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# ESP

## Across Cultures



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# ESP Across Cultures

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*ESP Across Cultures* is a double blind peer reviewed international journal that publishes theoretical, descriptive and applied studies on varieties of English pertaining to a wide range of specialized fields of knowledge, such as agriculture, art and humanities, commerce, economics, education and vocational training, environmental studies, finance, information technology, law, media studies, medicine, politics, religion, science, the social sciences, sports, technology and engineering, tourism, and transport. The journal addresses a readership composed of academics, professionals, and students interested in English for special purposes particularly from a cross-cultural perspective. The aim of the journal is to bring together scholars, practitioners, and young researchers working in different specialized language domains and in different disciplines with a view to developing an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to the study of ESP.

*ESP Across Cultures* is indexed in *Scopus* and covered in *Linguistics & Language Behaviour Abstracts*, *MLA International Bibliography*, *Translation Studies Abstracts* and *Bibliography of Translation Studies*.

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# Foreword

Welcome to volume 17 of *ESP Across Cultures*, the seventh to be published in on-line format, and the second to be published in the era of Covid-19. As with the previous issue, the fact that the journal is published online has meant that it could be published without major technical problems. In human terms, of course, the impact of the global pandemic has provoked endless stress, and this has translated into allowing for slightly extended deadlines on all sides. One aspect that has remained unchanged since the journal began in 2004 has been the policy of double-blind peer reviewing, so only some of the papers submitted are considered worthy of publication.

There are seven papers in the current issue, all focusing on particular aspects of English for Specific Purposes from a cross-cultural perspective.

Lucia Abbamonte is the author of the first paper with the intriguing title ‘Black stories matter – Liverpool International Slavery Museum and multimodal representations of a controversial heritage’. Using a multimodal discourse analysis perspective, Lucia Abbamonte investigates how the International Slavery Museum (ISM) tries to engage visitors “through the synergy of (virtual) artefacts, verbal narratives of slavery, visuals and music that dynamically shape the contemporary semantics of the new emerging racial literacies, and attempt to promote change at societal level.” The author shows how, rather than underlining the theme of “black victimhood”, the museum focuses on the resilience, resistance and rebellion of those who were enslaved, “creating new transformative meanings by re-semiotizing loci, words, and tools of past iniquity into instruments of education and progress.”

In her paper Barbara Cappuzzo investigates the linguistic characteristics of a corpus of medical English texts included in *The Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations*, and compares it to the corresponding corpus of Italian translations. Netter’s texts have been reference tools for generations of medical specialists. Barbara Cappuzzo focuses on the topics of anatomy, physiology, traumatology – including sports-related injuries – and metabolic disorders of the musculoskeletal system, as she teaches English for Medical Purposes to Italian sports sciences undergraduates. She concludes that the Italian translations investigated “offer an example of the extent to which specialized translation can be a process of recontextualization where several adjustments are made, including omissions, additions, paraphrases, clarifications, reformulations, as well as variations that are carried out according to the discourse goals to be accomplished” in the target language.

In ‘A cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analysis of *Freedom Writers*: dubbing emotional upheavals from US English(es) into Italian’, Paola Leotta examines how the screenplay of this film – written and directed by Richard La Gravenese about a young teacher thrown into a class of at-risk students during the Los Angeles Riots of 1992 – is dubbed in Italian. Analysing a series of extracts taken from the film, the author observes that the students speak a socially marked variety of US English, an idiolect which includes “features denoting in-group identity, often combined with low social status, such as slang words (generally associated with an urban street culture), cursing and taboo words”. The Italian dubbed version, on the other

hand, “is a more standardized and socially flattened text, characterized by more neutral colloquial markers”.

Fabiola Notari states that the aim of her paper ‘Blended learning scenarios for developing students’ pragmatic competence in court interpreting’ is “to propose a new didactic approach to provide adequate preliminary training for future consecutive court interpreters from English into Italian and vice-versa”. The author argues for the need for a flexible syllabus to enhance students’ understanding of the spoken language of the law by creating ‘blended learning scenarios’ where “the analysis of popular legal movies can pave the way for more challenging activities aimed at identifying – in real-life trials – translation equivalents and pragmatic patterns from a cross-cultural perspective, with the ultimate goal of fostering students’ procedural knowledge”. The study of the language of the law thus becomes more stimulating by using ‘popular’ audio-visual materials.

Monica Randaccio’s paper focuses on museum audio description (AD) which, she observes, has “started to move from being a service for the visually impaired to become a paradigm in Translation Studies”. Beginning with an illustration of the main features of museum AD, the author analyses the theoretical background explaining how interpretation has become a major issue of museum AD and how this issue of interpretation “must be gauged against the wider backdrop of museums as multimodal and multi-sensory spaces”. She then shows how “cohesion, coherence and the discourse-based notions of microstructures and macrostructures are relevant for a comparison between an early un-interpretative example of museum AD and its later interpretative version” of Ben Nicholson’s artwork ‘Ramparts’ (1968).

Annalisa Sandrelli’s contribution, ‘A corpus-based study of deontic modality in English Eurolect’, starts from the premise that English has become the main drafting language of the European Union since the 2004 round of enlargement, thus creating an ‘English idiolect’ with its own specific features. Her study aims at verifying whether obligation, prohibition and permission modals and semi-modals are used differently in the EU’s enacting terms of directives with respect to UK national transposition measures and UK domestic laws. The author observes “the high frequency of the obligation modal *shall*, the prohibition modal *shall not* and the permission modal *need not*” in the EU-based corpus, with frequencies much higher than in the other two UK-based corpora. She concludes that “modality usage patterns in Eurolect seem to differ considerably from those found in the domestic variety of legislative English in the UK”.

In the final paper in this volume, Alice Spencer describes the use of an Open Badge certification for an ESP course. After explaining that Open Badges are online records of achievement documenting “field-specific, soft and technical skills” and highlighting their “uniquely ‘glocal’ nature, inasmuch as they are internationally recognized awards tailored by local providers in response to local demands”, the author describes in detail the Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services introduced by the Turin University Language Centre in 2019. She concludes that by providing detailed information on the training experience undertaken, Open Badges are potentially useful for recruitment purposes. In a context in which the digitalization of teaching and learning resources is leading to an increased globalization in education, the author

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argues that the use of Open Badges in ESP shows how “digital credentials can be used to acknowledge and promote local academic and professional expertise within an international framework”.

I hope you will enjoy the current issue of this journal, and please feel free to delve into any of the past issues, all available online.

Christopher Williams  
(Chief Editor)



# BLACK STORIES MATTER. LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL SLAVERY MUSEUM AND MULTIMODAL REPRESENTATIONS OF A CONTROVERSIAL HERITAGE

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## Abstract

In the light of the relatively recent efforts and teaching programmes to reshape the study of history both from a more comprehensive perspective and through a non-white lens, the opening of Liverpool's International Slavery Museum (ISM) in 2007 represented a milestone. Both the ISM in the UK and the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), which opened in Washington, DC, in 2016, foregrounded a new way of representing the challenging legacy of slavery. Yet, neither the imperialist/colonialist perspective, with its dire aspects, nor the emphasis on the enslaved people as victims to be pitied and redressed, are prioritized; the focus is rather on their individual identities as resourceful and resilient human beings and on their past and recent achievements. Such complex and multifaceted messages are conveyed through a plurality of artefacts and interactive exhibitions and videos which, especially in the case of the NMAAHC, unfold in an iconic architectural structure. One major representational objective is to unveil longstanding biases and omissions in the narration of history as it is traditionally organized in the school curricula. From a multimodal discourse analysis perspective, the present study investigates how the ISM's poly-social-media communication modes manage to engage visitors, through the synergy of (virtual) artefacts, verbal narratives of slavery, visuals and music that dynamically shape the contemporary semantics of the new emerging racial literacies, and attempt to promote change at societal level.

*I began to be bugged by the teaching of American history, because it seemed that history had been taught without cognizance of my presence.*  
James Baldwin (1963)

## 1. Introduction and aims

In such terms did the author James Baldwin reflect on the inadequacies and lacunae of his education (WGBH 1963), conveying the need for a fairer representation of 'Negro' history in relation to the 'American Promise'. Before Baldwin, Carter G. Woodson<sup>1</sup> had

<sup>1</sup> Carter G. Woodson was the second African American to earn a PhD in history from Harvard, in 1912, after W.E.B. DuBois, who was a proponent of Pan-Africanism and took part in the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

experienced the same frustration at how black people were underrepresented in US history. In 1915, Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History) to encompass the accomplishments of African Americans, and their efforts led to today's national Black History Month (which has occurred each February since 1976). This has been an increasingly successful educational initiative. During the recent protests and riots about the black deaths caused by police shootings in the US, also fuelled by the new media and mainly led by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, the demand for black history courses has constantly risen. To give one example, after the shooting of the African American student Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, (August 9, 2014) and the ensuing prolonged riots that devastated the city, educational, cultural and artistic projects and syllabi were developed there (Rogers 2016; Swartout Klein 2015) to promote hope and liberation through transformative socio-educational action. Interestingly, in that 'teachable moment', the role of critical discourse analysis in bringing about change through the efforts to build a comprehensive racial multimodal literacy was recognized as being central to it (Abbamonte 2018).

The main aim of Black History Month<sup>2</sup>, both in the US and the UK, is to reshape the study of history both from a more comprehensive perspective and through a non-white lens. If black people enter the school curriculum only through their enslavement, the history of both their previous achievements and of their contributions to US democracy is left out. Furthermore, an almost exclusive focus on major figures such as Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, or Barack Obama is not exhaustive, whereas a notion to be foregrounded is that black history is also American history and European history, and should not be confined to one month of study in the curriculum. The murder of George Floyd in the US on 25 May 2020, with the prolonged ensuing protests, triggered a closer analysis among historians of the way the African diaspora is narrated. The British-Nigerian historian David Olusoga has pointed out how British and European cultural-educational institutions still describe the history of slavery from the perspective of the history of colonialism and imperialism, laying great emphasis on British abolitionism, rather than from the perspective of black history. Black History Month notwithstanding, longstanding biases and omissions in the general curriculum have apparently not been deconstructed<sup>3</sup>.

A strong expression of awareness of this complex heritage was represented by the opening of Liverpool's International Slavery Museum (ISM) on August 23, 2007 – the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade (though not of slavery itself) and the date of the annual Slavery Remembrance Day. The ISM, which has attracted millions of visitors, encompasses aspects of both historical slavery, with its enduring impact, and contemporary forms of slavery as well as ongoing awareness-raising initiatives, such as the travelling *Journey to Freedom* multimedia exhibition. The ISM location in Albert Dock (Liverpool), at the centre of a World Heritage site near the dry docks where

<sup>2</sup> This usually occurs in February in the United States and Canada and October in Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The initiative is now spreading to other countries, e.g. Italy.

<sup>3</sup> David Olusoga in Conversation: Black History Matters. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDO1bdT47Rc&ab\\_channel=TheBritishLibrary](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDO1bdT47Rc&ab_channel=TheBritishLibrary).

18<sup>th</sup>-century slave trading ships were accoutred, has a tangible iconic value<sup>4</sup>. Whilst acknowledging the city's role in the transatlantic slave trade – much of Liverpool's maritime history was built on it – the ISM aims at challenging such legacies dynamically through engaging events and campaigns that utilize evocative language, such as 'Ink and Blood: Stories of Abolition', or 'We Are Setting the Truth Free'<sup>5</sup>, reinforced by and reinforcing visual representations.

On the other side of the Atlantic, a similar need for representation, acknowledgement and visibility was perhaps the most important motivation for the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) project, which finally opened on September 24, 2016 on the National Mall in Washington, DC, after decades of struggles. A priority for the NMAAHC is to represent the enslaved Africans not only as victims but also as resourceful human beings through the exhibition of artefacts and the unfolding of various kinds of narratives in a symbolically charged architectural structure, arranged in narrative form. To give just one clear example, we can consider the iconicity of the NMAAHC's façade, since it features the 'Corona,' a three-tiered inverted pyramid shape inspired by the Yoruban Caryatid, which the US representative John Lewis defined as "the story of our lives wrapped in a beautiful golden crown of grace." Both the NMAAHC (which limitations of space do not allow me to describe in this study) and the ISM are aiming to rescue generations of black people from anonymity by representing not only the inhumaneness of slavery, but also how ingenious and resilient the people were who endured it through a variety of interactive exhibitions showing how optimism, hope and spirituality are conveyed in African culture.

A challenging, overarching research question is the extent to which non-verbal iconicity may constitute new and highly productive semantics. This study investigates the strong symbolical aspects and features of ISM's polymedia communication modes, gauging the iconic significance of its galleries and the ways in which they create narrative constructions. More specifically, the study explores how historical, (ideo)logical meanings are developed through the positioning of artefacts within a synergy of narratives, visuals and music, and how all this dynamically interacts with verbally expressed semantics. Innovative ways to engage visitors range from apps, social media and 3D object exploration to recordings and videos, with a focus on the importance of spreading both oral histories/stories of slavery and trauma and empathic, affectual reactions. Through the lens of MDA, and with insights from media and narratology studies, aspects of this virtually interactive and productive polymedia environment will be investigated, and the entailed sociocognitive implications discussed.

## 2. Methodology

Increasingly, multimodality shapes everyday communication practices, enhanced by the multiplicity of resources of the contemporary mediascape, with its plurality of

<sup>4</sup> The ISM occupies the third floor and part of the basement of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. See <https://www.visitliverpool.com/things-to-do/international-slavery-museum-p138901>.

<sup>5</sup> By dismissing redemptive narratives of Atlantic slavery and the national myth of British philanthropy and white abolitionist efforts, the curators of ISM are 'setting the truth free', arguing in favour of African resistance (Bernier and Newman 2013: 7).

channels, embedded media and their associated affordances, and the emergence of ‘supermedia’ (e.g. a mobile phone showing a movie, etc.), with the (dubious) effect of multiplying meanings. This also entails notions of multi-/cross-mediality and amplifies the dimension of what Madianou and Miller (2012) define as a polymedia environment, where users and producers (or ‘prosumers’) can choose their favourite medium according to the communicative situation they are enacting.

In line with previous analyses of museums from socio-semiotic, discursive, cultural and cognitive perspectives (Bezemer *et al.* 2012; Stenglin 2009; Hofinger and Ventola 2004; Pang Kah Meng 2004) – all relying on the resources of multimodality – a broad multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) approach was adopted for the present investigation.

In addition to the specific literature on multimodal analyses (see, among others, Bateman 2014; Bateman and Wildfeuer 2014; Kress 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 2006; van Leeuwen 2008, 2013), some of Barthes’ (1957: 110) seminal notions were also considered for investigating aspects and features of ISM’s communication modes:

Pictures become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful: like writing, they call for a lexis. We shall therefore take language, discourse, speech, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual: a photograph will be a kind of speech for us in the same way as a newspaper article; even objects will become speech, if they mean something.

In 1957, Barthes (1957, 1973) anticipated the need for a lexis of visuals. Also, in relation to his analysis of modern myths, he scrutinized the propensity of political power to shape knowledge by ‘naturalizing’ cultural-ideological myths out of purposefully shaped social value systems, such as the myth of French imperialism and of the white man’s superiority, both at visual and verbal levels. Such and similar myths can be unveiled/denaturalized through the tools of multimodal (critical) discourse analysis, and these museums are meaningful cases in point.

Furthermore, a major challenge in the MDA research domain is investigating how non-verbal means interact with language and language-in-context, thus multiplying meaning. In developing new frameworks for multimodal analyses, Liu and O’Halloran (2009) and O’Halloran (2008, 2011), taking trajectories from both SFL and Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) studies (i.e. their grammar of visual design), showed how cohesive image-text relationships can be by integrating different modes rather than simply linking them, i.e. foregrounding the intersemiotic texture (ITx) as the crucial property of coherent multimodal texts. Concisely, we can say that a wide range of interpretive tools and notions is now available to associate the visual and other non-verbal features with lexico-grammatical choices, including:

- Information Value – consistent with the traditional Given-New dynamics of verbal information
- Salience and Framing – mirroring the Theme-Rheme dynamics in verbal language
- Intersemiotic/intrasemiotic repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and
- Meronymy and collocation across visual and verbal choices.

Indeed, verbal resources are only one of the many semiotic elements at stake in the communicative entities (multimodal texts or artefacts, ads, videos, architectures, etc.) that are the typical objects of MDA studies, which, however, mainly consist of verbal comments and analyses. Thus, in the attempt to account for both linguistic and non-linguistic factors through the medium of verbal writing, a number of images or screenshots from videos are included in MDA studies, though there are some inevitable losses in the descriptions of the communicative efficacy of other modes (auditory, tactile, olfactory, movement, rhythm). Seemingly, we still need to enhance our metalanguage (topic-specific categories, following topic selection, tailored tools, suitable definitions, etc.) for a comprehensive approach to these multi-layered, multi-texture communicative entities.

Overall, depending on the textual/discourse genres or artefacts under investigation, other (or additional) analytical resources can be utilized to render the identity and tonality of the multimodal entities under analysis and their (cultural-ideological) messages/meanings. In considering research methods for multimodality, Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hippala (2017: 40), given the interdisciplinary nature of this research domain, favour flexibility:

Most methods can be used for a variety of different kinds of research questions and so the selection of methods may be made rather flexibly. It is often the case that several distinct methods can be usefully applied to a single research question, and so particular approaches can in fact benefit by considering their objects of analyses from several different methodological perspectives. [...] Our own position on this matter is clear enough: methods should be seen as tools for addressing particular kinds of research questions and therefore be deployed as such, that is, in the service of research questions and not because of a particular disciplinary preference.

Depending on the object and purposes of the investigations, some tailoring of the available analytical resources can make the analyses more specific, especially when so complex an entity as a museum with strong ideological purposes is under observation. Indeed, comprehending the dynamics of history museums, which are often defined as mediums of spatial storytelling (Lu 2017)<sup>6</sup>, or, more colloquially, as storytelling machines, provides some insight in this field. Predictably, the works of classical, structuralist narratologists (Roland Barthes, Vladimir Propp, Algirdas J. Greimas, Gérard Genette, Tzvetan Todorov, etc.) now need to be implemented with the new notions of postclassical narratology, i.e. transmedial narratology and cognitive narratology (Herman 2012, 2013)<sup>7</sup>. More specifically for this study, as Bateman *et al.* summarize (2017: 314), “narrative, as a fundamental human capacity for making sense of the world, is not essentially tied to language, [...] similarly, visual and multimodal artefacts are endowed with the ability to tell stories without any or with only a little involvement of

<sup>6</sup> “Museums commonly adopt storytelling in their interpretive framework by use of audiovisual techniques to convey the meanings contained within artefacts. In addition to audiovisual mediation, this study demonstrates the idea that museum architecture itself can also be regarded as a medium of spatial storytelling, specifically of historical time, which is manifested spatially and cognitively for museum visitors” (Lu 2017: 442).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, in his *Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind* (2013), Herman advanced two research questions: how do people make sense of stories across a variety of media and genres, and how are stories used to make sense of the world? However, dealing with such issues lies outside the scope of this study.

verbal text”. As we shall see in the data sections, narratives can require the active engagement of the visitors at a variety of levels as viewers, readers, listeners, and tellers.

