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**«Speech handling»<sup>1</sup>: A multimodal analysis of simultaneous interpreters' gestural behaviours. Patterns of gestural usage under increased cognitive load during simultaneous interpretation from L2 to L1.**

**Abstract**

*In the present paper the results of empirical research aimed at investigating the phenomena of gestural behaviour of simultaneous interpreters at times of increased cognitive load will be presented.<sup>2</sup> 19 participants – both professional interpreters and undergraduate students in Conference Interpreting – were asked to record their SI performance on a TED Talk lecture from English to Italian. The gathered material, consisting in a 209-minute corpus of video footage, was analysed with the aim of assessing the types and functions of the specific gestures all subjects performed in co-occurrence with perceived disfluencies in interpreting production, with the purpose of demonstrating the facilitative role gestures play in the context of multimodality of simultaneous interpreting, which goes far beyond a mere communicative function.*

**Keywords:** *co-verbal behaviour, simultaneous interpreters, intense cognitive load, gestures, simultaneous interpreting, facilitative role.*

**1. Introduction - Theoretical overview**

The literature on simultaneous interpreting has long defined this profession as a highly-demanding activity, cognitive efforts-wise. According to Gile's Effort Model (1980), SI is composed of «a set of multiple cognitive operations which can be grouped into three Efforts» (GILE 2008: 1): 'Listening and Analysis Effort', 'Production Effort' and 'Memory Effort'. What's more, this cognitive triad is subordinated to the 'Coordination Effort', allowing attention allocation and shifts between the three aforementioned steps<sup>3</sup>. All three Efforts implied are not spontaneous, and «at least partly competitive» (GILE 2017: 2). In this respect, the 'Tightrope Hypothesis' – departing from the assumption of limited attentional resources available – shows that SI performance quality is not as much jeopardised by intrinsic difficulties of a particular source text, as by the fact that interpreters work most of the time near 'saturation level', i.e. close to cognitive processing capacity saturation for each effort involved.

In order to obviate such difficulty – as sustained by the concept of «economy of intermediate representation» (SETTON 1999: 4) based on Johnson-Laird and Byrne's Mental Model Theory of cognition (1983) – interpreters can coordinate input and output through a mental modelling processing, which makes both language comprehension and production faster and more accurate,

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1 Cfr. List of cited literature (STREECK 1994).

2 This experimental project was conducted in collaboration with the Moscow State Linguistic University's Centre for Socio-Cognitive Discourse Studies (SCoDis).

3 Cfr. List of cited literature (Baddeley-Hitch 1974: 47-89).

enabling them to process any portion of a given speech creating a sort of 'mental segmentations' which have the potentiality to reduce both Listening and Production Efforts as the process of interpretation proceeds.

From that, it follows that SI should be regarded as a Multimodal process which involves matching the interpreter's input and output with the «activated mental representations that are conceptually shared by two working languages» (PAVLENKO 2009). As an additional cognitive burden, in interpreters – as in all bilingual or multilingual individuals – these mental images are semantically linked to the lexical representations in all their languages. Thus, correlations between the lexical items in one language may be triggered even when another language is used, since they are linked to the same internal constructs.

That being said – since the final objective of this study is to analyse simultaneous interpreters' gestural patterns, with the aim of providing robust evidence in support of the facilitative role of gestures in offloading an increased cognitive pressure – it is worth wondering how the function of gestures fits into the context of Multimodality in SI.

The earlier discussed ability of the mind to create perceptual experience via mental models leads to the principle of 'Embodied Cognition' – and, subsequently, of 'Embodied Language Processing' – which describe human sensorimotor system as fundamentally integrated with cognitive and language processing. This very same idea can be found at the basis of the well-renowned 'Theory of Growth Points' developed by McNeill (1992), which postulates the existence of conceptual links between utterances and gestures. Therefore, gestures serve a fundamental communicative function, substantially affecting the final message extractable from the communicative act.

Nevertheless, results from many research studies suggest that gestural behaviours may also serve a speaker-oriented function, both in terms of co-speech and «co-thought» (SCHWARTZ-BLACK 1996, HEGARTY-MAYER-KRIZ-KEEHNER 2005) gestures. In this regard, it has been proved that people tend to perform gestures even in the absence of an interlocutor<sup>4</sup> since – as mentioned by Kita (2000) and further demonstrated by Bavelas et al. (1992) – not all gestures are intended to be seen. As a further proof, studies about gestures used by congenitally blind individuals, who have never seen gestures and have no experience whatsoever with their communicative function<sup>5</sup>, as well as research showing a general increase in quality of both speech comprehension and production for individuals suffering from aphasia or stuttering<sup>6</sup>, reinforce, once again, the role of gestures as a self-oriented facilitative tool in cognitive and linguistic processing.

Lastly, departing from the important difference Streeck (2006) outlined between 'depiction' and 'ception' <sup>7</sup>, it is possible to motivate the rationale behind this study. Simultaneous interpreting constitute a stand-alone communicative typology which implies interpreters' ability to simultaneously understand and match the lecturer's inner world with their own, in order to reproduce

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4 Cfr. List of cited literature (RIMÉ 1983).

5 Cfr. List of cited literature (IVERSON-GOLDIN-MEADOW 1997); (ALIBALI-CHU-KITA 2017).

6 Cfr. List of cited literature (AKHAVAN-GOKSUN-NOZARI 2016).

7 From Latin 'cap-', take, 'ception' is the «bodily form of conceiving, i.e., of conceptually structuring content to be articulated in speech» (STREECK 2006: 74).

meaning through a monomodal linguistic channel, in a way to convey the intended message to a multitude of heterogeneous 'world conceptualisations'. This – which has been analogously described by Poyatos as «the absurd but inevitable incongruence inherent in interpretation» (POYATOS 1997: 260)

– can nothing but result in a significant increase in cognitive load.

Assuming the validity of gesture's self-oriented facilitative role in cognitive and linguistic processing as the only possible explanation for simultaneous interpreters' gestural behaviours, this study is aimed at proposing a third role of gestures, i.e. as a coping strategy applied «outside the realm of conscious awareness» (STREECK 2006), in order to offload intense cognitive pressure during SI, ensuring the highest possible quality of the mediated communicative act.

## 2. Methods

In order to assess the key role gestures play in SI at times of 'cognitive overload', this research was carried out on the specific interpreter's gestural patterns that co-occurred during perceived disfluencies in interpreting production, analysing video recordings from 19 Italian simultaneous interpreters – both novice and experienced subjects – who were asked to interpret a TED Talk video lecture<sup>8</sup> from English to Italian on evolution and extinction of species.

All participants were provided with a glossary to consult to prepare on the subject; the topic didn't require any special knowledge, however the lecture contained various terms and numbers, which are known to be particularly difficult for SI<sup>9</sup>.

For reasons related to the impossibility of scheduling a single recording session for all participants on the same date and in the same venue, each interpreter autonomously filmed themselves; nevertheless, they were meticulously instructed on how to proceed in order to ensure the design of the study to be as ecologically valid as possible.

During the recording sessions, the interpreters were asked to sit at a desk – which had to be completely cleared of any kind of object – and to record their simultaneous interpretation using a device placed in front of them, making sure to frame themselves half-length, without cutting their head or removing their hands from the frame throughout the recording. Besides, since the aim of the study was to analyse hand movements, they were also asked not to hold anything in their hands. The source text was presented as an audio and video file and played through headset, simulating, as much as possible, a normal booth-like work environment.

Afterwards, all participants were provided with 3 documents to fill in: the LEAP-Q<sup>10</sup> and Handedness Questionnaires, as well as the Survey for Interpreters form, for us to collect data on their language proficiency level, professional expertise, dominant hand and personal opinions on the

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_benton\\_mass\\_extinctions\\_and\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_life\\_on\\_earth](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_benton_mass_extinctions_and_the_future_of_life_on_earth)

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (DESMET-VANDIERENDONCK-DEFrancQ 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (MARIAN-BLUMENFELD-KAUSHANSKAYA 2007; NORTH-WESTERN BILINGUALISM & PSYCHOLINGUISTICS RESEARCH LABORATORY).

source text in terms of familiarity with the topic, expert knowledge needed, level of vocabulary used and the speaker's way of speaking. A descriptive analysis (total numbers and percentage) for each investigated parameter was conducted to assess their relevance for the entire group of subjects.

### **3. Data extraction**

The gathered material was analysed using ELAN annotation software<sup>11</sup>, in which we created tiers to annotate speech difficulties and their categories, as well as all gesture typologies and the hand(s) used to perform them.

#### **3.1 Speech analysis**

Firstly, each participant's speech was transcribed and the respective audio files were segmented, allowing to insert the written target text in the dedicated tier, in order to mark each speech disfluency in the exact same portion of both the text and the audio file. The following step consisted in marking moments of difficulty in the interpreting output, always referring to the transcription of the original text to check whether some of the perceived disfluencies were somehow part of the original lecture or whether they actually reflected the interpreter's increased cognitive pressure.

#### **3.2 Gesture analysis**

The Gesture Coding phase was firstly concerned with the analysis of all gesture phrases occurring at times of fluent interpreting, obtaining a 'control portion' to see, for comparison, what interpreters did when they were not having difficulties. Secondly, we investigated all gesture phrases overlapping in time with instances of disfluencies detected in the interpreting output. Once all gestural units were detected, we focused on coding gesture functions, choosing them while listening to the interpreter's audio file, determining their role in context, as accurately as possible; indeed, – although gestures are usually multifunctional – we selected the main function we perceived a given gesture had in that precise context.

### **4. Results**

Jamovi Statistical Software<sup>12</sup> was used to find correlations between interpreters' gestural activities and their co-occurring linguistic signals of increased cognitive load.

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<sup>11</sup> The programme was developed in the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (SLOETJES-WITTENBURG 2008).

## Speech Disfluency and Resolution

### Total occurrences for each category

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Restart (Disfluency)	19	5.579	4	106	7.381	0	33
Truncation	19	35.053	28	666	21.415	11	92
Filter	19	58.053	49	1103	31.308	8	106
Stumbling	19	5.053	4	96	3.325	0	12
Source	19	0.526	0	10	0.612	0	2
Slow	19	3.368	2	64	4.232	0	19
Dragging	19	7.947	7	151	5.681	2	23
Long pause	19	2.947	2	56	3.135	0	11
Restart (Resolution)	19	35.632	29	677	20.427	11	91

**Table 1**  
**Filler: 38%**  
**Truncation: 23%**  
**Restart (Resolution): 23%**  
**Slow: 2%**  
**Long pause: 2%**  
**Source: 0.3%**

## Speech disfluency and gestural usage

### Total occurrences with or without gestures

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Speech disfluency + resolutions	19	154.2	156	2929	64.8	52	325
Speech disfluency + resolutions with gesture	19	137.6	143	2614	68.9	33	319
Speech disfluency + resolutions without gesture	19	16.6	8	315	21.7	0	89

**Table 2**  
**Disfluencies/Resolutions with gestures: 89%**  
**Disfluencies/Resolutions without gestures: 11%**

## Speech disfluencies and resolutions

### Gestural usage occurrences for each category

Descriptives	
	Sum
Disfluencies without gesture	266
Resolutions without gesture	49
Resolutions with gesture	1986
Resolutions with gesture	628

*Table 3*  
**Disfluencies with gestures: 88%**  
**Resolutions with gestures: 93%**  
**Disfluencies without gestures: 12%**  
**Resolutions without gestures: 7%**

## Gesture typology

### Total occurrences for each category

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Adapter	19	97.26	83	1848	53.88	10	225
Representation	19	4.84	3	92	6.17	0	23
Pragmatic	19	59.84	39	1137	59.27	2	261
Deixis	19	9.32	6	177	9.70	1	33
Beats	19	82.11	73	1560	74.03	2	338

*Table 4*  
**Adaptor: 38%**  
**Beats: 32%**  
**Pragmatic: 24%**  
**Representation: 2%**

## Adapter

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Restart (Disfluency)	19	2.895	1	55	3.799	0	15
Truncation	19	20.684	20	393	12.481	1	48
Filter	19	38.158	33	725	27.747	2	95
Stumbling	19	2.474	3	47	2.118	0	6
Source	19	0.263	0	5	0.452	0	1
Slow	19	3.000	2	57	3.590	0	15
Dragging	19	4.737	3	90	4.445	0	17
Long pause	19	3.263	2	62	5.455	0	24
Restart (Resolution)	19	21.789	18	414	16.144	0	60

*Table 5*  
**Filler: 39%**

## Beats

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Restart (Disfluency)	19	4.211	2	80	7.906	0	35
Truncation	19	20.421	15	388	19.543	0	88
Filter	19	22.842	18	434	20.716	0	73
Stumbling	19	3.211	3	61	3.409	0	14
Source	19	0.368	0	7	0.597	0	2
Slow	19	2.000	0	38	3.801	0	11
Dragging	19	3.263	2	62	3.494	0	11
Long pause	19	1.526	0	29	4.287	0	19
Restart (Resolution)	19	24.263	21	461	24.046	1	110

**Table 6**  
**Resolution: 29.5%**

## Pragmatic

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Restart (Disfluency)	19	3.263	2	62	6.288	0	28
Truncation	19	15.000	8	285	16.506	0	68
Filter	19	16.316	10	310	15.731	0	62
Stumbling	19	2.684	2	51	2.849	0	11
Source	19	0.263	0	5	0.562	0	2
Slow	19	1.421	0	27	2.545	0	10
Dragging	19	2.316	1	44	3.019	0	10
Long pause	19	0.263	0	5	0.653	0	2
Restart (Resolution)	19	18.316-	13	348	19.276	1	82

**Table 7**  
**Resolution: 31%**

## Representation

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
Restart (Disfluency)	19	0.3684	0	7	0.761	0	3
Truncation	19	1.2105	0	23	2.323	0	8
Filter	19	1.6842	2	32	1.857	0	7
Stumbling	19	0.0526	0	1	0.229	0	1
Source	19	0.0000	0	0	0.000	0	0
Slow	19	0.0000	0	0	0.000	0	0
Dragging	19	0.3158	0	6	0.671	0	2
Long pause	19	0.0000	0	0	0.000	0	0
Restart (Resolution)	19	1.2105	0	23	1.988	0	8

**Table 8**  
**Filler: 35%**

## Adapter - Total occurrences for each hand

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	22.6	18	430	18.9	0	74
BH	19	53.4	55	1014	33.5	2	108
RH	19	21.3	22	404	16.5	1	55

*Table 9*  
**BH: 55%**

## Beats - Total occurrences for each hand

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	14.16	9	269	16.71	0	55
BH	19	60.21	54	1144	64.52	2	300
RH	19	7.74	7	147	6.06	0	20

*Table 10*  
**BH: 73%**

## Pragmatic - Total occurrences for each hand

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	10.58	2	201	14.10	0	37
BH	19	45.79	31	870	54.43	0	243
RH	19	3.47	2	66	5.07	0	17

*Table 11*  
**BH: 76%**

## Representation - Total occurrences for each hand

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	0.316	0	6	0.749	0	3
BH	19	4.053	3	77	4.870	0	17
RH	19	0.474	0	9	1.389	0	6

*Table 12*  
**BH: 84%**

## Filler

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	17.2	13	326	18.92	0	70
BH	19	51.2	40	973	37.24	1	144
RH	19	11.6	10	220	9.84	0	38

*Table 13*  
**BH: 64%**

## Truncation

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	11.58	6	220	13.41	0	45
BH	19	40.37	27	767	37.42	5	170
RH	19	8.00	7	152	6.57	0	19

**Table 14**  
**BH: 67%**

## Restart (Resolution)

Descriptives							
	N	Mean	Median	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximun
LH	19	12.32	7	234	13.13	0	47
BH	19	47.84	34	909	44.81	6	207
RH	19	9.21	8	175	8.44	0	34

**Table 15**  
**BH: 69%**

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Results on speech Disfluencies and Resolutions

The analysis of the total occurrences for each Disfluency and Resolution categories showed that the most frequently used ones were ‘Fillers’, ‘Truncations’ and ‘Resolutions’, while the least frequently encountered speech disruption indicators were ‘Slow’, ‘Long pause’ and ‘Source’ (table 1).

