DIALOGIC FEATURES IN EU NON-NATIVE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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Abstract: *EU parliamentary debates are a complex form of dialogue in which representatives of European citizens delivering monologues during parliamentary sessions are simultaneously engaged in a dialogue with their colleagues and with the broader public of European citizens. EU citizens can watch online videos of the parliamentary sessions and read online verbatim reports, i.e. the official written transcripts of the sessions. Linguistically, however, the videos and verbatim reports differ significantly. The present paper draws on EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled which comprises the speeches delivered in non-native English during thirteen parliamentary sittings (about 75,000 tokens) held in 2006, transcribed from* EP Live-Video, *and the corresponding* verbatim reports *(about 69,000 tokens). Previous studies of the differences between actual speeches and the verbatim reports regarded national parliamentary debates, for example in the U.K. (Slembrouck 1992; Hughes 1996; Mollin 2007) and in Italy (Cortelazzo 1985), thus focusing on speech in native languages. With the exception of Mollin (2007), they were qualitative in nature. The present paper illustrates the results of a quantitative, as well as qualitative, analysis of EU parliamentary speeches delivered by non-native speakers of English and the corresponding verbatim reports. It is found that involvement devices (Chafe 1982), i.e. expressions such as 'I think', discourse markers like 'well', 'you know', 'I mean', emphasizers such as 'of course', 'indeed', 'really', 'actually', 'definitely', vague language like 'thing', 'stuff' and hedges like 'a little bit' are reduced. An analysis of 'I think' and 'of course' indicates that non-native speakers of English in the European Parliament make skilful use of involvement devices, in an attempt to engage in a dialogue with the addressees despite the fact that they are delivering monologues. Many of these dialogic features are lost in verbatim reports, where ideational, rather than interpersonal, meanings are emphasised.*

Keywords: EU parliamentary debates, verbatim reports, discourse markers, ideational meaning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The differences between what parliamentarians actually say and the corresponding verbatim reports have been the object of a number of studies that focus on national parliaments and – therefore –, deal with native languages. Cortelazzo (1985) was based on the recording of a debate held at the Italian Camera dei Deputati on 20th December 1982, broadcast live by "Radio Radicale". Methodologically, it consisted in cataloguing the differences between the recordings of four speeches (450 minutes) and the corresponding stenographic reports. The speeches were selected by the author among the ones that "were not simply read out" (Cortelazzo, 1985:90). In this respect, the author noted that

> Most parliamentary speeches are not [...] in the form of a text written to be read out; but neither do they exhibit the features of spontaneous speech typical of informal dialogue. These speeches are, indeed, generally based on a written outline, which gives them a markedly planned character (which is absent, in such form, in spontaneous dialogue); but the written outline, very different from a written version, does not prevent a certain spontaneity on the part of the speaker [...] (Cortelazzo, 1985:88; my translation).

The purpose of Cortelazzo's analysis was twofold. On the one hand, it stemmed from an

interest in the accuracy of parliamentary verbatim reports, often used as sources for the study of political language. On the other hand, the analysis aimed to contribute to the study of spoken Italian, which had previously been based mainly on the language spoken "in spontaneous and informal dialogue" (Cortelazzo, 1985:87).

Slembrouck (1992), deemed "an influential article on how transcripts of parliamentary reports are produced" by Bayley (2003:9), focused, instead, on the British parliamentary Hansard records and, therefore, on native English. Although no details about his corpus were provided, the examples in his study were taken from the sittings of 17th, 18th, 19th, 23rd March 1987. His method, termed 'comparative' (Slembrouck, 1992:102) because it involved a "detailed comparison of the printed text of the report against transcripts of the spoken debates" (Slembrouck, 1992:101), was the same used by Cortelazzo (1985). This method, taken from the field of discourse representation studies, enabled Slembrouck to reach a somewhat different aim from Cortelazzo's, in that the author intended to contribute to the study of "discourse representation practices in an institutional context" (Slembrouck, 1992:101). In particular, he intended to compare 'anterior discourse' – "the discourse as it occurred before it was represented" and the 'representation of discourse' – "the textual construct which is embedded in the reporter's text and which offers a particular version of the anterior discourse" (Slembrouck, 1992:102), thus unveiling the ideological assumptions underlying discourse representation.