Finally, the overarching interpretive dimension for museums is *re-semiotization*, i.e. the typical “process of almost all complex semiotic productions, from buildings to operas, from museum installations to films” (Bateman *et al.* 2017: 231). Indeed, exhibiting/rebuilding an artefact such as a slave log cabin or shackles for children means re-semiotizing artefactual proofs into pedagogical instruments.

### 3. Observational data<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.1. *The International Slavery Museum – the context*

The mission of the ISM is explicitly proactive: enslavement in its various forms cannot be situated in the past, nor is the interest for slavery circumscribed to black culture and people, and it is necessary that we all remember/learn and act, including young people. Through collections, archives, exhibitions, research and campaigning, the public is engaged with contemporary human rights issues at the (inter)national level. As David Fleming, the Director of National Museums Liverpool, declared during his speech at the opening ceremony (August 23, 2007), the ISM was not a neutral space but a place of commitment, controversy and campaigning. Indeed, by the 1780s, Liverpool had become the European capital of the transatlantic slave trade, and consequently one of Britain’s wealthiest cities. Hence the need for the ISM to renounce ‘neutrality’ in favour of socio-political engagement. As Dr Richard Benjamin (2011), Head of the ISM, stated,

a recurring theme was that the museum had to carefully balance the horror and often visceral presentation of transatlantic slavery against a backdrop of resistance and indeed African and Black achievement<sup>9</sup>. [...Thus, the] Black Achievers Wall, encompassing achievement across the arts, sciences and sporting world [...has avoided] associating African and Black history with transatlantic slavery solely, or indeed with a solely negative history. The ISM has a leading role to play in the fight to stop the growth of racism [...with its] dangerous legacy [... by shaping] the way that museum visitors interact with the entire museum experience [...] collecting impressions and experiences that will “make sense” later in conjunction with other experiences and activities in their lives.

A dangerous legacy, indeed. Over the centuries (from 1500 to about 1865), Liverpool ships carried about 1.5 million enslaved Africans across to the Caribbean and North America, returning to Europe with sugar, cotton, coffee and tobacco. Through this dire trade triangle, involving three continents, Liverpool became wealthy. The history of slavery is not free from some paradoxes, but an examination of such paradoxes lies beyond the scope of this study<sup>10</sup>. To show the worthiness of dissenting attitudes, space

<sup>8</sup> In our research domain, there is an increasing tendency to adopt the language of ‘hard sciences’. Hence, it could be useful to specify that our data are observational, rather than experimental, since in our studies and research we have no control over the variables, i.e. we collect data and make inferences, but we do not change the independent variable to check how this affects the dependent variable unless, for example, we do an experiment in second language acquisition using a control group.

<sup>9</sup> Apparently, this required a degree of censorship.

<sup>10</sup> Understandably, the thorny issue of the involvement of African elites in the enslavement process

is given in the ISM's exhibitions to both the abolitionist movement (led by Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce) and the resistance and rebellions of the enslaved Africans. Yet their revolts were frequently doomed by the unequal power balance and led to ferocious punishments, as the logbooks of slave ships reported.

### 3.2. *Discourse and attitudinal positioning*

Perhaps the most effective and concise illustration of the need for a slavery museum in Liverpool is conveyed through the speech delivered by Fleming to celebrate the opening of the ISM on August 22, 2007. His address attributes an intersubjective value to the event and the meanings of the museum by reference both to emotional responses and to culturally-determined value systems. The following excerpt is analysed following the Appraisal framework (White 2015) to evaluate Fleming's utterances in more detail. These are categorized according to the notions in the legend below (with some inevitable overlapping)<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Appraisal framework**

##### ATTITUDE

- **Affect** (positive<sup>+</sup> negative<sup>-</sup>)
- **Judgement** <sup>+</sup>-
- **Appreciation** <sup>+</sup>-

The day will come when it is impossible to imagine<sup>-</sup> a ***pleasant and articulate Black Liverpool teenager***<sup>+</sup> being excluded from his school<sup>-</sup> for resisting racial hostility and physical attacks<sup>-</sup> from his white schoolmates.

But that day *has not yet come*<sup>-</sup>.

The day will come when it is impossible to imagine<sup>-</sup> an African American woman, here to give a lecture on behalf of the ISM and accompanied by her young son on the streets of Liverpool, being called "nigger"<sup>-</sup> by a young white boy.

**Sadly**<sup>-</sup>, that day has not yet come.

The day will come when it is impossible to imagine<sup>-</sup> that a young man should be murdered by white thugs<sup>-</sup> on the streets of Liverpool simply because he was black.

**Tragically**<sup>-</sup>, that day has not yet come, neither in Liverpool, nor in any other British city.

was not commented on, though it is represented (but not foregrounded) in the museum (e.g. in the Dav- enport papers in the Archives Centre's collections, which include letters from slave traders with details of their negotiations with African tribes). Furthermore, the 1830 US census included 3775 free blacks who owned 12,740 slaves (Newman 2013). This lacunae are probably due to the possibly questionable responses to this side of the history that could improperly use such involvement and actions to lessen the moral burden of the European system of transatlantic slavery. Yet, perversely, these partial omissions project a monolithic image of the African people as simply the passive victims of Europeans.

<sup>11</sup> The description of the resources for evaluation in English in the AF is rich and multi-layered, as can be appreciated by looking at the synoptic contents of the 'framed version' at <https://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/appraisaloutline/framed/frame.htm>. It is feasible to utilize more resources for textual analysis at the same time by highlighting the different evaluative and discursive features cohesively interacting within the same text. Yet, for readability's sake, when annotating a text, it is expedient to select the more functional set of descriptors, which in this case was Attitude, with its sub-systems Judgement, Appreciation and Affect. Some overlapping, e.g. between positive Affect and positive Appreciation, may occur. Furthermore, annotation is clearer when it is selective; in other words, if every noticeable word is highlighted, the effect can be confusing.

And it is because that day has not yet come that **the ISM is needed**<sup>\*</sup>. It is needed, yes, *to help illuminate*<sup>\*</sup> one of the darker, more shameful and neglected areas in our history<sup>\*</sup>, an era in which this city played a pivotal role.

As well as this, it is needed because the consequences of that era are all around us<sup>-</sup> in the shape of a rich and vibrant multi-national, multi-racial Atlantic world, but also **in inequality of opportunity, racial prejudice, ignorance, intolerance and hatred**. And these **evils will not be overcome through denial**<sup>-</sup> or through wishful thinking. They have to be tackled head on, and the most potent *weapon at our disposal is education*<sup>+</sup>; the essence of museums, and the *essence of the International Slavery Museum*<sup>+</sup> (Fleming 2007).

The rhetoric of this address is simple and direct, based on repetition (“the day will come”) and crescendos (e.g. “sadly”, “tragically”, “evil”). Fleming’s dominantly negative judgement of the state of things entails notions of social sanctions for the dire consequences of the legacy of the slave trade, and he intends to weaponize the educational potential of the ISM to fight such ‘shameful’ conditions.

### 3.3. *The historical modulation of the space and multimodality*

In the ISM, slavery is *re-semiotized* as teachable history and represented through the artefacts and videos deployed in its galleries, encompassing not only historical transatlantic slavery and chattel but also contemporary forms of slavery. Its official website provides free access to virtual tours of the galleries, which are also available on YouTube<sup>12</sup>, and shows the available multimodal resources (images, billboards, paintings, dioramas, videos, audios, written texts, spaces for children’s activities, etc.). The public has some opportunities to interact with the artefacts and archives in the galleries. Although the ISM aims to engage the whole community in its proactive dimension, special attention and resources are dedicated to young people. In 2020, virtual classroom workshops and resources were made available online, using Microsoft Teams as a delivery platform. Coordination between teachers and museum experts is required, so as to provide pupils with useful information and crafts templates before the workshops, where they are engaged in activities based on real artefacts. The visual dimension and multimodality, rather than multimediality (only the use of Microsoft Team is allowed), play a central role in these teaching activities that are also intended to promote team work among pupils (e.g. role play, crafting, drawing, quizzes, discussions and decoding puzzles). The sociocognitive dimension of such ‘make-them-see/do’ initiatives and activities is apparent.

Here follows a concise description of the galleries and main areas, with some details regarding their multimodal resources<sup>13</sup>:

- The Life in West Africa gallery displays West African socio-cultural achievements before the arrival of the European slave traders. It includes the replica of an Igbo family compound, pleasantly decorated with captivating lively colours, and large enough for

<sup>12</sup> See, among the others accessible via YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Mg1HxjpCHK> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Mg1HxjpCHK>.

<sup>13</sup> The dynamics of the resources can be appraised by watching the virtual tours, available on the museum’s official website and via YouTube.

small groups to enter. Thus, the narrative of a sophisticated lifestyle can unfold at a spatial level.

- The Enslavement and the Middle Passage gallery features a walk-in audio-visual display about the eight- to ten-week journey across the Atlantic (i.e. ‘the Middle Passage’), showing the atrocious living conditions on board slave ships. In the vivid, affectual description of Jessica Moody (2015: 3):

Upon entering the Enslavement and Middle Passage gallery, the visitor is met with far more raucous noise; a layering of voices from videos, and ‘The Immersion’, a creative film representation of the Middle Passage, and of course, any further noise from engaged visitors. Actors tell stories as ‘slaves’, from narratives and first-hand accounts, injecting prominent visual and audio representations of the experience of enslaved Africans into the museum space. ‘The Immersion’ dominates this gallery, in its central location (the film is projected inside a circular walled enclosure which visitors can enter on either side, but equally could avoid entering altogether) and through the noise of the film. The film itself includes blurred and fractured images of black actors, bodily fluids; blood and vomit, jarring screeching sounds which through their ambiguity could be the screams of human beings, or the scraping mechanics of the slave ship on its voyage through the Middle Passage – the horrific journey from Africa to the Americas, and the symbolic site given central significance by this video, and by museum representations of the history of transatlantic slavery more generally.

This description conveys the sense of the immersive experience and the audience’s engagement in the physical representational space of the museum with its polymedia affordances.

- The Legacy gallery features both reminders of the persistence of racism after the abolition of the slave trade and examples of the contributions of people of African descent to the societies and cultures of the Americas and Europe. The Black Achievers Wall has TV screens that play videos where academics and celebrities discuss issues of freedom and slavery.

- The Campaign Zone is a community space where current human rights campaigns can be discussed and supported. It hosts temporary exhibitions on contemporary forms of exploitation and slavery, thus defining the museum itself as a campaigning institution.

### 3.4. *Visual art and re-semiotization*

An interesting and easily graspable example of re-semiotization is the permanent ‘Challenging histories: Collecting new artworks’ exhibition<sup>14</sup>, which features works by artists such as Kimathi Donkor and Alison Welsh, who have responded to the history of transatlantic slavery by offering new perspectives on and insights into its legacy. More

<sup>14</sup>A virtual tour and videos are available at: <https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/whatson/international-slavery-museum/exhibition/challenging-histories-collecting-new-artworks#section--the-exhibition>.



**Figure 1.** Queen Elizabeth I and George Washington – revisited under non-white eyes

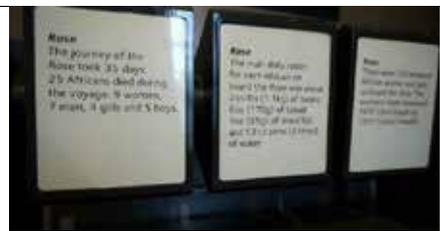
specifically, in the ‘UK Diaspora’ collection, Donkor questions the typical portrayals of historical figures such as Queen Elizabeth I or George Washington, who are typically represented as glamorous icons and dignified national heroes despite their connections with the transatlantic slave trade (figure 1). The artist challenges this shared attitude and punctures their classical images by framing their portraits with nails, adding iconic objects such as pins, chains, ropes, and money and by scratching their surfaces.

On the same representational canvases, we can see both the dignified stereotypical images of the historical characters and the iconic objects denouncing the economic advantages they drew from slavery, which visually challenge their right to be represented as national heroes. As Donkor forcefully said, “I wondered if glamorous movies about Queen Elizabeth I, or portraits of George Washington on the dollar bill, made us forget how they and others masterminded slavery? As a person of both African and Jewish heritage, I wondered what I’d think if Germany tried to put Hitler on the Euro?” (Liverpool Museums n.d.).

### *3.5. Old architecture, new messages*

The positioning of the ISM exhibits along the thematic galleries creates a historical narrative, which is not mirrored by the exterior structure of the museum. Apparently, no semiotic continuity is to be found between the architectural dimensions and the contents of the ISM in Liverpool, whereas a strong inter-semiotic connection can be found between the structure and the artefacts of the NMAACH in Washington. Below are some images to convey both this lacuna and the tonality of the ISM’s artefacts.

Information value	Screenshots of site/artefacts
<p>Its location in the Albert Dock, which harboured the slave ships, has a symbolic topological value.</p>	
<p>The framing of the ISM galleries within the traditionally British architecture of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, with its neoclassical portico suggesting the greatness of the Empire, is an (involuntary) paradox.</p>	
<p>The billboards or banners of the numerous exhibitions 're-frame' the function of the building.</p>	
<p>The replica of an Igbo family compound allows an immersive experience in the sophisticated African lifestyle.</p>	
<p>In the visual density of the museum, traditional paintings and artefacts coexist with more challenging exhibits.</p>	

<p>For example, this classical oil painting of a ship employed in the slave trade</p>	
<p>is integrated with a tridimensional diorama of its interior, displaying imprisoned black bodies and a boat carrying more of the same 'cargo'. A derogatory hyponym.</p>	
<p>Neck/wrist shackles – the salience of the real thing.</p>	
<p>Syncretically, the oil painting, diorama and shackles are displayed in the same showcase – these are metonymic props for the dire narrative of 'how to proceed' in the trade.</p>	
<p>A copy of carefully inked documents of the Port of Liverpool, listing the ships employed in the slave trade – the tidiness of evil.</p>	
<p>Significantly, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ISM in Liverpool was celebrated with the exhibition 'Ink and blood'.</p>	 <p><b>Morse</b> The journey of the <i>Morse</i> took 35 days, 25 Africans died during the voyage, 9 women, 7 men, 4 girls and 5 boys.</p> <p><b>Morse</b> The <i>Morse</i> sailed from Liverpool for each return on board the <i>Morse</i> was about 200 tons (1,800 of cargo) but 170 tons of lead, 100 tons of iron, and 7,212 pigs (1,000 of each).</p> <p><b>Morse</b> The <i>Morse</i> (1781) was the first ship to sail from Liverpool to the West Indies and back.</p>

<p>An 18<sup>th</sup>-century ivory tusk showing chained slaves – a covert protest? Complacency?</p>	
<p>A 19<sup>th</sup>-century teapot depicting an amiable British couple having tea with a young black servant in the background – an idyllic re-framing of the presence of African ‘servants’ in the UK. A reassuring hyponym.</p>	
<p>A visual representation of the European exploitation of Africa, for educational purposes.</p>	
<p>A photo of a wealthy British family in Nigeria at Christmas 1923, surrounded by semi-naked black bodies depicted with the letters of Christmas greetings – nobody too merry. A sinister meronymy.</p>	
<p>Diorama of a sugar plantation in the Caribbean – different areas, managers, and buildings are in the background. A segregated microcosm.</p>	
<p>The comprehensive, fast-evolving Black Achievers Wall – a different prism.</p>	

**Table 1.** Traditional pre-existing architecture and iconic exhibits of the ISM

The involuntary contrast between the imperialistic-looking architectural structure of the ISM, which occupies a floor of the old Merseyside Maritime Museum, and its multimedia artefacts promoting innovation and protests against lingering forms of racism and inequality has not attracted criticism. Hence, seemingly, such a contrast does not hinder the ISM's function as a space for campaigning. In the visual compactness of the museum, artefactual proofs are effectually situated in multimedia contexts and displays to better convey both the brutality of Atlantic slavery and the resilience and successes of the enslaved people and their descendants, proudly represented on the Black Achievers Wall, which constantly welcomes new achievers. The efforts of the curators of the museum to 'set the truth free' is tangible also through its collections of historical documents (mostly available through the archives). There is neither indulgence in the modern national myth of Britain as the country that launched the enlightenment and abolished slavery (Dearden 2014), nor is the role of cities such as London, Liverpool and Bristol as key ports underplayed. Such ports created wealth from slavery, thereby providing the basis for Britain's economy as a whole, e.g. the Manchester mills utilized cotton, which was produced in the US cotton plantations by enslaved people who had been transported there through the Liverpool slave trade.

Yet, in 1862, in an unexpected turn of events, during the American Civil War, Lancashire mill workers refused to spin Confederate cotton, picked by US slaves, and many of them faced starvation<sup>15</sup>.

### 3.6. *The Journey to Justice Exhibition* – black stories matter

This ongoing travelling multimedia exhibition was hosted by the ISM from October 5, 2018 to April 7, 2019, given both its common interest in the US civil rights movement, which deeply influenced UK institutions, policies and people (also inspiring subsequent women's, peace and gay liberation movements), and its shared set of values related to the need for promoting social and civic engagement in the UK. Furthermore, their affinity in style and artistic communication modes is apparent, and the ISM's official website currently displays a link to Journey to Justice (JtoJ) activities.

Launched in 2013, JtoJ moves along the dimension of political and pedagogic activism, based on the vision that everyone needs to promote/ensure social justice, starting with the UK, which is considered as a place of increasing inequality in need of active intervention. According to JtoJ's motto, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly (Martin Luther King, Jr.)" (see Journey to Justice 2019). By focusing on the inspirational personal stories of some of the less famous people involved in the US civil rights movement, JtoJ has been attempting to show how social justice campaigns can be led by local people as well, thereby connecting with local UK histories of previous campaigns for change. Indeed, the movement deals with many issues of contemporary racism and lack of opportunities/freedom by organizing local exhibitions and activities in schools and universities in many cities across the UK, utilizing a variety of resourc-

<sup>15</sup> In 1863, Lincoln praised the workers for their act of "sublime Christian heroism, which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country", and sent US relief ships packed with provisions sent by grateful Americans (<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/from-the-archive-blog/2013/feb/04/lincoln-oscar-manchester-cotton-abraham>).



**Figure 2.** *What is Journey to Justice?* Inviting the audience

es (photos, music, poetry, artworks, films, interviews, zines, interactive features and installations).

In this initiative, which includes training courses for educators, activists, artists and young people, there is a great emphasis on multimodality – music and songs play a particularly important role<sup>16</sup> – as can be seen on the dedicated website and social media channels. Here follow some visual highlights from JtoJ’s website (figure 2).