The most used Disfluency categories listed above can all be referred to as the «cognitive resource footprint»<sup>12</sup> (SEEBER 2017: 467) for SI, an ‘audible proof’ of local cognitive load. As per ‘Fillers’, they can be detected at times in which a given clause, sentence or word turned out to be problematic in terms of either its translation or retrieval, also accounting for the so-called TOT (Tip-Of-The-Tongue) state, i.e. whenever «you are unable to think of the word but feel sure that you know it and it is on the verge of coming back to you» (BROWN-MCNEILL 1966: 327). ‘Truncations’ and ‘Resolutions’ – as extensively discussed by Levelt (1983) – imply self-monitoring and self-repair strategies, which are inherent in the very functioning of human cognition when ‘thinking to speak’ in order to obviate ‘linalisation’ and appropriateness problems, up to actual error repairs, for the purpose of ambiguity reduction or nuance editing<sup>13</sup> while formulating – or rather, re-formulating – a message.

A possible reason for the least encountered speech difficulties – accounting for only 4.3% of the total number of cases (table 1) – could lie in the fact that all participants were familiar with the specificity of the SI technique, even in the case of students, who are exposed to such cognitive ef-

<sup>12</sup> Expression used by Seeber to indicate a two-dimensional representation of Wickens’ (1984) three-dimensional multiple resource model to allow the visualisation of cognitive resources involved in SI as a time-shared task. Here the same term is used in a broad sense.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (LEVELT 1981); (LEVELT 1982); (LEVELT 1983).

fort almost on a daily basis during their training. Besides, the source language – indicated by the majority of the subjects (79%) in the LEAP-Q document as their first foreign language – should not have caused any problems in terms of contents comprehension.

Furthermore, out of the total number of speech Disfluencies and Resolutions identified, a significantly higher percentage indicates their co-occurrence with detected gestural patterns, compared to their use in the absence of gestures (table 2). For both of the aforementioned speech categories considered separately, the same result is reported (table 3), thus emphasising gestures' paramount importance both at the precise moment in which an increase in cognitive effort is registered and in the use of relative strategies aimed at its reduction.

Since the ratio of speech disfluencies has been shown<sup>14</sup> to increase under 'noisy conditions' – and given the status of SI as a multimodal, highly demanding cognitive activity, thus exposed to different types of 'noise' – results reported provide interesting insight into the main problems all participants encountered during their SI performance, enabling us to focus on these very instances to conduct a reliable, problem-specific investigation of simultaneous interpreters' gestural patterns.

## 5.2 Results on Gestures

Data extraction from the gesture coding revealed 'Adaptors', 'Beats' and 'Pragmatic' as the most frequently used gesture typologies. In parallel, 'Representation' was the gesture function that reported the fewest occurrences (table 4).

Next, individual co-occurrence instances for each predominant gesture typology with all speech Disfluency and Resolution categories were investigated, highlighting that both 'Adaptors' and 'Representations' were most commonly performed along with 'Fillers', while 'Pragmatic' and 'Beat' gestures were most commonly performed along with Resolutions (tables 5-8).

'Adaptors' helped reducing emotional stress. This gesture typology, devoid of semantic meaning and directed either at oneself ('SAD') or the surrounding objects ('OAD'), can «serve as regulator» (KENDON 2004: 97, QUOTING EKMAN AND FRIESEN 1969), supporting that SI involves an increased global and local load, not only in cognitive but also in emotional terms. Apart from the motoric explicitation of emotions, 'Adaptors' may also «establish control over a cognitive process aimed at solving demanding mental tasks» (PLANAP 1999). This could explain the fact that 'Adaptors' have been recorded both in students and professional interpreters, who – at least theoretically – should be less influenced by the emotional component. In this respect, the motor activity of touching or grasping appears to be connected with the simulation of 'grasping mental objects', over which control is established through a corresponding physical act. Quite often, the tension-reducing and control- (re)establishing functions of 'Adaptors' have been attributed to the speaker's difficulty of retrieving a word or concept, or even when experiencing the TOT phenomenon. This can also be supported by our results, showing 'Adaptors' employed above all when 'Fillers' were being used. Overall, this seems to provide further data supporting both the Tension Reduction and Lexical

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<sup>14</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (Gosy 2007).

Retrieval hypothesis.

The second gesture typology most frequently used by interpreters were 'Beats'<sup>15</sup>. This category has been also referred to as «motor gestures» (KRAUSS-CHEN-GOTTESMAN 2001), «batons» (EFRON 1941, 1972), (EKMAN-FRIESEN 1972) and «rhythmical pulse» (McCLAVE 1994). Their function has been connected with organising speech in the target language, facilitating both words activation and speech segmentation, strategies which enable concepts retaining in working memory, thus facilitating the storing and retention of mental images and related lexical items in both languages.

Since 'Beats' tend to have the same form, regardless of the speech content they co-occur with, they have been described as the least significant gesture typology from the point of view of physical manifestation<sup>16</sup>. Even though they «bear no obvious relation to the semantic content of the accompanying speech» (FEYEREISEN-VAN DE WIELE-DUBOIS 1988), this category is one of the most revealing as it enables to concretely visualise the interpreter's mental models when advancing in the construction of narrative speech, revealing the semantic and discourse pragmatic significance of the lexical items it accompanies.

Having underlined 'Beats' most frequent co-occurrence with 'Resolutions' seems in line with their very function, i.e. allowing interpreters to self-monitor their own speech structuring process, providing further evidence as per the crucial role gestural kinetics plays in speech structuring and production during SI. Nevertheless, where interpreters put the rhythmic emphasis of their Beat gestures may not necessarily be related to the semantic key elements of the source speech.

To summarise, the obtained results underline how 'Beats' can help interpreters in reducing cognitive load during SI, allowing them – through rhythmic body movements – to store, retain and activate mental and lexical items in the working memory, while keeping constant track of their language processing and sentence structuring, hence facilitating the retrieval of the source speech key elements and the consequent logical structuring of their output. Lastly, since they appeared to be used more often during Resolutions, 'Beats' could also be seen as 'interpreters' embodiment of local cognitive load', with rhythmic movements used to emphasise a speech component, which was somehow challenging to translate, in the moment of its successful formulation in the target language.

The third gesture typology that showed a significant number of occurrences was the 'Pragmatic' one. This category includes all gestures which are idiosyncratic and do not have neither representational nor referential functions. In other words, 'Pragmatic' gestures do not appear to be semantically linked to the word or phrase they accompany and can be detected in different contexts. Many 'Pragmatic' gestures have become «recurrent gestures» (BRESSEM-MÜLLER 2014), such as 'sideways sweeping' to underline negation, 'cyclic gesture', depicting the idea of something continuing (especially during word-search) or even 'wavering hands', expressing uncertainty about something or even «during the retrieving of the desired lexical unit (LEONTEVA- AGAFONOVA- PETROV 2020). These gesture can also explicit the speakers' attitude towards the content of what they are saying, thus expressing one's point of view. Finally, 'Pragmatic' gestures can either serve a generic

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<sup>15</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (KENDON 1983); (MCNEILL-LEVY 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (MCNEILL-LEVY 1993: 5).

discourse structuring function or can be «empathic gestures» (IRISKHANOVA-PETROV-MAKOVEEVA-LEONTEVA 2019), illustrating the lecturer's own intentions, through «matching the interpreter's point of view with that of the lecturer, whose voice they hear through their headsets» (IBID.).

In line with the latter function, data we collected showed that 'Pragmatic' gestures were used to a greater extent along with Resolutions, supporting this as a further modality through which interpreters can reduce cognitive pressure during SI. Namely, through 'Pragmatic' gestures, interpreters can «copy the imaginary physical movements of the person whose speech is to be interpreted» (IBID.), supporting the self-oriented function gestures have and acknowledging the fact that giving physical form to a concept is an extremely useful cognitive effort reduction strategy. It can thus be argued that during 'Resolution' – when the interpreter's cognitive efforts are channelled into the repair or retrieval of a given word, phrase or concept – giving motoric form to that same linguistic unit can help them in successfully solving a given speech perturbation.

Lastly, 'Representation' – happening to be the least performed gestural function amongst all subjects – was predominantly identified with 'Fillers'. Notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning some interesting assumptions about its limited use. Representational gestures are usually performed to create similarity between the shape that hands acquire and the referred element, be it a person, object, thing, action or event. They have been proved to «facilitate mental activity and speech production as they are based on mental images» (KITA 2000, MITTELBERG-EVOLA 2014). By their very nature – being based on different mental models and memories – they can produce different, highly personalised representations of the same lexical unit, enhancing the quality of both thinking and speaking processes in two main ways. Firstly, 'Representations' have been commonly detected during the TOT state, thus helping in the retrieval of the sought-for word. Besides, since they have been also addressed to as «metaphoric gestures» (MCNEILL-LEVY 1993: 5), their second function consists in relying in the human body ability to help with the verbalisation of an abstract concept. Such «thought illustration» (IRISKHANOVA-PETROV-MAKOVEEVA-LEONTEVA 2019: 9) function is a more structured form of 'Adaptors', i.e. 'Representation' may serve as a coping strategy to overcome local cognitive load when strictly connected to precise linguistic components or discourse topics.

Both abovementioned functions seem in line with results from this study, underlying a predominance of 'Representation'-'Filler' co-occurrence. However, despite the well-established facilitative function of this gestural behaviour in complementing speech, «adding its own imagery of the narrative event» (MCNEILL-LEVY 1993: 5), it is interesting to note that 'Representations' were performed more rarely, compared to results gathered on 'Adaptors' and 'Beats'. Given the high improbability that our detection is to be interpreted in terms of the ineffectiveness of such gestures in facilitating simultaneous interpreters' task, the main reason might instead lie in a reduced management ability of the cross-language activation that a mental image originates in SI. As explained by Pavlenko (2009) – and applied here to the specific case of simultaneous interpreters – the facilitative role mental image activation has for these particular 'communicative actors' is not as immediate as in cases of monolingual interactions. Indeed, image activation in SI entails the stimulation of the corresponding lexical element in all the languages known by the interpreter, making the correct

linguistic equivalent retrieval much more demanding.

In light of this, the fact that more than half (around 63%) of the subjects who took part in our study are still finishing their training as interpreters could explain the lower use of representational gestures. A further study focusing exclusively on the use of 'Representations', comparing their occurrence rates between professional and novice interpreters could provide further support for this assumption.

Lastly, results on Handedness underlined – for each most detected gesture typology alone and in conjunction with the most used speech Disfluency and Resolution categories – an absolute predominance of gestures performed using both hands, compared to the percentages of gestural behaviours in which right or left hand alone were engaged (tables 9-12; tables 13-15). Both hands' predominant use was found to be over 50% in all cases investigated. This result is in line with data gathered from the 'Handedness' Questionnaire, in which – for all fifteen action types listed – all participants reported being able to use both hands to perform eleven of the given action categories, albeit almost always in smaller percentages than either left or right hand alone. However, only four action categories (27% approximately) reported no preference for using both hands. In this respect, it is possible to briefly illustrate the relevance of such a datum, by referring to what has already been discussed in the literature with regard to 'Handedness' and, in particular, the predominant use of both hands over the left or right hand alone.

Generally, the use of hands has been shown to mirror the structure of the speech they accompany, in terms of both grammatical structures and content types. «Cohesion of Handedness» (MCNEILL-LEVY 1993: 12), reflects the speaker's tendency to physically reproduce the cohesion between main and subordinate clauses that should always exist in a well-structured discourse. In particular, along with 'Space and Form Cohesion', the main relationship established between 'Handedness' and speech concerns greater gestural complexity together with main utterances, as «the subordinate clauses refer to information carried forward from previous clauses but the main clause doesn't convey presupposed information, and plausibly this clause does more to 'push the communication forward'» (IBID.). In parallel, McNeill (1994) devoted a section entirely to the use of both hands in gestural production, underlining that in some gestures they can move «in the same pattern but in mirror images. Such gestures do not seem to differ semantically or functionally from their one-hand counterparts» (MCNEILL 1994: 117). Besides, both hands can perform different movements, or rather, «considered separately, perform different movements but, jointly, create a scene in which there is a single event» (IBID.).

Summarising thus far, we may say that gestures performed with two hands – analysed in relation to the verbal typology they accompany – show the integration of speech and gestures at the level of meaning. In relation to our study, these considerations are particularly significant, allowing us to investigate how simultaneous interpreters use their body to reproduce in space both the possible changes in the point of view along the narration and the structural coherence of the source speech, in order to facilitate its transmission in the target output.

A final observation regarding 'Handedness' concerns – irrespective of the hand used to perform a given gesture – the timing of gestural performance in relation to the specific portion of linguistic

content uttered. It was found that, very often – after sentence truncations or at times when the fluency of the interpretation was clearly disrupted by an increased cognitive load (e.g. during filled or long pauses) – gestures serving different functions appeared well before the lexical element to which they referred was actually uttered.

From this, taking into account that interpreters always work with a more or less wide-ranging *décalage* from the lecturer's voice – and, thus, assuming that in moments of difficulty the specific source speech element responsible for the momentary disruption of the interpretation should have already been heard – it is possible to state with further confidence that gestures are crucial in activating effective coping strategies during SI, even when speech stops.

## 6. Conclusion

Contrary to the claim that preventing gestures has no particular effect on speech production<sup>17</sup>, standing in contrast to research showing that people gesture more when their listeners can see them<sup>18</sup>, and unlike scholars who argue that «when speech stops, gesture stops» (GRAZIANO-GULLBERG 2018), our data seem to support the exact opposite.

Results from the present study suggest a very tight link between speech and gestures, therefore supporting our hypothesis as per their facilitative role in offloading an increased cognitive pressure during simultaneous interpretation.

Given the fact that simultaneous interpreting is a multimodal, highly demanding professional activity which requires high levels of cognitive – global, local and emotional – load, and departing from the core theoretical concept of Embodied Cognition, this experimental research shows how gestures are accountable for the so-called «cross-modal priming» (KRAUSS-CHEN-GOTTESMAN 2001: 10).

Through the 'manipulation' of one's own world conceptualisation and perception, gestures enable to represent in motoric or kinesic form features of the «source concept» (IBID.).

Overall, data gathered from our analysis suggest that gestures help interpreters in reducing stress, in lexical retrieval as well as in analytic and spatio-motoric thinking<sup>19</sup>, serving as an invaluable support not only at times of fluent interpretation, but also and above all during speech disfluencies, enhancing the quality of both language comprehension and production processes.

Lastly, a comparison between results obtained from our investigation and those extracted from similar studies conducted by the Moscow State Linguistic University's Centre for Socio-Cognitive Discourse Studies (SCoDis) underlined interesting similarities in gestural behaviour patterns, from which we may infer – although further research is needed – that gestures not only help simultaneous interpreters in reducing an increased cognitive effort, but also that their self-oriented

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<sup>17</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (HOLLER-TURNER-VARCIANNA 2012); (KISA-GOLDIN-MEADOW-CASASANTO 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (ALIBALI ET AL. 2001); (MOL ET AL. 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. List of cited literature (CHU-KITA 2011); (ALIBALI-CHU-KITA 2017).

facilitative function is cross- cultural and cross-linguistic.

## ETICHS STATEMENT

This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere. All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study and were provided the right to withdraw. All personal data has been disclosed among members of the research group only, protecting anonymity and confidentiality and they have been analysed for research purposes of which all participants had been made aware of.

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## **Interlingual respeaking training for simultaneous interpreting trainees: new opportunities in Media Accessibility**

### **Abstract**

*Interlingual Live Subtitling (ILS) provides dual accessibility for live events offering multilingual accessibility to the content of a given source text in another language, catering at the same time for a written product for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences who might not have proper access to the audio source. ILS stands at the crossroads of audiovisual translation, media accessibility and simultaneous interpreting (ROMERO-FRESCO & ALONSO-BACIGALUPE 2022) and it is currently provided through different methods. One human-mediated mode is of ILS – or Speech-to-text interpreting (STTI) – is the technique of respeaking, which shares much common ground with interpreting itself. As previous research has shown (SZARKOWKA ET AL. 2018, PÖCHHCKER & REMAEL 2019, DAWSON 2020), interpreters as well as subtitlers are the best suited profiles to be trained for respeaking, as it is by definition an interpretation in its first stage. Given the growing demand for ILS services, it is believed it can be crucial to educate interpreters in respeaking and train professionals in this field. Simultaneous interpreting (SI) training is quite straightforward in the interlingual respeaking learning process, nevertheless aim of this contribution is to praise the benefits that SI courses can yield by including an interlingual respeaking coaching in the training, highlighting how respeaking can help strengthening some interpreters' skills.*

**Keywords:** *media accessibility, live subtitling, Speech-to-text interpreting, respeaking, simultaneous interpreting.*

### **1. Introduction**

Respeaking is one of the currently used methods to produce live subtitles via speech-recognition (SR) based systems. Romero-Fresco (2011) defines respeaking as “a technique in which a respeaker listens to the original sound of a live programme or event and respeaks it, including punctuation marks and some specific features for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing audience, to a speech recognition software, which turns the recognized utterances into subtitles displayed on screen with the shortest possible delay” (ROMERO-FRESCO 2011: 1). Drawing also on some of the first attempt of its definition (EUGENI 2006, 2008), respeaking is basically a simultaneous reformulation of an audio source input into a SR software, with the elicitation of punctuation marks, while still listening to the source audio and monitoring the creation of text on the screen.

