

FROM EXHIBITIONS TO THE SCREEN: THE CHALLENGES OF SUBTITLING ART FROM ENGLISH INTO ITALIAN

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to explore the characteristics of English for Art Purposes, also referred to as International Art English (Rule and Levine 2012), and to focus on the translation strategies used in the Italian subtitles of this type of content-related discourse in the art documentary *Goya: Visions of Flesh and Blood* (2016).

Through the *leitmotif* of the art exhibition, here the narration is presented through a variety of voices, from those of art curators and critics to the voice of the artist himself, producing a successful attempt to make art available in an informative but also entertaining manner, thanks to the use of a refined yet accessible and enjoyable language. Despite its technical constraints, does subtitling manage to retain such features? And in what ways does it transfer the aesthetic quality and interpersonal tone of the source text? The translation strategies used to manipulate and adapt the multi-layered nuances of this rich language will be identified through a qualitative approach, with specific reference to lexical and syntactical choices, the use of figurative language and register alteration. It will be argued that the communicative purpose expressed through the register, in the interpretations produced by art critics, is altered in translation which shows greater concern for the descriptive and compositional components.

Not that one has to talk about paintings at all
(O'Toole 2011: 10)

1. Introduction

The opening quote echoes the debated statement that 'art speaks for itself' and therefore no additional explanation is required to understand and appreciate it. While searching for proof of this *cliché*, the opposite argument finds empirical backing in the widespread natural human practice of regularly talking about art.

The aim of this paper is to identify the most common linguistic and rhetorical features, together with the semiotic functions of the language of art, in the genre of the art commentary and consider the translation strategies used in the subtitles from English into Italian for the art documentary *Goya: Visions of Flesh and Blood* (2016).

The specific domain of English for Art Purposes¹ refers to the study of a functional language used by the art discourse community of artists, art critics and academics to describe and interpret visual arts in specific social and cultural contexts. A significant contribution to the field comes from the area of language teaching, mainly to second or foreign language Art students, through academic programmes, websites, blogs and textbooks. However, the topic has been little investigated so far and mainly with reference to written genres (Hudson and Noonan-Morrissey 2015; Harris 2003; Sayre 2013; Svenungsson 2007; Barrett 2000; O'Toole 2011; Atkins 2013; Rule and Levine 2012; Crețiu 2013a, 2013b, 2016).

Due to the complex nature of the visual arts, whose primary communicative purpose is not merely informative but aimed at inspiring and moving the viewer, language seems an inadequate tool yet also a necessary evil whose form and purpose may vary. Harris (2003) used the term *Artspeak* to refer to an open-ended type of discourse mainly intended as a means of propaganda, to obtain social validation through the use of socially, politically and educationally loaded words. These mystifying constructions and 'esoteric contortions', often resulting in the alienation of the reader/viewer from the artworks, are highlighted and criticized in the corpus-based analysis conducted by Rule and Levine (2012), who coin the negatively connotated term *International Art English (IAE)*. In opposition to the negative drawbacks of both *Artspeak* and *IAE*, there is general agreement among experts and academics that language concerning art "is thoughtful and thought-out, for the purpose of increasing understanding and appreciation of art and its role in society" (Barrett 2000: 25, quoted in Crețiu 2013b: 2), and, therefore, concerned primarily with establishing a positive contact with the viewer.

2. A framework of analysis

In English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research, the construction of a methodological framework of analysis has frequently drawn on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978), and Genre Analysis (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993), as is also the case in the analysis of the source text and target text in Translation Studies (Hatim and Mason 1997; Trosborg 2002; Munday 2012).

In Functional Linguistics, the notion of register refers to language used in a situational context, determining the construction of meaning through three co-occurring factors, i.e. field, tenor and mode, where field refers to the subject-matter and purpose, tenor to the interpersonal relation between interlocutors expressed through the use of formal or informal language, and mode to the written or spoken medium. These elements activate three main linguistic functions. First, the Experiential or Ideational function relates to the fact that every semiotic text, regardless of the medium, is based on the encoder's experience of the world he/she is describing; second, the Interpersonal function refers to the type of interpersonal relation established between the producer and the receiver of the message; third, the Textual function means that the message will have the structural features of a properly formed text as regards coherence and cohesion, in relation to a distinctive genre.

¹ The acronym EAP will be used only in reference to English for Academic Purposes.