Recognizable iconic images of solidarity and captivating brilliant colours are utilized to encourage one to start the journey through the easily flowing images and embedded videos. Below are a few selected images from the informative Vimeo video<sup>17</sup> that has recorded not only school activities and social meetings and protests, but also other videos from the news or films. As discussed in Section 2, the table below is an attempt to account for both linguistic and non-linguistic factors in the same textual space synoptically, though with some inevitable losses due to the requirement to ‘narrate’ non-verbal resources (e.g. music, the moving and abundance of the frames, the rhythm, the concentration of information, etc.) with words rather than ‘show’ them directly, as Page (2010) made clear.

<sup>16</sup> Concisely, the much investigated role of music in Black History and Culture deserves new and specific studies for the contexts under analysis, since music and songs have been and still are so important in Black History both as an intra-group form of communication/transmission, identification, development, or even survival, and as a powerful means for bridging communication gaps across cultures. Furthermore, as regards the transition from musical ‘grammars’ to verbal grammars, some interesting if somewhat challenging reading could be Leonard Bernstein’s Norton lectures at Harvard (1973), which focused on the importance of interdisciplinary values insofar as “the best way to know a thing is in the context of another discipline”. Fascinated by the idea of a worldwide, inborn musical grammar, in these six lectures, Bernstein proposed a number of analogies between musical language and linguistics, aesthetic philosophy, acoustics, etc.

<sup>17</sup> Vimeo is a popular online streaming video platform, first established in 2004, which does not have ads and relies on user-generated fees. Although its estimated 170 million visitors per month cannot compare with YouTube’s 1 billion, Vimeo is known specifically for creative artistry.

Information value – engagement	Salience of the visuals in synergy with words
<p>Engaging the community and the audience in learning civil rights. The purple colour, a favourite in African American culture*, frames all shots.</p>	
<p>The teachable moments, religious pluralism, and schoolchildren engaged in activities and singing.</p>	
<p>A leitmotif is the billboards and banners, where written words, images and colours intersemiotically convey the meanings and aims of the campaigns.</p>	
<p>An activist illustrates the exhibition, with its lively coloured informative billboards in the background.</p>	
<p>The video includes a news report on the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., thus acting as supermedia. The iconic value of the rallying cry 'I AM A MAN' is foregrounded.</p>	
<p>Episodes of the journeys to freedom of the fugitives from slavery (here Frederick Douglass, 1846) are illustrated with photos, informative bubbles, and lessons within the overarching intersemiotic texture of the exhibition.</p>	
<p>The words of King are here foregrounded as both signifiers (the clarion voice of King + graphics) and signified. These are words that the previous song had anticipated intersemiotically. Applause and music complete the message.</p>	

\* E.g. the 1982 novel *The Color Purple* by American author Alice Walker, and the setting of the Marvel movie *Black Panther* (2018), where purple and violet colours dominate.

**Table 2.** Screenshots from the introductory video of JtoJ

The artistic tonality of such exhibitions and initiatives as are displayed in the film contribute to making the language of the protest more intense and iconic, shaping signifiers that help the specific goals to explain themselves within the overarching intersemiotic texture of such communicative events. Furthermore, a major emphasis is laid on the need to train educators, as shown on the website on the same page where the introductory film is embedded (fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Engaging the audience

Clearly visible links to a range of activities and information are within easy reach to convey the sense of community and the need for immediate (inter)action. The user-friendly interface, with its highlighted rectangle, inviting the user to click ‘View More’, conveys the sense of immediacy.

Through the polymedia environment displayed in the film, which is accessible from anywhere on the website, the organizers and curators of the artistically framed initiatives of JtoJ want to create a proactive dialogue on the intertwined questions of race, agency, equality, history, and the contemporary context with its pervasive lack of opportunities for some groups and areas. Their expectation is that people will leave transformed, especially through the personal stories of less famous people, and wanting to learn more and share their stories.

*Storytelling* has played a pivotal role in JtoJ, which began as a movement in 2012 when Carrie Supple visited the Little Rock High School Historic Site in Arkansas, where she “heard recordings of African American parents who chose to send their children to a formerly all-white school there in 1957, despite the danger [...] and she wanted to tell those stories of courage in the UK”<sup>18</sup>. Supple’s beliefs in the power of common

<sup>18</sup> See <https://journeytojustice.org.uk/homepage-section/about/>.

people, “people like us”, to challenge injustice found great support, and thus the need for sharing personal stories was prioritized in the movement to both awaken public memory about past struggles and move from the personal to the global. In the training and resource sections, materials and examples abound on how to tell an inspiring story more effectively and guide learners to do the same with the stories they want to share. Interestingly, digital storytelling is also used to share stories of the civil rights movement and engage young people; a platform was made for sharing people’s voices and stories<sup>19</sup>, which is in line with the considerable value attached to storytelling in our mediascape.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

The key messages conveyed through the display galleries are polarized on the long-lasting negative effects of the dehumanizing transatlantic slave trade, which created a permanent and enduring injustice through a coerced African diaspora that variously affected the histories of Africa, Europe and the Americas. Yet major emphases are not laid on black victimhood, but rather on their resilience: how they resisted and rebelled at every opportunity, and how successful they managed to be, as the Black Achievers Wall highlights. The vision of the ISM also focuses on the experience of individuals, using the narratives of the enslaved and those involved in the trade in engaging filmic representations, as well as the stories of less well-known people engaged in the fight against slavery. The need for a shared understanding and commitment to fight the contemporary forms of racism, sexism and the lack of opportunities is also represented, as well as the will to change the present situation.

Yet according to Andrews (2019), slavery museums will have no significant impact on racism in Britain, where too much attention is given to white saviours, such as William Wilberforce, instead of truly understanding Britain’s role as

the premier slave-trading nation, in a system that enslaved a minimum of 12 million Africans. [... For example,] the gun industry of the Midlands was so essential to slavery that it was often remarked in the 18th century that ‘the price of a slave was one Birmingham gun’. It is estimated that 150,000 guns from Birmingham were sold in the trade, not to mention the shackles that were also produced in the city. London was not only an important site for ships but also finance. Without insurance, there would have been no voyages, and companies such as Lloyd’s of London underwrote slave-trading voyages. [...] In order to make abolition possible, **slave owners were paid reparations** in the largest government bailout in history ... which at the time **was 40% of the national budget of the Treasury**. The government had to take out a loan from the Bank of England so large that it was only paid back in 2015. Consider the absurdity and cruelty of the descendants of enslaved people actually paying through our taxes for reparations to the owners of our ancestors [my bold].

Contrarily, no reparations were given to the enslaved people for their labour and the grievous damage inflicted on their bodies and minds.

<sup>19</sup> See <http://curiositycreative.org.uk/>.

Apparently, there is no easy way out of systemic racism and colonialism, with its legacy of enduring poverty and inequality. We could say that Andrews contributed to ‘unveil’ the national myth of redemption through abolitionism – a myth that David Cameron had famously advocated in his 2013 speech, “Britain is an island that has helped to clear the European continent of fascism and was resolute in doing that throughout the second world war. Britain is an island that helped to abolish slavery”. A controversial statement, to say the least. The historian Olusoga (see Introduction), in his *Britain’s Forgotten Slave Owners* (2015) documentary, showed detailed evidence of the generous compensation slave owners received from the government during abolition (representing a total of £17 billion in today’s money), visually demonstrating through a pinned map how much slavery permeated Britain, with slave owners not only in the more affluent classes but also the lower-middle classes, spread all over the country<sup>20</sup>. Olusoga had already disclosed another dark side in the process of abolition: *apprenticeship*, i.e. a further period of unfree labour for former slaves<sup>21</sup>. Yet Olusoga’s approach and projects, which focus on individual stories, are centred on the notion of historical repair, “acknowledging this history, naming it, must be part of the process of coming to the table to negotiate meaningful forms of reconciliation”<sup>22</sup>.

Somewhat differently, in Andrews’ view, the proposal for a new Slavery Museum in London to challenge racism, endorsed by its mayor Sadiq Khan, “is not going to have any impact on racial inequality”, yet he adds, “We should support a new museum because it is an important step in telling a truthful story about Britain” (Andrews 2019). Andrews’s vision on such issues, well-grounded in documented socio-historical studies, represents a realistic (hence pessimistic?) attitude, based on the status quo, which is different from the transformative proactive attitudes that move the activities of the ISM and JtoJ. Their campaigns aim to engage and align the community with their shared values of social justice, involving especially young people and children, through a multimodal polymedia environment, where everybody can choose a favourite expressive medium, which is a form of expressive empowerment. Through the importance given to inspirational stories and personal narratives, which members of the engaged communities are invited to share, participants can see themselves as part of the campaigning museum community. Sharing a story can thus function as a cognitive achievement on the way to personal growth and capacity to promote social progress.

Furthermore, through a sophisticated use of multimodality, the iconic value of the language of the campaigns is intensified and its transmission becomes immediate. Indeed, an overarching communicative feature of the exhibitions is the intersemiotic synergy between artefacts and words both spoken, written, and sung, or even artistically engraved on stone walls. Overall, the ISM and JtoJ achieved their aim of creating new transformative meanings by re-semiotizing loci, words, and tools of past iniquity into instruments of education and progress – apparently, such is the stuff that the International Slavery Museum is built on.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.bbcstudios.com/case-studies/britains-forgotten-slave-owners/#:~:text=Made%20in%20an%20exclusive%20partnership,attitudes%20to%20race%20in%20Britain.>

<sup>21</sup> See the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/the-legacies-of-british-slave-ownership/#:~:text=Last%20year%20the%20Legacies%20of,of%20Good%20Hope.>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDO1bdT47Rc&ab\\_channel=TheBritishLibrary.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDO1bdT47Rc&ab_channel=TheBritishLibrary.)

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# MEDICAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION INTO ITALIAN. THE CASE OF NETTER'S WORK

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## Abstract

Of the various specialized languages, that of the medical sciences undergoes, perhaps, the fastest changes. Medical innovations, whether new drugs or devices, therapies or advanced technologies, are quickly shared at a global level. For this reason, there is constant activity of medical translation. The latter is generally associated with the concept of terminological accuracy. However, if lexical precision is a fundamental feature in medical discourse, a good translation is also the result of compliance with the stylistic and syntactical rules that are typical of the language of medicine in the target language (TL). This paper investigates the linguistic characteristics of a 151,121-word corpus of medical English texts included in *The Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations*, and compares it to the corresponding 157,016-word corpus of Italian translations. Netter's texts were chosen for two reasons. They have been fundamental reference tools for medical specialists for about thirty years worldwide; the texts of the Italian version are produced by doctor-translators, and therefore they stand out for terminological accuracy, content precision, and obedience to the lexical, syntactic and stylistic conventions of Italian medical discourse. The anatomy, physiology, traumatology – including sports-related injuries – and metabolic disorders of the musculoskeletal system are the topics selected for investigation. In this respect, the analysis of the main linguistic features that emerge from comparison of source and target texts is intended to offer both a contribution to research on medical translation and useful suggestions for EMP (English for Medical Purposes) teaching, with particular reference to courses for Italian sports sciences undergraduates.

## 1. Introduction

Frank Netter was an American surgeon and one of the most influential physicians of the twentieth century. He became famous for his extraordinarily realistic hand-made illustrations contained in the 13-book *Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations*, one of the most famous medical texts ever published. It has been translated into 16 languages, including Italian, and is used as a highly valuable and authoritative reference text for medical and health-care students worldwide. The largest volume of the collection, Volume 8, concerns the musculoskeletal apparatus, which is the object of study in the present paper. The reason for this choice lies mainly in my research and teaching ac-

tivity in scientific English in the sports sciences study course at the University of Palermo. Although the latter encompasses several different disciplines, including law-related subjects and psychological studies, the predominant component of the syllabus is represented by the bio-medical area. The main goal of sports sciences courses is to educate learners to become kinesiologists and sports rehabilitation experts. Therefore, the curriculum is primarily based on acquisition of knowledge related to the anatomy of the human body and to its main biochemical and physio-pathological processes, as well as on knowledge of disorders affecting the musculoskeletal system and their treatment from a kinesiological perspective. As in most scientific curricula, the teaching activity in Italian sports sciences courses is characterized by frequent consultation of specialized literature in English. A correct understanding of English is crucial as it provides learners with the latest outcomes of research: it may describe a phenomenon, a new procedure, or a process. Consultation of scientific literature in English largely contributes to enriching students' specialized knowledge, thus allowing them to be successful at tests and at the final degree exams. With regard to the latter in particular, the majority of the dissertations discussed by sports sciences students at the end of both the three-year and the "laurea magistrale" (five-year MA) courses belong to the bio-medical field. As a consequence, they are widely based on the study and in-depth analysis of scientific material in English. Moreover, starting from the 2016-2017 academic year, an increasing number of triennial courses of Italian Universities (e.g. Bologna, Forlì, Milan, Palermo, Venice) have abolished the traditional written dissertation in the three-year courses and have introduced a final exam – assessed as a mark out of 30 according to the same procedure as that used for the other curricular subjects – within a project of simplification of the bureaucratic procedures in first-cycle degree curricula. As for the sports sciences course in particular, the University of Palermo was one of the first to join the project. The final exam – as set up by the study course board – consists in the presentation and discussion of a scientific English text among those recommended during classes for a thorough study of the topics dealt with during the course. The texts are translated into Italian by the students themselves and discussed in their language (optionally in English), with the presentation being enriched with personal reflections and analytical comments. Five graduation sessions have taken place to date in the sports sciences course in Palermo starting from the 2019 summer session, and the number of candidates was 30 per session on average. It was observed that more than one third of all the students did not show a correct use of specialized Italian, either in terms of terminological accuracy or in terms of appropriate style. The linguistic choices proved to be rather 'unnatural', mainly as a result of too many literal translations that did not observe the characteristics of medical discourse in the Italian language. The present study was inspired by the need to help such students. It provides a description of some of the linguistic aspects concerning medical translation from English into Italian. For this purpose, a corpus of English texts drawn from *The Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations* is analysed and compared with respect to their Italian translations included in *Atlante di Anatomia, Fisiopatologia e Clinica*. The peculiarity of the Italian texts lies in the fact that they were not translated by professional translators but by doctor-translators. Thus, it was thought that those texts might represent an important example of terminological precision, content accuracy, and syntactical and stylistic correctness.

It must be pointed out that even though this study was prompted by the needs of the sports sciences students of the University of Palermo, the results attained can be extended to all Italian undergraduates whose syllabuses include healthcare-based subjects – as well as to any scholar concerned with medical translation.

The important role that translation plays in language teaching and learning has been reconsidered over the last ten years (Cook 2010; Calis and Dikilitas 2012; González Davies 2019). Calis and Dikilitas (2012: 5080) state that “translation is favoured by learners as it promotes different aspects of learning.” González Davies (2019: 447) claims that “translation should have a place as a natural skill in language learning to cope with our plurilingual contemporary world.” In this respect Cook (2010: 43), who emphasizes the importance of translation in the maintenance of linguistic and cultural identities, says that “translation relates languages to each other, rather than leaving them to operate in separate compartments, and is thus very much in tune with globalization. Indeed it is, and always has been, a major catalyst of global communication.” In advocating its use in language teaching, Cook (*ibid.*: 155) highlights that “translation develops both language awareness and use, it is pedagogically effective and educationally desirable, and it answers student needs in the contemporary globalized and multicultural world.”

## 2. Theoretical background and previous research on specialized and medical translation

The study of specialized translation in the medical field has attained increasing importance within Translation Studies parallel to the rapid advances of medical sciences and technologies. Medical translation and specialized translation in general have been broadly investigated from a terminological perspective (Salager 1983; Felber 1984; Cimino 1998; Zethsen 2004; Deléger, Merkel and Zweigenbaum 2009; Thelen 2015). One of the reasons is that correct use of medical terminology “is one of the core conditions for successful communication in monolingual and multilingual healthcare communities” (Montalt, Zethsen and Karwacka 2018: 29). Another reason more than likely lies in the explanation provided by Byrne (2006: 3) with regard to technical translation, that is, that “terminology is, perhaps, the most immediately noticeable aspect and indeed it gives a technical text the ‘fuel’ it needs to convey the information.” The predominant role given to terminology as a feature of medical discourse as compared to general language has led to several misconceptions about medical translation and, more in general, about specialized translation. One of these is that style has little or no importance. Byrne (*ibid.*) writes:

**Style doesn't matter in technical translation.** This is, perhaps, one of the more irritating misconceptions for technical translators because it is completely unfounded and implies that technical translators do not have the same linguistic and writing skills as other types of translator. Perhaps the problem stems from differing opinions of the nature of style and the popular belief that it relates exclusively to literature. If we look at style from a literary point of view, then it does not have any place in technical translation. But if we regard style as the way we write things, the words we choose and the *way* we construct sentences, then style is equally, if not more, important in technical translation than in other areas because it is there for a reason, not simply for artistic or entertainment

reasons. [...]. In many cases, the importance or even existence of style in technical texts goes completely unacknowledged, due largely to the belief that because technical language is functional, it must be “plain” and stripped of any form of style or linguistic identity. In reality, however, technical translation is a highly complex endeavour and style is one of its most important facets. [...].

Byrne (*ibid.*: 6-7) also discusses another misconception, strictly connected to the previous one, i.e. that technical translation is all about conveying specialized information:

This is not entirely true; of course, the main concern for technical translators is to make sure that information is conveyed accurately but they are also responsible for ensuring that the information is presented in the correct form, that it is complete and that the information can be used correctly and effectively. [...].

However, research on medical translation also includes studies on its morpho-syntactic aspects (Gotti 1991; Magris 1992; Viezzi 1992). In order to identify the levels of diversification and specificity of specialized discourse as compared to general language, Gotti (1991) treats lexical, syntactic and textual characteristics of specialized languages, with medical communication occupying a major role. Magris (1992) carries out a comparative study of English, German, and Italian medical texts, and though mainly focusing on lexical features, she also focuses attention on morpho-syntactic characteristics and textual patterns. Viezzi (1992) concentrates on the translation of medical English into Italian and compares some texts in English to their corresponding Italian translations in order to find analogies and differences regarding syntactical, stylistic and terminological aspects.

Research has also focused attention on who should engage in medical translation and on the specific competences that a translator of medical texts is required to have. Montalt and González Davies (2014: 36) state:

There is still no agreement on which elements are needed to draw the complete map of translation competence, but in the specific case of medical translators, special attention should be paid to the competencies grouped [...] under the following labels: language and writing; communication and culture; medical notions; transference; information resources; professional practice; and attitude.

They also maintain (*ibid.*: 35) that

what matters [...] is not whether the medical translator has a degree in Medicine or Translation, but whether *s/he* has the translation skills required to be an efficient mediator. So, it is important to concentrate on those skills, regardless of the educational background.

Magris (1992: 79) maintains that a good translation is the result of cooperation between professional translators and medical specialists. Viezzi (1992) stresses the importance of knowledge of the subject which is at the basis of the text to be translated as a guarantee of correctness and precision for the quality of the product. He compares and contrasts English texts translated by Italian physicians not only because terminological accuracy is ensured but also because the stylistic and syntactical conventions that are typical of texts produced in the medical field in the Italian language are respected.

