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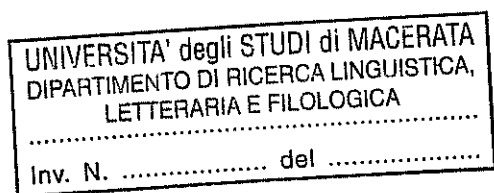
The Return to Ethics

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Look Who's Talking

The Ethics of Entertainment and Talkshow Interpreting

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Abstract. The role of interpreters working on Italian television is undergoing change. The traditional role, that of an invisible black box, is being challenged by what we define as an ethics of entertainment. The three principal factors affecting this ethics are professional performing capacity, 'the comfort factor', and the context of culture. A corpus of 200 hours of Italian talk show interpreting is drawn on to illustrate the tension between the traditional norms of fidelity or invisibility and the needs of TV emertainment (visible involvement and performance). In analyzing the successful interpreter's strategies and behaviour we suggest that a solution to this double bind lies in an expansion of the traditional role toward multivariate mediation encompassing varying perceptual positions and sensitivity to context.

We wish to investigate a new and still evolving ethics of interpreting in TV talkshows. Here we will argue that the traditional ethics regarding professionalism in interpreting is not so much being flouted or threatened as being given the opportunity to develop – at least in Italy, where the phenomenon is extremely visible due to the large number of foreign guests regularly invited on TV.

Italian television is an important employer of interpreters. Between 100 and 200 work days are offered each year, with only a tiny amount represented by simultaneous interpreting of news events. Talkshow interpreting accounts for 70-80% of the work, which can be delivered either consecutively or simultaneously. Most of our material contains examples of consecutive interpretation.

Traditionally, two ethical tenets have governed the interpreter's behaviour in face-to-face professional encounters, be it in courtroom or immigration work, medical consultations or business negotiations: unreserved loyalty to the source text and a clear-cut role definition. In this paper the claim will be

made that talkshow interpreting challenges both these tenets: the visibility of the interpreter is creating a new model of ethics, based on management or mediation between partners and the assumption of a multivariate role.

We begin by outlining the main features of talkshows in terms of institutional discourse, conversational genre, participants, topics and goals. We then discuss the ethics of entertainment and compare received opinion concerning professional norms with our corpus. This comprises 200 hours of actual interpreting taped over the last three years from a representative selection of the most popular talkshows on Italian TV (see Straniero Sergio 1999a).

1. Information versus entertainment

Interpreter-mediated institutional interactions are mostly 'elicitation procedures' (Circourel 1988) aimed at obtaining information, testing the knowledge or the skills of interviewees or constructing accusations. Adelswärd (1992:143) has called this type of conversational genre the 'evaluative interview':

This kind of interview has become an increasingly important tool for professionals in modern society. Therapists talk patients into self-diagnosis; social workers interview clients in order to place them in the proper category [...] clerks interview customers to find out if they are eligible for bank loans; policemen talk with suspects in order to find the truth – or at least in order to be able to write adequate reports [...] personnel officers interview applicants in order to find the right man for the job, etc.

This kind of institutional evaluation is quite alien to the talkshow, since the primary recipients of the opinions expressed on television are not the on-screen (physically present) participants but the overhearing audience or mass viewers. Unlike, for example, the jurors at a trial, TV viewers are not required to issue a verdict but simply to enjoy themselves. Thus, the entertainment function prevails over the information function. Likewise, the phatic, that is, the use of language to establish atmosphere and maintain social contact (Malinowski 1923), prevails over the referential. This requires a reassessment of existing theories of cooperation, relevance and politeness, as well as a redefinition of the roles of interpreters and, more specifically, their visibility.

1.1 The talkshow: a hybrid genre

The talkshow is characterized by an increasing contamination of different codes, languages and styles, as is demonstrated by the spread of hybrid forms that designate numerous types of programmes: 'docu-drama', 'docu-fiction',

'faction' (fact+fiction), 'infotainment', 'confrotainment', 'emotainment' and the like.

Many talkshows are a mixture of genres imported from other fields such as the interview, discussion/debate, romance, testimony, confession, drama and story-telling. Television recontextualizes and transforms these genres through a process that Fairclough (1992) has called 'interdiscursivity', the construction of a text from different discourses and genres. For example, the various programmes falling under the heading of 'debate' share the feature of 'public access genres', through which "the mass media offer an informal, unofficial, but nonetheless large-scale, institutionally managed forum for public debate" (Livingstone & Lunt 1994:36).

The purpose of a talkshow, though, is not to reach a conclusion or an agreement on the topic under discussion. On the contrary, it is a communicative situation in which people who do not know each other are asked to chat for entertainment purposes. From this standpoint, talkshow chat, albeit institutionalized and simulated, resembles ordinary conversation, the nature of which is essentially 'non task-related' (Goffman 1981; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1990; Linell 1998). The conversation is not even intended to discuss a specific topic. What counts is not the truth (or credibility) of what is being said but the *mise en scène* of its discussion. In fact, conflict, disagreement or controversy are nothing but expedients to attract the audience. As Richardson and Meinhof maintain, "the spectacle in talkshows resides in the emphasis upon display, shock and confrontation" (1999:131-32).

