COMPRESSION IN SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING: FACT OR MYTH? A CORPUS BASED STUDY

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1 Introduction

The present study will attempt to define the role played by compression in simultaneous interpreting (SI) particularly in those speeches that are marked by a fast rate of delivery or by sudden changes in rhythm.

From a theoretical standpoint, compression in SI was extensively theorised in a seminal study by Ghelly Chernov for whom it is a ‘labour saving device in extreme conditions of SI [that is made possible thanks] to the linguistic redundancy in the thematic component of the discourse’ (2004: 113).

Such a remark needs to be examined in greater detail since it implies a number of important notions that should not be taken for granted: 1) compression in SI is actually possible; 2) it can be achieved thanks to a certain degree of redundancy in the source message; 3) it is labour saving device that helps interpreters tackle speeches delivered at a fast rate.

The first two notions will be addressed in detail in the second part of this study, through the existing literature, relevant examples and evidence obtained from the study of a spoken corpus. The choice of a corpus-based approach responds to requirements set by modern research and is in line with suggestions by Robin Setton according to whom: ‘as a first step towards understanding interpreting processes … it seems reasonable to begin by observing and comparing the original discourse and its interpreted versions, instead of imposing models of memory and attention on the process, a priori’ (2002: 29-30).

As to the third notion it seems rather obvious that a speaker’s delivery rate have some role in SI: a speech that unfolds too quickly is most certainly bound to create some problems for the interpreters who will likely employ some strategy to try to
overcome them, compression being one of the most obvious. Yet even assuming that compression is actually used in SI, can it really be considered a ‘labour saving device’? Furthermore, does it arise from a conscious effort on the part of interpreters or is it merely the result of a certain number of random items of information being dropped when the source speech is delivered at a speed that some interpreters cannot sustain? These questions will be addressed further on in the study.

2 Interpreting as an externally paced activity

Of course interpreters have many ways to improve the quality of their interpretation such as a good working knowledge of the topic they are called upon to interpret along with a familiarity with its technical terminology and an in-depth proficiency in their passive and active working languages. The delivery rate of a speech, however, is a variable that entirely escapes their control. The pace is set by the speaker alone.

Incidentally, the fact that SI is an externally paced activity is one of the main factors that distinguishes it from a written translation where the translator can set her own pace and even go back to those parts of a text she may not have understood. An oral speech instead unfolds sequentially at a delivery rate over which the interpreter has no control, especially in those frequent cases where time is limited and speakers may be reluctant to slow down. In other words the ‘external control over the rate of SI constitutes one of the main parameters of extreme SI conditions’ (Chernov 2004: 17).

When SI was first adopted on a wide scale at the Nuremberg trials that followed World War II interpreting was not taken for granted and the delivery rate of speakers was kept under strict control. The Presiding Judge would frequently require speakers to slow down or even stop if their pace was incompatible with the
ongoing SI, as reported in this excerpt of the trial’s proceedings: ‘Answer slowly and after pausing. Do you understand? Wait a minute, wait a minute. When you see the light on the desk there or here it means you are going too fast. Do you understand?’ (Gaiba 1998: 79)

Such rather stringent requirements did not apply only to witnesses or defendants but also to the prosecution.

Mr. Dubost … you give the numbers too fast … It is very difficult for the interpreters to pick up all these numbers. First of all you are giving the numbers of the document, then the number of the exhibit, then the page of the document book - and that means that the interpreters have got to translate many numbers spoken very quickly … and therefore it is absolutely essential that you go slowly (Gaiba 1998: 79)

The very person credited with the invention of simultaneous interpreting, the U.S. Chief Prosecutor Justice Jackson, who had a tendency to speak quite fast, was once given a note in which interpreters complained that they ‘would break down’ if he did not reduce his pace (Gaiba 1998: 79).

The great attention placed by the court on the delivery rate of speakers came from studies conducted during mock trials that had shown that SI was not sustainable beyond a certain rate of delivery (Gaiba 1998: 80). Based on those studies, trials took place at an average delivery speed of 130 words per minute (wpm), with peaks of no more than 200 wpm (Gaiba 1998: 80).

It is worthwhile noting that despite the advances in interpreter training of these past sixty-five years, the optimal delivery rate of speeches interpreted simultaneously is still nowadays considered to range between 100 and 120 wpm, with peaks of no more than 150 to 200 wpm (Chernov 2004: 17; Seleskovitch 1990: 67). These delivery rates are in line with listening comprehension requirements:
Speech has an average rate of delivery of 100 to 200 words a minute. This appears to be the time required by our brain to process the sounds in our memory span, discriminating between sounds and connecting the relevant ones to language concepts on the one hand and to presently non-verbalized information or feelings on the other hand, producing sense. (Seleskovitch 1990: 67)

3 Measuring the delivery rate of a speech

In SI there is almost always some lag between what is being said by the speaker and what is translated by the interpreter. This interval is required to understand an oral message, situate it within its wider context and carry out a set of complex cognitive activities that are typical of any task that involves listening comprehension.

This lag between the speaker and the interpreter, called ear-voice span (EVS) or décalage in French and can be visually represented through the following example taken from the corpus considered by this study.

The sound wave at the top (A) refers to the original speech in the SL and the one below (B) to the interpreter’s version in the TL. As shown by the red lines that mark the pauses in the two versions the two versions do not unfold in parallel but diagonally.

This lag implies that SI is not truly simultaneous and that the information received by interpreters will have to be stored temporarily somewhere before it can actually be translated in the TL.
The role of memory in cognitive activities was extensively theorised by psychologists starting with the 50s and refined in the following decades. One of the best known models developed in those first years is called the *multi-store model*, which postulates the existence of three different areas of memory: a *sensory store* that ‘holds information very briefly and is modality specific, a *short-term memory* of limited capacity and a *long-term memory* of essentially unlimited capacity, which can hold information over extremely long periods of time’ (Eysenck 2001: 157).

According to Barsalou:

> When a perceptual system detects information initially, it establishes a perceptual representation of the information briefly in its sensory store. These sensory stores can retain … this information only for a second or so, depending on the modality … As perceptual representations become categorized, representations of these categories enter the short-term store. … Because the short-term store is limited in capacity to around five pieces of information, it can only contain about five categorizations of the perceptual representations. … If category representations remain in the short-term store long enough, they may be transferred to the long-term store. (1992: 94-95)

Although this model was questioned in subsequent years and different more sophisticated memory models were developed, psychologists still nowadays concur that short-term memory is limited in the amount of information it can contain and that ‘forgetting’ will take place after a relatively short period of time, due to decay, interference or displacement (Barsalou 1992: 99; Eysenck 2001: 162-163).

The role of *short-term* memory in SI has a strong bearing on the present study since interpreters will be likely to compress a message so as to avert the risk of forgetting important pieces of information, especially when they are lagging excessively behind the speaker. In fact ‘the storage of information is claimed to be particularly expensive in SI since both the volume of information and the pace of storage and retrieval are imposed by the speaker’ (Gide cited in Setton 1999: 36).
The delivery rates of the various segments of the corpus were therefore measured with the aim of identifying those parts of the speech that were characterised by a faster than average delivery rate, or by sudden changes in rhythm that were likely to deplete the interpreter’s memory.

It should be noted, however, that measuring the delivery rate of a speech in terms of words-per-minute (wpm) is a reductive approach that does not take into account the complexity of language nor the different cognitive processes involved in listening comprehension.

Setton notes that:

> The significance of EVS or comparative delivery rates as measured in words or syllables is highly questionable, firstly because of the morphemic differences between languages, but also because in translation, the meaning of a word may be rendered as a sentence or as a prosodic feature (Lederer 1981), or vice-versa, and redundancies may be omitted, or explanations offered. … Professional interpreters agree that the writtenness of the presentation is a far more important factor than the speed of delivery, and that SI from fast recited text is extremely difficult (1999: 30).

Furthermore using words as a measure of the capacity of short-term memory does not take into account that they are not understood nor stored in memory in isolation: ‘the capacity of short-term memory is not the amount of information that people can reproduce in a short-term memory task (e.g., the number of digits). Rather, it is the number of chunks … which later allows them to reproduce this information’ (Barsalou 1992: 97). Short-term memory is only partially limited in the number of words it can contain since ‘it can be extended by chunking single pieces of information more efficiently… if several pieces of perceived information form a familiar chunk, people can represent them more efficiently in working memory. Rather than each piece of information being represented separately, they are stored together as a single unit thereby using less storage capacity’. (Barsalou 1992: 114). For example if we take a number, such as 19702009 and store it in short-term
memory digit-by-digit it will soon be forgotten. On the contrary by chunking the
digits to form the following larger groups 1970 and 2009 it will undoubtedly be
remembered over a longer period of time.