In this regard, with reference to specialized translation in general Musacchio (2006: 175) states:

The question remains whether we can use insights from translation research (House, Laviosa-Braithwaite, Baker) to produce naturally sounding translations especially in technical and scientific domains where the main preoccupation is the transfer of content, not form as in literary writing. In short, if translations are arguably setting new standards, it could also be argued that they fall somewhat short of quality requirements where they deviate from the standards set by target language originals.

The role of the recipient in the validity or acceptability of a translated text has always been central to Translation Studies (Bassnett 1981; Bassnett and Lefevere 1998; Lefevere 1992; Nida and Taber 1969; Venuti 1994 [2008]).

Ulrich (2011) discusses the importance of recipient-oriented adaptation and manipulation of the source text (ST), and deals with the concept, first introduced by Stetting (1989), of “transediting.” Ulrych (*ibid.*: 90) makes specific reference to journal article publishing, and outlines the profile of the transeditor, who is a language expert having translational, editing, and writing skills, and “a sufficiently developed knowledge of the subject to be able to rewrite the paper in accordance with the expectations of the recipient audience.”

A certain degree of discontent emerges from Translation Studies towards the opinion, which is still deeply held by some scholars, that technical translation and creativity are two opposing concepts. In this respect, Popescu and Cohen Vida (2015: 1198) write:

If freedom and creativity are compatible terms, creativity and technical translation are two concepts that seem to be mutually exclusive, creativity would be the defining characteristic of literary translation while respect to fierce constraints, including terminological ones would define the technical translation.

This is in line with what has been observed by Postolea (2016: 52), who states that specialized translation is still a neglected area within Translation Studies in that it is considered as a mechanical and tedious job, an activity commonly “deemed easier”, “restricted” and not intellectually rewarding. Popescu and Cohen Vida (2015: 1201) add:

The professional world has increasingly need of professional creative translators, who are able to improve the original text, to correct its structure and the information it contains, so as to produce a text that might be better than the original one.

Postolea (2016: 58) also points out two aspects of specialized texts, i.e. the fact that they are not mere lists of specialized terminology but also “vast lexical and terminological networks”, and the interdisciplinary nature of specialized discourse, as “texts that are strictly confined to a single terminological field are the exception, not the rule.” In the specific case of the medical domain, terminology encompasses several specialized fields of knowledge, including biochemistry, physics, statistics, mathematics and biology.

### 3. Corpus and methodology

This study used a corpus of English medical texts drawn from the *Netter Collection of Medical Illustrations*, and their respective Italian translations contained in *Atlante di Anatomia, Fisiopatologia e Clinica*. The selection of the texts took into account the main basic bio-medical subjects in the three-year sports sciences degree courses, namely anatomy, physiology, traumatology – with particular reference to sports injuries – and metabolic disorders. The choice of the topics to be investigated was made according to the ministerial syllabuses established for the above-mentioned subjects. In this respect, the study focused attention on Sections I, II and IV of Volume 8, Part I, “Musculoskeletal System, Anatomy, Physiology, and Metabolic Disorders” (1994), and Section IV of Volume 8, Part III, “Musculoskeletal System – Trauma, Evaluation, and Management” (1993), as well as on their corresponding Italian versions, respectively, Sections I, II and IV of Volume 8, Part I, “Anatomia, Fisiologia e Turbe Metaboliche” (1994), and Section IV of Volume 8, Part III, “Apparato Muscolo-Scheletrico – Traumatologia, Valutazione Clinica e Trattamento” (1994). Two physicians carried out the translations in both subvolumes investigated, and their work was supervised by a third physician. Extensive manual reading of the texts was carried out and analysis also made use of WordSmith concordancing 5.0 software where necessary.

### 4. Results

Comparison of the source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs) revealed analogies and differences mostly depending on the type of topic dealt with. Greater compliance with the structure and the sequence of the syntagmatic units of the ST discourse prevails in the anatomical description of the musculoskeletal system and of its physiological aspects. Two examples, respectively taken from the anatomy and physiology sections, are reported below:

**1a.** The muscle action potential is propagated from the region of the neuromuscular junction along the entire length of the muscle fiber. The electric impulse of muscle is similar to that of most nerve fibers. The sarcolemma contains voltage-dependent sodium channels that open in response to an injection of depolarizing (positive) current into the muscle fiber (*Sarcoplasmic Reticulum and Initiation of Muscle Contraction*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. III, p. 155).

**1b.** Il potenziale d'azione muscolare è propagato dalla regione della giunzione neuro-muscolare per tutta la lunghezza della fibra muscolare. L'impulso elettrico del muscolo è del tutto simile a quello della maggior parte delle fibre nervose. Il sarcolemma contiene canali del sodio a voltaggio-dipendenti, che si aprono in risposta all'immissione di una corrente depolarizzante (positiva) nella fibra muscolare (*Reticolo sarcoplasmatico e inizio della contrazione muscolare*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. III, p. 155)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It seems right to underline that “è propagato dalla regione” (first line in this extract) sounds unnatural in Italian and would find a better wording as “si propaga dalla regione”.

**2a.** The cervical *vertebral bodies* are smaller than those of the other movable vertebrae and increase in size from above downward; they are broader in the transverse diameter than anteroposteriorly. The superior body surfaces are concave from side to side and slightly convex from front to back. [...] The *vertebral foramina* are comparatively large in order to accommodate the cervical enlargement of the spinal cord; they are bounded by the bodies, pedicles, and laminae of the vertebrae. The *pedicles* project posterolaterally from the bodies and are grooved by superior and inferior vertebral notches, almost equal in depth, which form the intervertebral foramina by connecting with similar notches on adjacent vertebrae (*Vertebral Column and Pelvis*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. I, p. 11)<sup>2</sup>.

**2b.** I *corpi vertebrali* delle vertebre cervicali sono più piccoli di quelli delle altre vertebre mobili e aumentano in dimensione procedendo dall'alto verso il basso; il loro diametro trasverso è maggiore di quello antero-posteriore. Le facce superiori dei corpi vertebrali sono concave in senso trasversale e leggermente convesse dall'avanti all'indietro. [...] I fori vertebrali sono relativamente ampi, in modo da adattarsi al rigonfiamento cervicale del midollo spinale; essi sono circondati dai corpi vertebrali, dai peduncoli e dalle lamine delle vertebre. I peduncoli si proiettano in direzione postero-laterale dai corpi vertebrali e sono incavati dalle incisure vertebrali superiori e inferiori, circa uguali come profondità, che determinano la formazione dei fori intervertebrali connettendosi con le incisure similari delle vertebre adiacenti (*Colonna vertebrale e pelvi*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. I, p. 11).

Extracts 1b and 2b show a high level of adherence to the STs as regards both the syntactic patterns displayed and the lexicon used. Extract 1b, in particular, shows a basically literal translation. The almost complete adherence to the ST regarding discourse patterns, terminology and syntactical structures was possible thanks to the linguistic characteristics of the ST which were suited for word-for-word translation while not making the TT sound 'unnatural'. By contrast, in extract 2b it can be noticed that a few – albeit minor – adjustments were necessary to adapt the English text to the lexical and discourse norms of the Italian language. Let us consider, for instance, the second sentence (in 2b). A word-for-word translation (“essi sono più ampi nel diametro trasverso che anteroposteriormente”) would have proved to be too artificial; to comply with the ‘spontaneous’ way of conveying the concept in Italian, the translator used a paraphrase, where “il loro diametro trasverso” (lit., their transverse diameter) became the subject, whereas it is an adverbial of location in the ST (“in the transverse diameter”), and “è maggiore” (lit., is greater) became the predicate that translates “broader”, which in turn is used in the ST to qualify the cervical vertebral bodies (represented by the anaphoric reference “they”). Moreover, adaptation was made for the noun phrases “from side to side”/ “in senso trasversale” and “cervical enlargement” / “rigonfiamento cervicale”, as well as for the adverb “posterolaterally”, translated “in direzione postero-laterale.” Moreover, extract 2b exhibits a repetition of “vertebrali” (vertebral) next to “corpi” (bodies) at every occurrence, unlike the ST, where the adjective only appears at its first occurrence. In the Italian translation, the use of “corpi” (bodies) without the adjective would have sounded ‘unnatural’, as well as the other previously mentioned Italian translations of terms and phrases if these had not been the result of a process of adaptation to the Italian lexical conventions of use. Nevertheless, it can be stated that

<sup>2</sup> All cases of underlining in the extracts in this study are mine.

no major changes can be identified in extract 2b considered as a whole and that there is still an overall high degree of obedience to the structure and sequence of the lexical units of the ST. By contrast, interventions of adjustment in the search for equivalence in the TTs become increasingly marked as the discourse progressively moves away from the mere morpho-physiological description of the human body and proceeds towards exposition of other topics such as diseases, disorders, injuries, and corresponding treatments and therapies. The first clearly distinctive feature that emerges from a comparison of the two languages concerns sentence structure and length. More precisely, the majority of the English sentences show a higher degree of syntactic conciseness, and therefore shorter sentences, and a greater quantity of content words in comparison with their Italian translations. Conversely, the Italian translations reveal more complex syntactic structures, longer sentences and a greater quantity of grammar words. The following extract may serve as an illustrating example:

**3a.** Sprains occur frequently in sports activities as well as in daily activities. In addition, a previously sprained ankle is at significant risk for reinjury (*Rehabilitation after Sports Injury*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 207).

**3b.** Le distorsioni della tibio-tarsica sono un evento di riscontro assai frequente sia nelle attività sportive sia in quelle della vita quotidiana. La caviglia che ha già subito un insulto di tipo distorsivo inoltre è più esposta a nuovi traumi (*Riabilitazione dopo lesioni traumatiche da attività sportiva*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 207).

As can be seen, in the English extract there is greater syntactic conciseness as compared to its Italian translation due to the preference for premodification rather than for relative clauses. “A previously sprained ankle” was preferred to a possible “an ankle which has previously been sprained.” Premodification gives the sentence syntactic compression and allows for what Gotti (2003: 79) defines as “an easier flow of information”. By contrast, the Italian translation shows greater superficial extension of sentences due to the use of postmodification including a relative clause (“la caviglia che ha già subito un insulto di tipo distorsivo”), and greater use of grammatical items, especially prepositions and articles. Moreover, while the Italian text uses an anatomical term which serves as an explicitation of the precise joint (most frequently) affected by a sprain, i.e. the tibio-tarsal, the English text deploys a more general term that denotes the anatomical region including that joint. In this respect, in some cases the English texts make use of terms taken from everyday language, whereas the equivalents used in the translated versions are drawn from specialized lexicon:

**4a.** After total knee replacement, pain is usually a significant limiting factor in the initial rehabilitation program (*Rehabilitation after Joint Replacement*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 211).

**4b.** Dopo un intervento di artroprotesi del ginocchio, il dolore costituisce spesso un importante fattore limitante nelle prime fasi del programma di riabilitazione (*Riabilitazione dopo artroprotesi*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 211).

**5a.** During ambulation, the patient is evaluated for limb length discrepancy (*Total Hip Replacement*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 210).

**5b.** Durante la deambulazione vengono valutate le eventuali dismetrie degli arti (*Artroprotesi dell'anca*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 210).

As can be seen, in extract 4a the word “replacement” is used, while in the Italian translation the strictly medical term “artroprotesi” is adopted. Similarly, to denote a medical condition in which there is a difference in the length of the bone segments of the legs, the locution “limb length discrepancy” is used in extract 5a (despite its lack of conciseness) and not the more specialized term *dysmetria*, which, in addition, would have also been more concise. By contrast, in extract 5b the term used is “dismetrie degli arti” and not a literal paraphrase, “discrepanza della lunghezza degli arti.” Moreover, it can also be noted that in the Italian translations there is an element which is not included in the original text, namely the adjective “eventuali”, which was considered appropriate to add to convey the concept that limb dysmetria is likely but not necessarily certain to occur after hip replacement operations. In the Italian texts investigated in this study, another term belonging to the specialized medical lexicon was found, namely “astenia”, whose corresponding English denomination is taken from common language. “Astenia” was used to translate “weakness” in the original texts. “Weakness” is never translated as *debolezza* – except when what is referred to is not a symptom but a condition of fragility. In other words, in the English texts there is no terminological difference between the use of *weakness* as “a subjective evidence of disease/physical disturbance” (*Merriam-Webster* 2020) and *weakness* meant as “the quality or state of being easily broken” (*Merriam-Webster* 2020), e.g. of organs or tissues, and therefore as *objective* evidence. Let us consider the following extracts:

**6a.** Most patients are asymptomatic or have only mild systemic manifestations such as weakness, polyuria, nocturia, constipation, or hypertension (*Primary Hyperparathyroidism*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 197).

**6b.** La maggior parte dei pazienti è asintomatica o presenta unicamente sintomi sistemici di lieve entità, quali astenia, poliuria, nicturia, stipsi o ipertensione (*Ipertiroidismo primario*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 197).

**7a.** Osteoporosis results when bone mass falls below normal for body size, age, sex, and race. It is characterized by structural weakness in the bones, primarily due to enlarged medullary (marrow) and osteonal spaces and reduced cortical thickness (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 216).

**7b.** Si ha osteoporosi quando la massa ossea scende al di sotto dei valori normali per taglia corporea, età, sesso e razza. L'anomalia è caratterizzata da debolezza strutturale delle ossa, primariamente dovuta ad espansione degli spazi midollari ed osteonici e a riduzione dello spessore corticale (*Osteoporosi*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 216).

As can be seen, in extract 6a “weakness” is used in the sense of symptom, and therefore it was translated as “astenia” in the Italian version; by contrast, in extract 7a “weakness” refers to a condition of fragility of a part of the human body, and more specifically to bone brittleness (due to osteoporosis), and therefore “debolezza” was used as the correct Italian equivalent. In one case, finding an equivalent for “weakness” took

into account its meaning and value in relation to the other components of the sentence, as in the following excerpt:

**8a.** The rehabilitation program is individualized, based on the patient's residual strengths and weaknesses (*Rehabilitation after Stroke*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sec. IV, p. 202).

**8b.** Il programma di riabilitazione deve essere personalizzato, in rapporto alle condizioni e alle capacità residue del paziente (*Riabilitazione dopo ictus*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 202).

The greater superficial extension of the target sentences as compared to the source ones in the texts examined was not only due to postmodification and to an extensive use of grammar words but first and foremost to the pervasive addition of extra elements. Some of the most significant examples are reported below:

**9a.** Protective measures must be developed [...] (*Musculoskeletal Effects of Weightlessness (Spaceflights)*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. III, p. 186).

**9b.** È necessario provvedere allo sviluppo di misure di profilassi [...] (*Effetti dell'assenza di peso (viaggi aerospaziali) sull'apparato muscolo-scheletrico*), Vol. 8, Part I, Sez. III, p. 186).

**10a.** Decubitus ulcers are common, expensive, and preventable complications (*Rehabilitation*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 195).

**10b.** La comparsa di piaghe da decubito in un paziente costretto a letto rappresenta un'evenienza frequente, prevenibile e costosa (*Riabilitazione*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 195).

**11a.** The elderly person with proprioception problems [...] (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 226).

**11b.** I soggetti anziani che presentano alterazioni della sensibilità propriocettiva [...] (*Osteoporosi*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 226).

**12a.** The diagnosis is made by a careful history and by observing the patient's response to withdrawal of calcium (*Differential Diagnosis of Hypercalcemic States*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 198).

**12b.** La diagnosi si formula con un'attenta anamnesi e con l'osservazione della risposta del paziente dopo avere posto fine all'assunzione del calcio (*Diagnosi differenziale degli stati ipercalcemici*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 198).

**13a.** Sensory deprivation leads to confusion and disorientation, which contribute to anxiety and depression (*Rehabilitation*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 195).

**13b.** La deprivazione sensoriale è causa di confusione e di disorientamento, che a loro volta favoriscono la comparsa di sindromi ansiose e depressive (*Riabilitazione*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 195).

**14a.** The diagnosis of osteomalacia will be expedited if the physician is familiar with the causes and has a high index of suspicion (*Comparison of Osteoporosis and Osteomalacia*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 228).

**14b.** La diagnosi di osteomalacia sarà più agevole quando il medico sia a conoscenza delle sue cause e abbia fondati motivi di sospettarne la presenza (*Confronto fra osteoporosi e osteomalacia*, Vol. 8, parte I, Sez. IV, p. 228).

What can be noticed in the Italian extracts above is the inclusion of additional elements as compared to the sentences in the original texts. This seems to be mainly due to stylistic reasons rather than to meaning-related motivations as the concepts to be conveyed would have proved equally effective if the translators had opted for more rigorous compliance with the structural patterns of the SL texts. Possible sentences like “si devono sviluppare misure preventive”, “l’anziano con problemi propriocettivi”, “la risposta del paziente alla sospensione del calcio”, and “contribuiscono all’ansia e alla depressione” would not have provided less information and would not have proved less clear or ‘natural-sounding’ than the sentences actually used, respectively, in extracts 9b, 11b, 12b and 13b. In extract 10b, “un paziente costretto a letto” (a patient obliged to lie in bed) is pleonastic in relation to “piaghe da decubito” (decubitus ulcers), as the term “decubitus” refers to the position that the patient assumes when in bed. By contrast, in extract 14b, the presence of extra elements does not seem to have been only due to merely stylistic reasons but also to communicative needs related to how the concepts included in the ST could be conveyed into Italian clearly and effectively. A faithful translation of extract 12a would have proved unnatural; if “familiar with the causes” and, even more, “high index of suspicion” had been translated word-for-word (i.e. “familiare con le cause” e “alto indice di sospetto”), the result would not have complied with the actual use that is made in Italian to express the concepts included in the STs. Information was not always conveyed through sentence length extension. Reduction of phrasal elements was identified in the TTs as compared to the STs due to the omission, in the former, of elements considered unnecessary or too redundant for a specialized text:

**15a.** An evaluation should be performed by a physiatrist – a physician trained in all aspects of acute and chronic rehabilitative care (*Rehabilitation after Care*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 200).

**15b.** Diviene utile la valutazione di un fisiatra esperto in tutti gli aspetti della terapia riabilitativa acuta e cronica (*Riabilitazione dopo ictus*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 200).

**16a.** Extensive preoperative planning is necessary to identify the extent of the bone bridge. After resection of the bone bridge, Silastic or autogenous fat is packed into the defect to prevent the bridge from reforming. If this surgical procedure is effective in maintaining an open growth plate, longitudinal growth resumes, reducing the risk of further angular deformity. Alternatively, an osteotomy can be performed to correct a residual deformity when the child reaches skeletal maturity (*Complications of Fractures*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. III, p. 149).

