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The Language of War: Lexicon, Metaphor, Discourse

Il linguaggio della guerra: lessico, metafora, discorso

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Voices from Conflicts

Voice-Over and Simil Sync in Italian Television News Reports

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Abstract

This article aims to show how Italian national newscasts portray private individuals who are witnesses of wars. Based on the difference between voice-over and simil sync, this article investigates how and when these audiovisual translation modalities are employed in the newscasts of Italian television channels. The analysis identifies how correspondents have chosen to give voice to their interviewees in the Ukrainian-Russian and Palestinian-Israeli zones of war. Furthermore, based on the speaker's voice attitude, the study seeks to investigate whether news report items are more informative or more emotional. This perspective contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of AVT in shaping the portrayal of war witnesses in the media. In line with Darwish (2006), Darwish and Orero (2014), and Ameri and Khoshsaligheh (2018), who investigated the use of voice-over in news reports, the qualitative analysis in this article seeks to lie between the audiovisual translation framework and journalism translation (Valdeón 2022).

Keywords: interviews; Italian news reports; media and war; simil sync; voice-over.

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1. Introduction

The demand for audiovisual translation in news reporting has increased due to widespread international media consumption. Translation in journalism, which has been thoroughly investigated by scholars (i.e., Bassnett 2005; Baker 2006; Bielsa and Bassnett 2008; van Doorslaer

2010; Valdeón 2015, 2020; Davier *et al.* 2018; Qin and Zhang 2018) has been approached by AVT researchers exploring the technicalities and theoretical premises (O'Shea 1996), the workflow of news production (Perrin 2013), and the sociopolitical implications beyond the technicalities *per se* (Darwish and Orero 2014; Filmer 2016, 2018; Ameri and Khoshsaligheh 2018). As observed by Valdeón (2022, 373), "news or journalistic translation is no longer discussed as part of AVT research even though the convergence processes that characterize news production in the new millennium involve a variety of materials". On the other hand, in the field of multidimensional media products, "news and journalistic translation has become an emerging research area, shedding new light on the ubiquity of production and circulation of news and the nature of translation practices in news organizations" (Bielsa 2022, 1). For instance, voice-over, which allows audiences to hear the original soundtrack below the translated version, is the most suitable translation mode for non-fiction products such as news programs since it "contribute[s] to the appeals of reality, truth and authenticity" (Franco *et al.* 2010, 25). In Chaume's words, voice-over can provide "a greater impression of verisimilitude" (2013, 108). Moreover, "[m]edia texts not only mirror reality but also construct versions of it, and analysis can show how and when certain choices are made – what is excluded/included, foregrounded/backgrounded, made explicit/ implicit, thematized/silenced" (Gambier 2006, 9). Broadcasters, television channels, journalists, and translators (*journalator*, see van Doorslaer 2010, 1050) collaborate to communicate news in a 'multilayered way'. In the case of voice-over, the speaker has a crucial role in how they read the text. Like the broadcast journalist, the speaker also "performs the script" (Everton 1999, 98). Therefore, speakers' attitudes toward reading the translation may contribute to adding another layer to news reporting.

A new trend has emerged in Italian news broadcasting (Di Francesco 2023)[1]. The interviews in news reports of foreign correspondents are sometimes dubbed using simil sync instead of the more conventionally accepted voice-over. This article employs an AVT perspective (Darwish and Orero 2014) to analyze when and how voice-over/simil sync are used in television news reporting concerning conflicts. Based on the characteristics of both AVT modalities, the analysis identifies how correspondents have decided to give voice to their interviewees in

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[1] Unpublished PhD Thesis *Audience Attitudes towards Simil Sync: A Pilot Study*, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna - Forlì.

the Ukrainian-Russian and Palestinian-Israeli war zones. Moreover, the study investigates whether news report items are more 'informative' or more 'emotional', according to the voice attitude, here intended as the vocal delivery – the product of the overall combination of pitch, rhythm and intonation – performed by the Italian speakers who read the translated interviews. In other words, it is similar to what is called the "actors' style of performance" in which "voice itself (incorporating vocal tone, timbre, dynamic and pace) and what is said both change in dubbing, which will have a potential, perhaps notable impact on characterization" (Bosseaux 2015, 15). Content analysis and news framing (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000) and the framing process mediated by audiovisual translation (Li 2023) are the frameworks through which I analyze the representation of the "ordinary witnesses of wars" in a collection of Italian newscasts broadcast nationally. Since the study aims to provide the current perspective on how individuals affected by conflicts are portrayed, I intend to answer the following research questions:

- How are audiovisual translation modalities employed to narrate stories of war?
- Does the Italian speaker read the translated version or add pathos to the original voice audible in the background?
- Does the use of a dramatic, superimposed voice-over contribute to the sensationalized presentation of war news?