Short-term memory, furthermore, should not be viewed merely as a passive storing
cognitive function but as one that involves some kind of understanding and interplay
between the items it stores and the interpreter’s world knowledge (in the example
considered previously, my birth date ‘1970’ and the year in which I am writing this
dissertation ‘2009’).

The fact that a speech goes well beyond the words and sentences it is made up of
will come as self-evident to interpreters who will certainly have had some
experience of utterances in which what is being said is not what is actually meant.
Seleskovitch refers to this with a distinction between what is said (dire, in French)
and the speaker’s underlying intention (the vouloir dire). When faced with such
inconsistencies, experienced interpreters, as well as listeners in general, will have a
tendency to correct the utterance, replacing the dire with the vouloir dire.

It is still widely held that speech is language, i.e., words following, upon each
other with the specific phonetics, semantics, grammar, and transphrastic
peculiarities of a given language. Speech is not considered very different from
words, phrases, and sentences. For interpretation the concept of speech has to be
taken much more broadly. It has to include speakers, time and place of emission,
and listeners. For interpreting - and for acts of communication in general -
speeches cannot be dissociated from the ideas a person has when opening his or
her mouth to speak or from the associations of ideas that come to the listeners’

This observation further supports the fact that a speech should not be viewed as an
inanimate object transmitted through words and received passively by someone
who shares those words, but as a complex living entity that involves many different
variables.
It follows that, ideally, the mere measuring of the words-per-minute in a speech does not suffice to establish its rate of delivery. In fact, other variables need to be considered which play an equally important role for the underlying communicative process. Some speeches may involve a certain number of words that point to many discrete pieces of information, such as acronyms, technical jargon or numbers, while others may unfold with many words-per-minute and yet entail very little information. This issue introduces the concept of information density which may be highly variable in different interpreting contexts (technical and non technical speeches, for example) or even within a given speech.

Dillinger, Lee and Tommola and Helevä cite density as a key determinant of processing capacity, and Gile notes the heavy load imposed by lists, in particular, which are intrinsically high-density utterances, since “... more information must be processed per unit of time. ... High speech density is probably the most frequent source of interpretation problems. High speech density is associated with ... information elements put next to each other without grammatical or other low-density word groups in-between. (Schlesinger 2003: 39)

To partially account for the issues mentioned so far the rate of delivery of the corpus was be measured in terms of words-per-second (wps) instead of words-per-minute (wpm). By considering smaller not only the average speed of a speech can be measured but also its frequent changes in rhythm which would otherwise go unnoticed. The wps were calculated by counting the words of each segment and dividing them by the segment’s duration expressed in seconds. The figure obtained was then rounded to the closest decimal and included in the transcript of the corpus (Appendix A) within square brackets at the beginning of each segment, as shown below:

1 [2.0] Grazie ai colleghi che sono presenti
2: Thank you very much. Thank you

In this example above the utterance ‘Grazie ai colleghi che sono presenti’ [Thanks to colleagues for coming] was delivered by the speaker at a rate of 2 wps.
4 Theoretical Framework

According to Chernov, compression in SI can take place at various levels of language, involving any one of the following: syllables, words, syntax, meaning or context.

Before describing these various levels of compression, a general word of caution has to be spent on the limitations of a study approach that fragments language into sub-components, especially where complex processes such as listening comprehension are involved. To quote Seleskovitch ‘observation of successful interpretations has proved beyond doubt that in normal communication, contrary to a wide-spread belief, sounds are not understood first as language meanings and then connected to actual events, they are always instantly understood as the thing meant by a speaker, which we call sense’ (1990: 67-68).

What applies to sounds and syllables can certainly apply also to words, syntax, meaning and in general to all other components of language: given that ‘sense’ arises immediately it follows that none of these sub-components can actually account for communication if taken in isolation.

4.1 Syllabic compression

This compression mechanism takes place at the lowest level and involves the choice of words that have fewer syllables than the ones in the SL. Such a mechanism, according to Chernov, allows ‘the interpreter to speak more slowly and comfortably than the original speaker’ (2004: 114). This rather bold statement needs to be taken with caution since it seems to oversimplify the process of SI that is not limited to the output, i.e. to what interpreters actually say, but that involves also the complex
task of listening. Compression at a syllabic level, instead, would not seem to be very helpful to interpreters as to the receptive side of their work.

Yet it is rather doubtful that a strategy aimed at selecting more concise words can actually be considered as a ‘labour saving’ one. In fact it could be argued that it is often easier, especially when interpreting between cognate languages, to use similar words that have common roots and use more or less the same number of syllables, unless a different solution is specifically required, as in the case of false-friends, to avoid calques or for the sake of appropriateness in the TL.

Furthermore it is not clear how this syllabic compression is actually achieved in practice. Are words with fewer syllables preferred over synonyms with more syllables? If this were the case such an approach would actually pay off only after many years of training when automatisms have fully developed in an interpreter’s mind, so that shorter equivalent words (assuming such a concept actually exists) are chosen without requiring any effort.

It can also be argued that some languages, such as English or Chinese, are by nature likely to employ fewer syllables (or signs) than others, given that they tend towards conciseness. This is particularly true in the case of Chinese where the TT is always noticeably shorter than the source one. A recent study conducted by Chernov on a certain number of cognate and non cognate languages, however, seems to suggest that ‘regardless of the target language, the SI renderings almost always contain fewer syllables that the SL original’ (underline added) (2004: 114). Based on this study it would seem that syllabic compression in SI cannot merely be explained by the degree of conciseness of a given language involved in the interpretation. This could be explained by the fact that syllabic compression may result as a by-product of rewording, which could well have a tendency to reorganise thought more coherently, and therefore more concisely than in the SL.
Lastly it should never be forgotten that ‘syllables are not semantic-units, and translation concerns meaning, not words’ (Gerver quoted in Setton 1999: 30).

4.2 Lexical compression

The second type of compression implies the use of ‘fewer words to express the same idea.’ (Chernov 2004: 115). However, can we really consider a strategy aimed at expressing a concept with fewer words as a ‘labour saving’ one? Wouldn’t the opposite actually be true? Those who have some experience in editing or in the news sector will know that expressing a concept with as few words as possible is in fact a very complex art. It is rather doubtful that such an approach could actually reduce effort in interpreting; in fact, if anything, it may very well increase it.

4.3 Syntactic compression

Syntactic compression implies the use of shorter or simpler constructions than the ones employed in the SL. It can be achieved, for example, by breaking a complex sentence into several simpler ones, a technique commonly adopted in SI and known as saucissonnage in French or salami technique in English (Setton 1999: 50). According to Chernov:

Syntactic compression results from the choice of a shorter and simpler construction than that used in the original, for instance by a) breaking a complex sentence with involved clause structure into several simple sentences … c) substituting a prepositional phrase for a participial construction) d) substituting a single word for a word combination, or an abbreviation or the full name of a country or an organisation, ex. The United Nations = ONU (in Italian or French). (2004: 115-116)

4.4 Semantic compression
Semantic compression has many points in common with lexical compression and as such is open to the same criticism- As a matter of fact the very example provided by Chernov is rather debatable: the French expression ‘Traité de non-prolifération des armes nucléaires’ interpreted into English with ‘non proliferation treaty’. Although it certainly cannot be denied that the English translation is semantically more concise than the French one, this example seems to point to an imprecise interpretation rather than to a successful example of semantic compression.

In fact, although the shorter English expression ‘non proliferation treaty’ may be acceptable in informal contexts, the unabridged form is certainly preferable in more formal ones as shown in the United Nations web site (http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/WMD/treaty/, accessed on 27 August 2009) where reference is always made to the complete expression ‘Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons’ and never to the less formal and more vague ‘non proliferation treaty’.

4.5 Situational compression

Situational compression refers to the ‘elimination of speech chunks bearing information which is compensated for by the extra linguistic situation of the communication’ (Shiryaev cited in Chernov 2004: 120). Being a strategy that involves context it could well be the most flexible compression strategy.

The following example taken from the minutes of a UN meeting has often been quoted as a typical example of situational compression: ‘I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania’, rendered in the TL by the interpreter just with the word ‘Tanzania’.

