Translating telecinematic texts

Linguistic and Cultural Representation in Audiovisual Translation

Voicing difference? The role of voice-over in negotiating identity in non-fiction BBC broadcasting across Italian/English lingua-cultures

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Introduction

Gieve and Norton (2007, 2010) have argued that the linguistic representation of "foreigners" in non-fiction British broadcasting has considerable "ideological impact on the discursive construction of identity, and cross-cultural relationships" (2010, p. 208). According to the authors, linguistic difference in documentary, travel and lifestyle television genres is flattened or even erased. Consequently, communication between speakers of different languages is routinely portrayed as "smooth, unproblematic, and everyday" (Gieve and Norton, 2010, p. 206). The reconstructed reality (Orero, 2006, p. 2) inherent in these genres is achieved through transfer modes such as voice-over translation, revoicing, narration, and simultaneous interpreting, which in turn give rise to "the peculiar situation of two people apparently speaking to each other in different languages" (Gieve and Norton, 2007, p. 200). Voice-over is also used to convey meaning in translation-mediated audiovisual news products; in particular, foreign politician's speeches, and interviews (Darwish, 2003, 2006; Darwich and Orero, 2014). These are discursive fields in which the translation process is susceptible to ideological manipulation (Diaz-Cintas 2012) that could provoke wide-ranging and possibly disastrous consequences. Despite such potential to create or subvert meaning, voice-over techniques remain mainly unchartered forms of audiovisual translation (Orero 2004, p 76; Franco *et al* 2010, p. 14). However, as an increasingly widespread mode of disseminating information on cultural and linguistic otherness in non-fiction TV genres and in relaying information regarding overseas news, a systematic investigation into voice-over translation in all its guises is long overdue.

This pilot study aims to open up the debate on voice-over research and offer some tentative observations within a specific sphere; the role of voice-over translation in mediating communication and negotiating Italian cultural identity in BBC non-fiction broadcasts. The contribution is divided into three parts: the first discusses the theoretical framework sustaining the analysis; imagology in translation research (van Doorslaer, Flyn, and Leersson 2016); narrative theory as applied to

translation studies (Baker 2006, 2010); and critical discourse perspectives (Fairclough 1995; Schäffner, 2008; van Dijk 2007, 2009a, 2009b). Descriptive methods (Toury 1995/2012), and Munday's (2012) critical approach to translational decision-making (2012) provide the analytical tools. Section two provides an overview of the literature on voice-over translation, while the third offers an initial but by no means conclusive small-scale survey; four mini case studies are discussed to illustrate the ways in which voice-over techniques can impact on the negotiation of national and cultural identity. Three examples are extracted from emblematic BBC productions: the acclaimed travel series, *Sicily Unpacked* (BBC 2, 2012), and *Italy Unpacked* (BBC2, 2013), and an episode of current affairs programme, *Newsnight* (BBC1, 2014). Finally, the paper draws some comparisons with an example from Italian television, an Italian talk show (*L'erba dei Vicini* [The Other man's Grass] RAI 3, 2015) in which British journalist Bill Emmott is interviewed. The article begins with a rationale for the theoretical framework adopted.

1. Imagological approaches in Translation Studies.

Sung-Yul Park (2010, pp. 190-191) observes that 'Interconnectedness between discourses established through the media [...] serves as a central mechanism for the media's power to produce and perpetuate stereotypes about languages and their speakers'. While this may be true (see section 4.4.1 for an example), racial and cultural ethnotypes have matured over centuries and were disseminated through travel writing and literature well before the advent of mass media (Hughes 2006; Beller and Leersson 2007). For instance, at the centre of this research are the juxtaposed feelings of fascination and repugnance that seem long to have prevailed over the British people's attitude to Italians (Beller 2007, p. 193). The roots and reasons for this contradictory rapport, the seeds of which lie deep within the respective collective psyches, are complex issues beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, one example from literature can be enough to illustrate the point. E.M. Forster's (1905/1975) vivid descriptions of Gino, the protagonist of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, resonate with the cultural stereotypes associated with Italians viewed from the British perspective: 'And Philip had seen that face before in Italy, seen it and loved it … But he did not want to see it opposite him at dinner. It was not the face of a gentleman', and again:

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

(Forster 1975, p. 43)

