of these elements, which are patently more frequent in journalists' spoken production than in the interpreters' output. In addition, Borgna (2005) reports that journalists acting as interpreters tend to violate the mediated interview format, i.e. "adjacency trio" (cf. Merlini/Favaron 2005), as the two distinct roles they play, namely interviewer and translator, give them the authority to steer the interview topic – topic management (Straniero Sergio 2007), select the next speaker and take advantage of the translation turn to add new discourse material.

6 Lentini (2008) analyses interviews broadcast on Italian television involving non-Italian guests, and draws a comparison between interpreter-mediated and non-mediated interviews.

The turn-taking system is a crucial component and an extremely telling factor of television interpreters' behaviour in dialogue-like settings, such as talk shows: Beltramone (2010), in her study on interpreters' "face work" (cf. Goffman 1967, 1971; Brown/Levinson 1987) in the Italian talk show *Maurizio Costanzo Show*, notices the significant influence of turn allocation and speaker selection on the quality level of the interpreter's delivery and face-saving interventions.

Turns may also refer exclusively to the IT: such is the case with SIA, when interpreters working in an *équipe* have to translate a dialogue-like form of interaction without sharing the *hic* and *nunc* with the SL interlocutors. In this case, more than in others⁷, interpreters have to be able to start and conclude their translational turn avoiding any possible overlap, as it may prevent the interpreter in charge of the following turn from hearing it properly, and may jeopardize the IT comprehension by the TL audience (cf. Zecchini 2006). Furthermore, irregularities in the *équipe*'s turns allocation may affect the IT as a whole, in terms of topical coherence (cf. Dal Fovo 2012a, 2012b): in her study on the rendition of dialogue-like discourse in the ITs of American presidential debates Dal Fovo (2008) focuses on the interpretation of question / answer (Q/A) exchanges in terms of preservation of topical coherence. Q/A classification and rendition in the IT highlight the importance of teamwork among interpreters working in an *équipe*, in particular as far as turn distribution is concerned.

As opposed to face work and communicative ethos, turn-taking system and Q/A management fall into the socio-cultural category defined as "interactional features" (cf. 3.1). Along with their pragmatic counterparts described in the previous paragraphs, interactional features too may be used to identify the role and tasks of television interpreters. This is the case of Bassanese's (2001) MA thesis on interpretation of American presidential debates broadcast on Italian television. By observing the degree of teamwork among interpreters at procedural (e.g. turn-taking system) and discourse (e.g. textual coherence) level, Bassanese provides an evaluation of interpreters' renditions of the speakers' image and ethos. Bassanese notices that there are substantial differences in the ways interlocutors appear in the OT and in the IT respectively. In particular, candidate Dukakis' attitude (cf. Bush / Dukakis presidential debate, 25.09.1988), extremely determined and convincing in the OT, is negatively affected by the insecure and somewhat unnatural delivery of his interpreter. Similarly, Colucci (2009) observes that a general tendency to mitigation in the interpretation of American presidential debates collected in CorIT (1984-2008) negatively affects the presidential candidates' ethos and image, as interpreters' efforts to level OT hedges greatly reduces the candidates' assertiveness. It should here be noted that television interpreters frequently operate in border-line working conditions, as shown by their widespread resorting to emergency strategies in potentially

7 Clearly, overlaps of interpreting turns should always be avoided. It is, however, of paramount importance that they do not occur in SIA, where interpreters cannot influence the original discourse, as their task is not that of allowing the primary interlocutors – i.e. source-language speakers – to communicate with each other. Primary interlocutors are often not even aware of the interpreters' presence and certainly do not need to wait for the interpreting turns to be over in order to be able to answer or react to what the other speakers say.