The answer to these questions will be provided after the analysis of the audiovisual material I collected over two months.

2. Background

In Italy, standard dubbing is used for films and TV series, voice-over is used for interviews and documentaries, and simil sync is used for other non-fiction programs such as reality TV shows, docu-dramas, docu-soaps, in other words, factual entertainment. The simil sync technique sits between dubbing and voice-over.

Simil sync "like dubbing but unlike voice-over respects isochrony (same length of utterances), and unlike dubbing but like voice-over it does not respect proper lip-synch (matching the translation with the bilabial and labiodental phonemes, and open vowels in close-ups and extreme close-ups" (Chaume 2020, 322). Sileo (2018), for instance, has recommended the use of "semi-sinc" to convey the idea of half-dubbing.

Spiteri Miggiani (2020, 82) has called it "phrase synch". The few studies which investigate simil sync, including Sileo (2018, 2020), Rossato (2014, 2020), Antoniazzi and Barra (2020), Barra *et al.* (2020), Barra and Farinacci (2021), and Di Francesco (2021), have remarked its hybridity.

Dramatization is another crucial aspect of simil sync. While Sileo (2020) defined simil sync as a dramatized voice-over, Bucaria (2022, 322) noticed that it "typically involves a higher level of theatricality in the voice actor's performances". As argued by Di Francesco (2023; 2025), in the case of reality TV shows, docudramas, etc., a fake effect could arise when the voice acting in simil sync does not reflect the real intentions of the original. Due to this discrepancy, situations, people, and programs risk losing credibility, and the audience appreciation may be affected by this histrionic attitude.

The 2017 provisional agreement of the dubbing industry called *Accordo Ponte* introduced the technical and extended definition of simil sync, which was created starting from the definition of standard dubbing. While dubbing is defined as *adattamento in sincronismo ritmico labiale* (lip synch adaptation which respects the pauses and length of the original utterances), simil sync is defined as *adattamento in sincronismo ritmico non labiale* (adaptation without lip sync which respects the pauses and length of the original utterances). As emerged from the review and analysis of terminology in the previous National Collective Agreements in the Italian dubbing industry (Di Francesco 2023) from 1992 to 2017, the attribution of the different dubbing modalities to new television genres evolved together with ambiguous expressions such as "documentaries with sync", "docu-dramas, reality TV shows 'with sync'", and "documentaries and reality TV shows 'without sync'" (my translation) (CCNL 2008 and 2017). Therefore, over three decades, simil sync features such as isochrony, the levels of dramatization and original soundtrack audibility, have proved to be variable due to the lack of standardized rules for simil sync that would produce only one type of adaptation.

However, the latest National Collective Agreement signed in December 2023 should clarify these blurred areas. It underlines that the *adattamento in sincronismo ritmico non labiale* (adaptation without lip synch) "does not require any lip synchronization (i.e., documentaries dubbed with voice-over)" (my translation) (CCNL 2023, 7). In contrast to the 2017 agreement, rhythm is no longer mentioned; instead, a new expression is introduced, that is, *sincronismo lineare* (linear synchronization).

The 2023 Agreement provides further rules[2] which recommend respect for isochrony (length of utterances) without any reproduction of rhythm (respect of pauses) or theatrical interpretation. The original soundtrack should be clearly audible below the Italian dub. These significant changes may influence how non-fiction products are dubbed. While, earlier, a certain degree of dramatization was admitted, now it should be avoided.

If we assume that interviews are part of non-fiction content, how they are dubbed should be established. Documentaries and interviews have been traditionally dubbed with voice-over with a 'flat' tone of voice. However, one latest trend observed in some Italian TV channels (Di Francesco 2023) does not follow this rule. In effect, some news reports have included interviews with simil sync, which show more 'pathos', as the speaker appears to be acting.