In her case study devoted to parliamentary interactions in the House of Commons, Hughes' (1996) purpose was similar to that of Cortelazzo in that it was embedded in a book illustrating the "major issues and points of contrast between speech and writing" (Hughes, 1996:1). Similarly to Slembrouck (1992), the study was aimed at investigating how the interaction between MPs was rendered on the written page, thus focusing on the conventions underlying discourse representation. For this purpose, Hughes broke up parliamentary

discourse into different discourse categories, namely 'main', the speech of a speaker called to participate in the debate, 'intervention', the speech of a speaker interrupting the main speaker, 'response', speech responding to an intervention, 'organisation', aimed at maintaining discourse between speakers, 'unofficial', for example facetious comments.

Mollin (2007) was a quantitative investigation based on the recording of the sitting of the House of Commons on 13th June 2006, of which the first four hours were transcribed and analysed with the software *WordSmith Tools*, and compared to the Hansard reports. The corpora of original transcripts and the corresponding verbatim reports amounted to 47,793 tokens and 35,661 respectively. Similarly to Cortelazzo (1985), the purpose of the author is "to assess the suitability of [...] parliamentary transcripts" (Mollin, 2007:187), in particular as a corpus linguistic resource. As the author notes, Hansard verbatim reports are downloadable from the Internet and would seem to be a convenient source of linguistic data. In the author's words, in fact,

> The corpus linguist is always looking for opportunities to compile new corpora of the English language. Most popular seem to be opportunities where we can access large amounts of text that already exist for other purposes, which we can then transform to suit our own. This holds especially for transcripts of speech, which save us the labour of transcribing ourselves (Mollin, 2007:187).

Interestingly, the authors mentioned so far, with the exception of Mollin (2007:189), who quoted Slembrouck (1992), were unaware of each other's research, as testified by their bibliographical references. In addition, the authors carried out their studies for different purposes, which can be considered only partially overlapping. This points to the relevance of their studies from different perspectives, in that they can illuminate the nature of the language spoken in a specific formal institutional context, simultaneously throwing light on discourse representation practices in that context and in society at large.

Furthermore, the comparison between actual transcripts and verbatim reports can unveil some of the differences between spoken and written discourse and constitute a warning against the use of transcripts made by non-linguists for the study of linguistic features.

Despite their different purposes, the elimination of hedges and emphatic particles was a constant finding in previous studies. While all of these focused on parliamentary speech delivered in national parliaments, the present study deals with EU parliamentary speeches delivered in English by non-native speakers, thus aiming to contribute to the study of English as a Lingua Franca in the context of the European Union, theobject of considerable scholarly debate (cfr. For example Berns 2009, Modiano 2009, Mollin 2006, Seidlhofer 2007) and recently also tackled at institutional level (European Commission, Directorate-General for Translation, 2011). The study of the use of English in the European Parliament is particularly intriguing, since the EU Parliament is a well-known multilingual setting, where the use of English is by no means compulsory, but is the result of the speaker's free choice[1]

The purpose of the present study, stemming from a previous qualitative analysis (Cucchi and Ulrych, 2008) based on a sitting held on a single day, is to provide quantitative data illustrating the extent to which some dialogic features, which comprise emphatics and hedges, are reduced in verbatim reports and, additionally, to explore the functions which two of them, 'I think' and 'of course' perform in original non-native English EU parliamentary speeches. The study draws on EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled of the speeches delivered in non-native English during thirteen parliamentary sittings (about 75,000 tokens) held in 2006, transcribed from *EP Live-Video*[2] and the corresponding

verbatim reports[3] (about 69,000). Before the analysis of the corpus data, the findings of previous studies on emphatics and hedges in parliamentary speeches and in verbatim reports are summarised in section 2.

2. ACTUAL SPEECHES AND VERBATIM REPORTS: EMPHATICS AND HEDGES IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

Among other features of spoken discourse edited out in verbatim reports, Cortelazzo (1985:97-101) mentioned the elimination of "particles which are frequently found in spoken discourse: […] discourse markers, hedges and emphatic particles" as being "the most frequent changes" (Cortelazzo (1985:97). Similarly, Slembrouck (1992:108-109) noted the reduction of "modal constructions, hedges, expressions of degree of commitment towards what speaker say", which he interpreted with reference to Halliday's model. Verbatim reports put a "premium on ideational meanings", as the title of one of the sections in his paper reads, and are characterised by "a general tendency to under-represent interpersonal meanings". In the examples provided, he mentioned the elimination of the expressions 'I hasten to stress', 'rather than', 'I think' (Slembrouck 1992:109), which, as he stated, "also function at the level of speech planning and discourse monitoring in the original speech".

