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# **Berlusconi's Language in the British Press**

Translation, Ideology and National Image in News Discourse  
across Italian/English Linguacultures

Denise Filmer

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
PhD

University of Durham

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

December 2014

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.  
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## **Abstract and keywords**

The thesis examines the representation of Silvio Berlusconi's language in the British press through the reverberations of linguistic taboos when translated from Italian into English. The analysis is set within the overarching premise that 'Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power' (Bourdieu 1992: 142). In order to navigate through the analyses, the trajectory of Berlusconi and his language is first set against the Italian sociolinguistic and historico-political backdrop. Then, through a triangulation of methodological approaches, the study attempts to understand some of the underlying mechanisms that influence the ways in which news producers shape knowledge on cultural difference. Critical Discourse Analysis methods are used to reveal the implicit propositions and evaluative translational choices in three datasets of online news texts drawn from British quality and tabloid newspapers. The first dataset examines news narratives on Berlusconi's sexist and taboo language and the translational decisions of these 'critical points' (Munday 2012). Textual framing and cultural stereotyping are the focus of the second dataset that analyse a meta-debate across Italian and British newspapers on national image. The third dataset examines 'anti-gay', 'sexist' 'racist' narratives on Italy, as portrayed in British news discourse. Semi-structured interviews with the journalists who were among the active agents in these framing practices provide data on the habitus of the 'journalator' (van Doorslaer 2012) and the role of the journalist/translator as cultural mediator. A tentative approach to sample the ways in which readers respond to the framed discourses was made in order to gauge the impact of these news narratives on the image of Italy in the eyes of the audiences.



## Acknowledgements

'Only connect...' (E.M. Forster)

To my parents and to my brother for their faith in me

To Massimiliano, with deepest love, without whom I simply wouldn't have made it

To my supervisor, Federico Federici, from whom I have learned so much

To Rosemary and Tom, for their kindness and patience.





## Abbreviations and Glossary

ANSA	Agenzie Nazionale Stampa Associata
AVT	audio visual translation
BNP	British National Party
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CENSIS	Centro Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNN	Cable News Network
DC	Democrazia Cristiana
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transexual
MEMRI	Middle East Media Research Institute
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NL	Northern League
OED	Oxford English Dictionary

PC	Partito Comunista
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiana
PDL	Polo della Libertà
RAI	Radio Audizioni Italiane
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party

## Introduction

In one of his last appearances for *Newsnight* (20 May 2014), British journalist Jeremy Paxman interviewed Silvio Berlusconi. Three minutes into the interview, '*Newsnight's* Rottweiler-in-chief', asked the former Italian Premier: 'Is it true you called [Angela Merkel] an unfuckable lardarse?' After flustering a moment, toying with the earpiece from which he listened to the interpreter translate, Berlusconi recomposed himself and replied 'Non ho mai, in venti anni di politica, insultato nessuno.' [I have never, in twenty years of politics, insulted anyone]<sup>1</sup>. The veracity of the response is of course debateable, and will be discussed further on (see Chapter 5). The episode is quoted here because it crystalizes several of the key concerns at the core of this thesis: a respected political journalist uses the f-word on British television, yet it is not 'his' word. He is quoting Italian politician, Silvio Berlusconi, but quoting him through translation. However, it is not actually a quote, as the insult to Merkel is only alleged, although it was widely reported in the international press. *Newsnight* was pre-recorded, and so considering the taboo-breaking nature of the offending words the BBC could have been bleeped them out (as was done on the *MailOnline's* website). Instead the 'news' of the scandalous question pre-empted the broadcast, and was reported in several British newspapers. The intertextuality of these discursive chains bring into focus three points: the reverberations of Silvio Berlusconi's language in the international media; the issue of newsworthiness and the encroaching influence of infotainment in foreign news reporting, and crucially here, the simultaneous omnipresence and invisibility of translation in the news, and in social life.

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from Italian to English are my own, unless otherwise stated.

## **The research rationale**

The rationale for this study rests on one basic premise: no Italian leader has attracted so much international media attention since Benito Mussolini. As such, the representation of this controversial figure *through translation* in news texts deserves our attention. For nearly twenty years Berlusconi's prominence in British news discourse has owed less to his political acumen than to his verbal transgressions; in violating codes of political correctness, the former Italian Premier's comments on race, religion, and gender have caused intercultural embarrassment. The ensuing media 'rows' circulated the globe via translated meta-journalistic dialectics. Drawing on a conception of translation that goes beyond interlingual transfer to encompass multi-layered processes of cultural transfer, translation, the invisible mediator between languages and cultures is interwoven with media discourse to play a crucial role in news making today. By analysing particular examples of news narratives on the language and discourse of Berlusconi, through an exploration of the processes involved in the production of news, by speaking to some of the practitioners, the journalists themselves about the role of translation in their work, and by attempting to consider the possible impact and audience response to those texts, this research aims to contribute to debates on translation, cultural representation, and national image in news production.

## **Research Questions**

As Schäffner (2008: 3) has observed, 'The mass media play a fundamental role in mediating between politicians and the public, nevertheless, media translation of political communication is rarely explicit; it remains invisible, filtering, transforming and reformulating speech without acknowledging the processes involved'. This study sets out to scrutinise those processes in the cross-cultural representation of Berlusconi's language in the British press. Focusing on the reverberations of linguistic taboos when translated from Italian into English, what mechanisms are at foot in conveying their meaning from source to target texts? Which multimodal devices are deployed in order to create new sets of meanings in

target culture news products? By whom, and to what aim? The investigation aims to explore these, and the following questions.

1. In order to contextualise Berlusconi's language and its representation in British news products, first it is necessary to understand in which ways his political discourse has evolved within the Italian context during the Ventennio Berlusconiano. Thus, tracing the trajectory of Berlusconi's use of language and with examples from other prominent Italian politicians, has a normalization of offensive, vulgar and politically incorrect expressions taken place within the Italian political arena over the last twenty years?
2. How do British news narratives (intercultural and intralingual) surrounding Berlusconi's verbal transgressions impact on the construction of his international persona and to the way in which he is represented in the UK press?
3. Is it possible to trace the translations of his taboo language back to news agencies or even individual journalists? If so, to what extent is it possible to identify ideological slants and power relationships within the translations themselves? Are they due to the individual or institutional bias?
4. How does the Italian press respond to the metaphorical mirror being held up to their society by the foreign media? Conversely, to what extent has prejudice, and stereotyping influenced the coverage of Berlusconi, and more generally, the representation of Italy? Can we identify any translation effects? How can we gauge reader response to the news narratives and representations of Italy?

## **Chapter overview**

The thesis comprises 8 chapters. Chapter 1 starts from the premise that a scientific approach should not necessarily preclude a level of subjectivity in methods of analysis. The interdisciplinary methodological framework is then discussed, with Translation Studies as the starting point. The chapter gives a reasoned account for

the triangulation of approaches adopted in this study, and how the original methodological framework was developed in order to answer the research questions. A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective underpins this research and is the first of the three perspectives presented. As both theory and method, CDA is discussed and the multimodality of news texts is considered through a multi-semiotic lens (Kress 2010). The limitations of CDA as a sole means of analysis are outlined. Munday's (2011) *Critical points in Translational Decision-Making* is proposed as a paradigm for textual analysis focusing on translation choices. The second approach, ethnographic methods in the form of qualitative interviewing, is situated within a Translation Studies context and the motive for its implementation in interviewing journalists is considered. Finally, the third aspect of the triangulation is proposed: the ways in which reader response, translation effects and the target reader can be accounted for in the methodological equation. The chapter concludes with some reflections on newspaper sources and text genres, methods of data collection and selection, and unresolved issues in research design. Chapter 2 introduces the three main theoretical areas that colour the discourse surrounding this investigation: the role of language, and its relation to power; discourse and ideology in news texts; culture, language and national image as represented in the press. The first part focuses on Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) work on language, symbolic power, and habitus and goes on to discuss the ways in which Bourdieu's theories have influenced discourse theorists Norman Fairclough (1995, 1999, 2003) and Teun van Dijk (1993). The chapter then focuses on ideology in the news (Fowler 1991), the role of image studies (2007), and media frames (de Vrees 1995) in the production of news on the Other. Chapter 3 focuses on the disciplinary hub of this thesis, Translation Studies. The chapter begins with a synoptic overview of some of the key theories of translation in recent years. Ideology and conflict in translation are the themes discussed in relation to Baker (2006, 2010), Munday (2012), Hatim and Mason's (1997) work while the invisibility of the translator (Venuti 1995, 1998), especially in news translation (Schäffner 2004, 2008) is considered. Bourdieu's impact is then discussed in relation to the 'sociological turn' (Wolf and Fukari 2007) in Translation Studies. The second part of the chapter

focuses on a literature review of translation theory and methods relating to conveying meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries in the circulation of international news. The last sections centre on the issues of national image building through translation in the news (Brownlie 2010; Conway 2008; Kelly 1998; van Doorslaer 2010, 2012). In Chapter 4 the attention moves to the sociolinguistic and historical backdrop that contextualises the analysis that follows. It starts by providing a diachronic overview of the notion of one language in the Italian context. Beginning with the socio-linguistic situation immediately after unification, Mussolini's impact on language and censorship is outlined and moves on to consider post-war Italy and the effect of the mass-media on the development of a national language. The chapter then situates the analyses within the Italian political context and introduces the persona of Berlusconi. The socio-political situation, and Italian political discourse pre-Berlusconi are outlined, and the dawning of the so-called second republic with Berlusconi's debut on the political scene, heralding a new political rhetoric and Northern League and Umberto Bossi's linguistic influence. The rise and fall of Berlusconi's first government are briefly outlined. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion on the issues of taboo language and political correctness within the Italian sociolinguistic and cultural context.

The heart of the thesis is found in Chapters 4-8 where the four distinct yet interconnected aspects of the overarching research questions are addressed. Chapter 5 introduces the core focus around which the analysis of the first data set is concentrated: some key examples of cross cultural perceptions of Berlusconi's sexist and taboo language filtered through translation-mediated news. The dataset examined focus on four discursive events; 'Thatcher the Great Piece of Pussy' (2007), 'Bindi - More Beautiful than intelligent' (2009), 'Go Pussy' (2011), and 'Unfuckable Lardarse' (2011). Chapter six looks specifically at the ways in which representations of Berlusconi and his discourse bear upon the construction of the image of Italy in the British press through a case study of the effects of intertextuality between Italian and British press. The *Star's* (2009) racist article 'Italian Slimeball puts the boot into Britain', is analysed and compared with its instigator, an article published in *Il Giornale* (2009) entitled 'Cari inglesi vi abbiamo

battuto in tutto' [Dear Brits, we have beaten you in everything]. Chapter seven looks beyond Berlusconi's actual words to the effects of twenty years of Berlusconi's discourse and 'berlusconismo' on British news narratives on Italy through the lens of three loose themes 'Anti-Gay, Sexist, Racist, and Fascist' Lastly Chapter 8 analyses the blurring of boundaries between journalist and translator (van Doorslaer 2012: 1050) in the context of British news discourse on Italy. The chapter discusses the findings of an ethnographic study carried out with the participation of journalists and correspondents for Italy who work for major UK national newspapers. The data reveals some significant indications of the ways in which high-profile, professional journalists view translation in relation to their work providing examples of some of their translational decisions that correlate directly to the analyses presented in chapter 5 of this thesis. In conclusion some final reflections and considerations are offered, with indications of the directions that future research might fruitfully take.

The relationship between Silvio Berlusconi and the Anglophone media has often been fraught. In an interview given to *The Financial Times* (3 February 2012) Berlusconi claimed that the 'obsessive campaign by the Italian and foreign media' had contributed to his resignation in November 2011. One of the most incisive campaigns against the former Italian Prime Minister was promoted by the British weekly news journal *The Economist* who published the coverlines 'Why Berlusconi is unfit to govern' (2001), and more recently, and more vulgarly 'The Man Who Screwed an Entire Country' (2011). *The Economist's* criticisms of Berlusconi largely fell into three categories and can be condensed as: 1) conflict of interests: his monopoly of Italy's means of communication; 2) his ineptitude at dealing with the economic crisis; 3) his legal battles and the extraordinary number of court cases against him (at that point he had yet to be convicted of fraud). What *The Economist* did not do was criticise Berlusconi on a personal level<sup>2</sup>. However, for the vast

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Emmott, editor of *The Economist* from 1991-2006 confirmed this editorial stance of 'no scandal mongering on Berlusconi' during our interview, discussed in Chapter 8



majority of the British press, as indeed for the international media, Silvio Berlusconi's private life and public 'gaffes' were the focus of attention (Crocì and Lucarelli 2010: 255) providing embellishment to reports on more serious issues in Italian affairs and the raw material for innumerable news narratives. This study addresses the second of these two phenomena.



# 1.

## Research Design: Integrating Methods at Macro-analysis

The introductory chapter presents the methodological structure of the research project at macro-level. Starting from a syncretism of perspectives, section 1.2 delineates the triangulation of approaches that are integrated for this research. Sections 1.3-1.5 describe the ways in which critical discourse methods are used to reveal critical points in translation decision making, while perspectives on how reader response could be evaluated are outlined in section 1.6. Data collection methods and methodological caveats are discussed in section 1.7.

### 1.1 The Premise

Methodology can never be more than a self-reflection on the means that have proved useful in [scientific] practice; and one does not need to be made explicitly aware of those means in order to produce useful work, just as one does not need to have knowledge of anatomy in order to walk "correctly".

(Weber in Bruun and Whimster 2012: 140)

The research paradigm adopted for this enquiry follows Max Weber's belief (Weber in Bruun and Whimster 2012; Weber 1949/2011) that human sciences should be concerned with understanding (*Verstehen*); an understanding that cannot be achieved by reducing empirical reality to generalised 'laws', or by implementing descriptive methods alone. According to Weber, some social phenomena require the researcher to go beyond mere description and strive towards 'interpretive understanding'. For Weber (2011: 72), 'there is no absolutely "objective" scientific analysis of culture' because, as Mannheim (Berger and Luckmann 1966/1991: 22)

subsequently recognised, all knowledge is gained indirectly through the filters of life experience.

Researchers in the humanities and social sciences are certainly not immune to the filtering effect of their own cultural baggage. Transcending positionality (Alcoff 1988; Tomozcho 2003), shedding personal ideologies and individual attitudes so as to observe social phenomena from a 'neutral' vantage point is a somewhat naïve goal. As Johnson's (1995/2000) axiom illustrates: 'The mere process of selecting a research problem [...] is in part an inescapable value judgment about what is most important or interesting'. At best, then, the researcher can be aware of her identity in the context of her scholarly endeavours and be attentive to the ways in which subjectivity might impinge upon interpretations and constructions of reality (Berger and Luckman 1966/1991). Weber (1949/2011: 60) maintained that the subjective voice has a place in research on condition that it is 'made constantly clear to the readers (and - again we say it! - above all to oneself) exactly at which point the scientific investigator becomes silent and the evaluating and acting person begins to speak'. Indeed, his views on clarity and transparency were by no means a negation of the validity of social criticism on the part of the researcher. On the contrary, he argued that 'an attitude of moral indifference has no connection with scientific "objectivity"' (ibid). Whilst advocating a critical approach to analysing culture and society, he nevertheless believed that those critiques must be based on scientifically grounded observation and be free from prescriptivism. Incisively, he asks (1904/2012: 102) 'Criticism does not stop before value judgements. The question is rather: what can a scientific critique of ideals and value judgements *mean* and what is its purpose?'

Weber's reflections on objectivity and the role of scientific critique in the human sciences have particular resonance for the present research: the ontological, epistemological and ethical issues involved in tracing the reverberations of Berlusconi's politically incorrect language (in itself a value judgement) when translated and represented in the British press are wide-ranging and manifold.

In the first place, if the researcher is always implicated in the phenomena being studied (Orlikowki and Baroudi 1991), an analysis of media representations of the internationally reviled Berlusconi from a value-neutral stance would be something of a challenge for me. As a British woman with socialist leanings who has resided in Italy for more than two decades I am simultaneously insider and outsider, witnessing and living through the Berlusconi years. 'Moral indifference' to all that Berlusconi is and all that 'Berlusconismo' stands for would be an inconceivable position. However, while some British nationals recoiled at the cultural decadence of Berlusconi's reign and returned in patria to criticise from the pages of the *Daily Mail* (Jones 2008, 10 November 2011), others like myself have remained. Agog at what we observe (Parks 2013) but we remain, nevertheless.

Yet to isolate language, the focus of this study, from other facets of Berlusconi's persona (his media empire, his politics, the pending lawsuits, the accusations of mafia links, the controversy surrounding his private life, not to mention his astounding capacity to bounce back) in the name of 'objectivity,' would be similarly unrealistic and contrary to the aims of this research, that is, to see language in its cultural context, and to examine what happens when transposed into another lingua-cultural environment. Furthermore, the issues surrounding Berlusconi's verbal transgressions and their mediated representations go beyond a conception of translation as purely lexical meaning transfer to reveal an intriguing set of dilemmas on much broader topics. These include but are not limited to; cross-cultural communication and the media; stereotyping and framing in media discourse; taboo language in Italian political discourse and the ensuing translation effects; cross-cultural perceptions of what constitutes sexist, racist, homophobic or offensive language; and the role translation plays in news production. These concerns are of great importance to intercultural relations as the immediate circulation of culturally sensitive information across national and linguistic boundaries may trigger ideological clashes and cultural misconstructions, the effects and repercussions of which are still largely unexplored.

Delving into these issues calls for multi-layered perspectives for two reasons; firstly, the issues they embrace span several interconnected disciplines; and secondly, as explained below, an interdisciplinary approach affords a wide-lens view on the issues under debate. The next section gives a detailed account of the approaches and methods deemed most effective for designing a 'scientific critique' to engage with the issues and questions investigated in this study.

## 1.2 A syncretism of perspectives

According to Berger and Luckman's (1966/1991: 22) interpretation of Mannheim:

Ideological influences, while [they] cannot be eradicated completely, could be mitigated by the systematic analysis of as many as possible of the varying socially grounded positions. In other words, the object of thought becomes progressively clearer with this accumulation of different perspectives on it.

Ideology<sup>3</sup> is interwoven throughout the complex dynamics at the core of this study: how are Berlusconi's discourses<sup>4</sup>, relayed across lingua-cultural spaces? By whom and to what aim? What potential effects do those representations have on the target audience? What role does translation play in the construction of Berlusconi's image in multimodal texts? How does translation figure in the dialogic relationship between the Italian and British press? To clarify these questions the research strands are drawn together and observed from a plurality of perspectives.

Munday (2008: 14-15), points out that in recent years the interdisciplinary nature of research in translation has brought new perspectives and paradigms to the field, thus challenging (ibid): 'the current conventional way of thinking by promoting and responding to new links between different types of knowledge and technologies'. The framework adopted here generates from this conception of

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion on the concept of ideology see sections 2.2.1-2.3

<sup>4</sup> Taking Hatim and Mason's (1997: 216) definition of discourse as 'modes of speaking and writing which involve social groups in adopting a particular attitude towards areas of socio-cultural activity (e.g. racist discourse, bureaucratise, etc.)'.

Translation Studies as an intersection between related disciplines. By no means exhaustive, here are some of the perspectives through which translation is observed, and which have provided the ‘accumulation of perspectives’ implemented in this study to which Mannheim refers: Cultural Studies (Venuti 1995/2008; 1998); Political Discourse Studies (Schäffner 2004, 2011; Hatim and Mason 1997); Ethnography (Hubscher-Davidson 2011; Koskinen 2006, 2008); Sociolinguistics (Nida and Taber 1969); Media and Journalism Studies (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Federici, 2010; forthcoming; Valdeòn 2010; Van Doorslaer 2010, 2012) and Sociology (Inghilleri 2003, 2005; Simeoni 1998; Wolf and Fukari 2007). It is evident that all of the approaches above overlap somewhat either in describing, or analysing the ‘social’ phenomena connected with communication.

Drawing on these interdisciplinary approaches, a triangulation of interpretative, discursive (critical discourse analysis or CDA), and ethnographic perspectives are implemented here to account for the chain of processes that are the object of this research: from language embedded in its source lingua-culture, to how meaning is interpreted and reproduced within the target cultural system, and finally, how that representation is received in the target culture. This three-pronged approach endeavours, as far as possible, to render ‘an objective science of the subjective’ (Blaikie 2007: 125). The following sections focus on the concept of Translation Studies as an interdisciplinary cross-roads, and go on to rationalise the selection of methods used in this research.

### **1.2.1 The starting point - translation in media texts**

The genesis for this research project stems from an empirical question pertaining to translation in the strictest sense: how Berlusconi’s politically incorrect utterances were/are rendered in the British press. Yet the burgeoning field of Translation Studies ‘the academic discipline related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation’ (Munday 2001/2008: 1) has so expanded its horizons in recent times that what appears to be a straightforward question of interlingual translation from SL to TL is now imbued with a series of interconnecting issues that a ‘pure’

discipline alone cannot account for. Translation as a phenomenon is now ubiquitous in post-modern societies where media communications are on a global level. Generally acknowledged as an area of interdisciplinary study (Snell Hornby et al 1992, see section 2.1), Translation Studies overlaps with several disciplines; in recent years globalization and the digital era have seen Translation Studies become the crucial locus for inquiry in a number of contemporary social sciences and an increasingly fertile cross-roads of anthropology, cultural studies, intercultural communication, media studies, discourse studies, sociology, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics, to name a few. This convergence of approaches reflects the interweaving of translation within media texts that combine different semiotic systems. Bassnett (2009: 11) reminds us that: 'Translation is one element in a complex set of processes whereby information is transposed from one language to another and then edited, rewritten, shaped and repackaged in a new context'. She is describing one of the ways in which today's news texts are produced and in which translated information is invisibly recontextualised (Schaffner 2008: 3). An in depth analysis of translation's role in creating meaning at micro and macro-level in such news texts cannot ignore the multimodality of that 'new context' (see section 1.6) thus requiring a plurality of methodological approaches in order to unpack the different layers of meaning. The next section explains in more detail which cross-disciplinary methods were essential to carry out this investigation and the reasons why some were preferred among other possibly valid approaches.

### **1.2.2 A triangulation of approaches**

Munday (2001/2008: 15) notes that the relationship between research in translation and other disciplines is not fixed but is contingent to the aims of the researcher. The choice of theories and methodologies is thus a crucial one. As the focus of TS has shifted from words to texts, from texts to socio-cultural context, to encompass the working practices and 'habitus' of the translators themselves (Simeoni 1999; Inghilleri 2003, 2005; Koskinen 2006, 2008), methodologies have become



increasingly sophisticated reflecting the changing nature of conceptions of translation and translators and their roles in our world today.

This research project attempts a three-fold approach to observe the phenomenon of translation from three perspectives; translation in hybrid texts (Schäffner and Adab 2001), the translator in her/his habitus, and reception of the product within target culture. Consequently, the methodology for this project is configured around three main approaches;

- A multisemiotic approach to Critical Discourse Analysis;
- Ethnographic methods of qualitative interviews;
- A preliminary attempt to survey and analyse reader response.

These three approaches correspond to different aspects of the research questions. The first, multimodal CDA (van Dijk 2009; Iedema 2003) forms the methodological hub and the necessary tools with which to examine the main source of data, online newspaper articles. Munday's (2012) adaptation of appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) provides the framework for analysis of the 'critical points' in translator decision-making (see section 1.6). This overarching analytical frame can be further broken down into three components that cover the three textual features under examination; 1. text in the target language, 2. embedded translated text, and 3. intersemiotic features such as images and graphics. The analysis of textual data, i.e., the newspaper articles is supported by a sample study of qualitative interviews with Italian correspondents for the major British quality and popular dailies. Practitioners in the field, they are also the 'journalists who translate' and who have put their by-lines to many of the articles analysed in this study. The third element is a sample survey of reader response. Reader's comments at the end of online articles and blogs related to the news narratives discussed are collated and monitored in order to try and build a picture of readers' reactions and perceptions. This survey that proposes to use readers' comments as data for qualitative analysis takes inspirations from sociological studies where they are considered 'a legitimate data source and basis for investigation for sociologists of popular culture' (Poulton and

Durell 2014: 7). This trilateral view has evolved from the tried and tested multidisciplinary methodology elaborated during MA research and subsequent publications (Filmer 2011, 2012, 2013). The following sections discuss the reasons for adopting these particular approaches here and explain the function of each of these facets within the research framework.

### **1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis revisited through a multi-semiotic view**

Mannheim's plea for interdisciplinarity by any other name is reflected in the ethos of (Critical) Discourse Studies (see section 2.2-2.3). Based on concepts and tools deriving from Hallidayan linguistics, over the last forty years CDA has developed into an area of research that spans the social sciences and the humanities alike (Fairclough 2001:121; van Dijk 2007; Wodak 2008: 2 see section 2.2) incorporating both method and theoretical stance. The aim of CDA is to make connections between the use of language and society thus revealing how discourse is instrumental to maintaining existing power relations. Teun A. van Dijk (2007: 354) was one of the first theorists to develop the CDA paradigm along with Ruth Wodak, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. He defines the field of study thus:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

Van Dijk (2001: 97) also emphasises the incumbent 'scholarly and social responsibilities' intrinsic to a Discourse Studies approach, asserting that 'its multidisciplinary theories must account for the complexities of the relationships between discourse structures and social structures' (ibid). It is no coincidence, then, according to van Dijk (2009: 193), that scholarly interest in the closely linked CDA, ideology, and the media converged at more or less the same time in Bell's seminal work, *The Language of News Media* (1991) (see section 4.4). Fowler's *Language in the*

*News* (1991) elaborated similar ideas with Critical Linguistics (Fowler et al. 1979; Kress and Hodge 1979) laying the structural foundation for later models of CDA. Wodak (2008: 3) on the other hand sustains that the object of study does not necessarily have to be linked to an exceptionally 'serious' social or political experiences or events: 'Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted'. Thus the purpose of CDA is to account for what can broadly be defined as 'social phenomenon' observed through the lens of language, or what van Dijk refers to as text (in the sense of written words) and talk (in the sense of speech). Within these general linguistic parameters he identifies lexicon as the greatest repository of ideological expression (1998: 205):

Lexical analysis is [...] the most obvious (and fruitful) component in ideological discourse analysis. Simply spelling out all the implications of the words being *used in a specific discourse and context* often provides an array of ideological meanings. As a practical method, substitution of one word by others immediately shows different semantic and often ideological 'effects' of such a substitution (Italics added).

This deceptively simple approach to semantics has been a useful tool in analysing data for this research proving to be an invaluable aid in understanding translational choices and their effects. As highlighted here in italics, however, the lexical item in itself has no intrinsic value if not contextualised, which is where Halliday's concept of *Language as social semiotic* (1978) comes into play, that is, 'how people use language with each other in accomplishing everyday social life' (Eggins 2004: 3).

Context intended in a broader sense, i.e., socio-political context, is what Reisigl and Wodak (2001) refer to in their brand of discourse analysis known as the discourse-historical approach. Their methodology brings to light the importance of historical contextualisation of the discourse under discussion and the need for ethnographical analysis to underpin research findings. This approach has been integrated here with other models of CDA because for the purposes of this research it was deemed essential to understand sociolinguistic origins of Berlusconi's use of language and not present his discourse as anomalous within its own context.

While language in use is the pivotal focus of CDA, van Dijk (1998: 205) was one of the first to recognise that the scope of discourse has moved beyond linguistic analysis alone to encompass non-verbal aspects such as voice prosody and gesture as well as other semiotic dimensions such as sound, film, image, and graphics: 'discourse is now understood as a complex multimodal event of interaction and communication' (van Dijk 2009: 192). With particular reference to newspapers he has observed the importance of graphics and visual layout as further meaning making structures:

Little theory is necessary to understand that variations of graphic prominence may constitute a crucial element in the expression of ideologies. Whether a news report appears on the front page or on an inside page of the newspaper, high on the page or at the bottom, left or right, or whether it has a small or a banner headline, [...] with or without a photograph, tables, drawings, colour and so on, are all properties of the graphical representation of just one genre that may have a serious impact on the readers' interpretation of the relevance or newsworthiness of news events (1998: 201)

With this consideration in mind the following section offers a brief overview of Kress's social semiotic view of multimodality and its relation to the present study.

### **1.3.1 The multimodality of news texts**

The rise in popularity of online newspapers raises questions on the multimodal character of news hypertexts and the interplay of different semiotic resources in the meaning making process (Conboy 2010: 148). The layout and presentation of information online is considerably different to traditional paper forms, juxtaposing image, video, and text. A plethora of links to related articles, audiovisuals, and a prodigious number of photographs with longer captions create a multisemiotic experience. The news article in question is often embedded in a paratext that foregrounds a communicative aim, even subliminally encoding an ideological slant. Iedema (2003: 33) points out this 'increased ubiquity of sound image, film, through TV, the computer and the internet is undoubtedly behind this new emphasis on and interest in the multi-semiotic complexity of representations we produce and see

around us'. He explains this is the reason why discourse analysis needs to extend towards a multi-semiotic practice because humans are predisposed towards multimodal meaning making and 'as our own multi-semiotic ontogenesis requires attention to more than one semiotic, the linguistic code' (ibid.). This notion was posited in Hodge and Kress's *Social Semiotics* back in 1988 before the era of online newspapers. It should also be noted that Roland Barthes was conducting forms of multi-semiotic analysis as long ago as 1957 (*Mythologies*). Nevertheless, the notion is significant in creating news texts of today where more than one semiotic system is afoot in creating representations of reality.

According to Kress (2010: 27), 'Makers of representations are shapers of knowledge'. From the multimodal lens, knowledge is produced rather than acquired, and is a process in which the individual receiver of information participates in order to make meaning. In other words, the signs need interpretation and communication takes place when there is a two-way flow. From this perspective, Kress (2010: 59) argues for a 'social semiotic multimodal account of meaning' in contemporary communication. Like CDA, social semiotic multimodality is based on Hallidayan (1978; 1984) systemic functional linguistics (SFL see section 1.4.3) according to which language not only represents but actively constructs our worldview: meaning making is negotiated in a social context where choice plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning. In the multimodal paradigm the emphasis is on agency and motivation in those choices, read in a semiotic rather than linguistic key. Kress (2010: 59) postulates that in a multimodal text:

All signs in all modes are meaningful. Thus we can no longer separate and isolate the various 'modes', or meaning making resources that a text contains such as writing, image, colour, proximity, number and facial expression; all have meaning potential and a function in the meaning making process'.

The theory of social semiotics, according to Kress, is able to give an account of each of these modes and their interrelation in any one text because multimodal semiotics deals with entities in which meaning and form appear as an integrated whole, a

sign. This is significant when considering the multimodal, multimedia texts of online newspapers.

Contemporary society has witnessed radical change within the field of communications regarding the ways in which the dissemination and distribution of messages and meanings occur (Castells 2010). Kress (2010: 6) draws attention to the ways in which semiotic effects are visible in this change. On the one hand, 'semiotic production' is evident in the shift from older technologies to digital and electronic printing methods, while on the other hand, a shift in 'representation' has taken place from the mode of writing to the mode of image. Indeed, from a multimodal perspective, language must be perceived in a different light: 'no longer as central and dominant, fully capable of expressing all meanings, but as one means among others for making meaning, each of them specific (Kress 2010: 79). A profound reorientation from the traditional stance of word over image, this is the route taken by social semiotic approaches to multimodal representation. An interesting aspect of the social semiotic project is its ethical approach to communication. One of its aims is to raise levels of social consciousness to the effects of semiotic actions performed by one social group on another (ibid).

Kress, therefore, sees the written code as a relatively small part of the overarching multimodal structure of a message. Clearly this must depend on the type of 'message' being conveyed; one needs to distinguish between different text genres. The reason for highlighting Kress's work here is not necessarily to subscribe wholesale to his theory, or to 'adapt' it for the purposes of this analysis. As he points out, linguistic frames of analysis cannot be applied to multimodal texts. Multimodality does, however, push the envelope on conceptions of what constitutes a text and the ways in which that text can be interpreted. It also advances the important notion of increasing public awareness as to how multimodal messages can be read. Finally it broaches issues of agency in the creation of multimodal meaning making, which is most relevant to the questions this research aims to address. Online news texts are sophisticated, multisemiotic messages that require scrutiny above and below text level in order to unpack their

multifarious meanings. This section, then, has drawn attention to one of the methodological drawbacks of relying purely on textual analysis when dealing with multimodal texts. The following section moves on to discuss other points of view as to the inadequacy of CDA alone as a method of analysis.

### **1.3.2 Limitations of Critical Discourse Analysis from a methodological point of view**

This chapter began with a reflection on the question of subjectivity in research. Critical Discourse Analysis has been described by one of its founders as ‘discourse analysis with attitude’ (van Dijk 2001: 95); it is unsurprising, therefore, that CDA provokes debate on this very issue. On the one hand, CDA approaches have been widely accepted as valid theoretical and methodological frameworks able to shed light on social processes through careful scrutiny of the ways in which language is employed in communicative events. On the other hand, the dissident and sometimes explicit stance that CDA affords when denouncing abuse of social power prompt criticism, even from scholars in the same field. Some find its aims and its methods lacking in objectivity. Toolan (2003: 69), for instance, maintains that a value-free analysis of language cannot be achieved, and that the researcher’s interpretations only add to the possible meanings that the text in question might have:

Textual analyses at core pose questions that are only variants of the metalinguistic resources we frequently invoke in everyday conversation (*What do you mean? Say that again. What are you saying?* and so on). And like the answers such questions produce in everyday life, those furnished by linguistic or discourse analysis can never be ‘the context-free analytical truth’ about what the speaker or writer meant, but instead a further contribution to the discursive flow of signification.

Although Toolan partially adopts CDA methods himself, he recognises that the researcher’s presence cannot be eliminated from the methodological process. Indeed, in his investigation “‘Politiquement Correct’ Dans le Monde Français’ (ibid.) the author avoids any attempts to objectivise his own discourse and provides a first person cognitive account of the corpus-based discourse analysis methodology

adopted in his analysis. Stubbs (1997) claims that CDA does not aim at comprehensive data but simply chooses elements of texts that can be used to support an argument, whereas Mason (2010: 94) asks 'are we just cherry-picking evidence to suits our case?' He counter argues however, that relying only on quantitative analyses of shifts 'would tell us very little of what is going on' (ibid).

Caimotto (2010: 100) follows Toolan and advocates a mixed method qualitative-quantitative approach to CDA in her analysis of the construction of Berlusconi's image in the Italian press. According to Caimotto, using corpus-aided discourse analysis is as a way of avoiding 'excessive subjectivity'. Nevertheless, even the selection of criteria for building a corpus inevitably leads to partiality. In the specific case, Caimotto's corpus of articles from the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* reporting on what the foreign press said on the various scandals surrounding Berlusconi was compiled from the search '*La Repubblica* AND Times' on *La Repubblica*'s website. The name '*Times*' is common to several papers of various nationalities and her corpus is based on seven of these. Of the 72 articles, a selection was made 'manually' but the author does not specify according to which criteria. Further, it is highly likely that the bulk of articles 'manually' selected would have come from *The Times* or *The Sunday Times*, which were both Murdoch owned at the time, therefore not representative of a 'cross-section' of examples. Lastly, utilising only the keyword search with '*Times*' greatly limits the research perspective, considering that two of the most often-quoted British papers in *La Repubblica* are the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. The other corpus Caimotto examines comprises a selection of articles including 32 interviews with Berlusconi from various news providers, 'which we can presume met with Berlusconi's approval' (Caimotto 2010 101). This implies that the language used and subjects discussed would have been vetted by Berlusconi, again having repercussions on the value of the data analysed. Therefore, 'unsurprisingly' as Toolan says, Caimotto is able to prove her hypothesis that *La Repubblica* uses the foreign press to reinforce the negative image they wish to portray of Berlusconi.



The point here is not to discredit Caimotto's theory; on the contrary, it is a notion that has much in common with the present work. What we would like to put forward is that adopting corpus-based discourse analysis on the grounds of objectivity when the texts must then be filtered manually is clearly no more objective than choosing texts ad hoc. What using databases can do is reduce the time spent searching for primary sources and broaden the potential sample, thus also including texts that refute or at least are not confirming the observer's hypothesis. In the end, though, the final data selection is likely to be influenced by the aims of the researcher.

### **1.3.3 Critique of Fairclough and van Dijk and how this research responds**

One of the most incisive critiques of CDA exponents Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk was developed by Greg Philo (2007: 175–196). He underlines the limited conclusions that can be drawn from a linguistic analysis of news texts that does not take into account central factors in journalist production or audience reception (ibid. 175). He suggests that focus groups provide precious insight into audience understanding of texts, while interviews with actors involved in the production of news bring new perspectives on the object of analysis. It could be countered, however, that focus groups are equally skewed: loud and influential voices drive the conversation of the group.

Philo then makes some observations regarding the actual textual analysis, beginning with the checking of direct speech reported in news texts. From text-only based analysis we can only guess what was 'probably' said. Philo (2007: 185) insists that a more thorough research would examine the original speech in order to evaluate the importance of what is actually included in the news text. As my research deals mainly with speech acts, or rather, translated, reported speech acts, the verification of what was actually said was of paramount importance. As far as possible, this has been carried out for the analyses discussed here by cross-checking between the Italian and British press to compare the source text with the English rendering, although even with this careful scrutiny we cannot be sure that the

Italian newspaper has quoted faithfully. This is where new media becomes particularly helpful for this type of research; video clips of discursive events are often uploaded onto YouTube thus providing for everybody the 'original' speech act. I was able to transcribe verbatim stretches of 'text', or in this case 'talk', parts of which have subsequently been used in the analyses discussed. For example, Guido Barilla's comments on homosexuals (see section 8.5), and Berlusconi's discourse on Mussolini (see section 7.12-7.13) were easily retrieved on YouTube, thus I was able to quote from other 'authentic' sources beyond the immediate news texts. In addition, Philo (ibid. 186) suggests that

A critique is given more force by conveying a sense of what is excluded - of what we are not being told. This is especially so when it is possible to show that the excluded accounts have a strong evidential base.

The analyses carried out for this study involved bringing to light translational shifts, omissions, deletions, and manipulations of the source text, then quoted in translation in news articles. These processes could be described as 'conveying a sense of what is excluded'. Finally, Philo (ibid. 187) asks 'whose rhetoric?' advancing the idea that sometimes it is necessary to provide an account of the social and political structures that underpin the content of texts. So for example, in the present study, we might need to dig deeper as to Berlusconi's reasons for saying certain things about Mussolini (see section 6.5).

Lastly, Carvalho (2008: 161-177) notes that CDA has made important contributions to the understanding of journalistic discourse within its social embeddedness, yet three crucial aspects remain under-explored: 1) the need for a 'longitudinal examination' of mediated texts in order to understand their context; 2) the discursive strategies that social actors employ in diverse channels even 'before' and 'after' journalistic texts need to be examined; 3) extra and supra textual effects of mediated discourse that should consider the social processes 'outside' the text (ibid: 161). Furthermore, she suggests adopting a system of 'comparative-synchronic analysis' because in her opinion 'Critical discourse analysis would be more powerful if it routinely included a developed account of alternatives' (ibid). In

accord with Carvalho, the datasets designed for this study contain several newspaper texts from a cross-section of newspaper genres with different political leanings in order to provide a broad overview of representations of a particular discursive event. Some eminent scholars such as Wodak (2008: 33) welcome critique on CDA as an invigorating stimulus for its exponents:

Some critics will continue to state that CDA constantly sits on the fence between social research and political argumentation, while others accuse some CDA studies of being too linguistic or not linguistic enough. In our view, such criticism keeps a field alive because it necessarily stimulates more self-reflection and encourages new responses and new thoughts’.

Having outlined multimodal and CDA approaches to analysing texts, we now turn more specifically to paradigms for assessing translational decisions within the context of news texts.

#### **1.4 Critical points: embedded translation in news narratives**

The various ways in which translation is utilized in the production of news is discussed in-depth elsewhere (see chapter 3). It is necessary to clarify here, however, that the focus of this research is not on whole articles translated from source language (SL) to target language (TL) that are then published in the receiving culture context. The phenomenon under investigation is the practice of embedding translated text, or perhaps more specifically translated quotes in news texts and the transformations that occur in their reformulation from the original event to reports in the mass media (Schäffner 2008: 4). The translated utterances that are the object of this study do not perform the peripheral function of illustrating or elaborating information on a given news story; on the contrary, it is the source language lexical items, Berlusconi’s words, that *are* the *raison d’être* and the focus around which news narratives are built and multimodal texts are created. From the translator’s perspective these culturally sensitive and ideologically contentious expressions could be described as what Munday (2012:2) refers to as ‘critical points’, that is, ‘those points in a text that require interpretation and in some cases substantive intervention from the translator’ (ibid.). In other words, ‘critical points’

occur where the translator, either consciously or unconsciously demonstrates evaluative attitudes to the text s/he is translating and are 'locations in discourse where major cultural differences are signalled' (Agar in Munday 2012: 2).

The next section outlines Munday's (2012) model of analysis adopted for the investigation of evaluation in translator decision-making. The approach is drawn from appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) that was originally devised to describe the various components of a speaker's attitude. The section goes on to explain the relevance and application of this analytical framework to the present research.

#### **1.4.1 Attitudes in translational decision-making; an analytical frame**

In recent years, Translation Studies research has seen a surge of interest on the question of ideology in translation (Baker 2006; Calzada Pérez 2003; Hatim and Mason 1997; Munday and Cunico 2007; Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002), and more specifically, ideology and the translator. A full discussion on ideology and its definitions is given further on (see sections 2.2-2.4; 3.1.3). For our purposes here we use the term ideology to mean 'a body of assumptions which reflects the beliefs and interests of an individual, or group of individuals, a societal institution, etc., and which ultimately finds expression in language' (Hatim and Mason 1997: 218). Thus in the context of translational practice, the translator's habitus (Simeoni 1998) could influence perceptions and evaluations of the 'critical points' (Munday 2012) in a source text that subsequently effect the target language rendering. Munday (2012: 4) explains:

The way in which [these] critical points are resolved produces a specific representation of the foreign that reflects an ideological point of view and evaluative reading and seeks to guide the response to international events.

This phenomenon is significant in the present discussion on Berlusconi's politically incorrect discourse in the British press in which the meaning transfer processes are multiple. Ideologically redolent utterances rooted in the Italian lingua-culture are

refracted through the target culture's media discourse, translated and reshaped (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 15) for the receiving audience. Sifting through these layers to examine 'the translation of lexical evaluation' and observe, 'how such evaluation operates and varies in real, contemporary settings' (Munday 2012: 4) requires an analytical frame that is flexible and sensitive enough to detect the translator's evaluations in the subtle linguistic nuances where ideological stances can hide. Munday's project, *Evaluation in Translation: Critical points of translator decision-making* (2012) experiments with Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory, selecting those features of the model that are relevant to a translational situation. Munday seeks to 'investigate those places in a text, written or spoken, where the translator or interpreter's intervention and subjectivity are potentially most telling' (ibid.: 2). Linguistic signs of subjective evaluation on the part of the translator are the focus of his analysis. Although Munday's case studies do not include an example of translation in news texts, appraisal theory has been used to detect and classify 'journalistic voices' in Anglophone newspapers (Martin and White 2005: 164; White and Thompson 2008: 13-14. See section 4.4). The next section provides an overview of the main tenets of appraisal theory.

#### **1.4.2 Essentials of appraisal theory**

The appraisal framework is described as: 'an approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships' (2012). It deals with the ways in which the speaker/writer's intersubjectivity is expressed and how the text producer's value judgements dialogically involve the reader/listener, inviting her/him to share in those values, tastes, and norms inscribed or invoked by linguistic choices and mechanisms (Martin and White 2005: 1).

The paradigm delineates three domains of appraisal in the speaker/writer, and in this case also the translator's discourse:

- **Attitude** (stance);
- **Graduation** (strength of attitude);
- **Engagement** (alignment/disalignment with sources of attitude and with the receiver)

Each of the domains has sub categories that find expression through specific lexical fields and syntactical structures. Attitude, for example, the most basic form of evaluation, is often designated by loaded adjectives, or what Halliday (1994: 184) calls, 'evaluative epithets'. There are three types of attitude:

- **Affect:** related to registering positive and negative feelings and emotional reactions: *happy, sad, horrified, etc.*
- **Judgement:** attitudes towards behaviour that is admired or criticised; ethics, capacity, tenacity: *wrong, right, stingy, skilful, cautious, brave, insightful etc.*
- **Appreciation:** evaluations of phenomena and processes, including aesthetics, taste, worth: *beautiful, pleasant, brilliant, tedious, creative, authentic, etc.*

Gradation on the other hand has two parameters that modulate meaning by degree:

- **Force:** raised or lowered with adverbs: *extremely, slightly*
- **Focus:** sharpened or softened: A **true** father, an apology **of sorts**

As does engagement:

- **Monogloss:** prescribes contraction: *demonstrate, show*
- **Heterogloss:** prescribes expansion: *claim, nearly, possibly*

The system of appraisal is based on the concept of evaluation, or stance. Munday (2012: 21) outlines three main functions of evaluation as discussed in Thompson and Hunston (2000):

1. To express the speaker's or writer's opinion, and in so doing reflect the value system of that person and their community. With its emphasis on shared value systems it is linked to ideology.
2. To construct and maintain relations between the writer and reader (or speaker and hearer). This may have a goal of persuading or manipulating, or directly or indirectly evaluates the truth or certainty of a statement (Fairclough 2003: 171)
3. To organise discourse; creating a narrative structure which simultaneously recounts and comments on events.

Appraisal theory, then, aims to explore the nature of attitude and the adoption of stance in linguistic expression that can be inscribed or invoked. Clearly it is the latter that is harder to detect and more difficult to analyse without any subjective inflection or 'interpretation'. Journalistic discourse is a hive of implicit and explicit attitudes expressed through lexicogrammatical choices (see sections 4.1-4.8). Reporting verbs, for instance, are one of the grammatical pillars in the construction of a journalistic text and therefore one of the primary loci in which attitudes and evaluative judgements can be detected. Introducing quoted text, reporting verbs give clues to the reader as to how to interpret what they are about to read, or in the specific case, what has been mediated, interpreted and translated. The 'shades of meaning' latent in reporting verbs express the writer/speaker's attitude or stance and negotiate alignment between the writer/speaker and addressee' (Munday 2012: 8). In the context of news reporting, however, it is not their translation but their evidence of attitude to what is being translated that can have a significant impact on the reception of the text (ibid.: 9).

Martin and White (2005: 1) construe their paradigm as an extension and development of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL Halliday 1994, Halliday and Mathiessen 2004) that examines the function and meaning making potential of lexicogrammatical choices. As a recurring point of reference in this work, it is useful to map out those features of SFL that are pertinent to the issues of methodology

adopted here. The next section discusses the fundamental aspects of SFL as they relate to CDA and Appraisal theory.

### 1.4.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics

With no pretence to being an exhaustive exposition of one of the most complex and persuasive theories of linguistic organization, we simplify here the most relevant nodes of SFL that have influenced theoretical perspectives of translation (Baker 1992/2011; Hatim and Mason 1990, 1997; House 1997, 2008; Taylor 1990). The fundamental premise of Halliday's SFL is that language is organised to make meanings (Eggins 2004: 3). Language is a semiotic system composed of three metafunctions - ideational, interpersonal, and textual - that fuse together to form the discourse semantics of a text. The construction of meaning(s) is realised through sets of choices in lexicogrammar and syntactic structure. The range of options open to the speaker/writer at each point in the creation of a text is referred to as 'meaning potential' and it is this selection of meanings that provide 'semantic choice' (Halliday 1978: 122):

- Ideational: transitivity patterns, active/passive structures, verb types.
- Interpersonal: modality, modal verbs, adverbs, evaluative lexis.
- Textual: information structuring (clauses, order of elements) and cohesion.

One of the most important postulations of SFL starts with the analysis of communication in the context of situation or sociocultural environment. The communicative event in its environment in turn influences the genre, or text type. Different kinds of situation effect language in different ways engendering texts that differ in 'register' - that is, 'linguistic features which are typically associated with a configuration of situational features' (Halliday and Hasan 1985: 38-9). The register of a text is composed of three elements:



1. Field: topic or focus of the activity
2. Tenor: role relations of power and solidarity
3. Mode: role of language, e.g. written or spoken and its genre, rhetorical mode, as narrative or didactic (Eggins 2004: 9).

Eggins (2004: 11) suggests that an equally crucial tenet in SFL and one that is most relevant to this research is that 'no text can be free of context (register or genre), so no text is free of ideology. In other words, to use language at all is to encode particular positions and values' (for a broader discussion on relevance of context see Katan 2004: 245-257).

#### **1.4.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics in appraisal**

Appraisal theory relates to the interpersonal function of Hallidayan linguistics as it deals with the relationship between writer/speaker and reader. The tools of the appraisal model were originally devised to investigate the ways in which positive and negative evaluation is actuated and the negotiation of evaluative meanings and positioning of subjects (White 2002, 2005). As noted above, the lexicogrammatical features of the interpersonal function correlate to mood and modality. For appraisal theory this means examining grammatical and lexical features like the following, for example, within textual structures, in order to identify attitudinal markers:

1. probability (could, might, perhaps, certainly....)
2. Frequency (usually, never, tends to....)
3. Obligation (should, must, ought....)
4. Inclination (will, wish, want, determined....)

Although the appraisal model has been little experimented within the field of TS, Munday (2012: 159) concludes that 'as in other systemic functional linguistic studies, the detailed taxonomy of lexicogrammatical realizations is certainly helpful in understanding how a text construes value', which in any discourse analytical approach to translation is absolutely fundamental. However, he concedes that major shifts in attitude are only likely to occur in some text genres, for example

advertising and publicity, where domesticating practices prevail (ibid).It could be argued that certain types of newspaper texts would also fall into the appellative text genre due to their target oriented approach and therefore the appraisal model provides an extremely useful tool in detecting the speaker/writer's values and where evaluative translational decisions are made.

From CDA and multimodality, to SFL and appraisal theory as applied to translation, the last three sections have provided an overview of the language-based methodologies relevant to this work. The following sections focus on ethnographic methods and how they can enhance translation research, and explain why methods of qualitative interviewing have been incorporated into this study.

## **1.5 Ethnographic methods in Translation research: the interview**

In 'Unknown Agents in Translated Political Discourse', Christina Schäffner (2012: 103-125) calls for an exploration of interdisciplinary methods in order to probe translational practices within political institutions and the ways in which translated political discourse is recontextualised in the international news media. The first scholar to adopt political discourse analysis in Translation Studies (Schäffner 2004), Schäffner's own body of research in this area is significant (2001; 2004; 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2012) and in the above mentioned article she brings to light a number of research lacunae. In order to respond to some of these underdeveloped areas of scholarship, Schäffner suggests a research programme focusing on the agents involved in translating and interpreting political discourse, and also on the actors within institutions who create discursive events. According to Schäffner (2012: 122), translational practices in the field of politics have not been investigated sufficiently and opines: 'we need to employ ethnographic methods such as observing actual processes, interviewing translators, interpreters and other agents involved in the institutional process [...] Ethnography can be a useful accompaniment to research in both Critical Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies'.

My research takes up this plea for an ethnographic perspective (ibid.: 123) in the form of interviews with practitioners in the field of translation in the news. At a very early stage in this project, it became clear that the only way to glean inside knowledge on how the translated utterances embedded in the texts analysed came into being was to speak directly to those individuals who put their by-lines on the articles. For the research perspective adopted here it no longer seemed sufficient to speculate in abstract terms of 'social practices' and 'processes of meaning transfer': it was necessary to speak to the people at the heart of those mechanisms. Thus, the second of the three methods of analysis began to evolve in direct response to my research aims of establishing as accurately and exactly as feasible who translate Berlusconi's words, what methods are used in the translation processes, and if any ideological stances could be perceived in the translator's discourse; that method being the qualitative interview. The following section enlarges on which interview methods were implemented here and why.

### **1.5.1 Qualitative interviewing**

Interviews in the social sciences fall into two broad categories: on the one hand, surveys and questionnaires are used to obtain statistical data by homogenous questioning of a large number of subjects, i.e. quantitative interviews; on the other hand, in-depth interviews on a one-to-one or small group basis provide detailed, dense, descriptive material, i.e., qualitative interviews. The choice of method depends on the research questions and the research style of the investigator. As explained in the previous sections (1.1-1.2), the present study is based on an interpretive constructionist research philosophy, that is:

[To] accept that there is a reality but argue that it cannot be measured directly, only perceived by people, each of whom views it through the lens of his or her prior experience, knowledge and expectations. That lens affects what people see and how they interpret what they find. (Rubin and Rubin 2012: 15).

Qualitative interviews that focus on rich, individual narratives of 'how the social world is experienced and understood'(King and Horrocks 2010: 11) are therefore

implemented in this research to give an idiographic account<sup>5</sup> (Carniero 2000: 149) of one particular aspect of translation in the news. By speaking directly to the journalists who translate words or phrases from Italian to English in their news reporting as part of their regular work it is possible to gain some insight into attitudes to and practices of translation within the journalistic profession. Likewise, it gave me the opportunity to obtain first-hand accounts of translational decision-making related to specific 'critical points' (see sections 1.5

By following naturalist researchers Rubin and Rubin's (2012: 3) 'responsive approach' to qualitative interviewing I was able to collate information elicited from the interviewees in an attempt to 'create a portrait of complex processes' (ibid.).

### **1.5.2 A responsive approach to interviewing**

Rubin and Rubin (2012: 10) describe their notion of qualitative interviewing as the 'responsive interviewing model'. They posit that adhering to a rigid set of questions does not elicit the in-depth, nuanced material that qualitative interviewing seeks. Instead, the researcher should 'go with the flow' and 'adapt to new information and change directions if necessary 'to get greater depth on unanticipated insights' (ibid). The researcher should aim towards a 'conversational partnership' of reciprocal respect where both interviewer and interviewee are 'treated as people with feelings, opinions and experiences' (ibid). In the authors' model of responsive interviewing, there are three overriding characteristics:

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<sup>5</sup> In Cultural Anthropology the term signifies the ontology that events are 'unique and specific, and therefore ungeneralizable'. In this context it is used to emphasise the individual narrative of each journalist regarding their approach to translation, and their own individual experience of it within their work.

1. The researcher seeks rich and detailed information with examples, experiences, narratives and stories not yes/no answers or agree/disagree responses.
2. Questions are open-ended, that is, the interviewee can respond in any way s/he chooses, elaborating upon answers, disagreeing with the questions or raising new issues.
3. The questions asked are not fixed. The interviewer does not have to stick to any given set of questions or ask them in any given order; s/he can change wording or skip questions or make up new questions on the spot to follow up new insights. s/he can pose a separate set of questions to different interviewees (Rubin and Rubin 2012: 29)

These three features comprise the basis for the interviews, a full discussion of which can be found in Chapter 8. The idea of using qualitative interviewing as a research technique for this study occurred to me during an initial round of data collection. The first research theme tackled in this project concerned Berlusconi in the context of postfeminism in Italy (see Chapter 6). The data focused on communicative events in which Berlusconi allegedly insulted three women politicians in separate incidents. These news narratives were widely reported in the British press and in carrying out the first data searches, it became apparent that British newspapers, the broadsheet, or quality papers in particular, have regular correspondents for Italy. The 'correspondent from Rome' is a fixture on *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Telegraph*, thus the by-lines of certain journalists appear again and again on articles pertaining to Italian affairs. This discovery was especially noteworthy as the literature on news translation, in particular Bielsa and Bassnett (2009, see section 3.3), draws attention to the fact that 'the translator', as such, does not exist in news contexts. Journalists often cover this role as part of their routine work, as the interviews subsequently confirmed (see Chapter 9). Given the ideologically contentious nature of the language under analysis, which we would loosely describe as taboo (see section 4.5) for an overview of the concept of linguistic taboo and how it is applied in this research) it became all

the more imperative to understand exactly *who* was doing the translating and *how*. While carrying out this phase of the data gathering I began to make a note of the names of the correspondents, diachronically checking in which years they were working on that particular newspaper: within a time frame of 19 years, the position of 'Italian Correspondent' obviously changed hands on the various publications. Working with a small, but representative sample of major British dailies, I focused on the most recent (within the last 5 years) correspondents.

Before contacting the subjects with whom I wished to speak, the interview design and the form of sample study needed to be considered. The first deliberations were temporal, topographical, and financial. The prospective interviewees were located between Rome, London and Milan therefore face to face interviews were not feasible within the constraints of the research project. Remote interviewing techniques via the internet (email with open questions) or by telephone seemed the most practical options. I was not sure of the availability or indeed the willingness of the subjects to participate so in the first instance I sent out 'feelers' in the form of personalised emails to each of the potential interviewees. Between 26th September 2012 and 3rd October 2012 emails were sent to eight correspondents for Italy for major British newspapers, and to the chief correspondent for *Reuters*, explaining the nature of the enquiry and asking if the subject would be willing to be interviewed telephonically. In all the emails I expressed my interest in discussing the subject's work experience, training and background in languages and translation, and newsroom translational practices in general. I also specified that I was interested in their experience of translating Berlusconi. Then, for instance, to Michael Day of the *Independent* I specifically asked about the publication of Berlusconi's alleged insult to Angela Merkel, rendered as 'unfuckable lardarse' [Culona Inchiavabile]. This question would have been irrelevant to some of the journalists as the story was not published in all the newspapers. I suggested to each potential interviewee that they might prefer to answer the questions in a scheduled phone interview at a time that suited them, or respond to the questions in a written reply. Of the nine subjects, seven opted for the phone interview while two (John Hooper and Tom Kington) responded by email.

Table 1 - Newspapers and Associated Correspondents		
Correspondents	Newspaper	Years as Italian Correspondent
Nick Pisa	<i>The Daily Mail</i>	From 2004 -
Nick Pisa	<i>The Daily Mirror</i>	From 2004-
Bill Emmott (correspondent, Brussels, Japan, then Editor)	<i>The Economist</i>	From 1986-1993 (Editor) 1993 - 2006
John Hooper (Correspondent for Southern Europe)	<i>The Economist</i>	From 1998-
John Hooper (Correspondent for Southern Europe)	<i>The Observer</i>	From 1994-
John Hooper (Correspondent for Southern Europe, now editor for Southern Europe)	<i>The Guardian</i>	From 1994-
Tom Kington	<i>The Guardian</i>	From 2007-
Peter Popham	<i>The Independent</i>	1994 -
Michael Day	<i>The Independent</i>	From 2009-
Nick Squires	<i>The Telegraph</i>	From 2008-
James Bone	<i>The Times</i>	From 2010-
James McKenzie (Senior Correspondent for Italy)	Reuters	From 2010-

Literature on telephone interviewing techniques in qualitative research is scarce, although it has long been recognised that the style of interaction differs from face-to-face interviewing and can restrict the 'rich account that qualitative research requires' (King and Horrocks 2010:81). This does not mean, however, that researchers should discount this method. King and Horrocks (ibid.) suggest guidelines to ensure that telephone interviews yield quality results, for instance, asking the informant to set aside a substantial amount of time, perhaps 30-40 minutes, receiving the call in a private place, agreeing on a time of day when the participant is free of other commitments, and so forth. King and Horrocks (ibid) also observe that men tend to use the phone in a more instrumental way, keeping the call as brief and to the point as possible, thus possibly decreasing the chances of getting more in-depth information from the informants. For the type of subjects who were participating in the study I was preparing, the suggestions were not easy to adhere to. My ethnographic expectations led me to the following considerations. Firstly, my subjects were highly experienced journalists far more used to being the interviewer than the interviewee. I imagined they would be assertive, possibly defensive, and therefore probably difficult subjects to interview. Secondly, given that they are high-profile correspondents who work under pressure with tight deadlines, it seemed unrealistic to dictate when and where the interview should take place, or how long it should last: ultimately I had to work round the constraints under which the interviews were conducted. In spite of these imperfect conditions, the conversations yielded significant data relevant to the research questions. The interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes in length. While it was not always possible to record the phone calls, notes were taken during the interviews and then transcribed (see appendices 1,2,3,4,5,6.). At a later stage of my research it became clear that the influential weekly *The Economist* had played a fundamental role in Berlusconi's mediatic representations (see section 4.2.5) during the period 2001-2006 when Berlusconi was Prime Minister of Italy. Bill Emmott, who was editor in chief of *The Economist* at the time and largely responsible for its anti-Berlusconi stance kindly granted me two interviews; one face to face and a follow-up session on Skype (22 February 2014, 8 March 2014 respectively). Both were recorded and



transcribed. In the next section we look at the third aspect of the triangulated methodology presented here. To complete the picture on the communicative processes under observation, the final aspect of the methodological framework attempts to bring reader response into the equation.