As for interlingual respeaking, according to Romero-Fresco and Alonso-Bacigalupe (2022: 3) it is considered one of the most promising forms of STTI, intersecting the fields of audiovisual translation (AVT), Media Accessibility (MA) and Simultaneous Interpreting (SI) and situating between human-mediated translation and automatic language processing systems (GRECO & JANKOWSKA

2020).

In line with the demand for a barrier-free accessible to all communication, MA accounts not only for sensory but also to linguistic barriers (DIAZ-CINTAS 2005) and, in this frame, interlingual respeaking does tackle both auditory accessibility needs – including subtitling for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) features in the process – as well as multilingual accessibility given its interlingual nature.

This proposal primarily aims at shedding light on the opportunity than can be grasped in teaching to interpreting trainees the technique of interlingual respeaking, given their many similarities. Secondly, the purpose is to highlight how respeaking training can be beneficial to SI performance, sharing feedbacks from interpreting students who were tutored in intralingual and interlingual respeaking. The course was a novelty for the trainees as more than 85% of them had never approached the topic of MA or ILS and they did not know what respeaking was, suggesting how shallow awareness concerning accessibility in this field is, something even more striking in a multicultural, technological era, at an academic level and, above all, in a master's degree in translation and interpreting. The first part of this article is dedicated to the description of similarities shared by SI and interlingual respeaking in terms of competence-oriented tasks, drawing upon some recent research in the field. Then, attention is given to the positive outcomes and effects that participants to the training in respeaking at the University of Genoa detected in their interpreting performance. In doing so, some qualitative data gathered during a Doctoral research together with answers to some questionnaires submitted to the participants to the study are briefly outlined.

## **2. Skills and competences: from simultaneous interpreting to interlingual respeaking**

Although interlingual respeaking overlaps even more with SI with the code shifting from L1 to L2, intralingual respeaking intrinsic simultaneity of cognitive tasks such as listening, reformulating, dictating, monitoring and editing while still listening also heavily draws upon interpreting skills of split attention, multitasking and memory, among others (SZARKOWSKA ET AL. 2017; ALIPRANDI & VERRUSO 2006). Albeit the focus here is placed on interlingual respeaking training specifically, reference to its intralingual variation both in terms of skills involved and training will be made. Some attempts were dedicated to thoroughly inform respeaking training design, first intralingually and only more recently also interlingually. Over the last decade research in the field has bloomed, investigating more on the relationship between respeaking and both SI and subtitling, in intralingual but also interlingual respeaking (ROMERO-FRESCO 2015A; CHMIEL ET AL. 2017, 2017A; SZARKOWSKA ET AL. 2017, 2018; DAWSON 2019, 2020; SANDRELLI 2020), trying to research and answer to the more generic question "Who are live subtitlers?" (ROBERT ET AL. 2019a) and investigating their tasks through a competence-oriented lens (PÖCHHACKER & REMAEL 2019).

If we think to the whole process of interpreting or respeaking, in both situations some general competence coincide, such as world knowledge – also intended as the constant update on latest news – and knowledge of the subject matter developed in the task, professional and interpersonal skills, as well as linguistic and cultural competence, and multitasking.

As for SI and interlingual respeaking specifically, some interpreting skills such as bilingual competence, or an excellent command of the working languages are to be added. Pöchhacker and Remael (2019) present the first competence model for interlingual respeaking by carrying out a descriptive analysis of the process involved in the process, bringing it down to: knowledge of respeaking task and process, research and preparation, translation, multitasking, audiovisual monitoring, and editing.

Drawing on some recent research in the field concerning a research-informed professional profile for interlingual respeakers (PÖCHHACKER & REMAEL 2019; DAWSON 2020; DAVITTI & SANDRELLI 2020; DAWSON & ROMERO-FRESCO 2021), it is attempted to highlight the common features of SI and interlingual respeaking. Image 1 below shows which skills are shared between the two in the different stages of the processes, with particular attention (in yellow) to which additional ones are required only for the latter. Before the task both interpreters and respeakers need to undergo a terminological and thematic preparation about the subject matter. In this stage, for the respeaking task the SR engine should also be prepared and trained. When performing in the task, cognitive skills are activated and Gile's Effort Models in interpreting (GILE 1992, 1995, 2015) are a consistent approach to analyze the different similar components involved such as working memory, coordination and control, and listening comprehension. To this, Pöchhacker & Remael (2019) add strategic reformulation ("Production", according to Gile) and specifically for respeaking also dictation and monitoring and correction are added. To be noticed that here "expression" is also added, in an attempt to differentiate it from strategic reformulation, with a specific focus on the ability of expressing and articulate as well as pronounce words properly in the target language (TL). At this stage, respeakers need to add dictation to the SR software, monitoring of the produced written text on the screen and, if some error is detected, editing and correction. Furthermore, they need to be aware of technical conventions and use of SDH features such as speakers' identification labels or colors, and sounds-noises description. In the final stage, after the task is completed, both interpreters and respeakers make a debriefing to highlight strengths and weaknesses of their performance. Usually, quality check is more efficiently carried out for respeaking tasks since the written output of the reformulation and the dictation are available and therefore it is easier and more reliable, but nothing prevents to carry out a check on a recorded SI performance, for example. In addition, respeakers update the SR database with new terminology.

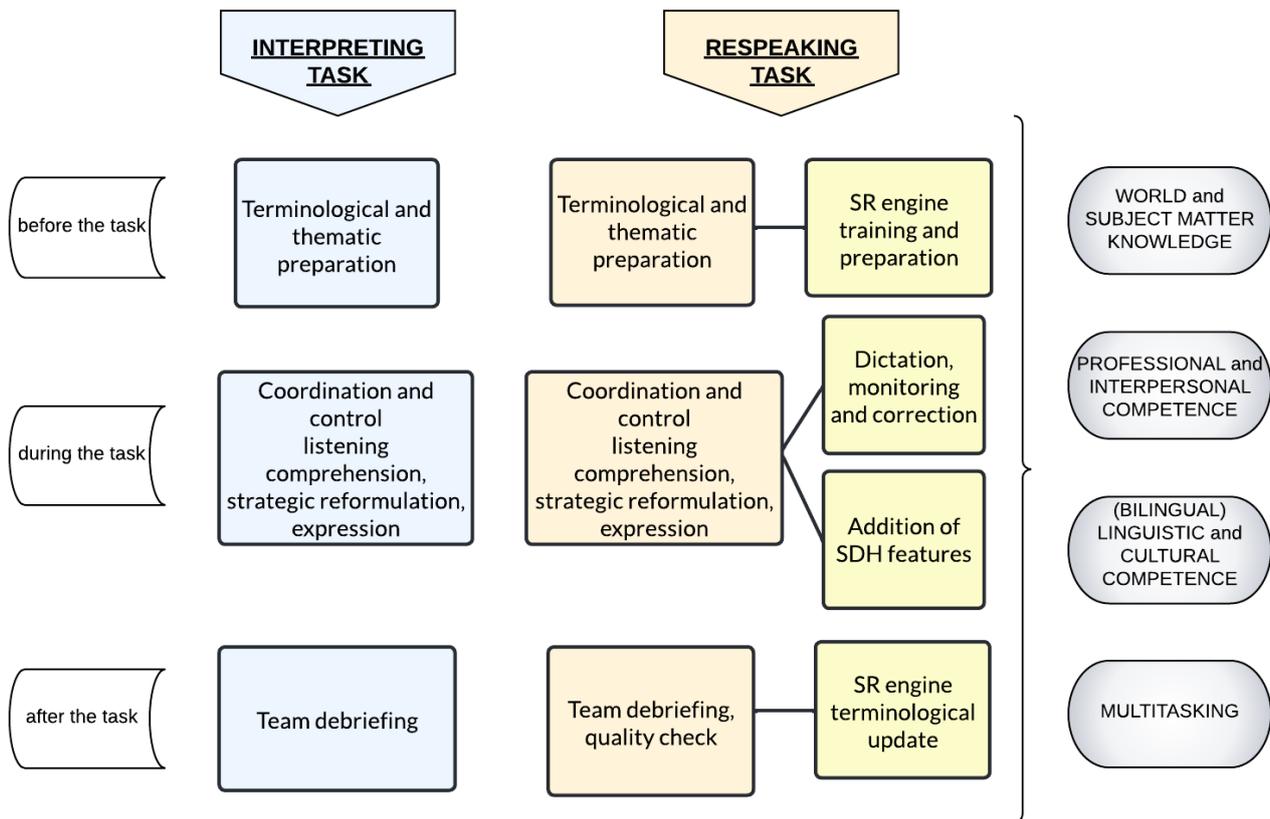


Image 1. Competences involved in SI and interlingual respeaking processes

### 3. But, can interpreters be better respeakers?

The competence profile outlined should serve as the starting point to design a training programme for ILS through respeaking. In an attempt to investigate the most suitable professional profiles to carry out respeaking tasks thanks to the different competences required, subtitlers and interpreters appeared to be valid candidates (SZARKOWSKA ET AL. 2018; DAWSON 2019, 2020). In both studies participants with different academic and professional backgrounds – simultaneous interpreters, subtitlers, and intralingual respeakers – were tested in both intralingual and interlingual respeaking performances.

To the question “Are interpreters better respeakers?” Szarkowska et al. (2018) reply with an investigation involving 57 participants (22 interpreters, 23 translators and 12 control participants) and point out that interpreters did consistently achieve higher scores in output assessment than other groups. Dawson (2019) tested firstly 9 participants (2 subtitlers, 3 subtitlers and respeakers, 2 subtitlers and interpreters, 1 interpreter and respeaker, and 1 subtitlers, interpreter and respeaker) suggesting that interpreters would be the best suited for the task. Afterwards (2020), another study tested 27 participants (13 with previous experience in interpreting, and 14 with some subtitling experience being all of them interpreting students) in which overall, both interpreters and subtitlers were observed to be suited for the task, although some differences were noticed in performance ratings between the two groups. The study also highlighted that an interlingual respeaking training programme needs to develop some task-specific skills, some of which inter-

preters already tame while subtitlers do not (multitasking, short-term memory to name but a few), and vice versa (e.g. SDH features, subtitles segmentation and duration, maximum characters and words per line etc.).

Overall, this allowed to shed light on the need for specific training for respeakers, drawing from both SI and pre-recorded subtitling, while specific tasks for respeaking are required such as knowledge on how the SR works, dictation to the software, and live editing. Given the many similarities shared with interlingual respeaking, it already seems reasonable as well as time and effort efficient to exploit so many specific and highly-technical skills of trainees in interpreting and seize the opportunity to train them also for accessibility through live subtitling (LS).

#### **4. Training programmes in intra and interlingual respeaking**

A recent increase in AVT and accessibility services is the result of new legislation and accessibility guidelines at a European level, such as the European Accessibility Act (2019), with the aim of increasing quantity and improving quality of SDH and AD services (ROMERO-FRESCO 2019b), as well as LS and ILS specifically. As a consequence, appropriate training plays an essential role in improving quality and setting standard requirements for the different MA services provided.

Intralingual LS has become a widely used professional practice and has begun to be recognized at an academic level over the past two decades (EUGENI & BERNABÉ 2019; ROBERT ET AL. 2019b). Intralingual LS through respeaking, more specifically, has been practiced from 2001 (ROMERO-FRESCO 2011) and the interest in the training of professionals in the field grew not long afterwards. As for intralingual respeaking, some training models were previously proposed (ARUMÍ RIBAS & ROMERO-FRESCO 2008; ROMERO-FRESCO 2012), helping to inform the skills and competences required by the job, as detailed in the paragraph above.

Nowadays at a European level few Universities offer courses on intra or interlingual LS or respeaking and, if so, they are only short modules in AVT or Conference Interpreting master’s degrees, therefore mirroring a need for better training. Among them, the University of Antwerp (Belgium), the University of Warsaw (Poland), and the University of Roehampton (UK) offer formal training in respeaking from 3 to 6 months, while the Universidad de Vigo (Spain) offers a five-month online module in Intralingual Respeaking in English, Spanish and Galician and a three-month online module on interlingual respeaking in the same languages (ROMERO-FRESCO 2018). In addition, the University of Leeds (UK), the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), and the University of Parma (Italy) provide introductory workshops on respeaking, as well as the University of Genoa (Italy), having offered a first interlingual respeaking training in 2020 (cfr. PAGANO 2022). In the EU frame are also worth mentioning the School of Applied Linguistics of the Zurich University (Switzerland) and the introductory course on respeaking at the University of Mons (Belgium) (EUGENI & BERNABÉ 2019). One last online self-paced course in intralingual LS – specifically respeaking and velotyping methods – which is worthy of note is the European project LTA<sup>1</sup> (Live Text Access), covering introduction to accessibility, linguistic and IT competences as well as professional skills

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the LTA project, please visit: <https://ltaproject.eu>.

required in this field.

Concerning interlingual respeaking, despite its complexity and technicality due to the many different tasks it involves, it was deemed feasible and promising (DAWSON 2019; MOORES 2020) also among student-level trainees (DAVITTI & SANDRELLI 2020). The first all-encompassing online, open-access training proposal of ILS dates back to 2020 by the European co-funded project ILSA<sup>2</sup> (Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access) through which the first training course on ILS was developed. Among other objectives, the project aimed at bridging the gap between intra and interlingual live subtitling as recognized professional practices (ROBERT ET AL. 2019b) by identifying the profile of the interlingual live subtitler. Moreover, through a Doctoral research that intertwined with the ILSA project (DAWSON 2020) a research-informed training model for interlingual respeaking was also investigated, only partially coinciding with the ILSA course as they differed in purpose, structure and modules, and since the latter was conceived to be integrated in Higher Education courses, providing open-access learning resources and materials. The training model instead "can be used as a guide to develop future interlingual respeaking training" (DAWSON 2020: 231). In other words, the research-informed model can help design a training to be integrated as part of a master's program, or adapted to other needs of modules on respeaking.

This is precisely what was done for the interlingual respeaking training at the University of Genoa, Department of Modern Languages and Cultures (IBID.), drawing upon both the training model by Dawson, and the ILSA course. It was the very first time that a training concerning the fields of SDH and MA through LS was provided and the chance was presented thanks to the author's -doctoral research in this field. Interestingly, students who subscribed had very little or no knowledge about audiovisual accessibility needs, neither they knew what the technique of respeaking was. They also subscribed entirely voluntarily, either because curious about the unknown topic, or because they were told at some point of the increasing demand for respeaking and it seemed to them relevant and urgent to grasp this training chance. Two trainings were delivered, the first in the academic year 2020/21 from English to Italian (15 students), and the second in 2021/22 from Spanish to Italian (5 students). Both courses were offered online throughout a three-month period (twelve weeks training plus the testing), and lasted approximately 70 hours (synchronous lessons and individual exercises). Of the 20 students, 16 of them previously attended some workshops or modules in pre-recorded subtitling or SDH, 17 had previous experience in SI, while 3 had had some experience in other types of interpretation (dialogue or consecutive) and had carried out only propaedeutic exercises to SI.