3. THE STUDY

3.1. *Database*

For the study, I selected news broadcasts from both state-owned (Rai) and privately-owned (Mediaset and La7) Italian TV channels, examining their online archives. The *Rainews.it* website provided the news content of Rai1, Rai2, and Rai3 (respectively Tg1, Tg2, and Tg3); *Mediaset Infinity.it* provided the content of Rete4, Canale5, and Italia1 (respectively TG4, TG5, and Studio Aperto), and the La7 website provided the TgLa7 content[3]. I decided to look into the evening editions of all Italian

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[2] "Documentaries and reality TV shows using 'simil sync' dubbing employ a linear synchronization technique. This approach, common in non-cinematographic productions, prioritizes matching the length and timing of the original audio with the dubbed version, aligning from the first to the last visible lip movement. However, it disregards nuances like pauses, specific lip shapes for phonemes, and the overall rhythm of natural speech. This differs from higher-quality dubbing (Fasce B and C) that requires actorial interpretation. Simil sync dubbing focuses solely on the spoken lines; expressions, breaths, laughter, cries, and other non-verbal vocalizations are not considered. The original soundtrack should be clearly audible beneath the dubbed audio" (my translation).

[3] In *Rainews.it* all the single editions are found together with the section "Rainews 24 live", where news is streamed live; as for the Mediaset channels, all the single editions are in *Mediaset Infinity.it* and the "live news" are found on the TGCOM24 website.

newscasts over two months (end of May 2024 – end of July 2024)[4]. Access to the websites was free, but the availability of the newscast editions was limited to monthly or weekly coverage.

The collected material followed three selection criteria: (a) being part of the evening edition of newscasts, (b) providing interviews with Ukrainian-Russian or Palestinian-Israeli people, and (c) being dubbed into Italian with a voice different from the journalist's own voice.

Over two months (specifically, 64 days), I watched 448 newscast evening editions, but only 20 videos met all the three criteria (19 were from Tg1, one was from Tg2). Among the Tg1 videos, 15 were on the Ukrainian-Russian war, and four were on the Palestinian-Israeli war. The Tg2 video was on the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.

The reports lasted approximately two minutes, were based on a question-answer style and were introduced by the talking head or the correspondent, providing the news context. In each video, one or more interviewees appeared on the screen and, since the original soundtrack was audible, it was possible to hear that the interviewees spoke Ukrainian, Russian, English, Arabic and Hebrew.

The 49 interviewees were soldiers, civilians, teachers, doctors, students, and retired people of different ages. I collected the utterances belonging to each interview, so the units of analysis are 49.

3.2. *Methodology*

The methodological framework for this study draws on Jingjing Li's work (2023), which has integrated audiovisual translation into video news framing processes adopted by news broadcasters. It is based "on the less-studied relationship between the modes of audiovisual translation and their meaning-making implications, rather than the textual analysis of news translation" (2023, 333). News framing (i.e., frame-building, framing process, and frame effects) is considered suitable for categorizing the material to be analyzed. I followed the "most common types of news framing" as adaped by Li (2023, 331): the conflict frame, the human-interest frame, the morality frame, the consequence frame, and the responsibility frame. In their quantitative study on content analysis

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[4] Schedule time for the evening editions: Tg1 at 8:00 pm, Tg2 at 8:30 pm, Tg3 at 7:00 pm, TG4 at 7:00 pm, TG5 at 8:00 pm, Studio Aperto (Italia1) at 6:30 pm, and Tg La7 at 8:00 pm.

of newspaper stories and television news stories in the Dutch national news from May 1 to June 20 1997 ("Eurotop" meetings), Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) defined the different frames with questions the coder was requested to answer (yes/no) [5].

- The *conflict frame* "emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest" (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000, 95). A coder question example is: "Does the article reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups?" (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000, 98).
- The *human-interest frame* "brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem" and "refers to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or 'emotionalize' the news, in order to capture and retain audience interest" (2000, 95-96). A coder question example is: "Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?" (2000, 98).
- The *morality frame* includes the event or issue within the religious or moral spheres. A coder question example is: "Does the story contain any moral message?" (2000, 98).
- The *consequence frame* "reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country" (2000, 96). Furthermore, it seeks to "touch on shared human feelings and mobilise empathy for distant others" (Li 2023, 331). This frame was adapted from Semetko and Valkenburg by Li. Therefore, no coder question example was provided for this frame.
- The *responsibility frame* includes issues or problems presented as produced by the responsibility of the government, groups or individuals (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000; Li 2023). A coder question example is: "Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?" (2000, 98).

