

# Skilled-based and knowledge-based strategies in Television Interpreting

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Interpreting, especially simultaneous,  
does not yield up its secrets easily  
(Setton 2005: 277).

## Abstract

*Television Interpreting and Conference Interpreting have always been regarded as profoundly different in terms of the expected performance and the interpreting strategies utilized. Television interpreting is a multi-faceted activity, requiring a particular mind-set and special communicative skills: television interpreters produce their own text, in an attempt to ensure coherence and convey the same effect that the speaker wants to obtain, with little or no possibility of using *décalage* due to the pragmatic context. The paper investigates how the flow of discourse is managed by television interpreters, with a special focus on the use of prosody and discourse markers. The analysis is conducted on a corpus of recorded texts, interpreted in simultaneous mode by a professional conference interpreter, working for public television. The typology of the interpreted event is the press conference interview, characterized by a rapid question and answer format. Through this analysis, we shall outline a profile of television interpreters and their interpreting strategies.*

## Introduction

The study consists of a corpus-driven analysis of Formula One press conference interviews broadcast on Italian television and interpreted simultaneously from English into Italian by the same interpreter. This case study is part of a larger corpus of simultaneously-interpreted interviews that was drawn upon to illustrate interpreters' behaviour in practice. The text belongs to the "interview" genre and, more specifically to the "press conference" format. In our sub-corpus we analyzed 10 interviews in order to observe how the interpreter manages the information flow, with limited use of *décalage*, as dictated by the context. In line with Straniero Sergio (2003: 140) the approach is not that of error analysis: the focus is instead on observing translation practices in a real setting. Transcription of the target text (TT) was made using Winpitch<sup>1</sup>, while the source text (ST) transcription was retrieved from the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) website<sup>2</sup>. The audio TTs were provided by Teche RAI<sup>3</sup> upon our request. The available interpreted version per interview is extremely brief (four minutes, on average) with a maximum of three questions. Synchronization of the ST with the TT was not possible because the original audio was not available; only the transcripts of the ST were available, therefore an objective quantification of *décalage* in seconds or in words was not possible. However, in the translated version the original sound is never entirely covered by the interpreter's voice and always remains in the background, allowing the researcher to make some observations, as noted by other researchers (among others, Straniero Sergio 2007: 13; Kurz 1995: 197). Our initial assumption was that the use of *décalage* is very much limited for the media interpreter. Excluding the possibility to use the time lag depending on ST difficulty, source language speaker accent or speed, our intention was to observe which production strategies were used by the interpreter in order to achieve cohesion and coherence. The observation of phenomena like pauses, latching and prosody yielded interesting results.

### 1. Conference and Television Interpreting

Though no clear-cut distinctions can be made between conference interpreting and television interpreting (TI), from our corpus analysis some peculiar features characterizing TI can be outlined. Generally speaking, television interpreters are conference interpreters with a common background in terms of their experience in conference interpreting. Talking about conference interpreting in general terms is unrealistic; there are several "sub-genres" that determine different interpreting strategies and approaches; different types of communication settings involve different participants (Fairclough 1995: 39) with different needs

1 [www.winpitch.com](http://www.winpitch.com)

2 [www.fia.com](http://www.fia.com)

3 Rai Multimedia Archive.

4 The fact that long *décalage* is not used in real practice was confirmed by the interpreter himself when asked to explain the major difficulties encountered in a media context, during an informal conversation with the author.

and expectations. Rather than outlining these differences, we prefer to talk about the context where TI is occurring; considering the context is a pre-requisite in order to understand the distinctive features of TI and to understand the nature of the context is to grasp the principles that govern the interpreting strategies and its requirements. Interpreting is a “specialized complex type of bi-lingual, sense-oriented communicative verbal activity” (Chernov 1985: 170) whose specific function is to deliver a service, in a specific context and for the benefit of a specific group of users. The specificity of the context determines users’ expectations and influences interpreters’ strategies.

### 1.1 The context

Talk is context-shaped in the sense that, in constructing their talks, participants address themselves to preceding talk (Heritage 1998).

In TI the preexisting repertoire of possible roles played by the interpreter is deeply transformed by the context where interpreting takes place. According to Auer (1992: 22), drawing upon Goffman’s theories:

Social roles have to be made relevant in interaction in order to provide the context for interpretation: a doctor is not a doctor because he or she holds a diploma and a patient isn’t a patient because s/he entered a doctor’s office; but because they become incumbents of the complementary roles of doctor and patient, because of the way they interact, taking on the rights and obligations of the partners in this unequal relationship.