Hughes (1996) found that the categories of discourse significantly reduced in the verbatim reports were those labelled 'unofficial' and 'organisation'. Regarding the latter, she noted that whole organisational turns, for example those when the Deputy Speaker acknowledges whose turn is to speak next, are omitted in verbatim reports, in that "they simply exist to carry forward the mechanics of the discourse itself" (Hughes 1996:60). Although Hughes focused on whole stretches of discourse rather than on specific expressions, it is clear that hedges and emphatic particles may have a discourse organisational function, and therefore, it is likely that they were missing from Hughes corpus, as suggested by her

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[1] According to Rule 146 of the *Rules of Procedure*, "[a]ll Members shall have the right to speak […] in the official language of their choice. Speeches delivered in one of the official languages shall be simultaneously interpreted into the other official languages and into any other language the Bureau may consider necessary".

[2]http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date#

[3]http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/minutes.htm

observation that "the discourse categories containing the interplay of speakers as they organise their turn-taking" (Hughes 1996:62) are omitted in the verbatim reports.

In her corpus study of MP's lexical and grammatical choices not retained in British verbatim reports, Mollin (2007:200) mentioned "amplifiers and stance adverbials" as being "high up on thelist of words that Hansard does not like". The emphasing adjectives 'very', 'really' and 'absolutely', in particular, underwent "dramatic modifications", being reduced by at least 75 percent. The reduction of the epistemic stance markers 'actually' and 'clearly', which "emphasis[e] what is important to the speaker and express[...] the speaker's stance", was less marked, but deemed "significant".

3. INVOLVEMENT DEVICES

In a previous qualitative study contrasting EU parliamentary speeches in non-native English and the corresponding verbatim reports based on a single parliamentary sitting, I noted the reduction of emphasisers such as 'of course', 'indeed', 'really', 'actually', 'definitely' and hedges like 'a little bit'. Expressions such as 'I think', discourse markers like 'well', 'you know', 'I mean' and vague language like 'thing' also tended to be reduced (Cucchi and Ulrych, 2008). Interestingly, these expressions fit in the category 'involvement' identified by Chafe (1982) in his analysis of some of the features "which seem especially important [...] on [...]

the two maximally differentiated styles: informal spoken language and formal written language". In Chafe's view, the category, which is the reverse 'detachment', comprises first person references, references to mental processes, devices used to monitor the information flow, emphatic particles, vagueness and hedging, and direct quotes. According to Chafe, their higher frequency in speech is due to the fact "that speakers interact with their audiences directly, whereas writers do not" (Chafe 1982:37). Involvement of the audience is accompanied, in speech, by self-involvement. In Chafe's words:

> The speaker is aware of an obligation to communicate what he or she has in mind in a way that reflects the richness of his thoughts – not to present a logically coherent but experientially stark skeleton, but to enrich it with the complex details of real experiences – to have less concern for consistency than for experiential involvement (Chafe 1982:45).

Biber (1988:107) also pointed out the importance of involvement in spoken texts and found private verbs, first and second person pronouns, hedges, emphatics and amplifiers, among others, to co-occur in spoken texts, typically characterised by an "interactive, affective, and involved" purpose.

Table 1 illustrates the presence of some involvement devices in the EUROPARL corpus and shows that, although originally present in the original speeches, they are in many cases edited out in the verbatim reports.

Table 1. The presence of involvement devices in speeches and verbatim reports

Expressions	Speeches	Verbatim reports
I think	168	60
indeed	98	38
of course	97	25
really	57	31
thing/s	48	40
actually	45	15
definitely	21	10
I mean	13	/
a little bit	10	4
you know	5	/
stuff	2	1

Of these expressions, only 'I think' and 'of course' are mentioned in *English CRE: The basics of typing and revision*, an unpublished document containing guidelines for revisers of EU parliamentary debates. They appear in a paragraph entitled "Remove redundancies", which states that these expressions "often signal paragraph or sentence breaks. […] It is thus perfectly reasonable, in most cases, to omit these words and, if appropriate, begin a new paragraph". Since they are very frequent in EUROPARL, in section 3.1 and 3.2 their functions in the corpus is illustrated through examples from the speeches by non-native speakers of English of various nationalities[4] drawing on previous research conducted on native English. To enable readers to better appreciate the functions of the expressions under study in their original co-texts and compare the original speeches with the corresponding verbatim reports, the differences between the two are highlighted in italics in the examples.