In the talkshow context, traditional discourse genres go by the board, since the primacy of the private over the public has delegitimized the expert. As Carpignano *et al.* have noted, "in debate the authority of the expert is replaced by the authority of a narrative informed by lived experience" (1990:53). Personalities, from actors to showgirls, are invited to speak alongside scientists, sociologists, politicians and ordinary people. Within the same talkshow there can be different contexts of representation, from 'social issues in personal perspective' to 'trash talkshows' (Haarman 1999:203-225). The formula of many talkshows consists of a continuous mix and turnover of guests and topics.

It is thus difficult – at least as far as Italian television is concerned – to distinguish between 'monothematic' and 'polythematic' talkshows (Charaudeau & Ghiglione 1997:135), 'personality-type talkshows' and 'issue-type talkshows' (Carbough 1988), 'elite talkshows' and 'vox pop talkshows' (Dahlgren 1995:62), 'evening celebrity talkshows' and 'daytime talkshows' (Haarman 1999:200), or even between 'audience discussion programmes' and 'current affairs or consumer affairs' (Livingstone & Lunt 1994:38). Talkshow elements are also to be found in the evening news, in which the newscaster interacts with a celebrity, as is shown by the interviews with Demi

Moore, Meryl Streep, Harrison Ford, Woody Allen and Richard Gere that are in our corpus. Many talkshows are not labelled as such. In fact, most 'serious' programmes that popularize medicine, science and technology on Italian television employ talkshow-style communicative strategies and interactional styles, covering the same topics and, more often than not, using the same guests.

A distinctive trait of talkshows, which interpreters are becoming more involved in, is the production of personal stories in public. These stories may already be in the news, and will include, above all, crime, sex, drama and passion. In this mixture of testimony, therapy and confession, frequently interspersed with songs, quizzes and games, television storytelling seems to provide the viewer with an escape valve and an occasion for re-evaluating one's private life. According to Livingstone & Lunt (1994:67),

[...] the visibility accorded to people's problems could itself be therapeutic, encouraging people to recognize their problems and to desire a solution: certain experiences are recognized, legitimated and shared, the expression of emotions may be cathartic, and ordinary people can prove to themselves and to the public, "this happened to me and I survived".

Similarly, Carpignano *et al.* (1990:51) maintain that "the purpose of the talkshow is not cognitive but therapeutic [...], not a balance of viewpoints but a serial association of testimonials [...], not an argumentative line [but] the aura of a ritual". This stands in sharp contrast to what happens in welfare-services interviews, where "a client's account of troubles [is] transformed into a professional problem definition" (Ravotas & Berkenkotter 1998:217), and the information the client supplies is recoded into "abstract categories that facilitate and depict efficient problem-solving" (Circourel 1982:73; see also Agar 1985).

Television storytelling is thus the transformation of a therapeutic discourse into public discourse. One of the functions of what Mehl (1996) has defined "la télévision de l'intimité" is simply the use of television to turn a private discourse into a collective message of general interest. Such a communicative situation can be defined with the oxymoron 'public intimacy' (Caprettini 1995), 'intimacy at a distance' (Moore 1997), or 'confiding out-loud' (Gasparini *et al.* 1998).

Access to television, i.e. the right to speak, is being granted to ordinary people solely on the basis of their life experiences. The testimony expected from these people is related to their roles as beneficiary, accuser, victim, hero, etc. Their stories of disease, suffering or simply the level of strangeness involved legitimize these ordinary people, making them the protagonists of the show. As Dalhgren puts it (1995:62), "the more appalling the more

appealing". The private life of famous people is also an important source around which most talkshows are built, and news about these people tends to take precedence over news about politicians and scientists.

Over the past few years talkshow interpreters have found themselves increasingly involved in this 'trash TV', where the theme is "the spectacular and carnivalesque display of personal problems" (Haarman 1999:200). Here the interpreter is involved with the weird and the wonderful, from foreign mediums to trans-sexuals, from sect gurus to a man with eight personalities, and from a Downs syndrome child to a child prodigy.

2. Relevance, ethics and context

Following Sperber and Wilson (1986), we are presuming here that the very act of ostensive communication carries with it an assumption of optimum relevance, which is true across genres and cultures. We also argue that the way relevance is communicated is not universal. We will suggest that what is considered 'good' or 'appropriate' interpreting is, to a certain extent, culture-bound (cf. Katan 1999a).

To make sense of our research, therefore, we should analyze the interpreter's behaviour in accordance with three interlocking aspects of ethics: comfort, professional performing capacity and culture. First, within the immediate context of situation, the TV talkshow, there is an ethics of entertainment, which is based on what we have elsewhere called 'the comfort factor' (see Katan and Straniero-Sergio forthcoming). This factor relates not only to the degree to which the TV viewing audience is entertained, but also to the degree to which the producers and those on-stage – including the interpreter – feel comfortable with what they are doing.

Second, there is the question of professional performing capacity, and respect for that capacity. Clearly, interpreters have a professional identity, which needs to be respected, and their own professional ethics. However, rather than being implicit to the act of translating or interpreting, as is the case of the conference interpreter, the professionalism here is literally in the spotlight. At times, the interpreter is also a full-fledged primary participant – whether they like it or not. For example, on the extremely popular late-night *Maurizio Costanzo Show* all the guests were asked to talk about the most unusual place in which they had had sex. The interpreter duly translated the question for the foreign guest, then found herself the centre of attention and was asked the same question. An interpreter, according to an ethics of entertainment, must feel comfortable with this form of spotlighting and must have the capacity to respond with professional aplomb. This aspect of the interpreter's emerging visibility represents a major challenge (or threat) for the conference interpreter.