Here the interpreter probably felt that most of the situational information in the utterance could be omitted given that the delegates attending the meeting were
likely to know that (1) Tanzania was represented by a delegate, that (2) it is a ‘United Republic’, (3) that all delegates are ‘distinguished’, and that (4) the floor was being given by the chairperson (‘I’), in that (5) moment (‘now’). It was therefore up to the listeners to reconstruct the situational pieces of information that had been left out by the interpreter, according to a process that Seleskovitch calls the ‘principle of non imbecility’ of listeners.

This example can be fully understood only within the context of conferences involving many different languages all of which require an interpretation. To cater for such needs the equipment commonly used in SI has a number of different channels which can be employed to interpret from one language into a number of different ones. In roundtables or during Q & A sessions it is not uncommon for interpreters to switch frequently from one channel to the other so as to allow participants to interact, ask questions or have their say on specific issues. It is therefore essential when translating utterances that refer to the task of ‘passing the floor’, as in the example considered above, to be very concise so as to give other interpreters time to turn their microphones on and start interpreting into another language. In fact, due to technical restrictions, the channel assigned to the floor cannot be engaged concurrently by more than one booth.

In the example above, the interpreter was probably aware that the main communicative task was just ‘passing the floor’, and that it had to be accomplished as quickly as possible to free the channel and allow a colleague with a different language pair to step in. A complete translation could have possibly required too much time and covering part of the speech delivered by the delegate from Tanzania. If the interpreter had not compressed the message and freed the channel as soon as possible very important pieces of information, such as a vote for example, could have been lost.
This explanation is essential to understand that compression does not take place randomly but always for a specific reason. In other words, in the example above, the interpreter was not merely being lazy by compressing the message, but was trying to accomplish her task in the most efficient way.

5 Compression in SI and in ICTs

Compression is by no means a technique that pertains only SI but is widely employed in many other fields. In ICTs, for example, there are many different encoding schemes that can represent information with fewer bits than required otherwise.

The need for compression in the ICT sector arose following the exponential development of the World Wide Web, when large amounts of information had to be exchanged along great distances. The issue that arose was that the existing networks were not able to cater for such data, especially for multimedia content which was particularly heavy. To offset this problem compression techniques were developed in order to allow large amounts of information to be transmitted through a limited bandwidth. As years passed these compression algorithms became increasingly advanced to the point that nowadays MP3 audio files, for example, present such sophisticated algorithms that they cannot be distinguished from their uncompressed ‘originals’, even by professional musicians.

What happened in the ICT field is particularly interesting also in relation to SI since it involves a concept that is shared by both fields: that of ‘constraints’, a principle that deeply characterises SI and that was evoked at the beginning of this study when referring to the externally paced delivery rate of speakers. In ICT’s the main constraint is represented by bandwidth much as in SI it is represented by interpreter’s short-term memory and processing ability.
This calls into play one of the main criticisms that perhaps can be moved against a theory of compression in SI: such compression requires a great deal of effort on the part of the interpreter. While in ICT’s the processing power of personal computers has increased so much in the past years making it extremely convenient to compress a message, transmit it over a limited channel and employ extensive processing power on the other end to decompress it, in the case of SI the processing power has remained unchanged being a resource that is limited by our minds.

In other words, although compression in SI may decrease the burden on short-term memory by reducing the size of a message, it involves an extra processing effort to compress it, which may well not pay off. The compressed message, furthermore, would increase the processing burden on listeners who would have to decode it. Any compression mechanism, in fact, always involves at least two components: ‘an encoding algorithm that takes a message and generates a ‘compressed’ representation (hopefully with fewer bits), and a decoding algorithm that reconstructs the original message or some approximation of it from the compressed representation’ (Blelloch 2001: 3).

6 Corpus

The corpus examined in this study was based on an audio recording of a press briefing download from the European Commission (2009) that had the original speech in Italian on the left channel and its interpretation in English on the right one. The choice of authentic material is in line with recommendations by Robin Setton, according to whom recordings from real conference events are to be preferred over less authentic material (2002: 30).

6.1 Features of the Corpus
The following general information that refers to the main features of the corpus employed in this study is provided to give some general context in which to situate it. This approach is in line with suggestions by Setton (2002: 31-32) and Chernov (1994: 144).

### 6.1.1 Event and discourse context: who, when, where, what, why

The recording features a press briefing that took place at the European Commission’s headquarters in Brussels in 2006. The speech was presented by Claudio Fava, rapporteur of the Special Committee on CIA Illegal Renditions with the objective of giving the press delegates present at the conference up-to-date information on the findings of his committee a few days before his draft report was submitted to the European Parliament for the final vote.

The purpose of the investigations carried out by the Special Committee on CIA Illegal Renditions was to identify the cases of Extraordinary rendition that had taken place within the EU territory.

Extraordinary renditions referred to the ‘transfer of an individual, with the involvement of the U.S. or its agents, to a foreign State in circumstances that make it more likely than not that the individual will be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment’ (Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice 2005: 6).

Although the speech was informative, as is common in press conferences, it was also clearly aimed at showing the great amount of work carried out by Claudio Fava and his team during their investigations. Such an intent arose because the committee’s results had been criticised from various parts for not being objective and based on evidence. Claudio Fava’s speech seems to react to that criticism by underlining that thanks to the work carried out by him and his team he was able to
achieve concrete results that were based on hard facts and evidence and not just on hear-say or indirect allegations.

For example, in the speech he says:

> After 154 interviews and 7 missions and all the work we've done [and] in the draft report that we have distributed … you will find an analysis linked to the **facts**, to the **evidence** that we have managed to gather (underline added, Appendix A).

Throughout his speech Claudio Fava will often employ the words ‘facts’ ['fatti'], ‘hearings’ ['testimonianze'], ‘documents’ ['documenti'] to deliver the idea that his work was actually based on concrete evidence and not merely on political speculation. Overall the word ‘facts’ appears more than 10 times often in consecutive sentences.

### 6.1.2 Spontaneity index: recited, rehearsed, semi-rehearsed or improvised?

It is particularly important in any study that involves a SI spoken corpus to establish whether interpreters were given a written copy of the speech that may have been recited at the podium. In fact, when this happens, interpreters will often (but not always) do a **sight translation** of the speech, an adlibbed translation of the written document that however is very different from SI proper.

The hesitations and restarts present throughout the corpus, however, seem to suggest that the speech had been actually improvised or semi-rehearsed from notes.

Also the interpreted version is marked by a number of hesitations and restarts which would indicate that the original speech had not been given out to the interpreters in written form.

For example:
and

The following quote from the closing remark made by the press officer confirms that the only documents that were actually within the pressroom were the written reports previously quoted by Claudio Fava: ‘working documents that Mr. Fava has mentioned are available in the back for you to have a look at. Thank you very much for coming’ (Appendix A).

6.1.3 Rate of delivery

The delivery rate calculated in the first 65 segments of the corpus was not excessive, ranging between 0.7 wps or 42 wpm (segment n. 3) and 3.1 wps or 186 wpm (segment n. 64) with an average of 1.7 wps or 102 wpm, as shown in table 1 below.

Although this speed is in line with the average of 100 to 120 wpm (Chernov 2004: 17; Seleskovitch 1990: 67) defined at the beginning of this study, it was often rather uneven, with a spread between adjacent segments that in two cases was of 1.1 wps (segments 20/21 & 24/25) and in one other case reached 1.2 wps (segments 61/62).
6.1.4 Style

The speech was not excessively formal and was characterised by occasional colloquialisms, frequent pauses and changes in rhythm.
6.2 Transcription

In the absence of guidelines specific to the transcription of SI material, reference was made to the general transcription principles defined by the Linguistic Data Consortium (2004) explained in greater detail in point 4.2.2 below. The transcript was produced with the software Transcriber which, while not specific is particularly suited to the task, thanks to advanced features that allow for the synchronised interlinear transcription of overlapping sounds (the SL speech and its interpretation in the TL, as shown in Figure 1, top of the screen), the onscreen visualisation of audio signals (Figure 1, bottom), and the selective playback of the left or right audio track.
6.2.1 Segmentation

The first issue that arose was how to segment the transcription in segments that were small enough to facilitate the study of the original and the interpreted version. Although a segmentation delimited by punctuation would have certainly produced smaller segments, it would have processed the source message excessively, depriving it of the spontaneity that was present in the original spoken corpus.

For example, between the end of the very first sentence ‘per poter arrivare a conclusioni e proposte.’ and the beginning of the new one ‘E credo …’ there is no discernible pause, possibly because the speaker wanted to give that part of his speech a special rhythm that did not reflect the logical structure of sentences perhaps with the intent of keeping his audience wide awake.
It is rather interesting to note that what the speaker is doing in this example seems to go against tenets commonly accepted in linguistics. Cecot, for example, says that ‘Speakers segment their discourse through grammatical pauses, enabling the listener to understand the syntactic organisation of the discourse. Moreover, pauses emphasise the new and most important information in a sentence’ (Cecot M. 2001: 65). It would seem that, at least in the case of this specific speaker, these general principles do not hold true.