In Swales' (1990: 58) definition, genre is "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" that functions and is shaped within the discourse communities who use it. Consequently, meaning is always socially constructed and language varies according to the situation in which it is used. In the domain of English for Art Purposes, common written genres are the art review, the research paper, the artist's statement and so on, and art commentary as an example of a spoken genre. Within different genres, specific discourse structures or text types may occur, such as describing a formal element, interpreting and evaluating, narrating, comparing and so on, depending on the specific communicative purpose (Paltridge 2012; Biber 1988).

For the purpose of the present research, the semiotic model introduced by O'Toole (2011) bears important methodological implications. The Australian scholar of communication studies also draws on Halliday's Systemic Functions, arguing that "semiotics – the study of sign systems – can assist us in the search for a language through which our perceptions of a work of art can be shared" (*ibid.*: 10). According to such a model, the visual arts should be described and interpreted in terms of three functions: a Representational, a Modal, and a Compositional meaning. The Representational function is expressed by elements that convey the experiential dimension, hence it concerns the description of the content of the painting, through a progressive order going from a single figure or detail to the picture as a whole. The Modal function pertains to the interpretation of both representational and compositional elements of the painting, through the use of rhetorical strategies and intertextuality, in order to connect the viewer to the painting. The Compositional function relates to the description of elements of composition such as the arrangement of forms, proportions, and so on (O'Toole 2011: 16-31). The scholar points out that, in spite of its apparent complexity, this semiotic model for the classification of functional elements provides a reliable framework for the interpretation of art that would otherwise risk undertaking undefined and unclear paths. Moreover, since "the boundaries between functions are permeable" (O'Toole 1990: 193), the language of art does not necessarily need to reproduce faithfully the order of macro functions described in the semiotic model. The main recommendation is, in fact, that art commentary gives priority to interpretative elements of the Modal function, as its main purpose is to engage the viewer's attention and emotions.

Most discourses about art, whether art history or popular criticism, tend to deal first with what is represented (the Representational Function), while academic and practical art teaching understandably starts with observations about the Compositional Function. Meanwhile, the ordinary visitor to an art gallery may lack both the factual knowledge and the technical vocabulary to say anything meaningful about either of these, and is discouraged from articulating how she or he relates to the work's visual impact (*ibid.*: 193).

In other words, the representational and compositional elements should intertwine with the expression of the art critic's personal engagement, highlighting those elements that were probably the ones the artist intended to exploit to make the picture connect to the observer.

3. Features of English for Art Purposes

English for Art Purposes can be considered as a subgenre of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), whose main shared function is to persuade and promote understanding through the use of narratives and intertextual references (Preece 1994). In his study of register in academic discourse, Biber (2006) argued that, while in written texts the achievement of persuasion is built through reference to highly informative material, in spoken texts this relies more directly on the interpersonal involvement achieved in a more spontaneous manner.

In the genres of English for Art Purposes, the urge to “establish relationships between words, images and objects in the real world” (Crețiu 2013b: 4) is obtained through the formal analysis of an artwork and a constant shift between descriptions and interpretations. Indeed, credibility and persuasiveness of subjective interpretative statements often rely on descriptions of real people and historical events or reference to documents and letters. In addition to this, the language of the art commentary, only apparently spontaneous, is a type of constructed orality that is written to be spoken. Therefore, although being dense and thought-through, it also relies on linguistic and pragmatic features to achieve interpersonal involvement, through the articulation of subjective emotions, and the expression of uncertainty, aimed at engaging the viewer in the process of speculation on artworks.

For the purpose of the present study, we are going to identify semantic, syntactic and rhetorical structures that convey the Interpersonal function in language within the specific context of talking about art. O’Toole (2011: 12-13) suggests focusing on those elements normally used in spoken language to engage the viewer, i.e. (1) direct address through the use of the personal pronouns *you* and *we*; (2) use of direct questions and answers; (3) use of modal verbs and of lexical items signalling lack of certainty and the speaker’s interpretative mode suggesting the viewer’s response to the painting; (4) prosodic features such as intonation and the rising and falling tone of voice. Crețiu (2013b: 13-15), a Romanian scholar and teacher of English for Art Purposes, suggests considering terminological specificities at lexical level, proceeding towards the morphological, syntactical and semantic level. More specifically, the linguistic signals of interpretation that can be found at the lexical level include the use of adverbs, subordinating conjunctions of manner, and specific nouns and verbs.