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

the striking resemblance and between the stereotyped Gino and some popular British mediatic representations, visual and textual, of Italians today. From an academic perspective, stereoptypes, or ethnotypes (Flynn, Leersson and van Doorslaer 2016, p. 3) reproduced in popular cultural products need to be uncovered and challenged. Imagology, in fact, aims to 'describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them' (Beller 2007, pp.11-12). Flynn, Leersson and van Doorslaer (2016, p. 2) argue that the cross-fertilization between Translation Studies and Imagology offers an effective interdisciplinary lens through which processes of national and (inter) cultural stereotyping in translated texts can be observed. While the paradigm originally destined for literary texts has been successfully applied to news translation, (See Caimotto 2016; Filmer, 2016b; Valdeòn 2016; van Doorslaer 2010, 2012), it has yet to be experimented with audiovisual products. Some of the key precepts of imagology can also provide a methodological framework for TS investigations on the construction of cultural images through translation mediated multimodal texts. The theoretical posits are as follows:

1. Imagology focuses on deconstructing ethnotypes and their characterological rationalisation of cultural difference.
2. This deconstruction uses a three-pronged approach: textual analysis employing narratological and discourse-analytical tools; contextual analysis, (situating a text and also the reception history of a text within real-world international relations; and intertextual analysis (following the textual dissemination history of a given trope of any given nation's (or cultural group's) "character".
3. The importance of narratological analysis in the formation of ethnotypes, i.e. the predication of behaviour and acts to actorial figures.
4. Ethnotypes are invoked without conscious awareness of their source and provenance. The imagologist's task is to follow the trail of transmission and dissemination and thus demonstrate that ethnotypes are ingrained discursive tropes rather than empirical observations.
5. Ethnotypes are variable, developing and morphing over time dialectically. Different images draw on different cliché's and stereotypes over time and depend on issues of selection and choice of discursive processes, *translation being one of those processes* (emphasis added)

Flynn, Leersson and van Doorslaer 2016, pp. 3-4)

1.1 Narrative theory for narration techniques

Closely linked to notions of stereotyping and mental frames is Baker's (2006, 2010) application of narrative theory to translation contexts. Narratives, as she intends

them, function in a similar way to "discourse" or "myths" in their "normalizing effect of publicly disseminated representations", however, they differ inasmuch as they are "much more concrete and accessible" (2006, p. 3). For Baker (2010, p. 350), narratives are "the stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live […] These stories provide our main interface with the world". She suggests that narrative theory provides a framework that allows us to examine the ways in which translation is employed in the elaboration of foreign, "other" narratives "that cut across time and texts". In other words, instead of focusing on discourse practices in localised or individual texts, the author proposes an approach in which the unit of analysis is the whole narrative, "a concrete story of some aspect of the world, complete with characters, settings, outcomes or projected outcomes and plot" (2010, p. 349). This concept is useful here, given that narratives concerning Italian cultural identity span different genres and diverse texts, interweaving to create one "story" of Italianness represented across different British media products, through and intertwined with translation.

1.2 The British perspective

It has been suggested (Dyer, 1977, p 30; Hall, 1998, p. 258), that notions of cultural superiority lead to stereotyping practices of the Other. The normativity of the British perspective becomes therefore decisive in any construction of Otherness found in British media. In his analysis of the British tabloids' construal of news, Conboy (2006, p. 108) explains:

> The normativity of the British perspective at the core of [tabloid] news values and encoded in their language is integral to the coverage of ethnic and geographical outsiders[…] British culture is rooted in a history which is indelibly marked with the associations of empire and cultural presumptions of superiority

One cannot help but wonder if such an 'insular mindset' (Kilborn 1993, p. 649) towards the foreign still exerts influence within British broadcasting. With regards language and linguistic difference Kilborn (ibid.) observes:

> In Britain, for example, acquiring foreign languages has never been accorded high cultural significance and there is the somewhat arrogant assumption that the majority of life's activities – including broadcasting – can satisfactorily be conducted in English.

For their part, Gieve and Norton (2007, p. 193) posit that an asymmetrical view of linguistic Other competence is promoted on British television by "constructing non-native speakers of English as linguistically deficient", while English speakers who cannot speak other languages are not apportioned the same negative image. Furthermore, they note that non-fiction genres share, "a reluctance to allow the 'foreigners' who feature [in the programmes] to 'speak' in their own voices" (2007, p.

193). One way of achieving this is by adopting voice-over strategies rather than subtitling as a means of translation. As invisible translations, often interwoven with commentary and narration, the discourse of the final audiovisual product requires careful analysis, which is the rationale for the critical discourse analysis approach adopted here.