**16b.** Per valutare esattamente l’estensione del ponte osseo è necessario un attento studio pre-operatorio; dopo la sua resezione, l’applicazione locale di tessuto adiposo autologo o di Silastic evita la recidiva. Quando l’intervento ha successo, la crescita longitudinale riprende, riducendo così il rischio di comparsa di deviazioni angolari. In alternativa, una volta

raggiunta la maturità scheletrica, è possibile eseguire un'osteotomia correttiva (*Complicanze delle fratture*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. III, p. 149).

In extract 15b, “physician” contained in extract 15a was not translated as the concept it refers to is included in that of “physiatrist”, while the information in extract 16b has undergone a process of reformulation as compared to that in extract 16a. The concept included in the clause “to prevent the bridge from reforming” was conveyed in the shorter form “evita la recidiva” (avoids relapse). Later, “to correct a residual deformity” was not translated but the concept of “correction” (in the specific case, of deformity due to bone fractures) was preserved and positioned next to “osteotomy” in an attributive position. Moreover, “bone bridge” is repeated twice in the ST, whereas in the TT the use of the possessive adjective (“sua”/its) was preferred to lexical repetition. With regard to the latter aspect, lexical repetition is constantly sought in the STs; by contrast, the Italian translations show a preference for expressive variety. Let us consider the following extract, a part of which was examined earlier regarding sentence length:

**17a.** Ankle sprains occur frequently in sports activities as well as in daily activities. In addition, a previously sprained ankle is at significant risk for reinjury. Ankle sprains usually occur in persons less than 35 years of age, most commonly in teenagers 15 to 19 years of age (*Rehabilitation after Sports Injury*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 207).

**17b.** Le distorsioni della tibio-tarsica sono un evento di riscontro assai frequente sia nelle attività sportive sia in quelle della vita quotidiana. La caviglia che ha già subito un insulto di tipo distorsivo inoltre è più esposta a nuovi traumi. Questo tipo di lesione colpisce prevalentemente soggetti di età inferiore a 35 anni: si tratta per lo più di giovani fra i 15 e i 19 anni (*Riabilitazione dopo lesioni traumatiche da attività sportiva*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sez. IV, p. 207).

In extract 17a, what immediately stands out is the lexical repetition of “ankle sprains”, which is repeated twice in the same form (“ankle sprains”), and with the variation “sprained ankle” in the second occurrence. By contrast, in the Italian translation lexical repetition is completely avoided<sup>3</sup>. Three different phrases are used to refer to the ankle sprain, namely, 1) the name of the joint affected by the injury (“le distorsioni della tibio-tarsica”/tibio-tarsal sprains), 2) a periphrasis including a relative clause (“la caviglia che ha subito un insulto di tipo distorsivo”/the ankle that has undergone a damage to a joint), where “insulto” (damage) was preferred to “distorsione”, and 3) a sentence where a partial definition of it is deployed (“questo tipo di lesione”/this type of injury).

Another type of intervention which was identified in the TTs (18 cases) concerns a change in the information / word order displayed in the discourse. Three examples are reported below:

**18a.** A person who has intellectual and physical dysfunction but is still capable of following commands and participating in therapy is a candidate for rehabilitation (*Rehabilitation After Stroke*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 200).

<sup>3</sup> “In English science, cohesion is often created by reiteration. In Italian, reiteration by means of repetition is avoided for stylistic reasons unless non-repetition is a source of ambiguity” (Musacchio 2004: 99).

**18b.** Sono candidati alla terapia riabilitativa tutti i soggetti che, pur presentando alterazioni intellettive e fisiche, siano però capaci di eseguire comandi e di cooperare alla terapia stessa (*Riabilitazione dopo ictus*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 200).

**19a.** Lifelong periodic evaluation is essential (*Marfan's Syndrome*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 232).

**19b.** Essenziali sono i controlli per tutta la durata della vita (*Sindrome di Marfan*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 232).

**20a.** A daily program of active spinal extension exercises should be started (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 226).

**20b.** Deve essere intrapreso un programma giornaliero di esercizi di estensione vertebrale attiva (*Osteoporosi*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 226).

In all three above-mentioned cases, the variation in the order of the phrasal elements, consisting in collocating the predicate nominative before the subject, does not have any particular effect on the transmission of the message but basically serves a stylistic function. However, in one case the change in the sequence of the information segments gives more emphasis to an aspect of the message that is considered important:

**20a.** After surgery, the patient can begin gentle active and passive range-of-motion exercises if the fixation is secure (*Injury to Femur*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. I, p. 91).

**20b.** Dopo l'intervento, se la sintesi è solida, il paziente può iniziare con cautela una serie di esercizi di mobilizzazione attiva o passiva (*Fratture del Femore*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. I, p. 91).

The position of the information “se la sintesi è solida” (if the fixation is secure) at the beginning of the sentence in extract 20b focuses attention on the condition in which it is necessary to allow the patient to undertake physical exercise after surgery, whereas in extract 20a priority is given to the exercises themselves.

Another type of intervention that did not exclusively aim at fulfilling stylistic needs but also allowed the translator to draw attention to a given feature of the topic treated is clarification, in the TTs, of concepts that remain implicit in the STs. Two examples are reported below:

**21a.** Spontaneous neurologic recovery is usually complete 3 to 6 months after the stroke. [...] The patient's medical condition is monitored closely, and the primary care physician is usually encouraged to continue follow-up of the patient (*Comprehensive Rehabilitation*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 201).

**21b.** Il recupero neurologico spontaneo è da considerare completato dopo un periodo di 3-6 mesi dall'ictus. [...] La stretta sorveglianza delle condizioni mediche ha grande importanza; a questo proposito è utile che il curante venga sensibilizzato a far eseguire controlli clinici ripetuti nel tempo (*Riabilitazione intellettiva*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 201).

**22a.** Emphasis is on range-of-motion exercises and transfers. At strength, confidence, and skill regained, the patient gradually assumes responsibility for these activities (*Comprehensive Rehabilitation*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 201).

**22b.** Rivestono particolare importanza gli esercizi di mobilitazione articolare e gli spostamenti. Quando si ottiene il recupero della forza, della fiducia e della abilità, il paziente viene portato ad assumere gradualmente l'iniziativa per lo svolgimento delle attività sopra elencate (*Riabilitazione intellettuale*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 201-202).

The translation in extract 21b can be considered a clarification of the sentence in extract 21a and, at the same time, its most obvious inference. If a patient's condition is monitored "closely", it means that the monitoring of his/her condition is very important. The translator makes explicit a feature of the topic which is implicit in the source text and by doing so s/he highlights what s/he wants to foreground. In extract 22b, the clarificatory function is far more incisive and 'sophisticated' than in extract 21b as the translator makes an element explicit, identified in the use of the passive "viene portato" / is guided, which is not of immediate inference – at least on the target reader's part. More precisely, while in extract 22a attention is on *the patient*, who progressively learns to perform some rehabilitation exercises after a stroke, in extract 22b the focus has been shifted towards the patient *being guided* (presumably by the physiotherapist) into taking the initiative to carry out the exercises – because s/he is not yet autonomous. Here, the translator chooses to emphasize the fact that a stroke patient is not able to perform activities unless *supported* by an expert (usually a physical therapist), at least at an early stage of the rehabilitation schedule. Given the basically instructive vocation of the texts analysed, the translator prefers to make explicit and highlight information of the topic which remains unstated in the original text and whose transmission s/he does not want to take for granted. For this purpose, the translator has transformed an active form ("assumes") into a passive one ("viene portato ad assumere" / is guided to assume).

A comparison of extracts 21a and 21b also reveals minor changes on a semantic level. In the former, the information is that the primary care physician is prompted to follow the patient in his/her periodic check-ups, and the information is given as a fact. By contrast, in extract 21b the information becomes a sort of 'suggestion' so that the primary care physician will be encouraged (presumably by guidelines) to assist the patient in carrying out follow-up after stroke. A fact in the ST becomes a recommendation in the TT.

Another important difference that emerged from comparing L1 and L2 texts regards the use of the deontic modal verb *should* in the STs and that of its corresponding translation in the TTs. In the STs "should" shows 84 overall occurrences; in 80 of these, the verb is never rendered in the conditional form in the TTs but in the indicative one. Some examples are reported below:

**23a.** Candidates for prosthetic rehabilitation should demonstrate adequate wound healing, range of motion, muscle strength, motor control [...]. Owing to the increased metabolic demands of prosthesis use, these patients should also have adequate pulmonary and cardiovascular reserves (*Rehabilitation after Amputation*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 197).

**23b.** I soggetti candidati alla riabilitazione protesica devono presentare una corretta cicatrizzazione della ferita del moncone, e mobilità articolare, forza muscolare e controllo motorio di buon livello. A causa delle aumentate richieste metaboliche dovute all'uso della

protesi, i pazienti devono inoltre possedere una riserva polmonare e cardiaca sufficiente (*Terapia riabilitativa dopo amputazione*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 197).

**24a.** In patients with classic rachitic or osteomalacic changes [...], renal tubular acidosis should be suspected as the underlying cause of the disease (*Rickets, Osteomalacia, and Renal Osteodystrophy*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 212).

**24b.** In pazienti con classiche alterazioni rachitiche od osteomalaciche [...], un'acidosi tubulare renale deve essere sospettata (*Rachitismo, osteomalacia e osteodistrofia renale*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 212).

**25a.** The mattress should provide firm support and be left flat to avoid promoting flexion contractures (*Rehabilitation after Stroke*, Vol. 8, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 200).

**25b.** Il materasso deve fornire un supporto sufficientemente rigido e deve essere lasciato in piano, così da evitare lo sviluppo di contratture in flessione (*Riabilitazione dopo ictus*, Vol. 8, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 200).

The shift from the use of the conditional in the STs to the use of the indicative of *dovere* (must) in the TTs also represents a shift from what is perceived as a sort of expectation (e.g. “the mattress should provide”, extract 25a) to what is rendered as a peremptory instruction (“Il materasso deve fornire” (the mattress must provide), extract 25b). The result is a more marked pedagogical argumentation in the TTs as compared to that in the STs. Moreover, the deontic “dovere” was used on five other occasions in the TTs also where no modal verb was deployed in the STs. Three different functions were accomplished, and one example of each is reported below:

**26a.** After the history is taken, a complete physical examination is performed, and antero-posterior and standing lateral radiographs of the thoracic and lumbar spine are obtained (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 219).

**26b.** Dopo la raccolta dell'anamnesi, deve essere eseguito un esame clinico completo e un esame radiografico della colonna dorsale e lombare in proiezione antero-posteriore e laterale in ortostatismo (*Osteoporosi*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 219).

**27a.** The patient is taught to use the remaining functional capabilities to compensate for the residual deficits of stroke (*Rehabilitation after Stroke*, Vol. III, Part III, Sec. IV, p. 201).

**27b.** Il paziente deve essere istruito a utilizzare le capacità residue in modo da compensare il più possibile i deficit residui (*Riabilitazione dopo ictus*, Vol. III, Parte III, Sez. IV, p. 201).

**28a.** Spinal cord or cauda equina involvement is even less common and suggests other conditions, such as infection or tumor, expansile primary bone tumors, Paget's disease, metastases, myeloma, or lymphoma (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Part I, Sec. IV, p. 218).

**28b.** L'interessamento midollare o della cauda equina è ancora meno frequente e deve suggerire altre affezioni, quali processi infettivi o tumorali, tumori ossei primitivi espansivi, malattia di Paget, metastasi, mielomi, o linfomi (*Osteoporosis*, Vol. 8, Parte I, Sez. IV, p. 218).

In extract 26b, the use of “dovere” emphasizes the organization whereby the methodological procedure of history-taking and physical examination takes place, even though, especially if read by expert or semi-expert users, it serves a basically stylistic function as a clinical examination must necessarily follow the patient’s history. Here, the use of “deve” does not particularly affect the meaning of the information conveyed, unlike extract 27b, where “deve” in “il paziente deve essere istruito” (the patient must be taught) serves a function of direction as regards the procedure that must be carried out. Finally, the same function is also served in extract 28b, where the presence of the modal verb assumes the value of instruction/teaching (if given conditions are present, i.e. the involvement of the spinal cord or cauda equina, then the presence of specific underlying diseases must be suspected). By contrast, this function is not present in the source text, where the absence of ‘must’ next to “suggest” gives the discourse a descriptive connotation rather than an instructive one.

## 5. Conclusions

The investigation carried out in this study has attempted to highlight some aspects of medical English translation into Italian in one of the most authoritative and influential medical texts ever published. The translations were carried out by doctor-translators, and therefore they were considered to be an important example of terminological accuracy and discourse precision. The study of these translations has made it possible to identify different levels of compliance of the TTs with the STs depending on the type of topic dealt with. A higher degree of adherence of the TL to the SL is displayed in the anatomical and physiological descriptions of the musculoskeletal system, whereas discourse becomes ‘more autonomous’ in the TL in relation to the SL as discourse progresses towards exposition of the clinical aspects of the topics treated (symptoms, signs, diagnoses, therapies, remedies, etc.). The use of extra, often unnecessary, elements, to convey the concepts included in the STs was identified in the TTs, even when fewer phrasal components would have been sufficient to communicate the meanings efficiently and clearly in the TL. However, albeit in very few cases, the presence of extra elements in the TTs is also due to a need for discourse clarity, as strict obedience to the structure and amount of elements included in the SL texts would not have produced an adequate and ‘acceptable’ text in the TL. Moreover, in the Italian translations recourse to paraphrase and clarification was identified as a means of shifting attention to a given aspect of the topic dealt with. From a terminological point of view, a comparison of source and target languages displays differences in the use of some terms as regards their belonging either to common language or to specialized lexicon. In some cases, where the English texts use words and expressions taken from general communication, the Italian translations deploy terms belonging to the specialized lexicon as equivalents. Finally, the constant use, in the TTs, of the deontic modal verb *dovere* (must) in the present indicative form to translate the conditional *should* in the STs makes the argumentation more effective from a pedagogical perspective, as it causes a change from what may be perceived as a ‘recommendation’ in the SL to what is understood as a guideline or an instruction in the TL.

The Italian translations investigated in this study offer an example of the extent to which specialized translation can be a process of recontextualization where several adjustments are made, including omissions, additions, paraphrases, clarifications, re-

formulations, as well as variations that are carried out according to the discourse goals to be accomplished in the TL. In this respect, further research should be carried out on Netter's 13-volume collection to see whether the linguistic aspects identified in this study can also be found in medical topics other than the ones explored here, to mention only one of the innumerable features that could be scrutinized in such a broad work.

It is hoped that this study can represent the beginning of a path, within ESP for medical purposes, that can provide Italian sports sciences undergraduates – and all learners concerned with health-related issues – with useful suggestions to understand medical material in English and translate it correctly into Italian, and, conversely, support them in text production in English, in compliance with the linguistic rules and conventions of both languages. In this regard, in addition to other types of linguistic activities, excerpts from Netter's texts and corresponding Italian translations are recommended as parallel text corpora to be used to find terminological equivalents and for effective classroom translation activities, including back translation. They provide learners with an important example of terminological precision and first-hand comparison between different discourse styles and aesthetic conventions. Finally, Netter's timeless work and its Italian translations should be taken into account for word alignment multilingual construction projects, also for the benefit of professional translators engaged in the medical domain.

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# A CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF FREEDOM WRITERS: DUBBING EMOTIONAL UPHEAVALS FROM US ENGLISH(ES) INTO ITALIAN

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## **Abstract**

Within the field of English for Psychological Studies, expressive writing is a very common practice. Following Smyth and Pennebaker (2008), there is reason to believe that when people transform their feelings and thoughts about personally upsetting experiences into language, their physical and mental health often improves. In this paper, the screenplay of *Freedom Writers* (LaGravenese 2007) is analysed, a film about a young teacher thrown into a class of at-risk students during the Los Angeles riots of 1992. The name comes from the fact the students are given diaries in which to write whatever they want, which can be private or read by the teacher. They write about their family situations, their feelings, and their being at-risk teens, while experiencing cultural, ethnic and racial tensions. For the lexical analysis of the screenplay, I have relied on the perspective proposed by Pennebaker and Chung (2007), based on four categories: “negative-emotion words”, “positive-emotion words”, “causal words”, and “insight words”. This study is also cross-cultural, as the Italian dubbing (by Valerio Piccolo under the direction of Valeria Nardini, only for home video) is compared to the source screenplay, characterized by diatopic and diastratic variations of American English. In particular, the students speak a socially marked variety of US English, an idiolect which is rich in features denoting in-group identity, often combined with low social status, such as slang words (generally associated with an urban street culture), cursing and taboo words. As will be shown, the Italian dubbed version is a more standardized and socially flattened text, characterized by more neutral colloquial markers.

## **1. Introduction: expressive writing and its position within English for Psychological Studies**

Within the field of English for Psychological Studies, the practice and analysis of expressive writing is a very common issue, as transposing emotional upheavals into language not only improves physical and mental health, but also leads to a conscientious use of language skills. The significance of being able to translate emotions into words has been highlighted by numerous studies since the publication of Freud’s psychoanalytic theory (see Solano 2007: 9-10), but the ones that interest us most, for the purpose of this paper, are those about the so-called “Expressive Writing Paradigm” (Pennebaker and Beall 1986) developed primarily by Professor J. Pennebaker in the late 1980s.

Pennebaker began his research with an interest in the impact of traumatic experiences on physical and mental health. He had the impression that expressing feelings and thoughts about a traumatic event in words enabled people to avoid or improve issues concerning mental and physical health. Since his initial experiments, this paradigm has been utilized in many studies that have confirmed Pennebaker's original findings, thus supporting a key principle of health psychology which holds that there is an important connection between emotions, physical and/or mental health, and behavioural changes. For instance, Pennebaker's writing paradigm has been applied to school performance, with students reporting improvements in grades following a writing experience.

This is what is shown in the film *Freedom Writers*, released in 2006, written and directed by Richard LaGravenese, and based on the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* (1999) by The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell. The film tells the real-life story of a novice teacher, Erin Gruwell, a white, educated female who is given the task of teaching first year students at Woodrow Wilson High School, in Long Beach, Los Angeles, in 1994<sup>1</sup>. The school was previously a high-achievement school, but a system of Voluntary Integration led to 75% of high achievers transferring elsewhere. The students now comprise a variety of ethnic groups considered as unteachable by the Government; racial tensions are high, set against the backdrop of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, during which minority communities were outraged following the police acquittal after the beating of Rodney King<sup>2</sup>.

The film characters are portrayed in negative stereotypes; racist, violent, uneducated, involved in guns, gangs and drugs. To gain an insight into her students' lives and thoughts, and probably believing that expressive writing might help them change their mindsets and their lifestyles, the English teacher Erin Gruwell practised a variant of the aforementioned "Expressive writing paradigm", issuing her students with diaries and encouraging them to record their daily thoughts, feelings and experiences.

## 2. Method

Through a quantitative as well as qualitative descriptive method, based on the lexical analysis of the screenplay by Richard LaGravenese, five extracts will be taken into consideration on a double level, regarding both the content of expressive writing and the cultural transference from the screenplay (our source text, ST) into the dubbed Italian version (our target text, TT).