After I transcribed the interviews (i.e. 49 units of analysis), I classified them according to date, channel, interviewees' gender/profession, original language, Italian speaker's voice attitude, which I distinguished between dramatized (theatrical) and undramatized (non-theatrical), and words left audible in the background as original soundbites. In order to establish which 'framing process mediated by the audiovisual translation' was used, I analyzed each video from the AVT perspective (voice-over or simil sync characteristics). Then, I qualitatively analyzed each

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[5] One coder question example is provided per frame.

unit of analysis using content analysis and news framing according to "keywords, stock phrases, stereotypical images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts and judgements" (Entman 1993, 52). Therefore, I correlated the frames with the Italian speakers' voice attitudes to establish whether the narrations were characterized by the 'emotional move' or the 'informative' one to observe which trends emerged in terms of AVT mode and narration strategies in news reports, in other words, how the AVT forms of voice-over and simil sync correlate with the frames of news reporting.

4. Analysis

4.1. *Database and AVT*

My analysis of audiovisual translation focused on key elements in voice-over and simil sync dubbing, including rhythm, isochrony, and the vocal delivery of the Italian speakers. Of the 49 units analyzed, the original rhythm was preserved in only two instances (Tg1, 25/07/24). A similar trend emerged with isochrony, where only four units (Tg1, 03/06/24, 08/06/24, 09/07/24, 25/07/24) maintained the original isochronous patterns. In most cases, original soudbites were retained at the beginning and/or end of utterances. This analysis partially confirms Darwish and Orero (2014) and Ameri and Khoshsaligheh (2016; 2018), who reported that in the case of news translation, initial isochrony is employed, as no original soundbite remains audible at the end of the speech. Following Sepielak (2016b), isochrony can be divided into "full isochrony", in which the original utterance is heard both at the beginning and end of speech, "initial isochrony" (the original utterance is heard only at the beginning of the speech) and "final isochrony" (or "post-synchrony", see Mazur and Chmiel, 2016), in which the original utterance is heard only at the end of the speech. In general, Sepielak (2016a, 1060) explained that

> The notion of voice-over isochrony assumes that the translation should fit in the time available for the voice-over in such a way that the beginning and end of the original utterance are audible. In multilingual segments, this kind of synchrony allows viewers to identify a multilingual context. There is, however, no specific indication of the voice-over isochrony unit of measurement.

The effect of the voice-over isochrony is that the audience can clearly hear words in the original, which may assume importance and relevance for those who know the original language and can understand it. In the case of English extracts of the database, the soundbites that are clearly audible are:

- in the jungle / welcome to Vietnam, guys / imperial army (Tg1, 27/05/24)
- I don't want [...] / [...] see how their friends die / get involved / I'm now a combat medic (Tg1, 27/05/24)
- keep fight (Tg1, 27/05/24)
- right now, the situation is hard / European human being (Tg1, 08/06/24)
- if Hersch can hear me / survive (Tg1, 24/06/24)
- one of our doctors was killed during when she tried to [...] / [...] in safety and nobody died but a couple of [...] / [...] these patients and tried to do everything to save them (Tg1, 08/07/24)
- hope (Tg1, 09/07/24)

The extracts all highlight a complex picture of the human experience during wartime, from which both physical and psychological aspects emerge. Themes such as conflict and human cost (i.e., in the jungle, imperial army, see how their friends die, combat medic), hope and resilience (i.e., keep fight, survive, hope), and cultural and personal identity or otherness (i.e., welcome to Vietnam, European human being) are characterized by a spectrum of emotions involving fear, anxiety, and loss but also empathy and determination.

On the one hand, hearing the real voice of people may support the sense of authenticity (Franco *et al.* 2010) and provide audiences with a sense of proximity to the interviewees. On the other hand, the tone of the original voices can also be compared with the Italian speakers' voice attitude performed through voice-over. *Graph 1* shows the distribution of the speakers' voice attitude in the database.
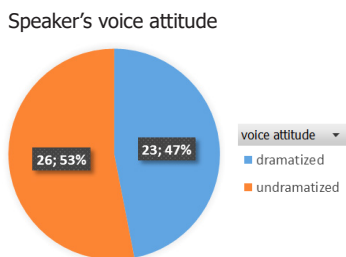
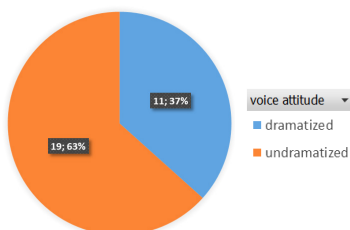*Graph 1. – Speaker's voice attitude.*