Based on these considerations, the transcription was segmented in accordance with the pauses that actually occurred in the original speech to introduce as few artificial simplifications as possible. Such segmentation, furthermore, was functional to the rest of the study aimed at measuring the delivery speed of the original speech in its various segments. Since pauses were likely to have some bearing on the delivery rate of the speech, it was important to leave the pause structure of the original speech unchanged.

6.2.2 Labelling

The following labels defined in the guidelines of the Linguistic Data Consortium (2004) were added to the transcription, as described below:

a. **Silence**: marks the absence of sound. Pauses of less than 250msec were discarded as suggested by Goldman-Eisler (1968).

b. **Correction**: a correction made by the speaker. It is usually also marked by a hesitation.

c. **Restart**: those parts of the speech where the speaker stops and then continues with an utterance.

d. **Hesitation** or **filled pause**: a non-word that indicates hesitation or that is used by the speaker to maintain control of a conversation while thinking about what to say next.
e. **Unintelligible speech**: an entirely unintelligible passage.

Although the guidelines make use of abbreviations for each label, for the sake of clarity the full label was used, enclosed in braces {}, as shown in the following example taken from the corpus:

```
1: direttamente o attraverso i loro
2: abroad, identi... {correction}
1: avvocati che abbiamo potuto ascoltare.
2: interviewed 20 victims
```

Labels were important to identify the specific characteristics of the corpus, such as the *spontaneity index* defined in point 6.1.2.

7 **Results and Conclusion**

A corpus-based approach is without doubt a double edged weapon. Although on the one hand it may be very precious to prove some assumptions based on real data and without being limited by preceding theories, on the other one it may prove that those assumptions are actually wrong, as it happened in my dissertation.

This study was aimed at examining compression in SI from a theoretical standpoint and at pointing to some specific examples of it in a spoken corpus. However, the transcription of the corpus seems to point in a different direction, suggesting that there is actually no specific correlation between the speed of an original speech or changes in its rhythm and the adoption of certain compression strategies, as initially assumed.
As a matter of fact, the corpus presents very little evidence of compression, which seems to suggest that the theoretical framework defined by Chernov on the topic should not at all be taken for granted.

Chernov’s assumption that compression is possible thanks ‘to the linguistic redundancy in the thematic component of the discourse’ (2004: 113) was not confirmed by evidence found in the corpus.

In the following example the word ‘facts’ is repeated over and over throughout the corpus appearing therefore as redundant and possibly qualifying for some degree of compression.

Table 2

1: [20] di altre autorità europee, e che ci racconta in dettaglio che cosa abbia rappresentato per lui la detenzione a Guantanamo,
2: [16] ever been brought from {correction} by Americans or other Europeans, telling us in detail what detention
1: [22] il fatto che venissero negati persino del diritto di sapere che giorno era, che mese era, che anno era, che stagione era.
2: [22] meant to him in Guantanamo. That they didn’t even have the right to know what day it was, what month, what season
1: [09] Il fatto di aver ricevuto la visita di alcuni
2: [08] it was. The fact that he received a
1: [12] rappresentanti, funzionari del servizio di sicurezza del suo paese di residenza
2: [11] visit from certain representatives who were from the secret services of
1: [16] non per essere aiutato, ma come specificarono nel momento in cui lo incontrarono, solo per interrogarlo.
2: [18] his country of residence, not to be helped, but as they specified when they met him, to interrogate
1: [20] Il fatto di avere dovuto subire questo interrogatorio davanti rappresentanti di un servizio di sicurezza europeo con i piedi incatenati.
2: [14] him. The fact that he had to submit to this interrogation {hesitation} with the attendance
1: [16] Il fatto di avere potuto incontrare un avvocato soltanto dopo tre anni e mezzo di detenzione.
2: [11] of these European secret service men with his feet shackled. Only
1: [17] Il fatto di non avere avuto alcuna informazione da parte della sua famiglia per anni e anni.
2: [18] after 3 and a half years did he meet a lawyer. He had no information from his family
1: [06] Bene, nel momento in cui noi
2: [04] for years and years.
1: [29] non apprendiamo tutto questo dalle rassegne stampa o dai documenti ma dalla viva voce di una vittima, noi abbiamo un supplemento di responsabilità, noi abbiamo un
A more careful analysis of the discourse, however, clearly shows that the repetition of the word is instrumental to deliver the impression that the work carried out by Claudio Fava and his team was based on hard facts and not on impressions. In fact, as suggested earlier in point 6.1.1, the aim of the speech was to stress the concrete results obtained through their work. This was accomplished by intentionally repeating the word ‘facts’ [fatti]; if this word is viewed as ‘redundant’ and elided or compressed the strength of the message will be greatly diminish.

This points to an inherent difficulty, or perhaps impossibility of identifying redundant elements within an oral speech that unfolds sequentially and of which interpreters only have a partial picture. In such a context the safest strategy is a minimalist one that actually refrains from eliding or compressing any part of a speech.

Of course the results achieved by this study may very well depend on the specific corpus employed which was rather limited and involved only one language pair and interpreter. Yet they might be sufficient to say that in this specific corpus SI was possible without any compression at all despite several sudden changes in the delivery speed.

Although statistical studies involving different interpreters, conference settings or language pairs may very well point to entirely different results, as far as the corpus used in this study is concerned, it can be safely assumed that compression played a very marginal: it was therefore a myth.
8 References


(Accessed 20 August 2009), Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University


9 Appendix 1 – Annotated Spoken Corpus

Presentation of the final draft report on CIA extraordinary renditions
Transcribed by Alessio Iacovoni

Opening remark by the Press Officer

[73] Good afternoon everyone. I’d like to welcome you to the press conference with Claudio Fava on the draft report of the Temporary Committee Investigating CIA activities in Europe. As you know the Temporary Committee Investigating illegal CIA activities in Europe has just released its draft report yesterday. And today we have Claudio Fava, the committee rapporteur who will brief you on the contents and also the implications of the draft report. Mr. Fava.

Speech by Claudio Fava on the results achieved by the Temporary Committee Investigating CIA activities in Europe + Interpreter

1: [09] Noi abbiamo rispettato il termine che ci eravamo dati:
2: [08] Now, we have managed to stick to the
1: [06] un anno di tempo per poter
2: [08] timetable which was allotted to us. One year,
1: [01] elaborare
2: [00] {silence}
1: [23] tutti i materiali raccolti, per poter completare le nostre audizioni, per poter arrivare a conclusioni e proposte. E credo che questo sia già
2: [12] for drawing up the report, collating all the material, and reaching conclusions.
1: [05] un successo significativo del quale
2: [08] And I think that’s a major success in
1: [05] voglio ringraziare tutti i colleghi.
2: [09] itself. And I’d like to thank all colleagues involved
1: [06] Voglio ringraziare il Presidente e naturalmente
2: [03] in that success:
1: [22] gli amici del segretariato che ci hanno permesso, soprattutto nelle ultime settimane, di dare un ritmo di particolare intensità al nostro lavoro.
2: [23] the President and those on the secretariat who have helped us above all in the last few weeks to step up the pace
1: [07] Nel complesso noi abbiamo svolto 154 audizioni,
2: [09] and finish the work on time. We have conducted
1: [03] 7 missioni all’estero,
2: [02] 154 hearings
1: [03] 20 le vittime
2: [03] 7 external missions
1: [05] direttamente o attraverso i loro
2: [02] abroad, identi... {correction}
avvocati che abbiamo potuto ascoltare.

interviewed 20 victims

Anche questo credo che sia un fatto estremamente significativo.

through their lawyers. And I think all of this is very

Questo Parlamento Europeo è la prima istituzione

significant as well. This European Parliament is the first

politica, parlamentare,

institution, political, parliamentary

della diritto di parola e di memoria

institution, which

che da diritto di parola e di memoria

non ad una ma a tutte le vittime che almeno conosciamo come vittime di "renditions". A loro direttamente in alcuni casi sono state

has given a voice, not to one but to all the victims, at least that we are aware of, victims of extraordinary rendition.

le audizioni certamente più difficili e anche più drammatiche, o ai loro

In some cases it's been more difficult to interview

rappresentanti legali, ai loro familiari.

them and more more of a problem, so

Parliamo di "vittime". Quando abbiamo cominciato il nostro lavoro

they had to be interviewed through their lawyers or members of their family.