4. Subtitling

Subtitling represents the most widely researched audio-visual translation mode with dubbing and voice-over, pushing the boundaries of a mere language transfer from one linguistic code to another (Taylor 2002). Subtitles translate spoken dialogue, which is still audible on screen, into written text that is synchronously added at the bottom of the screen and, in Jakobson’s (1959) terms, can be either intralinguistic (i.e. using the same language) or interlinguistic (i.e. from one linguistic code to another), and always intersemiotic (i.e. from spoken to written language). The manifestation of this diamesic shift (Perego 2003) generates a target text that has inevitably lost most of the prosodic features of spoken language, i.e. tone of voice, dialects, regional accents, sociolinguistic markers, etc., favouring elements more typical of a written register (Assis Rosa 2001).

On the other hand, it necessarily functions in a polysemiotic relation to the visual and acoustic channels. Chaume (2004) defines this relation as ‘semiotic cohesion’ which allows for the recovery of some missing elements in the subtitles through the support of the image and sound. However, “the systematic elimination of seemingly redundant elements such as even phatic fillers, modal adjuncts or repetitions (in any case – words) can be detrimental to understanding” (Taylor 2000: 159), and also interferes with the perception of the relation between interlocutors.

The adaptation of subtitles to the screen entails the compliance to technical time and space parameters. Therefore, the generally accepted norms specify that the time of permanence of the title on the screen should not exceed 6-7 seconds and the length of each line should stay within the limit of 33-40 characters, divided into a maximum of two lines at a time (Gottlieb 1992; Ivarsson and Carroll 1998; Lomheim 1999). Due to these formal restrictions, subtitles seem to inevitably require reduction, either total or partial, which, in turn, may generate problems with the “information density of the message” (Taylor 2002: 144), particularly once the source dialogue has been cleared of spoken features of conversation such as repetitions, hesitations, false starts, etc. Empirical research on the translation processes has produced numerous proposals for a categorization of translation strategies, considered as “the first level of abstraction from the concrete level data, which contains translation solutions” (Pedersen 2011: 71). In academic research, terminological discrepancies and different systems of categorizations prove the difficulty of setting clear boundaries to these translation solutions. It should be of no surprise that the seminal research in this field originates from Scandinavia, owing to a well-established tradition of subtitling audiovisual content. Gottlieb’s (1992: 294) detailed subtitling taxonomy including ten different strategies was later revised in Lomheim’s model (1999: 202-204), who reduced it to six main strategies, i.e. omission (e.g. an element that disappears during the transfer), compression (e.g. text-condensation), expansion (e.g. addition of information), generalization (e.g. use of hyperonymy), specification (e.g. use of hyponymy), and neutralization (i.e. using a less connotative term). The word translation is used to refer to a direct transfer of “equivalent meaning” (Lomheim 1999: 200) offering the closest possible alternative.

In particular, features of text reduction are the main focus of Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (2007) study of subtitling. The subtitler’s choices concerning text reduction are always dependent on the principle of relevance (Gutt 1991), which goes beyond linguistic issues, concerning not only meaning but also purpose and function of the source language (SL). Therefore, reduction includes total omission on the one hand, and condensation and reformulation on the other, all of which could be part of the same subtitle. Condensation and reformulation may happen at word level, through simplification, generalization, using near-synonyms, etc., or at sentence level, e.g. changing questions into statements, simplifying modality, etc. (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 151-161). As for the relation to functional linguistics, it is evident that elements conveying the Ideational function, mainly reliant on descriptions of reality, usually undergo less reduction compared to those expressing the Interpersonal and Textual function (Kovačič 1996).

Moreover, as an overt type of translation synchronically added to the screen, subtitling is ‘vulnerable’ since excessive reduction of the SL may be too evident and produce a distancing effect in the audience, especially in the case of two languages bearing some degree of familiarity. Thus, the subtitler’s choices of condensation could also exploit the

strategy of reliability that consists in the use of a number of words that present “strong phonetic and morphological similarities in both languages” (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 56).