## **1.6 Reader response: translation effects on the target reader**

One of the major tenets in Kress's (2010: 44) social semiotic approach to communication is that 'Communication is joint and reciprocal work'. Working on the Hallidayan premise that meaning making is a social process, Kress(45) sustains that communicative acts entail the ""engagement" of both the "rhetor" and the "interpreter" [...] each bring[ing] their cultural/semiotic resources and values'. They have complementary roles in which the rhetor 'sets the ground', while the interpreter 'interprets the prompt'. This interpretation entails a process of 'attention, selection, and engagement', thus reshaping and framing the rhetor's message according to the interpreter's interest. 'The *rhetor* has achieved nothing if members of the audience do not attend to and engage with and interpret the message meant as a *prompt* for them'. This last phase in the chain of communication has gained more prominence in the sphere of the humanities over the last few years due to Jauss's reception theory (1982) and Genette's *Paratexts* (1997), not least of all in the sphere of Translation Studies. Shifting the emphasis from 'sender' to 'receiver', or in Toury's terms (1995) from source culture to target culture, the translated product becomes a 'fact' in the target culture system and as such should be evaluated from the target culture perspective. These theoretical aspects are dealt with in the following chapter but what concerns us here is how this target culture perspective relates to the third methodological perspective applied to this work.

Reader response is perhaps the most elusive and challenging aspect of the 'three fold' approach attempted here. For the aims of my research it was vital not only to analyse and interpret the texts, focusing on translational decisions and the translator's subjectivity but also to endeavour to understand the impact of the texts on the target reader. In the closing lines of *Evaluation and Translation*, Munday (2012:

160) urges that research on the translator's value system should be balanced with investigations of reader response: 'How far do the choices made [by the translators] impact on readers and how are the different axiological choices in the TT read off by the TT audience? These are many unanswered questions'. This study intends to broach some aspects of that very question applied to the case in point: what effects did the target language renderings of Berlusconi's linguistic misdemeanours have on the audience for whom they were destined? Several practical, logistic, and epistemological dilemmas came to the fore while reflecting as to whether readers' reactions could be monitored in any systematic, scientific, yet natural way. Two methods of data collection were evaluated before coming to a decision.

The first method of data collection to be considered was a cognitive study by means of an eye-tracking experiment. However, for the scope of this project the constraints imposed by the method outweighed its merits: recruiting a suitable number of participants from a cross-section of socio-cultural and generational backgrounds from which to make valid observations, finding time to organise and monitor the sessions, and so on. However, the most persuasive factor against eye-tracking was an epistemological one regarding the quality of data that could be culled from this process. It was reasoned that the artificial, controlled conditions of eye-tracking sessions could not produce the kind of rich, spontaneous reactions that readers' comments, blogs or online forums, for example would be able to provide. A sub-area in Holmes' original 'map' of Translation Studies (Toury 1995: 10) is translation 'criticism' in the form of 'evaluations of translation', 'reviews' and 'revision' (ibid.). The concept of 'review' is adapted here to encompass target reader comments in response to online newspaper articles. A form of paratext, they might yield some insight into audience reaction to representations of Berlusconi's language as reported in British newspapers, although with a caveat regarding the 'positioning' of the data.

The last sections of this chapter outline the data sources and selection processes implemented for this study. Finally, it is worthwhile dwelling on some of the obstacles and dilemmas encountered while working on this project. The next

section considers these issues and their epistemological implications on the outcomes of the research.

## **1.7 Unresolved issues in research design**

Qualitative investigations analysing volatile data such as texts from online newspapers are laden with methodological pitfalls. This does not mean, however, that attempts at such research should be avoided. On the contrary, modern societies increasingly rely on the web for garnering, exchanging and producing information across cultures and languages, yet the repercussions and effects of these phenomena remain little or barely known. Thus, as a new and much needed area of inquiry, issues surrounding the reliability of methods and of data collection warrant our closest attention. It is also the task of the researcher to study ways of working round the epistemological obstacles that this type of slippery data presents, bringing to light the dilemmas and laying them bare for debate and for future research. What follows describes some of the methodological problems encountered while designing and carrying out this type of research.

The first consideration is the 'flux and flow' factor inherent to online material. Unlike printed newspaper articles that remain unaltered for posterity, digital news texts can undergo modifications even after publication online; headlines may change, the text can be edited or cut, links removed, or in extreme cases, whole articles that provided false information can be substituted. Online materials can potentially change URLs, or worse still, completely disappear. These factors could limit the reliability of digital sources as there is no guarantee of their stability over a period of time in terms of content and accessibility. Partial solutions to this problem can be found, however, the first being to print off the webpage as soon as it has been sourced so as to have at least one hard copy of the article. Diachronic monitoring of a corpus of particularly controversial articles in order to observe what modifications or censoring take place might be a profitable ontological study of the nature of online texts. Within the constraints of this project,

however, it was not feasible to carry out but would surely be a profitable avenue for future research.

Another significant point is the uniformity of data sourcing. The texts selected for analysis were for the most part sourced directly from newspaper websites. However, some were sourced from databases such as Nexis UK and Factiva where no paratexts are available. I soon realised, however, that I was missing a wealth of meaning making potential by not having access to the original graphic page layout, accompanying visuals and typography. For this reason often the best solution was going directly to the newspaper websites and searching through their archives, or even Google searches. From another point of view it should be noted that viewing archive material from newspaper websites means that very often they are framed with current advertising, another complication in our multimodal lives. Other texts were drawn from the database *ukpressonline.co*, a subscription to which allows access to the digital archives of *The Daily Express*, *The Sunday Express*, *The Daily Star*, and *The Daily Star Sunday*, among others. From these archives PDFs of the original newspapers can be obtained. Thus constrained by the methods of data collection, a combination of online newspapers, newspaper databases and PDF formats of hard copy newspapers has generated a data harvest that is varied and intriguing, if a little irregular.

### **1.7.1 Locating and categorising data; units of analysis**

One of the biggest methodological hurdles has been the many issues surrounding the data selection itself. These include which news texts to choose from such vast corpora without the aid of corpus software; how to organise and classify the materials selected; and not least of all how to deal with data that sometimes seemed like sand running through one's fingers. Online texts are evanescent. Yet the unfeasible logistics of attempting to go through hard copies of newspapers immediately discounted this as a method of gathering articles. Databases such as *Factiva* and *Nexus Lexus UK* remained as the viable options but even then the sheer

numbers of hits for a given search sometimes made this method incredibly time consuming and occasionally unfruitful.

Searches on *Factiva* and *Nexis UK* and *UKpress online* were performed by selecting the options for UK newspapers and manually choosing the specific newspapers I was interested in (see below); key-word searches provided a number of different results for more general searches yielding a range of possible data that need further refinement and filtering to create the final dataset. For example:

1. Berlusconi + Gaffe 1,815 of which 1020 newspapers
2. Berlusconi + Vulgar 643 of which 388 newspapers
3. Berlusconi + Sexist 448 of which 275 newspapers
4. Berlusconi + Bunga Bunga 2,589 of which 1,761 news
5. Berlusconi + joke over 3,000 results, 2,439 news.

I consequently discovered that *Nexis UK* is not always exhaustive nor is it always reliable; often it was necessary to cross-check individual newspaper websites to be sure relevant and significant data had not been missed due to the mechanical limitations of the database used. Further, aiming at specific newspapers means the search was automatically more refined. For example, 'Berlusconi+joke' brings up 86 hits on the Mail Online website, a number that is feasible to deal with manually compared to the vast quantities of data sometimes provided by the databases. In comparison, just to give an idea of the sheer numbers of hits to be found online regarding Berlusconi, a *Google* search of Berlusconi=Joke brings up about 1,690,000 results in 0.23 seconds.

Another advantage of using newspaper websites is the immediate access to the full text versions. As mentioned above, a major drawback of *Nexis UK* is that one only has access to the written text without any of the graphics or paratextual elements that are vital components of both online and traditional newspapers. Arguably, these factors might have influenced on the choice of articles analysed. Certainly it was preferable to have access to the full text versions, and to source them directly from newspaper websites. In terms of content and which news

narratives were included, it was the texts themselves that determined their inclusion or not. This being a qualitative study, the data is 'constructed' to some extent. Toolan (2003:73-74) wryly notes on the question of subjectivity in data selection:

In first-order linguistic communication there are no such things as data, data being the analyst's term for those interpretively decontextualized selections from the flow of interaction that they have decided to cast as evidence or topic of discussion. And of course once you come to regard data as an analyst's constructions, then it is often and unsurprisingly the case that the analyst can read discourse significance directly off that data.

The selected news data have been categorised thematically and divided into two main groups. The first relates to sexism and sexuality; news texts relating to Berlusconi's alleged utterances regarding three women politicians. The cases analysed are significant because the politicians involved, Rosie Bindi, Angela Merkel and Margaret Thatcher are the antithesis of the ex-Premier's apparent ideal of femininity. Powerful, mature, intelligent individuals, they defy Berlusconi's view of how women should look and behave in the political arena and in society. This might explain why they were the targets, alleged or otherwise, of his most offensive insults. In the same chapter, news texts regarding the scandal of 'Go Pussy' [Forza Gnocca], the alleged 'new name' for Berlusconi's political party are discussed. The second dataset focuses on images of Italy through news frames and stereotypes of Berlusconi. Two cases are examined, one regarding meta-debates between English and Italian newspapers, while the other analyses news texts on the discursive events surrounding comments made by Berlusconi regarding Mussolini.

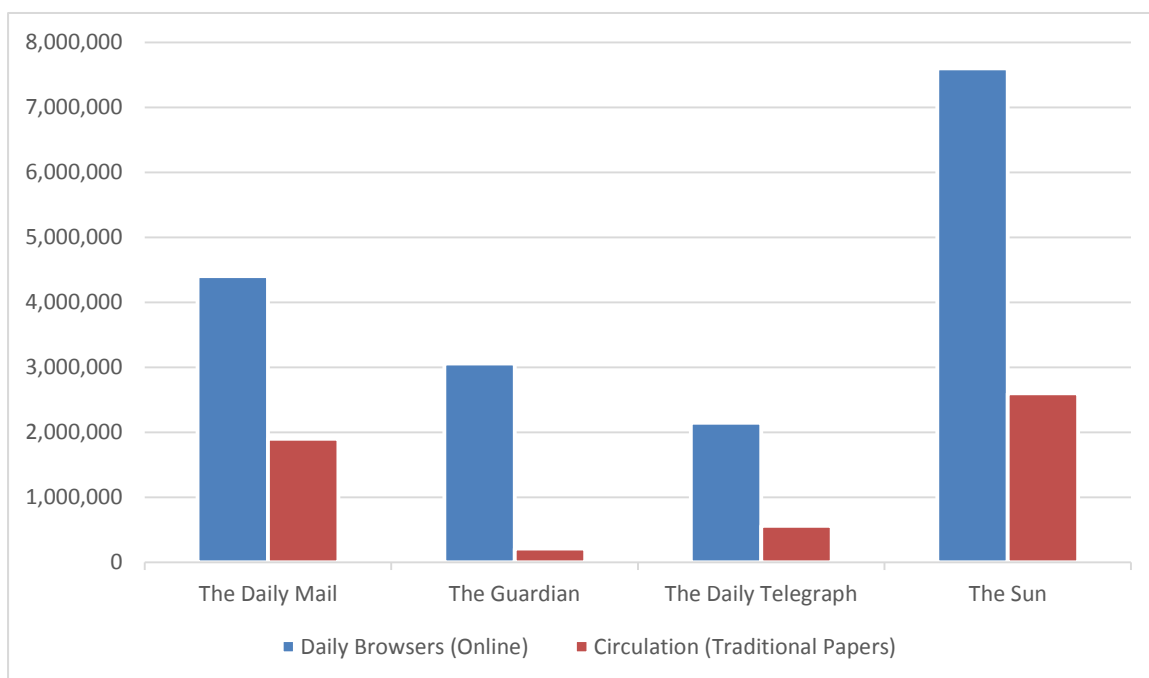
The second major issue regarding news data collection was delineating the time frame of this study. Berlusconi's controversial use of language has been reported in domestic and international newspapers since he stepped into the political limelight in 1994. However, a palpable upsurge of news narratives regarding his verbal transgressions can be detected from the beginning of his third term in office in 2008 that reached a crescendo just before his resignation in November 2011 (see section 4.4.3). Therefore at the time of commencing this

research (November 2011) it seemed that Berlusconi's linguistic exploits had peaked, and that the former premier's political denouement was signalled by his resignation. Berlusconi himself declared that he was leaving the political stage and would not be running for future elections (Dinmore & Segreti 2012). This provided what seemed a natural time limit to the period of analysis and also inspired the hope of giving some distance and perspective on the data under scrutiny. Instead, an upsurge of new linguistic transgressions later led to continue the data collection to 31 December 2013. The year 2013 includes the reverberations of Berlusconi's language in current British news narratives on Italy at the denouement of Berlusconi's 'ventennio'. Thus, the time line now neatly circumscribed having fixed the period from 1994-2014, the next problem relates to changes that have taken place online within that time span. The period under scrutiny spans nearly two decades, while blog culture and reader's comments have become more diffused only in recent years. This means that the third aspect of the methodological triangle, reader response, could only be monitored on more recent texts, leading to an uneven data set, but as this approach is intended to include pioneering and experimental research in the field, perhaps this could be justified. A future research project could entail creating a sample set of articles with comments as a diachronic record of how online newspapers have changed over the 20- year period under consideration, thus testing the methods to be implemented in the research project.

### **1.7.2 Newspaper sources and text genres**

The data for this study comes from a cross-section of British National newspapers. Texts selected from online resources and newspaper databases were sourced via key word searches, as described above. This data collection system was then further refined by choosing individual texts following the criteria of relevancy and presentation of translated materials. An effort was made to include a variety of article genres (news reports, opinion pieces and editorials) from a broad range of daily publications so that the analyses would include news products with different

functions and diverse ideological standpoints. From the category of quality papers texts were sourced from the websites of *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Times*. Each represents a different political leaning; *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* are traditionally right-wing, *The Guardian* is left of centre, while *The Independent*, is generally held to be of a centre left leaning (Conboy 2010; Tunstall 1996; Hardman 2008). The more popular newspapers are represented by *The Daily Mail*; a middle-range tabloid of right-wing ideology; *The Mirror*, a left-wing tabloid; *The Sun*, the biggest-selling daily paper in Britain today; *The Daily Star*, right-wing tabloid with very little hard news coverage; and finally *Metro*, a free newspaper distributed in various urban centres around the UK (Conboy 2006). Online articles were the main font of primary materials for two important reasons; firstly for practicality, ease of access, and the possibility of doing word searches and secondly because of their increasing popularity in the UK compared to traditional papers. Statistics on their dwindling sales compared to the growth in readers online confirm this tendency<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> Sources: The Audit Bureau of Circulations February 2014.



Figure 1 - Comparison of Newspaper Online Readers and Circulation of Traditional Papers in the UK

## 1.8 Closing Remarks

This chapter has rationalised the fusion of methodological approaches adopted in this interdisciplinary investigation. The representation of Berlusconi's language in the British press is explored through a three dimensional perspective: critical discourse analysis is the methodological linchpin used to examine the object of study, news discourse on Berlusconi's language. A 'responsive approach' to qualitative interviewing is employed to yield ethnographic data on translational practices in the production of news texts on Berlusconi, while an attempt to gauge reader response is proposed via the analysis of online readers' comments and blogs. Drawbacks, methodological dilemmas and data-related issues have been briefly outlined highlighting potential obstacles in carrying out this kind of research. The aim is to open the debate on possible future approaches to qualitative research on the reception of translation in digital news texts, a practically uncharted area of research. The methods and approaches that have been illustrated here are closely interconnected to the overarching theoretical framework discussed in the following chapter.



## 2.

### Research Design: Framework for the Micro-analysis

If the question of language is the *one* issue connected to all other ones, this means it is right to start from it. (Sanguinetti and Baratta 2010: 104)

At the core of this chapter is the complexity of processes involved in producing a news text viewed as cultural production within the mass media. In order to study such processes across cultures, the chapter takes into account the three main theoretical areas that colour the discourse surrounding this investigation: the role of language, and its relation to power; discourse and ideology in the production of news; the representation of culture and national image through discourse. The first part of the chapter focuses on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work on language, symbolic power, and habitus (Sections 2.2-2.3). The second part goes on to discuss how Bourdieu's theories have influenced discourse theorists Norman Fairclough (1995, 1999, 2003) and Teun van Dijk (1991, 1996, 1998, 2008), and their application to the CDA projects of Fairclough, van Dijk, Reisigl and Wodak. An overview of the concepts of discourse and ideology is offered in sections 2.2.1 and the aims of CDA are discussed in 2.2.2. Sections 2.3-2.4 introduce the third aspect, cultural stereotypes and framing in the news.

#### 2.1 The symbolic power of words

Bourdieu's (1992: 142) approach to language pivots around the notion that '*Linguistic relations are always relations of symbolic power*' (italics in original). For Bourdieu, linguistic exchanges are conditioned by the power dynamics that exist in the social world whereby:

meaning is negotiated through a web of historical power relations between the speaker, endowed with a specific social authority, and an audience, which recognizes this authority to varying degrees, as well as between the groups to which they respectively belong' (ibid.: 143).

He goes so far as to say that the message itself is incomprehensible without considering the overarching power structures. He surmises that 'Consequently, it is impossible to elucidate any act of communication within the compass of linguistic analysis alone' (ibid.: 142). Significantly, this underlines the growing awareness that language is interconnected with all areas of human existence. Bourdieu (1991: 32) himself observed that the influence of language extends to all the social sciences. In contrast with purely theoretical perspectives on language, such as Saussure's (1913/1986) structuralism or Chomsky's (1965) generative grammar, Bourdieu's sociological approach to language in everyday life offers alternative perspectives on linguistic phenomena ensuing from his 'theory of practice'. Transcending the dichotomy of objectivism and subjectivism, Bourdieu recognises the limitations of both; he maintains that distance from immediate experience is necessary in order to analyse the social world, even though the nature of social life is essentially practical (Thompson ibid.: 12). The dynamics of agency and power are central to the Bourdieusian view of language and linguistic exchanges. Crucially, Bourdieu perceives the symbolic power that language can confer and wield (1991: 165):

a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world, and thereby the action of the world and the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic).

For Bourdieu, therefore, language can exert the power to maintain or overthrow social order; a symbolic power that is created through 'the belief in the legitimacy of the words and those who utter them' (ibid.: 170). In other words, the symbolic power of language does not dwell within the 'symbolic systems' of 'illocutory force' (Austin 1962). Rather, it is realised through the dialectic relations between those who exercise power and those who surrender to it (Bourdieu 1991: 170). These

dialectics are constructed through a series of symbolic instruments (see Table 2 below). Bourdieu's map of symbolic instruments (below) has three sub categories:

Table 2 - Symbolic Instruments		
Structuring Structures	Structured Structures	Instruments of Domination
Instruments for knowing and constructing the world	Instruments for knowing and means of communication (language or culture vs. Discourse or behaviour)	Power Division of labour (social classes) Division of ideological labour (manual/intellectual) Function of domination
<i>Symbolic forms</i> Subjective structures (Kant-Cassirer)	<i>Symbolic objects</i> Objective structures (Hegel-Saussure)	<i>Ideologies</i> (vs. myths, languages) (Marx, Weber)
Sapir-Whorf culturalism	Durkheim - Mauss, social forms of classification Levis-Strauss (semiology)	Body of specialists competing for the monopoly of legitimate cultural production
Signification: objectivity as agreement between subjects (consensus)	Signification: objective meaning as a product of communication which is the condition of communication	

Adapted from Bourdieu (1991: 165)

From these three delineations, we grasp the linkage between language as a force that shapes our perception of reality (structuring structure), as an objective means of communication (structured structure), and as an instrument of domination, exerted through the subtle insinuation of ideologies. It is these interwoven threads that create what Bourdieu describes as 'symbolic power', an 'invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they exercise it' (p 164). Another form of symbolic power, symbolic violence (2001:1-2) as expressed through language is discussed in section 5.1.

### 2.1.1 Notions of field, habitus and capital

Bourdieu's ideas on language are better explored once one locates them within the broader context of his social theory, however, this is not the place for an excursus on the vast works of one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century (see Bourdieu 1977, 1982, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2001), for our purpose here, it is sufficient to summarise some key points relevant to the present study. According to Bourdieu, individuals in post-modern societies are endowed with 'habitus', that is, a 'set of dispositions which incline the agent to act and react in certain ways' (Thompson 1991: 12). Dispositions are acquired through a process of inculcation, through environment and experience, and are inevitably influenced by the social conditions within which they were assimilated. Habitus is construed not as abstract cognition but as 'constituted in practice and always oriented to practical functions' (Bourdieu 1990: 52). The habitus is durable and orients the individual's behaviour throughout her/his life, regulating how to act and react in the course of everyday activities, providing a sense of what is appropriate and what is not in any given situation. This is what Bourdieu calls 'le sens pratique'. More than a mindset, habitus is also the product bodily hexis, whereby the body is considered 'the site of incorporated history' (ibid.: 13). Particular practices or perceptions are viewed as the product of the habitus on one hand, and specific social contexts on the other. Furthermore, Bourdieu envisages modern society in terms of the differentiation of 'fields' in which individuals move. For example, the economy, the state, the legal system, religion, culture and the arts, and most relevant here, politics (Bourdieu 1991) and journalism (Bourdieu 1998) are separate fields that are partly autonomous though intricately linked within the wider web of society. Agents in these various fields interact and function through the distribution of different forms of capital; not only economic capital but also 'cultural capital' (education, knowledge, skills), and 'symbolic capital' (prestige, honour, social class). Capital can be embodied (mind, body), objectified (books, films, artifacts) or institutionalised. Constant sites of struggle, individuals seek to change or maintain the distribution of the types of

capital specific to a certain field, or even exchange one type of capital for another, i.e. cultural capital (skills) for economic capital (work).

### 2.1.2 Language as Capital

Language also has a symbolic value that Bourdieu refers to as 'linguistic capital' (1991: 57) accrued through the assimilation of objectified linguistic resources. The opportunity to acquire linguistic capital is strictly linked to the system of economic and social differences. The field of linguistic production is therefore conceived as a system of 'linguistic relations of power based on the unequal distribution of linguistic capital'. In sum, "'authoritative" persons exert power over language and therefore over the ordinary users of language' (ibid: 58). The concept of an 'authoritative' voice is one we encounter later on (see section 8. ) in the discussion of newspapers and more specifically foreign correspondents as 'experts' in their field. From this perspective, linguistic interactions are manifestations of the participants' respective positions in a given social space, reproducing an established balance of symbolic power:

A linguistic exchange [...] is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit [...]. Utterances [...] are signs of wealth' (ibid: 68).

The notion of language as capital, which is therefore a form of symbolic power relates to the present study on two levels; firstly, it underpins the fact that what Berlusconi says becomes news, not only in his own sphere of power but also beyond; and secondly, the power of the press to inculcate its 'market', that is, its readers. In the first case, the 'material profit' is notoriety - 'all publicity is good publicity' - while in the second, as we will see in Chapter 8, newspapers institutions and journalists are symbolic elites who have the power to influence public opinion, presenting their worldview to non-elites in such a way as to appear 'common sense', 'reasonable', and 'natural' (Morgan 2005: 3).



However, some have criticised Bourdieu's view on linguistic capital as somewhat restricted (Inghilleri 2003: 246; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 104)

Bourdieu's sociological concepts of habitus, field and capital have been influential to what has been referred to as the 'sociological turn' in translation studies. Several translation scholars (Gouanvic 1997; Hermans 1996, 1999; Inghilleri 2003; Simeoni 1998; Tyulenev 2012, 2014) have 'adopted and adapted' Bourdieu's theories (see section 3.1.3), expanding on Toury's target oriented approach. In particular, the authors have focused on the concept of a 'translatorial habitus' and the role of the translator in 'producing or maintaining normative practices within such activity' (ibid.). In Chapter 8 of this study the 'journalator's habitus' is discussed in relation to translation in the news. The next section concentrates on one particular linguistic field, Bourdieu's field of political discourse.

### 2.1.3 The field of political discourse

While Bourdieu posits that language has symbolic power, Wodak (1989: vx) adds the caveat: 'Language only gains power in the hands of the powerful; language is not powerful "per se"'. The field in which agents strive to construct and impose their worldview while attempting to rouse support from those on whose vote they depend, politics is the site '*par excellence* in which words are actions and the symbolic character of power is at stake' (Thompson 1991: 26). Interconnected to the themes of symbolic power and language (see also sections 3.7, 4.3), Bourdieu views political discourse as a field of struggle; internally in order to produce and maintain a coherent line with other political discourses; externally to build public consensus and trust (Fairclough 1995: 184). Naturally, this is achieved through

the mastery of a certain kind of language and of a certain political rhetoric - that of the *popular orator*, indispensable when it comes to cultivating ones relations with non-professionals, or that of the *debator*, which is necessary in relations with fellow-professionals' (Bourdieu 1991: 176).

According to Bourdieu, the habitus of a politician requires a special training in order to become a ‘professional[s] of ideological production’, as ‘the mastery of the whole set of techniques of public speaking, of wording one’s proposals ... are essential in order to ‘manipulate ideas and groups’. On the other hand it could be argued that ‘special training’ in political rhetoric is no longer necessary in order to be successful in the political field. In the Italian context several ‘non-professionals’ provening from other fields such as the media, jurisprudence, and showbusiness have nevertheless had considerable success in the political field. Berlusconi, the ‘anti-politician’ (Agnew 1995; Amoretti 2004; Andrews 2005; Pasquino 2005’), in primus, and Beppe Grillo of Movimento Cinque Stelle (see section 4.2.6) have both amply demonstrated that the ‘habitus of the politician’ is no longer a pre-requisite (see section 4.2 for an overview of political discourse in Italy).

Fairclough (1995: 183) however discerns a missing link in Bourdieu’s account of political discourse, that is, the ubiquitous role of the media in representing, refracting, and manipulating political messages through television, the press, and now digital technologies. He argues that the media, a feature of late modernity, are of crucial importance in the political arena. Fairclough points out that today much of what previously would have come into Bourdieu’s category of ‘internal’ relations, i.e. determined by in-group political discourse, is these days open to being reported and represented in the media, for example the televising of parliamentary debates now means that politicians address the general public as much as they do other politicians. (183). Fairclough adds that another lacuna in Bourdieu’s interpretation of political discourse is genre. According to Fairclough politicians’ discourses are always shaped by genres such as political speech making, parliamentary questions and answers, debate, or negation (184). This distinction becomes vital when discussing mediatized political discourse, as the genres of media do not necessarily correspond to the genres of politics, thus creating tension. To illustrate the interweaving between politics and media, Fairclough describes two political events that took place while he was working on his seminal work, *Media Discourse* (1995: 1):

Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia won the Italian general election, [while] in the UK Tony Blair was elected leader of the Labour Party ... It was generally recognised that Forza Italia was a media creation (Berlusconi founded the party in January, it won the election in March), and that Berlusconi's victory was largely a result of his control of the Italian media - he owns three television channels with 40 per cent share of the audience, a national newspaper, and Italy's biggest publishing company. Long before the Labour leadership contest even officially opened, most of the British media had already chosen Tony Blair as the successor to the late John Smith.

The nexus between Berlusconi's political success and his media empire are discussed elsewhere in this study (see section 4.3.4). What is significant here is the connectedness between language, media, and politics. Media representatives (interviewers, journalists, presenters, and so on) as subjective individuals all have political and ideological biases; each agent in turn works for an organization such as a newspaper or TV station that will also have an ideological slant, therefore political statements are constantly filtered through a series of receptors before arriving at their addressees, the general public. Bourdieu's (1998) later work gives some account of the media, journalism in particular, however, subsequent critical appraisal of Bourdieu's relevance to media studies and cultural production has been divided (Benson and Neveu 2005; Fairclough 1995; Hesmondhalgh 2006; Myles 2010). The scope and reach of the media has changed dramatically since Bourdieu was writing, and arguably has far more influence today. Nonetheless, the mass media has been instrumental in disseminating political propaganda, an earlier version of discourse, ever since its inception. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the complexity of processes entailed in mediating political discourse must attempt to peel away the ideological layers in order to uncover hidden meanings. Fairclough (1995: 201) suggests that the fine-grained scrutiny critical discourse analysis affords can enhance Bourdieu's original framework of the analysis of political discourse.

The media, and media discourse, are clearly a powerful presence in contemporary social life, particularly since it is a feature of late modernity that cultural facets of society are increasingly salient in the social order and social change. If culture is becoming more salient, by the same token so too are language and discourse.

We might add here also the saliency of translation within the frame of media discourse. The addressee has the right to know where the translation is coming from by whom and how. The following sections provide a brief overview of the theoretical perspectives sustaining this research, focusing on CDA approaches to analysing news and political discourse in the media.

## **2.2 Discourse and Ideology in Critical Discourse Analysis**

What Bourdieu (1991: 128) identifies as ‘the structuring power of words, their capacity to prescribe, while seeming to describe, and to denounce while seeming to enunciate’ is precisely what critical discourse analysis aims to reveal. However, before we move on to look more closely at what CDA aims to do, a definition of how two key terms such as ‘discourse’ and ‘ideology’ are intended is needed here.

### **2.2.1 Coming to terms**

What sometimes appears to be the most over-used idiom in academia, ‘discourse’ is a concept that has produced theories and definitions too numerous to expect a comprehensive discussion here; due to limitation of space, a brief summary is offered here of those most relevant to the present work.

Foucault’s (1981) philosophical reflections on the nature of discourse were arguably the first to focus on the relationship between language and power (see Fairclough 1992), however, our interest lies more with those who have applied notion of discourse to carry out social research into the wider nexus between language, culture, power and ideology. Hall (1996: 201-202) views discourse as ‘the production of knowledge through language’, that is in itself produced by ‘a discursive practice, the practice of producing meaning’. As all social practices involve meaning, all practices have a discursive element, thus entering and influencing all social practices (ibid.). Translation scholars Hatim and Mason use the term discourse to mean ‘institutionalised modes of speaking and writing which give expression to particular attitudes towards areas of socio-cultural activity’ (1997:

144). For his part, Van Dijk (1998: 195) admits that discourse is 'a highly complex and ambiguous notion'. He compares it to equally abstract concepts such as 'language', 'society' or 'culture' and states that it is a pointless exercise to try and define it. However, some parameters are necessary in order to use the term at all. He therefore offers both an extended and restricted definition. The extended definition refers to a specific communicative event, or 'token', for example an everyday conversation over dinner, a news report, a dialogue between doctor and patient. For the purposes of discourse studies, a more restricted primary meaning involves an abstraction of the verbal dimension of the written or communicative act: 'Discourse in that case is the general term that refers to a spoken or written verbal product of the communicative act' (ibid.). Finally, he adds there is a more abstract concept of discourse that looks at 'types' rather than 'tokens' and notes that these theoretical assertions would not refer to a particular conversation, story, or report, but 'to designate conversations, stories, or news reports in general'. In other words these can be termed as, genres of discourse, such as news discourse. In terms of content, van Dijk describes discourse thus: 'Semantically speaking, a discourse is like the tip of an iceberg: only some of the propositions needed to understand a discourse are actually expressed; most other propositions remain implicit, and must be inferred from the explicit propositions' (2009: 77). Fairclough (1995: 18) also identifies two main strands of meaning to the term 'discourse'. The first sees discourse as social practice; 'social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations', and corresponds to Halliday's interpersonal function of language (see section 1.4.3). The second considers discourse from a theoretical perspective, rooted in post-structuralist social theory in which 'a discourse is a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge' and is associated with the ideational function of language. Fairclough's own view of the concept incorporates both of these aspects, and is the definition preferred in the present work.

Another slippery semantic sphere is that of 'ideology'. While (surprisingly) unable to help us with 'discourse', indicating the enormous extent to which the term has burgeoned over the last thirty years, Raymond Williams' *Keywords*

(1976/83), an inquiry into the language of cultural transformation, brings us a four-page definition of 'ideology'. According to Williams (ibid.; 153) the English word is a 'direct translation' from the French 'ideologie' that originated from Bonaparte's attack on the principles of the Enlightenment. Williams (157) concludes that the term ideology today is viewed as a term of abuse: 'Sensible people rely on experience or have a philosophy; silly people rely on ideology' (ibid.). Van Dijk's (1998) eponymous book explores what he calls 'a multidisciplinary approach' to analysing the discursive manifestations of cognitive frames, in other words, ideologies. He defines them as 'shared social representations that have specific social functions for groups' (ibid.: 191). These 'mental representations' are reproduced through discourse, although he adds that there are also many forms of non-verbal discrimination. In van Dijk's view, then, ideology is equated with discriminatory practices, imbuing the term with negative connotations. In order to uncover the hidden ideological representations embedded in media texts, van Dijk uses the concept of the ideological square to illustrate the "functional moves" employed in order to develop an ideological strategy. The core of this strategy, according to van Dijk, is a polarisation between "us" and "them", established through positive in-group description and negative out-group description. Therefore an ideologically slanted news text would:

1. Emphasise our good properties/actions
2. Emphasise their bad properties/actions
3. Mitigate our bad properties/actions
4. Mitigate their good properties/actions.

(Van Dijk 1998: 33)

Philo (2007: 188-92) points out, however, that van Dijk's model fails to explain inconsistencies in newspaper stances, for example of the *Sun's* position on immigrants, which is sometimes positive and sometimes negative. In order to understand the variations and discrepancies in coverage Philo argues one needs to investigate beyond the text to the text producer to find an explanation (see section 1.3.3). A relatively neutral and succinct definition with which we concur, is

provided by Hatim and Mason (1997: 218) and discussed in section 1 . It is the aim of CDA to reveal this 'body of assumptions' that lie behind the power structures intertwined in news discourse.

### **2.2.2 Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis**

It is the traces of ideologies, therefore, that CDA scholars aim to reveal. In Fairclough's terms, 'texts should be analysed for 'naturalised implicit propositions of an ideological character' which people are not usually aware of and which contribute to 'the social reproduction of relations of domination' (1991/2010: 26). Fairclough focuses on the social effects of texts exploring issues of power and legitimacy and the 'common sense assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically' (2001: 2). In other words, the ideological consequences of discourse. Fairclough construes the term 'text' in its broadest sense to include written and printed material, transcripts of conversations, and interviews as well as television programmes and websites. He explains that texts are part of social events that can have causal effects, such as 'inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies' (2003: 9). CDA plays a crucial role in clarifying the contribution a text makes to the process of meaning making in social life and for this reason he proposes CDA as a viable method for social scientific research:

[CDA] is in my view as much theory as method – or rather, a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis (including 'visual language', 'body language', and so on) as one element or 'moment' of the material social process (Williams, 1977) which gives rise to ways of analysing language or semiosis within broader analyses of social processes. (2001: 121)

Like van Dijk, Fairclough considers CDA as being in a 'dialogical relationship with other social theories and methods, which should engage with them in a 'transdisciplinary' rather than just an interdisciplinary way' (2001: 121). Nevertheless, in spite of Fairclough's and van Dijk's research, as Philo indicates, much of CDA influenced research is largely based on linguistic analysis. Going back

to Bourdieu (1991), this time on a question of methods, he also argues that 'internal analysis' or 'discourse analysis' alone cannot sufficiently account for the production of political speech. It is essential to reflect on the socio-historical conditions within which political discourse is produced, constructed and received.

Reisigl and Wodak (2001) address this issue in developing what they refer to as a discourse-historical approach (see also section 1.3). Concerned with the 'social practice of language behaviour with the dialectics between society (including subsystems), power, values, ideologies, opinions expressed and constituted in and about language' (1989: xiv), for Wodak, a critical analysis of discourse must go beyond descriptivism and neutrality in order to 'de-mystify certain social processes, to make mechanisms of manipulation, discrimination, demagoguery, and propaganda explicit and transparent' (ibid; see also section 1.8). In order to analyse discursively certain socio-political problems that have surfaced in Austria in recent years, namely xenophobia, discrimination, and social exclusion, Reisigl and Wodak set out to study Heider's political campaign during the 1990s, culminating in the analysis of the 'Austria First Petition', a 12-point petition on immigrant controls. Their critical gaze is directed towards 'exposing contradictions and oppositions between discursive and related social practices' (2001: 33). In other words, their aim is to unmask forms of discursive manipulation and via analysis make the text producer's intentions transparent.

Mediatized political discourse entails further meaning making processes, such as frames (see section 2.5) through which language is represented. Set out nearly twenty years ago, Fairclough's 'desiderata for a critical analysis of media discourse' (1995: 32-34) still holds good today. The three aspects listed below are the basis, and are reflected in the research design for this project (see chapter 1):

- Textual analysis addressing all elements language, vision, sound (as appropriate)
- Analysis should also consider the processes of production and consumption of the text(s), i.e. reception studies and ethnographical studies to complement text analysis

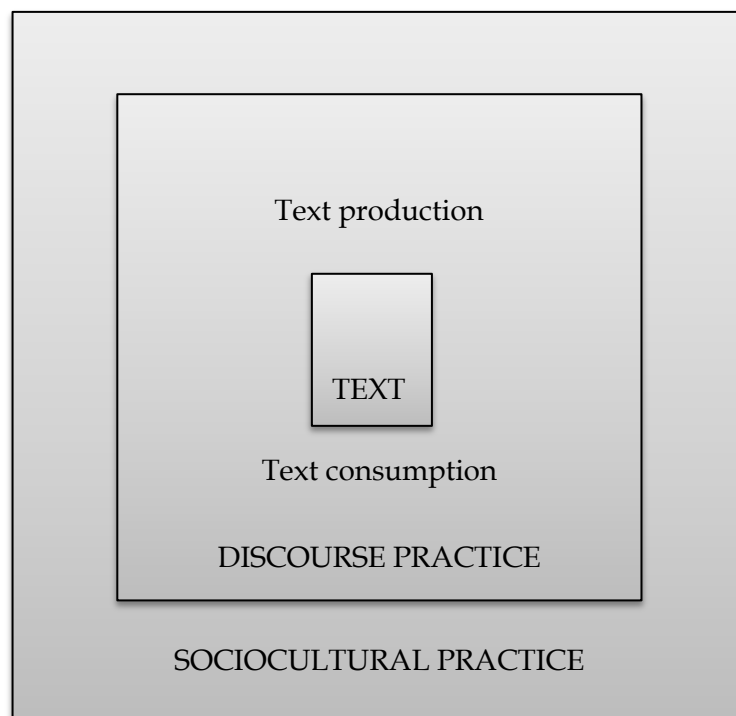


- The influence of the wider social, cultural and institutional context should be a part of the analysis, including ideologies and relations of power

Fairclough distinguishes two foci in the analysis of discourse;

- The communicative event (particular instances, particular texts)
- The order of discourse

The communicative event refers to the specific text. Critical discourse analysis of a communicative event has three aspects; 'text', 'discourse practice' and 'sociocultural practice'.



**Figure 2 - Fairclough's (1995: 59) framework for critical discourse analysis of a communicative event**

By 'analysis', Fairclough means a linguistic analysis that examines the grammar, lexicogrammar, meaning above and below sentence level, cohesion, etc. based on Halliday's Systemic Functional linguistics (see section 1.4). The order of discourse denotes 'the overall structure of the order of discourse, and the way it is evolving in

the context of social and cultural changes'. This concept can be applied in two ways in this research;

- a) The order of discourse regarding the trajectory of Italy's representation in the British press
- b) The order of discourse on the evolution of political discourse in Italy

The discourse practice refers to text production and text consumption. Fairclough sees this aspect as mediating between the textual and the cultural – the link between the sociocultural and the textual one is indirect made by way of discourse practice. In this sense, the ethnographic study of foreign correspondents presented here (see Chapter 8) offers insight on discourse practice, while text consumption can be to some extent analysed through readers' comments (see section 1.6).

Following Fairclough's interpretation of Bourdieu's political field and applying it to this research, an analysis of the internal relationships within the order of discourse (i.e. the discursive aspect of politics: parliament, party conferences, political communication, debates), would require locating Berlusconi's discourse within the general field of Italian political discourse. The external relationships would include a focus on discursive aspects of interfaces between politics and other fields, for example the economy, law, religion and so forth. In the case of Berlusconi, this would mean foregrounding the relationship between politics and the media, in particular the foreign press. The next section moves on to discuss the notion that news is a cultural product permeated with ideological attitudes.

### **2.3 News as ideological Discourse**

In this perspective, it may be reasonably argued that one of the main sources of ideological reproduction is the press (Fowler 1991; van Dijk 1989, 1993; Conboy 2006). Van Dijk's vast body of work spanning over thirty years has fundamentally been concerned with the nexus between cognitive processes and the generation and reproduction of ideologies in the mass media. His ground-breaking analysis of

racism in the press (1988) has provided a benchmark for subsequent CDA scholars. Van Dijk's (1998; 2009) theory of discourse and the ways in which discourses are constructed in social life are based on his sociocognitive model of ideology (see section 2.2.1). For van Dijk, (1998) ideologies are essentially discursive and cognitive in nature, our beliefs, and therefore our ideologies are mental representations reproduced by text, talk and communication. In other words, discourse is the expression and reproduction of ideology. He posits that ideologies perform societal functions such as establishing social groups and forming group relations, for example, ideological discourse is often characterized by a positive representation of 'Us', (in-group) and a negative representation of 'Them' (out-group). Finally, Van Dijk observes that ideologies are not usually expressed directly in discourse but are revealed by group attitudes to social issues and personal opinions of specific events, and are subject to the speakers or writers 'personal context models' that may 'block or modify (mitigate or amplify) the expression of underlying ideological beliefs' (ibid.). The concept of 'personal context model' dovetails with Bourdieu's concept of habitus discussed earlier (see sections 2.1-2.2), here used to explain the individual journalist's attitude to news:

[our] sociocognitive approach explains how underlying ideologies control more specific group attitudes and how personal mental models of journalists about news events control activities of news making, such as assignments, news gathering, interviews, news writing, editing and final make up.(van Dijk 2009: 195)

One of the first studies on ideology in the news is Bell's (1991) investigations of 'mis-reporting' and 'mis-representing' events in the news. In addition to quantitative analysis on misrepresentation, Bell also focused on the ways in which 'facts' become distorted in the newsmaking process. He identifies techniques such as overstatement, overgeneralization in the form of stereotyping and prejudicial comment, that van Dijk (2009: 195) later observes that these manipulations could also be referred to as rhetorical 'since rhetoric deals with the way information (meaning, content) is emphasized or de-emphasised for various reasons. Van Dijk goes on to suggest that the motivations for such semantic tweaking in journalistic

texts could be in order to highlight the bad characteristics of outgroups or the positive features of ingroups.

### 2.3.1 Ideological outsiders in British News discourse

In his seminal work, *Language in the News* (1991: 2), Fowler was among the first to argue that news is socially constructed. The selection of events that are reported is not a reflection of their intrinsic importance, but reveals the operation of a 'complex and artificial set of criteria for selection'. He (1991: 1) sustains that 'language is used in newspapers to form ideas and beliefs [...] language is not neutral but a highly constructive mediator.' If this is the case with just one language, the meaning making process in producing the news becomes all the more complex when the element of translation is added to the equation? This question will be explored in Chapter 3. With specific reference to the British context, newspapers are generally classified as 'quality' or 'broadsheet', or 'tabloid' or 'red top', although their definitions and delineations are problematic (see Bednarek and Caple 2011: 18). The first two genres are newspapers that in theory provide in-depth comment and analysis from home and abroad in a relatively unbiased way using a neutral or formal register<sup>7</sup>. On the contrary, tabloids, or the more recent name 'red tops', provide fast easy access to mainly scandal and celebrity news while any political, economic or foreign news is reported with a strong institutional slant. Tabloid language is usually characterized by dramatization, exaggeration and hyperbole in order to make the news more sensational (Van Dijk in Conboy 2006: 16). However these divisions have been blurred in recent years; as Conboy (2006: preface) comments there is a 'narrowing divide between the once-broadsheet press and the tabloids'. This convergence between quality and popular newspaper becomes more than evident in the present research. The language of newspapers seeks to entice the

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<sup>7</sup> For more in-depth discussions on the layers of the UK press and ideological perspectives on the various newspapers see Allan 2006; Bednarek 2006; Bell and Garrett 1998; Conboy 2007; Reah 1998/2002; Tunstall 1996.

audience to buy. The aim is to best package information in order to sell and 'fit into the taste of their readership and echo these within their own idiom' (Conboy 2010: 1).

One of the salient features of news discourse is the way in which it constructs in groups and outgroups. In particular Fowler (1991: 97) notes the widespread discrimination against women. Starting from the general premise that 'linguistic usage is sexist', he observes the ideological paradigms in news discourse that ascribe women a 'special, deviant status in certain respects' (ibid.). In the land that exonerates the existence of 'Page Three'<sup>8</sup>, it is no surprise to find that women are still commodified in the British press (Conboy 2006: 123, Fowler 1991). The sexualisation of popular culture, which is so closely linked to the post-feminist phenomenon, has only aggravated the tendency. 'Physical appearance and sexual appetite, whether real or implied, are two of the most common features of the language used to portray women in the news'. (Conboy 2006: 127). Furthermore we are told that tabloid language blending saucy innuendo with the explicitly sexual appeals to a post-feminist readership 'which is encouraged to approach such coverage with humour and a sense of irony' (Conboy ibid.). This echoes McRobbie's (2011: 179) affirmation that so-called 'postmodern irony', which smacks of old-fashioned sexism is aimed at the young post-feminist woman who 'gets the joke'; a joke that would incense her older counterpart. The cultural Other is a further another outgroup that is often targeted in the popular British press (Conboy 2006; Fowler 1991; van Dijk 1989, 1991). Van Dijk (1991) has shown that news values are based on those of the elite groups, or white establishment, who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. He stresses that it is not so much overtly racist discourse, but the normalization of the linguistics of racism that is interwoven in news narratives. He states 'it is not only *what* journalists write about ethnic affairs, but also how they do that' (1991: 209). From this perspective, the narratives

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<sup>8</sup> 'Page Three' refers to *The Sun's* traditionally semi-naked female pin-up which is published on page three of every edition, alongside the recently added 'News in Briefs', a semi-nude woman to accompany short news reports.

and representation of Silvio Berlusconi as the 'Archetypal Italian' (Ginsborg: 2005: 102) in UK newspapers could be interpreted.

### **2.3.2 Berlusconi's newspeak**

Most of the news stories analysed for this project have been constructed around what someone said. As Bednarek and Caple (2012: 91) point out 'Frequently, utterances themselves have news value and become a story'. This is certainly the case with Silvio Berlusconi. News values are the elements that determine what makes something newsworthy; the authors (ibid: 39-84) identify eight news values; - negativity, proximity, prominence, consonance, impact, novelty, superlatives, and personalisation. Articles on Berlusconi regularly contain several of these elements:

- Negativity; what he is quoted as saying is usually conveyed and framed by negative evaluative language;
- Prominence; Berlusconi is an elite and therefore newsworthy. Impact; the effects or consequences of a (discursive) event, and above all;
- Consonance; the extent to which aspects of a story fit in with stereotypes that people may hold about the events and the people portrayed in it (2012: 43).

Unsurprisingly, Bednarek and Caple (2012: 67) choose to illustrate their concept of Consonance with a news item on Berlusconi. On examining the article 'Berlusconi's pep talk to the gold diggers of the world' (Simpson: 14 September 2010), the authors conclude that inferences and associations of Berlusconi's attitude to women 'are played to and at the same time construed or built up in news discourse'. Crucially, they affirm that Consonance is construed 'by focusing on [Berlusconi's] quotes about women'. At the outset of their work Bednarek and Caple (2012: 6) state that their linguistic and semiotic analytical frameworks can yield 'detailed insights into the way meanings are discursively construed in the news', yet they completely

ignore the fact that Berlusconi's 'quotes' were originally spoken in Italian. The translational act is not considered part of the meaning making process, and it is assumed that what was said and what was meant in the source language has been faithfully conveyed into the target language. In his preface to *Analysing Political Discourse, Theory and Practice* Chilton (2004: xii) pointed the way forward for future research in this field:

During the course of our explorations we will come across the crucial question of discourse, discourse analysis across cultures, across languages and through translation. These encounters pose more intriguing and politically urgent challenges for scholars in a world that is both more global and more fragmented cross cultural communication.

In spite of the increasingly urgent need to analyse political discourse filtered through the media and conveyed across lingua-cultural barriers, it would appear that scholars are still ignoring the linguistic, cultural and ultimately ideological implications of the role of translation in news texts. Cronin (2005: 114) observes that 'A function that translation and the media are said to have in common is that of communication'. More crucially he affirms that 'in the 21st century, translation will increase rather than recede in importance for media studies' (ibid.). Translation is the means by which news is conveyed across linguistic and cultural spaces and is therefore central to international communication, not least of all in communicating news. In the first three sections of this chapter the core notions of language and power, and discourse and ideology in the news have been approached from a monocultural perspective. However, this research hinges on cross-cultural perspectives of the Other in media discourse. The next two sections, therefore provide an introductory overview of the theoretical perspectives on national image, and news narratives in the production of news discourse, and the ways in which they merge in the act of translating cultures.

## **2.4 What is in an image?**

Sung-Yul Park (2010: 190-191) suggests that 'Interconnectedness between discourses established through the media [...] serves as a central mechanism for the media's

power to produce and perpetuate stereotypes about languages and their speakers. This generalisation might well be true, however, it is argued here, along with Hughes (2006) that the origins of racial and cultural prejudice between some ethnic groups have matured over centuries, well before the influence of the media. Italy and England are an example. A juxtaposition of fascination and loathing appears to have long characterised British people's attitude to Italians (Beller 2007). The origins and reasons for this contradictory rapport, the seeds of which lie deep within the respective collective psyches, are complex issues that require a deeper analysis that goes beyond the scope of this research. However, this exasperated opposition of sentiments towards the Other periodically explodes in a profusion of caricatures and stereotypes. One example from literature can be made in the writings of E.M. Forster. In Halliday's introduction to the Italian edition of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905/1996), he notes:

Stereotypes are complex things that are neither to be condemned outright nor to be promoted per se as a means of understanding and dealing with other cultures. The fact is it is impossible for us to confront another culture, or even our own culture for that matter, without reducing it in some way to manageable simplifications. The problem with stereotypes is that as manageable simplifications they are open to exploitation by people who have denegratory intent.' (Halliday 1996: xxxvii)

Forster's (1905/1975) descriptions of Gino, the protagonist, resonate with the cultural stereotypes associated with Italians viewed from the British perspective: 'And Philip had seen that face before in Italy, seen it and loved it ... But he did not want to see it opposite him at dinner. It was not the face of a gentleman', and again

Philip watched his face - a face without refinement, perhaps, but not without expression - watched it quiver and reform and dissolve from emotion to emotion. There was avarice one moment, and insolence and politeness and stupidity and cunning. But gradually one emotion dominated ... his eyes began to wink and his mouth to twitch and suddenly he stood erect and roared forth his whole being in one tremendous laugh'

These are literary examples, of course, which are embedded within a historical and cultural period different to today. The suggestion is not that Forster is racist but to



note the striking resemblance between the stereotyped Gino and some popular mediatic representations, visual and textual, of Italians today (see section 6.1-6.5). Some observers claim that Berlusconi is the contemporary incarnation *par excellence* of all the worst excesses of Italianism, particularly those most archaic, ingrained in the national culture regarding attitudes to women (Agnew 2011; Ginsborg: 2005: 102-3; Signorelli 2011: 208). The caricature of Berlusconi as a Latin lover, charming, jovial but a slippery southern European, however, is the descendent of a long tradition. Literature provides the earliest forms of stereotyping, attested in the extensive volume, *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters* (Beller and Leerssen 2007: 194-199). The Beller (2007:11-12) defines the aims of imagology as 'to describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them'. Bassi (2012: 24 unpublished thesis) argues that stereotypes of Italy are the consequence of a 'collective investment in a certain idea of Europe'. Her study is concerned with how stereotypes are reproduced, sustained or contested through the process of translation, in particular in the selection of Italian literature translated and presented on the international book market. Her work, however, first raises the question of 'casting the foreign culture as other' (Tymoczko 2010: 215-228, see section 3.1).

#### **2.4.1 You have been Framed**

Closely linked to the notion of stereotype is the poli-functional concept of frame. According to Kress (2010: 10), in order to make sense of experience, human cultures create *frames* through which aspects of the world can be interpreted and of which the individual needs or wishes to be aware. According to OED, the verb 'to frame' has a myriad of meanings, among which 'to shape, give shape to; to fashion, to form'. In a more disconcerting vein, it can also signify 'To pre-arrange (something) surreptitiously and with sinister intent; to concoct, fabricate, to conspire'. Used in different disciplines, the term covers a number of concepts and connotations.

Anthropologist Gregory Bateson's (1972) original metaphor of frame was used to indicate the boundaries and context for information, that is, our conceptual or cognitive views of particular situations. Our choices of frames (or rather the choices made for us) help us to understand 'what's going on' (Goffman 1974: 8) from a certain perspective, while simultaneously impeding us from seeing the same situation from another point of view. Goffman (cited in Lemert and Branaman 1997: 155) borrows the term to refer to 'principles of organisation that govern social events', elaborating the theory that frames are the individual's way of organising experience and 'making sense' of what is happening. In other words, we create our perceptions and our interpretations of reality through frames that guide our consciousness. In accordance with Bateman, he argues that frames are dynamic in nature, thus requiring negotiation and decoding on the part of the receiver in order to create social meaning. Tanner (1993: 16) on the other hand employs the term 'frame' to refer to 'structures of expectations'. She suggests that our knowledge of the world is filtered through our experience in a given culture (or combination of cultures) and then used to 'predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events and experiences'. We might also add here, regarding people. These preconceived ideas are uncovered through discourse analysis. It was Entman who first observed that the notion of frames could be applied to modes of representation in media discourse, in particular in news production. Frames in the news can be examined and identified by 'The presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements (Entman cited in De Vreese 2005: 55). Katan (2004: 220) also reminds us that 'The influence of the press and other media in framing meaning, or spinning, should not be underestimated'. In *Translation and Conflict*, Baker (2006: 5) notes that the process of (re)framing is multi-semiotic, drawing on linguistic and non-linguistic resources including visual ones such as typography, colour and image, elements particularly significant in the examination of news texts. Therefore, a modern perspective on image studies must surely also take into account the multi-semiotic system of meaning making that exists today, not least in the sphere of the mass media and in

the specific case of online newspapers that extend the meaning making process by the inclusions of video, audio, increased use of photographic image and links to other texts.

#### **2.4.2 Framing in News Narratives**

According to Bell (1991: 147) 'Journalists do not write articles. They write stories. A story has structure, direction, and a viewpoint. [...] Journalists are professional storytellers of our age'. These 'stories' are constructed through the use of discourse narratives in such a way as to shore up the ideology or worldview of the newspaper in question, thus protecting the interests of the dominant 'symbolic elite' (van Dijk 1996). Editorials in particular are the expression of a publication's underlying ideological agenda (van Dijk 1989: 232). They perform a persuasive function with an important cognitive dimension, both in their production, and in their reception by the public (ibid). Fowler (1991: 1) identifies use of language as crucial to this function: 'language is used in newspapers to form ideas and beliefs [...] language is not neutral but a highly constructive mediator'. If language in the news is in itself a mediator, what happens when translation intervenes between two separate linguistic, cultural and societal systems in order to produce meaning? Baker (2006: 5) employs Goffman's concept of frame within the broader framework of narrative theory in order to analyse news narratives mediated via translation. In particular it is used to identify:

the many ways in which translators and interpreters - in collaboration with publishers editors and other agents involved in the interaction - accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance, and in so doing participate in the shaping of social reality.

In British newspapers, representations of Berlusconi are channelled through what Gamson & Modigliani (1989) refer to as 'framing devices'; metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions, and visual images. Within the realms of communication and the media Entman (1993) affirms that frame analysis can shed light on the subtle ways in which influence is exerted on the human perception of reality during

the transfer of information from a source, for instance a speech, utterance, or news report, to that receptive consciousness. Gambier (2006: 11) observes that 'News frames make certain facts meaningful, provide a context in which to understand issues, shape the inferences made, reinforce stereotypes, determine judgments and decisions, draw attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements'.

This last reflection is borne out by Agnew's (2011:7) affirmation that the foreign correspondent 'must slant their stories towards established frames of reference for characterizing Italy and its politics including stereotypes that are an inevitable part of reporting from exotic locales' (my emphasis). This statement is at once verisimilar and disconcerting: truthful in that frames undoubtedly become institutionalised and unconsciously applied in the context of news reporting. When stereotyping is considered as 'inevitable' in news reporting, alarm bells should sound. Is there an implication that this is standard practice and acceptable to frame news narratives within national caricatures and stereotypes? Berlusconi affords a larger than life caricature of the worst kind of Italian, as this quotation from columnist Rod Liddle (*The Sunday Times* 2011) illustrates:

such a disparate melange of people held together only by a shared interest in ice cream and motor scooters, [...] an Italian friend of mine from Milan often says to me, grimacing: "Every morning when I wake up I think for every euro I earn, I pay a euro to those useless, lazy, corrupt monkeys in the south." As do we all, of course, one way or the other via the EU. [...] this peculiar geographic coalition is governed by a man even more risible than Lembit Opik, a sort of caricature Italian male with one hand on the breast of a slapper and the other in the till.

On the one hand, if one takes the view of Tunstall (1996: 341) that 'a nation's foreign news ... reflects its prejudices and sentiments', the above quotation from a 'high-brow' paper could be construed as humorous and sardonic in a postmodern, politically incorrect way. On the other hand, it is also true that the writer not only ridicules Italians but also pits the 'law-abiding, honest British tax-payers' against the 'lazy' southerners in Italy who sponge off EU funds. The reference to Berlusconi is clear, but the subtext implies that all Italian men are lecherous embezzlers.