Students were introduced to the interlingual respeaking technique gradually, as a combination of both subtitling and SI. As regards the modules, the structure was the following: theoretical introduction on MA, accessibility and LS methods; introduction to subtitling and SDH; review of SI technique; introduction to the SR software use and intralingual respeaking practice; interlingual respeaking practice. The first introductory part was deemed not only necessary but very useful, since students can benefit greatly in seeing accessibility itself as a critical component to media creation rather than an afterthought (YOUNGBLOOD, TIRUMALA & GALVES 2018). Therefore a top-

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the ILSA project, please visit: <http://galmaobservatory.eu/projects/interlingual-live-subtitling-for-access-ilsa>.

down approach from the generic to the specific (audiovisual accessibility, auditory impairment, MA through LS, ILS, intralingual and interlingual respeaking techniques) instead of a bottom-up methodology (learning how to subtitle and only after integrating SDH features or LS concerns, and try to understand why and how they can cater for accessibility needs) was adopted. Then, why is it important to train interpreting trainees for accessibility?

#### 4.1 The experience at the University of Genoa

At the end of both courses in interlingual respeaking, the participants were asked to complete two anonymous questionnaires via Google Forms<sup>3</sup>. One was a satisfaction questionnaire and aimed at gathering feedbacks and thoughts on the recently completed training experience, while the second wanted to monitor students’ improvement in terms of preparation and awareness in the field of respeaking and MA respectively.

Some questions sought to receive feedbacks on the training and also to find out about the future intentions of the students in continuing their training in interlingual respeaking, and whether they would advise colleagues or classmates to enroll to a similar training; if the answer was positive, they were asked to briefly comment on why. All of the 20 students who participated to the course marked ‘yes’, though only some of the comments on this are reported below (all answers were given in Italian, the following are the author’s translations of the original versions):

1. It is a relatively unknown branch of the linguistic services field; it is useful for strengthening SI; in the future it could supersede SI, or at least radically change conference interpreting as we know it.
2. The workshop allows for deepening knowledge of a relatively unknown use of SI [respeaking] through which content is made accessible. I do think this is a very gratifying task at a personal level.
3. This experience offers the opportunity of learning and being confronted with a new practice that is not included in the standard master’s course [at our University].
4. The training is particularly interesting for those who already are interested in SI. [Through it,] you can discover a discipline that has never been approached before [at our University], and that can be refined for professional use in the future.
5. [The course] offers the chance of acquiring new skills, discovering a new field which is still relatively unknown, and improving one’s SI abilities.

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<sup>3</sup> All reference questionnaires from both the interlingual respeaking trainings (2020/21 and 2021/22) are available at: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VDDt0m7v8JXdzvnPkN3FbydY2-PD0gaQ?usp=sharing>, together with pre-workshop and post-experiment questionnaires of the Doctoral research (cfr. PAGANO 2022).

6. [Respeaking] is unfortunately still in its infancy and not widely acknowledged, but it can be very useful in improving one's SI abilities.
7. It is an insightful workshop that introduced a method of subtitling that I did not know about. It allowed me to develop new skills and improve my speaking competences.
8. I find it an amazing opportunity to learn something new and to acquire new skills, something particularly useful from a professional perspective. [It is also useful to] learn how to use new software.
9. I believe it is a useful workshop for anyone who wants to study languages since it widens horizons and offers new opportunities. It allows to use in full one's abilities and it is also quite enjoyable since you learn how live subtitles work, you learn how to deal with obstacles and to grasp the essential meaning to translate during an interpreting task. It is very stimulating and fruitful.

Several insights on the relation between and the common ground shared by SI and interlingual respeaking can be grasped by these comments. First, in almost all the iterations students highlighted that respeaking is still very little known – or not as widely as it should – and that they did not know it since it is rare to find a training on it at a higher-education level. Second, they emphasized the similarity between interlingual respeaking and SI (more than subtitling), suggesting they could greatly benefit from a combined training in which both techniques are taught. Third, it is stressed how interlingual respeaking training allows for acquisition of new skills while, at the same time, strengthening and training many others already gained that are useful for their academic curriculum. Last but not least, as for professional opportunities, many touched on respeaking as a natural evolution of SI as it is, and of Conference Interpreting as a whole.

Students were also asked about any competences they felt they had acquired or enhanced thanks to the modules they completed and, again, many pointed out improvements in their SI technique thanks to the several skills it shares with respeaking. Among them, trainees indicated split attention, working under pressure, multitasking, problem solving, IT and specific software competences, proficiency improvement in L1 and L2, advance in active listening comprehension, and expression (production). As newly acquired and enhanced skills they identified:

- dictation and segmentation;
- audiovisual monitoring to allow for editions and corrections on screen, if needed;
- a higher-level multitasking (not only listening, comprehending and producing, but also monitoring and editing), and strengthened cognitive skills (short-term memory and split attention) due to the complexity of the process;
- the importance of output quality check.

Thanks to dictation they noticed as a result a better articulation and pronunciation of words on their side, to allow the SR software to properly recognize them, while segmentation allowed to shed light on the need for pauses between idea units, therefore leading to a good prosody and intonation when speaking. One participant notably pointed out that it was fundamental to "try to create in the first place an output that is as clear as possible, in order to intervene as little as possible on the TT". Another one lauded the acquisition of the ability to "deliver a performance with as few false starts and hesitations as possible". In respeaking, the voice output is taken through dictation by the SR software that transcribes anything it can grasp, therefore any false start, hesitation or mumbling results in one more word to be monitored and corrected on screen, hence more cognitive load and work to do. Clearing out the feed of such oral features and speech fillers helped students to do the same also in SI. As a result, their feed could be more pleasant and clearer to be listened to by the audience. It goes without saying that all such features can be a great gain for SI as well in managing output.

Audiovisual monitoring together with edition and correction is interconnected with the higher-level multitasking, the latter depending not only on listening, comprehending and expressing, but also checking the screen in search for errors and correcting them, if needed. One student also mentioned an enhancement in their anxiety management in working in front of other people and with new techniques and tools: as the different tasks need to be carried out, once accomplished the more complex assignment of interlingual respeaking, interpreting can be performed with reduced working anxiety and stress. As substantial gain both for both SI and ILS, reduction in reaction time was also detected due to the speed required. During the demanding and rapid task of interlingual respeaking, indeed, they highlighted the importance of selecting information, grasping the most relevant information in a speech, reformulating and reducing strategically, an aspect that can quite straightforwardly be beneficial to SI as well, leading to a neater and more accurate output as well as to a reduced *décalage*. It also seems relevant to highlight one given answer where a participant pointed out: "I undoubtedly improved my SI skills since I understood which essential parts must be transmitted to the audience, without 'being afraid' of saying too little". With this, together with previous comment 9 ("you learn how [...] to grasp the essential meaning to translate during an interpreting task") participants express the need in interlingual respeaking to condense some information in order to keep up with the multitude of tasks and the ST pace, suggesting that sometimes 'less is more' – in other words, it is better to do less but to do it right, i.e. respeak less information but make sure it is transcribed correctly, rather than produce nearly the whole but unintelligible content, also in SI.

Lastly, during the training their performances in interlingual respeaking were analyzed collectively in the class concerning linguistic accuracy by applying the NTR model (ROMERO-FRESCO & PÖCHHACKER 2017). Thanks to this, students also acknowledged an improvement in their linguistic analysis ability, stressing they increased self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in both SI and respeaking especially for the impact omissions, additions and substitutions of content can have on the audience.

The following Image 2 summarizes the benefits that newly acquired and enhanced skills through interlingual respeaking training (left side) can have on some frequent obstacles encountered by SI

trainees (on the right in light orange), with their subsequent positive effect (far right).

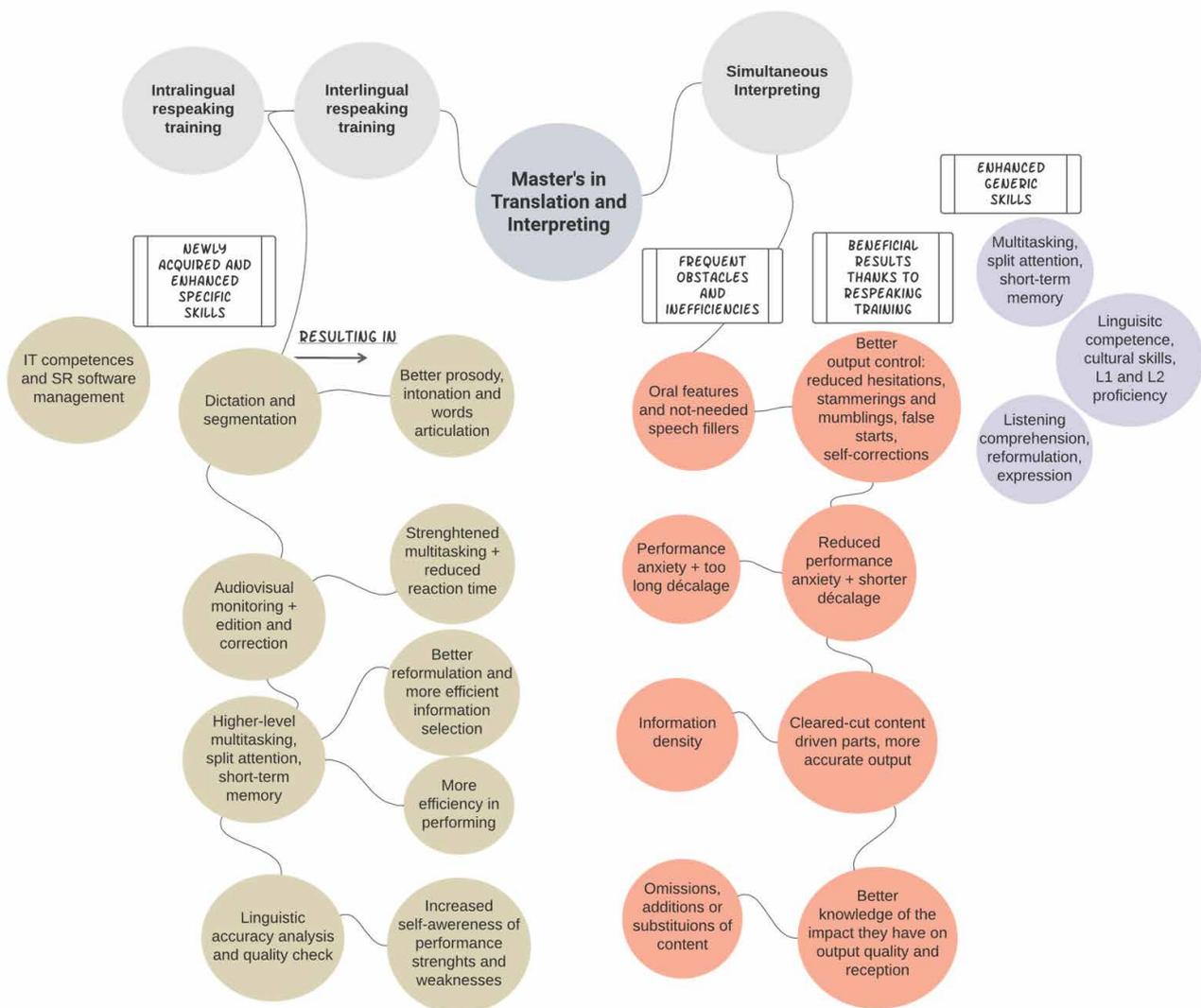


Image 2. Gains and benefits in SI through interlingual respesking training

## 5. Educating simultaneous interpreters for accessibility: conclusions

It must be stressed that SI performances were not closely monitored after the interlingual respesking training to detect and quantify the trainees' improvement curve in the highlighted skills. Nevertheless, the results obtained in the final testing on both courses completion in which students performed as interpreters, intralingual or interlingual respesking (cfr. PAGANO 2022) were quite satisfying, suggesting a substantial improvement.

Their background in simultaneous interpreting, translation competences and, in some cases, subtitling skills can be easily exploited in educating students in MA through respesking. If trained on how to interact with the SR software (specifically dictation, punctuation enunciation and segmentation) simultaneous interpreters have great potential in refining their interlingual respesking skills. Finally, if trained on how to cleanse their outputs of oral hindrances such as hesitations, re-

formulations on the go, false starts, and so on, ASR systems could process their audio inputs more easily in the speech-to-text process.

Although the answers and the qualitative data proposed refer to a quite small sample of participants – and therefore this work cannot be intended as exhaustive or comprehensive – the proposal can provide some relevant suggestions on training in this field through the trainees' opinions. Given that the better suited profiles for respeaking are both simultaneous interpreters and subtitlers, and the many similarities between the two techniques, it would be advisable to envisage a combined training in both SI and interlingual respeaking in Translation and Interpreting master's degrees. Academic courses in this area already train several – if not all – useful skills it is about time to gain the momentum and take a huge step forward towards a more inclusive and accessible audiovisual awareness.

Eloquently, answers to the questionnaires demonstrate particular enthusiasm by all the students that were interested in the subject matter, and this can be viewed as a call for accessibility in a field that already embraces it, and in which both could thrive. Furthermore, respeaking training can better educate students in the MA field and, specifically, in DHOH accessibility needs, raising most urgent awareness that, as shown, tend to lack in still so many academic landscapes, albeit strictly related to the topic. In this regard, it was striking how little students and participants knew about either SDH and MA: as seen, almost nobody knew what real-time subtitling for accessibility of non-hearing people entailed, still they sought more knowledge on it. On completion of training, they were more acquainted with the topic, but they were still eager to continue some form of training about it. To conclude, training interpreting students in interlingual respeaking could be very effective, and it is at the same time hoped that it could be fertile ground to raise awareness of the topic and train some much-needed professionals and experts in this field (GRECO 2019b), creating new job opportunities in the landscape of MA for interpreting trainees.

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## **Becoming validators and facilitators of Easy-to-Read texts: bridging the gap between training and profession**

### **Abstract**

*Though E2R has been gaining the interest of scholars in several fields and, recently, of institutions, we can observe the absence of standardized training programs for validators and facilitators of Easy-to-Read texts at a European level. To this purpose, the EU-funded Erasmus+ project Train2Validate attempts to provide a certified course for both facilitators and validators, by investigating the field and the professional background of the two professional figures. Thanks to surveys, interviews, examination of the literature and previous Intellectual Outputs, the consortium has been able to develop a set of skills for the two roles, creating for the first time structured curricula which hopefully will bring a radical change in the recognition of an already existing profession.*

**Keywords:** *Easy-to-Read language, Easy-to-Read, validators, facilitators, curricula, accessibility.*

### **1. Introduction**

This paper deals with competence-based curricula for validators and facilitators of Easy-to-Read (E2R) texts, in the framework of the EU-funded Erasmus+ project Train2Validate. In order to achieve a certified training for the professional development of the two roles, partners of the project have created two curricula. In short, «a curriculum is a document that outlines the contents to be taught to trainees to help them meet a given training objective and specifies how and when these contents are to be acquired and how their acquisition is to be assessed»<sup>1</sup>.

To fully explain the process and how the partners proceeded to get to the creation of the curricula, Section 2 will give a general overview of the project and of the Intellectual Output dedicated to the design of the curricula. In section 3, there is a brief analysis on the current status of training programs for validators and facilitators across Europe, followed by an overall summary of other significant European projects in the field of E2R. Afterwards, section 4 will present the curriculum design and the rationale of the T2V curricula, explaining how the partners categorized skills to be acquired, and the visual representation of the courses. Section 5 will shortly expose the training materials to be used for both training programs. Lastly, section 6 will introduce the credit system used to achieve a standardized certification.

### **2. The T2V project: Intellectual Output 3**

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-YtX1ULjEY> [last access 28 August 2022]

Before going into detail with the explanation of the curricula, it seems appropriate to give further information on the project and on the path followed by the partners to successfully create the curricula. Train2Validate (T2V), short name for the European project “Professional training for easy-to-read facilitators and validators”<sup>2</sup>, started in 2020 and «promotes the cooperation among organisations and the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices at organisational, local, regional, national or European levels» (DEJICA – GARCÍA MUÑOZ – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022). In the attempt of bridging the gap of professionalization in the field of Easy-to-Read, the overall aim of T2V is to create new specific professional profiles, called validators and facilitators, with a certified training for the production of E2R materials (GARCÍA MUÑOZ 2022). This was done to face «a lack of specialised literature and a common framework» (GARCÍA MUÑOZ 2022: 16) at a European level, which will be investigated in section 3.

Since the professional profiles envisaged by the T2V project are experienced experts with a certified training for the production of E2R materials, the project called attention to the necessity of defining the skills to be learned and the related methods and materials to teach these skills (DEJICA – GARCÍA MUÑOZ – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022). In particular, we need to bear in mind that validators are people with reading and learning difficulties assessing the readability and legibility of the texts, as well as «immigrants with low skills in the language of the host country, people with dyslexia, elderly, low literacy adults or deaf people» (GARCÍA MUÑOZ 2022: 14). Their work is coordinated by facilitators.