I distinguished two kinds of voice attitudes: 'dramatized' and 'undrama-tized'. The dramatized voice attitude is used when the Italian speakers read the texts with a histrionic and over-the-top delivery style. Instead, the undramatized voice attitude is characterized by a flat tone of voice, the "journalistic" reading style that correspondents and journalists tend to use in news reports. The data in *Graph 1* reveals that the number of undramatized units is higher than the dramatized ones. Nevertheless, the result is not clear-cut and shows quite a balance between the 23 in-dividuals dubbed with a dramatized delivery style and the 26 individuals dubbed with an undramatized tone of voice. As for the gender, I obser-ved that, while the female interviewees' voices were mostly rendered with a dramatized tone of voice by the Italian speakers (*Graph 2*), the male interviewees' voices were rendered with undramatized voices (*Graph 3*).

Female interviewees and the Italian speakers' voice attitude
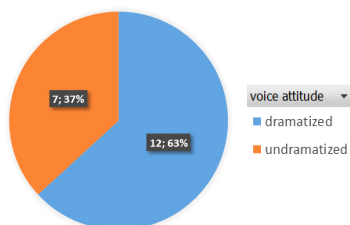
Graph 2. – Female interviewees and the Italian speakers' voice attitude.

Male interviewees and the Italian speakers' voice attitude

Graph 3. – Male interviewees and the Italian speakers' voice attitude.

As seen, over time, dramatization and isochrony have been some of the characteristics that differentiate simil sync and voice-over. The present analysis through the lens of AVT shows that the interviews with ordi-nary people in war zones are voiced-over in terms of isochrony and rhythm, but defining the voice attitude of the Italian speakers appears

to be challenging due to its balanced results between dramatized and undramatized attitudes. Therefore, it is better to speak of "theatrical voice-over, 'acted-up' recitation" (Chiaro 2009, 153), used in Italian news programs to translate the voices of ethnic minorities.

4.2. *Database and content analysis*

Word Cloud 1[6] highlights a certain focus on the dimensions of time and space through the words *qui* (here) and *quando* (when) and *anni* (years), in addition to the words *combattere* (to fight), *vogliamo/voglio* (we want / I want), *guerra* (war), *russi* (Russian), *persone* (people), and *bambini* (children). The reference to time and space is coherent with the narration of the interviewees who are experiencing the war as if they were in an eternal unchanging present. The other words are linked to the concreteness of the war which involves civilians and soldiers indifferently.


Word Cloud 1. – The words appearing in the interviewees' transcripts.

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[6] Word clouds are generated with Voyant tools: https://voyant-tools.org (Stéfan Sinclair & Geoffrey Rockwell © 2024).

According to the keywords found in each interview, the most suitable frame was attributed to each unit of analysis. While the conflict, the human interest and the consequence frames are well-defined (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000), I added a "factual frame" for those units in which speakers provided instructions only (i.e., *Vado a vedere se ci passiamo*[7]; *Seguici, stai vicino, non più di due metri*[8]; *Apri la porta! Apri la porta. Ha un'ascia! Ha un'ascia! Usa il gas! Usa il gas!*[9])[10].

The highest number belongs to the human-interest frame (25 units), which tells us that the news were more emotional and the journalists focused on the representation of the individuals kept in their feelings. The second most frequent frame is conflict (13 units), followed by the factual frame (6 units), and the consequence frame (5 units).
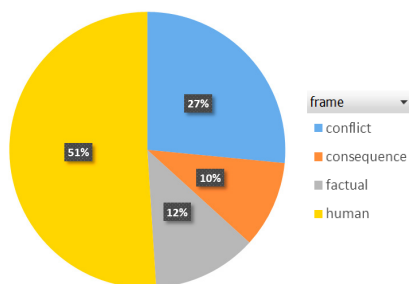
Graph 5. – Interviews and frames.

Interviews within the human-interest frame are characterized by the nominalization of family members, personal emotions and reactions, such as in the following examples[11]:

(1) *Rivedo Vovčans'k nei miei* **incubi**, *non ho ancora deciso se arruolarmi, ma voglio farmi trovare pronta. Siamo la porta d'Europa, purtroppo questo è il nostro* **destino**[12] (Tg1, 08/06/2024)

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[7] I'm going to see if we can pass through (Tg1, 27/07/2024).