It has often been observed that the Italian media suffers from ‘a great dysfunction’. Federici (2010: 127) notes that ‘reported or given opinions are reported as “facts” or “events”, and there are ... customary lapses of objectivity’. This might well be the case and, on the subject of Berlusconi, the particular situation of the Italian media rightly gives rise to these criticisms, but it will be demonstrated here that the British press is far from immune to reframing, subjectivity and distortion of reality (van Dijk 1989, 1992, 1997; Fairclough 1995). As the above quotation from *The Sunday Times* demonstrates, the ‘dysfunction’ exists in all newspapers at all levels and while the tabloids at least make no pretention to objectivity, the ‘quality’ press to some extent do, thus all the more worrying to find evidence of tabloid tactics.

## **2.5 Closing remarks**

In this chapter we have examined the links between language, society, and discourse, outlining the relevance of Bourdieu’s theories on language and power. Particularly, the role of ideological representations constructed through framing techniques and narratives in news discourse are discussed, and the ways in which these hidden attitudes and biases can be exposed with the tools and perspectives of Critical Discourse Analysis, providing the framework for the micro-analyses presented in Chapters 5,6, and 7. The last part of this chapter has introduced the notion of cultural stereotypes, in particular the image of Italians in news discourse, and the ways in which the representation of Berlusconi fits into this ‘socially constructed mental pigeon-hole’ (Fowler 1991: 17). Translation’s role in the social constructions of the Other is a crucial one. In the next chapter we focus on the issue of translation’s increasing importance in a globalised society and the developments in translation research that reflect these concerns.

### 3.

## Locating translation in global flows of news

Chapters 1 and 2 provided a description of and rationale for the integrated methodological and theoretical frameworks sustaining this research. This chapter focuses on the interdisciplinary hub, translation studies, and discusses the evolutions and perspectives in translation research that connect with the present study. The chapter begins with a brief synoptic overview of a few key theoretical developments (sections 3.1-3.1.2) that have taken place in the discipline since Toury's adaptation of Holmes' map of translation studies (in Munday 2008: 12). An overview of Bourdieu's impact on Translation Studies and the so-called 'sociological turn' (Gouanvic 1999, 2007; Maylaerts 2008: 91-103; Merkle 2008: 175-187; Simeoni 1998; Wolf 2006:6; Tyulenev 2012, 2014) is offered (section 3.1.2) while the following sections (3.2-3.3) come to the heart of the issues at stake in this work, with some perspectives on translation in a global context and the role of translation in the news, while the final part of the chapter (sections 3.3-3.4) cast some light on the central issues of invisibility in translated news, ideology, and representations of national image through translation.

### 3.1 Perspectives on translation

Translation is viewed in this study as multi-layered social practice. On a first level it is necessarily an act of interlingual meaning transfer, that is, the interpretation of verbal signs via another language, also known as 'translation proper' (Jakobson 1959: 232-39). However, this act is not an end in itself but is an integral element within a much wider framework of social and intercultural communication (Hatim 1997; Hatim and Mason 1997; Katan 2004, 2009; Pym 2003, 2010; Schäffner 1996;

2010). In this sense, translation is one of the strategies which can be employed in order to mediate between two cultures. Here we use the term culture in a minimal sense as 'large scale systems of assumed shared references, linguistic or otherwise (Pym 2003: 3). According to Katan (2004: 27) culture is not a tangible product but is internal, collective, not learned but acquired; language, behaviour, values and ideologies are naturally absorbed through unconsciously watching and hearing. This provides a 'shared system for interpreting reality and organizing experience. [...] a shared mental model or map of the world' (ibid.). What follows is an overview of the development of the discipline.

### **3.2 A Discipline is Born**

Translation Studies is a discipline whose broad sweep of interest is no longer contained within the confines of linguistic transposition. What was once viewed as an act of substitution of one linguistic sign to another, either word for word or thought for thought, today requires a plurality of approaches; the issues that invest current research in translation call for perspectives from other fields of enquiry such as anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, discourse and media studies along with linguistics. This is not the place to expand on the multitude of strands surrounding interdisciplinary approaches to translation studies. Rather, it is useful here to outline some of the key theoretical insights and how they can be applied to the texts to be analysed here.

Until the 1960s the predominant schools of thought in translation theory pivoted around comparative linguistics and ideas of equivalence between linguistic systems (Catford 1965; Nida 1964; Viney-Darbelnet 2000). One of the most influential strategic approaches to translation from that period that still holds sway today is known as 'dynamic equivalence', or equivalent effect (Nida and Taber 1969: 12). The concept is also closely related to the more recent 'Functional approach' (Nord 1997). For Nida, (ibid.) the act of translating 'consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style' As Katan explains, 'The

target words would then trigger the same associations and emotional effect as those of the original text' (2012: xx). However when faced with culture-bound lexis or extra-linguistic cultural practices this strategy can fall short. As Nida himself observed, 'Reader response can never be identical to the original due to different historical, cultural and environmental contexts' (1964: 159). Translation - gateway to the cultural Other.

At that time little attention was paid to external influences on the translation process, such as the cultural or sociological aspects of language, or the notion of translation as an act of cross-cultural communication. The revolution came at the beginning of the 1980s with the so-called cultural turn in Translation studies (Bassnett 1980; Snell-Hornby 2006). Issues of cultural and linguistic hegemony started to emerge within the discipline, reflecting similar concerns in post-colonial studies. From this perspective, translational practices began to and still are perceived as a means to perpetuate or redress the balance of power across cultural divides (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002; Hermans 2003, see also sections 2.1-2.3 for a discussion on language and power).

The 1990s saw the flourishing of this committed stance in both translation practitioners and theorists. In *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995/2008) Venuti considers translation as a form of symbolic violence. He denounces current translation practices within hegemonic British and American cultures where a translated text is evaluated on its fluency, transparency and easy readability. This requires a translation strategy which eliminates or masks any trace of the 'foreign' from the original text by employing syntax and stylistic features of the target language, thus 'domesticating' the text for the target culture. Instead Venuti challenges domestication as translation practice and champions what he calls 'foreignization'. More than a mere set of translational techniques, foreignising is a project: 'Foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation' (2008: 16). He believes that in order to preserve the source culture and its language the translator must manifest the differences and even alienate the reader through unexpected translation choices. Venuti categorically states that



'There is no equivalent effect. [...]. There is only interpretation for which there is no wrong or right but many variations' (Venuti 2012). On the other hand Nida's dynamic equivalence adopts a fluent strategy bringing it closer to the target culture and is therefore, for Venuti, an advocacy of domestication and 'an appropriation of a foreign text to serve a purpose in the receiving culture' (ibid. 17). Venuti views domestication and foreignization as 'fundamentally *ethical* attitudes towards a foreign text and culture'. His call for action in the field of Translation Studies is ultimately to develop 'a practice and theory of translation that resists dominant values in the receiving culture so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text (ibid.: 19). Bielsa (2010: 170) stresses the ideological implications of domesticating practices that mask otherness:

The distinction between domesticating and foreignising translation, the strategy followed of either leading the author to the reader or the reader to the author, is a fundamental one .... For domesticating translation, by denying the foreign as foreign, by rendering the foreign falsely familiar and translation transparent, is in fact denying any true openness to the other as other

An alternative cultural approach to translation is what Appiah (2000/2004: 399) calls 'thick translation', which stems from the anthropology of Geertz (1973). The idea consists in 'translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich social cultural and linguistic context' (Appiah 200/2004: ibid.). This strategy is rarely used because as Katan (2012: 3) notes:

most translators and scholars still feel that the use of any extratextual notes is not only a sign of translator indecision but is also off-putting for the reader. Therefore [...], for the time being, thick translation remains a seldom-used cultural approach.

On the other hand Hermans (2003: 8) considers thick translation as a most viable option in cross-cultural study, interpretation and mapping. Further, he sees thick translation as a critique of current translation practices that give the illusion of transparency or neutral description. Instead he views thick translation as a highly visible form of translation that gives the translator a narrative voice, 'acknowledging the impossibility of a total translation and an unwillingness to

appropriate the other through translation even as the translation takes place (ibid: 8).

By the beginning of the millenium translation scholars were looking outside the debates on language, culture and context (see Katan 2004: 99-118) to consider the broader sociological structures and frameworks involved in the act of translation: issues such as translation as cultural production, the role of the translator in producing cultural meaning, translation as communication in institutional environments came to the fore. Concepts borrowed from Bourdieu's theory of practice (see section 2.1) provided imputus for what has been referred to as the 'sociological turn' in Translation studies, outlined in the following section.

### **3.2.1 New directions - where the cultural meets the social**

Simeoni (1998: 4-5) has defined Toury's (1995) influential Descriptive Translation Studies as a cultural approach to translation theory that simultaneously moves towards Holmes' (1978/2000: 180-192) vision of a 'socio-translation studies'. He underlines however that the emphasis in translation research is shifting from texts and polysystems to translational activity itself; translatorial habitus rather than translational norms. Following this strand, Simeoni's sociological slant on translational practices starts from Toury's reflections on 'how translators translate' but moves beyond the search for laws of translational behaviour to focus on why translators are willingly 'subservient' to prevailing norms (1998: 7). Following Bourdieu's concept of habitus (see sections 2.1-2.2), Simeoni contends that the process of socialization and the inculcation of normative translational behaviour influence the activity of translating. These social constraints are gradually 'internalised by the translator, ultimately manifesting themselves in the end results, the translation product' (1998: 5). He (1998: 21) argues that there is a strong case for incorporating 'the question of the practice of translation, focussing on the translator's habitus as a locus of tension revealing an extreme yet very representative configuration of intercultural, as well as global influences'. There is some debate, however, as to whether the notion of 'field' in the Bourdieusian sense

can be applied to the activity of translation (Simeoni 1998: 18; Inghilleri 2003: 245). Nonetheless, the discussions around habitus, field, and capital in the sphere of translation studies are of fundamental importance to this research: here the figure of 'the translator' is not a translator at all in the traditional sense but a journalist, or rather a series of journalists, some of whom we might refer to as foreign correspondents, thus bringing into question not only the position of the translator and translation in news contexts, but also the boundaries of *who* we define as 'translator'. A translator is clearly first and foremost a social being. As Tyulenev (2014: 5) emphasises:

They grow up in a society, absorbing a particular worldview, and ethical and aesthetical values. *Becoming professionals* ... they learn to be more open-minded to other culture, they learn not to be rash, let alone bigoted or biased, in their evaluations of the people for whom they translate. (emphasis added)

Tyulenev's observation brings into focus one of the key points here, and that is, not all people who translate are professional translators. In the world of news production, for example, where training in translation and intercultural communication seems to be non-existent (see Chapter 8), could we posit that a little bigotry and bias might occur when communicating the Other in translated news discourse? Van Doorslaer (2012 see section 3.2.2) has suggested the hybrid name of 'journalator' to indicate the person who regularly uses translation as one of the tools (see chapter 8) in her/his journalistic work. The phenomenon of translation in the news, therefore, could fruitfully be investigated through the concept of the 'translator's (or journalator's) habitus, and the translational *practices* within the institutional journalistic field - which in this instance overlaps with the field of translation. As Cronin (2005: 109) points out, since 'the advent of post-structuralism [where] much greater attention is paid to the *how, where, when, why* and *who* of translation'.

Inghilleri's (2003) investigation into translational practices in interpreting political asylum interviews attempts to examine some of these questions. She (2003: 243) observes that 'Acts of translation and interpreting are never a mere matter of textual production (oral or written), but are consciously and unconsciously involved in the production and reproduction of "cultured meanings"' (ibid.: 243). In order to account for types of translational activity that are located within social structures and social institutions, and have a 'cultural, historical and a political specificity' (ibid.), the author elaborates a theoretical framework drawing on Toury's model of translational norms (Toury 1995, 2000), Bourdieu's notions of field and habitus (Bourdieu 1977; 1990), and Bernstein's (1990, 1996) theory of pedagogic discourse. Inghilleri sets out to examine what she perceives as 'a norm-based translational activity' and posits that 'the habitus of the individual interpreter and the field in which the interpreting activity takes place can be seen to play a crucial role in what counts as a 'legitimate' translation within a given context' (Inghilleri 2003: 245). Interpreting, she affirms, is a target-culture oriented translational activity where the aim is to 'produce meanings that are acceptable to the target culture'. She argues, however, that the social role of interaction plays a significant role in the potentially 'transformative capacity' of the habitus. In contrast to Simeoni's view that the translator is subservient to norms, Inghilleri calls for 'an alternative to viewing interpreters as forever trapped inside their socially constituted selves' and suggests that

the decision to serve as conduit or advocate may result from interpreters' qualifications, experiences or cultural understandings of the applicants or what is at stake for the applicants in the proceedings. However, the impact of these possible sources on the decision-making process must be seen in relation to the interlocking fields, habitus and norms evident in the interpreting context itself (ibid.: 259).

Inghilleri therefore sustains that it is the nexus between the micro-interactional and the macro-structural that forms the basis of interpreting decisions and informs all interpreted interactions. Inghilleri's study on interpreting political asylum interviews is exemplary of the kind of research that has emerged in translation studies over the last decade. The view of translation as correlated to a life world

where translational activities and processes affect the lives of individuals, societies, and cultures is one that has taken root. Wolf and Fukari's edited volume, *Constructing a Sociology of Translation* (2007), maps out the tentative paths that such a perspective can open up. As Wolf (2007: 3) observes, the 'rupture with exclusively text-bound approaches' helps to

draw attention to the cultural *and* social formations which fundamentally characterize the translation phenomenon: processes of mediation on are thus implicated in frameworks which involve both negotiating cultural differences and exploring the forms of action that belong to the translation process (2007: 3).

The sociological view of translation, then, aims to take into account the micro and the macro levels of the translation process within a given socio-cultural context. As we have already seen (see sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.3.2) ideological influences weave their way through discourse at both micro and macro levels of society and are propagated and reproduced particularly in media discourse. The next section looks at some of the approaches in translation studies that examine the ways in which the issues surrounding ideology impact on translation practices and on the translation product.

### **3.2.2 Ideology and conflict in Translation**

Hatim and Mason's study of *The Translator as Communicator* (1997) sheds invaluable light on the translator's role in shaping discourse and the ways information is or is not conveyed to text receivers operating in a different cultural and linguistic environment. Their research is informed by insights gleaned from earlier studies on the impact of ideology on language use and the ways in which discourse practices can maintain, reinforce, and contest ideologies (Fowler 1979; Hodge and Kress 1993; Fairclough 1989. See sections 1.3, 1.4, 2.3). Through detailed analysis of the linguistic intricacies in 'the text-worlds of translation' (Hatim and Mason 1997: 143), they aim to demonstrate the ideological consequences of the translator's choices.

The translation of ideology and the ideology of translation (1997:119) are neatly summarised in Hatim and Mason as two related but analytically distinct perspectives: one is the ideology of translating, that is, 'the extent to which translators mediate SL texts'; the other is the translation of ideology, defined as 'what happens to ideologies when they are translated'. The first of these strands could be construed as the translator's attitude to the translational act, and the ways in which this is relayed through the choice of strategies adopted; free versus literal, dynamic equivalence versus formal equivalence, communicative versus semantic, and so on. Hatim and Mason cite Venuti's dichotomy between domesticating and foreignizing strategies (see section 3.1.1) as the one that most 'brings out the ideological consequences' of the choice of approaches to translation. However it is the second phenomenon, the translation of ideology, that most interests Hatim and Mason. They observe that 'the translator as processor of texts filters the text world of the source text through his/her own world-view, ideology, with differing results' (1997: 147). Hatim and Mason, therefore, put the translator as central to the meaning making process. This 'mediation' on the part of the translator, which other scholars might refer to as 'manipulation' (see discussion in Katan 2004: 189-90) goes from minimal to maximal. In the former, 'the characteristics of the source text are made entirely visible and few concessions are made to the reader' (ibid.: 148), and according to the authors, corresponds to Venuti's foreignizing translation. On the contrary, their analysis of a sample text from Spanish into English taken from UNESCO *Courier* is an example of maximal mediation. At macro level, or in their terms 'top down' analysis, the TT differs from the ST regarding genre. The authors describe the ST as belonging to 'history-as-commitment' genre, while the TT is the genre of 'detached historical exposition' (ibid.: 155). However, the micro-analysis of the discourse features of transitivity, cohesion, and lexical choice 'converge in demonstrating that the translator's (maximal) mediation issues from and constructs a different ideology... fundamentally at variance with that of the ST' (ibid.: 158-9/62). Hatim and Mason's model of analysis is based on CDA and SFL but takes Halliday's original model of the register variables of field, mode and tenor a step further. The authors consider the text producers' intentions, beliefs,

presuppositions, and inferences thereby incorporating additional layers to the meaning making process and how these elements are subsequently relayed across linguistic and cultural barriers. Nevertheless, their approach is anchored in an ST/TT comparison of one particular text.

Baker (2006) on the other hand advocates the use of narrative theory in order to explore the role of translation and ideological manipulation in translated information, particularly in situations where political and cultural conflict come to the fore. For example, in order to investigate (2010) the translation programme of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), she implements the narrative theory model. She demonstrates that contrary to their declared aim of 'bridg[ing] the gap that exists between the West and the Middle East' by providing Western media with translations from Arab sources MEMRI do in fact have an ideological agenda in discrediting the Arab and more specifically the Muslim world in order to promote the Israeli cause. She observes examples of gross mistranslations do exist, yet they are relatively rare as accusations of partisanship would harm the aims of MEMRI. Instead, she maintains that MEMRI's entire translation programme contributes in a significant way to the construal of Arab and Muslim communities as 'terrorist and extremist' (Baker 2010: 349). For this reason she (2010: 349) claims that focusing on the accuracy of single translations 'miss[es] the point' (ibid.); a wider lens is needed to view the ways in which a social reality is represented through textuality and translation. Only then can we identify the presence or absence of underlying social and political ends.

Narratives, as she intends them, function in a similar way to 'discourse' or 'myths' in their 'normalizing effect of publicly disseminated representations', however, they differ inasmuch as they are 'much more concrete and accessible' (2006: 3). For Baker (2010: 350), narratives are 'the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live'. These stories provide our main interface with the world. She suggests that narrative theory provides a framework that allows us to examine the ways in which translation is employed in the elaboration of foreign, 'other' narratives 'that cut across time and texts' (Baker 2006:

4). In other words, instead of focusing on discourse practices in localised or individual texts, the author proposes an approach in which the unit of analysis is the whole narrative, 'a concrete story of some aspect of the world, complete with characters, settings, outcomes or projected outcomes and plot' (2010: 349):

A model of analysis based on this theoretical framework makes it possible to investigate the elaboration of a given narrative in an individual text or event as well as across several texts and events, and across different media. Using 'narrative' as the unit of analysis, and proceeding on the basis that local narratives, those elaborated in a specific text or event, have porous boundaries and are ultimately embedded in and contribute to the elaboration of larger narratives, provides precisely the kind of interface that is necessary to move us beyond the unproductive and widespread tendency to compare original and translated texts stretch by stretch.

Narrative theory works through a series of assumptions:

1. *Selective appropriation*: the inevitable choices authors and translators make regarding what will and will not be included in a text. Some elements of experience are excluded and others privileged in order to construct a coherent narrative;
2. *Causal emplotment*: Causal emplotment gives significance to independent instances; it is only when events are emplotted that they take on narrative meaning, forming an intelligible sequence about which we can form an opinion'
3. *Temporality*: narratives are embedded in time and space and derive much of their meaning from the temporal moment and physical site of the narration. Events are rarely recounted in the order in which they took place, especially in the media, and the way in which time, sequence and spatial setting are used to construct a narrative is therefore meaningful in its own right.
4. *Relationality*: individual events (and elements within an event) cannot make sense on their own but only insofar as they constitute elements of an overall narrative.

While it could be argued that Baker's narrative theory is framing by any other name (see sections 2.5, 2.5.1), and she herself admits they overlap, it is also true that in spite of her dismissal of discourse analysis being limited to isolated texts that are then linked to a broad concept of discourse, narrative theory shares some notions with Fairclough's chains of discourse that link communicative events in a sequence, binding them together through intertextuality (see also Hatim and Mason 1990: 120-



137). Nevertheless, the concept of an ongoing narrative is a useful one, especially in news narratives (Johnson-Cartee 2005: 147-183). Hermans (2010) posits that translated narrative discourse always contains a 'second' voice, the Translator's voice - visibility depends on translation strategy adopted, which leads us to ask about the role, or the position of the translator. Tymoczko asks just that - positionality - for Toury, the translator is an individual in the culture of the target system. The next section looks more closely at the effects of globalisation on news practices and the role of translation in mediating international news texts.

### **3.3 News Translation in a Globalized world**

The epoch-making effects of globalisation and digitalisation on the theory of translation and translational practices have been described in detail elsewhere (Cronin 2003, 2005, 2013; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Shiyab et al 2010; Valdeòn 2010; Pym 2003, 2006). Here we will simply outline some of the core threads of the discussion in order to contextualise the main focus here, that is, the use of translation in news production.

Pym calmly affirms that 'Globalization is neither the friend nor the foe of translation. It is quite simply changing many of the situations in which translation is called upon to operate' (2006: 747). Yet, undeniably 'Translation is living through a period of revolutionary upheaval' (Cronin 2013: 1). The turmoil is both practical and epistemological in nature, investing the whole conception of what constitutes the act and process of translation, and what ensuing effects those processes and acts might have on societies and cultures worldwide. As the demand for translation increases in our Babylonian world, in contrast with Hatim and Mason's *Translator as Communicator* (1997, see section 3.1.3) the translator could be conceived as transmitter (Cronin 2003: 65), whereby the 'source' text, if it can be defined as such (see section 3.x), is disseminated across the globe in several languages and cultural contexts simultaneously. The complexities of globalisation are many and this is not the place to analyse them in depth (see Bauman 1998; Cronin 2003; Beck 2000; Lash and Urry 1994; Tomlinson, J. 1999). Nevertheless a broad-brush outline serves to

understand the main aspects. The era of globalisation is characterised by two fundamental features that could be considered the result of advancements in technology: the reduction of temporal and spatial constraints, and the centrality of information and 'knowledge' (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 18). Thus, globality entails not only the emergence of supranational entities and global markets, but also increased migration and movements of people. These phenomena in turn generate the need for and the development of a global communications system that disseminates images, texts, news, and information across the planet. Cronin (2005: 111) observes 'the contemporary period is unique in the near-instantaneous information flows across the globe'. Therefore, the salient traits of globalisation in late modernity converge on the theme of instant interconnectedness across linguistic and spatial distances. Crucially, then, translation 'becomes a key mediator of global communication' (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 18). As Cronin (2005: 108) puts it 'translation is at the heart of the new informational economy, which in turn has implications for the relationship between translation and the global media'.

Of the several implications, which we will look at in turn, Bielsa and Bassnett underline the impact of speed and compression of space and the demand for instant translation on the meaning transfer of culture. Globalization theorists Lash and Urry assert that 'the use of instantaneous time can also be enabling for ordinary subjects. They can view and evaluate different cultures at the flick of a switch, or via high speed (or almost instantaneous) transport' (in Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 23). Bielsa and Bassnett rejoin 'How can cultures be grasped, let alone evaluated, "at the flick of a switch"? Can they be examined and compared without recourse to translation?' (ibid.). Here is the crux; despite its fundamental role in cross-cultural communications which are essential to the global economy, translation is completely overlooked in theories of global circulation and flows. For example, Manuel Castells' theories of the *Information Age* (2000a, 2000b) and *The Rise of the Network Society* (2010) practically ignore the existence of translational processes (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 23; Valdeón 2010: 153) even though as Valdeón states 'Translation and information are, in fact, at the crossroads of a primarily digitalized society' (2010: 153). The significance of the unseen act of translation in

conveying and mediating information across linguistic and cultural boundaries is greatly underestimated. In the words of Cronin (2003: 49) 'What is devalued or ignored in the cyberhype of global communities is the effort, the difficulty and, above all else, the time required to establish and maintain linguistic (and by definition, cultural) connections'.

Instead, Bielsa (2010: 8) argues for a different perspective on the relationships between globalization and translation. Viewed from the lense of new cosmopolitanism, 'Translation ... offers a privileged way of examining the link between the global and the local and of understanding processes of global communication'. It is this tension between the local and the global that emerges in the scrutiny of news texts in which translated information is embedded:

Within the news world, particularly, the opposition or interaction between globalising, localising and tribalising forces, constitutes a paradox that at first seems to contradict the global nature of news translation but which, after a closer analysis, defines and sheds light on the complex nature of globalisation itself: such a paradox consists of the very fact that what is global is such not because it is the same everywhere, but because it has been adapted to infinite numbers of different cultural and social contexts. (Orengo 2005: 169)

In the next section the concept of localisation and translation is discussed with particular reference to news translation.

### **3.3.1 The Global and the Local in news production**

As Cronin (2003) and Pym (2004, 2006) illustrate, the activity of localization, the process through which a product is adapted to a specific local market, has enjoyed remarkable growth in the translation industry in recent years. The tailoring of software products - common pc operating systems, for example - to individual language and cultural requirements would be a prime example of localizing. Translation, in this sense, is limited to what Pym describes as a form of decontextualized word processing: 'Translation practice is being restricted to the kinds of decontextualised examples used in the bad old days, except that now ...

decontextualisation is the result of the technologies used in the practice itself' (2009:101). Significantly, Pym laments, 'A whole generation of translation theory has been undone' (ibid.). In a later article Pym (2010: 170) explains international news practices in the same terms as localization:

consider the way international news is put together and translated. An event occurs, producing source reports; those texts are gathered and put into a format of an international news service like Reuters, those 'internationalized' versions are then localized by newspapers, radios, television networks and websites, some with interlingual translation, others without interlingual translation, all with adaptation. The terminology of localization can describe the overall process.

Pym describes international news production but without specific reference to how actual news 'texts' are constructed and at which level localizing occurs. While Schäffner (2005: 5) and Oregno (2005: 168-187) concur that localization is a term that can be applied to news distribution, Oregno (2005: 176) in particular views the production of international news for a specific national market as an act of localization. In his study of the use of news translation in the Italian press, he emphasises that there is a further stage of localization that takes place within national and linguistic boundaries: 'Not only has a news product to be localised into one national language, but it also undergoes further differentiation due to the different backgrounds of readers who speak the same language', an act he refers to as 'linguistic tribalizing'(ibid.). 'Global news is localised and turned into news stories in newspapers whose readership is positioned in relation to their political orientation (Oregno 2005: 176).

In other words, the translation, and framing (see section 2.5) of international news and events is tailored to the different newspaper audience within a language community, thus addressing different social groups with different ideological slants. Fairclough (1995: 58) links particular representations and recontextualisations of social practice to Halliday's ideational function (see section 1.4.3), indicating that these representations could carry particular ideologies. This process in an Italian context has been referred to by (Oregno 2005) 'tribalisation'. Oregno (2005: 184) asks 'to what extent is the national character of a people reflected

in the way international/global news is translated? (170). In the process of news production, Orengo goes on to observe that it is rare for a whole translated text to appear in a newspaper; only a small selection of translated quotations or excerpts is embedded in a news story.

the translated versions of texts such as official speeches, interviews, witnesses' accounts of facts are systematically disassembled bit by bit and re-used, through the process described as 'embedding', as raw material for the construction of news stories (Orengo, 2005: 173).

Facts and information 'necessarily have to be "localised" to come to terms with the national-and political sensitivities of a people while meeting market requirements of a very specific readership and its cultural and political receptivity in less than 24 hours' (170). Orengo observes that the source language utterances that are embedded within the target news text 'are more or less signalled through markers such as inverted commas or italics, and more or less faithful according to the newspaper's degree of supposed bias' (ibid.: 184). He concludes that translation today is increasingly acquiring the mere function of information to the detriment of its function of mediation and cultural exchange (Orengo 2005: 171). It is helpful at the point to clarify terms and labels and define what is meant here by the expression 'news translation'.

### **3.3.2 The name and nature of news translation**

In 'Rethinking Transediting' (2012: 866-883), Schäffner takes stock and offers some timely reflections on the concept of news translation, on the approaches adopted in researching this area, and the metalanguage within Translation Studies that has evolved in order to refer to this particular translational phenomenon. The title alludes to Stetting's (1989) term, 'transediting' that was coined in order to 'account for the fuzzy borderline between translating and editing' (Schäffner 2012: 881) but also to justify the act of 'improving and, to a certain extent, changing texts in the translation process' (Stetting 1989: 373 cited in Schäffner 2012: 868). Schäffner points

out that Stetting's suggested conflation of translation and editing was not intended to refer exclusively to news contexts. Stetting was writing at a time when notions of linguistic equivalence still dominated translation theory, more or less in the same years in which Skopos theory (Vermeer 1989/2004) and functional approaches (Nord 1988/1997) legitimized such editing strategies as deletion, addition, reformulation, and so on, and the 'ideological turn' (Wing-Kuong Leung 2006: 129-143) that would have questioned them was yet to take hold. Today the application of CDA to a journalistic text in which translated information appears, as Schäffner proposes (2008, 2012 see section 3.4.2), would lead to querying the motivations behind the changes that might have been made for reasons other than readability. However, despite its non-specific nature, the term *transediting* has been espoused by a number of scholars (Hursti 2001; van Doorslaer 2009; Cheesman and Nohl 2010).

Instead, Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 64) speak of *news translation* to indicate the form that translation takes when it is integrated in news production within the journalistic field. *Press Translation* is another expression used by scholars (Bani 2006; Kontos and Sidiropoulou 2012) to specify translation used in texts produced for newspapers rather than other media such as television, radio or the internet. Scholars who use this term tend to refer to whole articles that are translated from a source language into a target language for publication in foreign newspapers thus consolidating much narrower research areas. Conway (2006, 2010, 2012) draws on Anthropology (Asad 1986 Jordan 2002), and considers some forms of news translation as cultural translation, in which journalists try to explain to one group how another sees the world. These texts do not necessarily contain any translated text as such; rather, they are heuristic acts (Conway 2012: 1003).

Orengo (2005: 175) on the other hand views news translation as a sub-branch of mass media translation, while Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 2) claim that in news contexts 'the very definition of translation is challenged and the boundaries of what we might term as translation have been recast'. Their seminal work, *Translation in Global News* (2009) evolved from the Warwick conference (2006) in which

international translation scholars gathered to discuss the ever burgeoning questions surrounding the role of translation in the global circulation of news. Bielsa and Bassnett's analysis focuses on the role of international press agencies in transmitting international news instantly round the globe. The authors investigate the history and working practices of news agencies around the world and the ways in which they employ translation. They also examine the predominant attitudes to translation in the realms of news reporting:

Some of the views expressed by people who prefer to call themselves 'international journalists' rather than translators reveal that the way in which they conceive of translation is very different from the way in which linguists or language teachers might (2009: 2).

News translation - and this is one of its key features - occurs in two stages (cf. Jakobson, 2000: 114): first an interlingual translation from the press release issued by an international news agency either into a local news agency's translated press release, or into the translated news text; then an 'intralingual' translation when the localised news text is embedded into a news story by a specific newspaper. The two processes may even occur simultaneously in the way the news text is translated and imbued with new content and nuances. Here it might be useful to identify the different types of text that news translation encompasses:

1. A complete article that has been translated from source to target language. Often they are signed translations. This frequently happens, for example, with an Anglophone newspaper ST that is translated for an Italian Newspaper. It tends to happen less in the other direction. On the other hand, 'Celebrity' journalists write for the target culture publication and are translated in-house. For example, Bill Emmott (see chapter 8) writes articles directly for, and are translated by *La Stampa*, while John Lloyd (see Chapter 8) writes for and is translated by *La Repubblica*.
2. A news article that has been lifted almost piecemeal from an International press agency press release and contains direct and

indirect speech already transposed by the agency. This would undergo a localizing process (see section 3.2.1).

3. A news article that we might construe as 'cultural translation' – where no actual translation takes place but is where one culture is explained to another. However, as Conway points out, a prerequisite for this type of article is 'openness to the other. Otherwise the journalist's or even the newspaper's own institutional bias tinges the representation (2012).
4. By far the most common, and the type of article we refer to here, is the news text which is constructed around an international communicative event and includes translated excerpts and quotes embedded within it (see Orenko 2005). This type of article might also encompass material from other sources and texts, thus rendering it a 'hybrid text' (see below). Multiple sources problematize the existence and status of the source text as commonly understood in a 'normal' translational relationship. This in turn raises issues of authorship (van Doorslaer 2010; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009).

Therefore, apart from the first type of text, it can be seen that translation is a part, albeit a crucial one, of the complex process of constructing news texts on foreign affairs. Schäffner ultimately asks whether or not we really need to find another term such as *transediting* in order to refer to translation in journalistic texts? (2012: 879). The resounding answer is 'no'. For Schäffner, by substituting 'translation' with 'transediting', or with any other term, translation will continue to be viewed in the narrow sense of a 'purely word for word transfer process' (881). Van Doorslaer (2010: 179) subscribes to a similar view, observing that the discipline still has not managed to establish itself beyond a concept of linguistic transfer in spite of the growing interest in meaning transfer processes in the globalized world. Nevertheless, Schäffner (2012: 883) sustains that 'As any translation, news translation or media translation generally, is a textual and a sociocultural process which involves transformations'.



In accordance with Schäffner and van Doorslaer, this research takes the view that in spite of its constraints and peculiarities, news translation involves quite simply, more or less extended forms of translation. It seems therefore superfluous to talk of 'recasting' the boundaries of our field of interest. News translation is, however, a new and developing phenomenon whose ramifications and reach require careful scrutiny within the remit of translation studies research. Similar theoretical and ontological debates surfaced with the diffusion of audio visual translation as theory and practice (see Munday 2008: 184). The space and time constraints inherent to subtitling and the constraints of dubbing such as lip-synch and visual cues provoked discussion as to the relation of this form of meaning transfer to the umbrella term translation. In order to accommodate AVT, and equally it is argued here, in relation to news translation, Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007: 9) suggest a more 'flexible, heterogeneous and less static perspective of translation' that 'encompasses a broad set of empirical realities and acknowledges the ever-changing nature of the practice'.

Having located news translation within a broader conception of what translational activity entails, Floros (2012: 929) identifies the distinctive characteristic of news translation compared to more 'traditional' forms of translation as what he calls 'radical permutations'. It could be argued that AVT shares this characteristic; however, it is these 'permutations' in news translation that we will consider next.

While debate continues as to the name of this type of translational phenomenon, the literature concurs, as we will see below, that the overriding feature of the process of news translation is the hybridity of the resulting news texts (Schäffner and Adab 2001). Firstly, the production of a single news text involves the integration of various source texts, as van Doorslaer (2012: 1048) explains: 'journalists will base [the] article on several earlier news items, on information and feedback from experts, and possibly also on other national and international coverage on the topic'. Although he does not specify, we imagine that translated information (translated by whom?) is thus invisibly recontextualised (Schäffner

2008: 3) in the target culture product. Furthermore, he observes 'translated news texts can be seen as a complex mixture of summarizing, paraphrasing, transforming, supplementing, reorganizing and recontextualizing procedures (ibid.). Kang (2007: 222) defines a news text as 'a product that is "renegotiated" (in terms of meaning, form and function) to respond to a new context of use', while Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 2) state that 'Information that passes between cultures through news agencies, is not only "translated" in the interlingual sense, it is reshaped, edited, synthesised and transformed for the consumption of a new set of readers'. What is striking about all these descriptions is their abstractness and their lack of agency. Furthermore one wonders what exactly Kang means by "'renegotiated" meaning that responds to a new context of use'. Is this a euphemism for ideological manipulation? It would appear that in news translation 'meaning' is meaningless and the translational act itself, happens miraculously, automatically, mechanically. We have no perception of the *who*, the *why*, or the *how*. As we have seen earlier, the textual and semantic changes that take place during these processes can be referred to as localization (see section 3.2.1). However, a significant body of scholarship (Bani 2006; Bassnett 2004, 2005; Bielsa 2007, 2010; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Clausen 2004) use the term domestication (Venuti 1995/2008, see section 3.1) rather than localization to describe dominant translation strategies in the news. As Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 10) explain, in news translation, 'the dominant strategy is absolute domestication, as material is shaped in order to be consumed by a target audience'. This might well be due to the ethical and ideological implications of domesticating approaches to meaning transfer. In the following section this perspective is discussed alongside the parallel issue of the invisibility of translation and of the translator.

### **3.4 Ideology, invisibility, and the ethics of recontextualization**

In his study of the representation of Turkish Cyprus in translated news texts, Floros (2012: 938) argues that translational norms clash with the norms of journalism. A clash which is quickly resolved, he adds, as 'the norms of the news industry are

overwhelming'. Floros notes that the 'dominance of the reporting voice in indirect speech' blurs the borders between journalists' commentaries and the actual words spoken. Idealistically, and perhaps naively, he proposes a synergy between journalistic and translational norms that would recognise translation 'as a particular activity following its own ethics within news production' (ibid.). Tsai (2012: 1060-1080) suggests that these 'clashing' norms could be the focus of research. She posits that the translation strategies adopted in news texts are influenced by commercial rather than ideological interests of the media: 'The rise of market-driven journalism affords scholars the opportunity to consider how the changing ethos of journalism alters news translation strategies'(1060). While it is arguable that 'market driven journalism' is new (see Conboy 2010), or that the 'ethos of journalism' has mutated, the fundamental questions are *which* strategies are used in news translation and *why*. Here we discuss some of the observations in the literature on the issue. Floros (2012: 929), for instance, challenges the translational strategies employed in news texts and calls for contemplation on the ethics of news translation. He suggests a return to the concept of fidelity in journalistic contexts, although he freely admits this is a utopian ideal. He questions some of Bielsa and Bassnett's reasonings in order to highlight his point. According to Bielsa and Bassnett, task of the 'translator of news' includes:

changing news angles and nuances, when the new informative *context justifies* it.[...] [T]he possibility of changing news angles in order to better fulfil the needs and expectations of a different audience pushes the very notion of equivalence to its limit, revealing how different versions of global news events can function in very diverse local contexts. The translator's visibility and transformative role in news production is directly related to this power to actually change the prevalent news angle or point of view from which events are narrated in order to produce a new text which can *function more effectively* as news for a different public. (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 93)

Floros (2012: 936) asks what criteria are we to use in order to establish when 'changing news angles' is justified? Furthermore, what does it mean for a text to 'function more effectively' as news for a different public? Surely that depends on

the aim of the text producer – translator or journalist – but the authors barely broach the subject of ethics and ideological manipulations.

In a similar way, one might question the assumptions in the following:

*It goes without saying* that a certain degree of freedom in text production (although based on several other source texts) goes hand in hand with adaptation, *reconsideration* and *reperspectivization* on the basis of the *new needs* in the target text situation. (van Doorslaer 2012:1050 italics are mine)

Why does it go without saying, and what are these *needs* in the target text? Are these not euphemisms for manipulation?

And again in Kang (2007: 240), we find ‘the entextualizing function of institutional news translation *inevitably* entails a reformulation of the source text in response to *priorities* and *values* relevant within the target context’. As van Doorslaer explains, ‘Kang refers to the concept of “entextualization” for describing the process in news translation in which the *original* text is made subordinate to the journalistic purpose of recontextualization’ (Kang 2007: 221). Van Doorslaer (2012: 1046) himself observes ‘When a journalator selects a topic and creates or frames his new narrative, parts of the story will *inevitably* be modified during the translation process (transediting)’. Thus, some researchers appear to accept the ‘inevitability’ of domesticating interventions, without posing the questions of why this should be so, and what the effects might be.

It has often been said that communicability, accessibility, and speed are three of the main criteria for producing news translations for the target reader (Bani 2006: 37; Bielsa 2010: 10; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 91). This has a series of consequences. Firstly, domesticating strategies prevail as it is ‘assumed’, by whom we are not sure, that these are more easily acceptable to the target audience. Domestication leads to transparency, and thus to invisibility, whereby the translational act is obscured from the reader (Bani 2006: 40; Bassnett 2004, 2005; Bielsa 2007, 2010; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Holland 2006, Kang 2007; Schäffner 2005, 2008). As Bassnett and Schäffner (2010: 10) observe, ‘Laypeople are normally

unconscious of the fact that they are reading a text in translation'. Instant communication makes translation processes in global communication invisible, and 'only by challenging its invisibility, which obscures the social conditions under which translation is performed as well as its role in mediating between cultures, will the mechanisms of cultural globalization be more fully understood' (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 280). Bielsa (2010: 170) reflects that the domesticating and gatekeeping practices imposed by the large international news outlets raise questions as to:

whether international news, for instance, can indeed reveal a truthful and plural account of events and different social realities to global audiences, or are in fact falsifying a familiar image of the world to western audiences made up of what powerful news organizations perceive as newsworthy to their clients and publics.

Correlated these concerns is the question of the positionality of the 'translator', journalist-translator.

### **3.4.1 Invisibility of translation and the translator in news contexts**

The notion of invisibility in translation is one which Lawrence Venuti (1992, 1998, 1995/2008) brought to the fore (see section 3.1) during what are now conventionally termed as the cultural and ideological turns in translation theory. Initially used in literary contexts, Venuti used the term to indicate a 'fluent', 'transparent', domesticating translation that did not disturb the reader. Simultaneously, it erases the mediating figure of the translator. The concept can be more than aptly applied to the case of news translation, and indeed to the figure of the translator in news contexts. To begin with, current practices in international news production blur the boundaries between the figure of the translator and journalist (Bielsa and Bassnet 2009: 62-63; van Doorslaer 2012; see chapter 8). Frequently, news room practices combine the two. As van Doorslaer observes (2012: 1049):

The journalist very often functions as an invisible translator, the invisibility being the consequence of the fact that translation has not only been integrated into

journalism, but has even been effaced by it in the perception of readers, listeners and viewers.

Schäffner (2008: 3-24) addresses the invisibility of translation in political communication and observes the ways in which translation intertwines with media discourse in the 'cross-lingual and cross-cultural recontextualisation processes' (ibid.: 22). She also emphasises that 'in the recontextualization chains from political speech to its (transformed) publication in the mass media and continuing references to it in subsequent media texts, power is at play as well' (ibid.). Thus, the dominant international news agencies and mass media are in turn quoted by other mass media creating a situation of asymmetry in representational capacity. In other words, some 'voices' are heard more than others. Schäffner provides an example with the recontextualization and possible mistranslation of a phrase attributed to former Iranian President Ahmadinejad, that Israel should be 'wiped off the map'. Schäffner points out that although there are several possible translations of the source utterance, this particular rendering has become the most frequently cited translation of Ahmadinejad's original words, and actually discursively constructed as being his own words, thus demonstrating that there is a direct, though usually invisible link between politics, media and translation (Bassnett and Schäffner 2010: 2). The next section focuses on this very issue and examines the nexus between political discourse, news and (invisible) translation.

### **3.4.2 Political Discourse, news and translation**

The majority of news stories are not about events, or what people do but are about what people say. In Bell's words (1991: 53) 'Most of what journalists report is talk, not action'. This point is of considerable importance in a discussion of the translation of international political figures in mediated news texts. Schäffner's (2004; 2008, 2010, 2012) large body of research on the translation of political discourse investigates what happens to political texts in the process of translation and recontextualization across lingua-cultural spaces. Schäffner (2008: 3) notes 'Newspapers regularly provide quotes of statements by foreign politicians, without

explicitly indicating that these politicians were actually speaking in their own languages'. It is in these situations that CDA can aid in uncovering ideological slippage; manipulation and distortion may occur in the rendering of speech acts across cultures. Through the (a)buse of translation, as Federici (2011: 1397) has remarked 'Journalists become power brokers establishing a new narrative for their readers. The power and influence that newspapers exert over their readership is immense'.

For the perspective taken in this study, political discourse is intended in its widest acceptance. Starting from the premise that 'Political activity does not exist without the use of language' (Chilton 2004: 6), Schäffner (2004: 117) points out that 'the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what is called 'politics' in a broad sense'. Schäffner also notes the 'symbiosis of politics and entertainment - the reduction of actual content to a minimum and the addition of aspects of 'entertainment' to "sell" politics' (ibid. 119). It is from this acceptance of 'politics' that the language of Berlusconi is discussed and analysed here. Nevertheless, the types of text and talk that are 'political in the narrow or prototype sense' have usually been the focus of interest for political discourse scholars such as Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak (see sections 1.3, 2.2- 2.3). One of the aims of CDA is to highlight and examine the particular and ideological uses of language, and their underlying power relations in one language and one culture. In the case of translation studies, however, textual features, ideological contexts and underlying relations of power apply both to the source text and culture and to the target text and culture, thus providing the means to make comparisons between two linguistic realities. Schäffner comments that in translation studies today 'the focus is on social, cultural and communicative practices, on the cultural and ideological significance of translating and of translations, on the external politics of translation behaviour and socio-cultural factors' (2004: 136). This interest in human communicative activity in socio-cultural environments and the texts and discourses which are its products are viewed as the common link between TS and Critical/Political Discourse Analysis.

Following Schäffner, this study employs the analytical frameworks in CDA to compare translated text embedded in newspaper articles with the source text (where possible) as part of the three pronged methodology discussed in Chapter 1. Schäffner (2004: 118) points out that:

It is through translation that information is made available to addressees beyond national borders; and it is frequently the case that reactions in one country to statements that were made in another country are actually reactions to the information as it was provided in translation.

Holland (2006: 230) underlines the intricacy of the meaning making process when a media text has the added dimension of lingua-cultural plurality:

If any mass media text may be seen as the product of an 'extended chain' of communicative events (Fairclough 1995: Ch.3), this must be especially the case for texts involving more than one language: linguistic (and therefore socio-cultural) plurality inevitably entails additional complexity in the 'chain'.

Schäffner points to CDA and a critical reflection on the strategic use of 'key words' for achieving specific political aims. She (2004: 121) affirms that there is general agreement in linguistics today that meanings are not inherent to words. Neither are they stable. It is rather the case that language users assign meanings in communicative contexts:

Political concepts too are relative to the discourse of a cultural or political group, and thus contestable. The experiential and socio-cultural background of language users also needs to be taken into account when it comes to translation.

While efforts to engage theoretically with news and media translation are relatively few within the field of translation studies, research conducted until now (with a few notable exceptions such as Bielsa and Bassnett's *Translation and Globalization*, 2009) tends to focus on specific language pairs (Schäffner 2012: 869). This type of approach brings to light the paradoxes and dichotomies of insular nationalisms within a globalized world and the ways in which these attitudes are manifested through news discourse and the strategic use of translation. The following section



offers a brief overview of the scholarship that addresses issues of national image-building, framing, stereotyping, and perceptions of the other in relation to news translation.

### 3.4.3 National images in the news

The representation of the Other in news reporting has been examined utilizing various methodological and theoretical approaches. From Bourdieusian theory of practice in the field of journalism (Brownlie 2010) to cultural translation (Conway 2006, 2012) and imagology (van Doorslaer 2010, 2012, forthcoming), all seem to agree that the thread of 'us' and 'them' dialectics runs through all national news narratives.

Van Doorslaer's (2009, 2010, 2012) quantitative research into the gatekeeping, (de)selection, and framing principles of the Belgian (Dutch and French) media's coverage of international news indicates that 'domestic and national perspectives still seem to have a major impact on journalistic choices and formulations as well as on underlying values, norms and explanations' (2010: 183). He also suggests that the selections are likely to be influenced by stereotypes, national and cultural images, beliefs and prejudices held by journalists and newsroom workers (2010: *ibid.*). Kelly's (1998: 57-63) study adopts CDA approaches to unravelling representations of Spain in the British press. She demonstrates that evaluative translational decisions on culturebound terms influenced the portrayal of Spain in the British press (see also Valdeon 2010), and deduces:

Decisions taken in translation solutions can introduce ideological elements ... which reproduce and reinforce myths or stereotypes existing in the target culture regarding the source culture thus preventing, rather than furthering, intercultural understanding. (1998: 57)

For her part, Conway (2008:30) suggests that research into the journalist's relation to broader social systems, such as the influence of the politics of national identity on the journalists' institutional roles would provide fruitful insights. Conway adopts a

cultural approach to translation in the news and suggests that for the journalist 'openness to the Other is a necessary condition: journalists ... risk imposing their preconceived notions on the people they attempt to describe, missing the very point of their act of interpretation' (2012: 11). Brownlie (2010: 48) on the other hand observes that there is an inherent inclination to construe another culture in relation to one's own. This human characteristic is exploited by news journalists who arouse interest in the reader by appealing to the news values (see section 2.3) of Consonance and Proximity. In her study 'Representing news from France' (2010), Brownlie draws on Bourdieu's theory of fields, in particular the field of journalism (1992) to devise a seven point checklist of 'positionings' that need to be taken into account when analysing a news text.

1. Newspaper positioning
2. Genre -type of article
3. Habitus of journalist
4. Positioning of addressees
5. Socio-cultural positioning of target culture (and source?)
6. Intercultural positioning, historical and actual relations between the target and source culture
7. Transcultural positioning: shared practices, issues and attitudes between the two cultures

(Brownlie 2010: 34)

According to her these seven positionings form the structure of the field of foreign news reporting in British broadsheets. Brownlie (2010: 52) concludes that 'Journalists play an important role as intercultural and bilingual mediators who enable [the process] to occur. Events are translated (interlingually and intercultural), explicated, commented on and reassembled'. Journalists create 'intercultural narratives' through 'informing, persuading, entertaining, and teaching while drawing on pre-existing cultural schemas and narratives'. The suggestion that journalists 'teach' the audience through 'intercultural narratives,' is somewhat

problematic. Based on what authority and with what knowledge do foreign correspondents, for example, presume to 'teach'? This question will be examined more closely in Chapter 8.

### **3.5 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has brought together the theoretical strands in current Translation Studies that underpin this research that are closely connected to the overarching theories on discourse and ideology discussed in the previous chapter. From an overview of recent movements and ideas in TS research, the core themes of invisibility in translational practices, ideology, and the positionality of the translator have been discussed with reference to the particular question of the role of translation in news production. The debates on globalization and localization in translation practices has been described in which the specific area of news translation is embedded and an attempt has been made to define and delineate exactly what is meant by the expression 'news translation'. The final part of the chapter focuses on the nexus between news discourse, politics, and translation, and concludes with some reflexions on the ways in which translation in news discourse becomes a means by which national images are constructed. From these considerations, then, we have laid the theoretical and methodological foundations on which the analyses are based that follow in Chapters 5-8. However, as stated at the beginning of Chapter 2 with Bourdieu (see 2.1), meaning cannot be interpreted with the compass of linguistic analysis alone. Any understanding of language must be firmly embedded within a context. Therefore, in order to unravel the representations of Berlusconi's language in British newspapers discussed in Chapters 5-7, what follows is an essential sociolinguistic, political, and historical map of the Berlusconi years.



## 4.

### **The Berlusconi years - 1994-2014 - a sociolinguistic, socio-historic overview**

This part of the study outlines the sociolinguistic, socio-political and historical backdrop indispensable to the interpretation of data discussed in the chapters that follow. The period under analysis covers the 20 years, or 'il Ventennio Berlusconiano' from 1994-2014 in which Berlusconi rose to power, both politically and culturally, and it is argued here, linguistically. The chapter commences with an essential yet not comprehensive, chronological overview of the language situation in Italy since WWII. This serves to contextualise Berlusconi's discourse within the broader framework of the Italian language and its evolution at national level (sections 4.1-4.2). From a general discussion of the Italian language, the sections that follow (4.3-4.4) focus on contemporary political discourse, specifically on the ways in which Berlusconi's speech acts revolutionised Italian political language. The last three sections (4.4-5.6) provide an introductory discussion of the specificity of taboo language, and the politically correct in the Italian context.

#### **4.1 One Nation, One Language?**

One hundred and fifty years after Italian Unification (1861), linguist Gian Luigi Beccaria writes:

È un importantissimo punto di arrivo che la quasi totalità degli italiani ora parli italiano, dopo secoli che questa nostra lingua è stata soprattutto scritta e non parlata, lingua di cultura e non di natura.

[It is an extremely important milestone that nearly all Italians now speak Italian. For centuries, our language has been above all written and not spoken, a language of culture, not of nature]. (Beccaria 2011)

The assertion that nearly all Italians now speak Italian might at first appear tautologous; Beccaria's reflection needs to be read in the light of the language situation prior to Italy's political unification, and the subsequent institution of 'Italian' as a shared national language. 'La questione della lingua' [the question of language] is one that has accompanied Italy's long literary and social history. From Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (1304-5 ed. 1998) and Manzoni's (1868) call for linguistic unity, to establishing an Italian standard (Berruto 1995), the issues of regional and national identity reflected in language continue to stir up debate within Italian linguistics (see Berruto 1995; Cortelazzo 2000; D'Achille 2003; De Mauro 2005; Tosi 2004; Trifone 2007). An in-depth analysis of the complexities surrounding Italy's singular linguistic heritage and its evolution in the process of nation building are outside the scope of this research. Nevertheless, in order to understand the significance of Berlusconi's language, both as linguistic code and as discourse within the Italian context, the following sections sketch out the historical, socio-cultural and linguistic settings in which the variety of Italian used by politicians developed (see Beccaria 1988, 1995/2002; De Mauro 1963, 1970; Marazzini 2003; Mengaldo 1987/2007, 1994, Trifone 1994; Tosi 2001, 2004, for a more in-depth discussion).

At the time of unification approximately 80% of the Italian population was illiterate (Marazzini 2002: 394), the highest percentage in Europe following Russia (Beccaria 2011). De Mauro (1972: 36) has calculated that of the remaining 20%, 2.5 % of the population had an 'adequate grasp' of the yet to be 'Italian Language'. Other calculations (Castellani 1982: 4) suggest that figure is nearer 10% but in either case only a very small portion of inhabitants of the Italian peninsula could speak what today we call Italian. Until then Italy had been divided, not only geographically but

also linguistically by its regional dialects<sup>9</sup>. Tosi (2004), who prefers the denotation 'unofficial languages', remarks 'late unification maintained a situation of linguistic diversity that is unique within Europe' (ibid.: 248). Italy had in fact been living a situation of diglossia<sup>10</sup> (Berruto 2002: 227, 2005: 81-95; Mengaldo 1994: 37-44. See also De Mauro 1963; Sobrero and Miglietta 2002) even before unification; Latin was still recognised as the written language of culture and also the language of the church while most oral communication, even between the educated elites would take place in the local vernacular. In 1868 the government officially imposed 'standard Italian' on the population, thus raising Dante's Florentine to the status of national language while demoting the other languages of Italy to the status of dialects. Author Alessandro Manzoni was requested by the Italian government to make recommendations about the ways in which the 'buona lingua', both written and spoken, could be diffused amongst the people. Manzoni suggested that enforced learning of the newly established 'Italian Language' in schools would help to create cohesion and a sense of national identity. The education authorities took up Manzoni's advice but the implementation of such politics was carried out with uneven success and would take time to have effect. In the meantime ordinary people continued to interact in their regional idiom, while 'Italian' became the official language for administrative purposes and the standard for formal

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<sup>9</sup> A contested concept, dialect has various definitions in different linguistic environments (See Trudgill, 1994 for example. For simplification here we take Sobrero and Miglietta's (2002: 158) definition: 'un sistema linguistico autonomo rispetto alla lingua nazionale, dunque un sistema che ha caratteri strutturali propri' [a linguistic system that is autonomous to the national language, therefore a system that has its own structural characteristics]. We should add that lexis also plays a fundamental role in the structure of a dialect.

<sup>10</sup> The preferred definition of diglossia in this context remains Ferguson's: 'Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex), superimposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but it is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation' (Ferguson 1959: 435 in Hymes 1964: 429-39).

communication (De Mauro 1970; Migliorini 2007). Far from becoming a universal, monolithic language, hybrid forms known as the 'regional Italians', began to spawn as a consequence of mixing local dialects with the official national language. However, the turn of the new century saw the national language gradually spread through a number of interconnected social and cultural processes. First of all, the new capital Rome became an important focal point and the first national governments placed emphasis on a strong, centralised political and administrative organization in spite of Italy's polycentricity. To some extent the stigmatization of local dialects and the promotion of the national language within the school system had begun to take effect, but the most influential factor in the spread of the national language was internal migration. The increasing urbanization of the unified state combined with migration from south to north, national military service, bureaucratic dealings, and the circulation of goods and people during World War I and II, lead to Italian becoming the lingua franca between inhabitants of the Italian peninsula (De Mauro 1970; Tosi 2004). Simultaneously, as Tosi (2004: 251) points out, the movement of peoples and the consequent contact with other linguistic codes produced a number of variations from the 'standard' that together formed a continuum of linguistic evolution (Berruto 2002: 147-157). It was in fact during the period of Fascism (1922-1943) with its patriotic rhetoric and linguistic nationalism that the Italian language really began to take root (Tosi 2001: 7). From Fascism to television, the next section discusses the diffusion of Italian as the national language during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **4.1.1 From Fascist rhetoric to the mass media - a linguistic miracle**

Mussolini's Fascist regime had three main objectives when it established an institution to monitor the Italian language, the State Academy for Italian Language; 1) repression of dialects; 2) opposition to linguistic minorities 3) purification of the national language through the censoring of foreign words (Tosi 2001: 7). Ironically, the slogan for this campaign, 'Italiani boicottate le parole straniere!' contains a derivative of the English word 'boycott'. One of the consequences of the Fascist fear



of linguistic contamination from exposure to foreign languages was its impact on foreign film imports. If today Italy is a country that prefers dubbing, it is due to Mussolini (Duranti 1998: 482). These three objectives in language planning met with varied success. What was far more successful was the Fascist rhetoric in itself that emphasised strength, virility and energy; pithy patriotic slogans were used to galvanize the Italian people and encourage them to embrace the new, modern spirit of the times (Tosi 2001: 10). Mussolini was also quick to adopt the emerging technical advancements in communication. He immediately saw their potential and understood that radio, newspapers, and film were the new media that would be the greatest means of disseminating Fascist propaganda. According to Tosi (2001: 11) 'Any lasting impact on the national language was achieved by way of exposure to the rhetoric of the period and not really through the attempted imposition of a Fascist language policy'. The influence of the mass media on people's use of language steadily grew throughout the twentieth century, but the turning point came during the era of 'the economic miracle'. Industrialization, the economic boom, and the resulting increase in disposable income, all happened with staggering speed between the years 1950-1970 with profound consequences on the lives of all Italians. According to Ginsborg (2003: 239):

The years of the 'miracle' were the key period in an extraordinary process of transformation that was taking place in the everyday life of Italians - in their culture, family life, leisure time activities, consumption habits, *even the language they spoke* [emphasis added].