To reach the goal, the work has been equally distributed amongst the seven partners, according to their area of expertise, and divided into specific Intellectual Outputs (IOs). The IO dealing with the creation of vocational and academic curricula for validators and facilitators is IO3<sup>3</sup>, *Curricula for validators and facilitators of Easy-to-Read texts*, coordinated by SSML – Scuola Superiore per Mediatori Linguistici Pisa. The results achieved during this IO have been presented during Train2Validate’s Multiplier Event 3, held in Pisa on April 7th, 2022.

In order to develop the curricula, partners took into account previous projects, the data collected during IO1<sup>4</sup> and IO2<sup>5</sup>, the best practices and the limited literature in the field, with the overall aim of producing «educational content and activities that resonate with the targeted students and pick them up in terms of prior knowledge, skills, and competences» (BERNABÉ CARO – CAVALLO 2022: 16).

### 3. Current training programs and other projects

As mentioned, there is a lack of sources in literature concerning validation and facilitation in E2R

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/project/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/result-3-the-curriculum-that-facilitator-and-validators-should-study/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>4</sup> The results of IO1, Common methodological framework and best practices in validation across Europe, are available here: <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/result-1-the-current-training-of-facilitators-and-validators/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>5</sup> The results of IO2, The skills that facilitators and validators need, are available here: <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/result-2-the-skills-that-facilitators-and-validators-need/> [last access 28 August 2022]

(DEJICA – GARCÍA MUÑOZ – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022), confirmed also by the lack of research in other countries, as for instance Italy (BLEVE – EUGENI – SCIUMBATA 2022). Moreover, this lack derives from the scarce presence of training programs for professional validators and facilitators in several European countries, as for instance in Spain (GARCÍA MUÑOZ – BERNABÉ CARO 2022: 56), Italy (BLEVE – EUGENI – SCIUMBATA 2022: 113) and Germany (BERNABÉ CARO – CAVALLO 2022: 101), as well as it has an impact on the lack of E2R materials for public use in countries such as Slovenia (KNAPP 2022: 132). The status of training programs in T2V partners' countries are widely discussed in a recent publication<sup>6</sup>, where the debate focuses both on current situations in each country and at a European level. As a matter of fact, the results obtained are considered as «representative for the status of training programs for validators and facilitators in Europe» (DEJICA – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022: 149).

The preliminary results and evidence were gathered through IO1 and were essential to develop the curricula. In particular, IO1 consisted in the dissemination of a survey, «to understand more about the status and needs of E2R validators and facilitators across Europe» (DEJICA – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022: 21). The survey consisted of 5 sections (Demographic profile, General education and training, Education and training in E2R, Current activity and Skills). Amongst the data collected, one of the most relevant concerns the level of knowledge and skills related to E2R contents: «65.9% of the 337 people who answered reported having received some training related to E2R» (DEJICA – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022: 141). Even so, data don't suggest the presence of a standardized training for validators and facilitators across Europe. This statement is supported by the fact that, when asked: "Have you received/used any handbooks for training?", «the majority of the persons (96 of 176 persons) stated that they had not received or used any handbooks for training» (DEJICA – ŞIMON – FĂRCAŞIU – KILYENI 2022: 142).

Despite this general lack of standardized training and research, several projects prior to T2V served as point of departure. For instance, two leading projects in the E2R field are the European projects Pathways I<sup>7</sup> and II<sup>8</sup>. Pathways I attempted at promoting the professional integration of people with chronic diseases and Pathways II aimed at creating learning programs for people with intellectual disabilities. They underlined the needs of documents written in E2R following guidelines elaborated during these projects, such as "Information for all: European standards for making information easy to read and understand"<sup>9</sup> and "Do not write for us without us"<sup>10</sup>. Another project worth of mention at a European level is the EASIT project<sup>11</sup>, whose main goal was making information easy to understand.

To summarize, the information on the status of validators and facilitators across Europe and earlier projects, as well as the competences identified in skills cards and the Pedagogical and Metho-

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<sup>6</sup> See: [https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/04/CoMe\\_Status-E2R.pdf](https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/04/CoMe_Status-E2R.pdf) [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.pathwaysproject.eu/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/pathways-2/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-standards-guidelines/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>10</sup> See: [https://sid-inico.usal.es/idocs/F8/FDO23139/write\\_for\\_us.pdf](https://sid-inico.usal.es/idocs/F8/FDO23139/write_for_us.pdf) [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://pagines.uab.cat/easit/en> [last access 28 August 2022]

dological Curriculum which will be explained in the next sections, functioned as a starting point for the creation of the curricula.

#### 4. The curriculum design

The T2V curricula for the training of validators and facilitators of E2R texts are based on the Pedagogical and Methodological Curriculum (see section 4.1) proposed by SAFAR (1992) and adapted to audiovisual translation by HAMAOU (2015). It is divided into 3 areas: Aims and Objectives, Tools and Teaching, Assessment. Furthermore, the curricula are designed according to the FAME criteria (see section 4.3). The main feature of these curricula is represented by its structure, which is divided into modules. This modular content structure allows for its use at universities and for inhouse training by procurers and associations. In the next sections, we will analyse its structure as well as the rationale of the T2V curricula.

##### 4.1 The Pedagogical and Methodological Curriculum (PMC)

In addition to adopting resolutions to make higher education systems uniform at a European level, the Bologna process has shaped a different approach to vocational and academic training, focusing on competences to be mastered and acquired by students<sup>12</sup>. Nonetheless, competences and skills per se are insufficient for trainees and students to become professionals. There are other key factors to be considered, that are set into a wider scenario<sup>13</sup>. As a matter of fact, it is important for professionals to better understand their role in relation to the society; also, they should learn to use the acquired skills accordingly, as they have to acknowledge the general context they're working in. On the premise that «there is no unique and right way to translate a standard text into an E2R text» (PEREGO 2020: 235), validating E2R texts implies that simply following the guidelines is not enough, whether they are provided by Inclusion Europe<sup>14</sup> or by single countries. Aspects such as the knowledge of the target audience and its heterogeneity (SCIUMBATA 2021), or the knowledge of text types, influence the work of both validators and facilitators. It is in fact a big challenge to deal with several text types, as stated by BLEVE, EUGENI and SCIUMBATA (2022): «because text types are many, and the number of experts in the field is still limited, a heterogeneous group of validators is needed to be able and validate all types of texts from as many perspectives as possible». Moreover, this is not the only challenge faced by future validators and facilitators. E2R is part of the broader concept of accessibility and contributes to many fields (BLEVE – EUGENI – SCIUMBATA 2022). Notwithstanding, while it is still «not yet established as an access service, or an academic course, its production and training is fractionated, having gained the interests of linguists, socio-linguists,

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<sup>12</sup> Further information can be found at: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/bologna-process> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>13</sup> See: [https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO3\\_Report\\_final-ACC-V3.pdf](https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO3_Report_final-ACC-V3.pdf) [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>14</sup> Inclusion Europe is the European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families. Further information can be found at: <https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read/> [last access 28 August 2022]

translators, persons with disability, associations, social workers, and even typeface designers» (BERNABÉ CARO – ORERO 2019).

In the attempt to create competence-based curricula for validators and facilitators, SAFAR (1992) and HAMAOUÍ’s proposals (2015) for the training of university students to audiovisual translation laid the groundwork for IO3. Despite the fact that the theoretical framework proposed by SAFAR and HAMAOUÍ applies to audiovisual texts, and that the training (both academic and vocational) for validators and facilitators proposed by T2V applies to any type of texts, the Pedagogical and Methodological Curriculum (PMC) presented by the two has proven to be effective in other projects related to accessibility, as for instance the EU-funded Erasmus+ project Live Text Access (LTA)<sup>15</sup>. They based their work on the proposal made by D’HAINAUT, a Belgian pedagogue, in 1975 and elaborated the PMC to structure a curriculum on 3 levels, further subdivided into 14 subcategories.

## 4.2 Rationale of T2V curricula

The T2V curricula’s structure matches the PMC’s one. Following is a list explaining levels and subcategories, and a short explanation for each subcategory<sup>16</sup>:

### - Aims and objectives

a. *“Defining and analysing educational policy”*. The teaching has to fit in the societal framework, to avoid teaching pathways that are useless or inadequate in the professional world. The European Certification and Qualification Association (ECQA<sup>17</sup>) scheme helped partners creating the design of the trainings for facilitators and validators, aligning them with the vocational and academic training in the EU. Since the learning structure follows standardized procedures, it can be transferred to educational institutions or educational programmes.

b. *“Implementing aims and objectives”*. Trainees need to know in advance what they will learn during the course and what their role in the professional world will be. In order to analyse the bigger picture, the curricula will include specific contents to explain the profiles, the connection between both in the professional development of E2R, and how to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

c. *“Understanding trainees background”*. It is important that trainees do not undergo training that they don’t need and that trainers are aware of the special characteristics of the future validators. As mentioned above, people with reading difficulties that can apply for the role of validators constitute a very heterogenous group. For this reason, their training will include complementary ma-

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ltaproject.eu/> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>16</sup> The full curricula’s structure can be found in the Report of IO3 at: [https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO3\\_Report\\_final-ACC-V3.pdf](https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO3_Report_final-ACC-V3.pdf) [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>17</sup> <https://jobcertification.eu/> [last access 28 August 2022]

materials. Trainers will have to adapt methodology and materials for the special needs of the trainees.

d. *"Determining and analysing contents"*. Contents are selected according to a progressive principle, which is determined by the number of Learning Outcomes to be acquired. As stated before, the development of these curricula is based on skills cards, which are useful to learn competences to better adapt in the professional world.

e. *"Processing Learning Outcomes"*. This phase will allow for determining if a goal has been met or not and how much. In short, outcomes will be assessed following a modular competence-based structure and assessing achievement of Learning Outcomes (acquired knowledge, competence and skills) and professionalism.

### **- Teaching methods and tools**

a. *"Determining resources and limits"*. This is a concrete step which will make clear how the course will be held and by whom. The training will include digital resources, so as to support both self-study and face-to-face teaching. Resources will be provided to trainees through the Learning Outcomes, which will determine the duration during the course and the ECTS/ECVET (see section 6) according to the time needed to complete the Learning Outcome itself.

b. *"Tools and methods"*. This part concentrates on which tools trainees should work with in order to meet the goals set, with the resources available and the identified limits. Trainees will be provided with digital resources, specifically videos with an explanation of the main contents, factsheets with a summary of the main contents and task-sheets with exercises. Other resources as extra readings will be included. As accessibility is a key factor in both profiles for the successful end of the training, contents uploaded on an online platform will be made available (subtitles, transcriptions of the videos, accessible PowerPoint presentations, factsheets, and task-sheets in an accessible Word and/or PDF-format).

c. *"Teaching conditions"*. Trainers need to implement the tools available according to students. Advice to adapt the methodology and tools for trainees with special needs will be included in the trainers' guide. In order to do so, trainers will need experience with specific software and accessibility guidelines.

d. *"Learning conditions"*. Trainers need to determine the learning conditions to better target training. While facilitator trainees can be trained on their own through digital devices, the recommendation to better target training for validators is that they attend face-to-face, so that they can be supported by trainers in real time. This recommendation shows the need for trainers to have experience in teaching groups with comprehension difficulties.

e. *"Determining feasibility of tasks"*. Feasibility depends on background, previous Learning Outcomes and resources available. Every Unit will be propaedeutic to the following, so that there is a

connection between all the elements of the training.

f. "*Creation and implementation of missing tools*". This subcategory explains how to cope with potential lack of resources. The training of validators will be tested with people with reading difficulties in four stages: the platform, the resources, the training methodology and the evaluation.

#### - Evaluation methods and tools

a. "*Designing assessment plan*". An assessment system will be designed making sure that each LO acquired fits the overall structure of the course. The overall assessment plan proposed consists of:

- > Pre-assessment: it consists of an evaluation or self-evaluation of prerequisites necessary to attend the training (soft skills, general knowledge, basic computer skills, the capacity to adapt to changing contexts and text types, and empathy);
- > Peri-assessment: it consists of a standard formative assessment after every Unit with open questions for facilitators, and true or false questions for validators. In order to prepare trainees, it will also involve a simulate post-assessment.
- > Post-assessment: it consists of the standard final assessment with open questions for facilitators, and true or false questions for validators. It must be as similar as possible to the one simulated during the peri-assessment.

b. "*Selection and creation of assessment tools*". Ideas for objective assessment will be provided in line with the market of job.

c. "*Implementation of assessment methods and tools*". Tools will be tested on a focus group before starting the course.

#### 4.3 The FAME criteria

The two T2V curricula for the training of validators and facilitators of E2R texts has been designed according to the FAME criteria (EUGENI – GERBECKS – BERNABÉ 2021), having already proven effective in LTA project. The FAME criteria for an effective 30 ECTS/ECVET curriculum for the training of facilitators and validators of E2R texts are:

- **Feasibility and Flexibility:** a progressive curriculum will encourage trainees to pursue the training, letting them build their skills step by step.
- **Adaptability:** an assessment system including a pre-assessment (prior to training), peri-assessments (after each Unit), and a post-assessment (after all Units) will allow teaching and learning

to adapt.

- **Modularity:** the curriculum structure will be divided into Units and subsequently into Learning Outcomes, containing elements and resources to learn a given skill.
- **Effectiveness:** the T2V curricula will be designed to fit the needs of the job market, thus bridging an existing gap in training. To do so, the ECQA certification will allow both materials and trainees to effectively match the market needs, by explicitly mentioning the skills acquired.

#### 4.4 Visual representation of T2V curricula

T2V curricula will be structured into Units, Elements and Learning Outcomes and they draw on skills cards created in IO2 (GARCÍA MUÑOZ – HORTAL RUBIO – GONZÁLEZ SABÍN 2021)<sup>18</sup>. They are visually represented by Figures 1 and 2, which picture the two courses as trains, using the official colors of each T2V partner. Each coach of the train stands for a Unit, while the locomotive stands for the certification which will be given at the end of the training

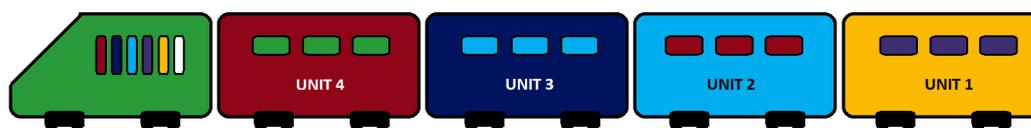


Figure 1. Curricula for facilitators

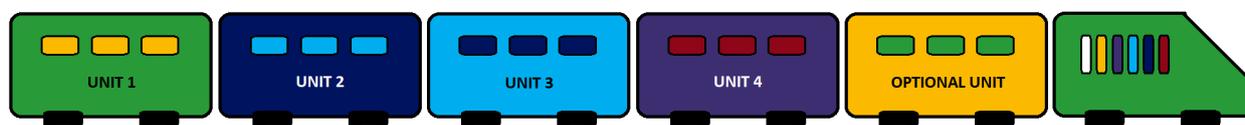


Figure 2. Curricula for validators

There are 4 Units in the curriculum for facilitators and 5 in the one for validators.

The Units for facilitators are explained in the “SKILLS CARD FOR EASY-TO-READ FACILITATORS”<sup>19</sup>. They are: Accessibility and end-users; Easy-to-Read methodology; Easy-to-read facilita-

<sup>18</sup> See: [https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO2\\_Report\\_final-ACC-final.pdf](https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/IO2_Report_final-ACC-final.pdf) [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>19</sup> See: <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/Annex-1-Units-Elements-LOs-for-facilitators.pdf> [last access 28 August 2022]

tion; Management skills.

The Units for validators are explained in the "SKILLS CARD FOR EASY-TO-READ VALIDATORS"<sup>20</sup>. These Units are very similar to the facilitator ones, but they are adapted for people with reading and learning difficulties: Accessibility and end-users; Easy-to-Read methodology; Easy-to-Read validation; Management skills; Optional Unit. The Optional Unit, which is only included in the validators' curriculum, will contain extra skills as it deals with secondary non-essential skills, like text analysis, advanced computer skills and entrepreneurial skills.