The context helps the interpreter to find the appropriate strategy but this requires flexibility and fast reaction times. Sperber/Wilson (in Auer 1992: 22) see the context as “a set of assumptions which have to be selected by the individual from a larger set of assumptions [...] and as soon as such a set has been chosen, the processing of a new utterance (comprehension) can take place”. In institutional talk, unlike ordinary conversation, participants “are fundamentally constrained” by the context (Heritage 1998: 7). Interviewers (IR) and interviewees (IE) play different roles: IRs restrict themselves to asking questions and cannot discuss the IE’s position; likewise, IEs “restrict themselves to answer to questions and they cannot ask questions, or at least responding to them. This constraint shapes the form taken by participants’ talk” (Heritage 1998: 7) and places the IR in control of the interactional management of the interview. The timing of the turns and the exact moment when each question is asked are determined by the IR who does not wait for the interpreter to conclude his translation. In the press conferences analyzed in our corpus the question is not translated to the IE by the interpreter but the Italian IR<sup>5</sup> asks the question in English and then the interpreter translates it into Italian for the TV viewers. The point in all this is that for the interpreter it

5 The communicative situation is not monolingual. The interviewer is an Italian journalist but he asks questions in English and drivers need no translation. In this instance, the interpreting service is an additional service provided for TV viewers. Even though the interpreting of the IR question has no bearing on the press conference itself, it has a strong impact on the final outcome of the TT.

is imperative to finish translating his turn on time not to overlap with the IR formulation of the question for two main reasons: the question needs to be interpreted into Italian; the question may “nominate a newsworthy topic which will be developed in the answer” (Heritage 1985: 96).

Before focusing on the interpreter’s strategies and skills we want to outline some features characterizing TI Formula One press conferences.

## 1.2. Some features of Formula One press conferences

*Decontextualization.* Discourse on TV has a double function: to create a communicative interaction and to be heard by absent hearers (Scannell 1991: 1). One of the most apparent features of TI is that the interpreter speaks to an *overhearing* audience, nowhere to be seen, whose needs and expectations are specific but not easily inferable from the context at the moment of speaking; the interpreter will have a chance to receive the audience’s *affiliative response* (Atkinson 1984) through indirect channels, mainly blogs, but only when the event is over<sup>6</sup>. The interpreting work is carried out “without the benefit of moment-to-moment feedback as to whether the listener is following the argument, understanding the point in general and various items in particular” (Gumperz *et al.* 1984: 3). Unlike in CI, situationality is not shared (Straniero Sergio 2007) and this de-contextualization creates a “bubble” around the interpreter, who must rely on his sensitivity and on the general requirements of the broadcasters: interpreters adjust their strategies on the basis of audience presence and feedback, not possible in a media context. Mack (2002: 207) describes media audiences as “undifferentiated, anonymous and numerous, with no possibility of active participation”; the mass nature of audiences is “an obvious and important feature of media events” (Fairclough 1995: 39): a fact television interpreters have to come to terms with.

*Colloquiality.* Media discourse has “listenable properties intentionally built in” (Scannell 1991: 1). Television programs are recorded in such a way “as to preserve the effect of liveliness”. The voices of television are heard in the context of domesticity and this is what drives the communicative style; media communication is more similar to the ordinary and informal conversation rather than to the public form of talk” (Scannell 1991: 3). Even though interviews are regarded to be “less than spontaneous [...] and staged for audience consumption” (Clayman 1991: 55) spontaneity and familiarity of tone is the distinctive feature of the interview genre in press conferences. As remarked by Straniero Sergio (2003: 138-139), in Formula One Press Conferences (F1PC) the “intensity of actions is often conveyed by colloquial expressions and idioms”; the interaction “takes place in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, in which speakers laugh, joke and slap each other on the back”. This is something conference interpreters are not

6 Personal communication with the interpreter during an informal conversation with the author. The interpreter was asked if and when he received feedback from his audience and the answer was that the only feedback was through the comments of the bloggers.

used to, since most speeches delivered in a standard conference setting have a formal style. In a media context interpreters must adjust their register in order to be more “listenable” for the overhearing audience.

*Extralinguistic Knowledge.* Technicalities are extremely abundant in F1PC and, as was demonstrated by Romeo (2001), one of the main problems in TI is recognising technical terminology in the extremely rapid flow of the speech. Extra-linguistic knowledge and prior preparation are a prerequisite to guarantee completeness of information and to cope with the extremely difficult working conditions. Interviews are characterized by “very short turns and [...] the narration is based on continuous references to what happened during the race” (Straniero Sergio 2003: 136). Knowing exactly what happened during the race or during previous races provides a sort of “safety net” for the interpreter; in case of obscure expressions or disturbed sound the interpreter may resort to parallel reformulations selecting *contextually plausible* solutions.