3.1 'I think'. The expression, indicated by Aijmer as typical of spoken language (1997:1), attracted specific attention in the field of political discourse, namely European parliamentary debates in native English (Simon-Vandenbergen, 1998) and political interviews (Simon-Vandenbergen, 2000). In these contexts, it was the object of contrasting claims regarding its function, which could be interpreted as "resulting from the politician's strategic use of hedges to avoid commitment to the truth of their preposition" (Simon-Vandenbergen, 1998:297) or, as Simon-Vandenbergen (1998:305) did, as "a marker of authority and deliberation rather than of tentativeness and hedging". Although Simon-Vandenbergen (1998, 2000) set out primarily to determine whether 'I think' was deliberative or tentative in her corpus, she remarked that the expression "is particularly useful in the spontaneous give-and-take of dialogue" (Simon-Vandenbergen, 2000:45).

The dialogic potential of 'I think' was recognised in works dealing with informal conversation or which contrasted its use in spoken and written discourse. Although he did not mention the expression as such, Chafe (1982) indicated "a speaker's more frequent reference to him- or herself" (Chafe, 1982:46) and "[r]eferences to a speaker's own mental processes" (Chafe, 1982:46) as signalling "speaker's involvement with his or her audience" which is typical of spoken discourse 'I think' is clearly a combination of the two. In keeping with this interpretation, Kärkkäinen (2003:105-186) performed a detailed analysis, with particular attention to interactive functions, of 'I think', "the most common epistemic marker in American English speech" (Kärkkäinen, 2003:105). Biber (1988) also recognised the centrality of 'I think' in informal conversation, including this expression among those in the dimension he termed 'Involved versus Informational Production', which he described as "a very basic dimension of variation among spoken and written texts in English" (Biber, 1988:104). In addition, Biber (1988:105) stated that private verbs "are among the features with largest weights" on the dimension. However, unlike Chafe (1982) and Kärkkäinen (2003), Biber (1988:105) emphasised speaker self-involvement rather than the involvement of addressees, maintaining that "[p]rivate verbs (e.g. *think, feel*) are used for the overt expression of private attitudes, thoughts and emotions. In any case, addressee involvement and self-involvement seem to go hand in hand, as testified by the fact that Biber indicated typically spoken texts, as mentioned above, as having an interactive, affective, and involved purpose, where 'interactive' and 'affective' clearly point to the relationship with

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[4]   The tags used in the corpus were: MCS = mother tongue Czech; MDA = mother tongue Danish; MDE = mother tongue German; MES = mother tongue Spanish; MET = mother tongue Estonian; MFI = mother tongue Finnish; MFR = mother tongue French; MHU = mother tongue Hungarian; MLT = mother tongue Lithuanian; MLV = mother tongue Latvian; MNL = mother tongue Dutch; MPL = mother tongue Polish; MPT = mother tongue Portuguese; MSL = mother tongue Slovenian; MSK = mother tongue Slovak; MSV = mother tongue Swedish. In analogy with the previous tags, the following were used to indicate nationality in countries where more than one national languages are spoken officially in the EU Parliament: MBE = Belgian nationality; MCP = Cypriot nationality; MLX = Luxembourgian nationality.

addressees, while 'involved' refers to the speaker's attitude.

The interactive functions performed in the corpus of non-native parliamentary discourse emerges from a close analysis of the speeches, excerpts of which are reproduced in the left column in the Tables 2 to 6. In the right column the verbatim reports are reproduced. In (1), where the openness of meetings of the Council is discussed, the speaker expresses his opinion that, in their current form, they are boring and that the situation would improve if they were open. The repetition of 'I think' serves a negative politeness function, in that

the speaker, by prefacing his statements with 'I think' and using 'probably' shows consideration for his fellow MEPs, who may have divergent views. The last occurrence of 'I think', prefacing a summary of the speaker's proposal, occurs immediately after an assessment by the speaker of his own proposal ('it's a little bit like Johannes Voggenhuber's proposal'). Interestingly, this statement is a shift to an earlier topic and brings in a partially new perspective, two of the partially overlapping functions of 'I think' identified by Kärkkäinen (2003:120-121;132), which in this case occurs immediately afterwards.