1.3. The value of Critical Discourse Analysis and other methodological ruminations

The theoretical and methodological framework for this study draws on critical discourse analysis and its application to Translation Studies (Munday, 2012) and Media Studies (Fairclough 1995). Viewing discourse as "the production of knowledge through language" (Hall 1997, p. 44), CDA scholars attempt to dissect the practices employed in producing meaning in order to shed light on possible ideological slanting. It is the aim of CDA to reveal the "body of assumptions", (Hatim & Mason, 1997, p. 218) that lie behind the power structures intertwined in discourse. In Fairclough's (1991/2010, p. 26) terms, 'texts should be analysed for `naturalised implicit propositions of an ideological character' which people are not usually aware of and which contribute to `the social reproduction of relations of domination'. Christina Schäffner (2004, p. 145) notes how CDA can be used in the context of translated news and political discourse to expose the practice of 'using and abusing texts for purposes of national ideologies' and 'positive self-representation and negative presentation of others'. For the purposes of this study where the representation of Italian cultural identity is at the core, it is important to uncover not only the possible mis-translations and their ideological consequences but also the discourse in English that frames the translated utterances. The audio/audiovisual texts (critically) analysed in part three of this study are offered as samples that are neither comprehensive nor in-depth; their primary objective is to raise questions regarding voice-over translation strategies in BBC broadcasting. The following section discusses the methodological issues in researching voice-over translation.

1.4 Research caveats

Research into voice-over translation has one very serious caveat; unlike cinematic products that are distributed and subtitled in various languages that can be easily accessed online or in DVD, with non-fiction television productions it is much harder retrieve the source text and therefore nigh on impossible to compare with the voiced-over target text. It is only feasible to work with the initial words and endings that are provided in original language. Nevertheless, it is possible to analyse the final target culture product in which the translated text is embedded. Another difficulty is getting input from the social actors involved in constructing the voice-over products. As Straniero Sergio (2011, p. 181-2) explains, "The decision to use one method rather than another is made by broadcasters according to programme

strategies, general channel broadcasting policies, TV genres, target audiences and the specific goals that the programme director wishes to achieve". Despite efforts to contact some of the key players involved in the audiovisual texts analysed, I was unsuccessful due to time and logistic constraints. Future investigations will aim to include the practitioners' perspective along with a sample audience reception study on different forms of linguistic mediation in order to construct a triangulation of approaches to analysing the current role and the future of voice-over translation strategies in British broadcasting. The following section offers a brief review of existing research into voice-over translation.

2. Lost voices

It has often been opined that voice-over practices receive scant attention within the broader field of audiovisual translation (Franco, 2001; Orero, 2004, p. 76, 2006, p. 2; 2009, p. 131). Although Matamala (2009, p. 3) states that investigations into documentary translation are on the increase, she concedes "further research needs to be carried out in order to grasp the specificities of this genre within AVT". In the context of news media, the lack of research into voice-over from a translation studies perspective is surprising, "given that voice-over is the modality most commonly used for translating politicians' speeches and to inform about international news" (Orero 2006, p. 2). In particular she calls for investigations into "its function, its formal features and the translation of content" (ibid.), a call to which this study responds. In order to "grasp the specificities" of voice-over translation, however, it would be helpful to delineate its parameters. Noted for its terminological slipperiness, several of the definitions found in the literature have been dismissed as either "misleading or inaccurate" (Orero 2009, p. 131) because they originate from film, or media studies before translation studies began to perceive voice-over as a form of interlingual communication. Even within translation studies there is dissent within the ranks. DesRochers (2013, p. 186) for example, berates Franco, Matamala, & Orero's (2010, p. 18) definition for being extremely vague: "a narrative technique in which the voice of a faceless narrator is heard over different images and this for different purposes". This is, however, a reformulation of Harrington's (1973, p. 165 in Franco et al 2010, p. 18) definition from his glossary of film terms. Franco *et al* do provide an exhaustive overview of the various names, definitions, and types of voice-over yet demure from formulating their own. The definition of reference for the present work is Díaz-Cintas and Orero's (2006, p. 477)

> A voice offering a translation in a given target language (TL) is heard simultaneously on top of the source language (SL) voice. As far as the soundtrack of the original program is concerned, the volume is reduced to a low level that can still be heard in the background whilst the translation is being read. It is common practice to allow the viewer to hear the original speech in the foreign language for a few seconds at the onset of the speech and to reduce subsequently the volume of the original so that the translated speech can be inserted.

The translation usually finishes several seconds before the foreign language speech does, the sound of the original is raised again to a normal volume and the viewer can hear once more the original speech.