*Time constraints and stress.* Time is a limit imposed on television interpreters in all circumstances, and this constraint is even more pressing during press conference interviews, where turns sometimes overlap (Straniero Sergio 2007). The interpreter is required to have rapid reaction times, translating simultaneously at a “supersonic pace” (Bros-Brann 1994: 26), utterance by utterance, without delaying the delivery due to the time constraints imposed by TV broadcasters. In TI time is of the essence and the TT cannot be longer than the ST, regardless of the syntactic and linguistic differences between source language (SL) and target language (TL): sentences must begin and end in synchrony with the IE’s utterance, obliging the interpreter to act more as a dubber, synchronizing the TT with the ST and ending each turn almost exactly at the same time as the source language speaker. The dialogic context, characterized by rapid turn sequences of questions and answers, as well as the absence of pauses between question and answer, places the interpreter in a condition of “always being late” (Straniero Sergio 2003: 141). Hence, under these circumstances *ad hoc* strategies must be adopted. The interpreter knows that his/her voice must coincide with that of the person being interpreted (Kurz 1995: 197) and that s/he cannot fall too far behind; hence time synchronisation of the ST with the TT is a further element of stress imposed on the interpreter. Synchronicity in itself is a concept contrary to the nature of interpreting. Synchronicity does not simply mean to conclude the sentence at the same time as the person being interpreted, it also means avoiding silent pauses. This is something that particularly concerns TV broadcasters; the idea that blanks may have a detrimental effect on the audience: “il faut donc ‘coller au plus près’ à l’orateur, car la télévision ne tolère aucun ‘blanc’; questions et réponses doivent se faire du tac au tac” (Kurz/Bros-Brann 1996: 209). The interpreter needs to fill in all the available space but no more than that. The interpreter is also required to have rapid adjustment times: as observed by Straniero Sergio (2003: 136) press conference interviews are extremely short; unlike in a standard conference situation where the interpreter can get used to the speaker’s accent or style, in press conferences the duration of the interview does not allow for adjustments. At this point some questions may arise: how can you listen to a segment, process it and reproduce it without using *décalage*, especially when the interpreter translates from English as a specialized language into Italian, from a more concise

to a less concise language? According to Gotti (2008: 40) one of the most distinctive features of English as a specialized lexis as compared to general language is conciseness “which means that concepts are expressed in the shortest possible form”. Conciseness in English “recurs to acronyms and abbreviations” (Gotti 2008: 41) but there are some other “linguistic devices that make language denser” (Gotti 2008: 69); a rather frequent phenomenon according to Gotti (2008: 73) is the relative clause reduction and the frequent use of premodification:

The phenomenon of relative clause reduction shows a frequent switch from postmodification to premodification. This transition is particularly straightforward in English because its syntactic rules allow several adjectival uses of phrasal elements. While Italian relies on left-to-right construction, English can easily employ right-to-left construction, which shortens sentences and makes the noun-phrase especially dense.

This implies that during the Production Effort the cognitive load is particularly intense in terms of the number of words to be uttered (Gile 2005). Fluency, quick reaction times and extralinguistic knowledge seems to be the natural, albeit tentative answer that emerges from our sub-corpus analysis. It is from this curiosity that we decided to collect a corpus of interpreted texts, with the aim to analyse the interpreting strategies in a television context. If TI is “a form of communicative language transfer requiring editorial decisions, content-related judgments” (Kurz 1995: 197), our desire was to observe the *editorial decisions* made by the interpreter.

In the following chapter we intend to outline some of the interpreting strategies that we observed in our corpus.

## 2. Knowledge-based and skilled-based strategies

The objective of a strategy is not only the reaching of a goal but that of reaching it in some optimal way (Van Dijk/Kintsch 1983: 62).

The basic task of professional journalism is to serve as a channel for public figures and the experts to communicate with the audience, that is to say “the primary recipients of the expressed information or opinions [...] for whose benefit the talk is ultimately produced” (Heritage 1998: 15). All the actions of the interpreter are undertaken and coordinated in order to achieve a precise goal, to communicate effectively, with a smooth and rapid delivery with a high level of precision, to the benefit of the *primary recipients*.