Let's start with the victims then. When we started

dicevamo "vittime presunte".

our work we were saying

Dopo 154 audizioni, dopo 7 missioni,

"alleged victims". After 154

dopo tutto il lavoro che abbiamo svolto,

interviews and 7 missions and all the work we've done

possiamo parlare di "vittime".

We can talk about

Vittime accertate, in alcuni casi

"victims", definitively,

talmente innocenti da essere state rimesse in libertà dopo 2, 3, 4, 5 anni di detenzione ed aver potuto raccontare loro stesse

ascertained. Some of whom have been released after 2, 3, 4 or 5 years of detention, who've

la vicenda che hanno subito.

been able to tell us in person

La conclusione a cui arriva la proposta di relazione che ho consegnato alla Commissione, che discuteremo a partire dai prossimi giorni,

what they have been subject to. And then I sent the draft report to the committee which will be discussing it in the next

conferma che le "renditions" sono state, sono un sistema assolutamente illegale

few days. And I [correction] And this report confirms that renditions

e consolidato.

were
Non un sistema episodico, una somma di episodi isolati, ma un sistema consolidato, strutturato, utilizzato dai servizi di sicurezza americani nell'ambito della lotta contro il terrorismo, isolati episodi but a consolidated structured system used by the American secret services in the framework of this fight against terrorism, which used the active and passive collusion of various governments and various European secret services. In the draft report that we have distributed you won't necessarily find a list of the guilty and the innocent, but you will find an analysis linked to the facts, to the [hesitation] evidence. E da questi fatti emergono diversi livelli di responsabilità. From the responsibility which has now legally been ascertained of the Italian secret services who physically participated in the abduction of Abu Omar and other forms of more indirect collusion equally serious of supplying information sometimes which was inexact which allowed the American secret services to carry out these renditions. Participation in interrogation of alleged terrorists illegally, who were
1: [03] e sottolineo illegalmente,
2: [03] illegally detained, illegally
1: [23] non perchè innocenti ma perchè illegali erano le forme della detenzione. Senza processo, senza avvocato, senza tempi certi per la loro vicenda giudiziaria.
2: [20] I emphasise. Not because they were innocent but because the forms of detention were illegal: no trial, no lawyer, no
1: [11] Aver partecipato in alcuni casi, all'interrogatorio di alcuni detenuti in Afghanistan,
2: [16] ascertained period of time for their detention. And we participated {correction} and there was some participation
1: [02] in Siria,
2: [02] in interrogation
1: [09] a Guantanamo, certamente rappresenta un modo indiretto ma riteniamo
2: [07] of detainees in Afghanistan, Siria, Guantanamo. Presence
1: [04] estremamente grave per legittimare
2: [05] therefore being an indirect participation
1: [02] questa procedura
2: [06] but that is an extremely grave
1: [03] delle "extraordinary renditions".
2: [04] crime as well because
1: [16] Io vorrei ricordare, sottolineare la significativa collaborazione che questa commissione, che il suo relatore ha ricevuto
2: [10] they colluded in these extraordinary renditions. And I'd like to
1: [14] certamente dalle magistrature, dai giudici che sono impegnati, in Germania, in Spagna, in Italia
2: [18] pay tribute to those who've cooperated this {correction} with my efforts to draw up this report. The magistrates
1: [09] in questo difficile lavoro di recupero della verità.
2: [15] in Germany, Italy and Spain who have been involved in this {hesitation} laborious work of
1: [07] Significativa collaborazione ricevuta da molti vostri colleghi
2: [07] finding the truth. There was a great
1: [14] che sono stati ospiti di questa commissione e hanno partecipato ad alcune nostre audizioni.
2: [13] deal of cooperation from many of your colleagues who have visited this committee
1: [17] La collaborazione che abbiamo ricevuto da alcuni governi, che abbiamo ricevuto da tutte le commissioni parlamentari d'inchiesta.
2: [18] and taken part in our hearings. Cooperation from certain governments as well and from all the Parliamentary
1: [25] E non è solo un modo formale per ringraziare ma anche per ricordare che i fatti che noi stiamo offrendo, le valutazioni che stiamo
2: [32] committees of enquiry. And this is not just a formal way of thanking all these people but it's also to say that the facts that we are submitting to you now, the
proponendo assessments that we are proposing,
le cose che abbiamo accertato e per le quali
the things that we have discovered
esprimiamo i nostri giudizi, non sono soltanto il frutto del nostro lavoro
and ascertained and where we are expressing our opinion, are not just the fruit of our
ma della capacità di mettere insieme il lavoro di tante istituzioni. E' esistita una domanda di verità
work but of the capacity to put together the work of so many institutions. There was
condivisa da parlamenti, da istituzioni, persino dai servizi di sicurezza. Alcune nostri fonti sono fonti che risalgono direttamente alla CIA
a demand for the truth which was shared by the parliaments, by institutions, even by some security services. Some of our sources
esprimiamo i nostri giudizi, non sono soltanto il frutto del nostro lavoro
and ascertained and where we are expressing our opinion, are not just the fruit of our
sottolineato con amarezza la scarsa cooperazione che questa commissione
play sources in CIA. And yet there has been poor cooperation
Sapevamo di alcune riunioni che si erano svolte fra
We knew about some meetings which occurred
la Segretaria di Stato Americana Condoleezza Rice, i rappresentati della NATO
e del Consiglio e con i rappresentanti
involving Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State from America, and representatives of NATO and the Council and other meetings with
sottolineato con amarezza la scarsa cooperazione che questa commissione
play sources in CIA. And yet there has been poor cooperation
ha ricevuto dal Consiglio
with this committee
e dal suo Segretario Generale.
by the Council
Sapevamo di alcune riunioni che si erano svolte fra
We knew about some meetings which occurred
la Segretaria di Stato Americana Condoleezza Rice, i rappresentati della NATO
e del Consiglio e con i rappresentanti
involving Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State from America, and representatives of NATO and the Council and other meetings with
di riunioni del Consiglio e con il capo del Ufficio Legale del Dipartimento di Stato John Bellinger.
within Council meetings and with the head of the lawyer's
di riunioni del Consiglio e con il capo del Ufficio Legale del Dipartimento di Stato John Bellinger.
Questi documenti ci sono stati in un primo tempo rifiutati, poi forniti in forme estremamente semplificate.
di riunioni del Consiglio e con il capo del Ufficio Legale del Dipartimento di Stato John Bellinger. These {correction} There was a refusal to hand over these
abbiamo potuto avere accesso per altre vie, direttamente
documenti, i minuti di queste sedute, e infine furono consegnati
al testo di questi debriefing
in very simplified summary form. But we managed
to find
the texts in other ways,
ed è
da deplorare il fatto che
of these debriefings, and it is very much to be deplored
una fonte preziosa d'informazione per il lavoro della nostra commissione
d'inchiesta
that a precious source of information for the work of our committee of
sia arrivata nelle mani di questa commissione in modo assolutamente indiretto
enquiry has reached this committee completely
e non sia stata fornita, così come avevamo chiesto, direttamente dal Consiglio,
direttamente dal suo Segretario Generale.
indirectly and was not supplied to us directly as we had asked, from the Council
Ma altra cosa da sottolineare è il merito di queste discussioni.
Another thing to underline is the
discussion importanti, perché nel corso di questi incontri, per quanto informali,
ma con una trascrizione assolutamente puntuale
merit of this issue. It's an important debate, because during the course of these
informal meetings, informal but with
di tutto ciò che è stato detto sia dalla signora Rice, sia da Bellinger
a very clear [hesitation] record in the minutes, everything that was said by
e dalle osservazioni, dalle repliche che essi hanno ricevuto da parte dei
Bellinger, by Condoleezza Rice, the comments, the replies, it's all listed in the
minutes, from representatives
viene un quadro allarmante,
of the European Governments.
e cioè che
All of this painted a very alarming
gli Stati Uniti, riconoscono di avere utilizzato il sistema delle "renditions",
dicono di averlo utilizzato
picture, which is that the United States recognised that they used the rendition
system.
senza mai violare la sovranità dei paesi dell'Unione Europea, e affermano di
non sentirsi obbligati al rispetto della Convenzione di Ginevra, soprattutto per quanto
riguarda il "refoulement"
They said they used it without ever violating the sovereignty of European
Countries and they felt they had complied with the Geneva Convention, particularly
in paesi in cui si possano subire torture.
with regard to "refoulement" in countries where they might submit to torture. These are affirmations which are
Sono delle affermazioni particolarmente gravi, e soprattutto capaci di farci comprendere, come dicevo all'inizio, come questo sistema sia stato un sistema assolutamente consolidato.
with regard to "refoulement" in countries where they might particularly serious and which lead us to understand how this system had become so consolidated,
tra le tante affermazioni recuperate da questi debriefing, per esempio, c'è la conclusione a cui arrivava so entrenched. Among the many affirmations from these debriefings there is for example the conclusion
tra il Segretariato del Consiglio which was reached between the Secretariat of the Council
e gli ospiti del governo degli Stati Uniti di arrivare ad una dichiarazione finale che potesse rassicurare l'opinione pubblica and the guests from the US government, to issue a statement which would e che potesse proporre l'elaborazione di un framework, di un quadro giuridico per le "renditions". Ecco, il fatto all'interno del Consiglio, in un reassure public opinion and which could propose the drawing up of a framework, a legal framework for extraordinary renditions. In fact that within the Council
momento non lontano della storia, si sia potuta avanzare l'ipotesi, poi accantonata,
at a very recent time in history, they had advanced the che l'Unione Europea potesse partecipare con gli Stati Uniti d'America all'elaborazione di un quadro giuridico che è al di là di ciò che è già previsto the hypothesis, which was then sidelined, that the EU could participate with the US in drawing up a legal framework which apart from dalle leggi nazionali e dal diritto internazionale per le estradizioni, potesse prevedere anything which had already been laid down in national law and international law for extraditions
una leggittimazione, naturalmente con correttivi e salvaguardie del sistema delle "renditions",