[8] Follow us, stay closer, no more than two meters (Tg1, 27/07/2024).

[9] Open the door! Open the door. He's got an axe! He's got an axe! Use the gas! Use the gas! (Tg1, 31/07/2024).

[10] I provide the original Italian extracts and my translation into English.

[11] Due to space limitation, only a subset of the examples is presented here.

[12] I see Vovčans'k again in my **nightmares**, I haven't decided whether to enlist, but I want to be ready. We are the gateway to Europe, unfortunately this is our **destiny**.

(2) *Il nostro asilo non esiste più, è stato bombardato il 9 maggio di due anni fa. I **bambini** sono **ansiosi**, a volte **isterici**, alcuni **si graffiano le braccia**. Se sentiamo un'esplosione gli diciamo che è un tuono. Ho una **bambina**, ormai siamo **abituate all'ansia**. Leggi sui loro volti, chi ha il papà al fronte. Hanno anche iniziato a **giocare alla guerra**, ma cerchiamo di distrarli*[13] (Tg1, 09/06/2024)

(3) *Non so dove mi stanno portando, da due anni non sento **mia moglie**, la chiamo ma il numero non funziona, non so nemmeno se è viva. / Sono nato in Russia, **mio padre** era un pilota militare, ma da quando ho quattro anni vivo in Ucraina. / Sono come zombie, Putin li ha trasformati in carne da cannone. Prima di ammalarmi **ero un pianista**, potevo suonare Chopin per giorni, **avevo un piano meraviglioso**, **i tasti erano così dolci**, **faceva un suono stupendo**[14]* (Tg1, 16/06/2024)

(4) *Sono morte due persone, una era una **dottoressa molto giovane**, aveva accompagnato i **bambini** del suo reparto nel rifugio alle prime sirene poi è tornata a controllare che nessuno fosse rimasto indietro. / **provo** così tante cose, **rabbia**, **speranza**, **preoccupazione**, è inconcepibile non so cosa pensare della società russa, hanno tutti delle madri, dei figli, non so quanto ci vorrà ma **spero** che tra un mese possiate tornare e restare stupiti da quello che avremo fatto*[15] (Tg1, 09/07/2024)

The conflict frame is characterized by terms reflecting disagreement or opposition between individuals or groups as well as the language of war.

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[13] Our kindergarten no longer exists, it was bombed on 9 May two years ago. The **children** are **anxious**, sometimes **hysterical**, some are **scratching their arms**. When we hear an explosion, we tell them it's thunder. I have a **little girl**, so **we are used to the anxiety** now. You can tell from their faces whose daddy is at the front. They've even **started playing war games**, but we try to distract them.

[14] I don't know where they're taking me, I haven't heard from **my wife** for two years, I call her, but the number doesn't work, I don't even know if she's alive. / I was born in Russia, **my father** was a military pilot, but I've lived in Ukraine since I was four. / They're like zombies, Putin has turned them into cannon fodder. Before I got sick, **I was a pianist**, I could play Chopin for days, **I had a wonderful piano**, **the keys were so sweet, it made a wonderful sound**.

[15] Two people died, one was a **very young doctor**, she had taken the **children** from her ward to the shelter at the first siren, then went back to check that no one had been left behind. / I **feel** so many things, **anger**, **hope**, **worry**, it's unimaginable, I don't know what to think of Russian society, they all have mothers, children, I don't know how long it will take, but I **hope** that in a month you can come back and be amazed at what we will have done.

(5) *Abbiamo iniziato il nostro* **contrattacco***. Il vero problema è che il* **fronte** *è lungo 1000 km, difficilissimo da* **difendere** *tutto. Siamo* **un piccolo esercito contro un grande grande esercito imperiale** [16] (Tg1, 27/05/2024)

(6) *Sono passato attraverso quella che* **noi prigionieri** *chiamavamo "la prionka". Sono stato* **abbattuto** *con il mio elicottero e* **i russi** *mi hanno* **catturato e portato in un campo di detenzione** *dove sono stato* **picchiato** *per un'intera giornata da tutti i* **carcerieri** *e* **poliziotti** *che vi lavoravano* [17] (Tg2, 01/06/2024)