In fact, as a primary participant, the talkshow interpreter is often the object of explicit scrutiny and teasing (see Straniero-Sergio 1999a). It may well be, for example, that the host and guests intervene with their own alternative translations. Off-stage, the interpreter is evaluated by the mass viewing public. These include not only the (literally) millions of accredited armchair viewers, but also a small number of unaccredited eavesdroppers, colleagues and other professional interpreters who assess the quality of the interpreted turns. Indeed, a TV interpreter's professionalism may well also be judged in the national press the next day. Beniamino Placido, for example, one of Italy's leading TV critics, reproached an interpreter for having translated George Bush's: "I am a liberal" into the literal "sono un liberale", rather than "sono un liberal". The point here is not whether the interpreter was right or not, but that his performance, like many others', was open game for a journalist's shots. Capacity, then, refers both to the traditional capacity to interpret and also to the capacity to be a primary participant. It should be understood that interpreters, like all professionals, are to be respected for their capacity, and for their limits.

Thirdly, the larger context of culture would suggest that the TV audience expect to maintain their habitus (Bourdieu 1990) or environmental bubble (Cohen 1972), and hence will expect an ethics based on their culture's own value orientations (Kluckholm & Strodtbeck 1961). On this level, the talkshow interpreter is evaluated according to the canons of entertainment following an ethics of norms and of service negotiated not only between the viewers, who hold the power of the remote control, but also by the programme directors, who, in turn, attempt to predict audience reaction. As we shall see, the Italian context of culture provides a fertile habitus for this shift in evaluating interpreters.

3. The partner

Speakers automatically adapt both their style and their verbalized content to their interlocutor (see Bell 1984; Hall 1976, 1983). This, following Hall, may be called 'external contexting', the modification of language (and other behaviour) to trigger the desired response in the partner.

Hatim and Mason (1997:84), talking about film translation, suggest that "typically, subtitlers make it their overriding priority to establish coherence for their receivers, i.e. the mass auditors". This would also seem to be the case in talkshow interpreting, as in the example below. What is particularly interesting is the way this priority can logically result in a loss of interpreter attention to inter-personal (on-stage) pragmatics and loss of accommodation to the guest's face wants.

Our example is from an interview with a Russian prostitute who is being asked to recount a case of rape that she witnessed. She has no wish nor need

to repeat the word 'rape' as it is not only implicit in the context, but has also been explicitly introduced by the TV host:

G = guest; H= host; I = interpreter

: = elongation of sound

(.) = pause less than 3 seconds

Original script	Gloss
H: qui- quindi quindi lei si è salvata dalla violenza (.) sessuale solo perchè era incinta?	H: s- so you were saved from being raped simply because you were pregnant?
G: другие девчонки там были еще две комнаты	G: The other girls there were another two rooms in the flat
I: le altre ragazze c'erano altre due stanze nell'appartamento	I: The other girls there were another two rooms in the flat
G: и были:: (.) ну и делали им	G: and they (.) they were
I: e sono state:: (.) violentate	I: and they were:: (.) raped
H: lei lei ha assisti- ha assistito alla violenza?	H: did did you s- see the rape?
G: да	G: yes

(I fatti vostri, Rai Due, 28.10.1999)

For the Russian guest, explication, we argue, would have been a face threatening act, while for the audience, eager for titillation and instant gratification, explication was optimally relevant within this particular talkshow frame. The fact that the interpreter made the extra cognitive effort for the eavesdropping audience might also suggest an 'asymmetric encounter' and that "adherence to the maxims [of cooperation] is determined by the party in power" (Blum-Kulka 1997:41). However, as we mention elsewhere (Katan and Sergio-Straniero forthcoming), the power does not, in fact, reside with the interpreter but with the ideology of popular culture. Also, clearly, the interpreter cannot be comfortable maintaining her taken-for-granted invisibility (Straniero-Sergio 1998) when emotainment is the prevailing function.

4. The interpreter

It is clear from our corpus that the talkshow interpreter is much more involved in creating topic coherence than would be expected or tolerated in other interpreting situations. The following two extracts illustrate the extent to which a talkshow interpreter has left the traditional habitus to take up a more active role in projecting meaning:

Original script	Gloss
G: this goes beyond just learning (.) curricula facts	
I: e questo va molto oltre voi lo capite il semplice fattore di avere ehm un contenuto cioè il piano di studi le materie eccetera	I: And this goes much beyond, you understand [plural] , the simple fact of having ehm content, I mean a curricula, subjects etc.

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 2.6.2000)

G: that is- that is gonna be an important part of your lives	
I: e questa guardate sarà una parte importante e molto grossa della vostra vita	I: And this, you see [plural] , will be an important and extremely large part of your life.

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 2.6.2000)

In both these examples the interpreter has added extra words ('you understand'/'you see'), which should not be confused with mere 'fillers' used in order to gain processing time. Firstly, this is a consecutive rather than a simultaneous interpretation. Secondly, and most importantly, the non-default plural forms signal that this is meta-communication. In fact, the interpreter has added 'contextualization cues' (Gumperz 1982) specifically for the benefit of 'his' or 'her' viewers. This strongly suggests that he or she is managing rather than translating meaning – and is acutely aware of the audience's likely perception.

4.1 Perceptual positions

This active participation can be usefully discussed in terms of perceptual positions, a concept taken from Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) (cf. O'Connor & Seymour 1990:87-88). There are three positions, and the form of awareness illustrated above is an example of 'the third position' (Katan

1999b:419-420).