problematic passages (cf. Sai 2002). Once again, these outcomes confirm the importance of the television interpreters' awareness of the nature of their task and their ability to perform accordingly, i.e. acquiring a satisfactory level of "comfort", "performing capacity" and "culture" (cf. Katan/Straniero Sergio 2001). Indicators of the interpreter's ability – and factors determining his/her credibility – are, among others, short time-lag, high incidence of automatisms, appropriate – almost idiosyncratic – use of discourse markers, appropriateness repairs and use of intonation, voice and pauses as rhetorical and textual-organization devices. This is what emerges from Serusi's (2010) study on style, identified through the analysis of specific interpreting attitudes and strategies peculiar of one single television interpreter, observed throughout his entire career. Serusi's outcomes confirm the relevant literature, in particular the relation between style improvement, additions or omissions on the one hand, and the "ethics of entertainment" underlying the interpreter's behaviour on the other, as stated by Katan/Straniero Sergio (2001). Further pragmatic devices that – if recurrent – identify the particular style of a given interpreter are phrasal expressions (cf. Colucci 2009), discourse markers (cf. Bettin 2004) and hedges (cf. Colucci 2009). Specifically, Colucci (2009) notices that, despite a general tendency to mitigation, individual displays of rhetoric ability by Bush senior's interpreter significantly improve the former's image, originally insecure and very little incisive. More generally, Colucci, corroborating Di Giovannantonio's (2008) results, points out that modalisation interventions in the IT do not appear to originate from a need to modify the OT; rather, they occur in correspondence with problematic passages and are used as face-saving, time-gaining and/or filling devices. This secondary – and semantically superfluous – function is precisely what turns the above-mentioned pragmatic interventions into useful style indicators.

Interpreters' deliveries and their adequacy and acceptability (cf. Straniero Sergio/Falbo 2012) also depend on the degree of success with which interpreters perform face work: in her analysis of French presidential debates and their interpreted versions in terms of *équipe* formation and face work, Gaia (2007) underlines the influence of OT specific features – i.e. high degree of conflict characterizing competitions (cf. Dayan/Katz 1993), such as overlaps, interruptions (interactional factors) and accusations (pragmatic feature), on the level of complexity of the required face work, and ultimately on the interpreters' rendition. Face-work issues are even more evident in mediated dialogue-like interactions (SIP and CIWN), such as talk-show interpreting (cf. Lentini 2008, Zangoli 2007).

4. Concluding remarks

*Alice: I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.
The Hatter: You mean you can't take less; it's very easy to take more than nothing.*

Aside from aspects pertaining to corpus-linguistics research and digital elaboration of data, which are currently object of research within the on-going classification process of CorIT, and despite their perfectible nature, MA theses provide significant contributions both to CorIT development in particular, and

television interpreting research in general. Indeed, they raise a series of issues that may inspire new studies and trigger further investigations, such as reflections on socio-cultural and ideological aspects of the interpreter profession.

Moreover, CorIT MA theses are a clear evidence of the value of the corpus-approach to Interpreting Studies. CIS cannot yet be considered a fully-fledged branch of Interpreting Studies, mainly due to the lack of comparable sets of data, from which ecologically valid conclusions can be drawn. As highlighted by Straniero Sergio/Falbo (2012), the main issues hampering CIS development lie in the preparation and interrogation phases of spoken corpora. These difficulties, however, do not invalidate the undisputable potential – and urgent need for – corpus-based interpreting research contributions, as they are increasingly being recognized as the only possible approach to interpreting studies able to guarantee the much sought-for rigour this discipline is still lacking. As was the case with television interpreting studies, here too MA theses represent a significant contribution, triggering “a reflection upon problems related to corpus classification and investigation methodology” (cf. Falbo 2012: 178).

As illustrated in the present paper, variables and methods vary greatly, depending on MA students’ choices and preferences. Methodology and outcomes differ from thesis to thesis, both in terms of field of analysis and overall quality, i.e. validity. Aside from any evaluation of MA student contribution results, the very fact that such a variety of issues pertaining to television interpreting could be identified and observed exclusively in one single corpus is ultimate evidence of the huge research potential of the CorIT project.

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