For the lexical analysis of the screenplay, I have relied on the perspective proposed by Pennebaker and Chung (2007) who developed a computer programme called LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count), which is a transparent text analysis programme

<sup>1</sup> In 1998, after teaching for only four years, Gruwell left Wilson High School and became a Distinguished Teacher in Residence at California State University, Long Beach. Gruwell later went on to start the Freedom Writers Foundation, which aspires to spread the Freedom Writers method across the country.

<sup>2</sup> Rodney Glen King (April 2, 1965 - June 17, 2012) was an American construction worker turned writer and activist after surviving an act of police brutality by the Los Angeles Police Department. The four officers were tried on charges of use of excessive force; three were acquitted, the jury failed to reach a verdict on one charge for the fourth. Within hours of the acquittals, the 1992 Los Angeles riots started, sparked by outrage among African Americans over the verdicts and longstanding social issues.

that counts words in psychologically meaningful categories, such as negative or positive emotion words, causal words or insight words<sup>3</sup>. The way that the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count programme works is fairly simple. Basically, it reads a given text and counts the percentage of words that reflect different emotions, thinking styles, social concerns, and even parts of speech. Because LIWC was developed by researchers with interests in social, clinical, health, and cognitive psychology, the language categories were created in order to capture people's social and psychological states.

The LIWC programme includes a text analysis module along with a group of built-in dictionaries. The text analysis module compares each word in the text against a user-defined dictionary. As described below, the dictionary identifies which words are associated with which psychologically-relevant categories. After the processing module has read and accounted for all words in a given text, it calculates the percentage of total words that match each of the dictionary categories. For example, if LIWC analysed a speech consisting of 2,000 words and compared them to the built-in LIWC 2015 dictionary, it might find that there were 150 pronouns and 84 positive emotion words used. It would convert these numbers to percentages, 7.5% pronouns and 4.2% positive emotion words.

This software is very useful for text analysis, but the study of word use as a reflection of psychological state is in its earliest stages. LIWC has one main weakness: it ignores figurative language and contexts, such as sarcasm, irony and idioms (Newman *et al.* 2003: 672; Hauch *et al.* 2014: 330), thus leading to miscoding. This is the reason why I have also manually explored the underlying meaning of some expressions, as used by students in their journal entries, and compared the film script to the Italian dubbed version.

As will be shown, the students/writers use a socially marked variety of US English, an idiolect which is rich in features denoting in-group identity, often combined with low social status, such as slang words (generally associated with an urban street culture), cursing and taboo words, whereas the Italian dubbed version is a more standardized and socially flattened text, characterized by more neutral colloquial markers.

### 3. Results

The degree to which the students/writers express emotion, how they express emotion, and the valence of that emotion can tell us how they are experiencing the world. As we know, people react in radically different ways to traumatic or important events; how they react may say a lot about how they cope with the event and the extent to which the event plays a role in the future, as people's emotional response is at the heart of reacting and coping with events.

<sup>3</sup> The LIWC software programme uses an internal dictionary of 4,500 words to classify words found in text files into over 70 categories. The categories include general descriptors (e.g. word count, words per sentence), linguistic components (e.g. adverbs, conjunctions), psychological processes (e.g. social and cognitive processes), and non-psychological processes (e.g. work). After processing the text files, the LIWC programme creates an output file containing variables that reflect each LIWC category as a percentage of total word count. For example, if a transcript received a score of 10.2 on the adverbs LIWC category, this would indicate that 10.2% of the total number of words classified in the transcript were adverbs.

### 3.1. Quantitative analysis

What follows is the quantitative analysis (using the LIWC programme) of the extracts chosen for our corpus. The data analysis expresses clearly our characters' emotional upheavals.

The traditional LIWC dimension reflects the percentage of total words within the text provided. The Summary Variables are research-based composites that have been converted to 100-point scales where 0 = very low along the dimension and 100 = very high.

*Analytic* refers to analytical or formal thinking.

*Clout* singles out writing that is authoritative, confident, and exhibits leadership.

*Authenticity* refers to writing that is personal and honest.

*Emotional tone* is scored so that higher numbers are more positive and upbeat and lower numbers are more negative.

#### Text 1 (243 words, personal writing)

*Clive was my boy. He had my back plenty of times. Me and him was like one fist. One army. I sat there till the police came. But when they come, all they see is a dead body, a gun and a nigga. They took me to juvenile hall. First night was the scariest. Inmates banging on the walls, throwing up their gang signs, yelling out who they were, where they're from. I cried my first night. Can't never let nobody know that I spent the next few years in and out of cells. Every day I'd worry, "When will I be free?"*

*Every time I jump somebody in and make someone a part of our gang, it's another baptism. They give us their life, we give them a new one. I've lost many friends who have died in an undeclared war. To the soldiers and me, it's all worth it. Risk your life dodging bullets, pulling triggers. It's all worth it.*

*My moms kicked me out when I got jumped into the gang life. But I'd like her to see me graduate. I'd like to be 18.*

*Ms. G sent our letters all the way to Amsterdam to Miep Gies, herself. When Ms. G made up her mind about something, there was no stopping her, man, for real. And after we raised the money to bring her to Long Beach, there she was. But, damn, I didn't expect her to be so small.*

TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION	YOUR DATA	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING
I-words (I, Me, My)	8.2	8.70
Social words	16.0	8.69
Positive emotions	0.4	2.57
Negative emotions	3.3	2.12
Cognitive processes	8.2	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>		
Analytic	31.0	44.88
Clout	70.3	37.02
Authenticity	70.2	76.01
Emotional tone	1.9	38.60

*Table 1.* Text 1

**Text 2 (458 words, personal writing)**

*In America, a girl can be crowned a princess for her beauty and her grace. But an Aztec princess is chosen for her blood... ..to fight for her people, as Papi and his father fought against those who say we are less than they are, who say we are not equal in beauty and in blessings. It was the first day of school, and I was waiting for my father to take me to the bus. And I saw the war for the first time. They took my father for retaliation. He was innocent, but they took him, because he was respected by my people. They called my people a gang because we fight for our America. When I got my initiation into the gang life I became third generation. They beat you so you won't break. They are my family.*

*In Long Beach, it all comes down to what you look like. If you're Latino or Asian or black, you could get blasted any time you walk out your door. We fight each other for territory. We kill each other over race, pride and respect. We fight for what is ours. They think they're winning by jumping me now, but soon they're all going down. War has been declared.*

*If it was up to me I wouldn't even be in school. My probation officer threatened me. Telling me it was either school or boot camp. Dumbass! He thinks that the problem. Going on in Long Beach aren't going to touch me at Wilson. My PO doesn't understand that schools are like the city and the city is just like a prison, all of them divided into separate sections, depending on tribes. There's Little Cambodia. The Ghetto. Wonder Bread Land. And us, South of the Border or Little Tijuana. That's just the way it is, and everyone knows it. But soon enough, you have little wannabes trying to hit you up at school, demanding respect they haven't earned. It looks like this, one tribe drifting quietly to another's territory without respect, as if to claim what isn't theirs. An outsider looking in would never see it, but we could feel it. Something was coming.*

*Paco was scared. In the car, he said, "You can't go against your own people, your own blood." The same word my father used so many times. Only I saw Paco. The others were turned away. So when the police questioned me, I knew I had to protect him.*

*I don't even know how this war started. It's just two sides that tripped each other way back. Who cares about the history behind it? I am my father's daughter, and when they call me to testify, I will protect my own, no matter what.*

<b>TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION</b>	<b>YOUR DATA</b>	<b>AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING</b>
I-words (I, Me, My)	6.6	8.70
Social words	17.0	8.69
Positive emotions	2.6	2.57
Negative emotions	2.8	2.12
Cognitive processes	12.4	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>		
Analytic	27.1	44.88
Clout	74.4	37.02
Authenticity	79.7	76.01
Emotional tone	22.4	38.60

**Table 2.** Text 2

**Text 3 (226 words, personal writing)**

*My brother taught me what the life is for a young black man. Pimp, deal, whatever. Learn what colors to wear. Gang banners. You can sell to one corner, but you can't sell another. Learn to be quiet. The wrong word can get you popped.*

*At the beginning of the tour, they give you a card with a child's picture on it. You could find out who they were and what camp they were sent to. And at the end of the tour, you could find out if they survived. I got a little girl from Italy.*

*She lost her whole family at the camps. She came to this country with 5 \$ in her pocket and a newborn baby. I'll never forget these people. I can't believe Ms. G did all of this for us.*

*Ms. G made us read Twelve Angry Men. It's all about how this one juror helped to turn the hearts of 11 jurors. It made me feel hopeful. At 2:00 today, my brother was given a verdict on his own trial. No O.J. Dream Team, just a court appointed attorney who probably thought his ass was guilty. And I realized Twelve Angry Men was just a book and nothing more. My brother got 15 years to life. Justice don't mean the bad guy goes to jail. It just means somebody pays for the crime.*

TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION	YOUR DATA	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING
I-words (I, Me, My)	3.9	8.70
Social words	16.5	8.69
Positive emotions	0.4	2.57
Negative emotions	2.6	2.12
Cognitive processes	11.3	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>		
Analytic	67.1	44.88
Clout	87	37.02
Authenticity	16.5	76.01
Emotional tone	4.2	38.60

**Table 3.** Text 3

**Text 4 (46 words, personal writing)**

*At 16, I've seen more dead bodies than a mortician. Every time I step out my door I face the risk of being shot. To the rest of the world it's just another dead body on a street corner. They don't know that he was my friend.*

**Text 5 (266 words, personal writing)**

*This summer was the worst summer in my short 14 years of life. "It all started with a phone call. "My mother was crying and begging, "asking for more time as if she were gasping for her last breath of air. "She held me as tight as she could and cried. "Her tears hit my shirt like bullets and told me we were being evicted. "She kept apologizing to me. I thought, 'I have no home. "I should have asked for something less expensive at Christmas. " "On the morning of the eviction, a hard knock on the door woke me up. "The sheriff was there to do his job. "I looked up at the sky, waiting for something to happen. "My mother has no family to lean on,*

*no money coming in. "Why bother coming to school or getting good grades if I'm homeless? "The bus stops in front of the school. I feel like throwing up. "I'm wearing clothes from last year, some old shoes and no new haircut. "I kept thinking I'd get laughed at. "Instead, I'm greeted by a couple of friends "who were in my English class last year. "And it hits me, Mrs. Gruwell, "my crazy English teacher from last year, "is the only person that made me think of hope. "Talking with friends about last year's English and our trips, "I began to feel better. "I receive my schedule and the first teacher is Mrs. Gruwell in Room 203. "I walk into the room and feel as though "all the problems in life are not so important anymore. "I am home."*

TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION	YOUR DATA	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING
I-words (I, Me, My)	10.6	8.70
Social words	6.4	8.69
Positive emotions	0.0	2.57
Negative emotions	2.1	2.12
Cognitive processes	6.4	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>		
Analytic	76.0	44.88
Clout	19.7	37.02
Authenticity	96.5	76.01
Emotional tone	4.4	38.60

*Table 4.* Text 4

TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION	YOUR DATA	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING
I-words (I, Me, My)	10.1	8.70
Social words	9.4	8.69
Positive emotions	1.9	2.57
Negative emotions	2.6	2.12
Cognitive processes	8.6	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>		
Analytic	70.1	44.88
Clout	34.0	37.02
Authenticity	90.4	76.01
Emotional tone	15.3	38.60

*Table 5.* Text 5

A few comments on the extracts above will follow.

As Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010) write, the language of lower-status individuals (our students) is mostly self-focused and tentative, as opposed to higher-status individuals who speak more often and freely make statements that involve others.

- Pronoun use is very important in showing the quality of a close relationship, because it shows how individuals refer to each other. People who are experiencing physical or emotional pain tend to concentrate their attention on themselves and subsequently use more first-person singular pronouns (“I”). Surprisingly, first-person plural (“we”) has not been found to be related to higher relationship quality, instead use of second person (“you”) is more important in predicting lower-quality relationships.

- The use of causal words (e.g. *because, effect, hence*) and insight words (e.g. *think, know, consider*), two subcategories of cognitive mechanisms, in describing a past event can suggest the active process of reappraisal. In a reanalysis of six expressive writing studies, Pennebaker, Mayne, and Francis (1997) found that increasing use of causal and insight words led to greater health improvements.

- Sex differences in language use show that women’s speech is richer in social words whilst men use more complex language. A meta-analysis of the texts from many studies shows that the biggest language differences between males and females lie in the complexity of the language used and the degree of social references (Newman *et al.* 2008). Males made greater use of long words, articles, and prepositions. Females made greater use of social words, and pronouns, including first-person singular and third-person pronouns, both singular and plural. There was also a frequent use of swearwords, feeling words and present tense verbs. The fact that there are predictable differences in the language used by the two sexes makes it possible to predict the sex of the user without prior knowledge.

- Social and emotional language has also differed with respect to extraversion; people who scored high on extraversion used more social words, more positive emotion, and fewer negative emotion words.

- Depressed and suicidal individuals have shown they were more self-focused, expressed more negative emotion and sometimes used more death-related words.

Let us now take into consideration just Text 1, both in English and in Italian, as a sample of comparative quantitative categorization. We do not know which words (from our extracts) have been placed in each of the psychologically meaningful categories shown below.

What we do know is that the English script is much more personal, as there are many more I-words (*my, me, I*). Nonetheless, this could be explained by the fact that the subject in English is almost always explicit, whereas in Italian this is not so.

The data referring to positive emotions, as was foreseeable, are very low, whereas those referring to negative emotions are higher than the average in the English script and, interestingly, equal to zero in the Italian. This probably shows the software indifference to negative connotations in figurative language. As for emotional tone, we know that higher numbers are more positive (as in the Italian dubbing), whereas lower numbers are more negative (as is the case of the English script).

To conclude, we are undoubtedly standing on the threshold of a new era of language analysis. However, from a cross-cultural perspective, we have deemed it necessary not to limit our results to the categorization of emotional upheavals in the film script, but

TRADITIONAL LIWC DIMENSION	YOUR DATA <i>English script</i>	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING English	YOUR DATA <i>Italian dubbing</i>	AVERAGE FOR PERSONAL WRITING Italian
I-words (I, Me, My)	8.2	8.70	0.6	8.70
Social words	16.0	8.69	2.8	8.69
Positive emotions	0.4	2.57	1.1	2.57
Negative emotions	3.3	2.12	0.0	2.12
Cognitive processes	8.2	12.52	0.0	12.52
<b>SUMMARY VARIABLES</b>				
Analytic	31.0	44.88	93.9	44.88
Clout	70.3	37.02	56.6	37.02
Authenticity	70.2	76.01	1.0	76.01
Emotional tone	1.9	38.60	46.2	38.60

**Table 6.** Text 1 as a sample of comparative quantitative categorization

also to consider what the underlying meaning of some expressions are, as well as which linguistic strategies have been used to convey the characters' feelings in a different context of culture.

#### 4. The underlying meaning of journal entries and the cross-cultural transferability of language <sup>4</sup>

This case study shows that meaning is not something 'carried' by a language, but something 'negotiated' between viewers from their own contexts of cultures. Each audience is hence bound to receive a text according to their own expectations; this is why any translation has to be considered as a form of "manipulation" (Hermans 1985), "mediation" (Katan 1999, 2009) or "refraction" (Lefevere 1982/2004) between two different linguacultures (Agar 1994). In the light of these concerns, before analysing dialogues, some general considerations on the non-standard American English spoken by most of the characters are in order. The students speak a socially marked variety of US English, an idiolect which is rich in features denoting in-group identity, often combined with low social status, such as slang words (generally associated with an urban street culture), cursing and taboo words. On the contrary, the Italian dubbed version is a more standardized and socially flattened text, characterized by a more neutral language. Inspired by the teacher's words, each student began to keep his or her own anonymous diary, and after a period of time, they gave Erin Gruwell permission to read their entries. Erin was then guided to focus on their emotions and realized that some of them had experienced very traumatic events in their lives, and had recorded tormenting stories of drug use, or struggles with physical and mental abuse.

<sup>4</sup> This section follows on previous research conducted on the film dubbing: see Leotta (2018).

For example, a young Cambodian girl, Sindy, who used to be withdrawn, isolated, and insecure, is a noteworthy character. She relates how she left Cambodia as a refugee, and that her family was separated as a result of war. She was forced to move to the United States as an immigrant and was completely overwhelmed by that experience. She could not understand how Cambodians who had escaped the war were then warring again, this time with Hispanics. It is clear that this young girl was experiencing ‘Culture Shock’, which is defined as “the emotional and physiological reaction of high activation that is brought about by sudden immersion in a new and different culture” (Barna 1976, quoted in Bennett 1998). She was actively experiencing acculturation and having difficulties with it.

Within the limits of this paper, only the five extracts analysed quantitatively will be taken into consideration.

To address the issue of the cross-cultural transferability of language, two perspectives will be used as models: Kwieciński’s (2001) and Díaz Cintas and Remael’s (2007). The former (2001: 157) proposed a taxonomy based on four procedures: “Exoticising procedure”, “Rich explicatory procedure”, “Recognised exoticisation”, and “Assimilative procedure”. Six years later, Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007) proposed a more clear-cut set of strategies based on Díaz Cintas (2003) and Santamaria Guinot (2001), namely ‘loan’, ‘calque’, ‘explicitation’, ‘substitution’, ‘transposition’, ‘lexical recreation’, ‘compensation’, ‘omission’, and ‘addition’. This taxonomy of strategies for the translation of culture-bound terms in AVT, conceived for subtitling in particular, has been adjusted to dubbing and used as a basis for this analysis. These two classifications have the merit of being both detailed and agile enough to serve as valid tools for analysis.

Within the limits of this paper, we are obviously not concerned with the social and individual problems that the film tackles, but only with the role that language plays in portraying the characters and their milieu.

For instance, an African-American student, Marcus, confided that he had witnessed his childhood friend accidentally shooting himself, but he was the one to be accused and incarcerated in a juvenile institution. The effect of his negative experience was that the young man had become outwardly aggressive and confrontational. His diary allowed him to express his feeling through poetry and hip-hop, revealing a sensitive, caring nature. This behaviour is usually typified as ‘face-saving’; a concept devised by Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) where ‘face’ is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”. His aggression was a way of ‘face saving’, of not wanting others to see his true personality.

#### 4.1. *Translations*

Let us now take translated versions into consideration.