(7) **Noi non siamo meno importanti degli abitanti di Tel Aviv**, *se non ci proteggete da* **Hezbollah noi** *lo faremo da soli!* [18] (Tg1, 28/07/2024)

As for the consequence frame, a representative example is:

(8) **Aiutateci** *e* **non dovrete combattere** *voi, chiudete i cieli e dormirete in pace.* **L'Europa non capisce** *fino in fondo, non può,* **nemmeno Kharkiv capiva** *finché si combatteva solo in Donbass,* **nemmeno Kiev**. *L'Europa ovviamente capisce che siamo in difficoltà,* **ma non ha mai sentito lo stivale di un soldato russo addosso. Siamo grati per tutto il sostegno** *che riceviamo,* **ma** *ci serve di più* [19] (Tg1, 08/06/2024)

The interviewee presents a significant issue that profoundly impacts the lives of Ukrainians and appeals to the European community, aiming to evoke empathy for the exhausted population. While the conflict and the human-interest frames involve the audience indirectly, the consequence frame appears to go straight to the interviewee's will of mobilizing distant audiences' empathy (Li 2023).

These frames are conveyed by the Italian speakers through voice-over and voice attitude. *Graph 6* shows the overview of the voice attitude styles per frame.

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[16] We started our **counterattack**. The real problem is that the **front** is 1000 km long, it is very difficult **to defend** everything. We are a **small army against a large imperial army**.

[17] I went through what **we prisoners** called "the prionka". I was **shot down** in my helicopter and **the Russians captured me and took me to a prison camp** where I **was beaten** for a whole day by all the **jailers** and **policemen** who worked there.

[18] **We are no less important than the people of Tel Aviv**, if you do not protect us from **Hezbollah**, **we** will do it ourselves!

[19] **Help us** and you **will not have to fight**; close the skies and sleep in peace. **Europe doesn't understand**. **Even Kharkiv** didn't understand until we were fighting in the Donbass – **not even in Kiev**. Europe knows we are in trouble, but **it has never felt the boot of a Russian soldier on its back**. **We are grateful for all the support** we receive, **but** we need more.
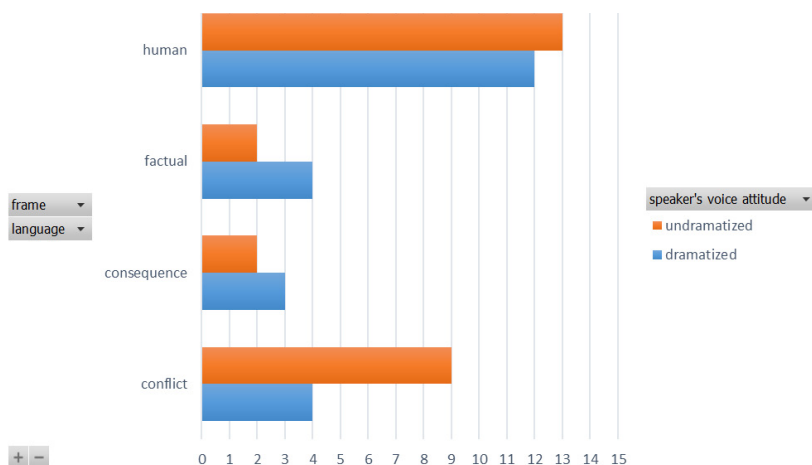
Graph 6. – Italian speakers' voice attitudes per frame.

Considering the two most salient frames (i.e., the human interest and the conflict frames), while the dramatized and the undramatized voice attitudes are almost balanced in the human interest frame, the imbalance is more evident in the conflict frame. On the one hand, the balance in the first frame may mean that personal emotions are conveyed according to the intensity of the interviewees' emotions. This balance suggests a nuanced approach by the broadcast, the journalist and the speaker, who attempt to convey the interviewees' emotions and align with the expectation that personal emotions should be portrayed accurately. On the other hand, a greater prevalence of undramatized speech in the conflict frame may be attributed to the inclination to communicate the interviewees' statements in a straightforward manner, without adding emotional appeal, thereby establishing a certain degree of detachment between the audience and the subject matter. Using an undramatized voice in conflict frames also reduces the likelihood of the conflict being narrated (and, consequently, being perceived) in an ideological manner.