The certification given by these curricula is promoted not only by the compliance with ECQA standards, but also by the opportunity of undergoing a certification process.

## 5. The training materials

To every Unit, for both validators and facilitators, there is a correspondent Learning Outcome. The language chosen for the training materials will be English for facilitators; instead, E2R English and the languages of the consortium partners will be used to draft the training materials for validators.

The choice of training materials will depend on their role in the different implementation pathways identified:

- *Class-work material*: it will be material used "in class" (face-to-face or for self-study) to acquire competences and skills required for each LO. The course will provide at least: an explanatory introduction outlining the structure of the Unit; a description of Learning Outcomes for each Element; a subtitled video lecture in English for facilitators, a text in E2R English for validators, and a classwork complying with the number of hours needed to achieve it for each LO; a reading list containing references and bibliography of sources used in training materials.
- *Self-study material*: it refers to materials to be used by every trainee outside classes (it may refer to exercises, academic papers, websites, or interviews).
- *Accompanying material*: it comprises every kind of material created during the project (such as subtitles or transcripts of video lectures).
- *Suggested readings*: these are further reading suggested to improve trainees' knowledge of related topics.
- *Tasks*: to substantiate the assessment system (pre-assessment, peri-assessment, and post-assessment), there will be material used for pre-tests, peri-test, and post-tests. Post-tests could be used as models for the certification.

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<sup>20</sup> See: <https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/01/Annex-2-Units-Elements-LOs-for-validators.pdf> [last access 28 August 2022]

## 6. Academic and vocational credits

To estimate the number of credits and hours for each Unit, Element and Learning Outcome, the consortium used the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)<sup>21</sup> and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)<sup>22</sup>. According to ECQA, a course should bestow a total of 30 credits, both in the academic field (ECTS) and in the field of vocational education and training (ECVET). These credits coincide with a total amount of 750 training hours, divided into 270 class hours and 480 independent self-study hours.

Every Unit corresponds to a certain number of credits. Given the difference between the various skills to be acquired, the most reasonable solution was analysing skills and Units and attributing them credits according to their complexity, after consulting a group of E2R validators and facilitators and asking them their opinion. This allowed to develop a precise workload of hours.

## 7. Conclusions

Due to different circumstances, such as «the lack of a social and professional recognition of the professions producing E2R texts» (BLEVE – EUGENI – SCIUMBATA 2022: 117) in Italy, or the lack of an official recognition of E2R as a career in Spain (GARCÍA MUÑOZ - BERNABÉ CARO 2022: 78), among others, and despite a general interest in an official training and in E2R, there is no standardized training across Europe to become a certified validator or facilitator. However, gathering information about previous projects and best practices, and examining the existing limited literature in the field, the consortium has been able to outline a set of skills that will enable future trainees to become certified experts. The creation of two distinct competence-based curricula, in line with the ECQA standards, will allow for a professional development thanks to a training course that responds the current market requirements and end-users needs. The idea is to increase validators and facilitators' recognition across countries and institutions once the project is complete (GARCÍA MUÑOZ 2022), by providing an institutionalized course and high-quality training materials. In addition to giving social recognition to the professional roles and, more in general, to the field of E2R, these curricula could also be applied to other educational contexts or further projects, as they are based on the Pedagogical and Methodological Curriculum.

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<sup>21</sup> See: <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system> [last access 28 August 2022]

<sup>22</sup> See: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/european-credit-system-vocational-education-and-training-ecvet> [last access 28 August 2022]

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## **Proposta teorica per la diffusione della *bande rythmo* nel doppiaggio italiano: uno studio empirico del modello francese in ottica traduttologica**

### **Abstract**

*The present work investigates the functionality of the *bande rythmo* as a support to dialogue writing in the Italian dubbing. The analysis of the French technology's developments allows a practical definition of its state of the art, as well as its potential, in order to promote the generalisation of a more computerised dubbing type. An inductive approach would guarantee the analysis within dubbing sector, so as to detect both strong and weak points. The writing of two versions of the same translation using both French and Italian methodologies empirically tries to detect possible cognitive effects on the translator itself, as well as any difference in tools, later discussing the quality of the final product.*

**Keywords:** *dubbing, bande rythmo, audiovisual translation, comparative study, cognitive effects.*

### **Introduzione**

Il presente lavoro propone una generalizzazione della *bande rythmo* nel doppiaggio italiano. Lo scopo della ricerca è da vedersi nell'individuazione di una serie di problematiche relative a tecniche e approcci dal punto di vista psico-cognitivo e traduttologico presenti nel doppiaggio italiano, proponendo la *bande* come possibile alternativa. Nello specifico, il *case study* presenta una proposta teorica di diffusione della *bande* in Italia sulla base di una comparazione di due adattamenti di uno stesso script da una serie animata, uno con metodologia più tradizionale in Italia, l'altro con un software per *bande rythmo*, in modo da valutare il processo traduttivo dal punto di vista qualitativo. Punto focale della ricerca è osservare empiricamente gli sforzi a cui potrebbe sottostare un dialoghista che usa due metodologie diverse per il doppiaggio, al fine di individuare punti di forza e punti deboli relativi sia alla personale capacità traduttiva che alla potenzialità degli strumenti in esame.

### **1. La *bande rythmo*: definizione e stato dell'arte**

La fruibilità di un testo audiovisivo in un paese diverso rispetto a quello di origine dipende dalle modalità traduttive scelte affinché il testo *target* sia conforme al nuovo pubblico, pur rispettando le intenzioni originali dell'autore. Poiché il testo AV è per natura multisemiotico (PEREGO 2005), la realizzazione di tale conformità non ha da compiersi esclusivamente con il codice verbale, ma occorre che avvenga nel rispetto della sincronia tra codici sia visivi che acustici (CHAUME 2004), così da ottenere la *suspension of disbelief*. Nel doppiaggio l'attenzione alla sincronia, nelle sue forme cinetica, fonetica e prosodica (AGOST & CHAUME 1996: 208), rappresenta un leitmotiv; tra i paesi

tradizionalmente *dubbing*, la Francia è riconosciuta come avente particolare considerazione per la sincronia labiale, tanto da sviluppare negli anni una tecnologia che favorisse l’adattamento della traduzione ai movimenti fonetico-articolatori degli attori: la *bande rythmo*.

Per *bande rythmo* s’intende un’applicazione tecnologica per il doppiaggio in cui la traduzione dei dialoghi di un prodotto AV viene trascritta su una banda che scorre sincronicamente alle immagini del film, in modo da poter essere letta dall’attore-doppiatore direttamente sullo schermo. LE NOUVEL (2007) la descrive come una pellicola di celluloidi trasparente su cui il testo viene non solo trascritto, ma anche «calligraphié» (LE NOUVEL 2007: 5), il che significa che si riadatta graficamente la traduzione in modo da indicare l’articolazione fonetica, la prosodia e il profilo intonativo delle battute (LE NOUVEL 2007; DE LOS REYES 2019). Ideata negli anni Venti, la *bande rythmo* costituisce lo strumento per il doppiaggio più diffuso nell’*Hexagone*, un po’ per effettiva comodità, un po’ per quell’*habitus* di cui parla DE LOS REYES (2019: 165), da intravedersi stavolta negli stessi professionisti. Anche STOJANOV (2011) ne fa una questione di tradizione: «French-speaking countries prefer the rythmo with its scrupulous accuracy» (3). Attualmente la *bande rythmo* si realizza al computer e sempre più di frequente con l’ausilio di Internet (CHAUME & PAPPENS 2021: 78), tanto da essere inclusa nelle cosiddette «nouvelles technologies de l’information et de la communication (NTIC)» (TEUMAGOU & AYONGHE 2016: 64).

### 1.1 Funzionamento di una *bande rythmo*

Il funzionamento della *bande rythmo* si iscrive nella catena di doppiaggio, avente una divisione in fasi: «détection, adaptation, vérification, calligraphie, frappe (transcription), enregistrement et mixage» (DE LOS REYES 2019: 167)<sup>1</sup>. Il *détecteur* si occupa di segnalare su una banda i movimenti labiali degli attori, i dialoghi originali e i cambi inquadratura (LE NOUVEL 2007: 11), così come ritmi, durata delle battute e ogni indicazione paralinguistica rilevante. YVANE (1996) specifica che la *bande* riporta, tra le altre cose, le posizioni degli interpreti sulla scena, la tipologia dei piani, i nomi dei personaggi e i numeri delle sequenze. La *bande* così arricchita assume il nome di *bande mère*<sup>2</sup>: essa costituisce il riferimento primario per il traduttore-adattatore, che scrive sulla stessa il suo target text guidato da tali indicazioni; al termine del lavoro, si ottiene la vera e propria *bande ryhtmo*.

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<sup>1</sup> Per il presente lavoro si tralasciano le fasi di registrazione e mixaggio.

<sup>2</sup> Tuttavia, LE NOUVEL (2007) si riferisce a questo prodotto già come *bande rythmo*, lasciando la denominazione di *bande mère* alla banda con testo tradotto.

Signes du son		
Signe	Son	Image
	Début et/ou fin d'un dialogue en bouche fermée (flèche différente de celle du point d'appui qui se place au-dessus de la codification).	
	Début et/ou fin d'un dialogue en bouche ouverte.	
	Labiales : p, b, m.	
	Demi-labiales : - v, f, w, r, s, t, th, k ( <i>think</i> en anglais). (à l'image, elles se distinguent dans 95 % des cas); - n, t's ( <i>it's</i> en anglais), l (se distinguent dans 50 % des cas); - n't ( <i>don't, wasn't</i> en anglais), get, got, d (se distinguent dans 20 % des cas).	
	Grande ouverture, dit « cul de poule », correspond au « wh » anglais ( <i>what</i> ).	

	Phonème où la bouche forme un arrondi ou une avancée : sons en « o », « on », « ou ».	
	Phonème où la bouche part en arrière : sons en « a » et « in ».	
	Son semi off, personnage de dos.	
	Son off, personnage hors champ.	
	Respiration.	
	Inspiration.	
	Expiration.	

Figura 1. Segni relativi a foni e a suoni prodotti dai movimenti articolatori (LE NOUVEL 2007: 28-29).

Con l'identificazione degli elementi sonori si ottiene così una mappatura per il doppiaggio che sappia facilitare, in primis, il lavoro del traduttore e, in secundis, quello del doppiatore. Pertanto, l'immagine garantisce più che mai la simultaneità con il suono, per cui sia l'adattamento che la generale sincronia non sono altro che il risultato di ciò che scorre visivamente sullo schermo e delle restrizioni da esso imposte (YVANE 1996: 136).

Oggi la *bande rythmo* si realizza virtualmente attraverso software che presentano in un unico file sia testo che video, in maniera del tutto informatizzata. Tuttavia, tale modalità potrebbe annientare le figure del calligrafo e del *décteur*, il primo sostituito dal software stesso, il secondo assorbito quasi pienamente dal traduttore-adattatore avente a disposizione gli strumenti necessari direttamente nel sistema (BREAN ET AL. 2014; DE LA CRUZ 2018; DE LOS REYES 2019). Ad ogni modo, la struttura complessiva del processo di doppiaggio e di post-sincronizzazione con *bande rythmo* rimane pressoché coerente negli anni.

Nonostante l'apparente accelerazione del lavoro che ne consegue, la *bande rythmo* implicherebbe l'acquisizione di più abilità tecniche e di maggior esperienza da parte dei professionisti (LANCRY & STOKLOSA 1995); inoltre, si rischierebbero l'annichilimento delle funzioni del traduttore, data l'automatizzazione di alcuni processi nella *bande* virtuale (LE NOUVEL 2007), e la caduta nella visione semplicistica per cui ci si affiderebbe a una semplice banda in basso a uno schermo. Pertanto, si procede con una descrizione del metodo di doppiaggio utilizzato in un paese idealmente sostenitore di tali critiche, l'Italia, in ottica comparativa-contrastiva con il modello francese.

## 2. Il doppiaggio in Italia

L'Italia è notoriamente uno dei paesi maggiormente dediti al doppiaggio. Al giorno d'oggi, la presenza di produzioni straniere sul territorio italiano è notevole, per cui il doppiaggio ha assunto toni piuttosto tradizionalistici. Nel 2000 PAOLINELLI ha riscontrato che il 97% dei prodotti AV è di origine estera, per cui il doppiaggio si rende necessario al fine di diffondere tali produzioni in Italia (PAOLINELLI 2000: 52). Secondo una ricerca personalmente condotta sul palinsesto televisivo di una rete nazionale, è emerso che la totalità delle produzioni estere mandate in onda sono state doppiate, senza mai ricorrere alla sottotitolazione, né al *voice over*<sup>3</sup>. Nel 2004 la RAI ha presentato un'offerta di prodotti esteri doppiati per l'88% sul totale dei film, mentre la Mediaset ha raggiunto il 97% (PAOLINELLI & DI FORTUNATO 2005: 21). Tecnicamente parlando, il doppiaggio italiano predilige il classico copione su cui il traduttore riporta il suo adattamento e i simboli necessari al doppiatore per una buona recitazione; la realizzazione del copione è inserita in un processo somigliante a quello che interessa la *bande rythmo*, ma i recenti sviluppi tecnologici (e gli ostacoli dell'ultimo periodo) accentuerebbero il divario tra le due tecniche.

## 2.2 Il dialoghista nella catena del doppiaggio

Il doppiaggio si attua secondo determinate fasi, che vanno dalla contrattazione del prodotto con il cliente alla gestione del progetto tra materiale e professionisti, con la nomina di un *project manager* e dell'*équipe* di lavoro, fino ad arrivare alla traduzione-adattamento, alla segmentazione in anelli del copione e ai controlli finali, sia linguistici che tecnici (FERRER SIMO 2017). Ad ogni modo, è il dialoghista a occupare una posizione centrale nell'intero processo, essendo responsabile di trasporre opportunamente un testo da una lingua *source* a una lingua *target*, contemporaneamente conservando l'integrità semantica e riadattando i contesti linguistici e culturali del prodotto originale. Nel doppiaggio italiano egli gestisce non solo l'adattamento, ma anche la sincronizzazione complessiva concernente durata delle battute, movimenti gestuali e buccali e l'aggiunta sul copione di simboli necessari a facilitare la recitazione per i doppiatori (compito anche dell'assistente al doppiaggio).

Il doppiaggio italiano non prevede la figura di un *décteur*, né quella di un *calligraphe*. A questo punto, si deduce che la tecnica della *bande rythmo* sia rara in Italia, conoscendo in definitiva soltanto uno studio che ne fa uso<sup>4</sup>. In più, tornando alla figura del dialoghista, nonostante le somiglianze con il traduttore nel doppiaggio francese, sono localizzabili alcune differenze dovute proprio alle tecniche adottate nei due stili, esposte in seguito. La sfida del presente lavoro sarà di dare un punto di vista alternativo per l'adempimento delle fasi di traduzione-adattamento e di sincronizzazione nel doppiaggio in italiano, proponendo una diffusione della bande in Italia in base alle nuove necessità del settore.

## 3. Case study: la bande rythmo in Italia

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<sup>3</sup> Lo studio è stato condotto per scopi di ricerca sulla diffusione del doppiaggio in Italia, basandosi sull'analisi delle trasmissioni televisive di una rete nazionale dal 25 al 31 gennaio 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Sotto indicazione del professor Chaume si è venuti a conoscenza del suddetto studio con sede a Roma, che non è stato possibile contattare; si potrebbero tentare interviste o incontri per un seguente lavoro.

### **3.1 Metodologia per la proposta teorica**

La metodologia seguita prevede lo studio comparativo tra *bande rythmo* e tecniche più tradizionali di doppiaggio in Italia, analizzando il processo lavorativo e considerando qualitativamente il prodotto finito. Nello studio teorico si elencano punti di indagine quali l’aspetto economico, le tempistiche implicate nel processo produttivo del doppiaggio, sia francese che italiano, la logistica e soprattutto gli effetti psico-cognitivi sul dialoghista, che mostrano caratteristiche diverse in base alla tecnica usata. Si conclude con una proposta teorica sulla fattibilità della generalizzazione della *bande* in Italia, con riferimento alle potenzialità che la stessa offre in un mondo ormai sempre più interattivo.