The first position would be that of the 'black-box' interpreter or 'animator' (in Goffman's sense): attention is paid exclusively to the words and idealized meaning. In the second position the interpreter is translating for the guest, and is aware of the pragmatic effect of each translated turn. In the third perceptual position, the interpreter can disassociate from the interactants on stage and gauge the effect of the dynamic negotiation of meaning, or 'the packaging of actions' (Pomerantz & Fehr 1997:72), on the audience off-stage. The interpreter is at once translator, interpreter and mediator.

This mediator role means not only attending to the immediate actions and turns but also taking the TV talkshow frame very much into account. This is often imposed during rehearsals by the programme directors who want a certain 'spin' to be placed on the human-interest stories. We have numerous examples in the corpus where the interpreter adds coherence to the guest's words, making more explicit links with the talkshow topic.

Below, for example, is a case of a young inarticulate (African) guest who is recounting how he fell in love with an Italian girl. The interpreter changed his ambiguous idiomatic 'piece of cake' into an extremely happy fairy-tale end, a readily digestible conclusion, strengthening topic coherence and fitting readily into the audience's habitus, in line with the ethics of entertainment:

H: stasera che fai Billy?	H: what are you doing tonight Billy?
I: what are you gonna do this evening?	
G: what am I gonna do this evening?	
I: che faccio stasera?	I: what am I doing tonight?
G: I think that's it's it's it's it's my piece of cake	
I: bè diciamo che stasera:: sarà una gran serata (.) non vedo l'ora	I: well (.) let's say that tonight:: is going to be a great night (.) I can't wait

(Coppie, Canale 5, 19.4.1999)

Similarly, the interpreter's awareness of the host's optimal relevance needs would also suggest that if the guest were not cooperating fully in providing novelty or selecting actions that could act as a cue for the host to respond to or close the topic – a key element in entertainment – then the interpreter may

provide the necessary features. Below is a clear case of an interpreter who is managing (rather than translating) the discourse dynamics:

H: (...) lei ha mai dato (.) uno schiaffo a un uomo?	H: (...) did you ever (.) slap a man?
G: (nods)	
H: (...) quando?	H: (...) when?
G: a while ago	
I: un po' di tempo fa	I: a while ago
H: ma per gelosia?	H: because you were jealous?
G: whe- (.) n::o (.) just a bad language (.) bad language	
I: no (.) per:: aver usato un linguaggio (.) diciamo: poco carino	I: no (.) for:: having used (.) let's say not very nice language
H: e che gli - chi era? che ha detto? lo ripeta (.) e lo dica (.) che gli ha detto? (...)	H: and who - who was it? who said that? could you repeat it (.) and could you say it (.) what did he say to you? (...)
G: it was just not a nice word actually	
I: ha usato una parola diciamo (.) sgradevole (.) insomma (.) mi ha insultata	I: he used a word let's say (.) unpleasant (.) basically (.) he insulted me
H: e lei (.) BRI::M=	H: and you (.) WALL::OP= [phonetic transcription of the host's imitation of the sound of a slap or "wallop"]
G: using rude language foul language	[interpreter did not translate]
H: [mimando il gesto di dare uno schiaffo] = gli ha dato un pizzone (.) BRAVA (.) BRAVA (.)	H: [miming a slap] = you gave him a good whack (.) WELL DONE (.) WELL DONE (.)

(Beato tra le donne, Canale 5, 25.6.1999)

The guest moves from "just a bad language (.) bad language" to an almost apologetic "it was just not a nice word actually". This is not the right tone for the host who, having set up the 'slapping' topic, needs to end with the final climactic move. The interpreter appears to have stepped in, having contexted a variety of needs: audience threshold of boredom, programme coherence,

and host interaction options. Through the selection of 'insulted me' she allows the host to close the sequence once again, with a clear conclusion – this time highly visual and climactic. In the same vein, the interpreter deletes the guest's final turn.

The talkshow interpreter clearly enjoys a flexibility that is almost inconceivable (and ethically unacceptable) for other dialogue interpreters. For the latter, any addition, deletion or even minor modification of the original propositional content and/or style is assumed to generate loss of information likely to have serious pragmatic consequences (see O'Barr 1982; Berk-Seligson 1990; Gonz  les *et al.* 1991; Linell *et al.* 1992; Hale 1997; Miguelez 1998; Cambridge 1999; Krouglov 1999 *inter alia*). Conversely, talkshow interpreters are well aware that their expanded ('unfaithful') renditions may be applause-relevant. At times the interpreter may give the host the opportunity to make comments and jokes. This can be seen in the following transcript, where a German neo-Nazi skinhead talks about his terrorist past and his involvement in a bomb attack:

H.: [...] ha ricevuto una bomba...una lettera-carta...una lettera-bomba, come si pu� dire, eh?	H: [...] she received a bomb ... a letter-card ... a letter bomb, what can we call it, eh?
G: Ja es war eine Buchbombe mit 1 kg Sprengstoff	G: Yes it was a parcel-bomb with 1kg of explosives
H.: ah e si � salvata non � successo niente � stato sventato prima ... cos'� successo?	H: Ah and she was saved nothing happened and it failed beforehand ... what happened?
G: Ne, die Bombe ist Gott sei Dank nicht explodiert weil sie genau ein Tag zu lang unterwegs war und die Batterie sich entladen hatte	G: No, the bomb thank God didn't explode because it took exactly one day longer to arrive and the battery went flat
I: No, la bomba grazie al cielo non � scoppiata perch� si � scaricata la batteria, in quanto il pacco � stato ritardato di 24 ore per motivi postali	I: No, the bomb didn't explode thank heaven because the battery went flat as the parcel was delayed by 24 hours because of the post
H.: Ecco, vedi che alle volte, quando le poste ... quando le poste tardano!	H: There we are, you see sometimes, when the post ... when the post gets delayed (laughter, applause)

(*Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 12.4.1995*)

As we can see, the interpreter's redistribution of the guest's narration from chronological to end focus and addition ("because of the post") allows the host to gain a further round of laughs and applause.