It is broad enough a definition to encompass most voice-over strategies: those carried out at post production stage; simultaneous interpreting, (an example of which is discussed in section 4.4); summary narration, narration performed by one of the participants, or by an external narrator at post-filming stage. Depending on the type of programme, meaning transfer strategies can be decided before filming, such as adopting the post-production strategies of narration, voice-over translation, and subtitling. Other methods can be decided during filming, for instance, an intermittent report, summary, or narration included by one of the presenters. This might well have been the case with Giorgio Locatelli whom we often see acting as a natural interpreter (Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 23) in the travel series *Sicily Unpacked* and *Italy Unpacked* (see section 3.1). In spite of its blurred boundaries, voice-over nevertheless has some distinguishing hallmarks. The most evident of these is its association with the recreation of reality and authenticity, which is discussed in the following section.

2.1 Recreating reality through voice-over

Voice-over as translation mode is predominantly employed in non-fictional genres and is linked to the (re)creation of reality in audio/audiovisual products (Orero, 2006; Franco, 2001; Daly, 1985; Ávila, 1997; Franco et al., 2010). Indeed, Franco *et al*. (2010: 26) affirm that the defining features of voice-over "contribute to the feel of reality, truth and authenticity that factual programmes count on". Voice-over has been described as an "exact" and "faithful" translation of the original source text, particularly when viewed from a media studies perspective (Luyken *et al*. 1991: 80). Furthermore, it is deemed to be a "literal, authentic, and complete version of the original audio" and referred to as the "trustful transfer mode" by those who have no grounding in translation or languages (Franco et al. 2010, p. 26; cf. Paxman's comment, section 4.4). The illusion of authenticity so important to non-fiction genres is created with the aid of specific voice-over techniques. For example, hearing the original soundtrack for a few seconds at the outset of the speech before it is reduced for the voiced-over translation (Luyken et al. 1991, p. 80; Franco 2001, p. 290). This suspension of disbelief is such that the average viewer might indeed be more than reassured by the illusion of authenticity. How many viewers will reflect on the fact that voice-over translation is "only a representation", of the source language text, and perhaps an unfaithful one at that?

Voice-prosody is another intrinsic feature that according to Orero (2006, p. 3) "may be one more important element to create the feeling of hyper-reality". In representing the foreign, the use of voice-over techniques crucially brings into focus

decisions regarding accent, pronunciation, and delivery and their role in creating the constructed reality so essential to non-fiction genres or news (Orero 2006, pp. 1-9). In the context of British broadcasting, voice-over strategies have traditionally been used instead of dubbing or subtitling for non-fiction genres (Kilborn 1993, p. 648). They also regularly feature in BBC news broadcasts (Darwish and Orero, 2014; Orero, 2006) where oversees events are reported or in pre-recorded interviews with foreign leaders. Developments concerning new software technology to be piloted in news production bring to attention once again the invisibility of translation. A video uploaded on YouTube, "'BBC Pilots 'Virtual Voice-over' News Service - BBC News" (Dec 2015) illustrates the "ground-breaking multilingual technology" that "allows us to offer more videos to audiences around the world", Susanne Weber, Language Technology Producer, affirms. The video with narrator explains the process:

> First, we take an English language video. We upload the script. Then the computer translates it. Next, our journalists polish up the text to the BBC's high standards. Now, we want to voice it in a new language. We can choose our favourite synthetic voices....and voila'

<div align="right">

YouTube 0:40.00-1.05.00
BBC news 14 December 2015

</div>

An in depth analysis of the numerous pitfalls and repercussions that such a random means of meaning transfer could trigger in foreign news reporting is too vast a discussion for the scope of this contribution. Suffice it to say that journalists, who are untrained in the field of translation and intercultural communication (Filmer, 2014), wield enormous power in manipulating messages and information across cultural barriers. As Darwish and Orero (2014, p. 129) underline:

> 'The importance of accurate voice-over translation for the objectivity and neutrality of news broadcasts cannot be overemphasized since so much depends on the accuracy and precision of the news, not only for the immediate audiences, but also for decision makers who often rely on live news broadcasts for much of their immediate decisions and public diplomacy responses to world events

Having outlined current issues in the debate on voice-over in non-fiction genres and news-making, the following sections focus on the data analysis.

3. The examples

This initial survey paves the way for further examination of broader corpora to better understand the diversity of voice-over translation techniques and observe their effects on the portrayal of linguistic and cultural Otherness in British non-fiction broadcasting. The dataset discussed below was created ad hoc in order to explore these themes in relation to the specific case of negotiating linguistic and cultural difference with Italians. Descriptive analysis of the phenomena is a priority at this stage of the research, as it serves to assess the innovations and challenges its

various forms entail. While the evidence considered here is not strictly speaking statistically significant, it nevertheless yields meaningful data from a qualitative point of view. The dataset focuses on two non-fiction broadcasting genres: the travel genre with the BBC2 series *Sicily Unpacked* (2012) *and Italy Unpacked* (2013, 2014)*;* and the political interview with BBC1's *Newsnight* (2014). The third case-study discusses an examples from a hybrid genre, the Italian political talk show *L'erba dei Vicini* (2015) as a comparison They all illustrate different forms of voice-over translation demonstrating the variety of practices that fall under the 'voice-over' umbrella.