### **3.2 Metodo per l’indagine empirica: adattamenti a confronto**

Si analizza empiricamente la suddetta teoria tramite l’applicazione pratica di un software di *bande rythmo* per una traduzione dall’inglese all’italiano e tramite la stesura della stessa traduzione senza simili supporti. In tal modo è possibile mettere alla prova le personali capacità psico-cognitive legate a concentrazione, sforzo ed eventuali riscontri sulla creatività dal punto di vista traduttivo nello svolgimento del task, sia con l’ausilio della tecnologia, che con una procedura più tradizionale. Si tenta perciò un ragionamento induttivo su possibili utilità del metodo francese secondo le capacità cognitive di cui sopra, ma anche secondo l’accuratezza della traduzione e dei diversi codici e la relazione con la catena di doppiaggio.

#### **3.2.1 Il software Cappella**

Il software di *bande rythmo* utilizzato per la ricerca è Cappella nella versione 3.7.0, scaricabile gratuitamente dal sito [cappella.tv](http://cappella.tv). Il freeware, in lingua francese, è risultato idoneo allo scopo poiché avente tutte le caratteristiche necessarie per la creazione della *bande*.

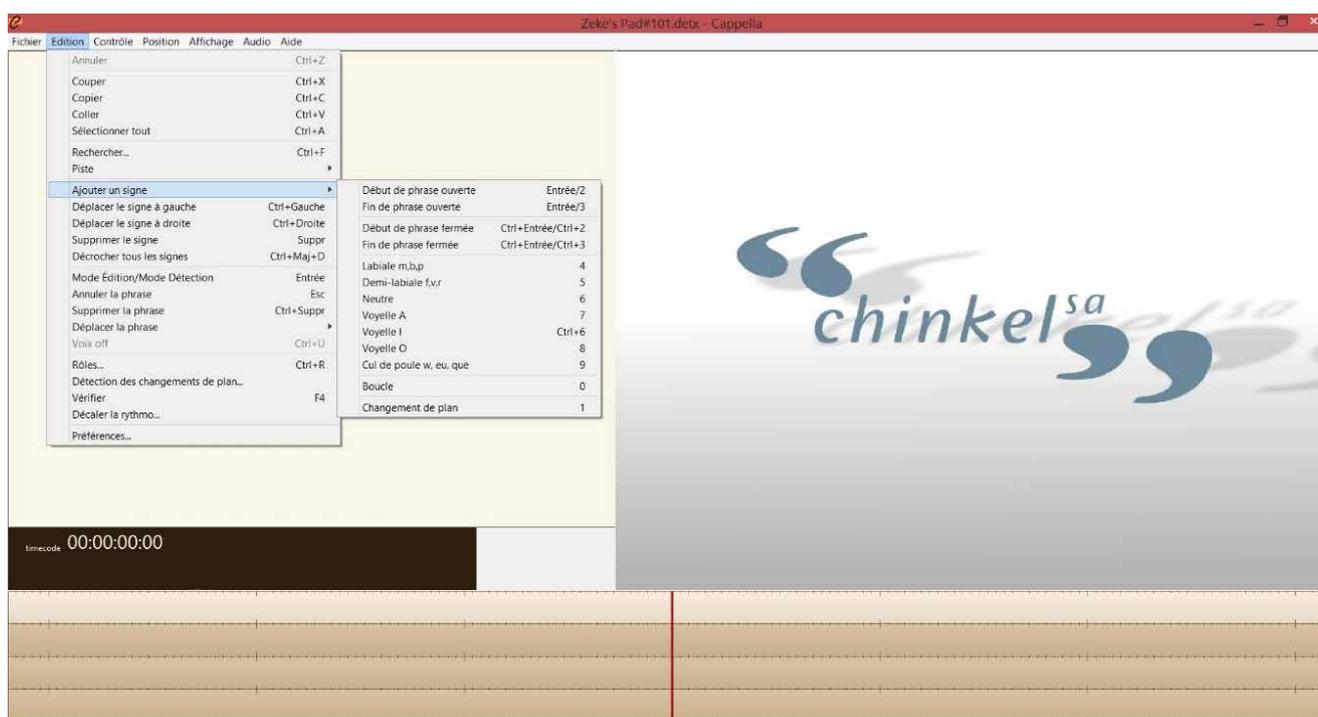


Figura 2. Screenshot del software Cappella.

Esso presenta un riquadro dedicato alla visualizzazione delle immagini e una serie di bande ad esso sottostanti su cui è possibile trascrivere il testo originale e la traduzione. Sono inoltre presenti comandi per la segmentazione del testo, per i cambi inquadratura e per l’inserimento di informazioni legate ai personaggi (nomi, genere, caratteristiche, raffigurazioni ecc.), associabili a colori diversi. Per iniziare, occorre importare file video e parte testuale tramite gli appositi comandi. Nel presente caso è stato creato direttamente un progetto a partire dallo script originale tramite la sua conversione da .docx a .detx, così da essere processato correttamente dal *freeware*<sup>5</sup>. Successivamente è stato importato il video dopo un passaggio da .avi a .mp4.

### 3.2.2 Le traduzioni-adattamenti

Per quanto riguarda la parte traduttiva, sono state create due versioni in italiano del primo episodio della serie animata canadese-australiana *Zeke's Pad* (2010): una svolta per copione tradizionale e l'altra su *bande rythmo*. Dell'episodio in questione, intitolato "You Art What You Eat" (LIZ SCULLY 2009), è stato tradotto, sia con *bande rythmo* che senza, solo il secondo atto (della durata di sei minuti) per ragioni temporali. Una parte della versione svolta in modalità tradizionale è stata realizzata nel febbraio 2021, mentre la restante parte tra settembre e ottobre dello stesso anno. La versione per *bande* è stata invece realizzata interamente nell'ottobre 2021. La creazione di due adattamenti diversi dal punto di vista tipologico parte dall'idea di offrire una prospettiva comparativa dei due metodi per il doppiaggio, al fine di constatare pro e contro del processo lavorativo e la qualità del prodotto finale. Di seguito si presentano entrambe le versioni.

<sup>5</sup> L'estensione .detx corrisponde al formato generato da Cappella. Tramite la conversione del copione in .docx attraverso un converter online, si è creato direttamente il progetto apribile dal freeware a cui associare successivamente l'immagine.

**Proposta n.1 di adattamento di "You Art What You Eat" da Zeke's Pad (1x01).  
Metodo con solo copione.**

*Titolo in italiano: Mangia come Crei!*

1. STEELE: Ed ecco il nostro disertore! Facciamogli conoscere le tre P della forma fisica.
2. IKE: Buona idea! Ehm...quali sarebbero le tre P?
3. STEELE: P di patate. Saluta il boss dei carboidrati, è con lui che ti allenerai.
4. STEELE: Non ci siamo...Spike, gli servono più patate!
5. STEELE: P di pentole...un ottimo esercizio per i tuoi bicipiti. E la terza P...
6. ZEKE: Porridge?
7. STEELE: L'ingrediente segreto: fibre. Ecco il ciclo perfetto per un fisico in forma. Sfamati. Scolpisci. E...Smaltisci!
8. ZEKE: Ehm...ma sono le tre "esse"!
9. STEELE: Ehi, ragazzino, mi stai forse dicendo che non so parlare?
10. ZEKE: Eh? Oh, no!
11. IDA: ...e cinque e sei e sette...e otto e nove...e dieci e undici...
12. IDA: E ora...cambio!
13. ZEKE: Bene, sei sveglio. Non so cosa fare. Se scappo di nuovo, mi troveranno. Ma quello è un orsetto?
14. JAY: Eh? No! Ok ma cosa farai?
15. ZEKE: Passare il test di ginnastica. Jay, tu sei bravo con i test. Per favore, aiutami!
16. JAY: Non posso, sto studiando per il mio test: algebra!
17. ZEKE: Ok, facciamo un patto. Tu mi aiuti con il mio test e io lo farò col tuo.
18. JAY: Ma tu sei una schiappa in algebra!
19. ZEKE: Beh, sono solo dettagli. Dai Jay, il Pad è già carico. Sono stanco e ormai non so più cosa disegnare. Sei la mia ultima speranza!
20. JAY: Ehm...Se proprio la vuoi mettere in questo modo...
21. ZEKE: Evvai! Ti dirò io cosa fare. Ah, e per qualunque cosa, non usare una mongolfiera. Quegli affari sono inutili!
22. IDA: È scientificamente provato che la ginnastica migliora la prestantza fisica! E due e tre...
23. RACHEL: Ma cosa fate? Non vi capisco.
24. RACHEL: Oh, adesso è tutto chiaro!
25. JAY: Psss...Ehi, Zeke!
26. STEELE: Tutti in riga tra cinque minuti!
27. ZEKE: Dobbiamo sbrigarcì!
28. ZEKE: Il Pad è prontissimo. Non posso sbagliare o dovremmo aspettare troppo per caricarlo!
29. ZEKE: Dobbiamo pensare al disegno perfetto. Qualcosa che mi aiuti a passare il test.
30. JAY: Potresti disegnarti di nuovo in forma...come eri prima dei pancake!
31. ZEKE: Sai come funziona il Pad. Non posso tornare indietro. Non posso annullare le mosse!
32. STEELE: Bene, andiamo! Freedman! C'è. Scully! C'è...
33. ZEKE: Oh no, tra poco Steele mi chiamerà all'appello. Dobbiamo sbrigarcì!
34. JAY: Ok, potresti disegnare delle scarpe che corrano da sole!
35. ZEKE: Hmmm, potrebbe andare...ma non vanno bene come pelapatate!
36. ZEKE: Oh accidenti, sono bloccato qui! Nessuno mi aiuta e mio padre crederà ancora che io sia al campo artistico.
37. JAY: Tu sei perfetto per il campo artistico.
38. ZEKE: Hai ragione! Sta indietro e preparati alla magia! Ora sì che andrà tutto bene!
39. STEELE: Palmer!? Sei ancora a letto?

**Tabella 1.** Versione 1 dell'adattamento (prima parte).

40.	JAY: Sbrigati!
41.	ZEKE: Lavora su, da bravo!
42.	STEELE: Palmer! Cosa c'è, eh, Palmer? Non mi dire che ti manca la mamma. Nessun contatto con l'esterno. Rammenti? Dammi qua.
43.	ZEKE: Ehm, cosa? Oh...ok.
44.	STEELE: Non dovresti lasciare in giro le tue scarpe! Mettile via!
45.	JAY: Ahia!
46.	ZEKE: <AHEM!>
47.	JAY: E ora cosa facciamo?
48.	ZEKE: Non va così male. Il test è domani, Steele ha il Pad e io resterò qui per sempre. QUALCUNO CI AIUTI!
49.	STEELE: <ronf>
50.	STEELE: (bofonchia)...<ronf>
51.	JAY: No, si è svegliato. Corri!
52.	JAY: Dimmi che hai un piano, vero?
53.	ZEKE: Non capisco, sembra tutto uguale!
54.	IKE: No! Mon Dieu, Zeke, che fai?
55.	ZEKE: Ike...?
56.	IKE: Bisogna spremere delicatamente.
57.	IKE: Oouh!
58.	JAY: Allora, basta porridge? Basta patate?
59.	ZEKE: Campo artistico! Credo ci serva un po' di cultura. Lo so, sono un genio.
60.	IKE (con accento francese): Et voilà le tre P: Pasticcini. Porcellane. E paperelle decorative! Bene, al lavoro, garçons. La tavola deve essere pronta per stasera!

**Tabella 2.** Versione 1 dell'adattamento (seconda parte).

Proposta n.2 di adattamento di "You Art What You Eat" da <i>Zeke's Pad (1x01)</i> . Metodo con <i>bande rythmo</i> .	
1.	STEELE: Ed ecco il nostro disertore!/Facciamogli conoscere le tre P della forma fisica.
2.	IKE: Buona idea!/ Ehm.../Quali sarebbero le tre P?
3.	STEELE: P di patate./Saluta il boss dei carboidrati, è con lui che ti allenerai.
4.	STEELE: Non ci siamo...Spike, gli servono più patate!
5.	STEELE: P di pentole./Un ottimo esercizio per i tuoi bicipiti./E la terza P...
6.	ZEKE: Porridge?
7.	STEELE: L'ingrediente segreto./Fibre./Il ciclo perfetto per un fisico in forma./Sfamati, scolpisci/e smaltisci!
8.	ZEKE: Ma... Non sarebbero le tre esse?
9.	STEELE: Brutto insolente, mi stai forse dicendo che non so parlare?
10.	ZEKE: Eh? Oh, no!
11.	IDA: ...cinque, sei, sette.../...otto, nove.../...dieci e undici.
12.	IDA: E ora...cambio!
13.	ZEKE: Bene, sei sveglio./Non so cosa fare./Se scappo di nuovo, mi troveranno./Scusa, ma quello è un peluche?
14.	JAY: Eh?/No!/Perciò...cosa vorresti fare?
15.	ZEKE: Passare il test di domani./Jay, tu sei bravo coi test, potresti venire ad aiutarmi?
16.	JAY: Ah, sai che non posso./Sto studiando per il mio test:/algebra.
17.	ZEKE: Ok, facciamo un patto./Tu mi aiuti con il mio test...e io lo farò col tuo!
18.	JAY: Ma tu sei una schiappa in algebra.
19.	ZEKE: Questi sono solo dettagli./Amico, dai, ormai ho già caricato il Pad./E poi sono stanco e non so più cosa disegnare./Sei la mia ultima speranza!
20.	JAY: Sì, ti aiuterò, ma non mettermi nei guai.
21.	ZEKE: Evvai! Ti dirò io cosa fare./Oh! e per arrivare qui,/la mongolfiera non è il massimo./Quegli affari sono inutili!
22.	IDA: È scientificamente provato che la ginnastica migliora la prestazione fisica! E un, due, tre...
23.	RACHEL: Ginnastica?/Io non vi capisco.
24.	RACHEL: Oh, ginnastica, dite?!
25.	JAY: Psss, Ehi.../Zeke!
26.	STEELE: Tutti in riga tra cinque minuti!
27.	ZEKE: Dobbiamo sbrigarci!
28.	ZEKE: Il Pad è prontissimo. Non posso sbagliare o dovremmo aspettare troppo per caricarlo!
29.	ZEKE: Dobbiamo pensare al disegno perfetto./Qualcosa che mi aiuti a passare il test.
30.	JAY: Hmm...potresti disegnarti di nuovo in forma.../intendo prima dei pancake.
31.	ZEKE: Sai come funziona il Pad./Non si può tornare indietro./Non posso annullare le mosse!

Tabella 3. Versione 2 dell'adattamento (prima parte).

32.	STEELE: Bene, andiamo!/Freedman!/C'è./Scully!/C'è...
33.	ZEKE: Oh no, tra poco Steele mi chiamerà all'appello./Dobbiamo sbrigarci!
34.	JAY: Ok./Hmmm...potresti disegnare delle scarpe che corrano da sole!
35.	ZEKE: Hmmm.../Potrebbe andare.../ma non vanno bene come pelapatate!
36.	ZEKE: Oh accidenti, sono bloccato qui!/Non ho una soluzione e mio padre mi crederà ancora al campo artistico.
37.	JAY: Saresti perfetto per un campo artistico.
38.	ZEKE: Ma sì!/Oh...Sta indietro e guarda la magia!/Ora sì che andrà tutto alla grande!
39.	STEELE: Palmer!/?/Sei ancora a letto?
40.	JAY: Sbrigati!
41.	ZEKE: Accenditi, su, da bravo!
42.	STEELE: Palmer!/Cosa c'è, eh, Palmer?/Non mi dire che ti manca la mamma./Nessun contatto con l'esterno./Rammenti?/Da' qua.
43.	ZEKE: Ehm.../Che?/Uff./Oh, ok.
44.	STEELE: Non dovrete lasciare in giro le tue scarpe! Mettetele via!
45.	JAY: Ahi!
46.	ZEKE: AHM
47.	JAY: E ora cosa facciamo?
48.	ZEKE: Non va così male./Il test è domani./Steele ha il mio Pad/e io resterò qui per sempre.
49.	ZEKE/JAY: QUALCUNO CI AIUTI!
50.	ZEKE: WOOAH
51.	JAY: Awwww! Ughhh!
52.	ZEKE: (sforzi)
53.	STEELE: (bofonchia)/Ronf...(rumoreggia)
54.	ZEKE/JAY: Oouh, agh
55.	JAY: No, si è svegliato./Corri!
56.	JAY: Ti prego, dimmi che hai un piano, vero?
57.	ZEKE: Non capisco...sembra tutto uguale!
58.	IKE: No! Mon Dieu, Zeke, che fai?
59.	ZEKE: Ike...?
60.	IKE: Ouh.../Bisogna spremere delicatamente./Oouh!
61.	JAY: Allora, basta porridge? Basta patate?
62.	ZEKE: Campo artistico!/Credo ci serva un po' di cultura./Lo so, sono un genio.
63.	IKE: (accento francese) Et voilà le tre P:/Pasticcini./Porcellane./E papereille decorative!
64.	IKE: Bene, al lavoro, garçons./La tavola deve essere pronta per stasera!