In 1951, just before the advent of television in Italy, 80% of the Italian population used dialect regularly, while for 63% per cent it was the idiom normally used in every circumstances (De Mauro 1973: 108). Italian was the language of written communication, for scholastic purposes, or in situations that required formality. Dialects instead continued to be the expressive means of communication in everyday life. However, linguists agree that the most radical changes to linguistic status quo occurred with the advent of the mass media, in particular the diffusion of television (De Mauro 1970, 2005; Beccaria 1987; Tosi 2001, 2004). As Ginsborg (2003: 240) puts it, 'No innovation [of these] had greater effect on everyday life than

television'. In 1954 when the first TV transmissions were broadcast, De Mauro (2005: 141) notes that approximately 18% of the population used Italian as their first language, while another 18% could code switch between dialect and Italian. Ten years later nearly half of Italian households owned a television (Ginsborg 2003: 240), and intellectual Pierpaolo Pasolini (1964) declared that 'L'Italiano è finalmente nato!' [Italian is finally born]. Although his description of Italian is of a 'technical' language inspired by capitalism and the industrialized north, it is nevertheless the mass media that disseminated the new idiom. Tosi (2004: 279) remarks that television was a decisive factor not only for the Italian language, it also indirectly contributed to the cultural unification of Italy. De Mauro observed as early as 1973:

La televisione ha inciso sul comportamento linguistico degli italiani a ogni livello del sistema linguistico; inoltre essa ha modificato profondamente, piu di altri mass media il modo con cui per secoli, e ancora fino a quindici anni fa, sono stati usati i molteplici dialetti e l'idioma nazionale del paese (1973: 108).

[Television has influenced the Italian people's use of language at every level of the linguistic system; in addition, more than any other form of mass media, it has profoundly modified the ways in which for centuries, even until fifteen years ago, the multiple national dialects and idioms have been used.]

Television's unifying influence on Italian cultural and linguistic national identity during those years could be exemplified by the status of television game show host and celebrity Mike Bongiorno, who became a symbol of the nation. Initially a star of the RAI, Bongiorno was a key figure for many years on Berlusconi's Canale 5 television channel. He was often mildly ridiculed for the simplicity of his language and his spectacular mediocrity. De Mauro (1973: 111) comments on Bongiorno's vocabulary of fifteen words, while Eco (1961/2005) in his eponymous essay, 'La Fenomenologia di Mike Bongiorno' writes:

Mike Bongiorno parla un basic italian. Il suo discorso realizza il massimo di semplicità. Abolisce i congiuntivi, le proposizioni subordinate, riesce quasi a rendere invisibile la dimensione sintassi. Evita i pronomi, ripetendo sempre per esteso il soggetto, impiega un numero stragrande di punti fermi. Non si avventura mai in incisi o parentesi, non usa espressioni ellittiche, non allude, utilizza solo metafore ormai assorbite dal lessico comune. [Mike Bongiorno speaks basic Italian. His discourse is the height of simplicity. He abolishes subjunctive forms, subordinate

clauses, and he almost makes the dimension of syntax invisible. He avoids pronouns, repeating the subject in full, and uses an extraordinary number of full stops. He never dares to use parentheses or elipsis, he does not allude, only using metaphors that have been absorbed into common speech.] (2005: 32)

Eco's analysis of Bongiorno's use of the Italian language appears to pre-empt a definition of Italian neo-standard. Berruto's (1987: 83) observations of the levelling effects of language use would seem to confirm this: 'Una prima direzione verso cui pare muoversi l'italiano è la semplificazione e omogeneizzazione di paradigma e l'eliminazione o riduzione delle irregolarità' [the first direction towards which Italian seems to be moving is the simplification and homogenization of paradigms and the elimination or reduction of irregularities]. Sobrero and Miglietta (2007: 61-78) give three definitions by different scholars of what they refer to as 'Italiano dell'uso commune', a middle way between the rigid norms of traditional standard Italian and the more slipshod forms of 'italiano popolare'. They also note that the Italian of common usage is largely influenced by television and legitimized by the media in general. Beccaria (2002: 271/2) sees the negative side to what he calls the 'impoverishment' and standardization of the Italian language. He argues that the 'levelling' processes taking place in Italian are at the cost of 'flattening' the rich and variegated linguistic patrimony of the peninsula. Finally, De Mauro (2005: 144) observes the dominance of the spoken over the written in contemporary Italian, emphasised by the highly diffused use of mobile phones in Italy. He comments that 'sappiamo che la conversazione telefonica libera senza remore l'uso più informale del repertorio linguistico di cui si dispone' [we know that phone conversations open up the floodgates to the most informal linguistic repertoire that we have at our disposal]. Beccaria (2002: 275) also notes the predominance of oral culture in Italy, and asks:

Che razza di vittoria è quella dell'italofonia e della morte dei dialetti, che suffragio universale e 'democrazia' in fatto di lingua se ciò dovesse portare a un italiano modestamente comune, quello dei rotocalchi di poco peso, del giornale a fumetti, al possesso di una lingua sempre più vuota e più povera, alla mal orecchiata formula, al piatto precotto, al fast food, al frasario-ideario tuttofare?

[What victory can we claim in a common spoken Italian and the death of dialects, what universal suffrage and 'democracy' of language is gained if it lead us to a

relatively common Italian, that of lightweight weekly magazines and comics, to the possession of a language that is increasingly void and impoverished, to the ugly grammatical constructions, to the pre-cooked dinner, to fast food, to a collection of all-purpose ready-made phrases?]

From these examples, then, we have seen the enormous impact of the mass media on the evolution of the varieties of the Italian language, while noting the predominance of the spoken, informal registers generally known as neo-standard, or 'italiano dell'uso comune'. In the next section we introduce the notion of neo-standard subvarieties. In particular we focus on the coarse subvariety that is relevant to the discussion that has evolved from what could be termed 'youthspeak'.

#### **4.1.2 From youthspeak to rudespeak- innovation in Italian today**

What Trifone (2007) has defined as a 'guazzabuglio', a 'hotch-potch' of linguistic influences, is 'il linguaggio giovanile' [the language of the young]. A contentious sociolinguistic category that defies precise definition (Colella 2008: 186; Trifone 2007; Miglietti Sobrero 2007) young Italians have mixed and matched linguistic codes to create a form of speech that has been called a variety, slang, or antilanguage (Tosi 2001: 188), or what Berruto (1987) has denoted as substandard. In the context of negative perspectives on neo-standard, some areas of change and evolution are attributed to young users of the Italian language. One such innovation, developed by the young between the 1970s and 1980s that has made a great impact on the language of the less young, is the use of coarse, or vulgar expressions with metaphoric and emphatic connotations, particularly in the mass media (Nobili 2007: 1) and increasingly in politics and other spheres of public life (Tosi 2001: 85). The most popular and now widely accepted are *cazzo* [dick, prick], a pass-partout exclamation, and *casino* [brothel] whose meaning ranges from 'quantity' [as in 'a lot of'], to 'dispair' [what a mess!]. Not unusual at all are their frequent derivatives: *incazzato* [that Tosi translates as 'fed-up', but might be better translated with 'pissed off' to stay within a similar semantic set]; *cazzone* [useless]; etc. which are gradually loosing their sexual connotations thus appearing less

vulgar to a wider spectrum of age groups. The same has happened to, *sfottere* [to take the piss] and *fesso* (stupid) which today have completely lost their sexual reference in the minds of virtually all speakers. One particular example will be cited here as it is a diminutive of one of the lexemes used by Berlusconi and discussed in Chapter 5. Trifone (2007: 144) notes the use of ‘*gnocchetta*’ in youthspeak, a diminutive of ‘*gnocca*’. The definition given is simply ‘*ragazza carina e desiderabile*’. We might also add that ‘*fighetto*’, ‘*figo/a*’ are lexical items whose origins are sexual (see section 5.3) but within the Italian lingua-culture have lost their denotative meaning and have positive connotations. In general, then, we can note an overall process of colloquialization of the spoken Italian language as it is used in social life and in the mass media such as television and newspapers. A widespread ‘*sdoganamento della lingua*’ [liberation of language] has taken place (see section 4.2.6), not least of all in the political arena. The following section focuses on the specific linguistic area of political discourse within the socio-historic context of the Berlusconi years. First we begin with some reflections as to what political discourse actually is starting with the era prior to Berlusconi.

## **4.2 Politichese, political language and the political scene**

### **4.2.1 Political discourse – the roots**

It has been argued that there is no such thing as political language in itself – it is not a separate entity from the language used in everyday life (see section 3.5.1). As Corcoran (1990: 53) succinctly puts it: ‘It is not simply difficult to separate out the intermingling of politics and language. Rather, one cannot distinguish between politics and language because they do not occupy separate spheres of existence that merely “overlap”’. Political discourse therefore cannot be isolated from general linguistic trends and the society that produces them (Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 8). From this perspective, the radical changes that took place in Italian Political discourse can be better understood. It also helps to underpin the notion sustained here that all of Berlusconi’s utterances are political, even when they are not addressing a ‘political theme’ in the strictest sense.

From this assumption, how can we then define political discourse? Chilton and Schäffner (2002: 6) indentify two strands: institutional political discourse such as parliamentary debates, and party conference speeches that are ideologically lead, and 'everyday political discourse - everyday conflicts between men and women, workers and managers, policemen and black youths, even school children and teachers - are sometimes by some people characterised as political'. Eco (1973) on the other hand traces the roots of political language back to Aristotle's classification of three types of discourse; juridical, deliberative, and epideictic. 'Rhetoric' was about the second of these types, which today we would call political discourse. Eco argues that the whole aim of political discourse is to be persuasive in order to convince the listener of the acceptability of an assertion. It should make the listener *consent* to the point of view of the speaker, even though other options may be available. In this sense rhetorical speech is an honest exercise, according to Eco. Instead of imposing will by force, the speaker wants consensus, a convinced adhesion to the speaker's point of view. Eco (ibid.) notes, however, that another type of rhetoric was prevalent in Italy at the time he was writing; a language full of vacuous, oxymoronic expressions that ended up by saying nothing. This type of political discourse dominated the political landscape prior to Berlusconi and of which we speak in the following section.

#### **4.2.2 Before the Cav**

This section focuses on the linguistic variety of political language that in Italian is known as *politichese* (which comes with disparaging connotations). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give an in-depth analysis of the evolution of Italian political discourse (for a review of the language of Italian politics, see Croci 2001; Dell'Anna 2010; Fedel 1999; Leso, 1994; Lyttelton 2009; McCarthy 1996, 1997, 2001; Mengaldo 1994). However, for our purposes here a brief overview of recent developments will aid in contextualising the object of analysis, Berlusconi's language. This thesis spouses the argument that political language in Italy can be divided into pre and post Berlusconi. Until the beginning of the 1990s political language in Italy was

particularly complex, often obscuring meaning rather than clarifying it with what has been called 'Baroque eloquence' (Eco 1973: 102), a legacy from the 'bureaucratise' of the 60s and 70s. Calvino (1965) referred to this tendency towards vacuous ambiguity as an 'anti-lingua' [antilanguage] for its ability to render words meaningless thus losing their emphatic power. In the political, as in the bureaucratic language variety this evolved as a form of, 'terrore semantico' [semantic terror]; a fear of speaking clearly because speaking clearly means taking responsibility for what has actually been said (ibid). McCarthy (2001: 1996) observes that Aldo Moro, Christian Democrat leader and Prime Minister who had the task of wielding power over an unlikely coalition with the Communist Party, was 'the incarnation of obscurity ... the verbs are a maze of subjunctives and conditionals, and the prepositions do not define the precise relationship between the nouns'. Not only was the grammar obscure, the message was also suitably vague: 'The agreement with the communists is described as "un qualche accordo parziale sulle cose da fare, per un certo tempo"' [some sort of partial agreement on things that need to be done, for a certain period of time] (ibid.). McCarthy argues, however, that Moro's speeches were far from 'empty', containing coded messages for the various factions with whom he wished to communicate. It was the public that was left out of the equation. According to Croci (2001) the language dimension of politics at that time was in fact directly related to its function within a party system, as well as the instability of the electorate. Croci identifies two dominant features of political discourse which correspond to the so-called First and Second Republics (see section 4.3.2). First he analyses what Eco refers to as 'politichese', and in accord with McCarthy, attributes its ambiguities to the requirements and constraints of the overall socio-political scenario of the period.

From the late 1950s to the early 1990s, in fact, the language of Italian politics was basically a cryptic code which politicians used to send transverse messages among themselves and to other insiders, and which baffled all outsiders. In the early 1990s however, as Italian politics entered a phase of turmoil, its language began to undergo noticeable changes, over and beyond those that have also occurred in other sectoral languages. (Croci 2003: 349)

Croci refers to the 'old style' politichese as 'Morotese', named after Moro. The most famous example of Moro's language is the expression 'convergenze parallele' [parallel convergence] in referring to the uneasy alliance that he had forged. Eco nonetheless opines that what was wrong with political discourse of the 1970s was that it alienated the public with whom it was supposed to communicate; the coded messages from one group of elite to another clearly went over the heads of the vast majority of the electorate

La classe politica tradizionale italiana non è tanto una classe di tecnici quanto una classe di intellettuali letterati che non rinuncia al parlare ornato come simbolo di prestigio, di status sociale, in sostituzione di un potere tecnologico ed economico che non gli appartiene. Il mondo industriale si esprime in modo ben più concreto ( Eco 1973: 104).

[The traditional Italian political class is not so much a class of technicians but a class of intellectual letterati who refuse to give up speaking in an elaborated way as a symbol of prestige, of social status, to substitute the technicological and economical power that they do not possess. The industrial world expresses itself in a far more concrete way.]

Towards the end of the 'anni di piombo', the 'Years of Lead', a reference to the terrorist attacks, political extremisms, and mafia struggles during the 1970s and early 1980s, the political situation in Italy was in disarray. Into this scenario stepped a new type of politician with a new type of language. The next section introduces the controversial precursor to Berlusconi, Umberto Bossi

#### **4.2.3 Bossi, his language, and his linguistic influence**

It can be argued that before Berlusconi's metaphors and similes Umberto Bossi and his populist language had opened the gates to a new form of political discourse. Tosi emphasises (2001: 110) 'The *Lega Lombarda* marked the beginning of a new political era and established a new pattern of communication with supporters. Its language reflected a totally new conception of politics and consensus'. The Northern League started as a small regional movement protesting against taxes levied on a national level. Socially, the movement re-established direct communication with the people, in meetings, in rallies or in newspapers. As Tosi



explains (2001:110), 'the language is explicitly anti-intellectual, it refuses euphemism and dialogue, but it manages to focus the attention of supporters on key concepts, often worded in rhythmic slogans: *Roma ladrona, la Lega non perdona* [Thieving Rome, the League will not forgive you]. Their language had the pretence of transparency while their rude and crude expressions attempted to demonstrate proximity with the electorate. By speaking in public as in private, representatives of the Northern League used revolutionary language in order to appear different to the old political caste. The new protagonists of politics such as Berlusconi and Bossi wished to disassociate themselves from the previous political regime, which had sealed its own fate with the detached linguistic variety that it had adopted.

Yet the DC's obscurity and the PCI's Gramscianism marked, by their solipsism, the end of a regime. They invited a populist reaction: the new language had a limited vocabulary, shorter periods and an aggressive tone. Speeches in the piazza became less important than television talk shows (McCarthy 2001: 198).

However what started as a linguistic movement to simplicity and clarity soon began to decline into the coarse and uncouth. Since then Italian political discourse has continued to plunge the depths of vulgarity while simultaneously producing a crescendo of verbal denigration of women (Agnew 2011; Rodotà 2011). From Bossi's slogan 'La Lega c'è l'ha duro' [The Northern League has got a hard-on] to Berlusconi's 'Forza gnocca' (see section 5.20, as Katan (2004: 108) puts it 'The leaders of Italy's most important political parties use language that no politician or influential party leader could ever use in America or Britain. The movement of politically correct language [in Italy] is almost non-existent' (see section 4.x). Shock tactics with language were used by the Northern League to replace costly investment in communication strategies in the media:

Since the Lega had no money for the cool medium of television, it used transgression in order to gain publicity. Bossi littered his statements with 'cazzo' (prick) and 'stronzo' (shit). When a law restricting the rights of immigrants was passed, it was too soft for Bossi, who called it 'una presa per il culo del paese' (a phrase literally translatable as 'the country is being buggered', meaning that Italians were being conned) (McCarthy 2001: 199)

While Bossi was protesting in the squares and chanting his slogans, businessman Silvio Berlusconi was preparing to step down onto the political field.

#### **4.2.4 A new era and a new political rhetoric**

Berlusconi's rise to power at the beginning of the Second Republic signalled a new phase in this process that was revolutionizing the old turgid 'politichese' (Eco 1973). As Tosi (2001: 114) notes 'The revolution in the language of Italian politics is one of the important effects of the transition from the so-called First Republic to the Second Republic'. With the collapse of the First Republic following *Tangentopoli*, the political arena was cleared and left wide open to newcomers, anxious to grab the vote of an electorate that no longer believed in the previous party system or in the old politicians who presented themselves in different guise. Enter Berlusconi. Berlusconi's background in communications, advertising and the media in this context pushed this linguistic revolution further. (Benedetti 2004; Croci 2001). McCarthy (1996, 2001) argues that, contrary to what the users of this modern political speech claim, "'gentese" ['peoplese', of the people] is merely another linguistic instrument which serves the purpose to capture the electorate's attention in that particular transitional period'. Therefore it is still a political language characterised by a pretence to clarity, simplicity, and spontaneity in order to be understood by 'la gente'. As we saw in the previous section, the first exponents of a type of 'gentese' emerged at the beginning of the 1980s with the Northern League. It was the advent of Berlusconi, however, which brought political discourse in Italy to the masses with striking similarities to Mussolini for their use, knowledge, and manipulation of the mass media.

#### **4.2.5 Onto the pitch and into the political fray**

'Il Nuovo che avanza' [The new that marches forth] of Berlusconi combined forces with a language that adopted metaphors of strength, reliance, power, and most significantly of victory (Semino and Masci 1996). McCarthy (2001: 165) notices

Football metaphors abounded in Berlusconi's speeches, as he tried to represent politics in terms of a football match, naturally with his side winning[...] All his language was simple and direct, the opposite of the complicated Roman political rhetoric. He had learned a lot from Umberto Bossi, but avoided the latter's vulgarity.

Berlusconi's entrepreneurial background became his linguistic ally in creating his own party's new language. 'In order to choose the name and image of the new organization he employed all the considerable marketing, advertising and polling techniques of Fininvest' (McCarthy 2001: 290). These corporate strategies involved teams of communication specialists. They sent a video cassette of symbolic importance with Berlusconi's 'presentation speech' explaining to the nation the motives behind his decision to launch into politics (Ginsborg 2005). Berlusconi's Forza Italia party has been defined as a machine (Mazzoleni 1995, 2004) or as a procedure to escape bankruptcy and prison (Ginsborg 2005; Traveglio 2008). The emphasis on planned functionality and operative nature applies to the language it uses, too.

The rhetorics of novelty and the communications strategy succeeded. Berlusconi's coalition ruled for 7 months in 1994 and managed to impose its populist views to a large portion of the Italian population. The initial vote of protest against the corruption of the politicians and politics of the first republic was also a vote in favour of a new language of politics. Underneath the rhetorics, however, lay a political ideology with a neo-liberal economic programme, and strong Thatcherist overtones: fewer taxes, greater choices for citizens, competition and efficiency in public life, residual welfare state. In Berlusconi's party, traditional and stereotypical values were reasserted. Family was the pivotal force in Italian life, both in terms of entrepreneurship and personal solidarity. The figure of the lonely force of the leader who was the object of attack of the magistrates of Tangentopoli became another trope. Different interpretations of his success have been put forward, some betray the force of Berlusconi's own rhetorics in influencing commentators. His appeal to many Italians was due to the fact that he was an extremely successful businessman, and what many people dreamt of for themselves. He was also the antithesis of the career politician in language and in deed.

Several detractors and political opponents emphasised between 1994 and 2001 the unsavoury nature of the conflict of interest of a powerful politician who is also a media tycoon. Equally, Berlusconi's early career was firmly rooted in the corruption and clientelism of the first republic (Stille 2006; Travaglio 2008). Nevertheless, the rhetoric of the new and the novelty of its communication strategies paid dividends in the 2001 political elections. Berlusconi had the resources of a media empire at his disposal and acted accordingly: 18million copies of an illustrated 127 page booklet on his life, *Una storia Italiana* (2001) were sent to Italian families (Ginsborg 2003). The campaign was fierce and for the first time the election had become the object of heated international debate. In spite of the negative interventions from the foreign press, Berlusconi forged ahead with a landslide victory. The force of his language rested on simple concepts: 'his major campaigning points, which took the form of a solemn promise to Italians signed on television, were repeated incessantly in simple language' (Ginsborg 2003: 321). Mazzoleni (1995, 2004) however argues that Berlusconi's media empire is but a part of the puzzle in explaining Berlusconi's win in the 2001 elections. This victory arrived in spite of an avid anti-Berlusconi campaign on the part of some of the foreign media, in particular *The Economist*, (4 May 2001), that famously entitled its cover story, 'Why Silvio Berlusconi is unfit to lead Italy'. The well-respected UK-based weekly magazine found several factors regarding Berlusconi's affairs as cause for concern. At the time the journal was under the direction of Bill Emmott (1993-2006), who focused on Berlusconi's juridical entanglements: 'under investigation for money laundering, complicity to murder, connections with the Mafia, tax evasion and the bribing of politicians, judges, and the tax police'. Mazzoleni points out that among these impediments not one was regarding his monopoly of the Italian media. Mazzoleni suggests that it could not be on the list of *The Economist's* reasons, because Berlusconi is legitimately in control of all his communications empire. (ibid.). Mazzoleni already in 1995 argued that Berlusconi had not won because of his media, but could not win without it (2004: 258).

Berlusconi's language, then, 'gentese' or 'discourse of serenity' (McCarthy 2001) is based on loose themes of 'neo-liberalism' and a strong allusive use of

rhetoric and colloquialism. Albertazzi (2009: 6) sums up Berlusconi's rhetorical style thus

His language, a simple colloquial style of communication that relied heavily on slogans, jokes and commonsense statements, funny anecdotes about his family and a tendency for jovial self-aggrandizement – stood in sharp contrast to the dry political style that had characterised the political era of the DC and the PCI ... cheerfully detached from the pessimistic gravitas and intellectualism of the left'

Mazzoleni concurs that 'Ultimately, Berlusconi's communication owes most of its aura to non-political ingredient' (2004: 274). This of course depends on one's definition of political discourse and of rhetorical style. Berlusconi's rhetorical 'style', heavily depended on the use of metaphor, in particular employing the semantic fields of religion, family, and sport. The use of metaphors in politics is not new as such. The novelty and distinctiveness are in the planned communications strategy that Berlusconi intended to employ.

Berlusconi's plan, however, was not to use occasional references to the world of sport but to re-invent a language for political debates that would make sense to his audience and give the advantage of being a political leader with the best communication skills (Tosi 2001: 120)

Semino and Masci (1996) provide a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Berlusconi's use of metaphor; drawing on Lakoff, Johnson and Turner's cognitive approach (Johnson 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989), the authors see metaphor as 'a way to talk and think about abstract, complex or unfamiliar concepts such as love, death, language, and in this case, politics, in terms of concrete, familiar domains (such as journeys, containers or machines) thus bringing metaphor into the sphere of everyday life' (1996: 244). The authors point out that increasing attention is placed on the use of metaphor in politics and the media. Berlusconi's discourse exploits a set of rather conventional metaphors to achieve his ends. The most salient and influential of the three source domains is sport, or specifically football, starting with the party name, *Forza Italia* (this is a typical football chant, similar to 'come on you reds'), Berlusconi's decision to

'scendere in campo' [to enter the field] in explaining his debut into politics and his attempt to form a right-wing coalition with the Northern League in order to form 'una squadra (vincente)' [a winning team]. These are but a few samples from Berlusconi's repertoire. What is significant is the fact that 'The football metaphor has fundamentally sexist implications [...] as 'the prototypical football player is undoubtedly male [...] the default sex of the candidate, not to mention the leader, is definitely male' (251). The second repertoire chooses to characterise politics as war: 'Italia ha bisogno di uomini che vengono dalla trincea della vita e di lavoro' [Italy needs men that come from the trenches of life and of work] (253). The third broad category is that drawing on religion that portrays the unique features of the leader at once 'The good Samaritan' and the 'annointed by God'. However, Berlusconi's perspicacity in reading the mood of the masses was duly rewarded. He exploited the use of clear, concrete terms and metaphors and images to appeal to the Italian people who, in the space of 20 odd years had had to come to terms with learning a new language, their national language and leaving behind, to a great extent their regional dialects. In the next section the focus shifts to the other new element in political language; talking dirty.

#### **4.2.6 Verbal vulgarities and the sleaze kicks in**

Parallel to the discourses of 'serenity' and the plain simple metaphors of Berlusconi was the general and gradual 'vulgarization' of political debate in the Italian context. Croci (2001: 364) first noted that the use of foul language had become so common in the political arena that the term *insultopoli* [Insult city] (see Lotti 1994) has been coined on the model of *Tangentopoli*. Starting from the crude language of Bossi, the increasingly frequent occurrence of bad language within Italian political discourse has produced a normalizing effect on the use of insulting or offensive idioms, not only in the political arena but in social life generally. More recently, we hear of 'sdoganamento della lingua', which in journalese (Becaria 1973) would mean official sanctioning, or legitimization of 'Rude Words' (Gorji 2007). However, it was not only the introduction of vulgar terms, but the insults that accompanied them.

Commentators noted from the very beginning of Berlusconi's ventennio a change in the tone of political language. Spinelli (1995) for example wrote against the increasingly common habit of insulting the political opponent in her article 'La parola diventa coltello' [the word becomes a knife]. More recently Priulla notes that the linguistic situation in the political arena has considerably worsened: 'Dopo la "sgarbizzazione" del linguaggio politico che ha imperversato durante la campagna elettorale del 2006, passando attraverso l'eloquio sboccata di Beppe Grillo, si chiama ormai "franchezza" la volgarità'. [from the abusive insults that triumphed during the election campaign of 2006, to the offensive speech of Beppe Grillo, in political circles, vulgarity is now called 'candour']. Priulla makes reference to one of the first indications that Berlusconi's use of language was also beginning to include the use of vulgar terms in the public sphere. During the election campaign of 2006 against Romano Prodi, the former Prime Minister said that the Italian people are not 'coglioni' [dickheads] and therefore would not vote for the left. Beppe Grillo, comedian and political activist made famous 'vaffanculo day' [fuck off day], in which to demonstrate against the political status quo. The next section links the themes discussed here of the pervasive use of bad language in the political field to the overlapping issues of political correctness and linguistic taboos in the context of Italy, and their cross-cultural perceptions and implications.

### **4.3 The Politically (in) Correct - comparative concepts of acceptability and unacceptability in public discourse**

The conflicts surrounding the political correctness (PC) movement began at its very inception in the last two decades of the twentieth century. During the 1980s the institution of 'speech codes' at some North American universities made it a disciplinary offence to use expressions that could be construed as racist, sexist, offensive to minorities, or the disabled (Cameron 1995; Hughes 1993). In spite of its worthy aims of eliminating social inequalities by changing attitudes towards diversity through a proscribed use of language, Cameron (1995: 123) remarks that

PC soon began to acquire increasingly pejorative overtones. Along with Fairclough (2003) she takes the view that language is a social institution, and that institutional changes can be made to a language in order to influence society positively. Today, however, political correctness is often used as a term of abuse to signify a form of hyper prescriptivism akin to Orwell's (1949) *Newspeak*. Various descriptions of it include 'that fetishism of discourse known as political correctness' (Eagleton 2000: 89), 'a linguistic Lourdes' (Hughes 1993: 197), a 'tyranny' (Lessing 2004: 73), and 'essentially naming-revisionism' (Toolan 2003: 4). Fairclough (2003: 20) maintains that the controversy over political correctness, is not located within the question of language itself but in the shift to 'cultural politics, the politics of recognition, identity and difference'. Hughes (2010: 349) goes to the heart of the matter and questions the assumption that changing language can solve or improve societal problems, or alter mental and political attitudes. At best it might 'raise consciousness'. Surh and Johnson (2003: 5) suggest that the evaluative charge associated today with political correctness may be due to the semantics of 'correct' and 'correctness', that imply disciplinary and authority frames. The Italian refusal to accept political correctness (Baroncelli 1996; Crisafulli 2004; Serri 1996) could be interpreted from this perspective, considering Italy's recent history of Fascist linguistic policy (Lespsky 1991. See also section 4.1).

#### **4.3.1 Cross-cultural perceptions of PC discourse**

Political correctness could be viewed in a global/local dialectic (Surh and Johnson 2003: 7). On the one hand, the globalized mass media (see section 3. 2; 3.2.1) have been instrumental in disseminating PC discourses across different languages and societies. These discourses have been internalised and modulated by local historical and cultural influences in a 'localizing' process. Toolan (2003: 4) for example, investigates the use of the calque 'politiquement correct' in the cultural context of France. He concludes that the phrase implies 'mild and detached disapproval', although it harbours none of 'puritanical proscription' linked to North American and British attempts to promote a politically correct society. The cultural politics of



PC has permeated the British socio-cultural context in particular, albeit with some resistance, where it shares common linguistic and cultural ground with the United States, and where culture bumps (Archer 1986) are less likely to occur. On the contrary, some European cultures, Italy in primis, have shown considerable opposition to what Fairclough (2003) refers to as 'linguistic interventions' or 'linguistic restructuring' in the name of political correctness. These two lexical choices are in themselves examples of 'discursive PC', as Fairclough himself would concede; his construction of the notions of 'restructuring' or 'interventions' of language are what others who are not from hegemonic Anglophone cultures might construe as a detrimental form of linguistic and cultural engineering:

What Bourdieu refers to as 'symbolic violence' – the symbolic violence characteristic of PC – has implications for languages other than English and cultural contexts other than Anglo-American and it is the potential damage within and across languages and cultures which [we believe] necessitates a critical stance on the 'PC' phenomenon as it continues to act as a discursive constraint on so many of the important cultural and political debates of our time (Surh and Johnson 2003: 16).

In the Italian context, the debate on political correctness is largely a journalistic one. News narratives on gaffes and utterances that are 'politicamente scorretto' are the only evidence of public awareness of what the expression means. There is an apparent disengagement with its underlying themes in Italian scholarship and a dearth of literature on the subject. As Katan observes 'In Italy, political correctness is still an academic exercise' (Private communication 15 April 2012). Unsurprisingly, then, as Tosi (2001: 84) notes, an English borrowing is often used when PC language is discussed in Italy. Baroncelli (1996) for instance refers to 'linguaggio non-offending'. He also comments that PC has made some inroads in Italian bureaucratic terminology, and similar euphemisms have been adopted to those found in current English to indicate physical disability. For example 'sordo' [deaf] has become 'non udente' [not hearing], or 'audioleso' [hearing impaired]. In the semantic fields of sexism and racism there is much less evidence of change, as we will see in the following chapters. Nevertheless, Tosi seems to agree with the likes of Hughes (1993) who upholds the belief that the euphemistic aspects of PC actually

dull the senses to precisely the injustices and prejudices it seeks to eradicate (2001: 83). Italian linguist Trifone (2012: 16) shares Tosi's apparent scepticism as he clearly states his view:

non è possibile condividere i programmi di igiene verbali ispirati alle posizioni più dure e intransigenti della politically correct che conducono a una conformistica sterilizzazione dell'espressività, denotando, a ben guardare, un atteggiamento regressivo oltre che repressivo, di sostanziale sfiducia nella maturazione critica della coscienza contemporanea.

[One cannot agree with the agendas of 'verbal hygiene' inspired by the hardest and most intransigent positions of the politically correct that lead to a conforming sterilisation of expressivity that denotes a regressive and repressive attitude of considerable diffidence in the critical maturity of contemporary conscience]

The PC movement has nonetheless stimulated some discussion on the nexus between language and society in a changing Italy and has opened the way for increased sensibility to prejudice and discrimination in everyday language. Returning to the subject of acceptability and transgression in the use of language in the political sphere, we have seen (section 4.3) that what would have been classed as taboo language in the past has now to some extent been normalized. This shows the fluctuating nature of what constitutes a linguistic taboo, a notion that in late modernity is linked to the politically correct.

#### **4.3.2 PC and linguistic taboos**

Allan and Burridge (2006: 1) define a taboo as 'a proscription of behaviour that affects everyday life'. The authors posit that certain taboos are common to all cultures, yet tolerance levels differ when defying those taboos, depending on societal values and beliefs. Furthermore, they argue that in recent years Anglophone cultures have developed new taboos regarding gender, sexuality, disability, religion, race and ethnicity that are expressed through the avoidance of certain terms. In other words, political correctness now determines linguistic taboos in the English-speaking world. Hughes (2010: 48) suggests that in recent decades feminism and political correctness have heightened our awareness to new areas of sensitivity, thus creating new forms of taboo, such as demeaning terms for women,

homosexuals, foreigners, minorities, as well as mentally and physically disabled people. He illustrates with an example: the common derisory insult for a woman 'stupid fat cow' would today be unacceptable not only for its sexism but also for being 'fattist'. Hughes underlines the epistemological paradox related to PC, that is, while modern linguistics has taken a descriptive turn, respecting actual usage, the proscription inherent in political correctness on the one hand outlaws demeaning language but on the other 'change[es] or suppress[es] the meanings of particular *paroles*' (59). Hughes notes the overlapping in postmodern cultures of taboo and the concept of political correct. He (2010: 46) observes 'Political correctness can be seen as an endeavour to extend the boundaries of its progressive orthodoxy to make taboo many areas which previously involved prejudicial attitudes and stigmatizing language'. He also points out the current 'double standard' regarding taboo language, in that the very fact taboo words are uttered and printed means they are no longer strictly taboo. This reflection brings us back to the role of the media and its discursive practices regarding PC and language.

### **4.3.3 PC Warriors in the News**

The discursive construction in the British popular press has added to the vilification process of political correctness as a social practice. Conboy (2006: 118) observes that PC is portrayed as an 'organised lobby or brigade' that imposes its ideological values on an unsuspecting public, depriving the majority of the right to freedom of speech. This became particularly evident in media debates over illegal immigration and asylum seekers who were routinely demonized in the pages of tabloid newspapers in particular (ibid). While overt institutional racism is apparently condemned across the board in all the tabloids, covert racism emerges through discursive strategies and selection of news stories that highlight the most extreme and ridiculous example of language and behavioural policing. In these cases, British tabloids make continual reference to the oppressive nature of PC and 'The expression "political correctness gone crazy" ... forms part of a self-lubricating linguistic rationale whenever interventions on equality affairs are raised' (Conboy

2006: 119). These double standards in ideological positioning can also be witnessed in news narratives on Berlusconi, as will be discussed in Chapters 5-8. The most controversial aspects of PC language are the forms of 'policing' that it takes; As Cameron (1995: 157) points out

The struggle to make others accept the label you choose remains an important component of verbal hygiene practiced by subaltern groups[...] Despite the rhetoric of guideline writers, more than civility is at stake here. At stake is a power structure in which certain people, often even without being conscious of it, just assume the right to tell other people who they are.

The mediatic habit of stigmatising those who act in an intolerant manner create new discursive forms of sexism, racism, and intolerance to other cultures or ways of life, thus generating tensions around the phenomenon of politically correct language. These tensions emerge with remarkable force in Silvio Berlusconi's 'politichese', his own brand of political language. PC prescriptivism risks opening the semantic door to ambiguity;

it also leads in specific cases to wrangling about what this or that expression 'really means'. This wrangling provides an excellent illustration of the clash between liberal and radical theories of meaning (Cameron 1995: 157).

This section provided some perspectives on the concept of PC in relation to media discourse and therefore in relation to an interpretation of Berlusconi's language from the British media's point of view. On the question of media, the next section provides some points of reflection on the question of Berlusconi and his own media, and its role in his political success.

#### **4.3.4 Media effects and personal effects**

At this point in the discussion it would be timely to raise the question of the impact of journalistic media on the voters' choices. To what extent was it media coverage that swayed the vote in favour of Berlusconi, not once but three times? This is difficult to ascertain. Some go for the Adorno's Hyperdermic needle effect, claiming

that the Italian public were more or less brainwashed; Ginsborg (2005), for example talks of 'cultural conditioning' of Berlusconi's commercial TV channels that begin in the early 80s, as Albertazzi puts it 'promoting a pro-American, individualist, consumerist and escapist culture' (2009: 5). Albertazzi goes further, claiming Berlusconi's 'cultural hegemony that was gradually imposed in the country was not counterbalanced by any effective cultural or political opposition' (2009: 5). He adds, however, in agreement with Mazzoleni that there were other factors involved in Berlusconi's success as an outcome of the broader complex political situation in Italy at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall (See section 4.2). With hindsight we might agree with McQuail's scepticism (2000), or rather, optimism in sustaining that the media alone is not sufficient to be the cause of an effect, and that furthermore their influence is hard to evaluate. Fiske (1987: 19) in fact repudiates the hypothesis that hegemony can be imposed by the media, believing, as ultimately the scholars from Birmingham do, that subordinates have the power to challenge prevailing frames through sub-cultural engagement. Ultimately, it can be argued that, although the media cannot dictate *what* to think, they play an important role in what we think *about* (Valdeon 2012; Kuhn 1991).

Critics claim Berlusconi had an unfair advantage with his own media TV channels; this is evinced by Mazzoleni's admission 'The television campaign was dominated - directly or indirectly, in favour or against, - by Berlusconi' (2004: 271). Berlusconi and his political opponent at the 2001 election, Francesco Rutelli, were aired in serious disproportion. Berlusconi has 465 minutes on RAI and 1,427 on his own Mediaset channels whereas Rutelli had 441 on RAI and 887 on Mediaset during the campaign when the rule of *par conditio* (granting equal broadcasting time to all parties) was imposed. The figures clearly show the advantage Berlusconi had not only on his own network but also on the state channels.

Questa centralità ha fatto vedere i media come quarto ramo del governo, dopo i poteri esecutivo, legislativo e giudiziario. Tanto più che i media non fanno solo da tramite tra politici e cittadini, ma il sistema politico deve sempre più negoziare con essi i tempi, modalità, registri e contenuti' (Mazzoleni ibid.)

[This centrality has revealed the media as a fourth branch of government, after executive, legislative and judicial powers. Even more so as the media not only act as a channel between politicians and citizens, but the political system has to increasingly negotiate with them for the timing, modalities, registers, and contents].

If we accept Mazzoleni's depiction of mass media as a form of effective fourth power, Berlusconi's image was part of his political language, too – with extreme gestures, such as signing a political contract with the voters on live television. From both a political and linguistic perspective, Berlusconi engaged in capturing the vote of women in both the 1994 and the 2001 campaigns. Reductionist theories (See *Analisi Politica* 2010; Ginsborg 2005; Stille 2006) suggest that the type of TV shows broadcast on Berlusconi's channels were heavily influential in persuading women voters. Albeit simplistic and in itself a sexist theory of audience reception, the latter makes one wonder whether or not part of Berlusconi's political language as the 'chosen' benefactor influenced detractors as much as favourable audiences.

Perhaps the TV/Silvio reality show argument can be overplayed. Berlusconi's 'difference' is about much more than his television empire and the conversion of Italy into a gigantic reality program. He is much more than *mere* performance. He has remained central to Italian national politics for so long because he knows how to create and manage a successful coalition. (Agnew 2011: 13)

Mazzoleni argues nonetheless that Berlusconi's media profile, the spectacularisation, the personalization, and the charismatic single person party are not endemic to Italy but are part of a broader movement across the globe in postmodern political arenas; these are processes taking place in the UK, France, Germany and Spain, not to mention the US and Russia, too. Yet it has to be said, that with his language and his public persona, Berlusconi marks the first time since the demise of Mussolini that an Italian political leader has made his physical appearance and communicative style so intrinsic to his leadership. Belpoliti (2009: 94) affirms 'Berlusconi is a postmodern man with a "mindful body" that relies for its public impression of "freshness" ... [and] youthfulness ... by means of lifting, liposuction, transplants'. Ultimately, according to Mazzoleni (2004: 259) it is Berlusconi's mix of entrepreneurial talent, Machiavellian savvy, conspicuous

narcissism and 'bewitching charm' that are the key to his success. Agnew (2011: 5) suggests that the popular appeal of a leader comes down to the projection of an 'image' 'that can be created and communicated'. From an international perspective, however, Ginsborg (2005: 102) cynically observes that Berlusconi 'has tried to foster an image of himself outside of Italy ... that has only succeeded in part'.

## **4.4 The Berlusconi years**

This section offers a snapshot of the historical and socio-political context in which Silvio Berlusconi rose to power and in which his language thrived. As Newell and Bull (2005: 17) have observed, Berlusconi's ascension in the political field, his influence on the mass media as businessman and Prime Minister, not to mention his celebrity status, cannot be isolated from the socio-political context in which they occurred. Commentators agree that the start of the 1990s marked a watershed in Italian politics with the downfall of the old political 'regime' and the heralding of another (Ginsborg 2001, 2007, Newell and Bull 2005).

### **4.4.1 The trials and tribulations of the Berlusconi years**

Berlusconi's political rise and fall have been more than aptly documented in the literature from an array of disciplinary perspectives, (for instance, Ginsborg 2005; Mammarella 2008; Stille 2006). It is not our aim here to add to this abundance of scholarship. Nor is our aim to make political judgements and commentaries on Berlusconi's politics. As suggested in previous chapters, social life, culture, and language cannot be separated and therefore the political backdrop needs to be understood. This section merely provides the dates and events that serve as a chronological compass to relate historical events to socio-linguistic ones in an effort to map out the evolution of Italian political discourse and Berlusconi's role within that framework. With this objective in mind what follows is a broad-brush outline of the key political events that led to the crisis at the beginning of the 1990s and other turning points during Berlusconi's ventennio.

#### 4.4.2 The end of an era

The end of the so-called 'first republic' and the beginning of the 'second' loosely coincide with Berlusconi's ascent. According to Bull and Newell (2005: 5) before the 1990s Italian politics had been 'relatively uneventful': 49 governments in 45 years all dominated by the Christian Democratic Party. This extensive repetition of coalition governments with the DC as a constant is the 'anomalous nature of the Italian political system of the first republic' (ibid.: 5), which in turn solicits the frequent debate: 'is Italy a "Normal Country?"' (Francesco Cossiga, President of the Republic, quoted in Stille 2006: 146) and echoed in numerous newspaper articles, comments and also the title of the much quoted book *Not a Normal Country: Italy After Berlusconi* (Andrews 2005).

Ginsborg (2003) identifies the causes of the dramatic events of the early 1990s into two groups. The first looks at international causes:

1. Italy's commitment to the European Community and the development of a greater union. As such Europe puts demands on Italy 'formidable external restraint', requirements regarding behaviour especially its political economy. Economic downturn and the passing of the Maastricht Treaty which required Italy to make drastic economic adjustments in order to qualify for the first group of entrants into the EU economic community.
2. Collapse of Communism internationally and the transformation of the PCI into a socialist rather than communist party, ending the 'Communist Question'. No longer necessary for voters to 'hold their noses and vote Christian Democrat' in an effort to keep the Communists at bay, until the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe.

On a national level:



1. Generally high levels of popular dissatisfaction with Italian democracy were translated into protests against the regime and the emergence of new parties, notably the Northern League and Forza Italia.
2. The growing power of organised crime and the confrontational strategy of the new leadership of Sicilian Mafia. Tangentopoli - investigations by the judiciary and magistrates into the accusations of corruption in public life, a movement which began in Milan, which then lead to 'Mani Pulite' [Clean Hands campaign].

Ginsborg points out that it was not these individual aspects which brought the situation to a head, nor was the crisis due to particular political leaderships: rather, how they interacted and how their interaction developed diachronically within the socio-cultural context of Italy. Crucially, Ginsborg places responsibility in the hands of Italian society, on Italian individuals and their attitudes to legality and society:

it is always too easy to blame political leaderships, to let the explanatory weight fall casually upon the shoulders of single political actors. There were deeper structural problems at work, which concerned the nature of Italian public opinion, and the limited extent of civil society. The magistrates of Milan requested a general return to legality, but this was no mean demand in the Italy of the 1990s. Interpreted literally, it would have meant many ordinary Italian families having to ask uncomfortable questions about their own behaviour, about how the dominant political culture of clientalism, nepotism, tax evasion, and so on, was their own (Ginsborg 2001: 284).

The Clean Hands investigation appeared to be a political revolution that effectively swept away the old ruling class that had held power in Italy from 1946-1993 (Ginsborg 2005: 62; Stille 2006: 146-7). With the political stage bare, Berlusconi stepped in, thus uniting his large media empire with national political power in one of the world's richest and modern democracies (Ginsborg *ibid.*: 62). On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1994 Silvio Berlusconi sent a videocassette of nine minutes and 24 seconds to Reuters, the RAI and his own television channels announcing his intention to enter the world of politics.

The reasons why Silvio Berlusconi, powerful media magnate and one of the richest men in Italy, decided to enter politics are complex and open to interpretation (see section 4.2.4). Ginsborg (2005: 62-66), suggests the motivations are several but claims on one level the reason is simple: in Berlusconi's own words:

Così ho sentito che la partita si faceva pericolosa, che era tutta giocata nelle aree di rigore e che il centro campo era disolatamente vuoto... e ci siamo detti che non potevamo lasciare quell'immenso spazio libero  
[So I felt that the game was getting dangerous and that all was being played in the two penalty areas, with the midfield being left desolately empty ... and we said to each other that we couldn't leave that vast empty space] (Berlusconi cited in Semino and Masci 1996: 248)

Bull and Newell (2005: 17) on the other hand state that Berlusconi is 'the quintessential product of the first republic and someone who launched his political career to try to protect his own personal interests'. They also emphasise what is one of the core issues regarding the legitimacy of Berlusconi's position as political leader while simultaneously owning a majority of the mass media in Italy:

He has brought to the heart of Italian government a conflict of interests which has yet to be satisfactorily resolved. This is between his position as Prime Minister and his control of 90 per cent of private television networks, which currently secure 43 per cent of the total average of television viewers (ISTAT 2003), an increase on 41.7 per cent in 1997<sup>11</sup> (Bull and Newell 2005: 17)

Whatever the reasons, on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1994 Berlusconi sent a video to the RAI, Reuters, and his own television channels of what has become the most famous of his speeches, 'La discesa in campo' [going down onto the pitch]<sup>12</sup>. Ginsborg (2005: 65) comments, 'Never in Italy had the creation of a political force been studied so minutely and so scientifically'. Neither had a political party ever been put together

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<sup>11</sup> See also Ginsborg 2005, and Stille 2006. Guzzanti's docu-films *Viva Zapatero* (Guzzanti 2005) and *Videocracy* (Gandini 2009) provide interesting commentaries on the cultural hegemony that Berlusconi's control of the media is said to have.

<sup>12</sup> See Deni and Maresciani (1995: 227-41) for an analysis of Berlusconi's first speech.

so quickly: in the space of just a few months all the marketing, advertising and polling techniques at Berlusconi's disposal were drawn upon to create the image and the name of 'Forza Italia' (Golia 1997: 27). As Croci (2001: 361) notes Berlusconi's political party was 'born in the same minute it was communicated to the public'. In order to combat the left-wing coalition at the election, Berlusconi formed an unholy alliance with Gianfranco Fini of the post-fascist party *Allianza Nazionale* [National Alliance] and Umberto Bossi of the populist *Lega Nord* [Northern League]<sup>13 14</sup>. Forza Italia won the elections in March 1994, as Stille (2006: 192) explains, thanks to Berlusconi's grasp of the zeitgeist:

Berlusconi aveva capito d'istinto che dopo la fine della Guerra fredda l'appello ideologico su cui i vecchi partiti basavano la propria forza non funzionavano più. ...In un'epoca postideologica contavano molto di più la personalità, il charisma, la celebrità, il linguaggio e l'immagine.

[Berlusconi instinctively understood that after the end of the Cold War the ideological appeal on which the political parties based their strength no longer worked ... what counted much more in a post-ideological age were personality, charisma, celebrity, language and image].

However, Berlusconi's first term as Prime Minister was doomed from the start. Before the end of 1994 Bossi gave a vote of no-confidence to the coalition of which he was part and brought down the government. The following sections summarise the chronological order of events in Berlusconi's successive governments.

#### **4.4.3 Berlusconi bounces back – not once but twice**

According to Mazzoleni (2004) Berlusconi's win in 2001 was due to a series of events, not least of all the introduction of the new electoral system that was more in line with the 'first past the post' system in the UK. For the first time in Italian political history, voters had the chance to participate in a bipolar system; an

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<sup>13</sup> See section 5.1 for a discussion on the political discourse of *La Lega Nord*.

<sup>14</sup> See Stille (2006: 181-214) for a detailed account of Berlusconi's alliances and success at the 1994 election.

alternating of left and right that until then had been impossible with the dominance of the centre parties in the post war years. The alliance with Bossi's Northern League secured the success of the PdL at the poles, although the NL had in fact lost half of its traditional support. Berlusconi was also the first Italian Prime Minister to finish a mandate. At the 2006 elections, however, Berlusconi's popularity waned and after what has been described as one of the dirtiest political campaigns, in terms of language and tactics, Prodi and the centre left won. However, the centre left were ousted two years later in a vote of no confidence. In 2008 Berlusconi returned to power with his coalitions with The Northern League and Gianfranco Fini's post-Fascist National Alliance. According to Agnew (2011: 3) Berlusconi's success at the urns was largely due to his ability to maintain 'a relatively more coherent and electorally attractive coalition on the center-right than has been possible on the center-left'. Once this started to unravel in 2010 with Fini's defection at the height of the sex scandals, Berlusconi's leadership began to be questioned. Pressure from the Eurozone, the economic depression at home, increasing disenchantment with his sexual antics, true or imagined but assiduously reported in the foreign press culminated in Berlusconi's resignation in November 2011. Although at that point Berlusconi announced he was retiring from politics (Dinmore & Segreti 2012), he has continued and is still leader of the newly launched Forza Italia party. Following his conviction for fraud, some commentators claim that the end of the 'ventennio Berlusconiano' is nigh (see section 7.1), nevertheless, at the time of writing Mr Berlusconi is still present on the political scene as one of the leaders of the opposition.

#### **4.4.4 Berlusconi's legacy**

In attempting to explain the popular consent that Berlusconi has maintained until very recently, Pasquino (2011) borrows the theory of 'amoral familism' from political scientist Edward Banfield. In *The Moral Basis of a Backwards Society* (1958), Banfield's study of a rural village in Southern Italy leads him to affirm that the basis of a backwards society is an 'ethos of amoral familism', that is, 'the inability [...] to

act together for the common good, or indeed for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family' (ibid.: 10). According to Banfield, what singles out a progressive society is 'the advancement of community welfare' (ibid.: 18). In late modernity, 'community welfare' could be construed as the extent to which a community engages with socio-political and cultural issues: civil and human rights, education, and a sense of civic duty in order to improve the lives of its members. Encouraging inclusion through policies against ethnic discrimination and homophobia, while promoting accessibility and gender equality are all indicators of a healthy, caring social environment. A more enlightened socio-political outlook tends to delineate a more evolved society, which tends towards a liberal-socialist ideology. Berlusconi's so-called 'gaffes' – a term that is of common usage in journalist discourse that somewhat undermines the deeper meaning of such so-called slips of the tongue – have often been related to the socio-culturally sensitive themes identified for this study. For instance, Berlusconi's comments on Mussolini (see section 6.5) have been construed as an apology for Italian fascism while his questionable taste in jokes and jibes on race, gender, and homosexuality<sup>15</sup>, have made not only the domestic but also international headlines. The ways in which these utterances have been selected, rendered, framed, and embedded in British news texts tells us something of Anglophone perceptions of Italy today. Beyond Berlusconi, it is posited here that the linguistic and cultural legacy of his 'gaffes' continue to reverberate in British news narratives on Italy. To be labelled 'anti-gay', 'racist', 'sexist', or 'fascist' is clearly intended to stigmatize, yet the perception of what constitutes a racist or sexist remark is to some extent linked to

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<sup>15</sup> It would appear from recent reports that Mr Berlusconi had epiphanies with regards to gay rights once out of power. Berlusconi is quoted in *La Repubblica* (29 June 2014) as saying 'Quella per i diritti civili degli omosessuali è una battaglia che in un paese davvero moderno e democratico dovrebbe essere un impegno di tutti' [The fight to obtain civil rights for homosexuals is a battle that everyone in a truly modern and democratic nation should be committed to]. It is not by chance that he mentions the key words 'modern' and 'democratic'. The article does not desist, however, from listing a liturgy of the former Prime Minister's previous comments that could be construed as disparaging towards homosexuals.

concepts of acceptability within a certain cultural context, and to the concept of political correctness (see sections 4.4-4.5).

## **4.5 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has aimed at locating Silvio Berlusconi's language in a sociolinguistic and politico-historical framework. In the context of the development of the Italian national language, the gradual abandoning of dialects and the evolution towards a standard, the success of Berlusconi's simple clear metaphors and messages as a language for the people can be understood. The convoluted rhetoric of 'politichese' no longer functioned as the political landscape changed, too. We have also noted the influence of the more colloquial spoken Italian forms that have become part of political discourse, and the increasingly common use of vulgar, offensive language that could also be termed non-PC or taboo language, within the Italian political arena. It is precisely these forms of linguistic taboos, specifically related to sexism and gender, that Berlusconi allegedly used towards the end of his third term in office that are the object of the following chapter.

## 5.

### **Sexism and sexuality in Berlusconi's world**

The first part of this study (Chapters 1-4) has laid out the theoretical and methodological foundations upon which this research is based. An essential sociolinguistic and historical framework has also been provided in order to contextualise the analysis that follows. Chapters 5-8 focus on four distinct yet interconnected aspects of the overarching research questions that this study aims to address. Chapter 5 introduces the core focus around which the analysis of the first data set is concentrated: some key examples of cross cultural perceptions of Berlusconi's sexist and taboo language filtered through translation-mediated news. Chapter 6 looks specifically at the ways in which representations of Berlusconi and his discourse bear upon the construction of the image of Italy in the British press. Chapter 7 looks beyond Berlusconi's actual words to the effects of twenty years of Berlusconi's discourse and 'berlusconismo' on British news narratives on Italy. Lastly, Chapter 8 attempts to delve into the issues surrounding the journalist as translator offering an ethnographic study of some of the major British newspaper's correspondents for Italy.

This Chapter centres on the areas of political discourse on which the attention of British press on Silvio Berlusconi's comments and observations has most regularly focused, that is the female gender and sexuality. To attempt to examine and discuss twenty years of Berlusconi's discourse on gender and sexuality and its subsequent reconstruction in British news narratives would be an epic work far beyond the word constraints of this research. Therefore, three discursive events involving language and gender that took place within the last Berlusconi mandate

(2008-2011) were considered as case studies. The themes that come to light through the analyses necessitate reflections on the relationship between language and culture, which introduce the chapter and its aims (sections 5.1-5.1.2). Sections 5.1.2-5.1.5 broadly outline the theoretical notions of language as a gendered issue, postfeminism in the Italian context, while section 5.1.5 offers some insights on the methodological considerations on creating the dataset. The following sections (5.2-5.4) scrutinise the representation of three linguistic incidents regarding three powerful political leaders are examined; Margaret Thatcher (5.2.2), former president of the Italian Democratic Party, Rosie Bindi (section 5.3), and Angela Merkel (sections 5.4). On a similar political theme, media debates surrounding Berlusconi's comment that 'Forza Gnocca' [Go Pussy] would be the most effective new name for his political party are also discussed. The case studies chosen sample the most visible aspects of Berlusconi's sexism in his political discourse that reverberated across the UK spectrum of both quality newspapers and tabloids. The examples are also significant because Bindi, Merkel and Thatcher are the antithesis of the ex-Premier's apparent ideal of femininity. Powerful, mature, intelligent individuals, they defy Berlusconi's view of how women should look and behave in the political arena and in society. This might explain why they were the targets, alleged or otherwise, of his most offensive insults



## 5.1 Language and gender in the Italian context

As Sapir observed (1956: 36), 'Vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of a people, and changes in meaning [...] are dependent on the history of the culture itself.' While it would be inaccurate to claim that Berlusconi's language is representative of all Italians, it could also be posited that his linguistic choices derive from his habitus, and his culture on which his worldview is constructed. Lepschy (1991: 117) argues that the language, we use and the discourses we construe are largely conditioned by societal ideologies, not least of all with regards to gender:

Our discourse is not what an individual subject freely decides to say; it belongs rather to a discursive process which itself creates the very notion of individual subject through which it finds an outlet and realises itself. This reciprocity in creating and maintaining societal values is manifest in what can loosely be termed sexist language. Sexist discrimination and gender stereotyping colour the whole of language and are reinforced by it.

Bourdieu (2001: 9) on the other hand sees the symbolic significance of gendered language reflected in power relations between the sexes: 'The strength of the masculine order is seen by the fact that it dispenses with justification - in languages the masculine gender appears as non-marked, in a sense neuter, in opposition to the feminine'. This is fundamental to the question of sexual representation in the Italian lingua-culture. If we consider that a natural language has two main categories; lexis, the words that carry meaning, such as nouns, adjectives and adverbs; and grammatical structure, that is, syntax and morphology, both aspects in Italian, as in other Indo-European languages, could be viewed as carrying the seeds of gender discrimination (Bourdieu 2001:x ). The feminine has semantic limitations (Sabatini 1987), and as Bourdieu points out, is the marked form that diverges from the masculine base form. Further, it is the feminine that submits to the dominating masculine gender where agreement is required in verbal or adjectival forms in the plural or in mixed groupings.

In 1987, a parliamentary effort was made to ascertain the depth and breadth of the question of linguistic asymmetry in the Italian language. Scholar Alma Sabatini was commissioned to produce her 'Raccomandazioni per un uso non sessista della lingua italiana' [Recommendations for a non-sexist use of the Italian language] by 'la Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri' and the 'Commissione Nazionale per la Parità e le Pari Opportunità tra uomo e donna' [Presidency of the Ministers' Council and the National Commission for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women]. The principle aim of the investigation was to propose ways in which the Italian language could accommodate more neutral linguistic structures and lexemes in order to avoid what the author considered sexist forms. (Sabatini 1987: 1). Secondly, Sabatini's objective was to 'dare visibilità linguistica alle donne e pari valore linguistici a termini riferiti al sesso femminile' [to give women linguistic visibility and bestow equal linguistic value to terms that refer to the female gender] (idem). Sabatini's suggestions to modify aspects of grammatical gender and agreement in Italian language, for example in the area of masculine/feminine accordance where the masculine takes precedence, received a lukewarm response (see Lepschy 1991 for an incisive critique). With regards to lexicon, for example, Sabatini's report proposes new designations for female professional activities in an effort to create gender symmetry: terms such as 'dottoressa' [Doctor] and 'avvocata' [lawyer] are suggested thus avoiding the diminutive suffix '-essa'; and 'ingegnera' [engineer] to explicate the female gender which the male 'ingegnere' masks. One example in social life where women have become more visible in recent years is that of politics<sup>16</sup>. Sabatini's suggestion that the masculine 'il Ministro' becomes 'la Ministra' has to some extent been adopted today, especially in journalistic discourse but there is still a manifest resistance in everyday language to using a feminine form of masculine nouns to denote professions<sup>17</sup>. Eckhert and McConnell-Ginet

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<sup>16</sup> All the more so with Matteo Renzi's policy of positive discrimination within the Democratic Party and his cabinet.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, the website of *L'Accademia della Crusca* for debates on the subject of language and gender, particularly regarding titles and professions.