could actually allow for a legitimation, with all sorts of riders crediamo che sia una cosa grave. E crediamo che sia da deplorare il fatto che queste informazioni of the rendition system. And I think that's a very serious thing and we must deplore the fact that this la nostra Commissione le abbia potute apprendere in forma assolutamente indiretta.
information was something we only managed to get a hold of in an indirect Per quanto riguarda le vittime, vi dicevo, all'inizio parlavamo di vittime presunte. Quando ci si ritrova di fronte il Sig.
2: [17] way. Regarding the victims, as I was saying at the moment, well initially we talked about alleged
1: [20] Murat Curnaz, che è turco di nascita e tedesco di adozione e di residenza, il quale ci spiega, da libero,
2: [18] victims. And then when we met Murat Kurnaz who is a Turk, born in Germany, German by adoption
1: [15] di aver trascorso quasi un anno in Afghanistan e più di quattro anni a Guantanamo,
2: [19] he explained to us that he’d spent about a year in Afghanistan and more than 4 years in Guantanamo,
1: [31] accusato di colpe che si sono rivelate assolutamente infondate, tantè che è stato rimesso in libertà senza alcune accuse a suo carico, ne da parte delle autorità americane ne da parte
2: [18] accused of attacks which were completely invented, and he had to be freed without any kind of charges.
1: [20] di altre autorità europee, e che ci racconta in dettaglio che cosa abbia rappresentato per lui la detenzione a Guantanamo,
2: [16] ever been brought from [correction] by Americans or other Europeans, telling us in detail what detention
1: [22] il fatto che venissero negati persino del diritto di sapere che giorno era, che mese era, che anno era, che stagione era.
2: [22] meant to him in Guantanamo. That they didn’t even have the right to know what day it was, what month, what season
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2: [11] visit from certain representatives who were from the secret services of
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2: [11] of these European secret service men with his feet shackled. Only
1: [17] Il fatto di non avere avuto alcuna informazione da parte della sua famiglia per anni e anni.
2: [18] after 3 and a half years did he meet a lawyer. He had no information from his family
1: [06] Bene, nel momento in cui noi
2: [04] for years and years.
1: non apprendiamo tutto questo dalle rassegne stampa o dai documenti ma dalla
viva voce di una vittima, noi abbiamo un supplemento di responsabilità, noi abbiamo
un supplemento di responsabilità
2: So we're not learning all this from documents, but from the press, but from the voice of a
1: l'abbiamo noi come Commissione, l'abbiamo come istituzione europea, l'abbiamo noi come cittadini
2: victim directly, so that's why we have even more responsibility. We as a
1: e cioè il fatto di non lasciare senza seguito
2: committee, we as European Parliament and we
1: questa denuncia. Noi non crediamo che
2: as citizens, we cannot
1: tutti coloro che sono stati vittime di "renditions" fossero innocenti, naturalmente. Crediamo che queste "renditions" sia un sistema assolutamente legale, in
più in alcuni casi
2: leave this unanswered. All those who have been victims of rendition are no
{correction} not all of them are innocent, have been innocent, but this is a
completely
1: hanno colpito in modo assolutamente ingiustificato
2: illegal system. And in some cases
1: persone che erano innocenti.
2: it even
1: Noi abbiamo costretto queste persone a ricordare,
2: involved people who were innocent. We have
1: testimoniando e con molta sofferenza, e chi di voi era presente lo ricorderà, la
loro storia, le umiliazioni subite, e quindi
2: forced these people to testify, which is a very painful thing, for them to tell us
about
1: non solo abbiamo la necessità di mettere in chiaro le responsabilità di ciascuno,
ma dobbiamo anche fare in modo che tutto questo non si ripeta mai più.
2: the humiliation they suffered. And so not only must we lay the
responsibility at the correct doors but we must also make sure that none of
1: Sulle prigioni clandestine, sui "Black Sites", noi non abbiamo trovato, e
sapecamo che non avremmo trovato,
2: this should ever happen again. On the secret prisons, the "black sites", we didn't
find them, we
1: ciò che in gergo giornalistico può essere uno "smoking gun", però
2: assumed that we wouldn't be able to find the "smoking
1: nella proposta di relazione si arriva ad una conclusione: che le contraddizioni, le
omissioni e le reticenze raccolte
2: "gun", as the journalists call it. But in the draft report we reached a conclusion
which is that the contradictions, the admissions and the reticence
1: nel corso della nostra missione in Polonia, assieme alle modalità di "stop-over"
2: which we perceived during our mission to Poland, and the
1: [10] di diversi \{unintelligible\} operati dalla CIA nell'aeroporto di Zimani,
2: [05] methods of the stop-over, through
1: [15] assieme ad altri elementi che nella relazione sono indicati in modo abbastanza
dettagliato, ci portano
2: [11] CIA flights to Szymany \{mispronounced\} airport, \{correction\} Szymany
airport, all of
1: [07] a pensare che vi siano, non prove
2: [13] of the other things which are related in some detail in the report
1: [17] ma indizi numerosi e concordanti sulla possibilità che sia esistita una base
temporanea di detenzione in Polonia.
2: [28] lead us to believe that there's no proof, but there are lots of clues which all tally
to show that there was a temporary detention centre in Poland.
1: [05] Sugli articoli 6 e 7
2: [03] On article 6
1: [12] questa commissione e il relatore per conto di questa commissione ha raccolto
2: [06] and 7, this committee, the rapporteur
1: [08] testimonianze, ha ricostruito i fatti, ha tentato di
2: [07] from this committee have heard evidence and
1: [01] individuare
2: [03] put the facts
1: [10] le eventuali responsabilità, adesso crediamo che sia compito del Consiglio
2: [19] together and tried to identify the various responsibilities. And now we think it is
the job of the Council
1: [21] valutare se e in che misura per alcuni stati ricorrano gli estremi previsti
dall'articolo 7. Noi mettiamo a disposizione del Consiglio
2: [17] to assess whether and to what extent they need to resort to measures under
article 7 against
1: [09] il lavoro che abbiamo nel corso di questo anno.
2: [11] certain states. We are going to hand over to the Council
1: [15] Ripeto è un lavoro che ha recuperato non opinioni ma fatti, alcuni di questi
provati
2: [21] the work we've done over the last year. This is work which has not just been
based on opinion but on
1: [12] dalla testimonianza diretta che ci hanno offerto 153 ospiti delle nostre
audizioni.
2: [10] facts, some of the facts involving direct testimony from 153
1: [23] Su questi fatti noi chiediamo a ciascuna istituzione europea, al nostro
parlamento per quanto ci compete, di assumersi la responsabilità politica e istituzionale
2: [21] people who attended our hearings and we're asking each European institution,
in particular our Parliament, to shoulder the political and institutional
1: [02] di dare
2: [02] responsibilities which
1: [10] corso a questa inchiesta, di dare corso anche per la
2: [09] derive from this and to follow up on this
seconda parte del nostro mandato, alla quale noi abbiamo dedicato particolare attenzione. Fare in modo che si
inquiry. For the second part of our mandate, as well, to which we devoted particular attention, to make
costruiscano gli strumenti istituzionali, normativi, politici per evitare che ciò che è accaduto possa ripetersi di nuovo. Io in questo caso voglio fare mie
sure that we should build the institutional instruments, political instruments and legal instruments, to ensure that this can never happen again.
le parole che ci ha detto
And I'd like to concur with the words
il Segretario Generale del Consiglio d'Europa Terry Davies qualche giorno fa quando è stato nostro ospite.
of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Terry Davis, a few days ago when he was our
Terry Davies che è un signore britannico con un aplomb particolare, molto tranquillo, molto posato,
Terry Davis, who is a British gentleman of great aplomb. Very
e attento e prudente nel pesare le proprie parole ha detto una cosa che io condivido e che è una cosa grave.
With a great deal of gravitas, very careful, who weighs his words carefully. He said something with which I would
Quello che è successo potrebbe accadere di nuovo, potrebbe accadere in qualsiasi momento e potrebbe accadere a chiunque.
very much concur with, which is serious. He said that "what could happened could happen again, it could happen at any time and it
Ecco, noi abbiamo il dovere morale, al di là del mandato istituzionale che ci è stato conferito dal parlamento
and the moral duty, apart from the institutional duty
di fare in modo che ciò che è accaduto, che gli abusi
in the Parliament, to ensure that what has happened
e le violazioni che si sono consumate
that the abuse and the violations
nell'ambito della dovuta lotta contro il terrorismo internazionale si possano ripetere.
in this very correction this restart this
Ricordando che l'Unione Europea non è solamente un'unione economica ma possiede valori e doveri condivisi che noi intendiamo salvaguardare e che esiste una obbligazione positiva per ciascuno stato per salvaguardare
legitimate war against terror, cannot be repeated again. The EU is not just an economic union, it involves shared values as well and there is a positive obligation on each state
diritti e valori nei confronti di chiunque è sul proprio territorio, sia esso cittadino, residente o semplicemente ospite.
uphold rights and values. If there is anyone on their territory, be they citizens
1: [14] Voglio ringraziare in modo informale il Presidente Cuello perché la qualità della sua presidenza,
2: or passing through, to uphold all those rights. I'd like to thank {hesitation} Mr. Coelho because of
1: [04] la capacità di garantire
2: [06] the quality of his chairmanship. The
1: [10] l'assoluta libertà dei nostri dibattiti e allo stesso tempo l'efficacia
2: [09] ability to guarantee the full freedom of debate and
1: [25] con cui la nostra commissione ha lavorato in questi mesi, è uno dei contributi più preziosi che abbiamo ricevuto, per cui al presidente Cuello, all'intero
2: [20] the effectiveness with which our committee has worked. This is one of the most precious contributions we have received. So
1: [18] unione della presidenza va il mio ringraziamento assieme ai componenti del segretariato e a tutti gli altri colleghi
2: [18] to our chairman Coelho particular thanks and to the Secretariat as well and to all the other colleagues
1: [27] della commissione e ai loro assistenti perchè il frutto di questo lavoro, qualunque sarà il destino che il Parlamento deciderà che debba avere questa proposta di relazione
2: [20] in the committee and their assistants, their staff. Because whatever happens to this work, whatever the parliament decides should happen
1: [21] se e quando verrà approvata, sarà ceramente il frutto di uno sforzo e di una attenzione e di una determinazione collettiva.
2: [21] to this draft report, if and when it is approved, will be the result of a great deal of determination and
1: [13] E adesso ancora per qualche minuto sono a disposizione per le vostre domande.
2: [14] collective effort. How many minutes have we got here? We're available now for questions.