The attitude of the speaker's voice may bring the viewer closer to or further away from the subject of the news. However, there are cases of interviews involving Ukrainian speakers in which some parts of their speech are left in the original language without any form of audiovisual translation, especially in dangerous or high-stress situations for civilians or soldiers. When the speech in another language is left as it is, the non-translation may serve as "staging authenticity" in Martin Luginbuehl's (2004) words and emotionally impact the audience, producing more

awareness of war issues. The 'unfiltered' speech may also imply technical limitations, as seen with isochrony, due to fast-paced situations or security concerns about protecting sensitive information.

Whatever the translation strategy, no other channels except Tg1 (and Tg2) broadcast voiced-over and simil synced interviews with ordinary people in news of war.

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to provide the current perspective of how private individuals, witnesses of wars, are portrayed in Italian national newscasts through audiovisual translation. I focused on the two major latest conflicts, so I looked into interviews with Ukrainians-Russians and Palestinians-Israelis. The specificity of the audiovisual material and its limited availability have been a challenging issue for the retrieval and collection of the material. Many years ago, Díaz Cintas (2012, 291) observed that the lack of access to audiovisual content, fictional or factual (i.e., news reports), could be one of the reasons why only few studies appear in the AVT field. And yet, retrieving material in AVT is still a critical aspect of research that requires careful consideration. Of all the public and private TV channels, Tg1 (Rai1) and Tg2 (Rai2) newscasts broadcast voiced-over interviews.

As for the audiovisual modality, voice-over seems to be used mostly. Voice-over isochrony was used more than simil sync isochrony (the Italian translation entirely covers the original utterances) since "the perception of voice-over as a trustful mode stems from the fact that it is frequently used in products that present real and true events – that is, documentaries" (Sepielak 2016a, 1056). In news reports, voice-over isochrony contributes to maintaining the link between the testimony's experience and the journalist's narration. This result can answer the first research question of the study: 'How are audiovisual translation modalities employed to narrate stories of war? In contrast to the speeches of politicians and representatives of international organizations, which are paraphrased or quoted by journalists, the speeches of ordinary people are translated by voice-over. In other words, when journalists report the words of politicians through reported speech, they are providing information; when a speaker lends their voice to ordinary people through voice-over, information acquires more emotionality. Employing a voice different from the journalist's may be a strategic move into the portrayal

of 'ordinary people' since viewers can hear both the original voice and the Italian version. Therefore, the contrast between using a form of audiovisual translation or paraphrasing speeches has to do with how stories are framed and narrated by journalists and producers, and how audiences interpret news (Dobkin 1992).

As seen in the analysis, the attitude of the Italian speakers' voice can make a difference, and the results can answer my research questions: 'Does the Italian speaker read the translated version or add pathos to the original voice audible in the background?' and 'Are people dubbed with the same tone of voice?'. On the one hand, the flat and journalistic tone of voice provides the news report with an 'informative style'; on the other hand, the theatrical tone of voice provides the news report with an 'emotional style'. However, the balanced numbers of both delivery styles (23 dramatized voices vs. 26 undramatized voices) do not allow for tracing a clear-cut trend, so more investigation is needed. As for gender, more 'pathos' is slightly put on the female voices, with 12 units with dramatized voices and seven undramatized voices, while male voices are divided into 11 units with dramatized voices and 19 undramatized voices. This is a further line of inquiry which may be fruitfully developed in the future.

The study also correlated the Italian speakers' voice attitudes and the analysis of news framing, such as the human interest, the conflict and the consequence frame. While the dramatized and the undramatized voice attitudes are almost balanced in the human-interest frame (undramatized = 13 units and dramatized = 12 units), the imbalance is more evident in the conflict frame (undramatized = 9 units and dramatized = 4). The use of undramatized voices suggests that both news programs, Tg1 and Tg2, seem to choose a neutral strategy when dealing with the war news reports concerning conflict issues. However, the research question 'Does the use of a dramatic, superimposed voice-over contribute to the sensationalzed presentation of war news?' can also be answered considering the human-interest frame. Using superimposed voices to highlight individual experiences during the war can align with the focus on personal stories, drawing attention to personal narratives rather than more complex geopolitical issues. The Tg1 and Tg2 channels seemed to consider the ethical implications, avoiding sensationalism in reporting people's experiences of war for entertainment, and thus the "tablodization" of news (Esser 1999). This entails the overall commitment of news translation to shaping audiences' understanding of global events concerning conflicts.

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