(2003: 70) remark that lexicon is the 'repository of cultural preoccupations and as a result the link between gender and the lexicon is deep and extensive'. Nevertheless they also point out that it is the 'most changeable part of language' and therefore an important site for introducing innovation. Eckhert and McConnell-Ginet also note that language has its effect on society through repeated use. Therefore even if language is regulated by a top down approach as in the implicit prescriptivism of Sabatini's recommendations, the real changes take place at grass roots level, when people adopt and use those modified forms to such an extent that they become part of a natural linguistic evolution. Although some of her suggestions, such as the ones above regarding occupational terms appear in dictionaries, for instance *Zanichelli's online dictionary*, Sabatini's recommendations for a less androcentric use of the Italian language have largely languished in disuse. As Renzi observes, 'in effetti non mi sembra di notare nessun cambiamento in atto di questo tipo (2012: 177) [in effect, I am not able to perceive any changes [regarding language usage] taking place'. Lepschy (1991: 134) suggests that Sabatini's proposals were unpalatable for the lack sensitivity with which they were expounded. Furthermore he surmises that Italians' reluctance to accept linguistic innovation imposed by government policy could well be due to historical reasons (see section 4.1):

One further element working against these suggestions is the scepticism with which attempts to interfere with language use are considered in a country like Italy which ... has a long tradition of puristic (and, more recently, fascist) prescriptivism. It would be a pity if the socially and politically disreputable nature of some strands of the puristic and fascist tradition were to hinder the cause of equality for women.

Sabatini herself remarks that the majority of people are diffident, even afraid of linguistic change. She believes that the choice of one word over another entails an alteration in thought and attitude of the speaker, and subsequently of the listener (ibid.).

While Lepschy acknowledges (ibid. 122) that a sexually neutral language would still permit people to make sexist remarks (and we will see an example of this in section 5.4 of our analyses), he maintains that certain characteristics of

linguistic usage could expediate sexual discrimination. Thus we have outlined the general linguistic context in Italy as regards language and the female gender. What follows is a brief summary of recent developments in Italian political discourse as contingent to the question of language and sexism.

### 5.1.1 The Italian lingua-culture and gender

Tosi (2001: 183) makes the point that much of Italian advertising, both visually and verbally, is steeped in sexual stereotypes, sexism, and overt sexual references. He quotes several examples; below we will make reference to just a couple. They are relevant because they indicate the cultural context within which Berlusconi operates and in which his 'gaffes' or his comments are couched. Some would argue (Ginsborg 2005; Stille 2006; Albertazzi et al 2009) that he is actually the perpetrator, and therefore responsible for these crimes against equality because he owns the three biggest commercial television companies in Italy. However, it could also be posited that although he, or his TV channels, *do* pander to the lowest common denominator of national taste (see Bourdieu 1979 on the issue of culture and taste), they are merely a reflexion of what intrinsically exists within postmodern societies (see Hipkins 2011), and appears to be ingrained in Italian culture. Furthermore, it can hardly be expected that commercial television companies, openly capitalist and profit-oriented enterprises, take on the role of prescriptive authoritarians, or educators, modulating its content to guide the public in its morals or ideology.

Tosi (2001: 183) pinpoints the late 70s as a moment when sexual emancipation was exploited to the maximum in Italian advertising – play on words were used to make erotic allusions and the good times promised by the products advertised, for example a slogan for a well-known beer: 'Peroni. Una bionda nel sacco. Un corpo morbido e caldo. [Peroni: a blond in your (the) bag/bed. A warm, soft body]. While examples of this type abound, Tosi remarks that 'most ordinary people find the increasing emphasis on aggressive stereotypes and male chauvinism disturbing' (ibid.). He produces two examples, which are indeed disturbing, but for which he gives no reference or context:

Per l'uomo che non deve chiedere mai.

[for the man who never has to ask].

Pagami solo per quanto mi usi

[Pay me only for as much as you use me]

Double entendres and vulgar language are also frequent within the realms of sexist messages in advertising. For example: 'Bullock. L'antifurto con le palle' [Bullock. The anti-theft device with balls]. Here we should also explicate the Italian expression 'con le palle' implies the traditionally masculine traits of strength, courage, power (see also section 4.2.6) on the legitimization of vulgar/bad language). Sexist and sexual language and image are frequently found in Italian advertising even today. However, from another perspective it could be argued that these overt manifestations of sexualization in the media are symptomatic of the current debates on a transnational postfeminist cultural landscape.

### **5.1.2 Postfeminist or anti-feminist?**

In the words of Genz and Brabon, 'Postfeminism is a concept fraught with contradictions' (2009: 1). Emerging at the beginning of the 1990s, postfeminism spawned in Anglophone media and popular culture while simultaneously occupying the attention of feminist academia; hence the widely diverging perspectives on the interpretation of its essence. The phenomenon is multifaceted and defies a clear-cut definition. For some, like Natasha Walter (1998) it is a liberating force offering new choices to women; the chance to shake off the dreary, militant elitism, and androgynous image of second wave feminism to make way for the consumer orientated neo-liberal non-political young woman. TV programmes such as *Sex and the City*, *Ally Beal*, and *Desperate Housewives* promote icons of financially secure middle-class white women who either have a career or are wealthy enough to give it up. Freedom to choose is the mantra, yet that possibility is anchored in assumed full economic freedom (Tasker and Negra 2007: 9). On the

other hand, sexual empowerment, education and professional opportunity are seen as birthrights thus naturalizing aspects of second wave feminism while distancing young women of today from the political activism of the past. In this interpretation, the 'posting' of feminism indicates 'after'; a net closure with previous feminist movements. For others postfeminism is perceived as a continuation from second wave feminism, a 'process of ongoing transformation' (Genz and Brabon 2009: 4) which link it to postmodernism.

By contrast, McRobbie (2011: 179) posits that postfeminism represents a form of 'sophisticated anti-feminism [that] upholds the principles of gender equality, while denigrating the figure of the feminist'. Thus we have an 'undoing' of feminism, whereby the hard won gains of the 1960s and 1970s are being undermined by the postfeminist consumer culture. She describes its various manifestations, including the 'gentle upbraiding of the feminist figures in *Bridget Jones's Diary* to lap-dancing clubs, lad mags, hen parties and the sexualisation of young girls' (ibid.). However, for McRobbie the most heinous example of this anti-feminism or new sexism is found in the very language of Berlusconi:

At its most extreme, there is the spectacular and unapologetic hate speech of Silvio Berlusconi, who also claims to have supported the career ambitions of young, glamorous women (while showering older women who challenge him with torrents of verbal abuse.)

### **5.1.3 Postfeminism in Berlusconi's Italy**

Gill affirms (2007: 260) there is a clear nexus between neoliberalism and postfeminist media culture, which is certainly true in the Italian context, but the manifestations and underlying message of postfeminist media discourse, is culture-dependent. As Tasker and Negra (2007: 15) observe there are national specificities to the postfeminist phenomenon that are expressed through different channels and ultimately produce different levels of meaning within different cultures. Our main interest here is language; an example of postfeminism's cultural specificity can be seen via the postfeminist buzz-words of the 1990s, 'girl power' and 'empowerment'. These slogans were disseminated throughout the Anglophone media especially in

young women's magazines but were hardly heard in Italy. They have little currency within Italian culture and there is no translation for these expressions, if used at all they are left in English. Italian culture tends to be a visual culture, or an oral culture (see section 4.1.1) which could explain the preference for television over magazines or newspapers. It is also the media that provokes most debate on the state of postfeminism in Italy (CENSIS 2006).

In her article entitled 'Whore-ocracy: Show Girls, the Beauty Trade-off and Mainstream Oppositional Discourse in Contemporary Italy', Hipkins (2011: 416) reaffirms that women are objectified more frequently on Italian television than in any other European country. Furthermore she notes that postfeminist theory has had little impact on Italian culture but suggests that Gill's postulations on the relationship between female subjectivity and popular culture could shed light on the Italian context. According to Hipkins, the intellectual debate in Italy on the 'velina' [show girls], 'prostitution' and 'women in public spaces' has become a form of 'moral panic' and has lost cachet by its moralising tone.

Hipkins draws on the concept of what Gill refers to as 'desiring sexual subject' as opposed to 'sex object' to make the case for young women who 'choose' to use their bodies in an 'active', knowing way. Nonetheless Gill herself refers to 'new sexism' in this context rather than postfeminism and hints that there is a fine line between submissive, humiliated bodies and bodies which are exhibited in an active way (Gill cited in Hipkins 2011: 427). The premise seems to be that if one is aware of being treated as an object, and one manages to exploit this to one's advantage then it is all well and good. Commodification of the female body is justified within the postfeminist paradigm, as long as it is accompanied by the rhetoric of 'choice'.

Although Hipkins admits that sexism is a 'fundamental and serious obstacle' for women in Italian society, her aim is to show how mainstream contemporary left-wing analysis critiques the 'velina' and equates her with 'whore' without tackling the underlying 'real' problem which according to her are 'widespread accusations of political corruption' relating to Italy's (then) Prime

Minister (Silvio Berlusconi). It is argued here that in some respects, such a reading also sidelines very basic issues regarding women in Italy; it does not account for the abysmal record Italy has with gender gap equations and female employment. 'Choice' means having options, that women can choose from a truly flexible and buoyant labour market the type of work they wish to do. The fact is that job opportunities for graduates, let alone those with only a school diploma are few and far between in Italy (see section 8.2.2). Therefore, the desire to exploit those ephemeral charms that a young woman might possess is substantially augmented, especially in a late modern society where so much emphasis is placed on youth and physical beauty.

It is implausible to consider a 'postfeminist' Italy in terms in the sense of 'we have surpassed feminism and we have equal rights'. The World Economic Forum Gender Gap Survey for 2011 presents statistics that are shocking; Italy ranks 74th out of a total of 135 countries for categories including academic achievement, economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment. (The UK's overall ranking is 16<sup>th</sup>, in itself a decline, having held ninth position in 2006). Considering that Italy is a G8 country with one of the world's largest economies, the apparent lack of female participation in the production of wealth, and in wielding economic and political power is disturbing. In a breakdown of these overall figures, we find that Italy is 90th for economic participation and opportunity; this is backed up by recent figures on female employment. Currently one in three Italian women is unemployed (ISTAT 2012), indicating that job opportunities for women are scarce and economic power is still firmly in male hands. In the other categories, Italy comes 48th for Academic attainment (compared to the UK's 1st position) and 55th for political empowerment. In sum, the figures are not encouraging. Hipkins postulates that the snobbism of the left wing intelligentsia damages the young women themselves rather than attacking the root cause. She suggests that postfeminist media studies would 'sharpen the tools with which mainstream critics in Italy launch their attack on a culture that is profoundly and 'newly' sexist at both structural and representational level' (2011: 430). This may be true, in Italy's case, there is nothing 'new' about sexism. It never went away. And before bringing 'the



female body and its pleasures back into the understanding of the situation' (2011: 430) perhaps it would be more productive for all women in Italy to tackle those fundamental issues of respecting women's rights and contesting patriarchal tendencies in Italian society. In summing up what she believes is the Italian women's perspective, Lea Melandri observes: (in Hipkins 2011: 430) 'le donne, pur emancipate, non rinunciano facilmente a quel ruolo di madri e "seduttrici" che dà loro il potere, in gran parte fantasmatico, di sentirsi necessarie, indispensabili all'altro'. [Even though women are now emancipated, they are reluctant to give up that role of mother and 'seductress' which gives them power, mostly imagined, to feel necessary and indispensable to the other]. From this interpretation we can only assume that for Italian women, 'power' is obtained through the figure of mother and seductress, rather than directly from their own agency. This would explain the 'velina' phenomenon to a large extent and also account for why Italian women seem so complacent in their socio-cultural setting. According to a report by CENSIS [national institute for social study and research 2012], 76% of Italian women are convinced that the postfeminist years have brought significant improvements in the condition of women in society. Only 10% of women consider that the situation today is worse than in the past, while 5.6% think that women themselves are not engaged enough in the struggle for emancipation. In reality, the presence of women in the world of labour now amounts to about 51% of the population and on average women earn 27% less than men<sup>18</sup>. Indications from a more recent report (CENSIS 2014) would indicate, however, that women are now beginning to participate more in the economy with an increase in small businesses and run by women.

#### **5.1.4 Language in Social life - Translating Cultures**

From the socio-linguistic view taken in this study, language and social life are inextricably tied. In the words of Dardano (1994: 424) 'La vita di una società è

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<sup>18</sup> To have a wider understanding of women's living conditions in Italy, see the Global Gender Gap 2013

riflessa in un modo più o meno diretto nel lessico' [The life of a society is reflected more or less directly in its language]. The following reflections are dedicated to the ways in which language is used against women. Bourdieu (2001: 1-2) suggests that in post modern societies there is a symbolic dimension of male domination; 'a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible, even to its victims, exerted for the most part through purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition'. In the post-feminist era, how does this symbolic violence exert its power? If symbolic violence is a fact of life in Italy, the backlash against women can be seen no more clearly than in what McRobbie (2011: 179) describes as the 'unapologetic hate speech of Silvio Berlusconi' and his 'torrents of verbal abuse' towards older women who challenge him. Yet language needs a context in order to be interpreted; Berlusconi's use of the Italian language could be construed as a result of his habitus. As cultural anthropologist, Signorelli (2010) suggested in a paper given at a conference entitled 'Società e Stato nell'era del berlusconismo' [Society and State in the era of Berlusconi]:

I comportamenti di Silvio Berlusconi in materia di donne e di sesso non sono estemporanei e incongruenti. Sono stati e sono costanti e coerenti, il che dimostra che non nascono casualmente da circostanze e occasioni, ma si radicano in una sua solida concezione delle donne e del loro posto nel mondo e più in generale in una sua solida visione del mondo. In una parola si radicano nella sua cultura. Questa cultura non è solo sua, ma possiamo ipotizzare che sia largamente condivisa da una platea che, mi sembra, è ben più vasta del suo elettorato e che comprende sia uomini che donne.

[Silvio Berlusconi's attitudes towards women and sex are not improvised or incongruent. They have been constant and coherent, [...] rooted in his solid conception of women and their place in the world and his solid conception of the world in general. In a word, they are rooted in his culture. This culture is not his alone, but we can hypothesise that it is shared by a much larger public than his electorate and includes both men and women.]

Signorelli's hypothesis here would seem to indicate that Berlusconi's views on gender are largely due to the culture of which he is a product; they are ideologies shared by (Italian) society in general. Her paper was later published with other contributions from the conference in a volume edited by Ginsborg and Asquer

(2011: 207-222). In her revised version, Signorelli elaborates her original thesis and modifies her stance:

...il 'suo' modo di interagire con le donne assume una funzione che definirò provvisoriamente *esemplare*; ovvero, il 'suo' modo tende a diventare 'modello nazionale' con importanti effetti performativi ...la mia ipotesi è che lo stile che il premier ha adottato e adotta nei suoi rapporti con le donne non sia però, solo una riesumazione e riproposizione del vecchio *maschismo* italico ... lo stile che Berlusconi propone ... include dimensioni nuove, nel senso che è intimamente connesso ai valori e agli ideali della nostra società di mercato

[his way of interacting with women takes on a function that I would call *exemplary*; that is, his ways and behaviour tend to become a 'national model' with important performative effects... my hypothesis is that the style of the Premier has adopted and continues to adopt in his relations with women are not however just a resurrection and reproposal of the old Italian male chauvinism ... the model that Berlusconi proposes ... includes new dimensions, in that it is intimately meshed to the values and ideals of our market society].

From this perspective we read Berlusconi's behaviour as exerting influence on society, while simultaneously being a product of his culture, thus a form of structuring structures (see section 2.1). The fact that his 'values and ideals' are closely connected to those of the consumer society might also imply a postfeminist reading. Either way, Berlusconi's persona, his actions and his words can be perceived as a zeitgeist of post-feminist Italy, and emblematic of the culture with which he is imbued and that he actively creates. This tenet perhaps needs to be remembered in the intricate process of communicating between cultures and the conveying of information on sensitive issues where ideologies could collide.

### 5.1.5 Methodological caveats

Berlusconi's verbal indiscretions regarding sex and women are arguably his most controversial and therefore with the highest news values. Taboo language and the translational dilemmas it presents are crucial to the questions of intercultural communication at issue here. Further, the fact that the utterances under discussion are alleged is in itself significant. News narratives become reality; when a newspaper or media website publishes a story they render it a communicative

event. Thus, 'Go Pussy' and 'Unfuckable lardarse' are media facts. The second criteria is timing: both news events occurred just before Berlusconi resigned, thus giving rise to the claim that news narratives perpetuated in the international press had contributed to the mounting pressure for the ex-premier to step down. The third factor concerns sourcing. The sheer volume of data on these news events was in itself a methodological hurdle; for example a simple Google keyword search of Berlusconi+pussy produces 1,650,000 results. However, looking at the first headline we find: 'Vladimir Putin, Silvio Berlusconi discuss Pussy Riot', which is not relevant to our discussion here. Neither would the inevitable web pornography with such a word search. Even with refined word searches on newspaper databases such as *Nexis UK*, the final choice must be done manually to find relevant and rich texts that can be analysed in some depth. As Rubin and Rubin (2011: 192) point out, there is no mechanical way to tease out the shades of meaning that go beyond mere counts (see sections 1.5-1.7). From the Hallidayan posit that language must be interpreted in context, any meaningful analysis would be prohibited by such a large corpus. The only thing the numbers demonstrate in this particular case is how much media attention two little words can provoke. Instead, the data-set discussed here centres on a small corpus of online texts gathered from a cross-section of British national newspapers. Carvalho's notion of extending CDA to incorporate a comparative-synchronic analysis across several texts has been partially adopted here (2008: 161-177, see section 1.3.3). In order to attempt ideological balance and representativeness, the data-set draws on four quality newspapers; *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Independent*; two middle range papers; *The Mail online*, and *The Daily Express*; three tabloids, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Sun*, and *The Star* and a free paper, *Metro*. The texts were sourced directly from newspaper websites and from the newspaper database, *Nexis UK* using similar keyword searches to those illustrated above.

The global circulation of news via translation (see sections 3.2-3.3) could implicate an ideological evaluation of the Italian reality regarding language and gender from the perspectives on other cultures. It is perhaps these representations in the foreign media that prompt reflection on so-called postfeminist societies in

general. Ross (2010: 1) laments the 'persistent gaps in critical analysis of sexuality and gender in an Italian context where failure to engage with Anglophone CDA provokes frustration'. The following analysis puts forward an exploration of the cross-cultural renderings, meaning transfer and representations of a small but meaningful sample of Berlusconi's discourses regarding women in politics in the lingua-cultural context of Italian political discourse.

## 5.2 'Forza Gnocca!'

### 5.2.1 The event

According to *Il Giornale* (2011) while conversing with his deputies, Berlusconi joked: 'Cambiamo il nome al partito, chiamiamolo 'Forza Gnocca'. [Let's change the name of the party, let's call it 'Go Babe/Pussy']. On the other hand *La Repubblica* (6 October 2011) quote the premier thus: "'Il nome Pdl non è nel cuore della gente. Si accettano dei suggerimenti. Mi dicono che il nome che avrebbe maggiore successo è 'Forza Gnocca'" [The name Pdl is no longer in the hearts of the people. We accept any suggestions. I have been told that the name that would have most success is 'Go/come on Babe/Pussy']. Culminating the Prime Minister's widely reported 'sex scandals', this off the record comment became a discursive event provoking strong reactions at home and abroad. Berlusconi's supposed suggestion of renaming the 'Popolo della Libertà' [People of Freedom Party] as 'Forza Gnocca' is an intertextual reference to his founding party, 'Forza Italia', which in fact he relaunched in November 2013. This was not the first time that Berlusconi's alleged use of the term 'gnocca' had caused comment in the British press. Before focusing on 'Forza Gnocca', the episode should be contextualised with the discourse chains (see section 3.1.3) of another verbal incident that occurred some years earlier.

### 5.2.2 Thatcher the gnocca

In his article entitled 'Vulgar Berlusconi pays tribute to the sex appeal of the Iron Lady' (2007), the *Independent's* Italian correspondent, Peter Popham (see also

Chapter 8 for discussion and interview), claimed that Berlusconi had paid a crude complement to Mrs Thatcher whilst giving a lecture to students in Rome. The 'news' was not reported in other British papers, nor by the Italian press. In the wake of Popham's critique on Berlusconi three of Italy's major newspapers, *La Repubblica*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and *L'Unità* commented the following day. Yet for the Italian press, the scandal was not Berlusconi's language but the British paper's reaction to the 'parolina' [little word] (*Repubblica* 6 July 2007). Popham had translated the 'very Italian, if not very refined' (*Corriere della Sera* 6 July 2007) 'bella gnocca' [beautiful babe] as 'a great piece of pussy' (see also Chapter 8). A discussion of this rendering is not possible here; there are several things to note, nevertheless. Firstly, in an analysis, the difficulty of evaluating translational decisions of vulgar language and taboo words; how do we gauge translation impact? Secondly, what are the intentions of the translator? What knowledge/expertise does s/he have in dealing with semantically loaded vocabulary? Returning to our analysis, Popham's *Skopos* (Vermeer 1989/2004) in the *Independent* article seems not only to ridicule Berlusconi, but Mrs Thatcher, too. Put simply, the expression 'Great piece of pussy' is what a misogynistic African-American gangster rapper might utter (Hughes: 2006: 113); as such it sounds ridiculous as a translation for Berlusconi's supposed utterance, probably a dialectal term, that is qualified with 'beautiful'.

### 5.2.3 What does 'gnocca' really mean?

Baker (2011: 245) observes, 'sex, religion and defecation are taboo subjects in many societies, but not necessarily to the same degree within similar situations': while 'gnocca' and 'pussy' both denote the female genitalia, there is a considerable lingua-cultural gap between their connotations and usage within the respective Italian and English contexts. To clarify this point, the denotative and connotative meanings of the terms are given below:

- Gnocca 1. (Vulg). Organo genitale femminile, vagina.
- 2. (Vulg). Ragazza, donna, molto sensuale e attraente.
- [Gnocca 1. (Vulgar). Female genital organ, vagina.
- 2. (Vulgar). Girl, woman, very sensual and attractive].

(De Mauro 2000)

**Gnocca.** 1. (Volg). Vulva.

2. Donna molto vistosa ed attraente.

[Gnocca.1.Vulgar. Vulva. 2. A very attractive, eye-catching woman].

(Zanichelli online)

The Italian lexeme is clearly a synecdoche but its etymology is uncertain. It would appear to have dialectal and regional origins; 'gnocca' is also noted as the improper feminine noun of the masculine 'gnocco' (*Zanichelli Online.it, Treccani.it*), an oval-shaped bite-sized piece of potato mixed with flour that is typical of Northern Italian cuisine. It has been suggested that the physical form of a gnocco in some ways resembles that of the female genitalia, hence the name. Nevertheless, as Hughes (2006: 177-8) reminds us folk etymology can provide plausible but sometimes imprecise explanations. What is certain is that the term is imbued with cultural connotations and associations (food, sex) that are pleasant. The following example of its current usage (other than Berlusconi's) demonstrates the extent to which 'gnocca' has become desemanticised and is accepted as slang, albeit vulgar, for an attractive woman. On a live Sunday evening chat show (*Che Tempo Che Fa* 4 November 2012), comedian Luciana Littizzetto referred to Penelope Cruz as a 'gnocca' whilst joking with the show's host, Fabio Fazio: 'Quando vengono le *gnocche* in trasmissione, tu perdi le bave' [When a babe comes on the show, you start drooling]. No-one was shocked, it did not cause a scandal, and the national press did not report on the utterance. In short, it was not a discursive event. It could be posited that Littizzetti's usage of the sexist term - a woman to another woman, and clearly meant as a compliment - is in fact linguistic reclamation. Defined as 'the appropriation of a pejorative epithet by its target(s)', linguistic reclamation can be viewed as an act of 'self-emancipation that defies hegemonic linguistic ownership and the (ab)use of power' (Brontesema 2004: 1). From another point of view it could be interpreted as intrinsically postfeminist. Whatever the construal of the Italian term, the fact remains that the Angloamerican term 'pussy' used to indicate a woman would be highly inappropriate on primetime British Television in a similar context, given its definition below:

**Pussy.** Coarse slang. 1. The female genitals; the vulva or vagina. To eat pussy: to perform cunnilingus.

2. Sexual intercourse with a woman.

3. A woman or women collectively, regarded as a source of sexual intercourse.

(OED)

**Pussy .a** usually vulgar. 1. Vulva.

2. The female partner in sexual intercourse.

(Merriam Webster Online.)

It is evident from these dictionary definitions that 'gnocca' and 'pussy' do not perform the same sociolinguistic function and therefore do not produce an equivalent effect on the target audience. A comparison with another pair of vulgar signifiers, whose denotative meaning is the same as the above, further emphasizes the lingua-cultural slippage:

**Cunt.** 1. The female external genital organs. Its currency is *restricted in the manner of other taboo words*.

2. Applied to a person, esp. a woman, *as a term of vulgar abuse* (my emphasis).

(OED).

**Figa.** 1. volg. organo sessuale femminile, vulva. [female sexual organ, vulva.]

2. volg. *Ragazza o donna molto attraente* (my emphasis): *che fica! Che pezzo di fica* [very attractive girl or woman: What a babe! What a great piece of arse!].

3. **Figo.** agg. Bello, divertente, alla moda. [ Adjective. Great, fun, cool.]

(De Mauro: 2000)

Thus, 'cunt' is a term of abuse, a taboo word, whereas the Italian 'figa/o' is very much in common usage, along with its derivatives (see section 4.1.2). In Tartamela's (2006: 68) words: 'For the English, *cunt* is one of the most offensive words in the English language and also means an unpleasant or stupid person. In Italian it means the opposite'. Hughes (2006: 110) goes so far to say:

Cunt [...] has been the most serious taboo word in English for centuries, remaining so for the vast majority of users.[...] in vituperative semantics of the genital area,[...]the most wounding remains the plain form 'You cunt!'

It appears, then, that the two linguacultures diverge not only on the perception of the signifier but most importantly on the signified, i.e. women and their sex. It is also worth noting that the Italian lingua-culture contains several inoffensive terms



for the female genitalia such as 'fiorellino'[little flower], 'farfarglia'[butterfly], 'passerottina'[little sparrow] (De Mauro 2000), which children can readily use without feeling shame. The English language on the other hand provides only a series of abusive terms, none of which would be suitable in the mouths of infants. Perhaps the one exception is 'fanny': 'Fanny is one of the least objectionable UK euphemisms today for cunt; it is so mild that many young British girls, if they use any name at all for their genitalia, are encouraged to use it' (Hughes 2006: 157). This has enormous sociolinguistic relevance to the case in point: although the alleged utterances discussed here would be unacceptable as political discourse, certainly in Anglophone contexts, and are unacceptable trivialisations of women, it is also true that the lexeme 'gnocca' does not carry the same abusive resonance in Italian as the English-speaking world's media would have it.

From these reflections, we now return to the *Independent*. Popham glosses 'gnocca' with its denotative meaning and a caustic indication of its usage: 'it is a vulgar term meaning "vulva" and is the standard word used by construction workers, white-van drivers and long-serving Italian prime ministers for any attractive woman who crosses their path'. The allusion to Berlusconi is clear but the plural 'Italian prime ministers' implicity places manual workers and Italian politicians on a par, associating low social class and vulgarity with Italians. Popham then praises the leader's astuteness: 'Mr Berlusconi is never as artless as he appears, and his soundest political intuition – one might say the foundation of his career – is that no political leader ever went broke underestimating the taste of the Italian electorate' (emphasis added). This condescending comment infers that the Italian people, similarly to their leader, Silvio Berlusconi, lack discernment and good taste. It appears that Popham is not greatly interested in intercultural communication. Rather, he uses a loosely translated phrase to render both Berlusconi and Lady Thatcher rather absurd. The *Independent's* diatribe stimulated bemused reaction from the Italian press. *La Repubblica* (6 July 2007) responded to Popham's assertions by claiming the Italian leader had not complemented Thatcher at all but had said: 'Se fosse stata una bella gnocca, me la ricorderei meglio' [If she had been an

attractive woman/babe/I would have remembered her better]. Recognising the divergent attitudes to vulgar language, *L'Unità* (6 July 2007) remarked:

Winking at the slang he thinks is cool or popular, the Cavalier resorts to swearwords or strong epithets. *Here in Italy this goes unnoticed* (perhaps just a jokey headline in friendly newspapers) but it surprises the British press (my emphasis).

[Per fare l'occholino ai gerghi che lui ritiene giovanili o popolareschi il Cavaliere ricorre alle parolacce o agli epiteti pesanti: *la cosa che da noi passa tranquilla* (magari con qualche titolo di scherzoso e ammiccante sui giornali amici) sorprende un po' i giornali inglesi.]

#### 5.2.4 'Forza Gnocca' goes 'Pussy'

If Berlusconi's alleged use of 'gnocca' in 2007 roused a journalistic ripple, 'Forza Gnocca' triggered a media tsunami in 2011. 'Go Pussy', its translated version, was immediately posted on a series of international news websites, including CNN. It also made headlines across the spectrum of British newspapers. Here we focus on *The Mail Online*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Star*, *The Daily Mirror* and *Metro*.

Orengo (2005: 180) observes that in producing a news text 'the amount of translated material is trivial if compared to the size of the news story; nevertheless, it is crucial'. This is a significant concept here, where we are talking about just one short phrase. Yet, the repercussions of that little phrase were considerable in terms of mediatic interest. The rendering 'Go pussy' is common to all the articles. As noted before, the outré nature of the anglophone term creates translation effects that magnify the vulgarity of the source language utterance. These effects are exploited by all the news sources in order to link Berlusconi with 'sex', 'scandal' and 'gaffe' creating Consonance with previous news narratives on his private life and forming discourse chains across different media. 'Pussy' appears in the headlines of *The Mail Online* ('"Go Pussy!" Silvio Berlusconi suggests offensive name for his Italian Political Party to boost its popularity', 16 October 2011), *The Guardian* ('Berlusconi causes outrage with suggestion to rename party 'Go Pussy'', 16 October 2011), and *The Star* ('Silvio Berlusconi in Pussy Uproar', 16 October 2011). Semantically

charged and highly evaluative lexis such as ‘uproar’ ‘offensive’, and ‘outrage’ is deployed in order to ‘create a platform, a perspective enabling the reader ... to entertain an opinion, usually smugly moralistic’ (Kuhnel 1991: 14).

*The Mail* uses quotation marks around the expression ‘Go Pussy’, emphasising the idea of direct speech although these were not the words the Premier uttered. *The Star*’s headline focuses on the lexeme ‘Pussy’ with the noun ‘uproar’ suggesting another ‘sex scandal’ although without any reference to the political context. The word ‘translation’ does not appear in either *The Mail* or *The Star*, demonstrating the invisibility of translation in news texts (see section 3.3.1); therefore we do not know who performed the translational act, nor do we know its origin. *The Guardian* uses the translated phrase ‘Go Pussy’ in the headline but then explains that the source language expression was “‘Forza Gnocca” which translates as Go Pussy’. This categorical statement implies that this is the *only* possible interpretation and, per absurdum, that translation affords no choice, no nuance, no alternative.

*The Mail*’s choice of photographic images provides the frame (Entman 1993) through which the reader interprets the ‘news’. The first picture shows Berlusconi in a black shirt, angry expression and arm outstretched, with an accusing finger pointed at something or someone. The image is striking as it captures Berlusconi in a pose reminiscent of Mussolini. Subsequently, suggestive images of Karima Keyek and Noemi Letizia are captioned with allusions to ‘underage prostitution’ and ‘inappropriate relationships’ once more perpetuating news narratives on the sex scandals. *The Daily Mirror* (28 October 2011) reports the utterance within an article with ‘revelations’ of Berlusconi purportedly making payments to women for services undisclosed. The article claims Berlusconi’s behaviour is ‘more Mafia Don than statesman’, suggesting another stereotype of Italians. The narrative on ‘Forza Gnocca’ appears to have been included only to substantiate the controversy surrounding Berlusconi at that time. The word ‘pussy’ is censored: asterisks substitute the central letters: ‘ he was thinking of renaming his political party Forza Gnocca, which translates as ‘Go P\*\*\*\* y’’. This is arguably a strategy to emphasise

the taboo quality of the word, implying that 'gnocca' would have been censored similarly in its own lingua-cultural context. On the contrary, as we have seen, 'gnocca' provokes no such censorship in Italian contexts. *Metro* (6 October 2011) also uses asterisks for the translation of 'gnocca': 'Go \*\*\*\*'. However, here the number of asterisks indicates that the censored word is 'cunt', which has very different connotations to the source language lexeme, as noted above (see Section 5.2.3). Far from being a compliment, as Hughes (2006:110) points out it is considered 'the most serious taboo word in English'.

*The Daily Star's* brief article is illustrated with an unflattering photograph of Berlusconi over a caption with enlarged inverted commas: 'I think the best name would be Forza Gnocca (Go Pussy)'. The misleading and inaccurate quotation appears as direct speech yet the source language syntagm is embedded in the statement with the translation in brackets. Underneath the 'quote' appears the name 'Silvio Berlusconi' as if affirming that the words are in fact his. The article reports that 'Sleazy Berlusconi' is at 'the centre of sex scandals' yet again and is also allegedly labelled by 'MPs' as 'sick' and 'morally vulgar'. We are not told who these MPs are or if they are Italian or English; therefore we do not know if the attributions are translations or not.

Tom Kington (*The Guardian* 7 October 2011) notes that the 'quip' was Berlusconi's 'latest gaffe' (thereby at least acknowledging that it was not a serious comment by using the definition 'quip') and had brought 'condemnation from all quarters'. The article also recalls (incorrectly, see section 5.2.2) that Berlusconi had used this term to describe Margaret Thatcher. *The Daily Telegraph* (Squires 7 October 2011) is the only paper to refer to the remark as 'sexist'. It is also unique in employing 'thick translation' (Appiah 2000), providing description, annotation and most importantly the possibility of more than one interpretation. The journalist explains, 'The Italian word [Berlusconi] used was "gnocca", the meaning of which can range from "babe" or "crumpet" to the female genitalia'. Nevertheless the online article is surrounded by a series of links to other articles on Berlusconi's sex scandals with correspondingly provocative visuals. In this sense the article is very literally

'framed'. The next section examines the news discourse surrounding another of Berlusconi's verbal indiscretions. This occasion however, was not alleged; the discursive event happened on live national television.

### **5.3 Verbal Duelling - Bindi vs. Berlusconi**

#### **5.3.1 The Event**

The second of our subjects is Rosy Bindi, a left-wing politician who was the President of the Democratic Party from 2009-2011. During a live broadcast of the late night political talk show, *Porta a Porta* (8 October 2009), Bindi was scoring points in the debate regarding Berlusconi's loss of political immunity. Joining the discussion by phone, the then Prime Minister interrupted Bindi's incisive observations and enquired: 'È la Signora Rosy Bindi che parla? Lei è sempre più bella che intelligente' ['Is that Mrs (not the Honourable, which should be the title given to a member of parliament) Rosy Bindi? You are much more beautiful than intelligent']. The presenter, Bruno Vespa was visibly embarrassed and pleaded with Mr Berlusconi to stop. Bindi responded with the now famous slogan 'non sono una donna a Sua disposizione' [I am not a woman at your disposal]. This was a clear reference to the various accusations that involved Silvio Berlusconi at that time. The incident galvanised approximately 97,000 women to protest via facebook, by signing petitions, and by holding demonstrations over Berlusconi's attitudes to women and his use of language.

#### **5.3.2 The analysis**

The British tabloids were remarkably silent on the subject, therefore the articles available are from the quality papers (with the exception of *The Daily Mail*), that provide a more in-depth perspective to the occurrence. Used as the basis on which to make observations about the 'rare feminist backlash' in Italy (*Irish Examiner Online* 21 October 2009; *The Mail Online* 21 October 2009, Reuters 20 October 2009), *The Sunday Times* (8 November 2009) ran an opinion piece, while *The Telegraph* (21

October 2010), *The Mail Online* (21 October 2009), and *The Guardian* (8 October 2009) published extended news reports. Comparing all five texts, the most striking features to emerge are the adjective-loaded descriptions of Rosy Bindi. As Künel (1991: 47) puts it, semantically charged adjectives in news reporting ‘blur the boundaries between reportage and commentary’, a practice which he notes is not the preserve of the popular press; even publications that vaunt high journalistic standards are liable to use hyperbole (ibid.: 46). In the case under analysis, four of the five articles use of a string of descriptors, which are practically identical:

1. ‘matronly, bespectacled leftist, Rosy Bindi’ (the *Mail Online*, *Irish Examiner*).
2. ‘matronly, bespectacled opposition MP, Rosy Bindi, 58’ (the *Telegraph*).
3. ‘Bindi, a matronly, bespectacled fiftysomething (an opposition deputy)’ (*The Sunday Times*).

The adjectives in common to all are ‘matronly’, an adjective that means ‘rather staid or stout’ (*OED*), and ‘bespectacled’, which implies scholarly, perhaps intellectual but generally not connoted as attractive. Clearly evaluative, the adjectival phrases appear to be used in order to substantiate Berlusconi’s gratuitous and offensive remark. The use of exactly the same adjectives in all four articles is significant for two reasons: first it would strongly suggest that the articles were largely based on an agency news story, subsequently adapted and tribalized (Orengo 2005) to the needs of each publication and each article genre (see section 3.2.1 on localization processes in the news). The fact that Reuters’ article was published on the 20<sup>th</sup> October, a day before the various newspaper versions appeared would further indicate it as the source. What would confirm this is the remarkable similarity between the *Mail Online*’s article and that of the *Irish Examiner*, both with expressions apparently lifted directly from the source. Yet the *Mail*’s byline is the ‘Mail foreign service’ while *The Irish Examiner* article is clearly accredited to Deepa Babington, from Reuters news agency. Babington’s attitude towards Bindi is revealed in the evaluative lexis used to give a physical description, while the

ideologically biased representation of Italian women in her article might motivate questions regarding the neutrality of the news agency or even the individual journalist. *Reuters'* policy of impartiality and objectivity in news reporting (see section 8. 10) seems challenged in this instance. As for the newspaper articles, the agency sourced adjectives could easily have been omitted in the re-worked texts for the various newspapers. The decision to leave them in suggests the intentionality of the news producers to justify Berlusconi's comment.

The translation of Berlusconi's utterance as 'more beautiful than intelligent' was the same for all the newspapers. What differs is the framing of the discursive event. The *Mail Online's* adroit juxtaposition of images not only reminds us of Berlusconi's 'playboy' status but puts the contrast between Bindi and 'Berlusconi's women' in sharp relief: the online news text includes a photograph of Patrizia D'Addario posing in black lingerie with the caption: 'Patrizia D'Addario [...] has claimed she slept with Berlusconi' – an item which is totally irrelevant to the case in point. A photograph of Noemi Letizia is captioned in such a way as suggest she was the cause of Berlusconi's divorce. Berlusconi himself is also featured in another photograph, drinking champagne. The image chosen of Bindi, on the other hand, shows the politician purse-lipped, hands clasped, wearing a string of pearls and more clothes than the other two women put together. In the light of *The Mail's* visual framing it could be argued that, *de facto*, British newspapers purporting to disdain Berlusconi's sexism actually reinforce the very ideology they profess to denounce. Through the strategic use of images, suggestive captions and in making very specific and unflattering reference to Bindi's appearance, the British press are actually echoing Berlusconi's verbal abuse. The only newspaper to refrain from this caricature of Bindi is *The Guardian* that reports on the incident in the more general context of Berlusconi's rage in the article '*Berlusconi lets rip in all directions after loss of immunity*'. On the contrary, none of the major Italian newspapers make reference to Bindi's physical appearance. As a protagonist of Italian politics, she is already well-known to the Italian audience and therefore a description might seem superfluous. On the other hand, their reticence could be interpreted as a serious, non-sexist approach to news reporting.

However, the narrative strand that really appealed to the British press in relation to the Bindi story was the reaction of Italian women. For example, *The Mail Online* comments on 'the rare example of feminist initiative against Berlusconi' adding that Italy is a country 'where Berlusconi's quips about women [...] are usually met with indifference'. The construction of Italian women's lackadaisical attitude towards sexism in Italian culture is framed with a selection of observations, such as: 'few batted an eyelid when former showgirl Mara Carfagna became equality minister', and the stock phrase (Entman 1993, see also section 7.6) 'scantly clad women are the mainstay on TV'. Thus, according to the article, Berlusconi's sexism 'ha [ve]s so far triggered little outrage'. The Bindi episode, according to the *Mail*, 'opened the floodgates of female wrath'.

In a long opinion piece, Brenda Power (*The Sunday Times*, 8 November 2011) draws inspiration from Berlusconi's insult to Bindi to reflect: 'Not even the most formidable woman academic or politician is immune from the equation of appearance with worth'. Nonetheless, her observation is preceded by the trite description of Bindi as a 'matronly, bespectacled fiftysomething', as noted above. Power's article does however underline the fact that sexism in politics is not only the preserve of the Italian context. She notes by comparison that Tory MP Ann Widdecombe has been the butt of 'many a cruel comment about her appearance'.

To summarise, the gratuitous and offensive comment 'Lei è sempre più bella che intelligente' has been rendered more or less word for word in all the articles analysed, and the source language meaning remains intact. What is noteworthy however, from this sample, the pervasive use of material lifted straight from agency sources; there is no plurality of interpretation in the target text renderings as the source is direct from the agency version; there is no intervention from the journalist on the translated words themselves. Instead we see the process of localizing foreign news whereby translated text is embedded within the target culture news product, manipulated 'in-house', with images, captions and additions in order to reflect the ideological slant of the newspaper in question. In the next section we discuss what



was possibly the most scandalous of Berlusconi's sexist comments, a vulgar epithet allegedly aimed at German chancellor Angela Merkel.

## 5.4 Wiretapped words? Merkel the 'Culona'

### 5.4.1 The intertextual event

The third discursive chain involves an alleged insult to Angela Merkel perpetrated by Berlusconi: 'culona inchiavabile' [unscrewable/big arse], or as *The Independent* (2011) translated, 'unfuckable lardarse.' Culled from a wiretapped conversation that was not transcribed, the alleged slur was first revealed in the left-leaning Italian newspaper, *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (Nicoli 2011). The rumour was widely reported through online news outlets and in newspapers around the world provoking international media-debates. The German tabloid Bild (11 September 2011) inquired: "Riss Berlusconi schlimme Witze über Merkel"? ["Did Berlusconi insult Merkel?"] 'Diplomatic reverberations were indeed felt and Italy suffered the repercussions on the European markets. Following Berlusconi's resignation in November 2011 (see section 4.5), the Berlusconi family-owned newspaper, *Il Giornale* (31 December 2011) published the headline 'E' stata la culona' [It was that Fat Arse] on the front page. The unsavoury soubriquet 'la culona' is an intertextual reference to Angela Merkel, and Berlusconi's reported dictum. The article claims that Merkel was instrumental in causing Berlusconi's (then) political demise. In an era of unprecedented vulgarity in Italian political discourse (Lyttelton 2008; McCarthy 1997; Tartamella 2006; Tosi 2001), *Il Giornale's* headline provoked Tartamella, author of *Parolacce* (2006) and blog of the same name to comment (2 January 2012): 'Difficile immaginare che l'atto resti senza conseguenze diplomatiche, tanto più che il sessismo in Germania è inammissibile' (emphasis added). [It is hard to believe that this act will not have diplomatic consequences, all the more so because sexism is inadmissible in Germany]. The implications of Tartamella's affirmation that verbalised sexism is absolutely taboo in northern European contexts while in Italy it might be acceptable, if not in fact the norm

invites reflection on cross-cultural perceptions of gender issues and the crucial role that translation plays in relaying ideological discourse in news texts .

#### 5.4.2 The analysis

News narratives in the British press exploited this communicative event as the apex of Berlusconi's 'gaffes'. Intermingled with accounts of prostitutes, bunga bunga, bribery and corruption, a crescendo of debauchery emerges. Thus it becomes increasingly difficult to separate the strands of discourse, the fact from fiction in media frames which blur distinctions between quality and popular press. The incident is significant for three reasons: first of all, it raises questions regarding journalistic ethics as the utterance originated from an unreliable source and cannot be verified; secondly, the taboo nature of the epithet solicits varying forms of editorial censorship reflected in the translational strategies adopted; lastly, as Mackenzie of Reuters observes: 'The incident was important [...] because it coincided with the euro crisis (see also section 8.4.1). Italy was dependent on the Germans who were their paymasters'. The articles examined here were extracted from *The Independent Online*, *The Sun Online*, *The Guardian Online*, *The Mail Online*, and *Metro*,

In *The Independent*, Tony Paterson (2011) reported on the incident within a longer article entitled 'Angela Merkel undermined by outspoken MPs'. The theme is her disintegrating coalition government and how her approach to the Euro crisis was not well received within her own party. The narrative is therefore slanted towards her dwindling power and (in)ability to govern. Following this, the alleged insult is reported under the sub-headline 'Silvio's X-rated diplomacy'. First we note the familiar use of the first name, which is unusual in a quality paper. Tabloids use first names and nicknames of celebrities as a way of creating familiarity. This strategy is also used for politicians but it is employed to show contempt and destroy public confidence (Conboy 2006: 23). Interpreted thus, the headline can be read: 'We know Silvio and we know him framed within a certain context'. Therefore we are not surprised at the next expression, the adjectival phrase 'X-rated', a term to classify

pornographic films. Thus, a clear association is made between the obscene nature of the insult and the intertextual reference to scandals surrounding the person of Berlusconi (Fowler 1991:118). The paradoxical combination of 'X-rated' with 'diplomacy' lends a mocking rather than serious tone, which is confirmed by the ideological slant of the piece. The opening line describes Merkel as 'victim' to Berlusconi's sexist language, in spite of being 'the world's most powerful woman' thereby implying that no matter how much a woman achieves she is still to be subjected to sexism. Berlusconi is referred to as the 'playboy premier' and 'gaffe-prone tycoon', both examples of 'stock phrases and stereotyped images' (Entman 1993: 52). These expressions might be expected in the sphere of the tabloid journalism but here belie the gravity of the subject. Firstly, the accusation: 'The gaffe-prone tycoon has been overheard referring to the German leader as an 'unfuckable lard-arse'. In terms of transitivity, the passive verb form initially indicates an agentless action- we do not know who overheard the utterance; therefore we cannot even be sure that the speech act took place. However, the clause 'according to wiretaps reported by Italian newspapers' is added thus attributing the verification of the fact to a journalistic source. The dialogic relationship between British and Italian press is thus brought to bear on the legitimizing process (Caimotto 2010). The translational choice of 'lard-arse' lends a comic note to the insult, arousing suspicion as to the criteria for newsworthiness of this news item (see section 2.3.1). Intertextual references to the 'Obama gaffe' appear (see section 7.1.1) for no apparent reason other than to highlight the fact that Berlusconi is no novice to coining controversial epithets. The penultimate paragraph states once again that the wiretapped conversation was 'overheard' by 'investigators' but offers no substantiation to this assertion nor does it explain that there is no evidence of the utterance as the wiretappers did not transcribe what they 'overheard'. Finally Berlusconi is provided with the motive for his verbal abuse; the article explains that days before the alleged conversation, German officials had been putting the Italian Premier under pressure to implement budget cuts. *The Independent* publishes the boldest, most forthright and taboo rendering of the insult with the expression 'unfuckable lard-arse'. No reference is made to the source

language or a translation, and the expression is reported directly in English in inverted commas (see section 8.4.1 for a discussion on the 'journalator's' rendering of *culona inchiavabile*).

At the other end of the permissory spectrum, *The Mail Online* with its moralistic stance (Conboy 2006) uses asterisks to censor the obscenity: 'un\*\*\*\*able fat \*\*\*\*'. No mention is made of translation, or of the source language. Readers of British newspapers are perfectly aware that asterisks are used to mask taboo words and are certainly able to decode the message, in this case aided by the alliteration and loaded adjective used in the headline: 'What smutty Silvio was caught on wiretap letting slip about Frau Merkel'. The headline implies that the allegations are true, although there is no proof. However, the accusation then is allayed by the use of reporting expressions such as 'claims', 'it has been suggested', 'alleged remarks' and so on. As noted in other articles examined (see section 6.10), *The Mail* uses the intertextual tactic of 'reminding' its readers of previous embarrassing episodes involving Berlusconi, constructing chains of discourse across discursive events. The list begins with 'This is not the first time', and the journalist recalls the time when the Italian Premier leapt out from behind a statue and shouted 'cuckoo' at the German chancellor. Then there was the occasion that he kept her waiting while he was speaking on the phone. Thus the incident is framed within the context of a series of gaffes towards Angela Merkel, creating expectation and consonance (see section 2.3.1). Finally we note that the article is accompanied by the tried and tested series of photos of 'Berlusconi's women': Patrizia D'Addario, ('Italian escort'), Aida Yespica ('Venezuelan showgirl - one of the many young women linked to the PM') and a series of photographs that focus on the legs of Elvira Savino, one of his deputies. As if to underline the contrast, there is an unflattering photograph of a frowning Angela Merkel. The discriminate use of images of women associated with Berlusconi has the function of reinforcing narratives and media discourse on Berlusconi's scandals while highlighting the visual, and physical differences between Merkel and the women Berlusconi is linked to, thus evidencing double standards; purporting horror at Berlusconi's sexism while subliminally promoting the very same.

*Metro* ran the headline ‘Silvio Berlusconi accused of new “Sex Slur” over Angela Merkel’ with the strapline ‘Mr Berlusconi was allegedly recorded describing chancellor Angela Merkel as ‘unf\*\*\*able’ as she has such a ‘fat a\*\*e.’ The asterisks again simultaneously mask and underline the ‘unsayable’. The two previous incidents with Merkel are also recalled. Describing itself as a ‘family newspaper’, *The Sun* refrains from printing the expression, describing the insult as ‘too vulgar to mention’. The moralising tenor is rather inconsistent with the newspaper’s ritual ‘page three’, a page which is dominated by the photograph of a semi-nude young woman in a provocative pose (see section 2.3.1). However, a series of links on the same page – ‘Berlusconi had girl in a trance’, ‘Silvio; bunga is dancing’ and ‘Berlusconi hit by porn girl claim’ and the last line of the article referring to trails in which Berlusconi is involved provide the inevitable frame for the article.

The translational choice of ‘unfuckable’ as the equivalent English term for ‘inchiavabile’ is an ideological one that triggers issues of censorship in the British context, as we have seen from the use of asterisks in some publications. Although its increased currency has led to diminishing taboo status, ‘fuck’ and its variants still retain considerable shock value (Hughes 2006: 194); most UK newspapers will not print it (see discussion with journalists section 8.4.1). An alternative could have been ‘unscrewable’ which is semantically and etymologically nearer the source language term. It is also more acceptable in printed form, as exemplified in the notorious *Economist* title on the subject of Berlusconi, ‘The man who screwed an Entire Country’ (9 June 2011) with its double entendre. The choice, then of such a strong taboo word in English again raises questions as to the motives behind the translational choice; to shock? To make Berlusconi’s utterances appear worse than they really are? To highlight his vulgarity? Of course this analysis does not intend to underestimate the absolutely sexist inappropriacy of Silvio Berlusconi’s (alleged) language. The study, however, uncovers prejudiced ways of framing what is ultimately an unsubstantiated remark, and insodoing, expanding from the individual of Silvio Berlusconi, confirm existing national stereotypes.

If we ponder a moment on the source language verb 'chiavare', which could be defined as a colloquial, slang term, we note that the denotative meanings are:

1. Trafiggere con chiodi, inchiodare [To nail]
2. Fissare nella mente, nella memoria [to fix in the mind, in the memory]
3. Volgare. Possedere sessualmente: 'me la sono chiavata' [to sexually possess, to screw]
4. Volgare. Ingannare, fregare. Fottere, scopare, trombare. [screw; as in to deceive, to cheat] (De Mauro 2000).

We can therefore assume that 'chiavare', or rather the adjectival 'inchiavabile' is used in a metaphorical sense to mean 'to have sexual intercourse with'. On a comparative note, the Italian press had no scruples in publishing the complete expression. In conclusion, it would appear that Berlusconi's alleged dictum on Angela Merkel was viewed with mirth rather than condemnation from the British press. It is the character of the British 'behind the net curtain' mentality that emerges; 'Smutty Silvio', 'Sleazy Silvio', and so on. Of course this was only an alleged comment but the Anglophone newspapers gloat on the contents, giving them once more invaluable material to ridicule women, Berlusconi, and Italy.

## 5.5 Closing remarks

This chapter has focused on the cross-cultural perception of taboo language construed as sexist within English/Italian contexts via translation in the news and the ways in which it has been employed as an ideological prop in constructing Berlusconi's image. The picture that emerges from the analysis reveals that in the case of Berlusconi, translation is a means to perpetuate convenient news narratives and reinforce national stereotypes. The instrumental use of translation is employed

to present one debateable rendering of the source language term 'gnocca' in order to sanction the myriad news narratives on Berlusconi's persona linked to sex and the stereotype of the playboy Latin Lover. From a sociolinguistic perspective we note the differing attitudes of the two lingua-cultures towards signifiers pertaining to the female genitalia. In the case of the narrative on Berlusconi's words to Bindi, what is striking is ways in which the Reuters news agency text was appropriated, localized, elaborated and blatantly copied in the resulting news products, just as Orengo describes (2005; see sections 3.2-3.2.1). In the final news narrative on Angela Merkel, the renderings of Berlusconi's alleged words are purely skopos-oriented: not to serve the purpose of greater understanding, or of social criticism, but to tailor the news to fit the expectations of the target-culture users, in other words localization in the extreme. It cannot be denied that Berlusconi has used offensive language but in the current climate of unbridled vulgarity in Italian political discourse, the language he uses does not carry the abusive resonance within its own linguaculture that the English-speaking world's media would have it. If translation of Berlusconi is framed discourse, and framed discourse is a way to perpetuate stereotypes, are we seeing a double effect of translation? Is the British Press employing Berlusconi and translation as a subterfuge to legitimise national caricatures, thus subliminally adhering to sexist, racist and non-politically correct attitudes, despite the new taboos? The following chapters explore racist taboos to offer a comparison.





## 6. The Spitting Image of Italy? : Stereotypes and framing in British news discourse

I think Italians are neurotic or paranoid about their image abroad. Things written about the country have become a national crisis ... they keep looking abroad for reassurance or criticism

Nicolas Farell interviewed by John Lloyd for *The Sunday Times* (18 January 2003)

The previous chapter reflected on British news discourse related to representations of Berlusconi's alleged utterances regarding women and the ensuing translation effects. Here the analysis moves on to focus on framing practices and national image building through representations of Berlusconi, and by metonymy, the Italian people. The role of translation and intertextual references between the British and Italian press are examined in relation to the meaning making process. The chapter focuses on two discursive events from two periods of Berlusconi's career. The first event discussed in sections 6.4-6.5 regards a 'media row' that occurred in 2009 between the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* and British tabloid *The Star*. It is an example of the intertextuality and chains of discourse (Fairclough 1995) that were established in media meta-debates surrounding Berlusconi and Italy at the height of Berlusconi's sex scandals. The second data-set centres on news narratives surrounding a communicative event that took place in 2013 in which Berlusconi made some controversial remarks regarding Mussolini (sections 6.5-6.6).

## 6.1 Imaging Berlusconi – Stereotypes in the news

Silvio Berlusconi's notoriety on the international media circuit cannot be underestimated. While some suggest that 'in a world where increasingly there is no such thing as bad publicity, this could be spun in a positive light' (Agnew: 2011: 4), most commentators agree that the premier's prominence in foreign news reports owes less to his political acumen than to his various misdemeanours, thereby damaging Italy's image abroad (Albertazzi et al 2009; Bigi et al 2011; Fella and Ruzza 2009; Galetto et al 2009). Following his resignation in November 2011, Berlusconi openly blamed his (then) political demise, (via translation), on the 'obsessive campaign by the national and foreign media' (Dinmore & Segreti 2012). Thus he acknowledges the dialogic nexus between Italian and international newsmakers, and their pivotal role in constructing his public image. The literature on Berlusconi and his many facets often includes a cursory observation regarding the former Premier's 'gaffes'<sup>19</sup>, and the highly critical attitude of the world's media. However, there has been little serious and systematic investigation into the links between national image, stereotypes, and the cross-cultural representation of Berlusconi. Furthermore, the reflexive and interdependent relationship between the Italian and foreign press impacts significantly on the ways in which Italy is portrayed in the Anglophone media. The chains of discourse sustaining the dialectics between British and Italian press (Caimotto 2010) ineludibly make recourse to translation, although as we have seen in news discourse translated speech is rarely attributed as such (Schäffner 2008: 3). What follows is a brief overview of existing scholarship on the chains of discourse on the 'Italian Anomaly' that was its Prime Minister.

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<sup>19</sup> For example in Fella and Ruzza's 'Re-inventing the Italian Right: Territorial politics, populism and post fascism' (2009), we note 'gaffe' appears 4 times: 'well-publicised gaffes' (2009: 134), 'many gaffes and public indiscretions' (ibid.: 120), 'numerous gaffes and public indiscretions' (ibid.: 121), 'monumental gaffes' (ibid.: 36).

In 'The Big Seducer: Berlusconi's Image at Home and Abroad and the Future of Italian Politics', Agnew (2011: 4) affirms

[Berlusconi] captures in one person and in a peculiarly Italian way, the excesses and the hopes of the era. To many Italians, he is undoubtedly 'one of us' in his conviviality, Alpha-male swagger, apparent devotion to his children (if not to his former wife), capacity to ingratiate himself with whomever he is currently seducing (politically and otherwise), reckless hedonism, and (for some men, at least) ability to live out an erotic 'dream life' that they can only envy.

In comparing foreign media coverage with Italian popular opinion (*Analisi Politica* 2010), the author posits that contrary to the prevailing belief, there is no great disparity between how Berlusconi is perceived internationally and what his co-nationals think of him. The investigation looks at 'negative' and 'positive' reactions to news surrounding the former premier, and concludes: 'the presumed gap between views of Berlusconi at home and abroad looks much smaller than conventional wisdom would suggest' (Agnew 2011: 14). Agnew uses data drawn from unspecified international online 'news outlets'. In spite of the vagueness of the parameters of the dataset, or the news stories that have been covered, we can assume that newspapers are included (He mentions *The Times* and *The Economist*), and therefore issues of discourse, language, and attitude all become significant. The study is based on what is described as 'content analysis', yet there is very little critical appraisal of discourse (see Entman 1993: 57); translated quotes and texts are taken at face value without considering the possibility of misinterpretations or ideological slippage. The very salient question of language, and that Berlusconi's persona is viewed in translation from the foreign news perspective, does not figure in Agnew's examination of international and domestic perceptions of Berlusconi.

Caimotto (2010) on the other hand examines the construction of Berlusconi's identity in Italian newspapers identifying translation as a means of perpetuating 'news as narration' (Lopocaro 2005). She suggests that the Italian press cite articles from Anglophone newspapers to reproduce and reinforce 'gossip and storytelling' on Italian affairs, particularly on Berlusconi (2010: 103). The author flags up the selective construction of Berlusconi's identity (ibid: 109) through differently edited

versions of a CNN interview used in different media. The concept of selective construction is one that invites reflection on gatekeeping practices in British newspapers and the manipulation of translation in construing a foreign national identity. In an early study on ideological translations in the news, Kelly (1998) examines the translation of culturebound terms relating to Spanish institutions in the British press that reveal ideological skewing by presenting a positive 'us' and negative 'them' (van Dijk 1993: 263) view of Spain. She states (ibid: 58) 'the translation decisions taken often serve to reinforce and perpetuate stereotypical constructions of the source culture, thus preventing, rather than furthering, intercultural understanding.' Another clear example of the intrinsic force of the chains of discourse.