According to Heritage (1990) any interactant – in our case the interpreter – is acting strategically when two or more actions that appear to be directed towards the same goal have been produced; this often involves some kind of manipulation, “to stake the odds in favor of the desired outcome” (Heritage 1990: 316). Riccardi (2005) outlines two categories of strategies which interact with one another during simultaneous interpreting (SI): “skill-based” and “knowledge-based” strategies. Skill-based strategies are the result of procedural knowledge and their use confers spontaneity and fluency to the output; they refer to

conversational abilities which are usually taken for granted until we listen to an interpreter who does not possess them.

Such conversational skills which we usually take for granted (until we find someone who does not have them or ignore their social implications) are not too different from the ways in which a skilled jazz musician can enter someone else's composition, by embellishing it, playing around with its main motif, emphasizing some elements of the melody over others [...] trying out different harmonic connections, all of this done without losing track of what everyone else in the band is doing (Berliner in Duranti 1997: 16-17).

By contrast, knowledge-based strategies “differ from skilled-based strategies because their activation is the result of a conscious analytical process and they are employed when actions must be planned on-line, because something has caused a momentary cognitive overload” (Riccardi 2005: 762) due to high delivery speed or high information density. Even though they both interact in the SI process, knowledge-based strategies are those most widely adopted, as highlighted in our data, above all in the segments where the speech is extremely rapid.

## 2.1 Pauses and intra-turn latching

An indication of interpreting strategy can be inferred from an analysis of pauses and the way they are used or avoided. According to Halliday (in Schlesinger 1994: 229) functional pauses “serve to divide discourse into tone groups and organize it into information units”. In contrast, non-functional pauses are those caused by hesitations. According to Riccardi (2005: 760) the insertion of short pauses indicate the implementation of skill-based strategies:

Hesitation, pauses, slowly constructed sentences, are by contrast the result of explicit knowledge application. Skill-based strategies derive from an implicit competence and they remain at a subconscious level. Skill-based strategies favor a fluent output when interpreting into a structurally different language.

The following excerpts illustrate the rapid reaction times of the interpreter, who manages to conclude his utterance without delaying with respect to the utterance of the IE, using functional pauses inside the turn and accelerating immediately after in order to catch up using *intra-turn latching*. Though rarely described in the literature, “intra-turn latching is a common turn-holding device [...] where the speakers work hard to create the space to make their point” (Gumperz/Berenz 1993: 116). Here we are suggesting that the interpreter uses intra-turn latching as a strategy to create his space and stay in synchrony with the IE's utterance. According to Gardner (2001: XII) “within-turn latching shows that the same speaker produces a new intonation unit without a pause between units”. As it is illustrated in the following example the interpreter is hurrying up to conclude his translation to listen to the question asked by the journalist to the driver:

Example 1<sup>7</sup>

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: It is great to be back up here again. Another one-two for the team. Another one to this guy. I'd rather it was the other way around but I must say the team did a great job this weekend.	I: È bello essere ancora una volta sul podio=altra doppietta per la squadra (.) grazie a (.) questo mio compagno=avrei preferito che fosse il contrario =ma la squadra ha fatto un ottimo lavoro questo weekend.	I: It's nice to be on the podium again=another one-two for the team (.) thanks to my partner=I would have preferred the order inverted= but the team did an excellent job this weekend

Canada 13/06/2010 – Press Conference 4

In 1, accelerating the pace is not enough and an utterance needs to be latched onto the following one without leaving gaps (“It’s nice to be on the podium=another one-two for the team”).

Example 2

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: But an incredible day for the team. Another victory. One-two was our goal. Unfortunately we didn't get that, so we still got a big chunk of the points, so it was a good day.	I: Alla fine diciamo è stata una giornata incredibile per il team=un'altra vittoria=l'obiettivo era chiaramente una doppietta=purtroppo non ci siamo riusciti (.) per cui abbiamo fatto dei buoni punti.	All in all, I'd say it has been an incredible day for the team=another victory= we clearly wanted the one-two finish =unfortunately we couldn't pull it off (.) so we did collect some important points.