Tabella 4. Versione 2 dell'adattamento (seconda parte).

## 4. Analisi e discussione dei dati

### 4.1 Bande rythmo in Italia: una proposta teorica

La proposta di un'applicazione della *bande rythmo* nel doppiaggio italiano fa riferimento ad alcune problematiche che il settore sta riscontrando tra cui figura una «disattenzione generale» nei confronti del settore dal punto di vista economico (PAOLINELLI & DI FORTUNATO 2005: 99). Tuttavia, questa sede risulta essere poco idonea allo sviluppo di questa tematica.

Per ciò che concerne i ritmi richiesti oggi dall'industria AV, essi si possono definire come direttamente proporzionali alla quantità di materiale audiovisivo da adattare: all'aumentare della domanda sul mercato corrisponde un aumento della velocità di esecuzione, talvolta a scapito della qualità del prodotto finale (PINCI 2019). Inoltre, un *pressing* notevole viene stabilito dal pubblico stesso, il quale sembra richiedere l'uscita del film doppiato quasi in concomitanza con l'originale (PAOLINELLI & DI FORTUNATO 2005).

Sebbene questa sia la tendenza riscontrabile nel mercato internazionale dell'audiovisivo, si percepisce una gestione del tempo più affannosa nel doppiaggio italiano rispetto a quello francese. In base a quanto analizzato, il dialoghista italiano deve procedere con la stesura del copione in tutte le sue parti, avendo a disposizione poco meno di due settimane; inoltre, a una battitura più veloce al computer si contrappone un rallentamento pressoché fisiologico dei ritmi a causa del continuo spostamento di sguardo dallo schermo con il video a quello con il testo scritto (PAOLINELLI & DI FORTUNATO 2005). Certamente, la *bande rythmo* virtuale ridurrebbe il problema, poiché unisce video e testo a favore di una discreta comodità e di una velocizzazione dei tempi. Inoltre, l'informatizzazione del processo di *détection* ha reso possibile il suo accesso tramite Internet al traduttore-adattatore, accelerando ancora una volta le tempistiche.

È in questo scenario che si colloca la massima potenzialità che offrirebbe la *bande rythmo*: il *cloud dubbing*. Il doppiaggio tramite *cloud* permette di intervenire contemporaneamente da posti diversi, monitorando gli interventi di ciascun professionista che ha accesso al progetto in rete. Ad esempio, il software online ZOODubs ha alla base un sistema simile alla *bande rythmo*, completa di *détection* e di valutazione qualitativa finale (DE LOS REYES 2019; DIAZ-CINTAS & MASSIDDA 2019; CHAUME & DE LOS REYES 2021). Oltre all'agevolazione che il sistema apporterebbe al processo di adattamento, esso potrebbe dare continuità alla produzione anche in tempi di pandemia. Infatti, vien da sé come i professionisti del settore già abituati a software per *bande rythmo* possano sviluppare una maggiore adattabilità allo *smart working* anche per questo tipo di lavoro, qualora esista la possibilità di usufruire di un *cloud*, senza pensare ai numerosi vantaggi derivanti dalla mancata necessità di sterilizzare ambienti comuni in un periodo di pandemia come quello attuale. Pertanto, la diffusione e il potenziamento di una tecnologia come la *bande rythmo* potrebbero agevolare il lavoro complessivo sul doppiaggio in tempi simili, puntando proprio sui sistemi per *cloud*.

### 4.2 Analisi delle bozze di adattamento

Per la prima versione della traduzione del frammento da *Zeke's Pad* è notevole come sia stato percepito un rallentamento durante l'esecuzione: il continuo cambiamento di schermata dal file di testo al video è risultato faticoso, causando una significativa dilatazione dei tempi di stesura. Inoltre, è stato necessario più volte mettere in pausa e rivedere i punti d'interesse per proporre le strategie più ideali a un buon adattamento, aumentando la laboriosità del processo e influenzando negativamente sulla concentrazione. Con l'installazione di un secondo schermo, il ritmo si è leggermente velocizzato, ma la fatica ha subito ben poca riduzione, dovendo spostare lo sguardo in maniera costante. Al contrario, la stesura dell'adattamento su *bande rythmo* è risultata meno faticosa e dai ritmi complessivamente accelerati. Nonostante ciò, occorre considerare che le decisioni traduttive e di adattamento per la seconda versione hanno goduto di un aumento della velocità di stesura anche perché già applicate per la prima versione, sebbene in tempi diversi; tuttavia, lo stress provato per le due metodologie di lavoro è risultato diverso, per cui è quest'ultimo a costituire metro di paragone necessario alla presente analisi, al contrario di un mero giudizio sui ritmi. Eppure, le righe 1-8 si sono dimostrate significative nei riguardi della rapidità di elaborazione. Nel testo originale si fa riferimento alle “three P's of physical fitness”, per cui è stata trovata una corretta analogia in italiano per la prima versione. La stessa strategia ricorre anche nell'adattamento per *bande rythmo*; tuttavia, l'impiego della *détection* ha facilitato la scelta finale, potendo offrire un riscontro immediato con il video.

Senza il supporto della *bande*, gli effetti psico-cognitivi dedicati alla concentrazione e a un aumento della produttività hanno giocato un ruolo notevole nella resa creativa dell'adattamento e nel rispetto delle sincronie, i quali hanno necessitato di maggiore attenzione. L'esempio sottostante (riga n.20) dimostra la sostanziale differenza di proposte traduttive per una stessa battuta in seguito a un semplice cambiamento di strumenti:



Figura 3. Adattamento con *détection* per la riga n.20.

Nel caso in figura, la *bande rythmo* ha permesso una migliore riuscita dell’adattamento secondo il lip synch rispetto a quanto proposto precedentemente con solo l’ausilio di script e video su schermi separati, proprio per l’immediatezza del confronto tra testo e immagine. Per operare un confronto, si inseriscono di seguito la versione originale e quella in italiano senza *bande*:

VO : (Jay) Gee when you put it that way...

VI.1: (Jay) Ehm...Se proprio la vuoi mettere in questo modo...

L’esempio proposto diventa interessante dal punto di vista traduttivo. Al di là della comodità, la sincronizzazione labiale pare quasi monopolizzare le scelte traduttive. In effetti, l’adattamento con *bande* si allontana di più dall’originale, aggiungendo elementi alla *character portrayal*: con la frase “non mettermi nei guai” Jay parrebbe essere un ragazzino impaurito dalle conseguenze di scelte mal ponderate, in questo caso dall’esuberanza dell’amico (v. righe 13-21). Ciononostante, questo adattamento è supportato dal comportamento complessivo del personaggio nell’episodio, in cui si mostra ferrato in algebra, per cui particolarmente metodico; pertanto, una risposta simile suggerisce proprio l’analiticità del suo carattere, indicata anche dal codice iconografico rappresentato dagli occhiali che indossa e dal libro di algebra che mostra immediatamente (minuto 18). Inoltre, da entrambe le proposte traduttive si intravede una certa abitudine di Jay a sopportare l’estrosità del suo amico: la traduzione più “classica” veicola questa idea rispettando parzialmente il codice linguistico, mentre quella per *bande* ne rivela semanticamente l’aspettativa per la selezione gergale, con la prospettiva di sottintenderne la sopportazione con un tono di voce adeguato nel doppiaggio. Si può dire dunque che la *bande rythmo* abbia sì considerato maggiormente la sincronizzazione labiale, ma abbia anche in qualche modo stimolato la creatività. Un altro esempio è la riga n.19:

VO: (Zeke) Let’s not get technical. Come on Jay, the pad’s all charged up.

VI.1: (Zeke) Beh, sono solo dettagli. Dai Jay, il Pad è già carico.

VI.2: (Zeke) Questi sono solo dettagli. Amico, dai, ormai ho già caricato il Pad.

In questo caso, la prima prova traduttiva ha tentato di cogliere le somiglianze tra “let’s” e “beh”, tra “no(t)” e “(so)no”. Tuttavia, il risultato tramite *bande rythmo* sembrerebbe più adeguato, in quanto trascura la proposta dell’occlusiva bilabiale /b/ nella prima battuta e piuttosto opta per una semiconsonante [w] associata alla vocale [e]; in seguito, ripresenta la nasale bilabiale /m/ di “come on” nella parola “amico”.

A distanza di tempo dalle due bozze di traduzione, si nota come le caratteristiche traduttive della presente autrice si conservino in entrambe le prove; tuttavia, la seconda risulta essere più precisa a livello di sincronia, a causa delle segnalazioni paratestuali già incluse nella banda e della compresenza di immagine e testo sullo stesso schermo, che ha ridotto notevolmente lo sforzo cognitivo e ha incentivato la creatività linguistica. Oltretutto, la possibilità di lavorare direttamente sul copione originale nel software ha permesso di avere un riscontro diretto della traduzione sincronamente al video, come anche di tenere sempre presenti le lunghezze iniziali delle battute source (modificabili, sì, ma limitatamente) previo inserimento di apposite frecce di apertura e chiusura di

frase entro cui inserire l’adattamento (vedasi lo *screenshot* sopra), delimitando adeguatamente la durata degli eloi anche per la versione in italiano.

Tuttavia, la sincronia parrebbe occupare, seppur senza gran consapevolezza, una fetta importante dell’impostazione traduttologica, per cui occorre mantenere alta l’attenzione per una corretta caratterizzazione del personaggio, ponderando adeguatamente le scelte. Tale difficoltà linguistica non rappresenta l’unico svantaggio incontrato con la *bande rythmo*: è stata riscontrata una complessità iniziale nel comprendere le modalità di caricamento del progetto nel software, come nell’interpretare simboli e strumenti per la *détection*, che contribuirebbero a facilitare l’adattamento e ad accelerare il processo secondo la catena del doppiaggio francese, ma che in realtà hanno avuto bisogno di uno studio a sé. Inoltre, qualora l’esperienza aiutasse, i software potrebbero differire da progetto a progetto, a causa di scelte stilistiche o tecniche, per cui potrebbe occorrere di volta in volta apprendere i nuovi simboli e, soprattutto, il funzionamento complessivo del nuovo sistema. Nonostante ciò, l’abitudine sviluppata nel lavorare sul software ha permesso una notevole reattività nella lettura della *bande rythmo* in scorrimento con il video: caratteristica, questa, che risulta invariabile per tutti i software dedicati. Ad ogni modo, nonostante la soggettività delle considerazioni fin qui esposte, questi pochi esempi dimostrerebbero un certo supporto che uno strumento come la *bande rythmo* potrebbe dare a un dialoghista in fase di scrittura.

## 5. Conclusione

La presente ricerca ha voluto dimostrare come la *bande rythmo* informatizzi un processo tradizionalmente analogico e migliori il carico psico-cognitivo dedicato a sforzi fisiologici e a concentrazione complessiva. Le due proposte di adattamento hanno permesso una verifica empirica del processo traduttivo con e senza *bande*, dimostrando che quest’ultima può dare supporto al traduttore italiano tramite una velocizzazione complessiva del lavoro, così come incentivare una già presente integrazione del lavoro del traduttore in quello dell’adattatore, figure ancora percepibili come diverse nel metodo analogico. Tuttavia, la capillare attenzione alla sincronia labiale può indurre a un risultato finale qualitativamente compromesso, incentivando eccessivamente la creatività, per cui il traduttore potrebbe vedersi plasmato dalla *bande*. Nonostante ciò, l’avanzamento tecnologico attuale favorirebbe la definizione della *bande rythmo* come metodo più *up-to-date* per il doppiaggio contemporaneo, date le sue somiglianze con i recenti software di assistenza al doppiaggio da remoto; pertanto, un approfondimento della *bande* come tecnica per l’adattamento linguistico per la formazione di futuri traduttori TAV sarebbe auspicabile. Si spera che un futuro studio longitudinale sull’efficienza della *bande rythmo* a lungo termine riesca a dimostrare come sia possibile costituire una formazione multimediale per traduttori, pur avendo coscienza dei metodi tradizionali diffusi in Italia.

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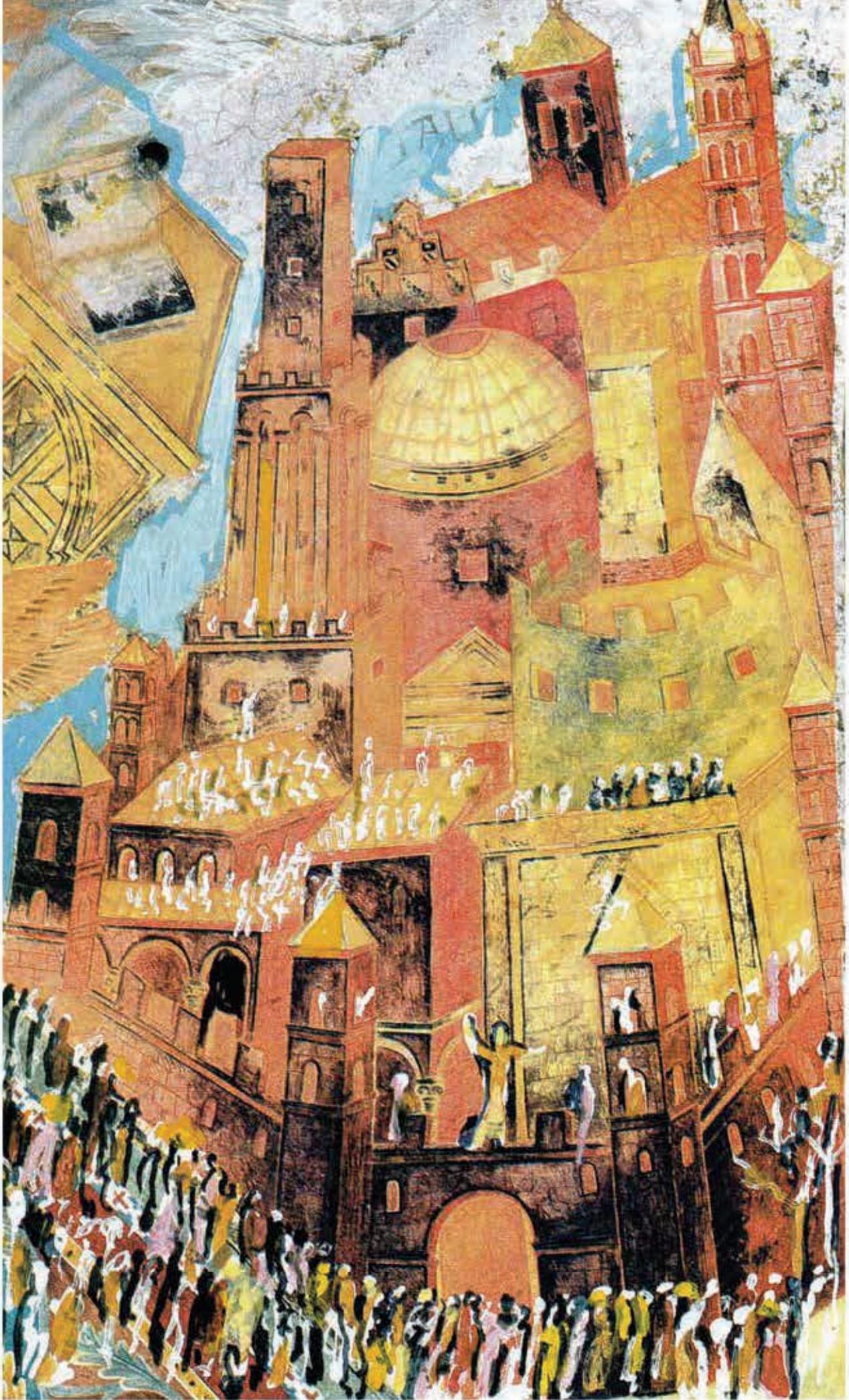
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