This third-position perception clearly includes an awareness of how the self is projected, very similar to 'the second track' described by British actor David Burke (Fraysn and Burke 2000:21):

Acting is mostly a twin-track mental activity. In one track runs the role, demanding thoughts ranging from, say, gentle amusement to towering rage. Then there is the second track that is monitoring the performance: executing the right moves, body language and voice level; taking note of audience reaction and keeping an eye on fellow actors; coping with emergencies such as a missing prop or faulty lighting cue.

All interpreters, whether in the booth, in the community or on stage, use the third position to monitor their performance. Moreover, whatever the setting, interpreters are judged first and foremost on the quality of the language they choose to utter. Hence, in practice, all interpreters are likely to embellish, enrich and generally raise the tone to project a positive image, which will also increase the possibility of more work. This tendency is brought to the fore in the setting of TV talkshows. Interpreters on stage in front of a studio audience and television cameras will be even more careful about making the right moves, not to mention dressing and looking the part. The importance of the interpreter's personal and public 'face' at this point becomes visible to all concerned.

Though there is no equivalent corpus material from other countries, we follow Hatim & Mason (1997:81) in suggesting that socio-cultural settings will also play an important role in the interpreter's "negotiated public image" (Scollon & Scollon 2001:23). It would, in fact, be useful to investigate the socio-cultural factors in other countries and also the (ideological) reasons why talkshow interpreting is apparently not such a phenomenon outside Italy. However, we will confine ourselves here to the Italian setting.

5. Context of culture

5.1 Text-context orientation

We have already mentioned 'external contexting' as the system adopted to maintain optimum relevance in communication. There is a further form of contexting, which relates to an individual's (and culture's) preferred channel of communication.

Many Anglo-American writers believe that good style is measured in terms of clarity, brevity and simplicity, often known by its acronym KISS, keep it short and simple. However, many scholars (Blum-Kulka 1997:41; Ochs 1976; Wierzbicka 1991:69; Vincent-Marelli 1997:99; Katan 1999a; Scollon & Scollon 2001:111-116) maintain that what is considered 'good' communica-

tion style actually depends on the culture. Scollon & Scollon (2001:106), for example, suggest that the Anglo-American values are embedded in what they call 'the Utilitarian discourse system', where "information should be conveyed as clearly, briefly, directly, and sincerely as possible". On the other hand, Romance-language countries like Italy tend toward an indirect and implicit communication style in professional talk (see Victor 1992:143; Katan 1999a:181-83). This tendency is, we suggest, realized in Italian through a preference for a KILC communication style: Keep it Long and Complete (Katan 2000), with the result that professional talk in Italy is measured, in part, by length.

This aspect coincides with Lepschy & Lepschy's analysis of Italian (quoted in Wierzbicka 1991:265). They argue that 'intensification', or overstatement, has the function of "the identification of an authentic quality". Without the extra length, there is less authenticity or authority. This intensification can be seen in the rendering of a simple 'yes' in English translated in our talkshow corpus as 'verissimo' ('really true') or 'lei ha perfettamente ragione' ('you are absolutely correct'); or again, a 'yes, yes' has been turned into a longer 'eh sì, è vero, ha ragione' ('oh yes, it is true, you are right').

The following 'really idiotic question', truly worthy of trash TV, is interesting for the way the interpreter is able to give a certain KILC gravitas to the otherwise non-authentic KISS reply – without actually adding any further information or cue for a new turn:

H: lei ha mai- una domandina proprio scema scema (.) lei ha mai portato la cintura di castità? Ma così una domandina proprio::	H: have you ever - a really idiotic question (.) you have never worn a chastity belt? I just wondered the question's really::
G: no I haven't (.) I don't think so	
I: no (.) veramente no (.) non mi sembra di ricordare di avere avuto questa esperienza	I: no (.) actually no (.) I don't seem to remember having had this experience

(Beato tra le donne, Canale 5, 25.6.1999)

The following two extracts illustrate the same strategy:

G: when I'm in Italy I always eat pasta and (.) pasta and caprese	
I: in Italia non mi faccio mai mancare un piatto di pasta l'insalata caprese insomma:	I: in Italy I never do without a plate of pasta a caprese salad basically...
H: queste cose qua	H: these sorts of things

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 9.3.1995)

G: it was a bitter sweet experience	
I: è stata un'esperienza dolce amara se vogliamo allo stesso tempo	It was a bitter-sweet experience if you will at the same time

(In famiglia, Rai Due, 2.11.1996)

5.2. Distance

Hofstede (1991) and Trompenhaars & Hampden-Turner (1997:110-111) undertook some interesting statistical research across cultures. They report that Italy, along with other Mediterranean countries, is particularly strong in what Hofstede (1991) terms a 'High Power Distance' orientation in comparison with Anglo and North European countries. The greater the power distance, the more individuals prefer to make (and are expected to make) their professional position explicit through the use of more formal language and titles (cf. Katan 1996:9-10).