In opposition to reduction strategies, explicitation (Perego 2003, 2009) is a macro-strategy indicating the insertion of additional information necessary to clarify obscure meaning. Forms of explicitation are addition, i.e. the introduction of a linguistic element not part of the source dialogue, specification, i.e. the substitution of a lexical item with a more specific one, and reformulation, i.e. changing the syntactical structure (Perego 2009: 59). More specifically, explicitation may be ‘reduction-based’ (Perego 2003), as a special type of addition inserted in the subtitle to compensate for previous toning down or deletion.

To sum up, the study of different taxonomies of translation strategies reveals the importance of establishing macro-categories (Pedersen 2011: 73). So far, in addition to direct translation, these macro-categories are text reduction, which includes the micro-strategies of omission and condensation; text explicitation, entailing addition and specification; and text reformulation, as a broader term that has been used in reference to both the previous categories (Bianchi 2015). Reformulation will be used, for the purpose of the present research, to refer to various types of intended grammatical changes, mainly producing condensation.

4.1. *Translating documentaries*

Documentaries are multimodal texts that exploit different communicative modes to convey the message. The verbal element intertwines with the visual and the prosodic features of voice, gestures, movement, music, etc., therefore the analysis of their language in translation should be considered in reference to multimodal discourse analysis of the different signs that co-participate in the creation of meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996; Thibault 2000).

Usually considered as non-fictional films (Plantinga 2005), documentaries represent a very flexible and hybrid genre. Although the description of reality is what audiences generally foresee, documentaries usually present a distinct perspective within a specific socio-cultural context, which inevitably reduces objectivity. As Franco (1999: 289) argues, “[i]f we assume that documentaries are far from impartial representations, then the role of translation in the documentary discourse seems to me to be a highly relevant issue”. Indeed, research on subtitling documentary deserves more attention within the wider field of Audiovisual Translation (Franco 1999, 2000; Taylor 2002; Matamala 2009a, 2009b; Bianchi 2015; Hanouille, Hoster and Remael 2015).

The translation of a specialized text usually presents recognizable linguistic and pragmatic conventions that mark its belonging to a particular genre (Asensio 2007). In spite of the lower level of specialization in the language of documentaries, generally addressing the layman, the translation of specialized lexico-grammatical, rhetorical features and the tenor still require attention from the audio-visual translator, usually unfamiliar with the specific domain (Matamala 2009b).

The most common audio-visual transfer modes used in documentaries include voice-over (Franco, Matamala and Orero 2010), mainly used to translate the voices of talking heads, i.e. people being interviewed; off-screen dubbing, used to translate the voice of

an off-screen narrator; and subtitling, usually chosen in case of different languages or in the translation of captions (Matamala 2009b).

As for the specific domain of English for Art Purposes, translation research is still a rather unexplored field with very few exceptions coming from individual contributions in online journals, such as *Art in Translation*, or professional workshops held on the topic². To my knowledge, no scientific research has been published on the topic of subtitling art documentaries.

5. The case study

The documentary series *Exhibition on Screen*, launched in 2012, aims at making major art exhibitions accessible to a wider audience all over the world through cinema screenings. As argued by Phil Grabsky, the documentaries director and producer, “a cinema experience of an Art Exhibition is unique”³, not only because of the extraordinary close-ups into the artworks, but also for the compelling insights into the artist’s life as well as behind-the-scenes footage. These art documentaries have the purpose of being “educational, informative and entertaining”⁴ for the viewer, accompanied throughout the captivating journey by the voices and commentaries of leading art critics, curators and historians, and, not least, by compelling music.

This case study analyses *Goya: Visions of Flesh and Blood* (2016) based on the artist’s portrait exhibition at London’s National Gallery in 2015/2016. Curatorial insights and commentary of portraits intertwine with biographical references to Goya’s life, from the description of his birth place and adolescence in Zaragoza to the narration of key moments in his career: e.g. his journey to Italy to study the classic masters, the early period spent at the Royal Tapestry Factory, his first royal commissions for painting frescoes in cathedrals, and finally his long awaited success as the Royal portrait painter of the Bourbons. Moreover, the documentary offers private insights into Goya’s contradictory personality due to the correspondence he maintained with his lifelong friend Zapater, showing he was a royalist and a man of the Enlightenment, sharply critical of his times.