3.1 Unpacking Italy – the travel genre

> Italian's easy-going epicurism is contrasted with an English self-image of dour and restrictive Victorian moralism
>
> Beller (2007, p. 196)

The BBC 2 television series *Sicily Unpacked* (2012) and the subsequent *Italy Unpacked* (2013, 2014) are worth a case study on its own from a linguistic and cultural representational point of view. However, we will limit ourselves here to some key observations and significant examples to illustrate the ways in which this travelogue bridges communication between native and non-native speakers of English. A criss-crossing of code-switching, subtitling, simultaneous and consecutive natural interpreting characterises the linguistic exchanges between British art critic, Andrew Graham-Dixon, Italian chef, Giorgio Locatelli, and the local people they encounter on their journey through the varied regions of Italy. Sharing with each other their knowledge of the country's culture and cuisine, one enthusiastic review in the *Guardian* (Lundin 2012) newspaper comments:

> the programme has introduced us to the food, art and culture of Sicily in a manner entirely different from the hyperbolic exclamations and stereotypical views so infuriatingly common in other travel shows…*keeping voice-over to a minimum*, Graham-Dixon and Locatelli discuss what they see between themselves (my emphasis).

In actual fact, all three series avoid traditional voice-over. This could be construed in two ways: it could be interpreted as ideologically positive as attempts at 'masking' linguistic Otherness are contained; Locatelli often acts as cultural and linguistic mediator between the local Italian participants and Graham-Dixon, whose grasp of Italian is limited. The sporadic dialogue in Italian is subtitled or consecutively interpreted by Locatelli. Contrary to Gieve and Norton's affirmation that native speakers of English are never shown in linguistic difficulty, Graham-Dixon does attempt to communicate with interviewees in Italian, although Locatelli is usually present providing linguistic back up if necessary. On the other hand, Gieve and Norton's posit that the voice of the foreign is kept to a minimum on British TV is

supported by the producer's choice to focus on exchanges between the two presenters rather than engaging more fully with the Italian interviewees. Although Locatelli is Italian, thus foreign, his linguistic Otherness is mitigated by thirty years of living in the UK.

Travel literature is considered a crucial source for national image building and stereotypes. For the case in point, Beller and Leersson note: "From a central or north European perspective, as expressed in traditional travel literature and clichés of tourism, Italy as a whole is the land of Mediterranean Southerners" (2007: 195). Heir to travel literature, in a televised travelogue the presenter's comments and observations frame the cultural content in such a way as to invite a particular interpretation. For instance, Graham-Dixon describes Southern Italy thus: "Il Mezzogiorno; Naples and the South. Italy's Wild West" (Italy Unpacked 2013, series 2, episode 3 1:09-1:13*)*. Hall (1997, p. 257) has described the act of stereotyping as "…a signifying practice [that] is central to the representation of racial difference" condensing people into a "few simplified, reductive and essentialized features". A further illustration of this can be observed during the introduction to the first episode of *Sicily Unpacked* (00:18/58:46). Locatelli is seen preparing a traditional Sicilian dish. Tossing some raisins into the frying pan, he comments 'so the sultana is really tiny, little aggressive dark one, like a little Sicilian, eh?' Thus, the association is made: the belligerent Sicilian, the South described as the "Wild West", by metonymy a lawless state. The web of images and metaphors builds on established narratives surrounding Italy and Italians, with Locatelli actively participating in its construction.

In terms of linguistic mediation, the programme evidences some innovative practices. The following example illustrates the way in which most of the interviews were carried out for the series. The sample is extracted from the first episode of *Sicily Unpacked* (2012), thus setting the interlinguistic communicative style for the following episodes. After watching a traditional Sicilian puppet show, Graham Dixon says "I wanted to catch a quick word with the puppet master, Mimmo Cuticchio' (17: 22.00). It is unlikely that Cuticchio will speak English or that Graham-Dixon will express himself extensively in Italian. In fact it is Locatelli that begins by commenting to the puppeteer in Italian on the way he fondly embraces his puppet: "lo stai tenendo in braccio come se fosse un bambino', which is subtitled simultaneously with "you are holding him in your arms like a baby". We hear the response from Cuticchio in Italian "Ma loro sono i miei figli perche'io gli ho costruiti". The response is subtitled: "They are my children. I made them" and Locatelli consecutively translates into English, presumably for Graham Dixon, "They are my children, I built them". As a natural interpreter, Locatelli makes natural mistakes, like rendering 'costruire' [build, construct] with "build", whereas the