Hungary 01/08/2010 – Press Conference 4

Intra-turn latching recurs more often when one or more pauses have been used previously as if the interpreter realized that he has to speed up before it is too late, as it is shown in the following excerpts:

7 Transcription conventions:

IR: interviewer

IE: interviewee

I: interpreter

(.): short pause (< 3")

(...): long pause (> 3")

>...<: speech uttered at a quicker pace

WORD: segments pronounced in a louder voice

Word: emphasized word/segment



Example 3

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: [...] with the safety car in the end it was the right choice not to try to pull away too much, to have some tyres left. Then I focused on the first couple of laps, built a gap and then just brought the car home.	I: [...] e poi con la safety car che è entrata alla fine=chiaramente:: ho cercato (...) semplicemente=di tenere un po' anche i pneumatici=mi sono concentrato sul RICOSTITUIRE diciamo il divario e portare la macchina a casa=è stato >...<veramente incredibile.	I: [...] and then with the safety car that entered at the end=clearly:: I tried (...) simply to preserve a little bit the tyres=I focused on RE-ESTABLISHING let's say the gap and bringing the car home=it was>...< really incredible

Brazilian GP 07/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

In 3, functional pauses are used by the interpreter in order to reorganize the utterance into information units (“I tried [...] simply to preserve a little bit the tyres=I focused”) but immediately after there is an acceleration of his speech rate and intra-turn latching is used to recover space providing a seamless transition to the next segment (“preserve a little bit the tyres”).

Example 4

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: [...] not an easy season, especially with races we just had in Korea. I think it was the right answer for all the people to come back here.	I: [...] una stagione devo dire NON facile:: (...) in alcune:: corse: come quella di (.) Corea=diciamo non ci è andata bene=e questa è stata la risposta GIUSTA da parte di TUTTI.	I: [...] I must say NOT an easy season:: (...) in some:: races: as (.) in Korea= let's say things didn't go right for us=and this was the RIGHT reaction from EVERYBODY.

Brazilian GP 07/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

Example 5

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: [...] never mind what happened in Korea, just stay focused and the whole team pulling on one string.	I: [...] siamo quindi (.) tornati per vincere = quindi >...<indipendentemente da quanto successo in Corea (.) siamo rimasti concentrati:e tutta la squadra ha=diciamo tirato tutti insieme.	I: [...] so (.) we came back to win= so >...< despite what happened in Korea (.) we stayed focused: and the whole team has=let's say pulled all together.

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In 5, the reaction times of the interpreter are amazingly rapid and perfectly synchronized with the IE's utterance. The ST's utterance (“never mind what happened in Korea”) is efficaciously and elegantly rendered with (“indipendentemente da quanto accaduto in Corea” / “Despite what happened in Korea”). This move has caused a delay, evidenced by the insertion of a functional pause in order

to reorganize the segment which required processing time; the interpreter is conscious of this fact and decides to use intra-turn latching, fastening the utterance onto the next one (“ha=diciamo tirato tutti insieme” / “has=let’s say pulled all together”) to nest all the information into the allotted space and time.

#### Example 6

ST	TT	Gloss
IE: [...] and getting us both up here, one-two, and getting the Constructors’ Championship one race before the end. I think it is fantastic. We are still fighting for the Drivers’. I want to get rid of this guy (Alonso), but it is an unbelievable achievement.	I: [...] quindi doppietta:: quindi vittoria del titolo costruttori (.) prima dell’ultima gara=quindi risultato fantastico=stiamo poi lottando anche per il titolo dei piloti::=vorrei cercare di superare QUESTI miei colleghi:: comunque è stato un risultato molto bello.	I: [...] so one-two::which means winning the Constructors’ Championship (.) before the last race=a super result, then=we are also in the fight for the Drivers’ title::=I would like to overtake THESE colleagues of mine::anyway it was a great result.

Brazilian GP 07/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

In 6, it is the end of the turn and delays are not acceptable. This is an exemplification of fast-pace latching (Tannen 1990), a device used by the interpreter to gain speed and despite that, the utterance is not disrupted. The fact that the interpreter is in a hurry is evidenced by the constant use of intra-turn latching in our data.

## 2.2 Prosody and cohesion

Despite the extremely rapid pace of the speech, the interpreter manages to produce a cohesive text thanks to his communicative skills. De Beaugrande/ Dressler (1981) define a text as a communicative occurrence that can be made manifest in sound or print. For a text to be communicative, certain standards of textuality must be met; the first two of these are cohesion and coherence. The standard of cohesion refers to “the ways in which the components of the surface text, i.e. the actual words we hear [...] are mutually connected within a sequence” (Bühler 1989: 131). Coherence is not “a mere feature of texts, but rather the outcome of cognitive processes among text users [...] a text does not make sense by itself but the sense is attained by the interaction of the knowledge present in the text with the receiver’s stored knowledge of the world” (De Beaugrande/ Dressler 1981: 6); “it is the listener’s search for a relationship [...] that motivates the interpretation” (Gumperz 1982: 33). In spoken language “much semantic and pragmatic information concerning what the talk is about, and how it is to be chunked, is signaled through prosody” (Gumperz 1982: 3). Prosody is among the most important of the devices that produce cohesion in spoken interaction; one of the main linguistic differences between speech and writing is that “speech relies in part on prosody (i.e. intonation, stress, tone of voice, and other paralinguistic signals) for information that in writing must be conveyed through words and punctuation” (Gumperz 1982: 5). Therefore, the achievement of