The genres present in the documentary are the artist’s biography, the artist’s statement and the art commentary. An off-screen voice of a female narrator recounts the artist’s biography through the use of a formal register, aimed at conveying objectivity and reliability in reporting facts. The narrator’s voice also functions as the main linking device, connecting the scenes of art commentaries, and the fictional frames in which an actor in Goya’s clothes is walking or painting, while an off-screen voice with a strong Spanish accent is reading the artist’s letters to Zapater. Thus, the artist’s statement is expressed in the form of read-aloud private letters, with the main purpose of informing the audience of the artist’s emotions and thoughts, adding authenticity to the narration

² During the Mediterranean Editors & Translators (MET) Conference in 2013, Poblet, Spain, two Workshops on the topic were presented: (1) J. Martinez, A. M. Bohan and L. Bennet, *The Art of Translation and the Translation of Art: perspectives on translating the arts from five languages*; (2) P. Llimona, *Translating art from Spanish to Catalan*.

³ Retrieved from Exhibition on Screen’s website: <http://exhibitiononscreen.com/en-uk/about-us>.

⁴ Retrieved from Arts Alliance, the documentary producer’s website: <http://www.artsalliance.com/introduction-exhibition-screen/>.

and also functioning as a back-up to the experts' comments. Finally, the art commentary presents a continuous shift between descriptions and interpretations of Goya's portraits as well as comments on his life, career and complex personality, through the voices of leading curators, historians and other artists, including, for example, the Prado's curator of prints and drawings who goes through the pages of Goya's rare Italian notebook in Spanish, adding a multilingual layer to the documentary. The art commentary is the genre that most clearly contains features of spoken language, whereas both the biographical narration and the artist's statement recall written language in terms of structure and level of formality. *Goya* complies to the recurrent structure of documentaries described by Matamala (2009: 5), where usually "a narrator presents the situation, a talking head gives her opinion and some shots of real action with real speech are included". Here, only the latter voices are absent, as we do not encounter instances of real spontaneous speech; the only real scenes are shots of people visiting the exhibition with background music.

Subtitling is the only mode of transfer present on screen. On the one hand, maintaining the original soundtrack provides a sense of authenticity while, on the other, it comes as a surprise for two main reasons. First, as mentioned previously, documentaries usually include subtitles in combination with other translation modes such as voice-over, lip-sync and off-screen dubbing, in particular in countries like Italy that maintain a well-established dubbing tradition (Hanouille, Hoster and Remael 2015), mainly for cinema screenings. Second, for the specific genre of art documentaries, subtitles may distract the audience from the intriguing close-ups. Nevertheless, the presence of subtitles may imply a thoroughly planned pedagogical choice, aimed at maintaining the original sound of the elegant and meaningful utterances of critics and curators and of the Spanish incursions, as part of the aesthetic dimension of the film.

I approached the production house Seventh Art to shed light on the above queries, and they provided me with a more practical explanation. The translation process was entirely delegated to the distributor who chose subtitling and outsourced it to external professionals. Moreover, the choice of subtitles was entirely dictated by time pressure, because of the goal of a single European cinema release of the film. As for future productions, they expressed the intention of opting for dubbing, particularly so as not to detract attention from the image during the screenings. In a sense, the producer/distributor's response unveiled and endorsed the wide and persisting gap dividing commercial and marketing strategies on the one hand, and the theoretical reasoning of the pedagogical potential hiding behind the use of subtitles, on the other.

Nonetheless, to date, after the release of 19 documentaries, the distribution language transfer strategy has not changed. This sustains the belief that, besides commercial reasons, subtitling offers the significant advantages of preserving authenticity and the multilingual component of the documentary, fostering the idea of art as a form of communication naturally blurring borders and therefore belonging to a wider international community sharing similar perceptions. Furthermore, subtitling in art documentaries functions as a powerful didactic tool for language learning, blending specific content and academic language together.

6. Analysis and results

Based on O'Toole's model, the analysis of the case study draws on the genre of the oral art commentary, focusing on the linguistic and pragmatic features used to signal the modal function of interpretation and on the rhetorical devices marking the alternation between informative description and interpretation. In particular, when describing a painting, the structure of the commentary follows a common path. First, the description begins with reference to the main character; second, there is an almost immediate shift towards interpretation, producing a sort of gossiping effect, with reference to Goya's personal relationship to the character or to additional information external to the painting. Then, finally, the description of the characters and composition comes to the fore usually through a close-up on a detail or gaze that takes the viewer straight into the painting. Description and interpretation continuously overlap through a rather informal and direct tenor.