Press Officer

[25] We have a few minutes left and I think that should allow for a few questions. And I think Sir, you had a question first.

Question from the press

[105] Mr Fava, as to the meeting held on the 7th December 2005, you said in a transcript that you can confirm that the member states had knowledge of the extraordinary renditions and secret prisons program. The minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Mr. De Gucht, has already categorically denied that this is in the transcript. So my question is: who is the author of that draft of that transcript? Are you willing, are you also linked to the Washington {unintelligible}, are you ready to put this to the public, this transcript, so that transparency can prevail and that everybody can see it? Thank you
Ma le posso assicurare che io non sono legato a Washington.

Well I can assure you that I'm not

Il rispetto dovuto

in any way linked to Washington.

alla confidenzialità di questo documento dipende da una scelta che ha assunto il nostro comitato.

The due respect for the confidentiality of this document depends on a

in any way linked to Washington.

The due respect for the confidentiality of this document depends on a

Altrimenti avrebbero potuto evitare di farcelo leggere.

And we had to take due count of it politically even though it was submitted to

La fonte dalla quale abbiamo ricevuto questo documento è interna al Consiglio, ma non sono stati nostri interlocutori diretti, e naturalmente

us confidentially. The source that we received the document from is internal to the Council but he was not a direct

all'interno di questa lunga conversazione tra la Sg. Rice e il rappresentante della NATO, del Consiglio, nessuno parla in modo aperto

interlocutor. And of course during this long conversation between Condoleezza Rice and the NATO representative and the Council representative

di prigioni clandestine.

nobody talks openly about

Naturalmente quando la Sg. Rice dice noi abbiamo mandato in giro per il mondo

secret prisons. Of course when Condi Rice says "we sent out

"lots of people"

around the world "lots of

e tutto questo lo abbiamo fatto rispettando

people" and we did all this in full compliance

la sovranità dei paesi membri e la loro possibilità di essere informati

with the sovereignty of member states and their possibility of being

mi sembra che sia stato detto a chiare lettere che le renditions sono un sistema che noi utilizziamo, che peraltro poi è stato confermato a noi stessi dal Sg. Bellinger nella nostra visita a Washington

inforn those. It seems to me that /restart/ that is clearly saying that rendition is a system that we use. And indeed Mr. Bellinger has confirmed that when we went to

e che viene condensata in quell'ultima annotazione che viene fatta. Ciò è alla fine si era pensato, di comune accordo
2: [20] Washington to meet him. And that is condensed in that last annotation which is made, which is basically, they thought, 1: [21] con gli Stati Uniti, di potere arrivare a un framework, a un accordo quadro che rendesse legali le "renditions", naturalmente non 2: [23] in agreement with the United States, that they would be able to achieve some framework, some legal framework, which would mean that rendition 1: [20] con le modalità operative con cui sono state applicate fino ad adesso, magari non sequestrando in una via di Milano 2: [10] was legal. Not with the operational methods which had been 1: [17] un signore per poi trasferirlo in un aereo della Cia prima ad Aviano, poi a Ramsten e infine 2: [09] used hitherto, abducting someone in Milan and transporting him 1: [18] in una galera egiziana, ma con forme un po più evolute. Noi contestiamo radicalmente l'idea che possa esistere 2: [18] in a CIA plane to an Egyptian prison, but perhaps in a more evolved form. We contest categorically 1: [20] un binario privo delle garanzie processuali, che sono docute a tutti gli imputati, anche agli imputati di terrorismo, così come 2: [17] the idea that there could be any lack of due process. Due process is due to all 1: [22] ci dimostra la storia recente e passata di ciascuno dei nostri paesi e anche gli Stati Uniti d'America che il ventesimo terrorista 2: [26] accused people, even though accused of terrorism, as we have seen from recent and past history in all our countries including the United States. The 20th 1: [27] del 11 settembre lo ha processato e condannato all 'ergastolo in presenza di un avvocato, davanti a una giuria e con un processo che ha avuto tempi certi. 2: [19] terrorist of the 11th September was tried and sentenced to life in the presence of a judge and jury 1: [15] Vorrei aggiungere, perchè mi è arrivata una nota sul sig. Bellinger, su una sua lettura 2: [09] [unintelligible] due process is right. Now a note has arrived 1: [11] del nostro Rapporto, che è stata, debbo presumere piuttosto frettolosa, perchè 2: [06] here about Mr. Bellinger and our 1: [04] la valutazione del sig. 2: [03] relations with him. 1: [17] Bellinger è che questo rapporto è, come dire, un po isterico nell'iperbole, nelle conclusioni a cui arriva 2: [19] Mr. Bellinger's position is that this report is a bit hysterical and that there is a lot of hyperbole 1: [13] visto che noi diciamo che tutti i voli della CIA avevano intenti nefasti. 2: [10] in the conclusions because we're saying that all CIA flights 1: [28] Se il Sig. Bellinger leggesse con attenzione il nostro rapporto, i due documenti allegati che sono a vostra disposizione, il documento di lavoro numero sette e numero otto 2: [23] had adverse intentions. Now if Mr. Bellinger were to read our report and the two annex documents which are available to you, documents
1: [30] leggerebbe che noi abbiamo ricostruito 1245 voli della Cia. Naturalmente nessuno si sognerebbe di dire che 1245 voli della CIA siano stati tutti utilizzati per scopi illegali o per renditions
2: [19] 7 and 8, he would read that we have reconstructed 1245 CIA flights. So no one can say that
1: [02] ma sappiamo
2: [03] all those flights
1: [34] e questa è un'analisi che poniamo in termini fattuale, che molti di questi voli erano legati come aeroporto di provenienza e aeroporto di origine a paesi che certamente sono coinvolti nel sistema delle "renditions"
2: [35] were destined for rendition purposes. But we know, and this is an analysis of the facts, that a lot of those flights were linked in terms of the original destination airport
1: [16] e che su nessuno di questi voli, tranne un caso, siano stati mai esercitati dei controlli
2: [14] to countries that were involved in the rendition system. And none of those flights
1: [05] che con un'interpretazione un po'
2: [04] were ever subject to
1: [22] rigorosa della convenzione di Chicago, ciascun paese avrebbe dovuto attuare, visto che molti di questi voli potevano avere anche funzioni di polizia
2: [20] rigorous inspection under the Chicago convention which all countries should've resorted to because many of those flights could have had
1: [20] e non essere semplicemente dei voli privati. Ma nessuno si sognerebbe di dire che 1245 voli della CIA che hanno
2: [13] policing functions and were not just necessarily private flights. Nobody can say that
1: [32] solcato i cieli e attraversato gli aeroporti europei sian stati tutti utilizzati per delle "renditions". E' una semplificazione che il Sig. Bellinger fa ma che non corrisponde alla lettera del nostro rapporto.
2: [33] 125 [correction] 1245 CIA flights were all used for rendition. That is a simplification is a semplification that Mr. Bellinger is making but does not correspond to the letter of what's in our report.