One of the salient characteristics of postmodern societies is the dichotomy between the global and the local (see section 3.2-3.2.1). While cosmopolitanism (Bielsa 2010) and globalisation engender cultural and linguistic homogeneity and supranational political entities, simultaneously, social, ethnic and religious groups are fighting for their specific identities. According to Beller (2007: 14) these discrepancies are 'verbalized in the discourse of traditional and fresh prejudices and stereotypes'. In order to comprehend these phenomena, one approach considered here is that emerging form Image Studies, or imagology. As a discipline, imagology aims to describe 'the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them' (ibid.: 11-12). In his seminal work, *Public Opinion* (1922), Lippmann first coined the term 'stereotype' to refer to the set of pre-conceived 'pictures in our heads' that form a visual short-hand of mental images that define our experiences in the world. These pictures are culturally constructed, and our expectations, our habits and our tastes conform to them. He observes (1922/1997: 55) 'In the great, blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture'. He goes on to explain the ways in which these stereotypes are employed by newspapers to involve the reader, reconfirming the reader's expectation (1997: 329):

The audience must participate in the news, much as it participates in the drama by personal identification. [...] In order that he shall enter he must find a familiar foothold in the story and this is supplied to him by the use of stereotypes. It is the combination of these elements that the power to create opinion resides. *Editorials reinforce.*

According to Lippmann, stereotypes are necessary to recognising our own identity: 'our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights' (Lippman cited in Dyer 2002: 11), thus installing the 'Us versus Them' dichotomy (Dyer 2002:11). Conboy (2006: 95) observes that British tabloids reinforce a sense of reader identity and of national community through 'a shared common perception of external challenge' (ibid.) and agrees with Hall (1988: 29) that 'a culturally contrasted sense of Englishness and a particularly closed form of English national identity [...] is one of the core characteristics of British racism today'. News discourse (see sections 2.3-2.5) can often be a repository of nationalistic ideology:

Journalists often identify not only with a language but also with a nation state, and in nationalist ideologies, the positive self-image is in terms of Us in our country, on the one hand, and Them in (or from) other countries, on the other hand, as we also have seen for racist ideologies, with which nationalist ideologies are closely related. In nationalist ideologies, identity is crucial, and associated with a complex system of positive characteristics about how we are, about our history and habits, our language and culture, national character, and so on. (Van Dijk 2009: 201)

It is these forms of nationalisms that we see emerging through stereotyping and framing practices employed in the texts under analysis. The next sections explain the nexus between these processes and the growing chains of discourse that frame Italy in British newsmaking.

### **6.1.1 Framing Processes**

Closely linked to the notion of stereotype is the poly-functional concept of frame (see section 2.4). According to *OED*, the verb 'to frame' has a number of meanings, among which 'to shape, to fashion, to form'. In a more disconcerting vein, it can also

signify 'To concoct, to fabricate, to conspire'. House notes that our knowledge is acquired through socio-culturally generated frames that are triggered linguistically through which we interpret information:

Since speakers are rooted in their culture, they can resort to their individual, socio-culturally generated knowledge in the form of 'frames' (acquired in primary socialization through language used in a specific culture) in which linguistic expressions are linked with extralinguistic features of the situation (setting, sociolinguistic variables, etc.). Together these features make up a minimal context that sets up inferencing processes' (House 2012: 287).

As we saw earlier (section 2.4) news narratives on Berlusconi are fed through 'framing devices (Gamson & Modigliani 1989) such as metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases, and visual images. Thus the formulaic 'cruise ship crooner', 'playboy premier', and the 'perma-tanned, 76-year-old gaffe-prone media tycoon' are hyperbolic stock phrases used by the gamut of British newspapers from *The Guardian* to *The Sun*<sup>20</sup> confirming the English speaking world's perception of the 'easy-going epicureanism' associated with Italians (Beller in Beller and Joep 2002: 198, see section 2.4). While international media depict the Italian leader in a certain way, Berlusconi himself, media entrepreneur and communications expert, has also cultivated his own image.. Headlines and captions such as 'The Italian Stallion' (*The Independent* 2010) and 'The Godfather of Italian Politics (the *Daily Mail* 11 April 2008) explicitly link negative national stereotypes to the individual. The British attitude to the Italian people is evident in the antiquated racial slur, 'Italian slimeball' that has been resurrected by Tom Savage in the *Daily Star* (15 July 2009) in Berlusconi's honour. A full page article entitled 'Italian Slimeball puts the boot into Britain, but *we* say: "Shaddap you face"' was in response to *Il Giornale's* (13 July 2009) editorial, 'Cari inglesi, ormai vi abbiamo battuto in tutto' [Dear English

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<sup>20</sup> Searches on the news database Nexis Lexis in 'UK national newspapers'; Berlusconi+Italian Stallion 8 results; Berlusconi+ perma tanned 66 results, Berlusconi+cruise ship crooner 140, Berlusconi+ Godfather 270 results. Cf. Google: Berlusconi+ Italian Stallion, 1,190,000 results; Berlusconi+perma tanned 438,000 results; Berlusconi+ cruise ship crooner 23,000 results; Berlusconi+Godfather 352,000.

people, we have now beaten you in everything]. The *Star's* abusive retort insults Berlusconi in particular and Italians in general. The headline is an intertextual reference to a song, 'Shaddap you face' (Joe Dolce 1981) that parodies the pronunciation of Italians speaking English. Berlusconi is photographed apparently about to burst into song, smiling and gesticulating with his hands. The article concludes with a series of crude racist insults towards Italians under the title 'why Italy should show the white flag'. What follows is a detailed analysis of the framing tactics adopted by British newspapers in narrating Berlusconi in which translation is emeshed.

## **6.2 The Spitting Image of Italy? Berlusconi in the British Press**

This chapter aims to further scrutinize two communicative events and their subsequent representations in a cross-section of journalistic texts that illustrate the ways in which translation and its invisibility are employed as a means of reinforcing stereotypes of Italians through (mis)representations of Berlusconi and his words. The first examines a meta-debate across linguistic and cultural boundaries between a British tabloid, the *Daily Star*, and the right-wing Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* mentioned in the previous section. The text under discussion is entitled 'Italian Slimeball puts the boot into Britain... but we say 'Shaddup you face'' (the *Daily Star* 15 July 2009) that was published in response to *Il Giornale's* (13 July 2009) editorial, 'Cari inglesi, ormai vi abbiamo battuti in tutto' [Dear English people, we have now beaten you in everything]. The second dataset comprises a small sample corpus of online British quality newspaper reports on some comments Berlusconi made on Mussolini during an interview (RAI 27 January 2013). The newspapers' rendering of Berlusconi's discourse is compared with the original interview with RAI television journalists. The transformations that take place in the translation process are identified and their ideological consequences are discussed.

### 6.2.1 National Image and stereotyping

In the realms of news production, framing and stereotyping are praxis. Agnew affirms (2001: 7): 'Foreign journalists [...] *must* slant and orient their stories towards established frames of reference for characterizing Italy and its politics including the stereotypes that are an inevitable part of reporting from exotic locales'. However, such an easy acceptance of the status quo should ring alarm bells in relation to the interpretation of the *Other*, of cultures and customs that we do not access directly through our own experience of their *modus vivendi* but through translations: should we not be asking why journalists '*must*' skew their news reporting, and why stereotypes are '*inevitable*' when reporting from abroad? By the same token, Rizzo and Stella (2011: 10), esteemed Italian journalists who write for *La Repubblica*, criticize the foreign press for exploiting Berlusconi as an excuse to denigrate the Italian people: 'In recent years the derision aimed at The Cavalier by newspapers from all over the world has all too often been a means of dusting down a few old prejudices against Italians, the very same ones that weighed down so heavily on our emigrants'. This might well be true, nevertheless, as Federici points out:

The Italian press use trenchant language to persuade without any evidence. It is the very problem of *Repubblica* as a newspaper, and of *Il Corriere*, *La Stampa* and Italian press more than any other national press: rarely, very rarely evidence or corroborating facts are used. Time pressure and constraints are no good excuse when blogging and internet journalism have changed the ways in which readers access news. (Federici, private communication 3. December 2014)

Van Dijk has long studied the role of the press in the reproduction of racism. He maintains that:

The media not only express, reflect or disseminate ethnic opinions, but actively mediate them [...]. They autonomously (re-)interpret, (re-)construct and (re-)present them, and therefore contribute themselves to their production, and hence to the construction of the ethnic consensus that underlies the racist ideologies and practices of our society (van Dijk 1989: 221)



It has been argued that Berlusconi's transgressions have systematically tarnished Italy's image abroad (Agnew 2011; Bigi *et al*; 2011; Corner 2010; Mommone and Veltri 2010; Croci and Lucarelli 2010; Rothenberg 2009: 162). Bigi *et al* (2011: 148-55), for example, examine the case of Berlusconi's indiscretions and the effect his scandals have played in the decline of the perception of the Italian Brand. They define 'national brand as 'the identity of a particular country as perceived by the international audience' (ibid. 148). Their analyses of political cartoons published in *The Times* provide insight into (negative) international attitudes towards Mr Berlusconi, emphasizing that a country's image abroad can effect the internal political, social, and economic stability. Could it equally be argued that British news narratives on the former Italian premier have been selected, constructed and refracted to coincide with convenient stereotypes of Italianness? Have media frames (de Vreese 2005: 51) rendered Silvio Berlusconi a synecdoche for the nation he was elected to govern? According to Bell (1991: 53), most news stories are not about events or actions, but about what people *say* (my emphasis). Berlusconi is a case in point. What ideological slanting transpires when what is said in one language and linguistic context is reformulated for another lingua-culture through the lens of newsroom expediency? In Chapter 2, the issue of newspeak was introduced (see 2.4-2.5). The next sections discuss examples of this form of unsubstantiated rhetoric that by means of framing creates the stereotypes shaping the image of Italy found in the UK press. In order to do this, however, a synoptic comparison between Italian and British newspapers is offered in the next section as a backdrop for the analysis that follows.

### **6.2.2 British and Italian press: a brief comparison**

As the first analysis focuses on the dialogic relationship between Italian and British press, it is useful to understand something of the ways in which newspapers function in the respective socio-cultural environments. There is a widely held belief that the British press is the guardian of truth and beacon of objectivity, even in

academic literature (see Bromley 2003, 123-131; Chalaby 1998: 130-40; Conboy 2004: 191; Hampton 2008: 477 McNair 1998: 64-77. See also section 7.3.2). For example, Caimotto (2010: 102) refers to 'a more reliable Anglo-American journalistic practice'. She remarks however that Italian newspapers quote the Anglophone press via translation that is used 'as one more tool for gossip and storytelling', instead of exploiting their so-called objectivity as a font of information that Italian readers might not have access to. Lumley (1996: 204) on the other hand eschews 'the assumption that somehow a truly independent national press exists elsewhere', and argues that too much credit is given to the authoritative status of newspapers like *The Times*, while 'the merits of the Italian press are overlooked'. Croci and Lucrelli (2010: 252) note that Italian national dailies such as *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* frequently quote reports about Italy and Italian politics from articles in European and American newspapers attributing this to 'the preoccupation that Italians have with what others think of them'. On the contrary Lumley (1996: 204) interprets the Italian journalists' habit of comparing their press with foreign newspapers as a sign of critical open mindedness and a 'non-nationalist approach'. Bonomi (2003: 129) on the other hand, notes the subtle way in which quoted material is introduced into Italian news discourse; a practice, as we saw earlier (see section 3.3.1), which occurs in particular with translated text. In this case,

Lo spazio crescente che il discorso diretto ha conquistato nei nostri quotidiani è sotto gli occhi di tutti. ... Sempre più spesso, poi, le battute appaiono inserite in modo quasi 'nascosto', senza segnalatori grafici come le vigolette (2003; 129). La lingua dei quotidiani Ilaria Bonomi

[The increasing amount of space that is given over to direct speech in our newspapers is apparent to everyone ... ever more frequently, the comments are embedded in such a way as to be 'hidden', without graphic markers such as inverted commas

Unlike the Italian newspapers, the British press has traditionally been divided into quality and tabloid press (Allan 2006) (see section 2.5). In theory the former provide in-depth comment and analysis from home and abroad, presenting news in a relatively unbiased way using a neutral or formal register. This is, however a

generalisation that has long been problematized (Fowler 1991: 2), as the stances one expects to find in editorials now also emerge through more subtle ideological skewing in news reports. The tabloid, defined as 'a very British format' (Conboy 2006: 7), provides fast, easy access to scandal and celebrity news while any political, economic or foreign news is reported with a strong institutional slant. Tabloid language is usually characterized by dramatization, exaggeration and hyperbole in order to make the news more sensational (van Dijk in Conboy 2006: 16). However these divisions have been blurred in recent years; as Conboy (2006: preface) comments there is a 'narrowing divide between the once-broadsheet press and the tabloids'. This convergence between quality and popular newspaper becomes more than evident in the present research.

Lumley (1996: 204) observes that the quality/tabloid division of British newspapers is unlikely to develop in Italy where the press is structured differently. The presence of a strong regional press that 'cuts across the divisions of social class' (ibid; see Orenco 2005), the differing approach to covering popular themes such as crime and sports and the dominance of popular weekly magazines are all factors which would impede the circulation of a tabloid-style daily. Lopocaro (2005: 61-71) notes, however, the recent 'svecchiamento' of linguistic and rhetorical style in Italian papers, which could be considered more akin to the language of British tabloids. He also points out that Italians prefer the television as a medium of news information over the written word (ibid.: 14). Some critics claim that Italian news reporting lacks objectivity. Giuliano and Lloyd (2013: 22) state: 'Being objective is not one of the main concerns of journalism: in Italy the aim is to present a plurality of points of views'. Loporcaro (2006, 15-16) argues that infotainment, a phenomenon affecting all Western democracies, has reached unprecedented levels in Italy. This might well be the case and to bring the topic back onto our main focus, the singularity of the situation in Italy regarding Berlusconi's control of the media justifiably gives rise to concern, but it will be demonstrated here that the British press is far from immune to subjectivity and distortion of reality. Dysfunction exists in all newspapers at all levels and while the tabloids at least make no pretention to objectivity, the quality press to some extent do, thus all the more disturbing to find

evidence of tabloid tactics. The datasets considered to further investigate these phenomena are discussed below.

### **6.3 Shaddup you face – a syncretism of stereotypes**

The datasets used here are constructed using texts from a cross-section of British national newspapers representing the quality, middle range and tabloid dailies including *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, the *The Mail online*, and *The Daily Star*. The communicative events reported in the articles under discussion epitomize two different periods of Berlusconi's career. The first case study dates back to the first wave of sex scandals surrounding the then Prime Minister in 2009 preceding the G8 summit held in L'Aquila, scene of the disastrous earthquake. The second case study discusses the news narratives surrounding a comment Berlusconi made regarding Mussolini in the run up to the last Italian general elections, 24-25 February 2013. Berlusconi had risen from the ashes following his apparent political demise in 2011 to reappear as a more sober character ready to take charge of the country once again. The analyses focus on two different newspaper genres; the first study focusses on tabloids while the second concentrates on quality papers.<sup>21</sup>

#### **6.3.1 The situation**

In early 2009 a series of scandals erupted regarding Silvio Berlusconi's private life. Revelations regarding his relationships with escort Patrizia D'Addario, and the eighteen year old Noemi Letizia prompted his then wife Veronica Lario to announce that she was suing for divorce. Ensuing news narratives exploded across the world's media in the period preceding the G8 summit (8-10 July 2009). The British press roundly condemned Berlusconi but the critiques in *The Times*, *The*

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<sup>21</sup>Albeit problematic, the definitions 'tabloid' and 'quality' are generally acknowledged in media studies in spite of their evaluative connotations (see Bednarek and Caple 2012: 18).

*Financial Times*, and *The Economist* were particularly fierce. In this context, *Il Giornale*, the right-wing newspaper owned by Paolo Berlusconi, brother of Silvio, published a front page editorial and double page spread (Maglie 13 July 2009) on the supposed moral, social and financial decline of Great Britain as a counter attack against the British press. In so doing the Italian newspaper incited scornful editorial responses from *The Times* (Owen, 14 July 2009; Vine 15 July 2009), the *Telegraph* (Squires 14 July 2009) and *The Daily Star* (15 July 2009). The very fact that *The Times* felt it necessary to replicate twice in two separate articles is significant, underlining the intense reactions that *Il Giornale's* article produced. The analysis discussed here focuses in particular on *The Daily Star's* response as it provides numerous examples of national stereotyping and is exemplary of tabloid discourse on the Other. The following section outlines the content of *Il Giornale's* article in order to contextualise the *Star's* retort.

### 6.3.2 Italy beats Britain - *Il Giornale* attacks the British press

Renowned for its aggressive, demagogic and populist style of journalism under the direction of Alessandro Sallusti, *Il Giornale's* editorial policy seems quite clear; it condemns the left-wing in general and anyone, regardless of political persuasion, who dissents from Berlusconi (Giuliano and Lloyd 2013: 62). The front page editorial entitled 'Cari inglesi, ormai vi abbiamo battuti in tutto' [Dear Brits, now we have beaten you at everything]<sup>22</sup> can be construed as a form of redress against the British press for its highly critical attitude towards Berlusconi, in particular regarding his private life during the period leading up to the G8 Summit. Editorials are not news reports; political and ideological biases are often freely expressed within editorial column inches with no pretention to objectivity (see section 7.3.2) but as Van Dijk (1989: 232) reminds us nevertheless their persuasive functions have

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<sup>22</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translations from the original Italian are mine.

an important cognitive dimension, both in their production, and in their reception by the public. *Il Giornale* dedicates three pages to tracing the 'downfall' of what *Newsweek* (4 November 1996) had dubbed 'Cool Britannia'. According to *Il Giornale*, Great Britain had plunged into financial and social chaos in the wake of the world economic crisis of 2008. Maglie begins her argumentation by noting that following the success of G8, the global chorus of praise bestowed upon Berlusconi, and therefore Italy, to some extent compensates for all the insults and threats of boycotting that had preceded the summit. She observes that 'il *Financial Times*, bontà sua, ammette che un statista è un statista anche se è italiano e miliardario e gli piacciono le donne' [*The Financial Times* generously admits that a statesman is a statesman, even if he is an Italian millionaire who also happens to like women]. In fact, the *Financial Times* (Dinmore and Parker July 11 2009) wrote: 'From scandal-plagued playboy to international statesman: after three days of presiding over the international gathering Mr Berlusconi has silenced his critics and soothed his allies, at least for the moment'. The Italian journalist then claims that Britain is in a phase of declining British cultural and social hegemony that had been associated with the Blair years. According to the writer, 'Cool Britannia' had been submerged by the global economic crisis - and could no longer look down in disdain at the rest of Europe, and Italy in particular: 'una decina di anni fa, l'Inghilterra ci guardava, come sempre ha fatto, come pezzenti' [A decade ago, England looked upon us as if we were beggars, as it had always done]. What can be decoded from this comment is the 'Senso di inferiorità' [inferiority complex] (Isnenghi 1970) that Italians feel when they compare themselves with other nations. This can also be seen in the standard practice on Italian talk shows and news media to compare Italy unfavourably with other nations, in particular northern Europe. Patriarca (2010: 5) notes the 'presence of a very self-critical attitude in Italian culture', that is, however, absent from Maglie's survey of Italy compared to Great Britain.

David Cameron's own definition of 'Broken Britain' (*The Times*, 17 February 2007) is cited as the most suitable description of the UK and attempts to highlight Italy's strengths against Britain's weaknesses. Maglie then cites the plummeting credit rating that Britain had at that time in Europe, and the MPs expenses scandal

during Gordon Brown's premiership as examples of moral and economic deterioration. She concludes that Britain's 'ruthless' newspapers would do well to halt their 'anti-Italian' stance and face the harsh reality that 'London rules no more'. To sum up, the editorial strongly condemns what is viewed from *Il Giornale's* perspective as the British press's arrogance and hostility towards Berlusconi. By metonymy, the Italian newspaper perceives the attacks on Italy's Prime Minister as an offence to Italy as a whole. Above all, however, it is a criticism of British journalists.

Before continuing the analysis it is necessary here to make a short methodological aside regarding the instability of online archive news data. It is not unknown for articles, even after they have been published online, to be edited, censored, or even directly removed. For the researcher this means that where there is a doubt, it is necessary to check that the digital version corresponds to the content of the original (newspaper) text. In the specific case, this was essential to understand *The Daily Star's* vitriolic riposte to *Il Giornale*. Had the analysis of *The Star's* article presented here been based only on the contents of *Il Giornale's* online article, the outcomes of the analysis would have been considerably different. Therefore for the purposes of this study the original newspaper article was obtained and compared with the digital version. The version available today on *Il Giornale's* website is considerably shorter than the three page spread published on the 13 July 2009. Furthermore, the original newspaper editorial is surrounded by a series of boxes on specific topics, such as football, immigration, fashion, crime, tourism, and industry in which Great Britain is compared unfavourably with Italy. Graphically, the information is organised in two columns entitled 'Them' and 'Us', which can be read as 'Them versus Us' (van Dijk 1995: 280), the argumentation structure that ideologically triggers opposition and conflict between the two groups. These do not appear at all on the newspaper website. Comparing the content of the online *Il Giornale* article to the riposte in *The Star* direct and indirect discourse reported in *The Star's* article, appears to be completely fictitious. It has been said that 'Tabloids

are at least as much about myths as the truth'.<sup>23</sup> The article below is no exception, nevertheless for a question of scholarly rigour every attempt has been made to understand the whole context.

### 6.3.3 The *Star* hits back – metaphors of war

*Il Giornale's* editorial is clearly skewed against everything British. As mentioned earlier, objectivity is often not the aim of Italian newspapers. The article does, however, present a motivated case, specifically against the perceived distain and hypocrisy of British journalists. There is some evidence of factual back-up for the claims it makes; it cites articles from *Newsweek*, *The Observer*, and *The Daily Mail* to sustain its point of view. In other words, biased and sardonic as it may be, the text focuses on political, economic and social aspects of British culture; allusions to the British superiority complex as evidenced by British newspaper discourse are the only comments on national character. The *Daily Star's* riposte, on the other hand, resorts to overt stereotyping and verbal abuse, targeting Berlusconi as the archetypal Italian. The text is multimodal, combining strong visual primers, classic tabloid rhetoric, and graphics to focus attention on content. A head and shoulders photograph of the former prime minister dominates the text; eyes half closed smiling and gesticulating, Berlusconi seems poised to burst into song. The image is particularly redolent for several reasons; firstly it connects with the musical reference in the headline. 'Shaddup You Face' (Joe Dolce 1981) is an astonishingly crude allusion to a popular song that parodies the pronunciation of Italian immigrants speaking English. The image and the intertextual reference in the headline construe Consonance (Bednarek and Caple 2012: 43; see section 2.3.1). Berlusconi is frequently described in British news texts as a 'former cruise ship

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<sup>23</sup> A comment made by John Lloyd, contributing editor of *The Financial Times* at the event, 'Watchdog and Lapdog? A comparison of British and Italian journalism' (15 July 2013), held at the Institute for Italian Culture in London. See also Chapter 8.



crooner'.<sup>24</sup> The photograph in *The Daily Star* reinforces the popular perception of Italians as 'warbling songsters' (Beller 2007:196). The image is captioned with the alliterative appellative, 'Randy Ranter: Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi has hit out following headlines about his antics'. 'Randy' is a slang term for someone with an overactive libido (*OED*) thus recalling the recent sex scandals and the stereotype of the sexually driven 'Italian Stallion'; 'ranter', means 'to talk or declaim in an extravagant or hyperbolic manner; to use bombastic language; (esp. of an actor) to orate or speak in a melodramatic or grandiose style. Now chiefly *depreciative*' (*OED*). It is also evaluative, hyperbolic tabloid lexicon that inscribes the newspaper's attitude to the Italian Prime Minister.

The strapline of the article contains an overt racial epithet, 'Italian slimeball'. It has been argued that in terms of pragmatics, in certain circumstances ethnic epithets and racial slurs are used as in-group slang and thus tend to lose their culturally conditioned insult value (Dundes 1971; Poulton and Durell 2014; Rappaport 2005: 52). From this perspective political correctness is contested as a form of linguistic censorship that inhibits freedom of speech (Hughes 1991; see section 4.3.2). It has also been noted that racial insults have become the greatest linguistic taboo in Anglophone societies (Allen and Burridge 2006; Filmer 2011, 2012, 2013; Hughes 2006), and as such should be avoided in order not to cause offence. In any case, it is evident from this context that the function of the epithet 'Italian Slimeball' is far from that of in-group bonding, yet this transgression against current sociolinguistic mores apparently went unnoticed. One wonders what the diplomatic and political consequences might have been if the *Daily Star* had used a racial slur to denote the leader of another, more militant ethnic group<sup>25</sup>. Political

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<sup>24</sup> The results of a very simple key word search on *Nexislexis* UK shows Berlusconi + cruise ship crooner 140 times in the last five years in UK national newspapers

<sup>25</sup> See *Racial Slurs and Ethnic Epithets: Last linguistic taboo and translational dilemma* (Filmer 2012) for observations on *Il Giornale's* use of politically incorrect terms to denote people of other ethnic origins.

correctness in language usage is relative in Italy, as discussed in Chapter 4 but it is unexpected, not to say disconcerting, to find blatant racial insults in an English newspaper.

The main body of the text begins by stating that Silvio Berlusconi has 'declared war' on Britain, 'branding *us* (my emphasis) a nation of violent failures'. The idea that Berlusconi personally orchestrated the article in *Il Giornale* is pure speculation and unlikely to be understood by the *Daily Star* readers: this initial distortion of facts is designed to lead the audience to believe that Berlusconi himself insulted the British people. The next sentence does in fact state that *Il Giornale* is the source, claiming 'the paper called us racists'. However, neither the noun phrase 'violent failures' nor the adjective 'racist' appear in Maglie's article. One of the sub-headlines is 'The most violent country in Europe' but it is a quote from the British newspaper the *Daily Mail*. The dominant semantic field of the *Daily Star*'s article is war, violence, and hate -'branding' 'violent failures', 'retaliation', 'hate', 'hate-filled rant', 'Battle with Britain', and so on. The metaphor of war is not new to the political sphere; Berlusconi himself adopted it in his earlier political life (Semino and Masci 1996: 252-253 see section 4.2.5) but here it is used to bolster the 'Them versus Us' rhetoric initiated by *Il Giornale*. The article explains the reason for the 'rant' against Britain as being caused by 'weeks of British press reports on allegations linking portly Berlusconi to under-age girls'. The adjective 'portly', meaning fat, is gratuitous but adds to the comic image of the former Prime Minister.

The article rounds off with a series of comparisons subtitled 'why Italy should show the white flag'. Stereotyping and racist rhetoric with all the hallmarks of the discourse of 'white masculinity' (Daniels 2009) abound in this comparison. The first category is 'Wars'. Italians are described as 'surrender prone'; 'Italian army's trousers come in just one colour - brown'. The demeaning 'joke' reinforces the stereotype of Italians as cowardly that emerged during the Second World War (Hughes 2006: 259). By comparison, the *Daily Star* claims that 'Our Boys are the finest fighting force around', once again underlining the rhetoric of racist argumentation that forms the framework of the text. The second heading is

'lunchboxes', a slang term to denote the male genitalia. Quoting a 'Serbian fertility expert', thus employing the tabloid strategy of legitimization of the 'fact' with an expert opinion (Conboy 2006; Fairclough 2003) through intertextuality, *The Daily Star* asserts that 'we' (the British) are better endowed than 'Latin Lovers'. Furthermore, 'Brit lads' are better than 'Italian Stallions', thus attempting to deconstruct the myth of Italian male sexual prowess, while simultaneously perpetuating it by using the clichéd epithets. Other categories in which the newspaper claims the British excel include motoring, inventing sports, the Olympics, and finally, politicians, comparing Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister of Britain to Berlusconi, who according to the paper 'surround[s] himself with hookers and teen girls'.

The *Daily Star* describes itself as 'Britain's brightest, bubbliest and youngest tabloid newspaper'. Conboy (2006: 94-123) identifies one of the pivotal semiotic functions of daily newspapers as bolstering national identity with what he calls the 'lexicon of a nation'. This is reflected in an exaggerated perception of difference. Thus the 'we' of consensus which sees its own cultural and economic interests as valid feels threatened by a 'them' which is usually a group identified as being sexually, ideologically or ethnically Other (Fowler 1991: 52). The text described above might be construed as 'humorous' yet the journalist not only ridicules Berlusconi, who we might say is in public life and therefore fair game to criticism, but also Italians as a nation by means of gross and offensive stereotyping. We might not be surprised at the overtly nationalistic insider-outsider discourse presented in *The Daily Star*, or dismiss the manipulation of translation to the ends of the paper's ideological stance. After all, it is just a tabloid. However, this is a dangerous path to tread. *The Daily Star's* readership is at the lower end of the socio-economic scale (National Readership Survey 2013), with a circulation in 2009 of on average 768,534 per day (Audit Bureau of Circulation), a considerable slice of the daily newspaper market. Perpetuating racial stereotypes and hate speech in the name of 'bubbly' humour in a mainstream publication urges questions as to the underlying ethics and the issue of newsworthiness; by what standards is information judged to be 'news'?

## 6.4 ‘Mussolini Did Good’

The second dataset examines more closely the ways in which translation and reformulation strategies are invisibly intertwined in the structure of a new story in order to present discourse in a certain light. The examples focus on the ways in which the British quality press built news narratives around comments Berlusconi made regarding Mussolini while being interviewed by a group of television journalists. The first case study addressed the overt manipulations and national stereotyping typical of the tabloid genre; by way of contrast the following analysis deals with what could be deemed an even more insidious and opaque form of manipulation of language precisely because it is the journalists from ‘quality’ newspapers who carry it out. It goes without saying that the following analysis is by no means an apology for Berlusconi; it is a scientific analysis of the machinations underlying the presentation of translated information in an international news context. All quotations of Berlusconi have been transcribed from a You Tube clip of the interview, “‘Mussolini fece anche cose buone’” intervista esclusiva’.

### 6.4.1 The Situation

On 27 January 2013, Berlusconi attended an event for International Holocaust Memorial Day. During an interview with a RAI journalist he made some observations regarding Mussolini, and Italy’s involvement in the Holocaust that triggered strong reactions in the media worldwide. The interview was reported in four British newspapers; *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Guardian* and *The Mail Online*. It has been noted (see section 1.3.1) that news texts, both traditional and even more so, digital, are multimodal texts in which the images, equally laden with meaning, are a crucial part of the meaning-making process (Bednarek and Caple 2011). An exhaustive multimodal analysis of all the texts would not be feasible within the word constraints of this study, therefore the analysis will focus on *The Times*, with a selection of examples sourced from other newspapers to shed some light on the different points being raised in the analysis.

## 6.4.2 The Analysis

'Mussolini wasn't that bad, says Berlusconi': this is the headline of the news story published in *The Times* (28 January 2013) under the by-line of their correspondent for Italy, James Bone. There are no inverted commas around the quotation, although the use of the reporting verb 'say' without 'that' would imply that the utterance is direct speech. *The Guardian's* headline is the formulaic 'Berlusconi causes outrage by praising Mussolini on Holocaust Memorial Day'. The choice of 'praising' clearly indicates the slant of the article. The journalist, John Hooper is also correspondent for *The Economist*, notoriously anti-Berlusconi. Both headlines could be described as a summary of the following statement made by Berlusconi: 'Il fatto delle leggi razziali è la peggiore colpa di [...] Mussolini, che per tanti altri versi invece aveva fatto bene' [The racial laws were the worst sins/crimes of Mussolini, who had in many other ways done well]. By considering only the subordinate clause and omitting the contents of the main proposition, the headlines produce the effect of an unqualified apology for the Fascist dictator. It might be argued, as all the British newspapers state, that the subordinate clause is in fact a defence of Mussolini but from the source text it is apparent that Berlusconi's observation that Mussolini did good was contextualised; the theme of the sentence are the racial laws, which according to Berlusconi were the worst of Mussolini's crimes. The headlines, then, are a half-truth through which the reader will filter all further information in the text.

*The Telegraph's* correspondent for Italy, Nick Squires (28 January 2013), conveys Berlusconi's phrase thus: 'Although Mr Berlusconi said Mussolini's introduction of anti-Semitic laws in 1938, which led to more than 7,000 Jews being deported to Nazi death camps, was a "mistake", he said Il Duce 'did good things in so many other areas''. By inserting the key words between inverted commas the journalist lends weight to his argument. In news discourse direct quotation has the value of 'incontrovertible fact' (Bell 1991: 207–208) and audience interpretation of an event may depend crucially upon knowledge of exactly what the newsmaker said. But deciding what is, or is not, direct quotation is not always straightforward (Bell

1991: 220–221), and becomes even more complex when the quote is rendered through translation. For example, what Squires has done here through translation, thus invisibly, is to invert subordinate and main clause creating a rheme-theme shift: emphasis is thus placed onto what was originally the rheme ('Mussolini aveva fatto bene') rendering it the fulcrum of the sentence. The translation of 'colpa' with 'mistake' in this context is paradoxically contrasted with the information added by the journalist regarding the deportation of Jews. The statement translated thus gives the impression that Berlusconi explicitly trivialises the death of thousands of Jews while eulogising Mussolini. Similarly, *The Mail Online* (28 January 2013) declared: 'Silvio Berlusconi today said that Benito Mussolini did much good, except for dictator's regime's anti-Jewish laws. Berlusconi also defended Mussolini for siding with Hitler. The black and white archive photograph of Mussolini evokes an iconic image of the dictator, instantly connoting authority: the imposing figure is photographed in profile, is dressed in black military uniform and has a stern facial expression. The image resonates with the type of nostalgia associated with Fascist sympathizers.

*The Times'* article begins with a stock phrase (Entman 1993) that is frequently used by the British press to frame news narratives relating to the Italian ex-premier: 'Silvio Berlusconi *provoked outrage* [...] yesterday by defending Benito Mussolini' (my emphasis). Thus the audience expects to be shocked and is primed for yet another of the ex-premier's 'gaffes'. The article continues, 'The former Prime Minister told journalists [...] that 'Il Duce' was right to ally himself with Hitler'. The journalist has employed indirect speech to convey what Berlusconi supposedly said. If the sentence is thus transposed into direct speech, that is, into what the journalist claims Berlusconi said, it would read 'Berlusconi affirmed: 'Il Duce was right to ally himself with Hitler''. These are not the words Berlusconi uttered. He said:

E difficile adesso mettersi nei panni di chi decise allora. Certamente il governo di allora per il timore che la potenza tedesca si concretizzasse in una vittoria generale preferì essere alleato alla Germania di Hitler piuttosto che contrapporsi e dentro questa alleanza ci fu l'imposizione della lotta e dello sterminio contro gli ebrei. [It is difficult now to put oneself in the shoes of those who decided back then.

Certainly, the government at the time, for fear that Germany's strength would lead to an overall victory, preferred to be allied with Hitler's Germany rather than oppose it, and within this alliance there was the imposition of the fight against and the extermination of the Jews].

Reporting verbs convey the 'shades of meaning' that are 'central to the expression of the writer/speakers attitude or stance and to the negotiation of alignment between the writer/speaker and addressee' (Munday 2012: 8). In the context of news reporting their evidence of attitude to what is being translated that can have a significant impact on the reception of the text (ibid.: 9) as the following example shows: 'He [Berlusconi] *insisted* that Mussolini 'did good things', [my emphasis] and described his notorious anti-Jewish racial laws of 1938 as his 'worst mistake'. There are three things to note here. The first regards the reporting verb 'insist'; it is a strong verb which has many meanings, among which 'be adamant' 'persist', 'vow', 'swear', all of which give an emphasis and weight to Berlusconi's words. The second observation regards shifting word order: the structure of the sentence in *The Times* gives the impression that Berlusconi said first 'Mussolini did good things', without contextualizing and then comments on the racial laws. This inverts the thought intended by the speaker and slants the perception of what was uttered. The last concerns a translational decision and the motivation for a certain word choice. Munday (2012: 3) refers to 'critical points' in texts as the lexical items that need more interpretation as they are often culture dependent and imbued with connotations within a certain context. The journalist who produced this text translates 'colpa' with 'mistake'. While it is true that one of the acceptations of 'colpa' is mistake, it is also true that 'mistake' in English does not carry the gravity and moral responsibility that the Italian 'colpa' does in this semantic context. *ZanichelliOnline* (2005) gives 'crime' and 'sin' among other meanings for the Italian lexeme 'colpa'. *Wordreference*, a popular online free dictionary gives the three very specific circumstances and definitions of the Italian word, with all the nuances.

<b>colpa</b> <i>nf</i> (atto contrario a leggi, morale ecc.) [act against	crime, injustice
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the law, immoral, etc.] (fault, blame)	
<b>colpa</b> <i>nf</i> (causa di fatto dannoso o spiacevole) [a fact caused by something dangerous or unpleasant (religious)]	guilt, fault  sin
<b>colpa</b> <i>nf</i> (fattispecie giuridica) [legal circumstance]	negligence

A two second search on 'google translate' brings up 'guilt'. From none of these digital devices do we find the solution 'mistake'. From the context and cotext of Berlusconi's speech, which are clear from the video, one might imagine instead a translational decision of 'sin' or 'crime'. There could be two explanations for the journalist's translational decision: either he was too hurried or not attentive enough and therefore took the first acceptance of the word 'colpa' that emerged. Or more plausible, considering that Zanichelli gives 'crime' as the first acceptance, the translator's choice is an ideological one in order to diminish the potency of the concept of 'colpa' as moral obligation thus giving the impression that Berlusconi has trivialised Mussolini's responsibility in the Holocaust. The fact that the word appears in quotation marks, embedded in the English sentence further indicates that the term was deliberately selected and framed.

### 6.4.3 The Frame

The expression 'It is not the first time...' is often used by journalists to introduce a list of similar events or utterances that create consonance between past and present. It also provides the frame through which the audience make inferences and stereotypes are reinforced, thus drawing attention to certain aspects of reality while hiding others (Gambier 2006: 11). Thus, *The Times* reminds us that:



It is not the first time that the ever-controversial billionaire, who struck an alliance with former fascists to form his present political party, has defended Mussolini. A decade ago, he told an interviewer that the wartime leader had never killed anyone and, more recently, provoked uproar by cracking a joke about Jews in the holocaust.

The choice of lexical items here is significant: semantically charged vocabulary, once the prerogative of tabloid discourse, are now used in quality papers in which they 'blur the boundaries between reportage and commentary' (Künel 1991: 36-80). The expression 'strike an alliance' echoes wartime terminology rather than 'form a coalition', a more neutral alternative in political discourse that would be more appropriate in this context. The descriptors (ever-controversial billionaire) create consonance and expectancy in the audience, who learn that Berlusconi 'provoked uproar' yet again by defying codes of the politically correct. The narration of events form a chain of discourse that the reader will associate to the current news story, framed as the yet another example of Berlusconi's fascist leanings. The die is also cast for the Italian people, according to the narratives in some British newspapers. The *Mail Online* (28 January 2013) observes, without a hint of irony: 'Mussolini sought to impose order on a generally individualistic-minded people, and Italians sometimes note trains ran on time during Fascism', thus also using a set Italian stereotyping on the 'goodness' of the Fascist regime. *The Telegraph* builds its 'Italians are Fascists' frame by choosing to quote right-wing politician Renato Brunetta as saying: 'I believe that Berlusconi expressed what the majority of Italians think about Mussolini'. Brunetta was in fact the only politician to defend Berlusconi. *The Telegraph's* choice of photographic material is striking: two large head and shoulder portraits, one of Berlusconi and one of Mussolini, both in profile and facing each other are juxtaposed on the page, almost as a reflection in the mirror. The inference is made clear by the caption, which reads 'Mr Berlusconi, left, said Il Duce "did good things in so many areas"'. The use of the adverb 'so' which is not present in the source text adds force to the target text rendering.

The utterances that are not selected for inclusion in news texts are as significant to the meaning making process as those that are. Van Doorslaer notes that 'The de-selection and framing principles used in the news rooms (also in news

agencies) are likely to be influenced by existing stereotypes, national and cultural images, and ideological convictions or sometimes prejudices' (2010: 183). In the case in point the omission of some of Berlusconi's observations creates an imbalanced view of his whole discourse. The following two citations were not published in any of the news reports discussed here:

Certo, non possiamo mai, mai dimenticare quello che era successo ... questo vertice di follia, di disumanita' di cinismo che risulta quasi impossibile pensare possa essere stato toccato. [Of course, we can never, ever forget what happened ... this pinnacle of insanity, of inhumanity, of cynicism, that now is almost impossible to believe could have ever been reached]

Questi fenomeni che succedono ... questi fenomeni anti ebraici non debbono avere piu' luogo perche sono veramente una vergogna, anche per il nostro paese [These phenomena that happen ... these anti-Jewish phenomena must never happen again because they really are a cause of shame, also for our country.]

## 6.5 Closing remarks

The chapter set out to investigate the hypothesis that translation strategies could be employed in the British press as a way to ideologically slant news narratives on Berlusconi and by metonymy, Italy and the Italians. By analysing two narrative frames, the chapter suggests that translations are manipulated to provide a framework for the foreign news in these newspapers that often portrays the division of the world into simplistic 'archetypes' (Conboy 2006). Berlusconi affords the perfect tabloid figure, a larger than life caricature of the worst kind of Italian that can easily be manipulated to coincide with familiar stereotypes of Italians discussed in 6.2 and 6.3. The figure of Berlusconi is used as 'mental short-hand' in media frames that perpetuate insidious stereotyping of Italians. From its framing of the discourse, it can be confidently argued that in the meta-debate discussed in sections 6.3 and 6.4 between *Il Giornale* and *The Daily Star*, translation is used as a subterfuge for resuscitating deeply rooted prejudice in 'Us and Them' dynamics. It is no coincidence that the tabloid resorts to using a racial slur dating back to the 1900s to denigrate Berlusconi and alludes to Second World War insults in order to offend Italian people today even in 2009. It could be argued that this example is merely tabloid rhetoric and is not representative of the press as a whole, however,

Conboy's (2010: 148) aspiration that 'a reflective and analytical mode of commentary' should be possible with quality online newspapers does not appear evinced by the examples examined here. In sections 6.3-6.4 above, the analyses on 'Mussolini did Good', both *The Times* and *The Telegraph*, make instrumental use of translation for ideological purposes, combined with framing, hyperbole, and astute use of image. The resulting multimodal texts present a distortion of reality whose veiled impartiality vies with the overt bigotry of *The Daily Star*. Translation, then, a means of building bridges across lingua-cultural spaces can become an ideological double-edged sword in the hands of news producers. Without defending the political persona of Berlusconi, the chapter has emphasised the ways in which the British newspapers use framing in simplifying the portrayals of Italy, by choosing Berlusconi as its image. The next chapter develops these hypotheses and investigates the assumption that Silvio Berlusconi's political career might be waning but his cultural influence is not, or at least as perceived from the perspective of the British press.



## 7.

### **Anti-Gay, Racist, Fascist, Sexist:**

### **Backwards Italy in British News Narratives**

Ci vorranno anni per ricostruire un 'immagine sobria' del nostro paese.

[It will take years to rebuild a 'sober' image of our country] (Rizzo and Stella 2012: 12)

'Italy's banana republic' (Squires 2014)

Fella and Ruzza (2013: 38-52) claim that the 'Ventennio Berlusconiano' is drawing to a close. Yet the question remains whether or not the vestiges of Berlusconi's 'cultural hegemony' (Agnew and Shin 2008; Albertazzi and Rothenberg 2009; Ginsborg 2005) will linger on through the images of Italianness portrayed in the Anglophone media. This chapter engages with the question of the British press's representation of social debates in Italy and the perception of Italianness that has surfaced towards the end of Berlusconi's 'Ventennio'. The dataset was garnered within the specific time frame of the year 2013-2014 in order to locate the echoes of what has often been referred to as Berlusconi's cultural dominance. Three narrative strands connected to perceptions of Italy - 'Anti-gay Italy', 'Sexist Italy', and 'Racist Italy' - are explored through the examination of news texts on these recurring themes that have emerged in British news discourse in recent years. Sections 7.1, 7.1.2 begin by explaining the normative of the British perspective in news narrative. A brief discussion on the tensions between British and Italian news media follows (section 7.1.2), and an overview of the concept of 'Berlusconismo' from various theoretical perspectives is offered in section 7.3.1. Sections 7.4-7.7 focus on the analyses. Finally, a small sample of readers' comments relating to the articles

discussed provides a tentative basis from which the reception and perception of representations of Italianness can be observed. This is, however, an initial investigation that makes no claims to be exhaustive; the corpus observed and the data collected are too small scale to yield widely generaliseable findings. Nevertheless the tentative hypotheses advanced here could well be tested with a more in-depth study on larger data sets.

## **7.1 Cultural translation in the news**

Lane-Mercier (1997: 46) rightly observes that in mediating cultures through translation, it 'is not so much linguistic difference, as the social and cultural representation of the Other that linguistic difference invariably pre-supposes'. The normativity of the British perspective is central to the negative representation of the 'ethnic and geographical outsider' in newspaper discourse. Conboy (2006: 108) suggests that 'British culture is rooted in a history which is indelibly marked with the associations of empire and cultural presumptions of superiority'. However, Kelly (1998: 6) puts forward that these presumptions are often unconscious. From a sociological point of view it could be sustained that 'British journalists have been socialized in the same institutions as their readers, and hence share in general the consensual beliefs of their society' (ibid.). This would dove-tail with the notion of habitus and the journalist-translator discussed briefly in section 3.3.1 and which will be examined in more depth in Chapter 8. Van Doorslaer (2012: 1057) contends that pre-conceived national stereotypes also influence the selection and production of news:

Some topics are more pointedly associated with one country than with another. Throughout the translation and localization process, existing images are being repeated and confirmed. It seems that journalistic framing processes and the translation processes have a lot in common.

These considerations on stereotyping and the construction of news narratives around national character are juxtaposed with myths of objectivity in news reporting. The next section looks at what objectivity means in a news context.

## 7.2 Redefining 'objectivity' in news reporting

To what extent, then, can it be argued that news narratives on Italy reinforce prevailing stereotypes of Italians? As discussed earlier (see section 3.1), it has been suggested that news values, that is the criteria for the selection of news, often chime with stereotypes that create consonance thus satisfying audience expectations. 'News' is constructed by discursive strategies; an item is made newsworthy by the way it is structured through a strategic use of language and image. If this is the case, could it be argued that agenda setting in the selection and production of news on Italy is closely connected to the news narratives that have surrounded Berlusconi? Furthermore, could it be advanced that objective reporting on Italy of late has been sadly lacking? Hampton (2008: 477) remarks that the term 'objectivity' is often flaunted when discussing 20<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-American journalistic practices although "objectivity"... is merely assumed in the British context [...]. Among print journalists, such ideals as independence, fair play and non-intervention by the state were far more compelling than objectivity'. Now into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is suggested here, in accord with Sambrook (2012) that objectivity still remains a secondary consideration with some forms of foreign news journalism. To overcome the dilemma particularly in digital news media Sambrook (2012: 4) suggests some measures, among which greater transparency, and greater emphasis on education in media literacy thus working towards a critical audience. Sambrook also proposes 'redefining objectivity' with what the Director of BBC Global News, Peter Horrocks (cited in Sambrook) calls radical impartiality:

I believe we need to adopt what I like to think of as 'radical impartiality' – the need to hear the widest range of views – all sides of the story. So we need to hear more Taliban interviews, more BNP interviews – of course put on air with due consideration – and the full range of moderate opinions [...] so get used to hearing more views that you dislike. This wider range of opinion is a worthwhile price to pay for a national forum where all can feel they are represented and respected. (Horrocks 2006)

By way of introduction to the analyses presented in chapter 7 the next section outlines a recent meta-journalistic debate on the issue of objectivity and the representation of Italy in British newspaper discourse.

### 7.2.1 The Italian Job

An article published in *The Financial Times* (Friedman 2 February 2014) ‘revealed’ that Italian President Giorgio Napolitano had approached Mario Monti regarding a possible appointment to the position of Prime Minister during the summer of 2011, months before Berlusconi resigned, that is, in November of the same year. The article appeared on page 4 but was announced on the front page with the headline ‘The Italian Job’. The title, which is by no means original (versions of it have appeared in tabloid articles on Berlusconi at various times; (Steele 2008; Charles 2003), is an intertextual reference to the classic British caper film (*The Italian Job*, dir. by Peter Collinson 1969) involving British gangers, Italian mafia, thieves and criminals. The headline of the *Financial Times* infers that Monti’s rise to Prime Minister was somehow manoeuvred by underhand dealings and possibly even criminal action.

Following the publication of this article an animated debate took place on the TV political talk show *Piazza Pulita* (broadcast on 11 February 2014) between journalists Alan Friedman and Vittorio Zucconi of *La Repubblica* on the very issue of the way in which Italy is represented in the British press. In response to *The Financial Times*’ headline Zucconi exclaimed: ‘La stampa anglosassone mi fa girare le palle’ [The Anglophone press pisses me off], decrying their ‘tono supponente’ [supercilious tone] with regard to Italian affairs. There are two considerations to make here. Firstly, Zucconi’s expression ‘tono supponente’ is closely linked to the theme of this research – the British newspapers’ perspective on Italian socio-cultural affairs. Secondly: a sociolinguistic observation regarding the Italian language and political discourse in comparison with English sociolinguistic norms. The use of an expletive on Italian national television just after 9pm by a respected journalist, a symbolic elite (van Dijk 1993), is acceptable and falls within socio-cultural norms



even within the high-brow sphere of politics and journalism (see section 4.5); in Italy the watershed is 10.30pm whereas communications regulator, *Ofcom* states that in the UK the ‘unofficial’ watershed is 9pm. Irrespective of the question of watersheds, it is debateable whether a British Journalist or politician would use vulgar language at any hour on British television<sup>26</sup>. This lingua-cultural difference illustrates that the sociolinguistic gap that exists between British and Italian cultures in the sphere of political discourse resonates much further through attempts at translation. In the next section we outline the principle discussions regarding the phenomenon of ‘Berlusconismo’, which is at the root of debates on the current socio-cultural climate in Italy.

### 7.2.2 Berlusconi, Berlusconismo and cultural hegemony

The term ‘berlusconismo’ is widely used in Italian political and journalistic discourse to denote the multi-faceted and apparently omnipresent political, societal and cultural influence of Silvio Berlusconi. The wealth of literature on the former Premier spans the humanities and social sciences, here we list just a few relevant to this study; Andrews 2005; Agnew 2011; Agnew and Shin 2008; Fabbrini 2013; Fella and Ruzza 2013; Gibelli 2010; Ginsborg 2003, 2005; Ginsborg and Asquer 2011; Gundle 1997, 2010; Mazzoleni 2004; McCarthy 1996; Orsina 2013; Pasquino 2007, 2011; Osvaldo 2001; Santomassimo 2011. Paradoxically, the socio-cultural phenomena surrounding the persona, behaviour, and discourse of Silvio Berlusconi and their societal impact has met with an ‘imbarazzato silenzio’ (Dei 2011: 472) from Italian researchers of Italian cultural studies. According to Dei, their tardive response to what has arguably been called an ‘anthropological revolution’ (Albertazzi 2009: 4) and a ‘Cultural hegemony’ (Ginsborg 2005, Stille 2006) is due to the fact that: ‘si tratta di un campo già fin troppo pieno di discorsi: denunce e analisi

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<sup>26</sup> One notable and highly relevant exception is veteran BBC Newsnight journalist Jeremy Paxman who used the F-word during an interview with none other than Silvio Berlusconi (20 May 2014). See introduction

critiche spesso anche molto sofisticate, rispetto alla quali è difficile andar oltre. C'è insomma il timore di cadere nel già detto' [We're dealing with a field that is already overflowing with discourses: often highly sophisticated analyses and accusations, beyond which it is difficult to go. In sum, there is the fear of repeating what has already been said']. The apparent disengagement of Italy's cultural studies scholars can be counterbalanced with one notable exception, albeit from a British institution, in the collected essays entitled *Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition under Berlusconi* (Albertazzi, et al 2009). The editors state quite categorically that 'Berlusconi's persona, ideology and style, in one word, Berlusconi, are now so deeply rooted in Italian society that they might well outlast his departure from the political scene' (ibid.: 2). Their aim, however, is to demonstrate that in spite of the dominant (Berlusconian) culture, there are in fact significant areas of dissent. In fact, they go on to clarify that 'no hegemony can ever be all-embracing, of course, and, despite Berlusconi's influence, spaces of resistance have not been completely eliminated in Italy' (Albertazzi et al 2009: 114). But what exactly are the characteristics of this socio-cultural wave that has invested Italy over the last twenty, or even thirty years? Pasquino (2011) describes Berlusconi as 'a complex mixture of misplaced individualism, selfishness, distrust of others, anti-parliamentarism, and a lack of 'civil religion'<sup>27</sup>. He also notes the lack of collective action against these cultural paradigms and comments 'berlusconi will outlive its founder and continue to linger in the attitudes and behaviors of Italian society. It will survive because millions of Italians hold the basic beliefs of berlusconi' (ibid).

Orsina (2013) views Berlusconi from a socio-political/historical perspective going back to the historical question of what it means to be Italian and of the birth of Italy as a Nation. According to him the root of the phenomenon of

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<sup>27</sup> 'Lack of civil religion' is Pasquino's rather flowery way of saying lack of civil behaviour in the community. Thus, double or even triple parking, throwing litter in the streets, allowing your dog to foul the pavement, refusing to queue in an orderly manner, and so on, are the norm in certain parts of Italy.

Berlusconismo lies in the historical relationship between State, the Elite, and the rest of the population. The author is wary of finding an easy definition to the complex process but summarises berlusconismo as: *'un emulsione di populismo e liberalismo'* [a combination of populism and liberalism] (author's emphasis; *ibid.*: 126). Ginsborg and Asquer (2011: v-xxviii) outline what they perceive as the key features of berlusconismo and their interrelatedness. According to them patrimonialism<sup>28</sup> is the basis for Berlusconi's system of power, sustained by a series of elements that together have created a cultural hegemony. These factors include the particularity of the cultural discourse that has characterised his control of the media; the views of gender that inform his actions and reflections; the instrumental relationship that has been forged with the Catholic church and the collusion of the latter with his power system; the way in which Berlusconi's brand of populism entails a contempt for institutions and the absence of public ethics; and finally, how these elements have divided the country (*ibid.*: viii).

Ultimately Dei (2011: 472) takes up his own challenge to find a cultural studies approach to what berlusconismo means. He goes beyond Berlusconi's monopoly of the media<sup>29</sup> and patrimonialist tendencies to focus directly on the ideologies that underpin 'berlusconismo': *'anticomunista, sessista e omofobica, con toni forti di revisionismo storico'* [anti-communist, sexist, and homophobic with strong undertones of historical revisionism]. Certainly, Berlusconismo is a broad phenomenon encompassing many spheres of influence but Dei's summary neatly coincides with three of the four themes dealt with here. Nevertheless he overlooks the theme of 'racist' which will be discussed through the analyses presented in chapter 7.

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<sup>28</sup> Defined in *OED* as 'A system of social organisation or government in which a male leader maintains authority through individuals with loyalty to him personally'.

<sup>29</sup> A detailed account of Berlusconi's media empire is beyond the scope of this study but for an overview see Ginsborg 2004; Stille 2006)

### 7.3 Anti-gay, racist, sexist, fascist: why these themes?

The following are examples of what have been commonly referred to in journalistic terms as Berlusconi's 'gaffes'. From the lexeme gaffe we understand a social faux pas (OED), or in other words utterances that clash with current ideas of the politically correct. A more comprehensive discussion on political correctness is provided elsewhere (see section 4.5). Here the focus is on Berlusconi's contribution to the debate. These soundbites provide the matrix for the news narratives that will subsequently be discussed.

1. Anti Gay: 'Meglio essere appassionati di belle ragazze che gay' (ANSA 2 November 2010). This was most frequently translated in British newspapers as 'My passion for women is better than being gay' for example, in *The Telegraph* (Squires, 2 November 2010). The utterance was referred to in news narratives as a 'homosexual slur' (ibid.). Although the focus of this study is the British press, here we quote an extremely 'free' translation found in *the Australian*: "At least I'm not gay', Berlusconi says in defence of passion for beautiful women' (3 November 2010). What is curious to note is that while Berlusconi's 'jokes' and 'gaffes' regarding homosexuals have received broad coverage across all newspaper genres, the news (Reuters 17 January 2013) that Mario Monti opposes gay marriage and adoption was not reported in any British national newspaper.
2. Sexist: 'Forza Gnocca' [most frequently translated as 'Go Pussy'](*La Repubblica* 7 October 2011) could be conceived as the verbal exteriorizing of Berlusconi's vision of women (see section 5.2).
3. Racist: 'Obama: 'Bello, alto, e anche abbronzato'' [Obama: handsome, tall, and suntanned, too] (*La Repubblica* 6 November 2008) provoked a 'race row' and Berlusconi was 'condemned from all sides for his apparently racist remark' (my emphasis) (*Mail Online* 7 November 2009). Berlusconi's comment on Obama caused universal criticism from the world's press. He was denounced as a racist and derided for his lack of

aplomb. Only 'imbeciles' would interpret his comments as derogatory, he protested.

4. Fascist: On Mussolini, Berlusconi has often demonstrated a certain ambivalence; on the one hand he has on more than one occasion commented in different contexts and that the Fascist dictator 'fece cose buone' (ANSA 26 May 1994; 28 January 2013 see section 6.5-6.6), while on the other underlining that a dictatorship is against all his principle of liberalism. Either way, bringing ex-fascists and neo-fascists into his first and subsequent coalitions gave foreign journalists cause for concern, if not indigenous ones. Eugenio Scalfari former editor of the centre left Italian national newspaper *La Repubblica* is quoted in the *Independent* (Patricia Clough 12 May 1994) as saying 'I must honestly say that [there] are no longer fascists now, because fascism is unthinkable in Italy today [...] they are no longer a danger to democracy'. Historians and journalists have debated similarities between the two Italian leaders, others have refuted them. One very obvious similarity is the 'Ventennio', twenty years of power.

Table 3 below shows the results of key word searches carried out on the newspaper database *Nexis UK* to discover which news events and which news narratives on Italy within the four themes were given most prominence in the British press in the year 2013. This was then compared with data for 1994, the year in which Berlusconi entered the political arena, to give us some idea of the evolution of these themes during Berlusconi's Ventennio.