English would require the more generic 'make' when talking about an object such as a puppet. Graham Dixon addresses the puppeteer but oscillates between English, which is translated by Locatelli, and Italian, which is then subtitled into English on the screen. He also self translates, "Per me era la prima volta, it was my first time, I thought it was absolutely fantastic" From this point, he describes the puppet theatre as a combination of "visual art, sculpture, theatre, art, literature…". Locatelli acts as interpreter, translating for the benefit of the puppeteer. Graham-Dixon concludes with "tutto nello stesso tempo" [all at the same time]. The puppeteer responds "E' come un film muto", subtitled "it's like a silent film", and Graham Dixon replies, "yes it is". The melange of code switching, from English to Italian, Italian to English, from no subtitles to subtitles, and the mediation of Locetelli brings a constructed spontaneity that nevertheless, eschews voice-over, allowing the foreign to be heard.

3.2. The Political interview

The second case study focuses on political discourse and meaning transfer. In one of the first articles to broach the topic of language transfer in audiovisual products, albeit from a Cultural Studies perspective, Kilborn (1993, p. 648) claims that voice-over is "particularly well suited as a method for the rendering of speeches by foreign politicians", so much so that "indeed, many in the audience would now deem it wholly inappropriate if any other mode were used". Kilborn's assumption, however, is not borne out by any concrete data. Furthermore, he was writing nearly twenty-five years ago; the socio-cultural landscape in the UK has changed enormously since then. The aim of the following sections is to shed light on the current practices in voice-over of political discourse, in particular in Italian/English contexts. The first is the case of Silvio Berlusconi on *Newsnight* (BBC, 20 May 2014). Discussed in detail elsewhere (see Filmer 2016b), here the example serves as a benchmark in order to compare with other Italian leaders, and also to make observations regarding how other world leaders have been voiced on British television.

Veteran political journalist Jeremy Paxman interviewed former Italian premier, Silvio Berlusconi on the BBC1 programme, *Newsnight*. The interview was widely publicised in the British press because during the interview, Paxman asks Berlusconi: "Is it true you called [Angela Merkel] an unfuckable lardarse?" Paxman and Berlusconi's apparently seamless conversation is mediated via simultaneous interpreters who translate Berlusconi's Italian utterances into English for Paxman, while Paxman's questions and comments are translated into Italian for Berlusconi. In the final product the interpreting act is completely *inaudible* and *invisible*. In a questionnaire Paxman was asked about his attitude towards and experiences with interpreter mediated interviews. The journalist states that the post-production voice-over results in an 'absolutely accurate' translation, an affirmation which he is not in a position to make considering he clearly speaks no Italian. StranieroSergio (2011, p.

187) notes that where voice-over translation is added post production, as with the Berlusconi interview, "The interpreter appears to be the originator of a draft which is then edited in terms of fluency and style, as well as content. Mistranslations, omissions and generalisations are redressed". The agentless observation begs the question: Who edits the contents, corrects the "mistranslations", and "redresses" the interpreter's omissions and generalisations? Straniero-Sergio concedes that at times re-voiced versions diverge so far from the source text that they "can hardly be considered a translation at all" (ibid, p. 194).

The most striking aspect of the interview from an ideological point of view is that Berlusconi is voiced-over with a noticeable Italian accent, and slow, pedantic delivery. The voice-prosody lends comic effect to the interview which is edited and translated in such a way as to apparently reinforce Italian cultural stereotypes (Filmer 2016, p. 19)

3.3.1 Recreation of reality with voice prosody?

The use of accents is a bone of contention when considering the voice actor or narrator. Interestingly, Kilborn (1993, p. 643) defines voice-over as a practice in which 'an additional or substitute *native-language voice* (my emphasis) either [to] give a simultaneous translation of the original or [to] provide the target audience with some form of explanatory commentary', the original soundtrack providing a 'guarantee of authenticity'. What Kilborn means by 'native-language voice' is not quite clear but one assumes he means what Franco *et al* refer to as 'original accents'. This point is particularly salient when voicing foreign leaders and questioning possible intent to reinforce national ethnotypes:

> The reproduction of original accents in voice-over versions can be tricky because it may, on the one hand, be positively assessed as even more authentic and, on the other hand, be attacked as a form of caricature or fake.