cohesion by the television interpreter relies on strategies such as voice intonation and other rhetorical skills to stress focal elements (Pignataro/Velardi 2011). Tone plays a key role and helps the listener to disambiguate or infer the exact meaning of the utterance: the “functionality of intonational choices and their role in facilitating or obstructing communication is by now a universal point of departure in the literature” (Shlesinger 1994: 231). The following examples illustrate the communicative style of the interpreter and the use of intonation to stress focal points:

Example 7

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: To be honest I didn't know anything until I crossed the checkered flag.	I: Detto questo (.) <u>IO NON SAPEVO VERAMENTE NULLA</u> fino a quando non ho attraversato la barriera a scacchi.	I: this said (.) <u>I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING</u> until I crossed the checkered flag.

Abu Dhabi 14/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

Example 8

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: [...] It is looking good, but we have to wait until the cars finish. I was thinking 'what does he mean?'	I: [...] <u>AH SEMBRA MESSO BENE</u> >...< dobbiamo aspettare fino alla fine delle altre macchine (.) e pensavo= insomma (.) <u>MA COSA INTENDE?</u>	I: <u>AH, HE'S IN GOOD SHAPE</u> >...< but we have to wait until the other cars finish (.) and I thought= (.) <u>WHAT ON EARTH IS HE TALKING ABOUT, ANYWAY?</u>

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Example 9

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: I got here Wednesday and things have just gone so well throughout the weekend. I have had incredible support from the fans. There are so many Brits out here which is great to see and the team did an exceptional job.	I: Ma Sono arrivato mercoledì e devo dire che ho avuto un supporto <u>INCREDIBILE</u> dai tifosi=c'erano anche molti inglesi qua in Canada e devo dire che la squadra (.) <u>VERAMENTE</u> ha fatto un lavoro (.) eccezionale (...).	I: I arrived on Wednesday and I must say that I have enjoyed <u>INCREDIBLE</u> support from the fans=there were a lot of British (fans) here in Canada (.) and I must say that the team (.) <u>REALLY</u> did a fantastic job (...)

Abu Dhabi 14/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

In all these excerpts there is excitement in the narration of the driver and the pace is extremely quick, despite the fact that the interpreter uses his voice to stress some focal elements. In 10, the expression: “in a bloody good position” is rendered in Italian with “in una bella posizione [in a really good position]” and “really good” is rendered by rising voice intonation and the emphasis is put on “really good position”. For spoken texts “intonation and stress not only link together spoken

surface texts, but also serve to qualify the linkage of concepts and relations” (Bühler 1989: 131).

Example 10

ST	TT	Gloss
IE: I was thinking why is this guy nervous, we must be in a bloody good position. Then crossing the line he came on the radio very silently.	I: >...< <u>MA PERCHÉ È COSI' NERVOSO?</u> (.) si vede che dovevo essere messo <u>IN UNA BELLA POSIZIONE</u> :: Poi (.) quando ho attraversato il traguardo alla radio è stato <u>MOLTO</u> silenzioso.	I: >...< <u>BUT WHY IS HE SO NERVOUS?</u> It means I must have been <u>IN A REALLY GOOD POSITION</u> :: then (.) when I crossed the line he went <u>VERY</u> silent on the radio.

Abu Dhabi 14/11/2010 – Press Conference 4

### 2.3 Discourse markers

Despite the extreme rapidity of the ST, the interpreter manages to produce a fluent output, thanks to the use of markers. Discourse markers are typical of spoken language (connectives, rhetorical phrases, fillers) and according to Riccardi (2005: 765) some of the subclasses are the following:

- markers of text segmentation/chunking (*so, in this respect*),
- markers stressing focal elements (*exactly, correct, that is, I mean*)
- markers signaling reformulations (*in other words*)
- markers for modulation operations (*to soften or strengthen the impact, maybe, sure, really*).