Table 2. Example (1)

Speech	Verbatim report
Second point *I wanted to make is as a matter of fact the* Council meetings, having sat through hundreds of hours, are **probably** the most boring meetings that you can get. *I think* it would liven up the debate in the Council, because *a lot of times* in the Council people come *there* and read *ready-made* documents *and* it really is boring and *and **and I think** it would open* if we *opened* it up it would be a bit better. *What* I would like to finish *off with* is *is this* unrealistic proposal, *it's a little bit* like Johannes Voggenhuber's proposal. *I think* what we should have is the Council meeting in a *hemicycle* without assistants next to them and in complete openness. That would be a *true* open and transparent Council, and that*'s* what we need. *Thank you.* <NNatEng> <MFI> Alexander Stubb, 3/04/2006	*A separate* point is *that*, having sat through hundreds of hours of Council meetings, *I can say they* are probably the most boring meetings that you can get. *Openness* would liven up the debate in the Council, because people *often* come and read *prepared* documents. It really is boring and if we open it up it would be a bit better. I would like to finish with *an* unrealistic proposal, *which is rather like* Mr Voggenhuber's proposal. What we should have is the Council meeting in a *chamber* without assistants next to them and in complete openness. That would be a *truly* open and transparent Council, and that *is* what we need.

The partially new point made by the speaker may occur in a confrontational context, where "interactionally problematic topics" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146) are discussed. In such cases, 'I think' constitutes a disaligning turn, in which a contrasting opinion is expressed and the interactional trouble is repaired through 'I think' as in (2). The MEPs praises the Prime Minister Erdogan for his speeches but then states that appropriate and prompt actions have not been undertaken, toning down the importance of

speeches and stressing that of deeds. In so doing, as highlighted by Kärkkäinen (2003: 146), speakers guide the interpretation of the recipients towards an agreement with the speaker. Kärkkäinen (2003: 156) also observed that, in such contexts, the function of 'I think' may occur close to semantic content expressing commitment. This is clear in (2), where commitment is conveyed through 'have to' and the repeated 'must'. In so doing, the speaker appears to prevent disagreement on the part of the recipients.

Table 3. Example (2)

Speech	Verbatim report
In the report of *this* Parliament adopted end of 2004, we *said that the we urged* for the	In Parliament*'s* report adopted *at* the end of 2004, we *pressed* for the development of the south east

development of the south east and for more cultural rights for the Kurdish people. It must be said Prime Minister Erdogan has made impressive speeches since that *moment*. ***But I think*** now, *on* this difficult time **these words must be followed more than ever by deeds**. **We must invest socially and economically** so that people with their families *do* have a prosperous future *and* so *make them satisfied* they *don't* want violence for their children. **We have to invest in more cultural freedom.** <MDA> Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, 26/04/2006	and for more cultural rights for the Kurdish people. It must be said *that* Prime Minister Erdogan has made impressive speeches since that *time*. However, *at* this difficult time these words must be followed more than ever by deeds. We must invest socially and economically so that people and their families have a prosperous future, so *that they do not* want violence for their children. We have to invest in more cultural freedom.

3.2 'Of course'. Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer (2007:40-42) point to the dialogic potential of adverbs traditionally associated with the expression of modal certainty, stressing that

> [one] of the reasons for using adverbs expressing a high degree of certainty has to do with the ways in which speakers want to position themselves in the current discourse, vis-a-vis other voices, with the extent to which they wish to open up or close down the dialogue (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer: 33).

The meaning of 'of course' indicates that the speaker assumes that knowledge referred to is shared by the addressees (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer, 2007:176) to the point of being "so widely known or so widely agreed upon to be self-evident" (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer 2007:42). As an equivalent of 'as you know', 'of course' may function as a device aimed "to give the audience full credit for their own background knowledge" (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007:204). In this use, it has a positive politeness function and can be considered a "marker of solidarity and equality" by which "[t]he speaker is treating the hearer as equally knowledgeable" (Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007:205), thus reducing the