### **Translations**

#### **Text 1**

*Clive era il mio amico. Mi aveva coperto un sacco di volte. Eravamo come una mano sola, io e lui, un esercito. Rimasi lì finché arrivò la polizia, ma quando arrivarono videro soltanto un cadavere, una pistola e un negro. Mi portarono al carcere minorile. La prima notte fu la più brutta. Detenuti che picchiavano sulle pareti, che indicavano a quale gang appartenevano,*

*che urlavano chi erano e da dove venivano. Ho pianto la prima notte. Non l'ha mai saputo nessuno. Gli anni dopo non facevo che entrare e uscire dal carcere. Ogni giorno mi domandavo: "Quando sarò libero?"*

*Ogni volta che picchio qualcuno per farlo entrare nella nostra gang è come un battesimo. Ti danno la loro vita, noi gliene diamo una nuova. Molti miei amici sono morti per una guerra non dichiarata. Io e i soldati pensiamo che ne vale la pena. Rischiare la vita, scansare proiettili, premere grilletti. Ne vale la pena. Mia madre mi ha cacciato di casa quando sono entrato in una gang, ma vorrei che mi vedesse diplomato. Voglio arrivare a diciott'anni.*

*Gruwell ha mandato le nostre lettere ad Amsterdam a Miep Gies in persona. Quando la Gruwell si mette in testa una cosa non c'è modo di fermarla, giuro. Poi abbiamo trovato i soldi per farla venire a Long Beach ed eccola qua. Cavolo, però, non me l'aspettavo così bassa<sup>5</sup>!*

### Commentary

From a lexical point of view,

- "boy" has been translated by *amico*. Actually, "boy" is informal. This level of informality is now lost;
- "like one fist" is a case of lexical recreation, which, nonetheless, gives the idea of feeling close to one another. In Italian, this simile is conveyed by a sort of calque, as there is no equivalent in the target language;
- "throwing up their gang signs" refers to gestures made with one's hands to signify what gang you are from. Gang signs can even get you killed if you make them in the wrong part of a town/city. Here again, there is a cultural gap, as in Italian this would not make sense, so explicitation was necessary;
- a "jump" is a one-sided fight, which is translated by *picchiare* (to beat). This can be considered a calque, as it is a sort of literal translation of a concept which is typical of urban street culture;
- the noun "moms" is the expression of a low social status, as the standard American English is "mom". Even this feature is lost in translation.

From a grammatical point of view,

- the verbs "come" and "see", as well as "be" are used in the base form; a case of double negative is worth noticing (*can't...nobody*). All this is typical of street language varieties. In the Italian dubbing these sociocultural references are lost, in favour of a heightening of the linguistic register;
- "I'd like" is translated by *Voglio* (I want), which gives more emphasis to the character's resolution;
- the verbs "made up" and "was" are also translated by the present tense. Here again, the use of the present tense conveys the idea of a concept that is always true.

<sup>5</sup> Clive was my friend. He had covered for me loads of times. We were like one hand, me and him, an army. I stayed there until the police arrived, but when they arrived, they saw only a corpse, a gun and a nigger. They took me to the juvenile detention centre. The first night was the worst. Inmates beating on the walls, identifying the gang they belonged to, screaming who they were and where they came from. I cried the first night. No one ever knew about it. In the following years, I did nothing but go in and out of prison. Every day I wondered, "When will I be free?" Every time I beat someone to let him into our gang it's like a baptism. They give you their life, we give them a new one. Many friends of mine died for an undeclared war. The soldiers and I think it's worth it. Risking your life, dodging bullets, pulling triggers. It's worth it. My mum threw me out of the house when I joined a gang, but I would like her to see me graduate. I want to reach 18. Gruwell sent our letters to Amsterdam, to Miep Gies in person. When Ms. Gruwell makes up her mind about something, there's no stopping her, I swear. Then we found the money to get her to come to Long Beach and here she is. Damn, but, I didn't expect her to be so short!

Another diary entry is that of Eva, a Hispanic girl who is also the film narrator. The following extracts reflect that she learned the concept of being racist. She had witnessed one of her gang members commit murder and was encouraged to blame it on an African-American boy who was also there at the scene, rather than tell the truth. She was told to protect “her own” and to blame the rival gang. After all, this is what had happened to her father, and it was time for her to win a victory. At first, Eva was willing to do this, but as time went on, her writing experience caused an internal conflict, until she realized that blaming someone else was not “the right thing” to do.

## Text 2

*In America, una ragazza può essere incoronata principessa per la sua bellezza e la sua grazia, ma una principessa azteca viene scelta per il sangue...di combattere per il suo popolo, così come papà e suo padre hanno combattuto contro chi dice che siamo inferiori a loro, che non siamo uguali quanto a bellezza e a doni ricevuti dal cielo.*

*Era il mio primo giorno di scuola e stavo aspettando che mio padre mi accompagnasse alla fermata dell'autobus. Quel giorno ho visto la guerra per la prima volta. Hanno preso mio padre per ritorsione. Non era colpevole, ma l'hanno preso perché era rispettato dalla mia gente. Siamo definiti una gang perché combattiamo per la nostra America. Io faccio parte della terza generazione che partecipa alla vita di una gang. Ti picchiano così non ti spezzerai. Sono loro la mia famiglia.*

*A Long Beach l'unica cosa che conta è il tuo aspetto. Se sei latino-americano, se sei asiatico o nero rischi che ti sparino ogni volta che esci di casa. Combattiamo gli uni contro gli altri per il territorio, ci uccidiamo per motivi di razza, orgoglio e di rispetto, combattiamo per quello che è nostro. Credono di vincere perché mi riempiono di calci e pugni, ma tra un po' faranno tutti una brutta fine. È stata dichiarata guerra.*

*Se fosse per me, non ci andrei proprio a scuola. Il mio assistente sociale mi ha minacciata. Ha detto: “O la scuola, o il riformatorio!” Che idiota! Lui pensa che i problemi di Long Beach non mi tocchino se sono alla Wilson. Il mio assistente non capisce che le scuole sono come la città e la città non è altro che una galera. Sono tutti divisi in zone separate, a seconda della tribù. C'è la piccola Cambogia, il ghetto nero, il paese dei latticini, e noi, a sud del confine, la piccola Tijuana. Così stanno le cose, lo sanno tutti. Però poi ci sono i ragazzini che si atteggiavano pretendendo un rispetto che non si sono guadagnati. Praticamente succede così: una tribù sconfina silenziosa in un altro territorio senza rispetto, quasi rivendicando quello che non le spetta. Uno che guarda da fuori non potrebbe mai accorgersene, ma noi lo sentiamo. Stava per succedere qualcosa.*

*Paco aveva paura. In macchina ha detto: “Non ti puoi mettere contro la tua gente, è il sangue del tuo sangue”. Le stesse parole che aveva usato tante volte mio padre! Solo io avevo visto Paco, gli altri erano di spalle e quando la polizia mi ha interrogata sapevo che avrei dovuto proteggerlo.*

*Non so neanche com'è cominciata questa guerra. So che due bande si sono scontrate un sacco di tempo fa. Chi se ne frega della storia che c'è dietro? Sono la figlia di mio padre e quando mi chiameranno a testimoniare proteggerò la mia gente, a qualsiasi costo<sup>6</sup>.*

<sup>6</sup> In America, a girl can be crowned princess for her beauty and grace, but an Aztec princess is chosen for her blood... to fight for her people, just as dad and his father fought against those who say that we are inferior to them, that we are not equal in beauty and gifts received from heaven. It was my first day of school and I was waiting for my dad to walk me to the bus stop. That day I saw war for the first time. They took my father for retaliation. He wasn't guilty, but they took him because he was respected by my people. We're called a gang because we fight for

## Commentary

From a lexical point of view,

- the Italian dubbing is more explicit (to the bus > *alla fermata dell'autobus*; + addition of *quel giorno*);
- he was innocent > *Non era colpevole*. The Italian dubbing is milder as an expression;
- "initiation" is translated by the explicitation *che partecipa alla vita di*;
- the verb "jumping" is impossible to translate literally, as the use of this verb is socially marked in US English and it has no equivalent in Italian; thus, an addition is necessary;
- the Ghetto > *Il ghetto nero*. Following Kwiecinski (2001), this is a case of assimilative procedure, as an equivalent expression is used even if the meaning is not exactly the same. Soon afterwards, instead, a case of recognized exoticization is found in "Wonder bread land", which is translated by *Il Paese dei latticini*;
- the adverb *praticamente* is added in the following sentence, to explain clearly the meaning of what is expressed by the sentence;
- finally, the verb "tripped" is a US slang word which is flattened by the Italian *scontrate* (fought).

Another film character writing a diary entry was Andre: at the beginning of the story, before starting his 'writing journey', he was very aggressive, and had his own concept of 'justice'. In one scene, he was shown selling drugs in order to make a living.

He even had trouble trusting figures in authority, which was shown when he asked Gruwell why she deserved his trust. At one point in the film, Andre began to doubt himself and gave himself a failing grade. Gruwell confronted him on this and told him that she believed in him and that he could do much better. Realizing that she cared, Andre was able to become a better student and person.

## Text 3

*Mio fratello mi ha insegnato cos'è la vita per un ragazzo nero. Fa' quello che devi fare, il pappà, lo spacciatore, quello che vuoi. Impara i colori delle gang, i confini delle gang. Quello*

our America. I'm part of the third generation that takes part in the life of a gang. They beat you so you won't break. They are my family! In Long Beach, all that matters is how you look. If you're Latin American, if you're Asian or black, you risk getting shot every time you leave the house. We fight each other over territory, we kill each other over race, pride and respect, we fight for what's ours. They believe they will win because they kick and punch me, but soon they will all end badly. War has been declared. If it were up to me, I wouldn't go to school at all. My social worker threatened me. He said, "Either school or reformatory!" What an idiot! He thinks problems in Long Beach don't affect me if I'm at Wilson's. My assistant doesn't understand that schools are like the city and the city is nothing but a jail. They are all divided into separate areas, depending on the tribe. There's Little Cambodia, the black ghetto, the Dairy Country, and us, to the south of the border, Little Tijuana. That's the way it is, everybody knows. But then there are the kids who pose as people who demand respect that they didn't earn. Basically, it happens like this: a tribe quietly invades another territory without respect, almost demanding what is not due to them. Someone looking from the outside would never notice, but we feel it. Something was going to happen. Paco was afraid. In the car, he said: "You can't go against your people, it's your blood". The same words that my father had used so many times! Only I had seen Paco, the others had their back turned, and when the Police questioned me, I knew I should have protected him. I don't even know how this war started. I know that two gangs fought a long time ago. Who cares about the story that lies behind? I'm my father's daughter and when they call me to testify, I will protect my people, at all costs.

che puoi dire a un angolo non lo puoi dire all'altro. Impara a stare zitto. Una parola sbagliata e sei morto.

All'inizio della visita ti danno una tessera con la foto di un bambino. C'è scritto chi era e a quale campo era stato assegnato. Alla fine della visita ti dicono se è sopravvissuto. A me è capitata una ragazzina italiana.

Ha perso la famiglia nei campi di concentramento. E' venuta in questo Paese con 5 dollari in tasca e un bimbo appena nato. Non dimenticherò mai queste persone. E' incredibile. La Gruwell ha fatto tutto questo per noi.

La Gruwell ci ha fatto leggere "La parola ai giurati". Parla di un giurato che è rivolto al cuore degli altri 11. Mi ha fatto sperare! Alle due di oggi c'è stata la sentenza del processo di mio fratello. Niente celebrità come Dow Jey, solo un avvocato d'ufficio che pensava che fosse colpevole, e ho capito che "La parola ai giurati" era solo un libro. Niente di più. Mio fratello ha preso 15 anni! Giustizia non vuol dire che i cattivi vanno in galera, vuol dire solo che qualcuno deve pagare<sup>7</sup>.

### Commentary

- "Learn what colors to wear" does not make sense in Italian, thus an addition is needed, which enables the Italian audience to understand which "colors" we are referring to;
- further on, "gang banners" is translated by *I confini delle gang* (gang borders), which is totally different. This is a case of substitution, probably due to technical constraints, or perhaps because the concept of gangs waving banners is strange to Italian culture. The Italian dubbing, in this diary, is rich in cases of substitution and deviations, such as *sell* > *dire* (to say). In this case, the reference to selling drugs is lost in translation, in favour of a heightening of the linguistic register. The same is true for "popped" > *morto* (dead);
- another cultural reference is Ms. G > *la Gruwell*. In students' idiolect, teachers can be called by their initial letters, in Italian culture this practice does not exist, not even in low social status classes;
- the "Dream Team" refers to the team of trial lawyers that represented O.J. Simpson in his 1995 trial for the murder of his former wife. According to Kwiecinski's model (2001), this is an example of assimilative procedure (an equivalent phrase is used, even if the Italian translation is meaningless). This case of substitution (following Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007), probably due to technical constraints, conveys a foreignizing effect;
- his ass was guilty > *che fosse colpevole*. In urban street culture, cursing and taboo words are very common. This reference is lost in Italian dubbing.

Another film character worth noticing is Jamal. At the beginning of the film, Jamal believed that school was a waste of time, and is seen fighting with Andre. One of his classmates drew a racist picture of him as a cruel joke. He had a tough life. After

<sup>7</sup> My brother taught me what life is like for a black boy. Do what you have to do, pimp, pusher, whatever you want. Learn the gang colours, the gang borders. What you can say at one corner, you can't say at the other. Learn to shut up. One wrong word and you are dead. At the beginning of the tour you are given a card with the photo of a child. It says who he/she was and what camp he/she was assigned to. At the end of the tour they tell you if he/she survived. I got an Italian girl. She lost her family in the concentration camps. She came to this country with 5 dollars in her pocket and a newborn baby. I'll never forget these people! It's incredible. Ms Gruwell did all this for us. Ms Gruwell let us read "Twelve Angry Men". It is about a juror who addressed the hearts of the other 11. It gave me hope! At two o'clock today, my brother's trial sentence was passed. No celebrities such as Dow Jey, just a public defender who thought he was guilty, and I understood that "Twelve Angry Men" was just a book. Nothing more. My brother got 15 years! Justice does not mean that the bad guys go to jail, it just means that someone has to pay.

his father left him at a young age, Jamal was solely responsible for taking care of his mother. Even though his mother could not look at him without seeing her ex-husband, Jamal still loved her immensely, and ended up selling drugs to take care of her. With the support of Gruwell, Jamal became more responsible for his actions and gave up selling drugs.

#### Text 4

*A 16 anni ho visto più cadaveri di uno delle pompe funebri. Ogni volta che esco di casa rischio di prendere una pallottola. Per il mondo esterno, è solo un altro cadavere all'angolo della strada. Loro non sanno che era mio amico<sup>8</sup>.*

#### Commentary

- Being shot > *prendere una pallottola* (get a bullet). It is more explicit and probably less direct as an expression. Later in the text, the translation they > *loro* is a literal translation or calque, but it gives a foreignizing effect as it does not refer to anyone in particular, whereas in the source text the reference is clear to the members of a fighting gang.

The results of the students' experiences were the foundation of a life-changing, spiritually enriching 'journey' that began with a symbolic "toast for change" and is still ongoing. During the toast, a student (Miguel) reads his diary entry, as reported below.

#### Text 5

*L'estate è stata la peggiore estate nella mia breve vita di quattordicenne. È cominciato tutto con una telefonata. Mia madre piangeva, implorava, continuava a chiedere tempo, come se stesse aspirando l'ultima boccata d'aria, mi teneva stretto più che poteva e piangeva. Le sue lacrime mi colpivano come pallottole, diceva che ci avevano dato lo sfratto, continuava a chiedermi di perdonarla. "Non abbiamo una casa", ho pensato. Avrei dovuto chiedere un regalo meno costoso a Natale. La mattina dello sfratto mi sono svegliato che bussavano alla porta. Era lo sceriffo che era venuto a fare il suo lavoro. Ho alzato lo sguardo al cielo, aspettando che succedesse qualcosa. Mia madre non ha una famiglia su cui contare, nessuna entrata economica. A che serve venire a scuola e prendere buoni voti se non ho una casa? L'autobus ferma davanti la scuola, sento che sto per vomitare. Ho addosso i vestiti dello scorso anno, un paio di scarpe vecchie, non ho i capelli tagliati. Penso che mi rideranno dietro e invece mi vengono incontro due amici che erano al corso con me e allora penso che la Signora Gruwell, la mia pazza insegnante dello scorso anno, è l'unica persona che mi ha fatto pensare alla speranza. Parlo con gli amici delle lezioni dell'anno scorso e delle nostre gite e mi comincio a sentire meglio. Mi consegnano l'orario di lezione e la prima insegnante è la signora Gruwell, aula 203. Allora entro nella stanza e mi sembra che tutti i problemi della mia vita non siano più tanto importanti. Sono a casa<sup>9</sup>.*

<sup>8</sup> At 16 I have seen more corpses than an undertaker. Every time I leave home, I risk getting a bullet. To the outside world, it's just another corpse at the street corner. They don't know he was my friend.

<sup>9</sup> The summer was the worst summer in my short life as a 14-year-old. It all started with a phone call. My mother cried, begged, kept asking for time, as if she were sucking up the last breath of air, holding me as tight as she could, and cried. Her tears hit me like bullets, she said we had been evicted, she kept on asking me to forgive her. "We have no home", I thought. I should have asked for a cheaper Christmas present. On the morning of the eviction, I woke up when someone was

## Commentary

- A hard knock on the door > *bussavano*. As is evident, the omission of the adjective “hard” conveys less violence to the scene;
- English class > *al corso* (at the course). Here, another cultural reference is impossible to translate, thus leading to a case of omission. In fact, English in the US is the main subject in school, as is Italian in Italy, so translating *classe di Inglese* in Italian would be a different concept, as English is studied as a foreign language and the teacher has not the same leading role as the teacher of Italian. The same is true in the case of “English teacher” > *insegnante* (teacher);
- in addition, the word “crazy” (currently coded by the LIWC as an anger word) has been miscoded as well as the meaning and intent of the utterance “my crazy English teacher”, which is actually a compliment that has no equivalent in Italian;
- “it hits me” is another expression denoting street culture. The Italian “allora penso” is well translated but does not convey the same low social reference. Soon afterwards, instead, he calls the teacher “Mrs. Gruwell”, being the only student in class who calls her by her full name to convey the maximum of respect for her.

To conclude, the film title *Freedom Writers* is very appropriate, because it introduces students who were unable to express their feelings and emotions previously and who wanted to free themselves, and, through their diaries, had the courage to fight their fears and neglected feelings<sup>10</sup>.

To validate Pennebaker’s hypothesis on expressive writing, the film ends with a note that Gruwell successfully brought many of her students to graduation and college.

### 4.2. Theoretical discussion on the Italian dubbed version

Non-standard language varieties pose serious problems in cultural transition. In the extracts taken into consideration, as in the whole film script, we have noticed how culture-specific expressions and the idiolect spoken by the low social status film characters often display forms that rarely have equivalents (i.e. forms that are comparable in meaning and scope) in a different language.