In the corpus, the interpreter constantly uses the pro-adverb “so/ I must say/ actually” with the intent to link to previous segments (cf. Straniero Sergio 2003: 153) and to segment the utterance. These markers do not appear only in final positions, but also act as “discourse lubricants”. In her work on pragmatic fluency, House (1996: 232) defines “discourse lubricants as elements of oral interaction, helping to cement segments of talk into a discourse” enhancing fluency, as is exemplified in the following excerpts:

Example 11

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: Enjoyed the grand prix to be honest. It was a good fight with Lewis.	I: <i>Quindi</i> (.) <i>devo dire</i> (.) <i>che ho veramente apprezzato il Gran Premio. Ho lottato con Lewis.</i>	I: <i>So</i> (.) <i>I must say</i> (.) <i>I really appreciated the Gran Prix (...)</i> <i>I battled with Lewis.</i>

Britain 11/07/2010 – Press Conference 4

Example 12

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE : [...] people don't really see how we are still having a bit of a fight even if it is against the pit board and just having a bit of a look how the gap is going to pan out.	I : [...] e non tutti riescono a vedere (.) quanto (.) in realtà (...) <i>diciamo</i> , si combatta (.) anche se lo si fa solo con i distacchi.	I: [...] Not everybody is able to see (.) how hard wet (.) actually (...) <i>let's say</i> (.) one fight (.) even if we do it only with gaps

Britain 11/07/2010 – Press Conference 4

Example 13

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE : [...] but it was enjoyable, particularly the first part of the grand prix. [...].	I : [...] ed è stata (.) <i>devo dire</i> (.) soprattutto la prima parte del GP (.) particolarmente piacevole [...].	I: : [...] it was (.) <i>I must say</i> (.) above all the first part of the GP (.) that was particularly pleasant [...]

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## 2.4 Markers of global coherence

Coherence can be signalled locally or globally. At the local level of coherence the items used indicate how two immediately adjacent utterances are related to one another; at the global level of coherence “utterances do not connect to an immediately adjacent utterance but refer back to something that was mentioned earlier in the conversation, or else project ahead to something that a speaker intends to mention in a subsequent stretch of discourse” (Lenk 1998: 29). These markers of global coherence (*anyway, actually, however, incidentally* and *still*) have a structuring function and they are mainly used in “longer stretches of discourse and they are functional with different topical actions like digressions (*anyway, however, still*), the introduction of a new topic (*incidentally, actually*) and turn maintenance (*what else*)” (*ibid.*: 29). According to Lenk (1998: 30) coherence is not a text-inherent property and the establishment of coherence is a dynamic and interactive process involving all participants in a conversation. The speaker – in our case the interpreter – has an influence on the hearer’s interpretation: “coherence is achieved through the hearer interpretation according to speaker-given guidelines, especially in cases where the connections between segments is not obvious” (*ibid.*: 30).

The following are examples of the use of *anyway* as a marker of global coherence.

Example 14

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: I had a very good start, so I think <i>we made good progress on that</i> .	I: sono <i>comunque</i> partito bene oggi e sicuramente da questo punto di vista sono migliorato (.) con le partenze.	I: <i>Anyway</i> I started well today and <i>from this standpoint</i> I definitely improved (.) with the starts.

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In 14, the interpreter is concluding a digression adding *anyway* which contributes to convey coherence to the text. Then he resumes by pointing to the previous topic (“I started well today”), stressing a focal point for the interaction. Finally, he concludes by adding “from this viewpoint I improved with the starts”. With this move the interpreter clarifies the SL speaker utterance, making reference to the context, to what really happened during the race, thanks to his extralinguistic knowledge.

Example 15

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: [...] I had a little mistake but I think it would have been very close.	I: [...] Ho fatto un pò un errore al pit stop (.) ma:: <i>comunque</i> >...< non penso che sia riuscito a superarlo.	I: I made a bit of a mistake at the pit stop (.) but :: <i>anyway</i> >...< I don't think I managed to overtake him.

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Lenk (1998) considers *anyway* as a compound adverb that expresses a resumptive summary relation, and it is also used as a continuative item. According to Lenk (1998), the most frequent use of *anyway* as marker of global coherence “indicates that a digression is being closed and that either the topic immediately prior to the digression or an earlier topic of the conversation is being resumed” (*ibid.* 1998: 60) as is shown in 15: *anyway* concludes the IE’s digression and points to the fact that he could not overtake. This holds true for almost all the turns concluded by the interpreter, where *anyway* comes after a digression and the interpreter supplies “additional background information” (*ibid.* 1998: 61) in order “to make the comprehension of the utterance clearer for the hearer” (*ibid.* 1998: 65).

Example 16

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: but the most important is that the car is quick, competitive all weekend.	I: ma la cosa più importante <i>comunque</i> è che la macchina è veloce, è stata veloce per tutto il weekend, competitiva.	I: but the most important thing <i>anyway</i> is that the car is quick, it has been quick all weekend, competitive.