asymmetrical power distribution between the giver and the receiver of information. Simultaneously, such use of 'of course' has a negative politeness function in that it prevents the speaker from being perceived as naive when providing information which is already known. (3) exemplifies such use, in that the speaker assumes that the audience of fellow MEPs is familiar with the positive effects on tourism of the extension of programme under discussion to all the Member States. Similarly, MEPs are thought to be well aware of the fact that cooperation on energy issues will also involve tackling climate change issues. It is to be noted that the repeated occurrence of 'of course' is found in an explicitly dialogic co-text, as shown by the request for permission to answer previous questions ('Let me respond to a few questions') and the request for forgiveness about repeating information which the MEPs present from the beginning of the debate are already familiar with ('for those who might not have been here at the beginning I I wanted to reiterate that of course'). This last occurrence of 'of course' additionally has a reassuring function, already noted by Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer (2007:209), since the speaker is engaged in persuading the audience that constant and careful attention is being paid to the issues at hand.

Table 4. Example (3)

Speech	Verbatim report
Let me respond to a few questions rather briefly [...] . As for tourism, *that* also *has been* mentioned, ***of course*** exchanges would be facilitated by extending the visa waiver program to all our Member States *and*, as to environment, we want to	Let me respond to a few questions rather briefly. As for tourism – *which was* also mentioned – exchanges would be facilitated by extending the visa waiver programme to all our Member States. As to *the* environment, we want to relaunch our

relaunch our dialogue with the US notably by relaunching the high level dialogue on environment including *of course* the issue of climate change. Our cooperation on energy will also *of course* touch on climate change issues from the standpoint *as I said in the initiation* ofenergy efficiency, *but* our overall dialogue needs to be broader than this *and* for those who might not have been here at the beginning I *I wanted to reiterate that of course* the *question* of *the* visawaiver and the visa reciprocity *is one of those* issues that we *steadily* not only mention but *is*there in the dialogue and will certainly be taken up again with President Bush. <NNatEng> <MDE>Benita Ferrero-Waldner 31/5/06	dialogue with the US, notably by relaunching the high-level dialogue on *the* environment, including the issue of climate change. Our cooperation on energy will also touch on climate change issues from the standpoint of energy efficiency. *However*, our overall dialogue needs to be broader than this. *For those who might not have been here at the beginning*, I *would like* to *come back to* the *questions* of visa waiver and visa reciprocity. *These are* issues *that* we not only mention *on a regular basis*, but *they are* there in the dialogue, and will certainly be taken up again with President Bush.

Stressing the fact that a position is shared may have an ideological function, in that construing certain positions as universally shared means "positioning any who might dissent from the viewpoint as at odds with common knowledge or common sense" (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer, 2007:40). In this function 'of course' is synonymous with 'needless to say/it goes without saying' (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer, 2007:42). In the beginning of the speech reproduced in (4), it is common sense to think that human beings are an important issue and it would be odd to dissent from this position. 'Of course' invites the receivers to converge on this sensible viewpoint.

Table 5. Example (4)

Speech	Verbatim report
Human beings. This *of course* is *an* issue *that* I fully agree is *is* very important and I *would* just like to mention that the European Union in this respect cooperates closely with the OSCE, which is very active in this field. <NNatEng> <MDE> Hans Winkler, 17/05/06	Human beings. I fully agree that this issue is very important. I *should* just like to mention that the European Union cooperates closely in this respect with the OSCE, which is very active in this field.

'Of course' may also have an oppositional (Simon-Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer, 2007:41) or concessive function, since the expression is often followed by 'but' (Vandenbergen and Aijmer, 2007:209). In this case, "[t]he speaker backgrounds alternative voices, whether real or hypothetical, by presenting them as to be taken for granted, so that he/she can then foreground his/her viewpoint (i.e. the proposition introduced by 'but')" (Vandenbergen and Aijmer, 2007:209). In (5), for example, the speaker first positively acknowledges what was done ('The recast directive to simplify and modernise incorporates the relevant points in this area. The standardisation and definitions is important') and then foregrounds her viewpoint in the proposition introduced by 'but', further reinforced by the remark 'and this is important'. At the end of her speech, she indicates explicitly whose voice she is backgrounding, as well as summing up her main point ('To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good, but we desperately need sanctions'). It is to be noted that 'of course' is substituted with 'clearly' in the verbatim report, which not only is "much less frequent" than 'of course' both in speech and in writing (Vandenbergen and Aijmer's 2007:223), but also "does not have a solidarity building function such as 'of course' has" (Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007: 226). The general dialogical character of the speech is apparent in the multiple vocatives at the beginning of the speech, which are routinely

substituted by 'Mr President' at the beginning of speeches, as prescribed in English CRE. Further, the speech closes with two adjacency pairs composed by question and answer.