The excerpts that follow were selected to provide qualitative examples of frequent occurrences in the SL and of the most frequent translation strategies used in the subtitles. As for the references found in the literature, the analysis focuses on the semantic, syntactical and rhetorical features directly aimed at engaging the viewer in the construction of an interpersonal process of interpretation and reconstruction of meaning.

At the lexical level, the specific terminology, i.e. etchings (*acqueforti*), lithographs (*litografie*), sketches (*bozze*), etc. is translated, in the majority of instances, with direct equivalents. In addition, a foreignizing effect in the subtitles is achieved thanks to the transfer of Spanish loan words from the SL e.g. *compentencia formál*, *mantilla*, etc., not because of lack of equivalence in the target language (TL), but mainly as a sign of cultural connotation (Pedersen 2011).

Moreover, the critics frequently choose words expressing interpretation, lack of certainty, personal taste and signalling informality to commit the viewer into the interpretation of the painting, whereas the omission of these bundles produces an increase of assertiveness in the subtitle. Similar considerations apply to the lexical choice of connotated and emotionally loaded adjectives and adverbs that co-occur in the formation of poignant noun and adverbial phrases.

In Table 1⁵, excerpts (1) and (2) exemplify the recurrent omission of the bundles 'sort of' and 'kind of' in the subtitles, as is also the case in (3). However, there are rare cases of direct translation, as in (4). In (5) and (6), both frequently occurring verbs 'mean' and 'think' are omitted as in the majority of cases, with a few notable exceptions, as reported in excerpt (7) where the personal tone remains explicit in the subtitle. Other scattered attempts at direct translations are found in the cases of the interpretative verbs 'seem', 'suppose' and 'wonder', respectively in (8), (9), and (10). The indefinite 'something' finds explicitation in (5) as 'un certo talento', while 'perhaps something' is omitted in the sentence reformulation in (10). The line acquires a higher degree of formality also because of the omission of the personal pronouns, as we will see later.

⁵ The tables present in the left column a progressive number indicating the example, in the middle column the source language (SL), and in the right column, the subtitle, the back translation and the subtitling strategy identified. The symbol (Ø) indicates omission of a word or a sentence.

(1)	but behind this sort of formality	ma dietro la \emptyset formalità [<i>but behind the formality</i>]
(2)	and the sense of a kind of emotional life	e il senso di \emptyset vita emotiva [<i>and the sense of emotional life</i>]
(3)	In a way he was in a unique position	\emptyset Era in una posizione unica, [<i>he was in a unique position</i>]
(4)	as a sort of language.	Come una specie di lingua. (direct translation)
(5)	I mean , he's got something	\emptyset Ha un certo talento , [<i>he has a certain talent (explicitation)</i>]
(6)	[...] with, I think , a greater simplicity	[...] con \emptyset una più grande semplicità. [<i>with a greater simplicity</i>]
(7)	I think he'd have enjoyed that,	Penso che a lui sarebbe piaciuta (direct translation)
(8)	he seems distant from the crown.	Sembra prenderne le distanze [<i>he seems to keep his distance from it</i> (reformulation)]
(9)	I suppose that	Immagino che (direct translation)
(10)	I wondered if the bandage is perhaps something you put on your head	Chissà se la fascia andava messa sulla testa [<i>who knows if the bandage was to be put on the head</i> (condensation/reformulation)]

Table 1

The informality of the commentary is also signalled by the use of general and colloquial verbs, i.e., to be, to go, to think, etc., whereas, the subtitle is usually more explicit increasing the level of formality, as shown in excerpts (11) and (12).

(11)	[...] is in the letters	provviene dalle lettere [<i>comes from the letters (specification)</i>]
(12)	When... thinking about this project,	\emptyset Elaborando questo progetto, [<i>Elaborating this project (specification)</i>]

Table 2

As for lexical combination, frequent occurrences of noun phrases and adverbial phrases express carefully chosen and dense collocations that convey the speaker's intention of transmitting personal enthusiasm and engaging the viewer. These chunks tend to be retained in most cases. In (13), the choice of a near-synonym produces a toning down of meaning. The direct translation of 'redeeming gaze', in (14), neutralizes the direct address to the viewer because of the omission of the first person plural pronoun. The SL is particularly rich in adverbial phrases that are usually maintained in the subtitles through direct translation as in (15) and (16), in spite of their length. This may be interpreted as an intentional choice aimed, on the one hand, at avoiding simplification, reproducing semantically loaded words and, on the other hand, at showing reliability (cfr. Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007: 56), translating words in the subtitle that are morphologically and phonologically similar in the two languages (Table 3).