It would thus seem logical that viewers will expect to hear the interpreter speak with an educated and professional register regardless of the language style of the guest – except when interpreting for children. The following extract is a case in point:

G: (laughs) I've been adopted by Sioux	
I: sono stata adottata dai Sioux	I: I've been adopted by Sioux
G: and I danced the sun dance	
I: e ho anche ballato la danza del sole con loro	I: and I also danced the sun dance with them
G: and they pierced me on the back	
I: e han- ehm hanno anche ehm praticato delle delle dei segni rituali sulla schiena (.) dei fori	I: And they ehm they also ehm practiced some some ritual signs on the back (.) some perforations

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 17.11.1998)

Though the interpreter could have translated 'pierced' literally, she not only nominalized the construction but she also chose to add information unavailable from the text itself, using a more complex lexis: '*praticare*'/'practise (the art)' instead of '*fare*'/'make' and '*fori*'/'perforations' instead of '*buchi*'/'holes'. Much simpler, and more colloquial, would have been *il piercing*, which has fully entered Italian popular culture.

This orientation is even more marked when the guest is talking as an expert rather than as a storyteller. The interpreter below has not only 'improved' on the Maori guest's monosyllabic and almost pidgin English, but she has also added the Italian discourse conventions of an expert. This is because, we suggest, the guest was presented as 'an expert' rather than as a member of the public. The TV interpreter felt the need to preserve the expert's face by adopting the discourse strategy of a domesticated expert, allowing the audience to respect the Maori from within the comfort of their own environmental bubble. In so doing, the interpreter became the expert:

G: the most of medicine is derived from plants	
I: ma dobbiamo ricordare che tutta la medicina deriva dalle piante	I: but we should remember that all the medicine derives from plants
G: so I feel ehm we also have natural medicines	
I: anche noi naturalmente pratichiamo la medicina naturale cosiddetta	I: We too naturally practice what is called natural medicine
G: and medicine is an example (.) plant medicine (.) this is (.) plants that what gives us the air we breathe	
I: non dimentichiamoci che si tratta proprio di ehm della medicina officinale cioè sono le piante che ci permettono anche di respirare proprio ci danno la nostra aria	I: don't forget that we are talking about pharmaceutical medicine that is the plants that allow us to breathe really they give us our air

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 17.11.1998)

And again, a few minutes later:

G: e- every human being has twin connections	
I però non dobbiamo dimenticare che ogni essere umano ha un gemello	I: but we must not forget that every human being has a twin
G: every egg (.) has a twin fertilization	
I: e anche nel caso di ogni ehm (.) ovu- uo- uovo femminile c'è una specie di fecondazione gemella	I: and in the case of every ehm (.) fe- female egg there is a form of twin fertilization
G: it's what you eat	
I: conta anche molto quello che mangi	I: It is also very important what you eat

G: a woman can create the possibility	
I: e una donna può in effetti con ciò creare una possibilità	I: a woman can in fact through this create a possibility
G: and the sex of the twins	
I: è anche possibile stabilire a seconda del tipo di alimentazione ehm una maggiore probabilità di avere un maschio piuttosto che una femmina	I: it is also possible to establish ehm a greater probability of having a male rather than a female

(*Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 17.11.1998*)

5.3 Diffuse and specific

There are also intricate face needs that would make it difficult for the interpreter, in particular an Italian interpreter, to use non-professional language. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner study an example of an Italian, American and Dutch meeting to highlight differences in cultural perception of face in professional settings. At one point the authors find that "the Italian reaction is of course quite understandable [...]. To call 'the idea' crazy is to call *them* crazy" (1997:86, emphasis in original). The authors explain this in terms of an orientation to 'one diffuse whole' where 'what you say and do' is equivalent to 'who or what you are'. The alternative (Anglo) orientation is toward 'specificity', where the speaker tends to compartmentalize words and behaviour, and also separates them from identity.

The interpreted sequence below is a good example of a sensitive Anglo-Italian cultural mediation of face, which also takes account of the interpreter's own face needs. Christian Barnard, the world expert on heart surgery, made the following off-the-cuff remark during an interview:

G: I'm only a stupid surgeon

There is no doubt that his statement was meant to raise a smile, thanks to the paradoxical compartmentalization of 'what I say' and 'what I am'. For an Italian audience, however, this expression simply does not fit in a competent surgeon's habitus: 'you are what you say'. The interpreter is left with an ethical dilemma. If she translates literally she would create a 'brutta figura'/'bad impression' both for herself (as a professional mouthpiece) and for the doctor. Instead, she was disloyal to the text and added her own extra words as if they were his meta-comment. In this way she not only cushioned the bald statement but also more explicitly stated that the utterance was not to be taken seriously. Notice also that she down-toned the extremely face-threatening 'stupid' ('stupido') to 'silly' ('sciocco'):

I: ma io sono soltanto uno sciocco chirurgo cosa ci volete fare	but I'm only a silly surgeon what can you do
--	--

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 6.11.2000)

Such a shift to indirectness involves a higher expenditure of effort in processing. This expenditure, as Aston (1988) and Vincent-Mirelli (1997:98) point out, "carries a premium of affect" and "a convergence of rapport", which we suggest is a major factor in the emerging role of the Italian TV talkshow interpreter.