(Franco et al 2010: 29)

Diaz Cintas (2012, p. x) has identified the two types of manipulation in AVT: technical and ideological. According to the author, technical manipulation "refer[s] to those instances where changes and modifications to the original text are incorporated because of technical considerations", while, ideological manipulation occurs "when unfair changes that unbalance the relationship between source and target products take place on purpose and unscrupulously". In discussing the voice-over narration in the Anglophone version of the film *Léolo* (1992), DesRochers suggests that the translational choice of an accented voice-over, in the specific case English spoken with a québécoise accent, is surprising to say the least "puisqu'il est rare et obsolète de constater la présence d'un accent en doublage" (2013: 187). From this it might be inferred the decisions to use accented voice-overs are possibly made for ideological purposes.

In the context of political interviews, then, could the same interpretation be given? The analysis here focuses on Italian politicians; nonetheless, a cursory search on YouTube for videos of two other international leaders, Vladimir Putin and Angela Merkel, produced the following results using the key words "BBC" – "interview" – "Putin" – "Angela Merkel". In the first three hits for Putin, the third was a BBC production, "Russian President Putin interviewed by Andrew Marr" [Youtube 2014. Russian President interviewed by Andrew Marr, 19 January., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nWENj8gbYY&t=186s] in which Putin is voiced-over with a strong Russian accent. The first two hits were not actually BBC productions. The first hit for Angela Merkel was: "Angela Merkel: 'Europe must stick together' - BBC News interviewed by BBC's Katya Adler (04 June 2015). Merkel is voiced-over by a British female whose accent could be described as unmarked 'BBC English'

While by no means exhaustive or statistically significant, what this short search shows is that two out of three world leaders who are non-native speakers of English have been voiced-over with foreign accents in BBC interviews rather than the neutral British tones. Might we infer that the decision-making at post production level has been ideologically influenced? That is, Putin and Berlusconi are not popular with the BBC? By contrast, Berlusconi was interviewd for Euronews (17 January 2013), and as with all their interviews with international leaders, he was voiced over with a neutral British accent. The question begs what are the criteria? Who makes those production decisions regarding the form of linguistic mediation?

Discourse chains (Fairclough 1995) link traditional and digital news media through intertextual communicative events. Video clips, often featuring foreign politicians' speeches voiced-over, subtitled or sometimes both are increasingly embedded in online news texts. The practice gives rise to urgent questions as to the nature of the translation modes adopted, and from a researcher's perspective, with what methodological tools we should approach such multimedia news texts (see Federici, forthcoming), particularly where foreign leaders are concerned. On the subject of Italian politicians, accent, and linguistic performances in English, the *Telegraph* reported that former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's mastery of English 'leaves a lot to be desired' (Squires 2014). In the accompanying video, first shown on *La Corriere della Sera*'s website (16 July 2014), Renzi is ridiculed for his pronunciation in a spoof parody of a song from the film *Grease*. The video ends with Renzi pronouncing "Now is the time of lunch", instead of "It's lunchtime" or "It's time for lunch". The article entitled, "Italians mock Prime Minister Matteo Renzi for awful English", appears instead to be occasion for the British journalist to berate Italians in general for their apparent inability to "speak English". Without any sustaining evidence, Squires (ibid.) claims that "Poor schooling and the dubbing of English-

language television and films into Italian *has been blamed* in part for the low level of English spoken by Italians in general". We are not told, however, *who* does the blaming, nor what is meant by poor schooling, or which research demonstrates that dubbing is the "cause" of Italians' "low level" of spoken English. Furthermore, who exactly has established, and by which standards, that Italians in general have insufficient English language skills? As Gieve and Norton (2010: 205) have posited, "British television does ideological work, potentially reinforcing the notion that it is not important to learn foreign languages because everyone speaks English these days." In fact, if we compare other Italian politicians' linguistic performance in English, for example former Prime Minister Mario Monti, Emma Bonino, and current Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, all have been interviewed on *Newsnight* in English, without the aid of interpreters, voice-over, or dubbing. Their linguistic skills are certainly equal to a C2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Could the same be said of any British politicians' foreign language skills?

3.4 'If you can't find a word, I'll be your Google translator…'
Investigations into voicing the Other in British Broadcasting have sustained that English speakers are rarely shown attempting strategies to overcome linguistic difference (Kilborn 1993; Norton and Gieves 2010). In some other cultural contexts, however, far from being invisible, media interpreting can become part of the performance. Katan and Straniero Sergio (2003, p. 133) first suggested that "an interpreted TV programme must first and foremost be entertaining". The scholars argue that the trend for participatory interpreting in entertainment and the media might well require a redefinition of the roles and ethics of interpreters and, more specifically, their visibility.