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In 16, the use of *anyway* is a propositional use, as “indication of explanation” (Lenk 1998: 68). The interpreter closes the digression with *anyway* and adds a conclusive remark (“it has been quick all week end”) and then resumes the topic, using the

adjective “competitive” placed in final position, stressing what is most important for the speaker in this turn, i.e. the competitive quality of the car. This is a further confirmation of his active role in managing the speech flow and his attempt to convey coherence and smoothness to his delivery.

## 2.5 Contextualization cues

In agreement with Straniero Sergio (2001), we are assuming here that the television interpreter is very much involved in creating topic coherence, far more than would be ethically tolerated in other contexts. The following excerpt is a case in point:

Example 17

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: I am sure the team did everything for the right reasons. At the time we needed to try and jump Sebastian. I think it was unfortunate we came up behind a Renault.	I: <i>Sicuramente</i> il team ha fatto la scelta giusta a seconda delle circostanze. Io volevo cercare di superare Sebastian (.) purtroppo sono rientrato dietro una Renault (.) e <i>questo è andato sicuramente a suo vantaggio</i> .	I: <i>Certainly</i> the team made the right choice in these circumstances (.) I wanted to try to pass Sebastian (.) unfortunately I came up behind a Renault (.) <i>and this certainly worked to his advantage</i>

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In 17, the interpreter takes an active role in providing additional explanations: (“e questo è andato sicuramente a suo vantaggio [and this certainly worked to his advantage]”). The interpreter is giving clear guidelines to his hearers improving the comprehensibility of the segment.

Despite the extra fast pace of the IE the interpreter is adding items to the TT in order to make it clear and understandable. Another case of topic coherence is when the interpreter adds “contextualization cues” for the benefit of the hearers. In Gumperz’s notion (1982: 131) they are “any feature of linguistic form that contribute to the signaling of contextual presuppositions” and they refer to the information interactants need to send off in addition to what they want to convey as a message, in order to mark the boundaries of a message (Auer 1992).

Contextualization cues are [...] verbal and non-verbal metalinguistic signs that serve to retrieve the context-bound presuppositions in terms of which component messages are interpreted. A contextualization cue is one of a cluster of indexical signs, produced in the act of speaking that jointly index, that is invoke, a frame of interpretation for the linguistic content of the utterance (Gumperz 1996: 379) .

According to Auer (1992: 23) contextualization cues are “all the form-related means by which participants contextualize language”, and they possess “an inherent semantic potential” (Auer 1992: 32) in that they give directions in the inferential process. The use of contextualization cues is exemplified in the following excerpts:

Example 18

ST	TT	GLOSS
IE: there was a bit missing yesterday and probably that was what I was missing today.	I: <i>Abbiamo avuto un problema (.) un po' ieri per la pole e forse questo è quello che è mancato.</i>	I: <i>we had a problem (.) a bit yesterday for the pole and probably that was what was missing.</i>

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In 18, the driver maintains: “there was a bit missing”, but to those who did not follow the race, this might be an ambiguous utterance. The interpreter *marks the boundaries of the message* adding a clarification: “we had a problem [...] for the pole”, “steering the interpretation of what is going on” (Auer 1992: 29). Additional information about the context is provided, as demonstrated by Gumperz (1995: 120) who has proved that “lack of shared background knowledge leads to misunderstanding”. It is as if the interpreter assumed that “the hearer would not be able to understand the development of the topic without the additional information” (Lenk 1998: 68). In order to manipulate the text and reconstruct obscure segments, extra linguistic knowledge is required (Romeo 2001); there is no mention of the pole position in the ST, but the interpreter knows exactly what happened during the race, and despite time constraints he inserts a “contextually plausible rendition”, giving his audience directions in the inferential process (Auer 1992).

### 3. Concluding remarks

In this paper the active role and the communicative skills of a television interpreter were illustrated based on small data extracts. Starting from this empirical study some general considerations of the role of television interpreting can be outlined. In particular, it could be said that the interpreter takes an active role in managing the flow of information thus ensuring a cohesive and coherent text. Data show that the interpreter activates both *skill-based* and *knowledge-based strategies* (Riccardi 2005) in order to cope with time constraints and high information density. In our study we are assuming that the interpreter has a conscious and effective control over the interpreting process, dynamically negotiating the meaning of the text for the benefit of his audience (Pomerantz/Fehr in Straniero Sergio 2001: 221). We attempted to “spell out the logic of human actions” (Duranti 1997: 16) without ignoring the importance of the unknown, the unforeseeable, which tinges the various phases of an exchange with tension and uncertainty.

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