5.4 Ascription/achievement

We have seen that maintaining a positive public image is extremely important when assigning status within a culture based on 'diffuse' rather than 'specific' principles. A related orientation may account for the following reformulation of Catherine Buck's status:

G: and Catherine Buck has two daughters (.) her husband owns Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles so she doesn't do anything	
I: e:: il- il marito di Catherine ha:: ha addirittura possiede i Fleetwood Mac e gli Eagles quindi: diciamo che è a posto	I: and:: the- the husband of Catherine even has the Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles so we could say she's in place/set up/made it.

(Meteore, Italia 1, 21.10.1999)

The guest speaker, an American, is talking in terms of what Catherine does: "She doesn't do anything". Though this is a slightly pejorative statement it does not 'ascribe' any particular status or identity: it is a comment specific to what she does. In Italian 'non fa niente'/'doesn't do anything', on the other hand, carries a decidedly more negative connotation, conveying the meaning 'good for nothing'. This could be explained in terms of the 'ascription/achievement' orientation (Trompenhaars & Hampden-Turner 1997:105-106).

A diffuse-oriented audience will tend to generalize a person who 'does nothing' into an 'ascriptive' or identifying trait which stereotypes their social status. The interpreter's reformulation, however unconscious, was to ascribe the wife a positive status: literally 'she is in place'. In English there is no ascriptive, nominalized ('being') equivalent. Instead, the closest translation would be through a 'doing', verbal, orientation: 'she's set-up'/'she's made it'.

5.5 Involvement and emotion

Another dimension on which Italy scores highly, again in comparison with Northern European and the Anglo countries, is uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1991:125). Cultures with a high score (apart from Japan) tend to show more 'positive face' and verbalize their involvement (Wierzbicka 1991:279; Levine & Adelman 1993:66). Wierzbicka (1991:280), quoting Barzini for "specifically Italian cultural features", cites the "theatrical quality", "the importance of spectacle", and their "extraordinary animation". Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997:72) point out that the appropriateness and "the amount of visible 'emoting'" is a major cultural variable, and also that two-thirds of the professional Italians interviewed considered it appropriate to show emotions openly in a professional situation (cf. Hofstede 1991:115).

High involvement, along with sentence complexity, non-repetition and the use of a high or technical register, is a visible sign (for high power distance cultures) of competence and expertise. Those who speak otherwise, such as children, tend to be regarded as such: 'you are what you speak'. It is hardly surprising then if, in our corpus, a healthy number of interpreters' additions are in fact 'involved' metalinguistic assertions, such as 'let's say', 'you know', 'look' or 'if you will'. In such expressions the interpreters adopt a positive politeness strategy and thus intensify their relationship with the host and the audience at home.

In the examples below, the interpreter literally takes the guest's position. She is momentarily no longer the interpreter but, apparently, a primary participant:

G: it's wonderful	
I: sì sì le assicuro guardi (.) meraviglioso	I: yes yes I assure you you see (.) wonderful

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 17.11.1998)

G: I'm thrilled to be here	
I: sono veramente felicissimo di essere qui con voi grazie	I: I'm really very happy to be here with you thank you

(L'ultimo valzer, Rai Due, 17.12.1999)

In the following example, the interpreter empathizes with Monica Lewinski, and adds a rebuttal totally absent on the original:

G: the sexual component of the relationship was only one part of our relationship and it was (.) and that component was both ways	
I: mentre il sesso ha rappresentato soltanto:: uno degli elementi del nostro rapporto e poi c'è anche da aggiungere che non è (.) non è vero che era soltanto (.) da una parte (.) era quindi vero per entrambi bidirezionale per così dire	I: while the sex represented only :: one of the elements of our relationship and it should also be added that it isn't (.) it isn't true that it was only (.) one sided (.) so it was true for both bidirectional so to speak.

(Speciale Coppie, Canale 5, 14.4.1999)

We have already mentioned the role of newspaper articles in evaluating talkshow interpreters. The criterion often used for praise by the leading TV critics is, interestingly, openness to the expression of emotion. Thus the interpreter Olga Fernando is praised for her level of involvement, as shown in the following translated extracts from the TV critic Luigina Grasso (*La Sicilia* 30/10/92): "...Olga Fernando who translates what our foreign guests say, without whom, not only their words but also the shades of emotion would remain incomprehensible", and further on, "Yet, without that added profound sensitivity and highly-tuned perception [Olga's performance] would only be a cold translation".

In another article, the well-known critic Aldo Grassi (*Il Corriere della Sera* 17/11/95), referring to one of the guests who was talking nostalgically, notes, "At a certain point, he began to cry, [...] Olga translated and consoled, and without doubt with words that touched a chord and reached an all too hidden depth of understanding". The article also mentions how she "takes note of everything she hears", and translates "murmuring with delicacy".

6. Comfort

The orientation toward involvement and the verbalization of emotion certainly go a long way towards explaining why the interpreter's role on Italian talkshows has been developing toward that of a multivariate mediator.

Unsuccessful talkshow interpreters demonstrate how challenging (or threatening) this can be, particularly for those imbued with the norms of prescriptive interpreting ethics. One particular interpreter, for example, was asked to interpret 'The Incredible Hulk'. During the show he was instructed to respond with the same gestures and voice as The Hulk. The interpreter gamely did as he was instructed, but was clearly gauche in his performance. The host immediately began to chide him, saying: "Sì, ma lei lo deve fare come lui, se no che traduzione è?" / "Okay, but you've got to do it like him, otherwise what sort of translation is it?" The host then made fun of The Hulk, which the

interpreter conveyed, only to be told: "Ma non traducca tutto!"/"But don't translate everything!" Finally, as the interpreter managed to make his voice gruff and swing his arms Hulk-style, he was told "Ma che cosa fa?"/"But what are you doing?", which further compounded the interpreter's unease. This is an example of the (invisible) mark between what is ethical and non-ethical in entertainment.