On the issue of visibility, both in the literal sense, and also in raising awareness to the reality of overcoming language barriers in broadcasting, this contribution concludes with an example extracted from an episode of an Italian docu-talk show. The sample illustrates an "imperfect" attempt at communication across linguistic borders during a television broadcast that took place on '*L'erba dei vicini* [The other man's grass] (RAI 3 17 November 2015). Presented by journalist Beppe Severgnini, the programme compares Italy to other nation states across the globe on socio-economic and cultural issues. Each episode deals with specific themes comparing the different national contexts through a mix of documentary footage and interviews with the aim of a friendly "competition" between the two realities. Audience participation is an integral part of the formula, with the viewers casting their votes as to which national reality is better regarding the set themes. Sometimes light-hearted, sometimes in a more serious vein, the programme aims to challenge cultural stereotyping and prejudice that Italians may harbour towards the Other. In

the episode aired immediately following the Paris Bombings, British Journalist Bill Emmott was interviewed by Severgnini on the theme, 'porte aperte in Europa' [Open doors to Europe]. Severgnini introduced his guest by saying "Bill Emmott has agreed to speak in Italian", which Emmott had indeed agreed to do but before the tragic events in France[1]. A simultaneous interpreter was provided ready to step in, should Emmott find himself in difficulty. Watching the interview it is clear that Emmott's comprehension of Italian far outweighs his production, and he was floundering at the first question. We see Emmott struggling to get his message over, fumbling for words, at which point his interviewer offered "Se non trovi la parola io saro' il tuo Google translater" [If you can't find a word, I'll be your Google translater…]. Emmott strives for a second longer to answer in Italian a question regarding being proud of Europe. Severgnini comes to his aid by saying, "Lo sforzo l'hai fatto, dai, inglese – rispondi in inglese"' [You have made the effort, come on, English, now answer in English] and Emmott switches mid-sentence into English. An off-screen voice consecutively translated what he subsequently said. Emmott admits "under the pressure of TV, a live audience, although I started in Italian I agreed quite quickly to switch into English". From then on the interview is concluded with Emmott using the odd phrase in Italian, the invisible yet audible consecutive interpreter translating when he spoke in Italian, while Severgnini back-translated for himself from Italian into English. This melange of linguistic negotiation, natural translating, and code-switching between English and Italian illustrates on the one hand the hybridity and flexibility of an uncontrived/unaffected approach to TV interpreting offering an alternative to the seamless hyper-reality of traditional voice-over; on the other hand, such strategies expose the participants to real-life linguistic negotiations, difficulties, and possible embarrassment in front of an audience of potentially millions. Either way, demonstrating how language barriers can be openly confessed and negotiated in a more natural and visible way

Closing remarks – if there is nothing to hide, why hide it?
This research set out to explore some selected examples of voice-over translation techniques adopted in non-fiction broadcasting in order to make a preliminary survey of the status quo with regards the representation of the Italian lingua-cultural identity on British television. The contribution makes no apology for the fact it has posed more questions than it has answered. The research aims, as stated at the beginning, have been a point of departure in order to advance the still underdeveloped debates surrounding the ever-more frequent use of voice-over as translation mode in non-fiction audio/visual texts. Rather than attempting to draw conclusions or make hypotheses, the objective has been descriptive. The examples presented here have provided some evidence of the ways in which Italian

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[1] Bill Emmott personal interview on Skype 27 January 2016

ethnotypes are represented and reinforced through voice-over and other (cultural) translational techniques across non fictional genres. However, we have seen, for instance, with *Italy Unpacked*, there are more innovative approaches to bridging linguistic difference on television with code-switching, subtitles, and simultaneous interpreting performed by the participants themselves. However, we note that the cultural framing often falls into the familiar stereotypes of Italianness. In the political sphere, cultural stereotypes appear to be greatly reinforced. However, as quoted at the beginning, the linguistic representation of "foreigners" in non-fiction British broadcasting *may* impact on the discursive construction of identity, and cross-cultural relationships, however, without a thorough investigation into the reception of these audio/visual products it would be difficult to establish to what extent these seemingly skewed representations might influence perception of the cultural-linguistic Other. Rather, what is absolutely clear is how much research is still needed into voice-over in Anglophone contexts. Why should we attempt to hide the obvious reality, and that is, that we are linguistically different? Surely we should concentrate more on ways to bridge that difference in a transparent way instead of hiding it? As Emmott commented, "I decided it was more respectful at least to attempt to speak the same language" (Private communication xx). This is a step forward in the right direction. Linguistic difference finally becomes visible.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI_nn5-lhow

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