**Table 3 - Comparison of news narratives on Italy in 1994 and 2013 in UK national press. Source, Nexis UK newspaper database**

Associations with Italy	1994-1995	2013-2014
Italy Anti-Gay (homophobic)	1	20
Italy sexist	0	9
Italy racist	0	187
Italy fascist	197	145

The results might appear surprising at first glance. In the light of the sex scandals that embroiled Berlusconi towards the end of his last term as Prime Minister, more articles on ‘sexist Italy’ would have been expected. However, the ‘bunga bunga’ years – as they were later labelled in the Italian press - were those between 2008 and 2011, thus we might interpret the relative silence in 2013 as simply a calming of the waters. Rather, what is noteworthy is the changing tune of narratives on the theme of women; the predominant Italian news story on the theme of sexism during 2013, as we shall see, was the decision of the RAI to eliminate Miss Italia from its schedule. Similarly, the increase in news narratives on homophobia comparing 1994 to 2013 might also be attributed to a general shift in socio-cultural awareness on the part of the receiving culture, i.e. Great Britain, and also the source culture, Italy, as issues regarding social equality, and gay rights have become more evident in the political and social arena. Of the four themes initially identified, data revealed that in 2013 news values on Italy focused more on narratives on racism and fascism - one old, and one new, although some connections can be made between the two. Now let’s turn to the first of our themes, ‘Anti-gay Italy’, with British news narratives on comments made by Guido Barilla, chairman of Barilla Pasta.

## 7.4 Anti-Gay Italy - Boycott Barilla!

Prior to engaging in a debate on anti-gay utterances, it would be useful to establish what exactly constitutes 'homophobic language'. McCormack (2013: 93) argues that there are two requisite features; firstly, that something is said with 'pernicious intent', and secondly that what is said has 'a negative social effect'. Establishing the speaker's intent is never easy, however, Barilla was not abusive in expressing his opinions, therefore it is improbable that he meant to offend or 'degrade or marginalise a person or behaviour' (ibid.). The second attribute manifests itself in 'bullying, emotional trauma, social isolation' all of which are hardly likely to have been the consequences of Barilla's comments. Barilla also publically apologised, albeit with the formula 'if I offended anyone, I apologise', further indicating that his intention was not to wound. Having clarified this term we now move on to situating the analysis.

On a live radio chat show, *Zanzara* (broadcast on 25 September 2013), Guido Barilla, chairman of the world's bestselling pasta brand, was asked if he would ever feature a gay family in the company's advertising campaigns. Barilla replied:

Noi abbiamo una cultura vagamente differente. Per noi il concetto di famiglia sacrale rimane uno dei valori fondamentali dell'azienda. La salute, il concetto di famiglia. [When pressed on the question of a gay advert he responds]... no, non faremo uno spot gay perché la nostra è una famiglia tradizionale.  
[We have a slightly different viewpoint. For us the concept of sacred family remains one of the fundamental values of the company; well-being, and the concept of family. We wouldn't do a gay ad because ours is a traditional family].

Pressed to give an opinion on gay marriage and adoption by homosexuals, he replied that he was in favour of gay marriage but against gay couples adopting. Online websites and social networks quickly picked up Barilla's comments; LGBT activists in Italy and in the United States roundly condemned him as homophobic and proposed boycotting the Barilla brand.

### 7.4.1 The analysis

The British press also took great interest in the news story. Articles on the discursive event and its aftermath appeared in the online versions of nearly all the national papers, indicating its considerable newsworthiness. The *Independent* (26 September 2013), *The Guardian* (27 September 2013), *The Observer* (29 September 2013), and *The Telegraph* (5 November 2013), the middle market *Mail Online* (26 September 2013), and two tabloids: *The Daily Star* (27 September 2013) and *The Mirror* (27 September 2013) all reported on the event.

The headline in the *MailOnline* begins with a direct quote: “‘If gays don’t like it, they can choose another pasta’”: Barilla faces global boycott after chairman says brand would never feature a homosexual family in its ads’. As discussed earlier (see section 3.3.1), the translational act in news texts is rarely explicit; the fact that Barilla did not say these actual words and that someone has relayed their meaning from Italian into English is not at all evident. Furthermore, the rendering is questionable in terms of transitivity. The implicature of the phrase ‘If they don’t like it, they can choose another pasta’, relayed through a zero conditional and the modal verb ‘can’, which can be construed here as either possibility or as an imperative, diverges from the grammatical mood of the source language, that changes the intentionality of the discourse. The use of the Italian future tense in the source text implies hypothesis rather than a future fact: “‘Se gli piace la nostra pasta, la nostra comunicazione, la mangiano. Se non gli piace quello che diciamo, faranno al meno di mangiarla e ne mangeranno un'altra. Ma uno non può piacere sempre a tutti’ [if they like our pasta, our advertising, they’ll eat it. If they don’t like what we say, they’ll avoid eating it and they’ll eat another. You can’t please everyone]”. The tenor of the source language utterance is a less categorical, less emphatic, and it may be argued that it ultimately sounds less offensive. Barilla is later quoted in the article as saying ‘I would never do a commercial with a homosexual family, not for lack of respect, but because I don’t think *we* are like *them*’. Quoted thus it appears that Barilla states plainly that ‘we’ are different to ‘them’. *The Mirror* also uses the ‘us versus them’ (van Dijk 1993; Kelly 1998; Fairclough 1995) dialectics in translating Barilla: ‘I would



never do a commercial with a homosexual family, not for lack of respect but because *we* don't agree with *them*'. Both renderings distort what Barilla actually said: '...perché non la penso come loro. Penso che la famiglia a cui ci rivolgiamo noi è la famiglia classica ... in cui la donna ha un ruolo fondamentale'. [Because I don't think of it in the same way as they do. I think the family that we address is a classic family ... in which women play a fundamental role]. In the *Guardian*, the rendering of the same quotation is nearer to the pragmatic meaning of the source language: 'I don't see things like they do and I think the family that we speak to is a classic family'. The *Guardian's* headline is also less inflammatory, removing the 'anti-gay' accusations and employing a transitivity shift: 'Pasta firm Barilla boycotted over 'classic family' remarks'. Notwithstanding such difference, it has to be noted that Lizzy Davies' article frames the news item within a context of legislation in Italy on gay rights. Italy is described as 'lagging behind' other European countries on gay rights due to the influence of the Catholic Church. She also notes that 'far from moving towards the legislation of gay marriage, Italy still does not recognise same-sex unions'<sup>30</sup>. In *The Observer* (McVeigh 2013), the punning headline 'Pasta-maker in hot water as rival posts pro-gay imagery on social media' reflects the newspaper's ironic attitude. Barilla's most potentially offensive comment is conveyed through reformulation and indirect speech that softens the tenor: 'he said he would only portray the 'classic family' in his adverts, not a gay family, and if people objected to that, they should feel free to eat a different brand of pasta'. In contrast, the ideologically loaded adjectives 'homophobic', and 'anti-gay', appear in the tabloid headlines, construing the news value of negativity (Bednarek and Caple 2011: 42). The *Daily Star* 's (Spillett 27 September 2013) headline 'Homophobic Barilla pasta boss in ad ban on gays' places the key descriptor 'homophobic' in thematical position, denoting Barilla himself. The *Mirror's* (Bond 27 September 2013) more

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<sup>30</sup> Since the article was published, new legislative proposals have been presented in parliament by Forza Italia senator Giancarlo Galan on civil rights, including the introduction and ratification of civil unions between people of the same sex. At the time of completing this article, mayors of large Italian cities are ratifying same-sex civil partnership in open conflict with the Ministero degli Interni [the home affairs ministry].

informal 'Anti-gay' refers to the comments rather than the individual: 'Barilla pasta boycotted over anti-gay remarks by chairman who said he would never use gay family in adverts'.

Reuters news agency, source for all major British news outlets, published 'Italian pasta baron's anti-gay comment prompts boycott call' on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, a day before some of the articles cited here. In fact, the Reuters' article appears practically verbatim in stretches used in the *Star* and the *Mirror*. The offending phrase is rendered: 'If gays 'like our pasta and our advertising, they'll eat our pasta, if they don't like it then they will not eat it and they will eat another brand,' he said'. Michael Day of *The Independent* translated the same phrase thus:

Guido Barilla, whose firm has almost half the Italian pasta market and a quarter of that in the US, told Italy's *La Zanzara* radio show last night: 'I would never do an advert with a homosexual family...if the gays don't like it they can go and eat another brand.'

Comparing source and target text, Day's rendering omits the central part of Barilla's statement, thus making it appear more brusque and dismissive than the source text – an editing mechanism used to adapt the discourse of a source to the ideological line of the journalist or the newspaper itself (see sections 3.2-3). The rendering also reveals a considerable translational shift in tenor: 'If the gays don't like it they can go and eat another brand' sounds distinctly aggressive. In the same article evaluative adjectives are used to introduce the translated quotes thus framing expectation and guiding audience interpretation: 'But then the pasta magnate upped the ante by *attacking* gay adoption. 'I have no respect for adoption by gay families because this concerns a person who is not able to choose,' he said. Thus, by selecting and editing information the journalist slants the narrative to his aims.

In the *Telegraph*, Nick Squires (5 November 2013) reported on Barilla's apology rather than the discursive event itself under the headline 'Italian pasta maker in gay advert row backs down' with the strap line 'Italian *pasta maker* who *banned gay people* from appearing in his adverts has performed an abrupt U-turn'

(my emphasis). The *OED* defines 'ban' as to 'interdict, proscribe, prohibit' and would imply that something that already exists is now forbidden. Instead the question posed to Barilla as to whether he would do an ad with a gay family was a hypothetical one, given that homosexuals do not feature in current Barilla advertising. Furthermore, the depreciating nominative 'pasta maker' is a considerable downsizing for the chairman or CEO of the world's largest pasta manufacturer. The descriptor also functions as a cultural denigrator; someone who 'makes pasta' is inferior and the specification of nationality once again hammers home the national stereotype.

Returning to our theme of 'backwardness' and how this is evaluated in the 21st century, it is worth pointing out that Southern Italy, often portrayed as the most 'backward', 'traditional', and 'Catholic' region of the peninsular, has two left-wing gay regional governors (Niki Ventola in Puglia and Rosario Crocetta in Sicily). On the latter, *The Sunday Times* (Follain 2014) ran a feature entitled 'The Gay Governor vows to straighten out Sicily'; the use of oxymoron plays on gender stereotypes associated with the meridian macho culture. Continuing on the theme of gender, the next section looks at British news narratives on 'Sexist Italy' in the year 2013-2014.

## **7.5 Sexist Italy - Misogyny and Miss Italia**

The story of the year on 'Sexist Italy' was the RAI's decision not to broadcast Miss Italia. The beauty contest was described as a 'sexist anachronism' by Anna Maria Tarantola, head of the Italian state broadcaster and was not screened on the RAI channels but was broadcast instead on the private channel La7.

### **7.5.1 The analysis**

Of the seven articles in the 'Italy' AND 'Sexist' dataset, four deal with this particular news story. Two articles appeared in *The MailOnline* (17 July 2013; 6 November 2013), one in *The Guardian* (5 November 2013) and one in *The Telegraph* (17 July 2013). All three papers show their attitude to the news through the use of

strategically juxtaposed images, lexical choice and other framing techniques. None of the quotes are indicated as being translated. *The MailOnline*, gives importance to the news by reporting on it on two separate occasions. The first article (18 July 2013) was written by regular *Mail* correspondent for Italy, Nick Pisa, under the headline 'Italian TV drops Miss Italy beauty contest that launched careers of Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida'. The article quotes Laura Boldrini, Speaker of the Italian House of Deputies, as saying 'Only two percent of women on TV express an opinion and speak. The rest are silent and more often than not semi-dressed'. This same comment by Boldrini is rendered in *The Guardian's* (Davies, 5 November 2013) article, 'Misogyny and Miss Italia', as 'women are often depicted [on television] as "mute and sometimes undressed"'. Davies (ibid) opines that Boldrini's comment was 'a clear dig at former PM Silvio Berlusconi's TV channels which regularly show a gallery of semi-naked women on everything from talk shows to quiz programmes and cookery items - as well as news and weather'. The chains of discourse (Fairclough 1995) here remind us of Berlusconi's cultural legacy, and Berlusconi in Italian culture as a whole. The journalist observes again:

In a country notorious for the scantily clad showgirls who came to populate television screens during Silvio Berlusconi's era of huge political and media power, the symbolic nature of the move was clear.

*Reuters* appear to lose their claim to neutrality once again (see section 8.2.2), if we look at the following quote:

Predictably in a country where skimpily clad women are a common sight on mainstream television channels, especially those owned by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset empire, the decision sparked a vigorous debate. (Hornby for *Reuters* 17 July 2013)

These formulaic criticisms of the representation of women on Italian TV as 'scantily clad', 'semi-naked', and 'barely clothed showgirls' nevertheless chime with the portrayal of women as objects in British newspapers. Wykes and Gunther (2005: 82) observe 'our national press presents women as "news candy" - to please the eye and sweeten the business of reportage'. The journalist then implies that Tarantola's

decision to remove Miss Italia from the RAI channels was long overdue, whilst simultaneously implying that the 'culturally superior' Britain had done away with such sexist trappings a long time ago:

Twenty-eight years after the BBC stopped broadcasting Miss Great Britain for being an anachronism verging on the offensive, RAI too, under Tarantola, wants to send a message that Italian television needs to start cleaning up its act.

The second article in *The MailOnline* (Thornhill 6 November 2013) announces that 'Nineteen-year-old Giulia Arena was crowned Miss Italia 2013 in a glittering ceremony - but it was not aired by Italy's state broadcaster'. The adversarial 'but' infers disapproval of the fact that the programme was not broadcast on RAI channels. A photograph of the winner as she is crowned by two middle-aged men is followed by a less than flattering photograph of 68 year-old Tarantola. In the strapline she is quoted indirectly: 'President of the state TV station, RAI, *deems* the contest - which launched the careers of screen sirens Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida - a sexist anachronism' (my emphasis). The reporting verb 'deem', means to 'to give or pronounce judgment; to act as judge, sit in judgement' (OED online) and therefore conveys the idea that Tarantola judges the contest from a position of superiority. The clause regarding Loren and Lollobrigida serves to legitimize the value of the contest, countering Tarantola's opinion. Tarantola is later quoted as saying beauty contests like Miss Italia 'reinforce[s] a two-dimensional view of women'. *The Mail's* online article is interspersed with several gratuitous images of bikini-clad Miss Italia contestants that would no longer be shown on Italian television, thus demonstrating that semi-naked female bodies are a regular feature of *all* popular media cultures (Conboy 2006: 123). Other photographs show a young Sophia Loren and Gina Lollabrigida, forming part of a legitimizing paratext that attempts to justify the existence of the beauty pageant. We are told the programme has been 'dropped' after 25 years, giving the idea of a historical past that should be preserved. Laura Boldrini, once again proffered as feminist spokesperson is quoted as saying: 'This is a civilised and modern choice'. The argumentative structure of the article provides testimonies against the RAI's

decision. A series of 'experts' are quoted to legitimize the *Mail's* stance. Finally, the evaluative adjective 'respected' lends authority to the Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* whose editorial is quoted thus: 'If banning Miss Italia from TV makes us feel more modern and civilised as a country then we really are in a bad way.'

*The Guardian* comments that 'inevitably' Tarantola has been compared to Margaret Thatcher and even the Queen. Why it is 'inevitable' that women are categorized and labelled by their physical attributes and appearance is not made clear. The journalist then goes on to comment that Tarantola is 'a woman of steely gaze but hearty laugh' and is 'a powerful woman who likes to keep her clothes on'. Nick Squires in the *Telegraph* (2013b) also comments on the director of the RAI's appearance: 'Anna Maria Tarantola, whose coiffeur and no-nonsense approach have drawn comparisons with the late Baroness Thatcher...'<sup>31</sup> This could be construed as what Fowler (1991 93-105) referred to as the 'over-lexicalization of women'. This framing process contextualises Tarantola and how we should read her in this situation: she is the middle aged to elderly, plain but powerful woman with no nonsense frills. The image created implies she is something of a killjoy who wants to banish young beauties from Italian TV.

### 7.5.2 'Everyday sexism is the norm in Italy'

In a crescendo of myth and stereotype, 'Meet the Italian women fighting to be more than mothers and lovers' (*The Telegraph*, 4 April 2013) is a synthesis of the British quality press's representation of the 'condition' of Italian women:

Italy's parliament now has more women in it than ever before, and yet Italian women still battle a daily culture of overt sexism both in the workplace and at home. *The Telegraph's* Marta Cooper, who is of Italian descent, reports.

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<sup>31</sup> The formulaic description of Tarantola is a verbatim repetition from an article published on 11 November 2012.

The strapline (above) introducing the article attempts to create a dichotomy between the relatively high number of women in Italian parliament, and what the journalist, whom we are told is of Italian descent - presumably to legitimize her 'expertise' on all things Italian - refers to as 'the reality' of Italian society. According to Cooper women in Italy are perceived as either 'mothers or lovers'. The article then claims:

Italy's mass media has played no small role in normalising this: private television channels owned by the country's former colourful Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and state-owned broadcasters both routinely cast women as showgirls, allowing misogynistic attitudes to become more passively accepted over the past two decades.

Thus, once again intertextual chaining (Fairclough 1995: 79) link Berlusconi's cultural influence in the last twenty years to the limited and 'backward' societal models proffered by his own commercial channels, and to his indirect control of the state channels, too.

### **7.5.3 Femicidio and violence against women**

In a subsequent article, Cooper (*The Telegraph* 2013b) reports that Italy has only 'just' ratified a Council of Europe Convention, (Istanbul Convention 11 May 2011) to combat violence against women. For the purpose of their legitimation, it does not matter that the treaty had yet to be ratified by nations such as France, Sweden, Denmark and the UK. The Convention came into force on the 1 August 2014 with the necessary 10 ratifications, eight by member states; on this list of ratifications the United Kingdom is conspicuous by its absence. Under the headline 'Italy may finally be recognising that women aren't "dispensable"', the strapline reads that Italy's ratification of the Convention is 'a small step in the right direction for a country that is battling a plague of femicides and deeply entrenched sexism'. The hyperbolic metaphor of a 'plague' might imply a number of femicides far above the two a week quoted in the article. Clicking on the link, we arrive at an Italian website, where ISTAT's figures are quoted: 'nel 2011 in Italia sono state assassinate

137 donne' [In 2011, 137 women were killed in Italy] while in '2010 le donne uccise sono state 156; nel 2009 erano state 172; nel 2003 il picco del decennio scorso con 192 vittime' [in 2010 the number of women killed was 156, in 2009 there were 172 and in 2003 the peak of the last decade with 192 victims]. Of course it is unlikely that the average British reader would understand the article written in Italian, and therefore, in spite of the link, does not have access to this contextualising information.

To enter into the debate on violence against women and the alarming frequency with which women are dying at the hands of men in Italy as in the UK is beyond the scope of this study<sup>32</sup>. What concerns us here is that this quote is practically word for word the paragraph in the previous article. Journalists appear to be churning out the same phrases that perpetuate stereotypes and that give a 'common sense' explanation of cause and effect. Finally, Italy is described as having 'a culture of sexism that permeates from the office to Parliament, from television screens to the street'. The aim here is not to deny that these currents exist in contemporary Italy, or that the acts reported by the British press are to be condoned. The statistics from the *The Global Gender Gap Index 2013* are chilling; Italy's overall ranking is 71<sup>st</sup> out of a total of 136 countries, placed between Romania and the Dominican Republic. The UK is ranked 18<sup>th</sup>. A reasoned analysis of these figures in the light of their parameters while considering the socio-cultural reality of Italy is an enterprise too complex and too long for the constraints of this work. The point is another: how are these facts and statistics reported, framed, and narrated within the context of foreign news reporting and to what aim? Returning to our analysis, once more Cooper's article names Berlusconi's assumed cultural hegemony as the cause of 'mystogynistic perceptions' of women:

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<sup>32</sup> The figures of ISTAT, the Italian National Statistical Agency, indicate that every two days an Italian woman dies at the hands of a man – frequently an ex-partner or relative, while in the UK according to Women's Aid 'On average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner: this constitutes around one-third of all female homicide victims'. (Coleman and Osborne, 2010; Povey, ed. 2004, 2005; Home Office, 1999; Department of Health, 2005). However, as can be seen the statistics are based on slightly outdated sources. If Britain follows the trend, the numbers are likely to be higher.



[Italy] is still a deeply chauvinist and sexist society. Over the past two decades misogynistic perceptions of women have been reinforced by the mass media, with private television channels owned by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and state-owned broadcasters regularly casting women as showgirls.

The citation above is almost a word for word repetition of the quotation in section 7.5.2 extracted from an article written by the same journalist that was published two months earlier. These examples show that stereotypes of Italy and Italian women are hammered home by reiterating stock phrases and platitudes from a set repertoire. The next two sections are dedicated to the two themes that generated more press coverage in the year 2013-2014; 'Racist Italy' and 'Fascist Italy'. We begin with Racist Italy where the focus shifts from gender to ethnicity in the Italian societal context.

## **7.6 Racist Italy**

### **7.6.1 Italy's first black minister - a baptism with bananas and insults**

It was a particularly telling year for racism in Italian news narratives. Here we examine three discursive events, two concerning Cécile Kyenge and one on Mario Bolatelli. In April 2013 Cécile Kyenge became Italy's first black cabinet minister. She was appointed Minister for Integration in the coalition government lead by Enrico Letta of the Democratic Party. In the year that she was in office she was subjected to highly offensive racist and personal insults from some extreme elements of the opposition. During a political rally (13 July 2013), Roberto Calderoli of the Northern League and vice-president of the Senate said: 'Amo gli animali, orsi e lupi com'è noto, ma quando vedo le immagini della Kyenge non posso non pensare, anche se non dico che lo sia, alle sembianze di orango' [I love animals, bears and wolves, as you all know, but when I see images of [Ms] Kyenge I can't help but think, even if I'm not saying she is one, of the image of an orang-utan, *La Repubblica* 2013]. Following the outrage and criticism from all fronts, home and abroad and across the party spectrum, he was asked to resign from his role of Vice-President of the Senate, which he did not. He was also charged with 'diffamazione aggravata dall'odio e dalla discriminazione razziale' [racially aggravated public order offence], the

outcome of which is still pending. Insulting behaviour towards the minister was not the prerogative of the political class: in the same month of July, a spectator threw bananas at Ms Kyeng during a party rally in Cervia, in Emilia Romagna.

Many of the British newspapers reported on both of these discursive events, again highlighting their high news values and newsworthiness. For space restraints we mention in particular articles in *The Telegraph* (Squires, 15 July 2013), *TheMail Online* (McCann, 27 July 2013), and *The Times* (Clemence, 27 July 2013). *The Telegraph's* headline, 'Italy Race-Row has "shamed the whole country"' contains a direct word for word quote from the then Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta who was interviewed (in English) on British television (Channel 4 15 July 2013). The strapline reads: 'The xenophobic, anti-immigration League is not part of the coalition government but was once Silvio Berlusconi's key ally and *remains powerful*, especially in the north of the country' (my emphasis). While no-one would disagree that The Northern League are xenophobic and anti-immigration, it is debateable whether with only 4.09 %<sup>33</sup> of the national vote in the 2013 general elections, they could be described as 'powerful' or representative of public opinion. If we compare this data with the figures for two right-wing parties in the UK we note that in the last national elections in 2010 the British National Party gained 1.9% of the national vote while UKIP took 3.1%. However, UKIP gained 27.49 % of the national vote at the European elections held in May 2014, beating both Labour and the Conservatives, and now have 24 MEPs. The Northern League has just five. This would indicate that right-wing populism is not unique to Italy, it is a phenomenon shared by other European countries. The difference lies not so much in attitudes and beliefs but in how those attitudes and beliefs are expressed; while Nigel Farage has to some extent learnt to avoid offending PC sensibilities (see section 4.5), even

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<sup>33</sup> Data source: Italian Chamber of the Deputies in the two-chamber Italian Parliaments; see <http://elezioni.interno.it/camera/scrutini/20130224/C000000000.htm> Dati ufficiali del Ministero dell'Interno.

condemning those who do not toe the politically correct line<sup>34</sup>, right-wing politicians in Italy say exactly what they think, ignoring Kyenge's plea to 'reflect on their use of communication' [che tutte le forze politiche debbano riflettere sull'uso che fanno della comunicazione] (*La Repubblica*, 14 July 2013). *The Telegraph's* strapline also creates consonance with past news narratives by invoking the name of Silvio Berlusconi. The adversarial 'but' focuses attention on the clause in which textual chains (Fairclough 1995: 79) associate Calderoni's racist discourse with Berlusconi's coalition government thus implying that the incident is part of Berlusconi's cultural legacy. An analysis of the transitivity structures and the lexicogrammar of *The Mail Online's* headline, (McCann 27 July 2013) reveals the underlying attitude expressed in the article.

Italy's first black minister has condemned a spectator who threw bananas towards her while she was making a speech at a party rally.

The noun phrase 'Italy's first black minister' in thematic position focuses on difference (first black minister) and shifts the agency to Kyenge who finds the act of throwing a banana reprehensible. This might be taken to imply that the act in itself is not unacceptable, but that it is Kyenge who 'condemns' the perpetrator of the act. The following sentence continues: 'Integration minister Cecile Kyenge, who was born in Democratic Republic of Congo, has angered far-right groups with her campaign to make it easier for immigrants to gain Italian citizenship'. The *Mail's* over-lexicalization with the non-defining clause 'who was born in Democratic Republic of Congo,' reveals negative attitude by once again underlining the deviation from the white establishment norm. The 'anger' of the 'far-right' groups is legitimated by claiming that Kyenge intends to 'make it easier for immigrants to gain Italian citizenship', and then 'Kyenge's proposal to make *anyone* born on Italian soil a citizen' (my emphasis). The lexical choice of 'immigrants,' in the first example

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<sup>34</sup> MEPs for UKIP called for the expulsion of Mario Borghezio, MEP for the Northern League from the right-wing Europe of Freedom and Democracy group due to his racist tirade against Kyenge (Squires and Waterfield, 23 May 2013)

is misleading. Kyenge in fact advocates that those who are born on Italian soil of immigrant parents should have the right to apply for Italian citizenship. Van Dijk (1984) has noted that racism has the social function of protecting the interests of the in-group. This is often reflected in journalistic discourse on ethnic issues and affairs (van Dijk 1991). The *Mail's* anti-immigration stance has been analysed elsewhere (Conboy 2006: 94-122). Here the newspaper's protectionist perspective is implicit yet discernible; the premise is that Italy is the gateway to Europe, more 'immigrants' in Italy will ultimately lead to more immigrants entering the UK. A final example from the article seems to infer that the minister overreacted to the incident as the bananas did not actually hit the target: 'Although the bananas missed the stage where Kyenge was speaking, she responded to the gesture on Twitter, calling it 'sad' and a waste of food, considering the economic crisis'. The paper also ignores Kyenge's intended irony in referring to the incident as 'a waste of food'.

### **7.6.2 Berlusconi and Balotelli: 'nigger' vs 'negro'- translation effects**

Politics was not the only sphere of Italian public life that furnished the British press with opportunities to construct news narratives on racist discourse in Italy. Racism in football is an issue that reaches far beyond national boundaries. From the skinheads and the National front of the 1970s to the latest 'race rows', British football, for instance, has harboured examples of shamefully racist behaviour from fans and players over the last forty years, and they still continue today. Far too complex a subject to discuss in any depth here, suffice it to say that in recent years racial tensions have been emerging in Italy, too. In order to gain a little historical perspective on the subject, it should be noted that Benjamin Odeje was the first black England football player at junior level playing in 1971, while Laurie Cunningham was the first to play for England under 21s in 1977, approximately twenty years before the first black player for an Italian national team. Football superstar Mario Balotelli began playing for the under 21s national team on gaining Italian citizenship in 2008. Although born in Italy, he could not apply for citizenship until he was eighteen (see above). He started playing for the senior national squad

in 2010. Although not the first black player to play for Italy (he was preceded by Matteo Ferrari, who first played for the under 21 team in 1999), Balotelli has been the object of strong verbal abuse and racist gestures throughout his football-playing career. The discursive event analysed here, however, concerns Berlusconi's brother Paolo, the vice president of AC Milan for whom Balotelli played. During a political rally the younger Berlusconi was caught on video referring to Mario Balotelli as 'il negretto di famiglia' [the little negro of the family] as he suggested that all present should go and watch his debut match for AC Milan. The offending phrase was variously translated in the British press as 'little nigger' 'little negro', 'little black boy', and also censored with asterisks.

### 7.6.3 'Racist taunt' or 'Gaffe'?

*The MailOnline* (Pisa 2013) reported the incident under the headline: 'Balotelli is victim of Berlusconi's brother's shocking racist taunt'. The semantically-loaded evaluative noun phrase primes the reader for what *The Mail* frames as deliberately offensive provocation on the part of Berlusconi junior. The *OED* define taunt thus: 'An insulting or provoking gibe or sarcasm; a mocking or scornful reproach or challenge.' The video clip of the discursive event is embedded in *The Mail's* online article; the paratext guides our expectations with the strapline 'Watch Berlusconi's shocking speech' and 'watch the censored video of Berlusconi's speech'. A photograph of Paolo Berlusconi chewing on a cigar and smiling, the archetypal football manager, accompanies the text. The article refers to Berlusconi's informal address as a 'speech', thus legitimating *The Mail's* representation of the discursive event as an intentional slur. The mention of censorship is deceptive; the video originates from *La Repubblica* website where no 'censorship' has taken place, however, on *The Mail's* website it has been subtitled in English, the offending word rendered with asterisks, in order to emphasise the taboo nature of the insult in Anglophone contexts and suggesting that the word uttered was 'nigger': 'That's all. Now let's go watch the household n\*\*\*\*r, the crazy head'. The impact of this rendering on Anglophone audiences is significant. As Allan and Burridge (2006: 107) affirm, 'While some people still complain about hearing [rude] words in the

public arena, what is now perceived as truly obscene are racial and ethnic slurs'. It could be argued then, that in translation terms, dynamic equivalence has not been maintained. What Berlusconi said was:

Questo è tutto. Adesso andiamo a vedere il negretto di famiglia. Le signorine sono anche invitate se vogliono venire con me, avrete anche la possibilità a conoscere il presidente [of Milan Football club, Silvio Berlusconi]

[That's all. Now let's go and watch the family's little negro. The ladies are also invited, if they'd like to come with me, you will also have the chance to meet the chairman (of AC Milan, Silvio Berlusconi.)

The diminutive form 'negretto', could be construed in two ways; patronising or affectionate, and here the question of intentionality is fundamental to the interpretation. In either case, to imply that it carries the same loaded meaning as nigger is misleading (see Tosi 2001: 84). In the first line of the article the journalist, Nick Pisa writes: 'Mario Balotelli is at the centre of a race controversy *after he was called 'a little n\*\*\*\*\*'* by the brother of AC Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi'. The construction of meaning in this sentence infers that Berlusconi called Balotelli a nigger in a direct confrontation.

*The Mirror* (6 February 2013)<sup>35</sup> instead refers to the expression as alleged: 'allegedly called "a little n\*\*\*\*\*r" by the brother of AC Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi'. The idea that the video was somehow kept secret is conveyed through the expression 'Video footage has emerged of Berlusconi saying: 'Right, we are all off to see the family's little n\*\*\*\*\*''. As mentioned above, the video was in fact on the *Repubblica* webpage and there was nothing hidden about it. In neither of these articles is the word 'translation' mentioned. Bearing in mind Munday's 'critical points' in translational decision making (2012: 3), the reverberations of the taboo qualities of the word nigger are not explained through translation. In a headline worthy of a tabloid, *The Telegraph's* (6 February 2013) reads 'Balotelli Racially

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<sup>35</sup> This article has also been modified and no longer contains the word 'alleged'. Nor does it say 'Video footage has emerged', in fact the video is now on the webpage with the article.

Attacked'<sup>36</sup>. The semantically loaded verb 'attack' might be construed as physical rather than verbal abuse. It is not until we read the first line that we understand that Balotelli was 'targeted for racial abuse'. The lexical choice of the verb 'target' would indicate that Berlusconi had deliberately singled out the player in order to racially insult him. The article then talks of the 'shocking public remark' made by 'Paolo Berlusconi, who described Balotelli as 'negretto di famiglia', which translates as 'the family's little n\*\*\*\*\*', thus acknowledging the translational process. Nevertheless for the journalist the process appears to be a question of linguistic equivalence; there is no attempt to negotiate meaning between languages and cultures in the rendering of these highly culture sensitive lexemes. This could be for ideological purposes or simply lack of intercultural competence and awareness of the complexity of translating in the journalistic sphere (see Chapter 8).

In *The Times* (Bone 6 February 2013), the headline simply states 'Silvio Berlusconi's Brother uses racist term to describe Mario Balotelli'. The expression is then reported in the second line as 'little negro in the family', a far less contentious representation than any of the options discussed above. While 'negro' is now considered outdated and offensive in Anglophone contexts, it does not have the semantic force of nigger. What is interesting to note from a translation point of view is that the full translated quote is contextualised later in the article but is accompanied by the source text, reproduced in square brackets [negretto di famiglia]. This would indicate a growing awareness of the need for transparency when dealing with translated text on the part of the journalist, especially with culture-dependent terms. The journalist goes on to discuss the possible translations of the offending phrase: "'Negretto can be translated in a range of ways, from 'little black boy' to 'little n\*\*\*\*\*'. What he fails to mention is that 'negro' in Italian cannot possibly carry the same semantic load as 'nigger' because it does not carry the same socio-historical connotations. The journalist does refer to the term as 'tasteless' and

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<sup>36</sup> This article has now been removed from *The Telegraph* website. See section 1.7 for a comment on these types of issues when dealing with online material.

'racist', while the first line introduces the narrative with 'Berlusconi causes outrage'. Although 'negro' in Italian is becoming increasingly recognised as politically incorrect, the *Corriere della Sera* (5 febbraio 2013) light-heartedly refer to the comment as 'La Gaffe'.

This discursive event, along with other similar incidents<sup>37</sup> bear witness to a socio-linguistic shift in attitudes to certain words and expressions in the Italian lingua-cultural context. This evolution could be due to translation effects; the socio-cultural and historical semantic load of 'nigger' is transferred to the Italian lexeme 'negro' through the translation process (see Filmer 2012 for a discussion on meaning transfer of racial slurs). In *Razzismo è una Gaffe*, Baroncelli (1996: 85-87) states that 'negro' is 'unanimously 'considered an insulting way to say "black", however he does not make clear by whom or in which cultural or societal contexts. He continues, 'in molte lingue è un termine che fa pensare agli schiavi. Si evita di usare il termine più carico, tradizionalmente, di disprezzo, per la buona ragione che non si ha intenzione di significare alcun disprezzo' [in many languages it is a term reminiscent of slavery. The use of the loaded, historically disparaging term is avoided, for the good reason that one has no intention of being disparaging]. However, he goes on to sustain that the term 'nero' in Italian was in fact considered more insulting than 'negro' at the time of Italian colonisation in Ethiopia, his point, along with Crisafulli (2004), is that political correctness does not change the basic problem, that is, the continuing existence of racist attitudes and prejudices. While both discuss political correctness as a phenomenon of Anglo-American language and culture, Crisafulli faithfully translates all the English terms into Italian in brackets yet neither author broach the significant nexus between the Italian lingua-culture, political (in)correctness and cultural translation (see section 4.5).

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<sup>37</sup> The Headline 'Ma questa volta....Hanno Ragione I Negri' [But this time...the negroes are right] (published on the front page of *Il Giornale* (Feltri 9 January 2010) which happens to be owned by Paolo Berlusconi, caused controversy for its use of the word 'negro'.



Dictionaries of the Italian Language, for example, *Zingarelli online*, denote 'negro' as 'che, chi appartiene a gruppi etnici di pelle nera' [that, or who belongs to dark skinned ethnic groups] and 'relativo alle popolazioni di tali gruppi etnici' [relative to the populations of such ethnic groups], but, for example, add a connotation:

Negro definisce chi appartiene al gruppo umano caratterizzato da pelle nera o scura, capelli molto ricci, naso piatto; il termine è oggi percepito perlopiù come offensivo e sostituito da nero o dalla locuzione di colore, considerati più corretti.

[Negro defines those who belong to the human group that is characterised by black or dark skin, very curly hair, flat nose; the term is generally perceived today as offensive and is substituted by black or by the expression 'coloured', which as considered more correct].

The dictionary entry in itself seems to be in itself rather problematic, yet beyond our aims here. *Negrétto* is then given as the diminutive form to what is referred to as a 'nuance' between 'negro' and 'nero'. In *Il Dizionario della lingua Italiana* (De Mauro 2000) the first acceptance of 'negro' is also denotative: 'Che, chi appartiene alle diverse razze del ceppo negroide' [what/who belongs to one of the various negroid races] with a physical description of the characteristics perceived to be 'negroide' with the addition in brackets: (il termine talvolta è avvertito o usato con valore spreg. E sostituito da *nero*) [the term is sometimes perceived or used with a disparaging value and substituted with black]. Bone's article also makes intertextual reference to Silvio Berlusconi's comment about Obama: 'His tasteless comments echoes previous remarks by his older brother, Silvio, who once described Barack Obama as "suntanned"', thus underlining the interrelation with the cultural legacy of the past while emphasising Berlusconi's influence on the present.

Finally, we look at how the broadsheets interpret the tensions around the theme of racism in Italy. Two commentators, both writing for the left wing *Guardian*, attempt to answer the question 'Why'. Tobias Jones (30 July 2013), author of *Dark Heart of Italy* (2003) asks 'Why is Italy still so racist?' While the headline of Paul Foot's (15 July 2013) opinion piece affirms: 'Why ignorant racists still flourish in multicultural Italy', thus promising to answer the question posed by Jones. Both

headlines put 'why' in theme position stressing the investigative nature of the articles. It also invites comparison: the unfinished sentence could be 'Why is *Italy* (Them) still so racist when *we* (Us) have managed to overcome such barbaric practices and ideologies'. The adverbs 'still' and 'so' emphasise the tone of incredulity that in a 'modern' nation like Italy some people might still harbour racist attitudes and behaviour. Jones observes 'The verbal attacks on Cécile Kyenge are shocking, *even in a country where racism is part of everyday life*' and 'Despite many Italians' love of all things foreign, *racism is common*' (my emphasis). It might be argued that such generalisations and stereotypes are devoid of meaning, as we are given no concrete examples to sustain the posits. They serve, it would seem, only to bolster the notion that 'Italians are racist' in what could be perceived as a form of inverted racism. Through the use of hypotaxis, which Fairclough (1995) associates with explanatory logic, dependent clauses provide further information or explanation in order to justify a stance. The syntactical structure of the first statement subordinates the proposition that racism is normal in Italy, in order to convey the idea that although we expect racist attitudes in Italy, because after all, Italy is racist, we do not expect the magnitude of insults to which Kyenge has been exposed. In the second, the main proposition 'racism is common' overrides the token defence in the subordinate 'Despite *some* Italians' love of all things foreign'. We are left once again with the conclusion that most Italians are hopelessly xenophobic. It should be remembered, as Paul Foot (15 July 2013) points out, that illegal immigration in Italy has only become an issue in the last two decades, more or less coinciding with Berlusconi's ventennio. However, to claim Italy is 'Multicultural' as in the headline could be perceived as misleading. Figures for 2013 (ISTAT) show:

La quota di cittadini stranieri sul totale dei residenti (italiani e stranieri) continua ad aumentare passando dal 6,8% del primo gennaio 2012 al 7,4% del primo gennaio 2013. E i nati stranieri lo scorso anno sono stati 80 mila (15% del totale dei nati; +1% rispetto all'anno precedente).

[The number of foreign citizens in a total of residents (Italian and foreign) continues to increase, rising from 6.8% on 1 January 2012, to 7.4% on the 1 January 2013. The number of foreign births last year was 80,000 (15% of the total number of births; 1% up on the previous year)]

For the UK it is harder to interpret the data; a 2011 census estimate for the main ethnic group categories show 'white' as 81.4% in England and Wales. That would imply that nearly 19% of the population are of different ethnic origins, although this does not clarify if they are UK citizens or not, or what is intended by 'white'. Returning to our analysis, Foot's accusation that 'Calderoli's is the latest in a long line of revolting racist comments from politicians and others *from right across the political spectrum*' (my emphasis) is rather broad-brush. 'Revolting racist comments' from the extreme right might be expected: Calderoli has a history of voicing his views in no uncertain terms on a range of contentious issues. Yet no evidence emerges of racist comments from members of the centre right, centre left, or left. The journalist continues: 'The Lega's founder and former leader, Umberto Bossi, referred to somewhere called "Bongo Bongo land"'. At best we could accuse Umberto Bossi of plagiarism. Right-wing British politicians can lay claim to the expression: in 1985 Alan Clark, then the Under Secretary at the Department of Employment responsible for race relations issues, came under fire for using the phrase 'bongo bongo land' in a derogatory statement against the black community. He denied this and said it was a reference to the then President Bongo of Gabon. Then on the 7 August 2013, UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom said that Britain should not send aid to 'bongo bongo' land. He subsequently apologised for his remarks. What follows are some readers' comments from *The Mail* regarding the articles. They suggest that *The Mail's* construction of Italian racism through news narrative has had considerable influence on readers' opinion:

It is only 80 years ago that miscegenation (mixed race relationships) was made illegal by Italy ... it appears that they are still as culturally backward as they were then'.

Wasp in the South, London, United Kingdom,

What a backward country? i wonder how they perceive Obama? Disgusting behaviour.

Surrey, United Kingdom

How backwards and behind the times is this country regarding race? -

Jake14

Orangutan?!!! What decade do we live in? Wasn't Mussolini thrown out of power nearly 70 years ago? And Italy still elect horrifically racist bigots? Both Southern and Eastern Europe are taking huge leaps backwards, those countries need more people like Kyenge!!

Dan UK

These immediate responses cannot be analysed in depth as they represent an irate discursive reply to an article that the readers have just read. They give nevertheless a sense of how extensive, and ultimately dangerous, the repeated stereotyping of a nation fuels existing stereotypes. Although of no value to substantiate the core argument on audience response in unrefutable terms, they suggest the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 on the journalistic use of repertoires of 'images' on a nation create the risk of legitimizing rhetoric. In combination with the data in Figure 1 (section 1.7.2), it is clear that journalistic discourse is certainly capable of being influential in itself.

## 7.7 Closing remarks

This chapter traces the reverberations of Berlusconi's language through three thematic strands in media chains; anti-gay, sexist, racist Italy. The evidence suggests that through media frames (see section 2.5) the legacy of Berlusconi's utterances resound in British news narratives on Italy. Both popular and quality newspapers' construal of newsworthiness and evaluative parameters seem to give rise to selection criteria of news that reinforce and perpetuate preconceived ideas about the Italian people as a whole. The trope of 'backwards Italy' is implicit in news texts and is picked up by readers, as evinced by the reader's comments. Attitudes of British cultural superiority are revealed not only in tabloids but also the quality press. Condemnation of Italian racism, deplorable as it is, appears in news discourse as a form of inverted racism, while Italian sexism is denounced through a series of trite stereotypes of Italian women. Accusations of homophobia are aided by strategic use of translation in the case of Guido Barilla. In the next chapter the journalists whose by-lines have been frequently cited in the previous chapters

provide qualitative data on translational practices and perspectives in news translation through a series of interviews.



8.

## **Journalators?**

### **An ethnographic study of British journalists who translate**

Given that Chapters 5, 6, and 7 have highlighted a set of problematic consequences derived from the role of journalistic discourse in enforcing national images, this chapter focuses on journalists who were among the active agents in these framing practices.

There is one feature of researching the media which still manages to surprise even experienced practitioners: the porcupine reaction of media personnel. If there is any one institutional disease to which the media of mass communication seem particularly subject, it is a nervous reaction to criticism, a reaction that puzzles us, for it is the media themselves which so vigorously defend principles guaranteeing the right to criticize. (Bell 1991: 4)

The chapter discusses the blurring of boundaries between journalist and translator, the figure that van Doorslaer (2012: 1050) has termed 'journalator', in the specific context of British news discourse on Italy. Van Doorslaer uses the term to denote the 'interventionist newsroom worker who makes abundant use of translation when transferring and reformulating or recreating informative journalistic texts'. While this might not perfectly describe the work of the foreign correspondent, it highlights the blurring of boundaries between what have traditionally been conceived as separate spheres.

It has been said that the phenomenon is not country-specific (see Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Bielsa 2007); however, as Italy has received considerable attention from the Anglophone press in recent years, largely due to Silvio Berlusconi, this mediation by news agents between British and Italian contexts warrants closer examination, especially as it has not been attempted before. Based on ethnographic methodologies, qualitative data drawn from a series of interviews with British correspondents for Italy, Reuters chief correspondent for Italy, and the former editor-in-chief of *The Economist* is analysed. Focusing on the journalists' perspective, this study aims to ascertain as far as is possible who translates the extracts and quotes that are the basis around which news texts are constructed. Further objectives of the chapter include to identify some aspects of the 'journalator's' habitus, to find out how the journalists perceive translation in their work, and to learn something of their translational practices. The chapter begins with an introduction to the approaches and aims of the study (sections 8.1-8.2), while section 8.2 offers an overview of the role of the foreign correspondent. The participants are then introduced with a summary of their backgrounds and experience (section 8.2.1) followed by a discussion with the journalists on their experiences with translation and its role within their work (8.2.2). Section 8.3 focuses on the journalists' perception of Italy.

## 8.1 Introduction

'Translation is not the job of the journalist'. Thus affirms John Lloyd<sup>38</sup>, veteran foreign correspondent, contributing editor to *The Financial Times* and co-founder of the *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. Lloyd's response to the notion that journalistic training should include translation and intercultural skills highlights a crucial issue in intercultural communications today, that is, the role of translation,

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<sup>38</sup> Lloyd was a key panellist at the event, "Watchdog and Lapdog? A comparison of British and Italian journalism" (15 July 2013,) held at the Institute for Italian Culture, London. His comment was in response to my questioning him on the role of translation in reporting foreign news.



and indeed, the 'translator' in the production and circulation of international news. If, as Lloyd sustains, translation is not the task of the journalist, then who does the translating, the recontextualising, and reformulating so intrinsic to foreign news reporting (see sections 3.2-3.4)? Contrary to Lloyd's assertion, this posits that foreign correspondents do in fact translate although the translational act is rarely explicit. The blurring of boundaries between journalist and translator (van Doorslaer 2012: 1046-1059) and the consequent invisibility of translation (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 23), in particular when reporting political discourse (Schäffner 2008, 2011) pose ethical and ideological questions: these questions include, but the list is in no way comprehensive, in which ways is meaning relayed across linguacultural barriers in translation-mediated news texts, by whom, and to what aim? Bielsa (2010: 10) explains: 'Invisibility implies the assumption of transparency that texts are unproblematically rendered in another language [...]. The nature of translation as a process which necessarily mediates between cultures is ignored' (see section 3.3.1). These are critical concerns in modern communications that urge further interdisciplinary enquiry. Pioneering research (see section 3.2) has stirred up debate but there are still many research lacunae to address. Empirical, descriptive studies, sociological perspectives, and ethnographic enquiries on the production and reception of translated media texts are still much needed in order to raise awareness to the social impact of manipulations and evaluations in the global circulation of news, particularly where ideological clashes and cultural misinterpretations can occur.

### **8.1.1 Need to know questions**

Implementing responsive interview techniques (see section 1. 5.2), correspondents for Italy for the major British newspapers (see table below) were invited to discuss their experience of and attitudes to translating in the news. Distinct from Schäffner's (2012) 'Unknown agents in translated political discourse', foreign correspondents are in fact identifiable subjects who usually write under a by line. Thus, they are exposed and hold some accountability for the use of translation in the texts they

generate. The aims of the interviews were threefold: to establish if the journalists themselves translate the extracts and quotes that are '[re]-used, through the process described as 'embedding', as raw material for the construction of news stories' (Orengo 2005: 173); to discover the journalist's habitus (see section 3.1.3), that is, some overarching and general features of her/his background, lingua-cultural competencies, and working practices with regards to translation. Two examples of translating Berlusconi's taboo language<sup>39</sup> from Italian into English are discussed and an attempt is made to uncover ideological intervention through evaluation (Munday 2012) in translational decisions, either from the individual journalist or from the newspaper's editorial policy.

### **8.1.2 Interdisciplinarity and ethnographic methods in translation research**

Globalisation and digitalization have rendered Translation Studies (TS) a crucial locus and fertile cross-roads for interdisciplinary research. Methods and approaches from neighbouring fields of study create a 'portrait of complex processes' (Rubin and Rubin 2012:3) that feed into current debates in translation studies. Following Hubscher-Davidson (2011), and Koskinen (2006, 2008), Schäffner (2012: 103-125) calls for ethnographic methods to uncover translational practices as the agents themselves perceive them within political institutions in order to investigate the ways in which translated political discourse is produced. An essential component of this study became the integration of interviews with news producers, those journalists who acted as translators to mediate news from Italy. The sections that follow show the results from the semi-structured interviews. These provide the journalists' accounts of the role of translation in their daily work. The focus is on individual narratives offering idiographic perspectives of one particular aspect of translation in the news. By speaking directly to the journalists who translate words

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<sup>39</sup> As a working definition of the concept of taboo we take Hugh's (2010: 46) acceptance: 'Taboo has now become mainly semantic[...] and is used in the broad modern sense of "highly inappropriate" rather than [...] "strictly forbidden"'

or phrases from Italian into English in their news reporting, it has been possible to gain some insight into attitudes and translational practices within the journalistic sphere. It also provided first-hand accounts of translational decision-making related to what Munday (2012: 2) refers to as 'critical points' or what Agar (in Munday: 2012: 3) defines as 'locations in discourse where major cultural differences are signalled'.

### **8.1.3 Constructing news from linguistic taboos**

The translational decisions of interest to this study are those regarding Berlusconi's taboo words, the *raison d'être* and the focus around which the British press have often constructed news narratives. Chapter 5 to 7 showed how these discursive events in which the offending phrase or word is mediated through translation have extremely high news value and are widely disseminated through both traditional and digital news outlets. From the translator's perspective, culturally sensitive and ideologically contentious expressions are 'those points in a text that require interpretation and in some cases substantive intervention from the translator' (Munday 2012:2). In other words, 'critical points' occur where the translator, either consciously or unconsciously demonstrates evaluative attitudes to the text s/he is translating.

In recent years Translation Studies research has seen a surge of interest on the question of ideology in translation, and more specifically, ideology and the translator (see section 3.1.3). Thus in the context of translational practice, the translator's, or in this case, journalist-as-translator's habitus (Simeoni 1998) could influence perceptions and evaluations of the 'critical points' in a source text that subsequently effect the target language rendering. Taboo terms are particularly suitable to carry out a lexical evaluation because they are rich points (Nord 1988/91) that have both cultural and semantic density. In examining the ways in which journalists deal with them, the observer can ascertain 'how such evaluation operates and varies in real, contemporary settings' (Munday 2012: 4). This approach requires an analytical frame that is flexible and sensitive enough to detect the

translator's evaluations and attitudes through the subtle linguistic nuances where ideological stances can hide. In the following section we turn to the subjects of this small sample investigation who carry out the semantic evaluations of these points of density.

## 8.2 Foreign Correspondents in the news

In 'The Changing role of the Foreign Correspondent', Sambrook (2010: 104) observes:

For most of the 20th Century, the average foreign correspondent was likely to be white, male, middle class, working with a high degree of independence [...]. They probably didn't speak the language of the country in which they were based [...] but they would over time, develop a degree of specialist expertise.

Into the second decade of the new millennium it appears that very little has changed. The nine correspondents interviewed in the present study bear an uncanny resemblance to the foreign correspondent of the past. All were white, male<sup>40</sup>, and middle class. Only one (Pisa), we might imagine, rightly or wrongly, has some background in the Italian language and culture before beginning their assignments in Italy, although as Sambrook points out, and as most of the interviewees confirmed, learning the language and culture as they go along is part and parcel of the job.

By contrast, Sambrook (ibid.) predicts that in the future, foreign correspondents will be 'far more diverse in gender, ethnicity and background. They will speak the language and have specialist knowledge of the country before they are eligible to be appointed. 'Their role will be as much about verification, *interpretation* and explanation as revelation'. In other words, Sambrook is

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<sup>40</sup> At the time these interviews took place (September/October 2011), there were no female correspondents. Since then, however, Lizzie Davies has taken over as Rome correspondent at the *Guardian* (January 2013) while Hannah Roberts became Rome correspondent for the *Daily Mail* at the same time. Nevertheless both John Hooper and Nick Pisa continue to write on Italian affairs for their respective newspapers.

advocating a cultural mediator, one of the roles that some sociological views in TS envisage as part of the translator's role. In fact 'They will take steps to ensure the way they work is as transparent as possible in order to win the trust of editors and the public'. One final point, as John Hooper of the *Economist* and *The Guardian* (24 June 2013) declared during a debate on Italian news programme *Otto e Mezzo* 'Non faccio i titoli' [I don't write the headlines]. It is also true that the editorial policies of the newspaper as a whole will dictate the multimodal paratexts surrounding the news, as much as the translated news, thus influencing and contributing to an overarching multimodal message.

The research focuses on foreign correspondents as translators for several reasons. Firstly, as Walter Lippmann observed nearly a century ago, newspapers have enormous sway in forming public consensus. As he succinctly put it: 'Editorials reinforce' (1921/2007). They have the power to form public opinion through the use of stereotypes, values, beliefs and prejudices that the editor retains will reflect the views and taste of her audience. Thus the worldview of journalists can simultaneously mould and reproduce public attitudes and ideas. More recently it has been argued that through gatekeeping processes journalists might not tell us exactly what to think but they influence what we think about (Valdeón 2012: 69). In other words, news providers select the agenda but ultimately audiences will make up their own minds on the issues at stake and not be influenced by editorial slanting. Either way, foreign correspondents are considered experts in their field and as such enjoy the authority and at times celebrity status that representing an elite newspaper brand confers. Conboy (2010: 103) asserts that 'the future of journalism is linked to "brand trust" that is, the public's confidence in the reliability of the source'. In other words, the name of the newspaper and even the individual journalist become a guarantee of the reliability of the news.

Editorials are not the only genre of articles that 'reinforce'; also comment, opinion pieces and the viewpoints of correspondents simultaneously influence, create and reproduce public opinion. Hannerz (1996: 120) explains:

News may be a commodity, but in the contemporary cultural market place, some news correspondents also become commodities in their own right. Their reporting is imbued with their own personal authority, and in the end, the places where they go and the events they report on may be marked as more important by their presence.

As Hannerz suggests, they themselves become media celebrities, appearing on political talk shows. According to Beliveau, Hahn and Ibsen (2011: 129-164) foreign correspondents act as a cultural interface, mediating, translating, and negotiating tensions between foreign and home cultures. While sharing the perspective of the audience for whom they write, reporters must fully comprehend the cultural traits of the Other, and fill in the 'meaning gaps' between cultures (ibid: 143). In a very general sense, this is certainly true but such a view of the foreign correspondent evades the pragmatics and praxis of translation in conveying news across cultural boundaries and disregards the commercial pressures journalists in all spheres have to contend with nowadays. Instead Bill Emmott, former Editor in Chief of *The Economist*, describes the foreign correspondent's task thus: 'the role of the [foreign correspondent] today is not just as a reporter of facts or conveyer of news but as the analyser, the interpreter of those facts and that news'. He concedes, however, that 'The foreign correspondent today is [also] trying harder to be more entertaining than they probably did 50 or 100 years ago. They need to get attention, to get things published'. Emmott acknowledges that translation can play a significant part in this.

Now let us turn to the men (for they are all men), who have arguably contributed to shaping the British newspaper audiences' perception of Silvio Berlusconi through a combination of translation, reformulation, selection and editing strategies. Here follow selected points from the discussions with some of the journalators involved in the practices described in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 above, focusing on the acro's view of the process. It should be noted here that while all the subjects interviewed were men,<sup>41</sup> this is not to say that there were no women

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<sup>41</sup> Since carrying out the interviews in 2012 two prominent women have emerged as reporting on Italian affairs for British newspapers. The first, Hannah Roberts for *The MailOnline*, and the second, Lizzy Davies for *The Guardian*.

reporting on Italy at the time. However, in 2012 when the interviews were carried out the high-profile regular correspondents for the major British newspapers were indeed all men. This is important for two reasons; firstly it suggests that foreign news reporting is still male dominated. Secondly, might a female journalist have interpreted the language in a different way, making different translational choices? This study, unfortunately, cannot even begin to ponder this crucial question. It is, however, an area of research that could yield interesting results.

### 8.2.1 Meet the correspondents - the journalists who shape our opinions on Italy

As discussed earlier (see section 1.5), the interviews carried out for the present study adopted techniques from the responsive interviewing model (Rubin and Rubin 2012: 10). This means that the interviews were semi-structured thus allowing for open discussion, without necessarily adhering to a fixed set of questions. In order to contextualise the interview data, it is helpful to know something of the professional trajectory of each of the respondents to this project. The table below lists the journalists interviewed, summarising salient data on their backgrounds, training, and career. This particular data was gleaned through a series of standard questions asked during the course of the interviews. However, following the responsive interviewing model the questions were not necessarily asked in the same way or in the same order. Due to time constraints, it was not feasible to ascertain the participants' level of L2 competence. However, this would be a desirable aim in future research projects.

Name	Publication (s)	Position (s)	Previous Experience	Translation, I.C, Language Training
James Bone	The Times	Correspondent in Italy, based in Rome	Times Correspondent United States	No formal training.

**Table 4 - British newspaper correspondents for Italy: essential information**

Name	Publication (s)	Position (s)	Previous Experience	Translation, I.C, Language Training
Michael Day	The Independent, The Sunday Telegraph, The Express	Freelance correspondent in Italy, based in Milan	The Sunday Telegraph, reporter covering Health and Social Affairs	No formal training
Bill Emmott	Independent writer, regular contributor, The Times, La Stampa	Former Editor-in-Chief of The Economist. Under Emmott's direction campaigned heavily against Berlusconi. Foreign Correspondent in Brussels, (1980-83) and Japan (1983-86)	None. Emmott started working for the Economist straight from University.	No formal training
John Hooper	The Economist The Guardian	Correspondent in Italy Southern European Editor, based in Rome	30 years' experience as a foreign correspondent for BBC World Service, The Guardian, The Observer, and The Economist; based in countries including Spain, Cyprus, Germany and Italy.	No formal training.
Tom Kington	The Guardian, The Observer The Los Angeles Times.	Freelance correspondent, based in Rome for last 10 years.	Correspondent in London and Lebanon.	Not known



<b>Table 4 - British newspaper correspondents for Italy: essential information</b>				
Name	Publication (s)	Position (s)	Previous Experience	Translation, I.C, Language Training
James MacKenzie	Reuters	Senior Correspondent, based in Rome	Reuters bureaux in Frankfurt, Berlin, Paris.	No formal training
Nick Pisa	The Daily Mail, The Express, The Mirror, Sky News, The Sun.	Freelance correspondent in Italy based in Rome for 12 years (now based in the UK).	Not known.	No formal training
Peter Popham	The Independent	Foreign correspondent and feature writer	Over 20 years with The Independent as foreign correspondent; five years in India, seven in Rome.	No formal training
Nick Squires	The Telegraph	Italy Correspondent, based in Rome	The Telegraph correspondent in Australia	Italian language course, L'Università per Stranieri, (Perugia).