The ethics of entertainment, as we have said, is determined by comfort, respect for capacity and culture. In this particular context of culture, the interpreter was clearly uncomfortable, did not have the capacity to be a primary participant – and was not respected as a professional interpreter.

7. The multivariate mediator

The dilemma for the interpreter is how to deal with the double bind of keeping a professional distance from the 'emo' or trash element of the talkshow while at the same time being personally involved as a professionally competent primary participant.

As a primary participant, a talkshow interpreter must display a certain acting ability to 'get into the part' played by the guest or, at least, to manage the situation. Olga Fernando provided an excellent example of management when interpreting the comedian Jerry Lewis. He had made a joke about the prize he had received, which was adequately translated by Fernando. Lewis, realizing the timid audience reaction, turned to Fernando, and said: "You are not too funny". Her reply (in English only) was "I am not Jerry Lewis", at which point the audience laughed.

The interpreter's role thus requires a profound sense of limits, an ability to oscillate between distance and involvement by adopting a third perceptual position in order to co-manage the talk event and packaging of actions. However, in shifting all these perceptual positions, there is also the risk of a confusion of identity. We, both as analysts and viewers, may wonder who is really talking: the interpreter, the mediator or the guest, or as in the example below, all three. Again, it is Olga Fernando. This time she is translating for an American medium:

G: I must say one thing	
I: posso dire una cosa?	I: may I say something?
G: She is very shaken [pointing to Olga Fernando]	
I: io s-...sta dicendo che (.) l'interprete (.) io è un po' sconvolta adesso spiegherà perché	I: I sh-...she's saying that (.) the interpreter (.) me is a little shaken she'll explain why now

G: Before the show we were sitting here and I said to (.) Olga "who is that lady there?"	
I: prima dell'inizio dello spettacolo eravamo seduti qui e Rose ha chiesto a me parlo in prima persona adesso chi era quella signora	I: before the beginning of the show we were sitting here and Rose asked me I'm speaking in the first person now who was that lady?

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 14.05.1998)

This con(fusion) of roles can become even more marked as the following extract illustrates. It is taken from an interview with the American writer Asha Philips, who was promoting her book: 'Saying No: Why it's Important for You and Your Child'.

G: but I think culturally (.) because a lot of us I think were (.) young teenagers in the sixties (.) we find it very difficult (.) to:: ehm agree to and to find a structure and rules that we don't want to fight against ourselves	
I: poiché (.) noi eravamo=adolescenti (.) molti di noi erano adolescenti negli anni sessanta (.) eh parlo anche per me per noi è difficile immaginarci (.) di strutturare ehm il=	I: because (.) we were= adolescents (.) many of us were adolescent in the sixties (.) eh I'm speaking also for myself for us it's difficult to imagine ourselves (.) structuring ehm the=
H: beati voi	H: Lucky you (pl.) [Referring to being adolescent in the sixties; notice in particular the plural 'you']
I =nostro atteggiamento (.) in modo tale da dire no senza sentirci poi a nostra volta ribelli contro questa struttura	I = our behaviour (.) in such a way as to say no without becoming rebels against this structure

(Maurizio Costanzo Show, Canale 5, 30.3.2000)

In the earlier example, the interpreter was addressed as a primary participant, and footing shift was explicitly marked by the metacommunicative formula "I'm speaking in the first person now". Conversely, here, the parenthetic addition (totally absent in the original text) of literally "I'm speaking also for myself" (meaning "I'm referring to myself here") is totally ambiguous: is the interpreter speaking for the guest or is she speaking as herself? She is the right age, and the host, now in his 60's, uses the plural "lucky you", referring equally ambiguously to the interpreter and the guest, or to the guest's exclusive "we".

The question of 'ownership' of the interpreter's words also emerges with

the addition of the term "ribelli/rebels", and in the expression "in modo tale da dire di no/ in such a way as to say no" which is not only totally absent in the original text but is also a conscious link to the topic of the conversation: "Saying No". Talkshow interpreting seems therefore to reconcile the dichotomy between "liberté de formulation" and "liberté en interprétation" (Déjean le Féal 1991:214) in that the ethics of entertainment is organized to include both. As we have seen, in fact, the interpreter seems to be authorized (in third perceptual position) to add and produce 'translations' which are the result of personal inferences. This multifaceted role, we suspect, is forging a new model of interpreting ethics, one in which visibility is encouraging the interpreter to be a key-player in the show.

Success for this new model will be based on the three 'C' factors (comfort, capacity and culture). First, all participants will need to work within their comfort zones. Second, interpreters will need a particular professional capacity, which includes the ability to perform in public, and to be respected as full-fledged professional participants. Finally, the interpreter's behaviour should be coherent with the particular context of television and national culture.

Though a number of influential members of the Italian Interpreters' Association have expressed their unhappiness with this trend toward visibility and greater translational freedom, we feel that the ethics of entertainment is likely to become part and parcel of an interpreter's ethics not only in Italy, where the habitus already functions as a fertile environment for this development, but in other countries as well.

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Note

- * David Katan is responsible for sections 4 and 5, and Francesco Straniero-Sergio for sections 1-3 and 6-7.

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