<p align="right">Table 6</p>

Speech	Verbatim report
Commissioner, Rapporteur, colleagues, first of all thank *you* Mrs Niebler for *an* excellent work. The recast directive to simplify and modernise incorporates the relevant points in this area. *The* standardisation and definitions *is* important **_of course_** but, **and this is important**, what we need now *is* sanctions. To reconcile working life and family life is one of the most urgent issues of Europe today and Europe *in* the future. There is today no country in the Union that reaches the reproductive level necessary *if we in the end want* to avoid extinction. Women want to work *and one more* if *women are* forced to choose between working and having a family, *they* choose to work. One of the most obvious *kinds* of discrimination against women is the gender pay gap **and** for more than 30 years we*'ve* had a directive dealing with this, but **how much has the situation changed during *this* time? *Nothing*.** There has been no improvement in this area whatsoever. **Will the recast directive change this? It remains to be seen.** To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good but we desperately need *sanction*. *It's* nothing less than the future of Europe *which is at stake*. *Thank you*. <NNatEng> <MSV> Maria Carlshamre, 1/06/06	*Mr President*, *I would like to* thank Mrs Niebler for *her* excellent work. The recast directive to simplify and modernise the issue incorporates the relevant points in this area. Standardisation and definitions *are* clearly important but, *most importantly*, what we need now are sanctions. To reconcile work and family life is one of the most urgent issues of *the* Europe *of* today and *the* Europe *of* the future. There is today no country in the Union that reaches the reproductive levels *necessary* to avoid extinction. Women want to work. If forced to choose between working and having a family, *an increasing number of women* choose to work. One of the most obvious *forms* of discrimination against women is the gender pay gap. For more than 30 years we *have* had a directive dealing with this, but **how much has the situation changed during *that* time? *Not at all*.** There has been no improvement in this area whatsoever. **Will the recast directive change this? It remains to be seen. To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good, but we desperately need** *sanctions*. Nothing less than the future of Europe is at stake.

4. CONCLUSION

Previous studies on national parliaments (Cortelazzo 1985; Slembrouck 1992; Hughes 1996; Mollin 2007) noticed that many features of spoken discourse, including hedges and emphasisers, were edited out in verbatim reports. With reference to Chafe (1982) it is here observed that these expressions belong to a larger category, comprising first person references, reference to mental processes, devices used to monitor the information flow and vague language. They may be collectively termed 'involvement devices' and are typical of texts with an "interactive, affective, and involved" purpose (Biber 1988).

In EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled comprising original speeches (about 75,000 tokens) and the corresponding verbatim reports (about 69,000 tokens), it was found that involvement devices are invariably reduced, albeit to various extents, in verbatim reports. Their reduction obscures some the original linguistic choices on the speakers' part, thus conveying to the readers of verbatim reports mere facts, partially outstripped of speakers' emotional involvement and of the devices they use to engage their audience. The reduction of 'I think' and 'of course', suggested in the document containing guidelines for editors, is a case in point.

An examination of selected samples of 'I think' and 'of course' has shown the diversity of functions which they serve in non-native political discourse, already identified in native informal conversation and political discourse (Aijmer 1997; Kärkkäinen 2003; SimonVandenbergen 1998, 2000; Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007; Simon-

Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer, 2007). 'I think' may be used as a strategy of negative politeness, thus showing consideration for fellow MEPs' possibly divergent views, to introduce a shift in topic and to bring in a partially new perspective. The expression is also utilized in confrontational contexts where problematic topics are discussed with the function of toning down the importance of a contrasting viewpoint. 'Of course' indicates that shared knowledge is self-evident and may work as a marker of equality between the giver and the receiver of information or have a reassuring function, persuading the audience that something is the case. The expression may also have ideological implications, inviting convergence on a specific viewpoint, constructed as the only sensible one. Similarly to 'I think', it may also serve to background alternative voices and foreground one's own. It is thus shown that non-native speakers of English in the European Parliament are pragmatically skilful speakers who fully exploit the high dialogic potential of the expressions studied, in a continuous effort to engage in a dialogue with the audience.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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