### 8.2.2 Translation and intercultural mediation: the journalist's view

Despite their lack of formal training, all the interviewees claimed that they personally translated quotes and other material for their articles, and did not rely on news agencies such as ANSA (L'Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata). When asked if he thought there was a place for intercultural training and translation skills in journalism, Emmott, who has no specific journalistic or linguistic training, observes, 'I went to Japan without knowing the language - there training would have been an advantage - but for example with Italy, well with Italy there is the underestimation of difference'. This is a significant phenomenological admission. It might suggest that a journalist's expectations of similarity will collide with reality, possibly

provoking an overly negative evaluation; something that might be avoided with intercultural training? On the role of translation in the task of the journalist, Emmott comments, 'We are journalists fundamentally. Translation for us is a tool'. His pragmatic explanation as to how translation fits into the journalist's remit is enlightening:

Foreign correspondents are usually on contract or by piece. Getting the story - 'a story a day keeps the sack away' is an old journalistic adage - means that distortion can take place to please the audience. The audience in this case is your boss. This means 'getting the story' and selling it in a way that the 'boss', be it the desk editor, foreign desk editor, or overall editor, means earnings, so it's the system that's wrong. This is one source of distortion. The second source is the entertainment factor, the exotic. Bunga Bunga is far more exotic than a falling GDP.

Therefore, Emmott's comments imply that what influences a translational decision in news production is financial gain rather than ideological slanting or the holy grail of objectivity. When asked if he felt formal training in translation and intercultural communication would be beneficial to the journalist he replied that on international publications, such as *The Economist*, in his opinion 'there isn't really a problem'. The problem lies, according to Emmott, with the higher levels within newspaper hierarchies:

Intercultural training would be beneficial for the national media at the level of News Editor and the more senior staff. They are the ones who determine the line of the newspaper.... in senior structures of the newspaper translation issues come in.

Although intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation is an integral part of their daily work, Nick Squires, *The Telegraph's* correspondent in Rome comments: 'As far as I am aware no foreign correspondents have any formal [language/translation] training. It goes with the job, your knowledge of the language'. He acknowledges, however, the importance of accurate representation through translation and states: 'Bearing in mind the constraints of time and the deadlines, none of us [correspondents] have a cavalier approach. People make a huge effort to get it right'. It has been established here that the journalists' 'huge efforts' to get it right are not always successful, however, from a phenomenological

perspective by talking to the actors we are provided with some understanding of how the journalists consider their own translational production. On the issue of the invisibility of translation in news texts, Squires responds 'Translation is implicit, readers know.' He adds that with around 40 foreign correspondents working on the news desk, crediting translations to individuals would create 'a mess' on the page.

On what Munday terms 'critical points', Squires says: 'If the word is ambiguous, I'll ask an Italian colleague'. He quotes an example of a culturebound Italian term that he found difficult to render: 'bamboccione' [chubby baby], a term used in the Italian media to signify single adults who live at home with their parents. In order to rely this concept to a British audience Squires 'explains' the term, using what Appiah (2000/2004: 399) refers to as 'thick translation', annotating and glossing the word to locate it in its social-cultural and linguistic context: 'Italians have a word for people who choose to live with their parents well into their thirties and even forties - bamboccioni, or "big babies", who refuse to fly the nest and instead sponge off their families' (Squires, 27 August 2013). While the SL term does have negative connotations these are amplified in the TT. The ideological slant of the article fails to convey the social reality of Italy where the rate of unemployment is at 13 percent, while nearly 44 percent of young people aged between 15-24 are out of work (Istat 1 August 2014). The decision to use evaluative verbal phrases such as 'choose to stay at home', 'refuse to fly the nest' and 'sponge off their families' alongside semantically loaded adjectives such as 'workshy' clearly indicates the journalist's attitude, if not the editorial position. The message conveyed is that Italy's youth is lazy and unwilling to work, thus conforming to stereotypes of Italians generally as feckless and idle (Beller 2007: 321).

James Bone (*The Times*) says he was 'familiar' with Italian before commencing as correspondent for Italy. He affirms that he always translates himself, adding 'there is no great mystery', thus confirming anthropologist Hannerz's (1996: 120) observation: 'newspeople do not seem much given to deciphering foreign meanings at all. The working assumption, apparently, is that understanding is not a problem, things are what they seem to be'. Bone concedes,

however, that he sometimes takes advice from colleagues to find the best English rendering for culture-bound language ‘which is not always easy, especially with some of the [Italian] dialect’ (Private communication 1 October 2012). On the issue of cultural transfer he was more forthcoming. ‘The job of the foreign correspondent is to catch the cultural peculiarities – and Berlusconi is a good example’. He cites the occasion when Berlusconi referred to Barack Obama as ‘Alto, bello e anche abbronzato’ [Tall, handsome and suntanned, too]. *The Times* correspondent explains:

In Italy to say one is ‘abbronzato’, ‘suntanned’, is a complement while in England it is clearly an insult. It is not politically correct and cannot be excused. It’s like 1950s Britain. The use of language says a lot about a culture.

Interpreting his analysis, on the one hand Bone seems to justify Berlusconi’s use of the expression because in an Italian context it would be a ‘compliment’. On the other hand he compares it with Anglophone values and deems ‘it cannot be excused’. Finally, the journalist concludes: ‘We [correspondents] should analyse and explain, not judge’. Yet Bone’s comparison of Italy to ‘1950s Britain’ can be construed as an evaluation; an unconscious manifestation of the ways in which familiar stereotypes of ‘Backwards Italy’ that we saw in the previous chapter are resorted to in news discourse.

Another journalist who believes in learning the language on the job is the correspondent for *The Independent*, Michael Day who asserts ‘You become proficient [in a language] living in a place’. He has been based in Milan since 2009. He knew little Italian before moving to Italy and had no previous experience or training in translation but believes that ‘Translation is an art’. Nick Viverelli, Rome Bureau Chief for *Variety*, the American trade journal for show business, is Day’s inspiration when it comes to approaches in translation. According to Day, Viverelli ‘literally re-writes texts from Italian into American English, but with the vernacular slang used in the tabloidy style of *Variety*’. Day adds, ‘most foreign journalists don’t do that. Especially the agencies, they tend to translate too literally’. Ideally, he suggests the translation process should aim at ‘honing’ the source text into ‘lovely English’.

Ultimately, he adheres to the infotainment approach, commenting 'the papers are there to entertain'.

John Hooper (*The Economist* and *The Guardian*) has lived in Rome on and off since 1994. He apparently considers translation as part of the task of the journalist and says he is responsible for all the translated text that appears in his articles:

For better or worse, all the translations, whether taken directly from a speech or press conference or indirectly via a newspaper or magazine, are made by me. Some correspondents, and this is particularly true of American correspondents, rely on translations made by their Italian assistants. Agencies do not come into it, though we do sometimes use interpreters for interviews with visiting special correspondents or editors. (Email correspondence 26 September 2012)

The description of 'assistant' to describe the Italian native speakers who perform translation tasks for American correspondents is revealing. Bielsa and Bassnett (2009: 60) point out

If the foreign correspondent is the most visible face of international news organisations, often enjoying personal prestige and recognition, in some cases even considerable fame, the local translator can be considered the most humble and invisible among those directly involved in the production of global news. The low status of this figure, generally known as the interpreter, is reflected in the way its task is described and classified as part of a whole variety of local services including drivers and other media assistants

It should be added here that what the authors refer to as 'the local translator' is likely to be a non-professional translator, rather a person who 'also translates'. Hooper, however, prefers to translate for himself. He says: 'Well, the translation tool I use most is my head, and what is inside it already. But I also turn to dictionaries. None is perfect, but I find Collins perhaps the best. I have their app on my iPhone and iPad too'. News translation often demands immediacy, i.e. apps and smart-phone technology, underlining expediency as the main translation criteria; nuances of meaning or cultural interpretation take second place. Tom Kington (*The Guardian*) also claims: 'I always translate Italian myself, without recourse to

agencies. That is not to say that my choice of words won't be the same as agencies or other papers'.

Nick Pisa was born in the UK but his parents are from Naples, thus we might assume, rightly or wrongly, that he had some knowledge of Italian, or Neapolitan dialect before moving to Rome where he worked for several years as freelance correspondent for major tabloids *The Sun* and *The Mirror* and middle-market dailies including *The Mail* online. Pisa could therefore be perceived as a crucial figure in disseminating information on Italian affairs to a much larger British newspaper-reading public<sup>42</sup> than that of the elite papers. He is also significant to the representation of Italy on a global scale as *The Mail Online* is the world's most popular online newspaper<sup>43</sup>. On the question of translation, Pisa has certain notoriety: he wrote the article for *The Mail Online* (3 October 2011, now deleted) in which the verdict of the Amanda Knox Appeal was erroneously reported as 'guilty'<sup>44</sup>. According to Pisa: 'The *Sky* translator [sic.] got it wrong', triggering the online publication of the 'news'. Pisa was exonerated by *The Mail* who launched an inquiry into the matter stating: 'It is common practice among newspapers to prepare two versions of an article ahead of a court verdict and these are known as "set and hold" pieces.' Other journalists interviewed concurred that this is journalistic praxis. Bone confirms: 'We all did it, it's routine practice. I had prepared a splash, two spreads, although I didn't describe the reactions. That shouldn't have been utilized.' An in-depth discussion goes beyond the scope of this contribution, nevertheless, it should be underlined that journalistic ethics come into question here

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<sup>42</sup> The *Sun* has the largest circulation in the UK with 2,409,811 while *The Mirror*, 1,058,488. The best-selling elite paper, *The Times*, has a circulation of 399,339 (Audit Bureau of Circulation, May 2013.)

<sup>43</sup> The average global total for daily 'browsers' for *The Mail online* was 8.2 million, up 46.8 per cent year on year. Its total number of unique browsers for May 2013 was 129 million (Audit Bureau of Circulation, May 2013).

<sup>44</sup> In fact the Court of Appeal found Knox guilty of slander but acquitted her on the count of murder. This decision has subsequently been overturned by the Court of Cassation and Knox has once again been found guilty of the murder of Meredith Kirchner.

with Pisa's 'reporting' of the verdict: 'Knox 'sank into her chair sobbing uncontrollably while her family and friends hugged each other in tears' not to mention the false quotations of the prosecution. It might be legitimate to suspect, at this point, that similar tactics prevail in recontextualising translated information.

Peter Popham, (*The Independent*) acknowledges that comprehension itself becomes more of a critical issue when one is not fluent/trained in a second language. In particular Popham recalls inadvertently misrepresenting a comment Berlusconi had allegedly made regarding Margaret Thatcher. 'Yes, I got that wrong. I understood that Berlusconi had called Margaret Thatcher a 'bella gnocca', instead of which he said "*Non e' una bella gnocca*"' (see section 5.2.2). He observes: 'We are correspondents, we are not trained translators and if we do have the language it's been learned in an informal way. Given the pressures of deadlines, the translation process is an informal one that is open to errors'. Reuter's chief correspondent in Rome, James MacKenzie, has no translation training, but describes Reuter's translation ethos thus: 'When we translate we try to get as close to the original sense as possible'. The target language rendering prefers 'neutral' terms that avoid local connotations and do not sound 'too English or too American'. This strategy echoes Toury's (1995: 267-74) law of standardization producing neutralised effects, particularly with culturebound lexis. According to Mackenzie, Reuters adopt a 'literal approach' to translation, while some newspapers might be tempted to use 'poetic licence to make a quote appear more scandalous' than the original source language (cf. section 3.3).

### **8.3 Italy through the eyes of the correspondent**

Following van Doorslaer's observation that national stereotypes are perpetuated through translation in the news, it is interesting to note the opinions of the interviewees regarding the nation, culture and people they report on. The gap between what they say in the interviews and what they actually practice in terms of journalists and translatorial production becomes evident. James Bone observed that it was not for the correspondent to judge (see above) the foreign culture s/he seeks

to represent, yet correspondents in Italy hold strong opinions on Berlusconi, Italy and the Italian culture. Pisa blames Berlusconi for declining international opinion of Italy: 'A G8 leader indulging in Benny Hill-style humour and behaviour deserves what he gets from the international press'. An opinion shared by Michael Day who exclaims 'Berlusconi is totally beyond the pale' and as such is fair game in manipulated translation. Bone, on the other hand claims: 'Berlusconi is not an aberration [in Italy] he is mainstream' and maintains that journalists who have been trenchantly anti-Berlusconi 'have missed a lot'. Popham confirms that for the world's media, Berlusconi is synecdochic: 'He has become a symbol of Italy's political failings. It was tempting to succumb to expressions like 'former cruise ship crooner' or 'media tycoon' but I don't think unfairly'. Squires is of the same opinion. When asked if his use of evaluative adjectival phrases to denote Berlusconi was appropriate for a quality paper he replied 'It is all true, there is no libel'. These observations suggest, in journalistic terms, that judgemental and ideological slanting through the use of loaded adjectives is legitimate, provided it is not libellous. Within these parameters there is a great deal of leeway for manipulation of neutral information. Instead Pisa conceded that paratexts in the form of headlines and photographs could also play a part in manipulating meaning: 'Yes, that's very possible. I can remember a few times having to phone London to say that the headlines did not match the meaning of the story'. On the international image of Italy, Emmot's view is more analytical and observes: '2011 was a crucial moment for Italy in the International media - that press conference with Sarkozy and Merkel, that look, laughing at Berlusconi creating an official image of Berlusconi as a buffoon and unreliable in international affairs'.

### **8.3.1 Bad language and Berlusconi's linguistic taboos**

As discussed earlier (see section 4.3) the perception of what is or what is not taboo is culturally and contextually contingent requiring exceptional lingua-cultural competency in the SL and the TL to achieve equivalent effect across linguistic and cultural barriers. Thus, while toeing the politically correct line is now engrained in



Anglophone cultures, and Berlusconi may be notorious in the international media for his ‘vulgar language’, it is, however, rarely acknowledged outside of Italy that coarse language, insults and vulgarity are commonplace in Italian political arena that has steadily become a hotbed of vulgar vernacular (see section 4.3.7-4.4.3).

Here we summarize the journalists’ approaches to taboo language in general, in relation to their publication, and their comments on translating two examples of Berlusconi’s taboo-breaking language; the first, ‘Gnocca’, and the second, an alleged insult to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, ‘Culona inchiavabile’. Editorial policy on censoring obscene or offensive language vary from newspaper to newspaper in Britain, therefore the challenge of rendering linguistic taboos from Italian into English and “getting it into the paper” was a theme discussed with relish by the interviewees. Here we summarise the journalists’ comments on taboo language in relation to their publications and discuss two examples of Berlusconi’s taboo-breaking language around which news stories were constructed. The aim here is to initiate a process of describing the phenomenon in order to understand what translation effects are created prior to considering and postulating what ideological ends they might pursue. The analysis brings to light the reverberations of linguistic taboos when translated from Italian into English, and asks to what extent the ideological perspectives of the journalists, the newspaper they work for and ultimately the receiving culture impact on translational decisions. Berlusconi has uttered many words that violate the codes of the politically correct: in Italy newspapers do not censure them. The table below shows how the major newspapers rendered the two taboo expressions discussed in Chapter 5, ‘Forza Gnocca’, [Go babe], and ‘Culona inchiavabile’ [unscrewable big arse].

<b>Table 5 - Summary of Renderings of Berlusconi’s Taboo Language in British Newspapers</b>		
<b>Publication</b>	<b>‘Forza Gnocca’ [Go Pussy/babe]</b>	<b>‘Culona inchiavabile’ [unscrewable big arse]</b>
The Times	The story was not covered at the time it occurred. In a subsequent	Not reported.

Table 5 - Summary of Renderings of Berlusconi's Taboo Language in British Newspapers		
Publication	'Forza Gnocca' [Go Pussy/babe]	'Culona inchiavabile' [unscrewable big arse]
	article (consonance), Bone uses the translation 'Go Pussy'.	
The Independent	Not reported	'Unfuckable Lardarse'
The Guardian	'Go Pussy	'Grossly obscene comment'
Reuters	Not reported	Not reported.
The Daily Mail	Go Pussy	'un****able fat ****'
The Mirror	'Go P****'	Not reported
The Sun	'Go Pussy'	'The phrase is too vulgar to mention in a family newspaper.'
The Star	Go Pussy	Not known.
The Telegraph	'Go pussy / babe / crumpet'	Not reported

## 8.4 Editorial censorship

For British newspapers linguistic taboos present questions of 'editorial policy'. With regards Berlusconi's taboo language, Squires of *The Telegraph* explains: 'It is the foreign desk editor who decides what goes in or not. It is not a question of censorship; it's a question of decorum'. For the journalist, then, who goes where angels fear to tread, the challenge of rendering taboo language and getting it 'into the paper' was a topic they seemed to relish. Translation in this case can be viewed as a way to simultaneously introduce, export and re-introduce taboos. However, as can be seen from the above table, while *The Independent* is not holds-barred on taboo, in other newspapers asterisks abound. Cameron (1995: 29) describes this dichotomy on moral attitudes thus:

Contemporary tendencies towards diversity and democratization are certainly worth remarking upon, but in the real world they clearly coexist with much older tendencies towards uniformity and elitism. The ultra-traditional 'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' remains a vocal and influential figure'. (Cameron 1995: 29, see section 4.4.3)

### 8.4.1 'Unfuckable Lardarse'

As discussed in Chapter 5, Berlusconi's alleged reference to Chancellor Angela Merkel as a 'Culona inchiavabile' [unscrewable big arse]<sup>45</sup> first appeared in the Italian newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. True or not, the rumour made international headlines provoking international media-debates (see section 5.2 for detailed analysis). For reasons of ethics and editorial policy outlined above, not all the journalists interviewed reported the discursive event, in spite of its high news value and consonance with previous news narratives on Berlusconi at the time. James Bone of *The Times* comments: '*The Guardian* and *The Independent* make an effort to use 'fuck' a lot, they are more transgressive. Some language is too strong [for *The Times*] and won't get published on the grounds of taste'. Squires of *The Telegraph* concurs 'It's down to London's judgement, whether or not to run a story, but with *The Telegraph's* readership they are simply not going to print something like that. There are some stories they simply won't touch'. New Agency Reuters did not report the rumour either; however, Mackenzie states 'it came from an unreliable third hand source from a left-wing paper'. However, he confesses 'but we did talk about how we would have translated it'. He explains that 'inchiavabile' would have been translated with 'unfuckable' because according to him and his colleagues, it is the 'most natural' English rendering with no specific localized connotations. 'Unshaggable' was excluded as being 'too English', while 'unscrewable', he claims 'sounds like a bottle you can't open'. Commenting on *The Independent's* translation, 'Unfuckable lardarse' Mackenzie observed: 'Some poetic licence was at play in inventing that phrase'. James Bone also thought that 'a certain licence was taken with that translation'. He comments: 'Insults tell you a lot about a culture' and observes that Italian dialectal terms are particularly difficult to translate. He relates

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<sup>45</sup> This is, in my opinion, the most neutral rendering of the Italian expression, although it undoubtedly loses the comic undertones of the source language version.

this to another discursive event that caused some scandal involving Mara Cafagna, then minister for equal opportunities in Berlusconi's government, and fellow Member of Parliament Alessandra Mussolini. Following Mussolini's provocation, Cafagna referred to her colleague as a 'Vajassa'. The lexeme is Neapolitan dialect and according to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* (22 November 2010) signifies 'servant', 'woman of low social standing', 'a gossip', or a combination of all three. Its pejorative connotations could include prostitute. Bone translated the term as 'slut'. He comments: 'this is the interesting thing; you have difficulty finding the appropriate tone in English and to get it into the paper'. Although the by-line on the article is Tony Patterson (15 September 2011) Michael Day claims he was responsible for 'unfuckable lardarse', the most graphic, vivid, and perhaps exaggeratedly vulgar translation of 'culona inchiavabile'. I asked Day (Private correspondence 5.10.2012) if it was his. He replied thus:

For your information, the original 'rendering' -- I presume you mean 'translation' -- 'unfuckable lardarse' for the phrase 'culona inchiavabile' came from me (actually, an Italian TV writer friend suggested it to me on the phone).

Thus, ontologically speaking we appear to have the origins of this translation; a translation that was subsequently diffused globally via the internet, on international news websites and foreign newspapers that had picked up on *The Independent's* story. A translation which had ultimately come from an Italian native speaker, a friend of a friend of the journalist whose name appears on the article. Day comments: '*The Independent* puts anything in. It's very liberal and pro-swearwords. I think, and this is my own opinion, it's silly putting asterisks - if it's reporting [speech] then it's legitimate [to publish the complete word]. Day concludes 'Newspapers are there to entertain'. On this point Tsai (2012: 1061) notes that across the globe journalistic practices are bowing to criteria other than objectivity and are shifting towards 'The influence of the rapidly developing market-driven journalism and its most prominent features, which generally include sensationalism, tabloidization and infotainment'. Emmott admits the tendency to sensationalism does exist but warns

If there is a desire to entertain it can be dangerous, [...] if you've got to try harder to be heard then the danger of sensationalising, or distorting or trivialising or any of those sins increase. It's across all kinds of journalism but perhaps there is more now in foreign correspondence compared with 50 years ago. Then there is an extra issue with translation.

Perhaps from this comment we might deduce that the 'extra issue with translation' might entail the 'sins' of distortion and trivialisation to which Emmott refers?

#### 8.4.2 Go Pussy - Forza Gnocca

The analysis of this discursive event can be found elsewhere (see section 5.2). Popham stood by his translational decision when questioned on his lexical choice:

I think it's quite a good translation. He [Berlusconi] uses language colourfully, using terms that most politicians would avoid. This distinguishes him from his grey colleagues. For the English, who are so buttoned up, it's interesting, it's transgressive, it's fruity, it's flirtatious.

We might interpret Popham's translational decision as an ideological one; a desire to exaggerate the impact of the verbal transgression for the target audience. Bone of *The Times*, on the other hand when asked if he agreed with the way that 'bella gnocca' had been translated, suggests that 'great piece of pussy is what men say'. In Berlusconi's context the lexeme would be inappropriate but not as offensive as it might appear translated thus. As Ross (2010: 165) reminds us: 'It remains potentially problematic to impose one set of discourses on a cultural context in which they are not rooted'. Hooper of *The Guardian* and *The Economist* explained his translational rationale of 'gnocca' thus:

I chose 'Pussy' because there were two possible English translations: one, 'crumpet', was just too English (our [Guardian] website now has a vast US readership, about 30% of the total); the other, which also begins with c, is a word we use only if the context absolutely requires it and which, I felt, was much cruder than gnocca. Pussy was comprehensible on both sides of the Atlantic and, I felt, more faithful to the original.

Hooper's 'think aloud protocol' is revealing. It demonstrates how translation choices are made in journalistic contexts and illustrates a domesticating strategy that bows to the requirements of an international English-speaking audience. Although the majority of *The Guardian* readers are clearly British, Hooper casts aside the two 'English' options he had found. It could be argued that there is in fact a wealth of lexical alternatives or translational strategies that could have been employed to render 'gnocca' but for our purposes here we will only discuss the two that the journalist mentions. He rejects the term 'crumpet', which in this context signifies 'Women regarded collectively as a means of sexual gratification' (*OED* online) on the grounds that it is 'too English', and presumably would confound the 30 percent of US readers. More relevant, perhaps, is it could be considered an archaism: its sociocultural and generational associations resonate with the sociolect of post war (WWII) upper middle class white British males (see dates of usage in *OED* online and *Chamber's Dictionary of Slang* 2008), which incidentally would be Hooper's own sociocultural milieu. The second alternative, he notes, also 'begins with a 'c'. Thus we can assume the word is 'cunt', the mother of all English obscenities (see section 5.2.3), so offensive that it cannot be written in full. Hooper observes that this peculiarly English taboo word is 'much cruder than gnocca' and would therefore not be an adequate solution. While appearing to have lexicographical equivalence, the translational decision produces a significant shift from the SL pragmatic meaning. Suffice it to say that by relying only on quick dictionary solutions Hooper's translation tools and resources were severely limited, his own habitus also influencing the choices. If we consider 'gnocca' part of contemporary Italian Slang, then other translational solutions with a more contemporary English register could have been found, for example 'babe', which is equally transatlantic as pussy. Hooper's concern with 'fidelity', presumably for the denotative meaning, overrides functional considerations. This point demonstrates how more research into the role of translation in the news from the ethnographic point of view remains a critical priority to the discipline.

## 8.5 Closing Remarks

This chapter puts forward a preliminary attempt towards investigating the habitus and working practices of the journalist as translator, within the journalistic field,. By including the newsmaker as part of the qualitative datasets it has been possible to learn something of the practitioner's perspective on the role of translation in the production of international news for the major British newspapers. There are two main conclusions to be drawn from this preliminary investigation. Firstly, Lloyd's affirmation that translation is not the job of the journalist is in stark contrast with the evidence brought to light in this study. For all the journalists interviewed, translation is part of their work, even though they might not possess the necessary skills and knowledge that would be expected considering the responsibility that their translational decisions entail. Furthermore, Lloyd's dismissal of translation/intercultural communication training for journalists is at odds with the findings of a recent report for which he was a member of the editorial committee. In the report entitled 'Are Foreign Correspondents Redundant? The Changing face of International News,' Sambrook (2010: 101) concludes

In the long term, news editors must commit to greater professional training for foreign staff[...]. It is increasingly clear that language skills, cultural awareness and subject or country expertise are more important than ever for the accurate portrayal of international events and issues. Cultural gaps need careful bridging.

Emmott suggested that in fact it is the 'bosses', the news desk editors, and the general editors who need the intercultural training as ultimately they are the decision-makers. This brings us to the second conclusion; the concept of infotainment has increasingly influenced the slanting of news reporting and the selection of news. The tendency is no longer the prerogative of the tabloid press but has made inroads on important 'quality' newspapers, too, extending to the field of foreign news reporting. The translation of utterances of prominent individuals, politicians included, are thus fair game for manipulation, as Emmott points out, in order to catch the attention of the 'audience', who for the journalist is the news desk

editor. Journalism of this nature becomes piece work and in order to sell the news product, it seems translation is just another tool of the journalist's trade.





## 9.

### Conclusions

This study set out to understand some of the underlying mechanisms that influence the ways in which news producers shape knowledge on cultural difference. Focusing on the role of translation in the production of news texts, the study investigated some particular facets of the representation of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's language in the British press. Having established that strategies of framing and cultural stereotyping are used to narrate the Other in news discourse, the thesis has endeavoured to identify the traces of Berlusconi's 'cultural hegemony' within the Italian context through the filter of British news discourse. A tentative approach to sample the ways in which readers respond to the framed discourses was made in order to gauge the impact of these news narratives on the image of Italy in the eyes of the audiences. From an interdisciplinary perspective in which Translation Studies, Critical Discourse Studies, and Sociology intersect, Chapters 1 and 2 discussed the relations between language, power, and ideology at micro and macro level that are relevant to this study, within a context of news production. Chapter 3 brought these strands together around the core issue of translation with particular attention to the phenomena of translation embedded in news texts. Chapter four provided a comprehensive overview of the socio-historical and sociolinguistic backdrop for the study, while the following four chapters (Chapter 5, 6, 7, and 8) focused on the analysis, and an ethnographic study of the journalists who translate. Some broad observations can be made at the outset of these conclusions.

The translation and representation of Silvio Berlusconi's language in the British press is symptomatic of the domesticating, target oriented, strategies that dominate foreign news reporting in newspaper journalism, as discussed in Chapter 3. We have seen that in the selection of news, Berlusconi's utterances have often been the foundation upon which news stories have been constructed and news narratives perpetuated, chiming with familiar stereotypes of Berlusconi himself. News reports on the former Prime Minister contain hyperbolic strings – the 'gaffe-prone premier', the 'latin lover', and the 'perma-tanned, media tycoon' – thus providing the target audiences with resounding tropes with which to frame and interpret the various controversies surrounding Berlusconi. Online news texts combine visual prompts and stimulants creating paratexts that prime the audience: suggestive photographs of semi-naked young women accompany almost any news story that mentions Berlusconi; images that very often clash with the moralistic attitude of the texts themselves underscore the newspapers' double-standards regarding sexism and sexuality. Evocative juxtapositions of image are created, such as facing profiles of Berlusconi and Mussolini in order to emphasise similarities between the two figures (see section 6.5); off-guard photographs of inelegant moments or unfortunate facial expressions are used to illustrate, for example *The Star's* racist article against Italians, 'Shaddap You Face'. Hypertext links to 'related stories' draw attention to chains of discourse. All these elements are brought together to construct multimodal texts in which meaning is construed through a reciprocal process with the target audience. In order to answer the research questions set out in the introduction, these complex processes were analysed through a triangulation of methodologies that integrate qualitative interviews, critical discourse analysis, and towards including reader response in the equation.

The research project pivoted around four broad lines of inquiry; 1) socio-historical context of Berlusconi's language; 2) ideology in news translation; 3) agency in news translation; 4) Audience reception and response. The first question asked to what extent Berlusconi's transgressive comments could be contextualised and comprehended within the framework of Italian political discourse and the socio-cultural situation of Italy. Chapter 4 traced the trajectory of Berlusconi's

rhetoric during the Ventennio Berlusconiano from the 'discesa in campo' and football metaphors, to the discourse of serenity. The chapter then outlined the general trend towards 'sgarbizzazione' [vulgarization] within Italian political discourse, and cross-cultural perceptions of political correctness thus providing the sociolinguistic backdrop and context to Berlusconi's language. Chapter 5 then analyses Berlusconi's later verbal vulgarities that emerged during his last mandate (2008-2011) through 'revelations' in media hyped-narratives but were in fact just conjecture. However, through translation, Thatcher the 'Great Piece of Pussy', the new party name, 'Go Pussy' and Merkel, the 'unfuckable lard-arse' became 'facts' in the target culture (Toury 1995: 24) that reverberated throughout the international news media. In the light of Italian political discourse, however, it has been shown here and can be safely asserted that Berlusconi's vulgarity is not unique (see, for instance, Bossi's successor, Matteo Salvini of the Northern League and to a greater extent Beppe Grillo of The Five Star Movement). From the analyses carried out it would appear that a normalization of offensive, vulgar and politically incorrect expressions has occurred within the Italian political arena over the last twenty years, as in everyday life.

The second question tackled one of the thorniest themes of this study; ideology in translational decision making. The analysis made attempts to maintain an impartial view of what are clearly loaded and sensitive discourses in order to detect ideological slanting and translation effects. The examination of Berlusconi's utterances as represented in the spectrum of British newspapers, from *The Star* to *The Times*, would seem to indicate that on various occasions considerable shifts in meaning had taken place. We refer to, for example, the analysis in section 6.5 when the translations of Berlusconi's speech acts on Mussolini reveal transitivity strategies such as changing theme-rheme patterns to highlight one proposition rather than another, or making lexical choices in translation, as Munday (2012) suggests, that are evaluative or that are chosen in order to emphasise the point the journalist wants to make. An example would be the choice of translating the semantically loaded Italian term 'colpa' which has deep moral and religious undertones with the English 'mistake', a term that carries no such connotations and

would be used to describe an error of orthography rather than the crime of genocide. Therefore, far from exhibiting a translation ideology, although it could be argued that domestication is the overarching ideological umbrella in foreign news reporting, it is posited here that they are ideological translations in that there is some motivation for the slanted representations discussed in chapters 5 to 8. In order to find out more about the translational decisions, it was necessary to speak to the 'translators'. This brings us to the third research question, that is, the question of agency in the translation process. Returning to Tyulenev's premise that translation is a social activity, and as such the translator must be seen as a socialised individual (Tyulenev 2014: 5), was it possible to ascertain who actually translated Berlusconi's taboo and politically incorrect utterances embedded in news texts that were tailored to the needs of particular audiences in a process of 'linguistic tribalizing' (Orengo 2005: 176). This research question led me to conduct interviews with several of the leading correspondents for Italy who work on British national newspapers. The ethnographic study yielded data that give important insights regarding the foreign correspondent and her/his perception of and relationship with translation within the journalistic field. Through this series of interviews several significant facts transpire. To begin with as Floros (2012: 938) has suggested, 'translational norms clash with the norms of journalism'. Commercial considerations come first. Emmott quite clearly states that translation functions as a tool of the trade, although what meaning it constructs in journalistic discourse for the various publications is open to debate. Emmott also suggests that it is not individual beliefs and political ideologies that dictate translational choices in news reporting but rather it is a question of pleasing the foreign desk editor hence, 'bunga bunga is a more attractive story to the media than tax evasion'. From meaningful observation, it appears that the old adage 'sex sells' still applies. This is nothing new regarding the tabloids but it is a perturbing discovery that news values for the quality press is following a similar path. Michael Day, correspondent for Italy of the *The Independent* confirms this theory as he states that 'newspapers are there to entertain'. Franklin (1997: 4) first noted this tendency several years ago. He observed

news media have increasingly become part of the entertainment industry instead of providing a forum for informed debate...traditional news values have been undermined by new values; 'infotainment' is rampant'.

Sparks *et al* wrote in 2000 of the *Tabloidization of News*, while the concept of infotainment is mapped out by Thussu (2009). What is new to this paradigm is the manipulation of foreign news to fit the infotainment criteria, as Emmott implied. This crucial point brings us to the possible underlying motivations for the journalist's translational decisions. Tyulenev (2014: 5) draws attention to the 'social underpinnings' that 'lurk behind their individual wills and individual styles'. It is therefore reasonable to assume that there is now an 'orientation toward market-driven journalism' (Tsai 2012: 1063) in which as we have seen, the Cultural Other becomes an obvious target. In this respect, the persona of Silvio Berlusconi was a gift to newspaper editors and writers. Popham of *The Independent* commented in one of his editorials (2011) 'he may be a small politician but he'll leave a big hole'. Popham's political obituary on Berlusconi was premature but 'scandal' from the former Premier is certainly less frequent. Instead it seems that narratives on Italy styled on Berlusconi's discursive legacy have filled the hole where Berlusconi's gaffes left off. From this point, the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8 focused on news narratives on Italy related to the culture-sensitive issues related to gender and race. The critical analysis of the texts shows that on the whole, stereotypes and framing in British news discourse provide slanted representations of the Italian culture, in particular Italian women, overt racism, and the associations with Fascism through a mixture of repetitious tropes and images, as well as strategic uses of translation. Italians appear as the reflexion of Berlusconi's cultural hegemony in news narratives that portray Italy as socially and culturally backward as perceived from a British perspective.

The fourth and final investigative area refers to response - firstly the response from the Italian press to the representation of Italy, and secondly the response from the target audience, the reader, to the news narratives on Italy. In chapter 6 we saw how the dialogic relationship between British and Italian press has developed a high level of intertextuality with the respective nation's

newspaper's quoting each other as reliable sources. This is in itself a dangerous reflexivity. The chapter focused on one particular incident whereby *Il Giornale*, Berlusconi's mouthpiece, reacted like the proverbial worm in response to British newspapers' criticism, in particular *The Times*, heaped onto Berlusconi during the Bunga Bunga period. That in turn provoked a vitriolic editorial in *The Star*. While the Italian press generally demonstrates a 'deferential attitude' (Vaccari 2009: 148) to foreign newspapers, *Il Giornale's* nationalistic attitude and critique of the British sparked animated debate in the British press. This cross-cultural media battle drew out all the basest forms of cultural stereotyping in a cross-cultural journalistic rant. The analysis of *The Star's* editorial reveals the Us and Them frames often used in news discourse but its blatant and offensive racism through the guise of 'humour' seems to have escaped rebuke. In later British news narratives on 'Racist Italy' seen in Chapter 8, Italy is accused of being racist towards its growing population of ethnic others, yet the narrative is a thinly disguised inverted racism. The trope of 'backward' Italy is used in postmodern context suggesting that Italy's social backwardness contrasts with the implied cultural superiority of the British. The impact of these news texts can be tentatively seen through a sample of reader response in the form of readers' comments to online news texts analysed in Chapters 7 and 8. The preliminary results are not sufficient to make any generalisations as such but add some indication of reactions to the news texts examined.

The themes explored and the initial results obtained from this investigation on some aspects of Berlusconi's language in the British press have wider implications across a spectrum of issues connected with media and translation. In the first place, this thesis has shown how translation studies can embrace sociological perspectives and ethnomethodological methods in order to contribute to the study of national representation in popular culture in the form of newspaper discourse. As an intrinsically social activity that 'mediates between peoples, nations, groups and individuals' (Tyulenev 2014: 6), translation has become increasingly pervasive in the everyday lives of ordinary people, although the general public might be unaware of the fact. Globalising effects in late modernity have brought the

foreign much closer to home; through the consumption of mass media we are constantly exposed to international flows of information that are produced and packaged according to what are believed to be needs of the 'target'. However, the relations between translation, media representation, and reception are greatly underdeveloped areas of investigation. While the scope of this study has necessarily been limited by financial, temporal and word constraints, more in-depth studies supported by funding would yield significant results that could be diffused for the public benefit. Future research might fruitfully engage in more in-depth studies of the reception of cultural representation in translation mediated media texts through the analysis of reader's comments together with input from focus groups. From the data collected it might be possible to see the influence of translation effects, thus opening the way for further investigations on the effects of translation on public opinion. The role of the interpreter in the media is another field of translation research which has not been fully explored and another example of translation's invisibility to the wider public. The impact of this type of research could be considerable. In the first place it would benefit the visibility of the discipline bringing translational issues onto the agenda of research into the mass media. Raising public awareness to potential ideological slanting in translated news, starting from critical media reading being taught in schools and at university would surely benefit society as a whole – as Sambrook (2012: 36) has already noted:

Just as we recognise the need to educate the public on nutrition, and on financial prudence, we may increasingly need to educate them too on the benefits of a balanced and judicious information diet and on how to develop greater levels of critical awareness

This research has also contributed towards debates on translation in the news through a small but significant ethnographic study of journalists who translate. Knowledge of the practitioners' perspective was obtained through qualitative interviewing methods providing individual accounts of the phenomenon of the journalist as translator. The information garnered from some of the most influential international journalists in the field provides concrete evidence that translation is instrumental, a tool, a means to an end from the journalist's



perspective. That end is commercially led and has very little to do with objective reporting or building bridges across cultural spaces to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Other. The National Union of Journalists' code of conduct contains 12 points. Four of those twelve are reported below as they have considerable relevance to our themes:

1. A journalist strives to ensure that the information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
2. Does her/his most to correct harmful inaccuracies.
3. Differentiates between fact and opinion
4. Produces no material that is likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

The ways in which translation can be used in news reporting as a subterfuge for the legitimization of biased representations might include a reflection on the above. In fact, one of the most important contributions this work has made to the discipline of translation studies has been to provide empirical evidence of the role of translation and the journalist as translator in representing and communicating Italy in British news discourse.

Nevertheless, these initial conclusions must be countered with a critical reflection on the value of the findings and the scope and limitations of the methods used. First of all, as has been more than once stated, of the 'triangulation of methods' proposed at the outset in Chapter one, only two methodologies have been sufficiently implemented within the scope of present research. Reader response through the CD analysis of reader's comments has not been fully exploited here. A much larger corpus would be needed in order to provide valid evidence of media and translation effects. The methodology is intrinsically a sound one, however, that promises to yield interesting results. It could certainly be profitably applied to similar future research projects if carried out in a more consistent and systematic

way. Indeed, it is this author's aim to pursue this end. The corpus of news texts and the thematic datasets analysed using CDA approaches were also relatively small, thus it could be argued that they offer little data that can provide generalizable results. Nevertheless, it is sustained here that what is at stake is not so much the quantity of evidence but the quality. Even if the corpus appears to be relatively small, the detailed analysis shows that by dint of force, the repetition of certain tropes and stock phrases regarding Silvio Berlusconi and by metonymy Italy, appears across the spectrum of the most influential and most popular British national newspapers cannot but impact negatively on the image of Italy in the public opinion. The next stage of research could certainly investigate this further through reception studies, focus groups, and reader response.

The two final points regard the findings of the last Chapter and the figure of the 'journalator'. Van Doorslaer's neologism has been kept in inverted commas throughout its usage in this work because although a handy label for translation scholars to adopt when referring to the professional hybrid of journalist-translator, in practice we have seen that the actors themselves do not consider themselves translators as such. If we accept along with the fautors of PC that social groups have the right to be called by names that they themselves would choose, and not by the tags attached by other people, then for the moment the soubriquet 'journalator' is premature. This is not to say, however, that training for journalists in the fields of intercultural communication, cultural mediation, and translation is an issue that should be swept aside. On the contrary, research and scholarship on translation in the news needs to point the way towards collaboration with institutions of learning where media and journalistic training and research takes place so as to produce a new generation of experts in the field equipped to deal with the increasingly international flow of news. The new breed then might recognise themselves in a hybrid name. As noted in Chapter 8, in 2012 when the interviews were carried out the regular correspondents for the major British newspapers were indeed mostly men. To speculate on how female correspondents would have translated certain words and expressions is a crucial question. The issue of gender in translation of news is another area of research that could reveal significant data.

In this sense, the present research makes a considerable contribution to future directions for developing research and training that will have impact on the way translation is perceived in news and media contexts.

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## Appendix 1

Bill Emmott Interview 22.02.2014

Emmott graduated from Magdalen College in PPE, Oxford (UK). He began postgraduate research on the French communist party at Nuffield College. He joined *The Economist* in 1980 as was foreign correspondent first in Brussels, from 1980-1983, and Japan from 1983-86. He was Editor of the weekly from 1993 to 2006. An expert on Japan, he has written six books on the country. He is currently writing a book on the balance between India, China and Japan.

Q. In the introduction to your film showing yesterday ('Girlfriend in a Coma') it was publicised as 'Banned by the Italian Government' in the lead up to the last general elections in Italy in February 2013. Could you elaborate on that? Who exactly 'banned' it and for what reason? Could it not have been due to the 'halt'; 'par condicio' in political discussion in the Italian media that happens every time there is a general election?

A. Well, yes, it wasn't exactly banned - Italian distributors weren't interested, in the end Sky took it on pay TV we'd got it to be shown at Maxi venue in Rome but on Feb 13 the decision was revoked - not sure why, minister for Culture - worked out better for us as Espresso took up the cause and got a bigger screening at XX

Q. How and why did you first become interested in the 'Italian Case'?

A. The first reason was because of the issues of conflict of interest - it appeared that the players were becoming the referees. Italian newspaper journalism is part of the problem - they are not critics they are part of the system. They are obviously influenced by 'groups', they are not independent, they don't function as a fourth

estate, which is the role of the journalist. British journalism has more of a tradition of boat rocking, often very criticised – but in the UK Journalism is seen as a crusade

Q What do you see is the role of translation in the news?

A. We are journalists fundamentally. Translation for us is a tool. – target reader ?– who is your audience? Your boss. Foreign correspondents are usually on contract or by piece. Getting the story - ‘a story a day keeps the sack away’ is an old journalistic adage – it means that distortion can take place to please the audience, the audience in this case is your boss. This means ‘getting the story’ and selling it in a way that the boss, be it the desk editor, foreign desk editor, overall editor, means earnings, so it’s the system that’s wrong. This is one source of distortion. The second source is the entertainment factor, the exotic. Bunga Bunga is far more exotic than a falling GDP.

Q Do you think the ‘British perspective’, the colonial attitude might influence the approach of the journalist?

A. Smiling, Emmott replies, ‘We like to give lectures, we don’t like to receive them’.

Q How did you get into journalism?

A. Luck. I went to Oxford where I did a degree in PPE (politics, philosophy, Economics) and got a job on the Economist.

Q. So you have no training as a journalist and no linguistic training?

A. No. Actually I was researching for a PhD on French politics when I was offered a minor post in the Brussels office of the Economist. Q. Could you speak French? No, I could read it but I couldn’t speak

Q. Did you finish the PhD?

A. No!

B. Who did the subtitles on the film?

A. The film was made in Annalisa's [co-director] loft. It was on a shoestring budget - the young guy who helped us out on location did the subtitling.

Q. So translation, then, was not a priority.

A. As I said, we made this film with practically no money.

Q. Returning to the issue of Translation in the news Do you think there is a case for intercultural communication or translation training for foreign correspondents?

A. I think the problem is on the demand side not on the supply. I think that on international publications like *The Economist* there isn't really a problem. I think the problem lies more with the national press like for example *The Times*. Intercultural training would be beneficial for the national media at the level of News Editor and the more senior staff. *They are the ones who determine the line of the newspaper.* People who are perfectly good at their job - in Germany for example, there are people who are quite good at cultural interpretation But who they are working FOR, it is not that they distort what they do - however well they are trained - *in senior structures of the newspaper translation issues come in.* I went to Japan without knowing the language - there training would have been an advantage - for example with Italy, what is the truth about Italy? 'is the underestimation of difference'

Foreign correspondents don't have a say in the headlines - Guy Dinmore, for instance, who works for the *Financial Times*, he'll file a story and not see it until it's published. He is an influential journalism and would say 'you screwed up' if he didn't like the headline but mostly they[journalists] don't have a say.

Q. *Il Giornale* referred to you as the 'Anti Italiano' - Why do you think that is and do you think there is any truth in that

A It's an ideological tradition - either you're with us, or against us - if you're against Berlusconi you're against Italy. This is not journalism in my sense -

newspapers like this represent the extreme, journalism of propaganda, also *Liberio* – deliberately creating deception to create a picture they want. Where is the TRUTH?

*The Economist's* famous headline 'Unfit to Govern' was translated in the Italian press with 'inadatto' – Bill questions this translation

#### Bill Emmott interview part two 08.03.2014

For the second part of the interview Emmott distances himself from his former position as Editor-in-Chief at *The Economist* and we agree that his perspective should be considered that of an interested and experienced observer

Q. According to Berlusconi, the foreign press played a fundamental role in his downfall in 2011. Would you say there is any truth in that?

A. I don't think there is really any truth in that – except to the extent that the international bond markets....the daily newspapers for bonds markets are the FT and WSJ, so the reporting at that time, the key point was the crisis, the division between Berlusconi and Tremonti, it was that story that caused his downfall. The summer of 2011 cast a strong doubt on the government's ability to act – spent ages summer 2011 on next manoeuvre this cast doubt on the bond investors. As an observer I would say that played a role in his downfall

Q. Would you say that the image of Italy has suffered a great deal internationally under Berlusconi, Berlusconiismo?

A. From 2001 onwards that is accurate. As prime minister his image is bound to have a very large impact. Everything about Berlusconi, the image he created of himself, Berlusconi was inexorably associated with Italy – everything about Berlusconi, the image he created for himself through his media and through his personal presentation – this then became closely associated...with the image of

Italy.....the international media in 2011 was a crucial moment - that press conference with Sarkozy and Merkel, that look, laughing at Berlusconi creating an official image of Berlusconi as a buffoon and unreliable, their attitude... .it was his doing. He created himself as a stereoptye but his creation of himself as a stereoptye was in his view a positive image but a positive image that was taken in a negative way internationally. He was the 1950s male, the tycoon media mogul male surrounded by dancing girls - this was in a way reinterpreted in a negative way internationally

Q. What is the role today of the foreign correspondent?

A. That seems a rather big question but erm, I think the role today is of er is of someone to do the direct analysis and interpretation of news and information about the foreign country for their readers and viewers wherever those readers or viewers might be but erm but always obviously outside that country so that the key point, which has always been the same for a FC is that you're always working for foreigners, wherever you are.

Q. What's changed since you worked as a foreign correspondent?

Well, the audience now has more access to info, internet, so the role of the FC has to be now not just as a reporter of facts or conveyer of news reports but as the analyser, the interpreter of those facts and that news. I think that's perhaps the change; the consumer has more ready access to information so the FC responds to that by becoming more of an analyst, OR, another choice is to become an entertainer, that's true of all journalism as a response to competition, television, two directions... entertainment or analysis, or a combination of the two (laughs). Actually the foreign correspondent today is trying harder to be more entertaining today than they probably did 50 or 100 years ago - they need that to get attention, to get things published. But with more serious subjects like politics, economics, or business they must be there as your personal interpreter and analyst of the foreign

information...I think the availability of more information is a positive thing ...people know more about foreign countries, it raises the existing threshold of knowledge, so I think that's positive, but in trying to react to that if there is a desire to entertain can be dangerous, which is not unique to being a foreign correspondent it is all to do with journalism, erm that er, if you've got to try harder to be heard then the danger of sensationalising, or distorting or trivialising or any of those sins increase, it's across all kinds of journalism but perhaps it more new to foreign correspondents now compared with 50 years ago. There is an extra issue with translation. I would say, I am sure you have thought about this – this is equally true also in simply domestic reporting. You are effectively doing a translation because *the journalist is nevertheless an interpreter, a distiller of the truth and facts and translates it into a new set of words, a new set of phrases.* When the PM or DPM gives a speech and the journalist is the only channel through which people get an impression of that speech then the journalist is also doing a translation the fact that there are cross-cultural issues involved with foreign reporting and linguistically, *then that obviously adds another layer.*

Q. But isn't it also more difficult for a foreign PM to have come-back and more unlikely?

A. But they do it all the time – they do it all the time, through their ambassadors or spokesman, *although they might not have much leverage over the foreign press.* but also for the domestic prime minister.

Q. Has that ever happened to you? Has a prime minister or politician of a foreign country ever complained that they had been quoted incorrectly in translation?

A. No, not to me. Often *disputes of interpretation but not of language*

Q. So, just to wrap, and return a seconds to Berlusconi, from your perspective, then, do you think the foreign press treated him as a stereotypical Italian?

A. It was his doing. He created himself as a stereotype but his creation of himself was in his view a positive image that was taken in a negative way internationally





## Appendix 2

Nick Squires, *The Telegraph*. 26 September 2012.

Nick Squires has been Rome Correspondent for *The Telegraph* since 2008. Nick Squires has been the Telegraph's correspondent in Rome since 2008, covering Italy, the Vatican and surrounding countries. He started his career at the Brighton Evening Argus, then worked in Hong Kong for two years before completing an MA in International Relations, at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Before moving to Rome he was the Daily Telegraph's correspondent in Sydney, covering Australia and the South Pacific.

Q. Could you tell me something about your background and training as far as languages and translation is concerned? Did you have any specific training, for example if you studied journalism, was translation or any form of intercultural communication a part of the course?

A. As far as I am aware no foreign correspondents have any formal language/translation] training. It goes with the job, your knowledge of the language. I did a course in Italian in Perugia before beginning in Rome.

Q. I noticed that *The Telegraph* demurred from publishing the news story on Berlusconi's supposed comment on Angela Merkel. Could you tell me why?

A. We don't know for sure if he said that. It's down to London's judgment, but with *the Telegraph's* readership they are simply not going to print something like that. There are some stories they simply won't touch. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* use 'fuck' a lot, it's down to individual editors....but there are some stories they

won't touch if they can't rely on the source. It's a question of decorum, it's not really about censorship.

Q. Could you tell me something about your approach to translation? How do you deal with tricky, or on this case, sometimes taboo words?

A. I translate myself. But if the word is ambiguous, I'll ask an Italian colleague. With 'bamboccio', for example, I asked. But I would say that in four years I've never had a complaint about misrepresentation or misquoting through translation. Bearing in mind the constraints of time and the deadlines none of us (correspondents) have a cavalier approach. People make a huge effort to get it right. Although it might be true that sometimes less scrupulous journalists resort to google chrome translations.

Q. Do you think it might be an idea to credit the translations at the bottom of the article, for a question of translarency?

A. Translation is implicit, the readers know, though, that there is translation involved. And with 40 correspondents it would just look such a mess on the page.

Q. In your descriptions of Berlusconi I notice that you sometimes use expressions like 'playboy tycoon', 'gaffe-prone premier'. Do you not think these are more tabloid style journalism rather than for a serious newspaper?

A. It's all true. There's no libel.

## Appendix 3

Phone Interview James McKenzie. 26. September 2012.

MacKenzie has had no training as a translator. He has been Chief correspondent in Rome since 2010 and previously worked in Reuters' Bureaux in Frankfurt, Berlin and Paris.

Q. Could you tell me your approach to translation, and in particular, how you deal with Berlusconi's language?

A. Reuters unwritten policy on translation is to choose neutral terms that have less local connotations and flavour so as not to be 'too English' or 'too American'. The basic aim is to convey the sense and tone. When we translate we try to get as close to the original sense as possible. Berlusconi's very colloquial remarks can be a bit tricky to convey in English. Another recent example was the noun 'porcata', which became 'porcelum'. It comes from pig, or swine, and was used by Calderoli, MP La Lega Nord, to describe the electoral laws that he himself had written in 2006. That gave us some problems.

Q What was Reuters' stance on the alleged comment, 'unfuckable lardarse'?

We never did *culona inchiavabile*, but we did talk about how we would have translated it! 'Unfuckable' would have been the most likely translation choice for 'inchiavabile' because it is the most neutral English term, without specific localized connotations. 'Unshaggable', for example, is too English, and 'unscrewable' sounds like a bottle you can't open. But as information from a third hand source from a left-wing newspaper, we didn't do it.

Q. So do you think that 'unfuckable lardarse' is a fair translation?

A. I think there was some 'poetic license' at play in creating that phrase.

## Appendix 4

Nick Pisa, Phone interview 1 October 2012

Freelance correspondent for *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, and Sky TV. He was based in Rome from 2000-2012.

With Nick Pisa the interview started differently. We began by speaking about the Amanda Knox case, for which he was the main reporter for *The Daily Mail*, and also *The Mirror*. He was directly involved in the 'scandal' of the publication in *The Mail* of an incorrect verdict on Amanda Knox in 2011.

Q. Could you tell me something about the ways that translation plays a role in your news reporting on Italy?

A. I'll tell you an interesting anecdote about translation: the Knox verdict. The Sky translator got it wrong and someone pressed the button sending the wrong version online. It's standard practice to write two versions of an outcome of a court case. In this instance the translator in the London office was following the verdict in Italian, misunderstood, and thought Knox had been found guilty of murder [she was in fact released as there was insufficient evidence]. Pisa maintains, however that the fault was not his.

Q. What do you think is Italy's image abroad, and how do you think it has been portrayed in the British press?

A. Their reputation is not premier league in an international context, not until Monti came along. They would like it to be but it isn't. It's really down to

Berlusconi. A G8 leader indulging in Benny Hill style humour and behavior deserves what he gets from the International press.

Q Do you think the choice of headlines and photographs of your articles might manipulate the meaning of the text?

A. Very possible. I can remember a few times having to phone London to say that the headlines did not match the meaning in the story. The favourite photo of Berlusconi at the *Mail* was the one with Blair and the bandanna.

Q. Did you translate *The Mail's* version of 'Culona inchiavabile'?

A. With regards 'culona', I used it in a later article - 'Quarto Reich' about the cover of *Il Giornale* (August 2012) but it is censored as only 'culona, which translates as "lardarse" '. They [the London office] took it out'.

## Appendix 5

James Bone, telephone interview 3.10.2012

Rome Correspondent since September 2010, previously in New York. No experience as translator, although says he 'was familiar' with the Italian language before becoming correspondent.

We started the conversation on the Pisa affair. He concurred that writing 2 stores is praxis.

Q. Can you tell me your approach to translation in the context of writing news?

A. There is no great mystery, I translate myself and if I have doubts I ask colleagues.

Q. Did you attempt to translate some of Berlusconi's more crude language?

A. Actaully I translated 'culona inchiavabile as 'unscrewable fat arse' it is etymologically nearer the original expression. Anyway, *The Times* wouldn't have published it. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* make an effort to use 'fuck' alot, they are more transgressive. Some language is too strong [for *the Times*], and on taste grounds it won't get published. There is a great deal of scope in the translating insults... they tell you a lot about a culture,... 'with the transcriptions of [Berlusconi's] wiretapping there were a lot of incidents of girls speaking in slang - street language Another example was the scandal over Mara Cafagna calling ... Mussolini a 'Vajassa' Neapolitan dialect - 'this is the interesting thing, you have difficulty finding the appropriate tone in English and to get it into the paper'. Bone translated this term as 'slut'. Berlusconi's language is 'highly sexist and sexual' but 'I don't think all Italians think that way'.

Q. So, what to your mind is the role of the foreign correspondent?

A. The job of the foreign correspondent is to catch the cultural peculiarities – and Berlusconi is a good example. The jokes in public....A good example of one of his less offensive comments, was the Obama incident. In Italy to say one is 'abbronzato', 'suntanned' is a compliment while in England it is clearly an insult. It is not politically correct and it can't be excused. It's like 50s Britain. The use of language says a lot about a country and its different cultural values. And these things make huge news in Italy. In any case we should completely analyse and explain, not judge'

Q. Would you say that your representations of Italy and Berlusconi are objective?

A. I don't know what you mean. Berlusconi has had a lot of criticism, but he's not an aberration, he's mainstream. Those who have been trenchantly anti-Berlusconi have missed a lot.'

Q On the subject of translating vulgar language, what did you think of Popham's rendering of 'Bella Gnocca' as 'great piece of pussy'?

A. 'Great piece of pussy is what men say'. Actually, a word that no-one has bothered to look up is 'bunga bunga'....



## Appendix 6

Peter Popham 4.10.2012. Phone interview

Q. When asked about the 'Thatcher' story, Popham immediately acknowledged that the article had caused him some embarrassment

A. Yes, I got that wrong. I had understood that Berlusconi had called Margaret Thatcher a 'Bella Gnocca' instead of which he'd said 'non è una Bella Gnocca'. We are correspondents, we are not trained translators and if we do have the language it's been learned in an informal way. Given the pressure of deadlines, the translation process is an informal one that is open to errors.

Q. Do you not think the translation of 'Bella gnocca' is a little problematic?

A. Actually, I think it's quite a good translation. 'He [Berlusconi] uses language colourfully, using terms that most politicians would avoid. This distinguishes him from his grey colleagues. For the English, who are so buttoned-up, it's interesting, it's transgressive, it's fruity and flirtatious.

Q. Would you agree that in news discourse Berlusconi has become a shorthand for national stereotyping and representation?

A. He became a symbol of Italy's political failings, used in a crude way. It was tempting to succumb to expressions like 'former cruise ship crooner' or 'media tycoon' but I don't think unfairly. On the whole in Italy by the class he was appealing to, these were seen as great things. Instead to the British broadsheet

readers they were causes for ridicule. One was conscious as correspondent of the readers interpreting him differently due to the cultural gap.

## Appendix 7

Michael Day 8. October 2012. Phone Interview

Michael Day writes freelance for *The Independent* on Italian news He has been based in Milan since 2009. Before moving to Italy Day worked on the *Sunday Telegraph* covering Health and Social affairs.

Q. Can you tell me about your background in Italian language/culture?

A. I learnt to speak a bit of Italian before I came here but it's not the same. You become proficient living in a place.'No, I have no formal training as a translator. To be honest, translation is an art. I was really inspired by a journalist called Nick Viverelli, the Rome Bureau chief for *Variety*.' Viverelli is bilingual and would literally completely re-write texts from the Italian into American English, but with the vernacular slang used in the tabloidy style of *Variety*. Most foreign journalists don't do that. Especially the agencies, they tend to translate too literally. Translating is about 'honing it into lovely English'..

In a private communication before the interview I asked Day (Private correspondence 5.10.2012) if the rendering 'unfuckable lardarse' was his. His reply read thus:

For your information, the original "rendering" -- I presume you mean "translation" -- "unfuckable lardarse" for the phrase "culona inchiavabile" came from me (actually, an Italian TV writer friend suggested it to me on the phone).

Day justifies the strong tone of the translated slur as 'Berlusconi is totally beyond the pale'. But the papers are there to entertain. *The Independent* put anything in. It's

very liberal and pro-swearwords. I think, and this is my own opinion, it's silly putting asterisks - if it's reporting [speech] then it's legitimate [to publish the complete word].