At a syntactical level, the use of the personal pronouns 'you' and 'we' and of modality establishes an informal and direct tone that is rendered more formally in the subtitles through the choice of impersonal structures, depriving the TL of a specific connotative

(13)	with a kind of piercing intelligence .	e con una Ø profonda intelligenza / [<i>and with a profound intelligence (generalization)</i>]
(14)	[...] that somehow redeeming gaze at us of the artist	quasi un sguardo di redenzione Ø dell'artista, [<i>almost a redeeming gaze of the artist</i>]
(15)	I mean, some of the portraits in this exhibition are simply overwhelming	Ø Alcuni ritratti di questa mostra sono semplicemente sconvolgenti . (direct translation)
(16)	and that's incredibly exciting	ed è qualcosa di incredibilmente emozionante . (direct translation)

Table 3

element. In (17), the specification of 'spectator', translating the personal pronoun 'you', and the omission of 'we' increase the impersonal tone in the subtitle; in (18), the switch from a direct to an impersonal grammar structure generates the same effect. The omission of modality produces a shift towards a more formal subtitle in excerpts (19) and (20) and the latter example also presents condensation and omission of the generic 'those things like'.

(17)	there is a man looking at you and we all think	c'è un uomo che fissa lo spettatore e Ø tutti pensano [<i>there is a man who is staring at the spectator and everyone thinks (specification)</i>]
(18)	you are in touch with the artist himself as you can be in no other way,	Si è in contatto con l'artista stesso. Non potrebbe essere altrimenti, [<i>There is contact with the artist himself. It could not be otherwise (condensation)</i>]
(19)	and you might think	e fa pensare [<i>it makes one think (condensation)</i>]
(20)	You can see he strips his portraits of all those things like attributes	Si vede che elimina dai ritratti tutti Ø gli attributti, [<i>It is visible that he eliminates from the portraits all the attributes (condensation)</i>]

Table 4

The use of direct questions and answers is another rhetorical strategy expressing interpersonal reference and a direct address to the viewer. In excerpt (21), the explicit reference of the utterance becomes an indirect question, whereas in (22) the syntactical structure is maintained in the subtitles.

(21)	And one wonders, did he paint it for himself? For his own satisfaction?	Ci si chiede quindi se l'abbia dipinto per sé, per la sua soddisfazione, [<i>One wonders if he painted it for himself, for his own satisfaction (condensation/reformulation)</i>]
(22)	How did he manage to do this painting?	Com'è riuscito a fare questo quadro? (direct translation)

Table 5

The expression of intentionality through informality is also achieved with the use of rhetorical devices conveying "additional intended meaning" (Hatim and Mason 1997: 69), as in the case of lexical repetition and figures of speech, i.e. metaphors, similes and hyperboles. Besides being a recurrent feature of spoken discourse, frequent repetition of lexical items, e.g. adjectives, verbs, adverbs, is also an important feature that has

come to the fore in the analysis, as it transmits a sense of spontaneous and progressive construction of thinking rather than a mere report of pre-packed theories. Subtitles generally avoid repetition of the same words, either through omission, as in excerpts (23) to (25), or by substitution with near-synonyms, interrupting in a way the smooth language flow of the SL, as in (26). However, the closing commentary of the documentary shows an interesting inversion of the trend, as shown in (27) and (28), where the subtitle maintains lexical repetition and redundancy, perhaps as a strategy to increase the emotional tone of the epilogue.