Question from the press + Interpreter

1: [06] Si onerevole Fava. Consoli di APCOM.
2: [02] Yes Mr.
1: [20] Il commissario Frattini, ieri o l'altro ieri in conferenza stampa in commissione ha risposto a una domanda sul suo rapporto
2: [16] Fava I'm from APCOM. Commissioner Frattini, yesterday or the day before in a press conference asked
1: [16] che il rapporto lui non lo conosceva ancora, che non era stato ancora approvato dal parlamento
La mia domanda è: che cosa si aspetta che faccia il commissario Frattini dopo questo rapporto. Prima si è parlato dell'articolo 6 e 7, delle responsabilità che potrebbe prendersi il Consiglio.

Commissioner Frattini to do when the report emerge? You talked about article 6 and 7 responsibilities that the Council needs to shoulder, but

Grazie

what do you expect Frattini to do about this?

Ma io mi aspetto che i governi, soprattutto alcuni governi siano, come dire, sollecitati a chiarire ciò che accaduto in questi anni. Ciò è il sistema delle "renditions" e le prigionie segrete sono una realtà. Ecco noi ci auguriamo che su questo ci sia uno sforzo di verità, perché la sensazione che abbiamo ricevuto non solo ciò che questa relazione propone, ma ciò che fa parte ormai della consapevolezza collettiva e che tra l'altro è stato ricordato dal Sig. Bush qualche mese fa. Ciò è il punto di vista "renditions" e le prigionie segrete sono una realtà. But I hope that not only what the report proposes but what what is now part of our collective awareness and which was recalled by George Bush himself a few months ago: "the renditions and the secret prisons are a reality". And we hope that in this respect there will be an effort to find the truth.
parlando in linguaggio poco politico, è che

Because to resort to a rather 

come dire si considerasse questa lotta contro il terrorismo e le modalità scelte

un-political language, the impression we got was that it was felt that this war 

against terrorism

dagli Stati Uniti e in parte accattate da alcuni governi europei, come un pedaggio 

dovuto, un fatto necessario,

and the methods chosen by the US and to some extent taken on board by the 

EU, {correction} some

EU governments, was felt to be inevitable,

Questo parlamento ritiene che non sia inevitabile tenere in vita il campo di 

Guantanamo nelle condizioni e con l'assenza di garanzie processuali che noi 

conosciamo. Così come non riteniamo che sia

an inevitable {hesitation} right of passage. And we don't think it is inevitable to 

keep Guantanamo Bay with the absence of safeguards and due process. We don't

la detenzione incomunicado di decine di presunti, magari effettivi terroristi, i 

quali non hanno potuto conoscere

inevitabile that one should detain incomunicado dozens of alleged terrorists, 

possibly real terrorists but only alleged

ne le prove sulle accuse che venivano rivolte contro di loro, ne avere un 

avvocato, ne un processo, ne un giudice certo.

who {hesitation} haven't even got the right to know the charges against them or

Ecco io credo che si questo noi dobbiamo chiedere ai nostri governi un 

supplemento di chiarezza.

have a lawyer, let alone a trial or a judge or anything. So I think we need to ask 

our Governments

Se riteniamo davvero, se i nostri governi ritengono davvero che non partecipare 

fisicamente ad una

to clarify this. If our Governments really feel that not

"rendition", non partecipare fisicamente ad

participating physically in a rendition exercise, not participating,

atti, come dire, di violenza o di violazione nei confronti dei detenuti, ma 

utilizzare le informazioni che vengono raccolte attraverso la tortura,

not actually attending acts of violence or humiliation against detainees, but 

using the information derived from that,

o utilizzare la detenzione

from torture or using the

illegale in campi all'estero per andare ad interrogare i detenuti.

detention, the illegal detention in foreign camps to

Ecco abbiamo bisogno di capire se tutto questo, secondo la valutazione e il 

senso etico dei nostri governi, è dovuto o se non riteniamo che questo sia uno degli 

eccessi a cui dobbiamo
2: {33} go and interrogate detainees there. Well we need to understand whether all of this according to the ethical code of our governments is normal, is fine or whether this is one of the
1: {15} offer a political and institutional correction as quickly as possible, as well
2: {13} excesses which we must correct politically as soon as we can. Not least
1: {05} be the absolute truth
2: {06} because, may I add, both from
1: {06} and, as I say, autonomous of the CIA,
2: {09} sources which are very much internal to the CIA
1: {06} be, as I say, authoritative and from representatives of various institutions,
2: {08} and authoritative and from representatives of various institutions,
1: {18} we have received the clear impression that this system has
2: {10} we have received the clear impression that this system has
1: {06} be against torture for the same reasons that the old legal culture of Europe can refuse torture, Cesare Beccaria, the ethical regions, moral principles.
2: {27} failed in the fight against terrorism. We talked to some CIA high placed officials who said: "we're not against torture for the same reasons that {hesitation} you might
1: {06} be against torture because it doesn't work.
2: {10} have to release them". So what happened with Ra Mubanga
1: {19} it is what we are also facing in terms of efficiency
2: {20} to the ethics of torture. But they said: "we're against torture because it doesn't work.
1: {21} after 2, 3, 4 years of holding people
2: {23} because people will tell you everything, will tell you what you want to hear and
1: {04} have to release them in liberty.
2: {02} we will
1: {20} that is what happened with Murat Kunnet shows that
2: {10} have to release them". So what happened with Ra Mubanga
1: {19} in the fight against terrorism, of these excesses and these abuses. E known
2: {14} this is not effective. The war against terror cannot be fought in this way.
1: {07} the Commissioner Frattini should help us
2: {08} And I think Commissioner Frattini should help us
1: {19} which should be, which should be the position of the governments and which should be the real level of cooperation
2: [18] there as well to understand what the position of governments should be and what the real level of
1: [07] che i governi e la Commissione devono
2: [04] cooperation should be between
1: [17] devono avere nella lotta contro il terrorismo. Sino adesso ci sembra che l'Unione Europea sia stata una
2: [14] governments and the Commission in the war against terror. It seems to me that
1: [08] una sorta di convitato di pietro, abbastanza assente,
2: [03] the European Union
1: [04] poco responsabile, poco coinvolto.
2: [18] has been rather absent, not very involved and not very responsible in its response to this whole thing.

Closing Remark by the Press Officer

[80] Thank you Mr. Fava. I see that we are unfortunately running out of time, so I would have to conclude the Press Conference. But Mr. Fava has agreed to be available for some questions and or interviews after this press conference. So if you have any questions to ask please meet us outside the room. Working documents that Mr. Fava has mentioned are available in the back for you to have a look at. Thank you very much for coming.