(23)	She was also very courageous, quite difficult quite cheeky, quite eccentric.	Era \emptyset molto coraggiosa, piuttosto difficile, \emptyset sfacciata ed \emptyset eccentrica [<i>She was very courageous, quite difficult, cheeky and eccentric.</i>]
(24)	in her very very elegant neoclassical dress	nel \emptyset \emptyset suo elegante vestito neoclassico [<i>in her elegant neoclassical dress</i>]
(25)	because he paints nature, he paints what is in front of him	perché dipinge la natura, \emptyset ciò che si trova davanti a lui [<i>because he paints nature, what is in front of him</i>]
(26)	[...] he rethinks it, he rethinks his approach, he rethinks of how to make a sitter sit ,	[...] lo riconcepisce . Ripensa il suo approccio, ripensa a come far posare il soggetto, [<i>he reconceives it. He rethinks his approach, he rethinks... (reformulation)</i>]
(27)	he is interested in everything. He is interested in antiquity, he is interested in education, he is interested in politics,	Gli interessa tutto. Gli interessa l'antichità, \emptyset l'istruzione, Gli interessa la politica (direct translation)
(28)	he is a big big figure	È una figura molto, molto grande. (direct translation)

Table 6

Ultimately, art commentaries benefit from and rely on the communicative force and frequent occurrence of figurative language, mainly retained in the subtitles through direct translation or reformulation of culturally connotated expressions in the TL. In excerpts (29) and (30), the imaginative force conveyed by the metaphor and the simile is transferred to the subtitles which also retain the sense of tentative interpretation in translating the words 'perhaps' and 'almost'. The hyperbole in (31) is maintained in the subtitle. The frequent use of idiomaticity in the SL is often translated with a parallel idiom in the TL as in excerpt (32), or reformulated as in (33) (see Table 7).

The selection of excerpts illustrated and the observations they triggered are part of a preliminary investigation that would benefit from further quantitative analysis. Many of the comments on the features of English for Art Purposes in the genre of the art commentary could also apply to the description of the characteristics of spoken genres in EAP. However, the main quality that comes to the fore in the former is the interpersonal and collaborative modality and the constant shift between description of formal elements and tentative interpretation expressed through an informal tenor.

(29)	[the Duchess of Alba] she is a muse of music and perhaps poetry, floating almost on clouds	Lei è una musa della musica, forse della poesia che sembra galleggiare tra le nuvole (direct translation)
(30)	It's almost like a laboratory.	È una specie di laboratorio. (direct translation)
(31)	it's a miracle of dressmaking	è un miracolo di fattura, (direct translation)
(32)	the students made fun of him	gli studenti lo prendevano in giro [the students took him around (translation/reformulation)]
(33)	He was a real sweet tooth	Era appassionato di dolci. [he was fond of sweets (reformulation)]

Table 7

7. Concluding remarks

In *Goya*, the art historian Juliette Wilson-Bareau speaks of an artist's portraits as a record of a "spiritual and emotional conversation" with the person watching them. The language of the art critics verbalizes this emotional component in a non-judgemental interpretation and description of the artworks.

Far from the obscurity and hostility of Artspeak and IAE, English for Art Purposes, both in written and in spoken texts, strives to capture the readers'/viewers' imagination by drawing them into a persuasive and engaging conversation, although descriptions can become, at times, technical and meticulous endeavours.

In the art commentary, the connotative charge of lexical items and figurative language transmit the communicative purpose of emotionally connecting the viewer through an accessible yet aesthetically pleasing and smooth language. Moreover, the informality and directness of tenor is essential to this purpose and it is achieved through the use of syntactical constructions and expressions of vagueness, lack of definition, and repetitions fulfilling the interpersonal function of including the viewer in the process of meaning reconstruction.

In subtitling, the transfer of this aesthetic dimension is achieved at a lexical level mainly through the choice of direct translation or reformulation, aimed at transferring the pragmatic meaning. Particularly in the case of noun and adverbial phrases, the subtitler is not over-concerned with excessive length, often choosing to use more rather than fewer words, also in consideration of the slow pace of the original lines. Therefore, the subtitles maintain a rich semantic texture. On the other hand, the informal and explicit tenor of the utterances sees a consistent shift towards formality due to the frequent omission of markers of uncertainty and repetition, and the use of personal pronouns and markers of modality, as is frequently the case when switching from spoken language to written subtitles. As for the specific genre of the art commentary, this translation shift can affect the perception of the communicative purpose of the SL and alter the audience response. The identification of unusual subtitling choices that show a specific concern towards these markers of informality, although scattered, comes as a surprising deviation from the norm. Moreover, this prepares the ground for further research on subtitling choices that attempt to escape from habitual compliance to features of written language, looking at new practices that tend to enhance orality without affecting readability. In particular, for subtitling of English for Art Purposes, further research should move to-

wards the implementation of a comparative investigation of semantic and syntactical features in the TL and the creation of a larger corpus for quantitative analysis.

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