In our case study, from a cross-cultural perspective, it was probably difficult for the translator to find in Italian culture parallel situations to the complicated reality of gang life and racial tensions of Los Angeles in the 1990s. Similarly, from a cross-linguistic perspective, finding similar modes of expression was unlikely to have been an easy task; this explains the ‘flattening’ effect due to the use of more neutral colloquial markers. This is especially the case of slang vocabulary, which is typical of a restricted speech

knocking at the door. It was the sheriff who had come to do his job. I looked up at the sky, waiting for something to happen. My mother hasn’t any family to count on, nor income. What’s the point of coming to school and getting good grades if I haven’t got a house? The bus stops in front of the school, I feel I am about to throw up. I am wearing clothes from last year, a pair of old shoes, and no haircut. I think they will laugh at me, and instead, two friends who were at the course with me, come towards me and then I think Mrs Gruwell, my crazy teacher from last year, is the only person who made me think of hope. I talk to my friends about last year’s lessons and about our trips and I start feeling better. They give me the timetable and the first teacher is Mrs. Gruwell, room 203. Then I enter the room and it seems to me that all the problems in my life are no longer so important. I am at home.

<sup>10</sup> The group name *Freedom Writers* is also in honour of *Freedom Riders* like Jim Zwerg who rode buses to challenge the limits of intolerance.

community. However, as shown in detail above, some strategies can be recognized to compensate for cultural or linguistic gaps, i.e. explicitation, lexical recreation, addition, assimilation, substitution, omission, to name but a few (following Kwieciński's (2001) and Díaz Cintas and Remael's (2007) models).

Another element we have taken into consideration in explaining linguistic phenomena in the transition between source and target texts is the fact that the translation of a film script entails technical constraints connected with the dubbing process, e.g. labial movements and synchrony with the images in the film, which inevitably leads to certain 'losses' in connotation.

Following Bertuccelli Papi and Lenci (2007), lexicon is a complex dynamic system, and the translation strategies used are the result of choices along a hierarchical scale of naturalness/markedness. It is along this scale that the translator has achieved the goal of giving voice to the sadness, anger, frustration and initial sense of impotence of the film characters.

## 5. Discussion

According to Jedlowski (2000: 194 my translation), "we are a narrating species". This is probably due to the fact that telling or writing one's experiences forces people to re-evaluate their life circumstances (Pennebaker and Chung 2007). Furthermore, writing one's experiences is significant because the "mere act of writing demands a certain degree of structure, as well as the basic labelling or acknowledging of their emotions" (*ibid.*: 279), which puts in motion different cognitive changes that result in alteration of unhealthy behaviours and improvements in people's health. Even if there is still not a comprehensive theory that can explain why this happens, it is important to consider the multiple positive effects that the expressive writing procedure has on people in the act of writing, which adds to the fact that readers/viewers can empathize with the pain, loss and happy moments of the writers.

By giving structure to an emotional experience (telling a story), by writing it as if it were a story that the person is telling, it is more likely that the individual will benefit from it, instead of writing it in a disorganized way. This happens because "the degree to which individuals are able to cognitively organize the event into a coherent narrative is a marker that the event has achieved knowledge status" (*ibid.*: 277), so by analysing the language used in this kind of expressive writing programme, we can now understand to what degree the writers have come to accept their emotions.

After analysing all these aspects, we can go back to the question we previously asked: "Why does expressive writing work?". As already said, it is not possible to give a final answer, but it can definitively be used as a life-course correction because it gives us the chance to detach ourselves from what we are feeling, to take a step back and re-evaluate our lives, it forces us to consider our emotions more closely, and it changes the way we think about past experiences. All these changes cause social and emotional upheavals that ultimately translate into cognitive changes. This is possible because people do not just write and move on with their lives, but in the following days and weeks, they keep thinking about the writing sessions and what feelings they experienced, thus activating various social and psychological processes. As regards my corpus, the writing practice strengthened the Freedom Writers so that their voices can now be heard. This leads

us to believe that change is possible, and a difference can be brought about in troubled people through the power of words.

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# BLENDING LEARNING SCENARIOS FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN COURT INTERPRETING

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## Abstract

By drawing upon cognitive resources, professional court interpreters should uphold as a guiding principle for their choices the need to preserve the pragmatics of the ongoing interaction between legal experts and witnesses during the trial, since participants' speech style, register and rhetorical strategies are bound to deeply influence the overall outcome of the judicial proceeding. In Italy, however, low quality standards and lack of specific training paint a grim picture of legal services with regard to the achievement of pragmatic equivalence in courtroom settings, thus suggesting the need for further research in this field. Given these premises, the aim of this paper is to propose a new didactic approach to provide adequate preliminary training for future consecutive court interpreters from English into Italian and vice-versa. In particular, after briefly discussing the issues, tasks and challenges of legal equivalence, an actual ESP course – developed in order to widen non-specialists' pragmatic and sociolinguistic micro-skills in court interpreting – is taken as a reference for effective needs assessment, syllabus design and material selection. The rationale of this approach lies in the creation of a student-centred and rich learning environment where multi-layered teaching methodologies, audio-visual resources and corpus-linguistic evidence are tailored to the learners' background knowledge and increasingly approximated to real-life situations. Specifically, this paper argues for the need for a flexible syllabus suitable for enhancing students' understanding of the spoken language of the law through the creation of 'blended learning scenarios' in which the analysis of popular legal movies can pave the way for more challenging activities aimed at identifying – in real-life trials – translation equivalents and pragmatic patterns from a cross-cultural perspective, with the ultimate goal of fostering students' procedural knowledge, i.e. the ability to predict and find the best interpreting solutions in professional situations when constrained by time pressure and extremely high-level expectations.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of legal equivalence in court interpreting is a multifaceted one, being related not only to the keeping of technical language and jargon, but also to all those pragmatic aspects concerning the social and inferential meaning-making characterizing the language of the courtroom where opposing parties strategically exploit rhe-

torical devices and language power to persuade the triers of fact (the judge or jury) of the truthfulness of their legal arguments. In this setting, accurate interpreting entails firstly knowing how to cope with these aspects from a cross-cultural perspective. In particular, interpreters should be fully aware of their role and ensure that the “context of situation” (Halliday 1985: 12), which is jointly negotiated and co-constructed by participants during the course of the interaction, is not inadvertently altered by the interpreter-mediated discourse which, by arbitrarily acting as a filter, could neutralize or amplify the accomplishment of specific communicative aims pursued by the speakers.

The difficulties pertaining to this task are immediately apparent when comparing the courtroom, as has often been suggested, to a battlefield where the main weapon is language. Here, the style of the message matters and the victory of a case is often dependent on how persuasively evidence is presented and elicited through questions and answers, rather than on how strong the case actually is. This last remark clearly emphasizes the close relationship existing in this context between illocutive force and form of the message and suggests that “interpreting semantically” (Hale 2010: 61), thus providing only the ‘gist’ of the message without transposing the illocutive force behind it, may lead to a translation loss, defined by various authors in terms of “pragmalinguistic failure” (Thomas 1983: 93), “linguistic distortion” (Gonzales *et al.* 1991: 5) and “communication breakdown” (Hale 1996: 65-66). On the contrary, “interpreting pragmatically” (Hale 2010: 61) – i.e. interpreting in a way that the same perlocutionary effects of the original message are achieved in the target language – requires specialized skills and training on the part of the interpreter in order to be able to detect and transpose, through appropriate stylistic means in the target language, those pragmatic cues with which participants strategically steer the interaction in particular directions. In this regard, it is worth noting that although it is still all too common for courts to rely on untrained bilingual volunteers or foreign language graduates who have not received any specific training before being allowed into practice, being bilingual, even fluently so, is an insufficient qualification for interpreters to guarantee a fair trial whenever foreigners are involved, as is blatantly exemplified by two famous Italian trials which received high international media coverage, namely the trial of Amanda Knox and the G8 trial in Genoa<sup>1</sup> (see Garwood 2012). These assumptions have been confirmed by empirical studies<sup>2</sup> demonstrating that untrained interpreters tend to alter the pragmatic force of the original message, hence leading to different perlocutionary effects in

<sup>1</sup> Involving respectively the American student Amanda Knox and the British freelance journalist Mark Covell.

<sup>2</sup> Translators have been found to weaken the level of coerciveness, either by omitting tag questions in cross-examinations (Hale 2001; Rigney 1999) or by changing leading questions into other weaker types (Berk-Seligson 1999; Hale 2004; Rigney 1999). There is also evidence of omissions and mistranslations of discourse markers such as “well”, “now”, and “you see” (Fraser and Freedgood 1999; Hale 1999, 2001). Moreover, by drawing upon what O’Barr (1982) and O’Barr and Atkins (1980) have called a “powerful” and “powerless” speech style, Berk-Seligson (1988, 1990, 2012) and Hale (2002) found in empirical studies with mock jurors that interpreters who tended to use their own style rather than replicating the witnesses’ affected the evaluation of the testimony on the part of the jury. In particular, those testimonies arbitrarily translated in a “fragmented style”, adding hedges, hesitations and markers of vagueness and uncertainty, were evaluated more negatively than the original utterances, while those which omitted these elements were rated more favourably. On the contrary, when the interpretation was accurate, being faithful to both content and style, almost identical results were achieved.

the target language. Consequently, it can be argued that ensuring legal equivalence in court interpreting largely depends on cross-cultural pragmatic expertise, a proficiency which can only be built by exposing students to a rich learning environment featuring the real language usage they will encounter outside the classroom.

## 2. Course description, material selection and teaching methodologies

The results and materials presented in this study are based on an actual ESP course held for Italian undergraduate students with no previous experience in court interpreting. The main aim was to introduce them to the core knowledge, skills and abilities that qualified court interpreters should possess in order to interpret faithfully, by preserving the pragmatic force of the ongoing interaction in direct and cross-examinations.

In this section the main teaching methodologies, together with some of the activities proposed to students, are analysed in order to evaluate the benefits of introducing in ESP teaching “blended learning scenarios” where information – in the shape of accessible input – is introduced along a continuum from “popular” to “authentic” renditions of the language of the law.

### 2.1. *Preliminary needs assessment survey*

The course was preceded by an anonymous survey consisting of very simple questions aimed at identifying students' prior knowledge and familiarity with the spoken language of the law. The questionnaire was created on-line with Google Forms and then sent to students to be completed. Interestingly, courtroom discourse appeared to be the most distant area of legal expertise with respect to students' knowledge and everyday experience. Indeed, to the question “Have you ever attended a court hearing or a trial?” 94 per cent answered “no”, hence clearly displaying a total lack of familiarity with this type of legal communication and setting. The majority of them (53%) also admitted that legal movies might affect their perception of real-life court proceedings. However, an even higher proportion (70.6%) expressed doubts about the reliability of movies in terms of accuracy and realism, hence showing their unawareness about the didactic benefits offered by these tools when supported by critical thinking skills.

The questionnaire also tested students' expectations about the language used in direct and cross-examinations. In this regard, while more than half of the students (65%) reported that what actually befuddles most laymen is the lawyers' use of rhetorical devices, some of them (35%) evaluated that comprehension problems mostly arise due to specialized terminology, thus demonstrating confusion with regard to the main features of written and spoken legal language. Finally, when asked to define translators' roles and aims, only a few of them (5.9%) claimed that interpreters should translate semantically, others (38%) stated that interpreters should insert, whenever necessary, personal explanations or clarifications for the benefit of witnesses and defendants, while the majority of them (56.1%) recognized the importance of preserving both content and style without any sort of alteration.

### 2.2. *Discovering courtroom questioning through popular legal movies*

The survey results suggested the need to tailor the input to students' limited background knowledge, therefore opening up the possibility of integrating into the syllabus,

at least in the early phases of the course, ‘popular’ audio-visual materials which could make their approach to the study of the language of the law more stimulating, by lowering their affective filter and level of anxiety (Krashen 1982).

In that respect, it is worth mentioning that even though in recent decades multimodal literacy has been strongly advocated in the field of General English (e.g. Cummins, Brown and Sayers 2007; Towndrow 2007; Vaish and Towndrow 2010) and in ESP courses (see Plastina 2013; Camiciottoli and Bonsignori 2015; Bonsignori 2018), in the legal domain the possibility of exploiting ‘popular’ renditions of the language of the law for teaching purposes is still dismissed by some conservative scholars stating that “it is beyond dispute that the cinematic portrayal of the American legal system and its personnel is far removed from legal reality” (Machura and Ulbrich 2001: 118).

Nonetheless, it is also equally important to highlight that in the academic field new paths have been strongly advocated, as evidenced by research showing that alternative approaches are possible. In particular, in her corpus-based study Forchini (2018) found very little linguistic and textual variability between naturally-occurring trials and movie courtroom scenes, an outcome which clearly suggests that movie language can be used “as a remarkable source [...] for learning the specialized features of courtroom discourse” (*ibid.*: 245). Similarly, Vyushkina (2016) in her teaching manual entitled *Legal English Through Movies* claims that selecting film episodes according to a particular communicative situation can undoubtedly prompt students to focus their attention on typical language patterns, a didactic slant designed to develop cross-cultural and interlinguistic awareness while facilitating the acquisition of linguistic and non-linguistic pragmatic elements<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, Canepari (2019), in her project aimed at finding new methodologies for teaching legal English in academic settings, fruitfully experimented the use of comics as well as other audio-visual and graphic products to help non-specialists understand some of the main features typical of legal language and foster the acquisition of a “communicative competence” to be used in professional settings (*ibid.*: 115-116).

As far as the course presented here is concerned, the use of audio-visual materials was accompanied by the inclusion of the flipped classroom model into the teaching methodology which provided the chance to devote classroom time for more engaging and productive activities aimed at stimulating learning by doing and teaching for skills.

Specifically, outside the classroom students were required to watch all courtroom scenes portrayed in the following popular legal movies, namely *Philadelphia*, *A Few Good Men*, *A Time to Kill*, and *Anatomy of a Murder* – evaluated by the American Bar Association among the best legal films ever made about lawyers and law (see Brust 2008) – and to identify, in terms of morphosyntactic features, the most common question types used in courtroom questioning (Table 1). Once in class, they were prompted to recognize in lawyers’ questioning eight communicative functions (Table 2) which I

<sup>3</sup> Even more remarkable is the growing debate aroused in the USA by the Law and Film Studies Movement (see Robson and Freeman 2005; Elkins 2006; Salzman 2010; Meyer and Davis 2018; Corcos 2018) which in the last twenty years has been promoting the adoption of theoretical and methodological practices aimed at designing academic courses for law students by stressing the relevance of popular culture in the construction of law as well as the need to determine the level of accuracy of legal representation in motion pictures.

had previously elaborated to introduce them to power dynamics in courtroom discourse. These activities are summarized in the following tables (Table 1) (Table 2): some examples from the above-mentioned courtroom scenes are also included.

Question type	Description	Examples from the Movie Corpus
(1) Broad <i>wh</i> -questions	Questions asking broadly for descriptions, narratives and explanations often introduced by e.g., <i>how, why, what etc.</i>	Q. "Why did you think so?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "And what happened?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "How did that make you feel?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> )
(2) Narrow <i>wh</i> -questions	Questions asking for specific pieces of information often introduced by e.g. <i>where, when, which, what, who etc.</i>	Q. "What was the order?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "How long have you lived there?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "And who is the chief psychiatrist at Whitfield?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> )
(3) Indirect questions	Indirect and more polite ways to ask for information or make requests.	Q. "Will you tell us what you found among these towels on the day after Mr. Quill was killed?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "Would you tell the Court the substance of that meeting?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "Sheriff, if you would, will you please identify this weapon?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> )
(4) Alternative questions	Questions which present two or more possible answers and presuppose that only one is true.	Q. "Were you satisfied, or were you pleased?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "From which entrance did he come? From the lobby entrance or the outside entrance?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "He took you all at once, or one at a time?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
(5) Grammatical <i>yes/no</i> -questions	Inversion questions which license only <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i> as default answers.	Q. "Lieutenant Kendrick, did you order Corporal Dawson and Private Downey to give Willy Santiago a code red?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "Do you know what constitutes rape under the law?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "Can you see the lesions on your chest in this mirror?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> )
(6) Negative <i>yes/no</i> -questions	Inversion questions which license only <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i> as default answers. They contain negative elements and have already undergone an evaluation by the questioner, thus adding a tone of surprise or disbelief upon hearing the answer.	Q. "Wouldn't this form of discipline be considered a code red?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "Wasn't he in fact pretty well loaded that night, Mr. Paquette?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "And didn't you swear to a lie to keep him from hitting you again?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
(7) Prosodic questions	Declarative sentences which lack morphosyntactic cues that clearly identify them as questions. They hint the belief of the questioner in the proposition and can be identified through the intonation used when asking the question.	Q. "Commander, you testified that it takes lactic acidosis 20 to 30 minutes before it becomes lethal" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "In other words, in your case you happen to be an innocent victim of the AIDS tragedy" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "Then it would be fair to say that you found insane people sane for the purpose of a trial?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> )
(8) Tag questions	Declarative sentences followed by a tag which can be divided into two categories: 1) Checking tags, composed of a declarative sentence and a tag of the opposed polarity. 2) Confirmatory tags which agree with the expression posed, e.g. "Right?", "Is that correct?"	Q. "You were present at the murders of Billy Ray Cobb and James Lewis Willred, were you not?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> ) Q. "Kendrick ordered the code red, didn't he?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "As a homosexual, one is often forced to conceal one's sexuality, is that right?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> )
(9) Other	Constructions which do not follow within the previous categories, including elliptical and imperative constructions.	Q. "Shortness of breath?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "Really?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> ) Q. "Tell the Court what Lieutenant Manion had to say about the trial" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )

Table 1. Movie Corpus: Question types classification according to morphosyntactic features

Communicative Function	Description	Examples from the Movie Corpus
1. Construction of Evidential Discourse (CED)	Construction of a coherent version of the story by controlling the flow of information and by eliciting only those elements which fit into the lawyer's preferred reconstruction of the case.	Q. "Why did you go to Private Santiago's room on the night of August 6th?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "What happened then?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "Please tell us in your own words what happened" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
2. Eliciting Contrast (EC)	Lawyers often construct their own arguments by deconstructing the other party's version of events, thus exhibiting its weaknesses and inconsistencies and suggesting its unreliability.	Q. "Corporal Dawson's been charged with a number of crimes, why wasn't he charged with firing at the enemy without cause?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ). Q. "Now since you went to find him and hold him for the police, why did you shoot him?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "Dr. Harcourt, psychiatry is an effort to probe into the dark, undiscovered world of the mind, and in there the world might well be round, it could be square. Your opinion could be wrong, Dr. Smith opinion could be right. Isn't that true?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
3. Eliciting an Evaluation (EE)	Lawyers usually ask defendants, as well as lay and expert witnesses for evaluations, opinions and impressions on the evidence presented in court, in order to emphasize the strengths of their case and/or exhibit the weaknesses of their opponent's.	Q. "When Lieutenant Manion entered the bar, how did he appear to you?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "What impressed you about him?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "As far as you could tell, would you say that he was in complete possession of his faculties?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
4. Reformulation and Repair Strategies (RR)	Lawyers often deploy reformulation and repair strategies to paraphrase the answers provided by the witnesses and allow their own version of events to go on the record, by neutralizing the most troublesome parts in cross-examinations, as well as stressing the most favorable ones in direct examinations. These strategies are also used by lawyers to rephrase their own questions in case of non-cooperative witnesses.	Q. "You mean it's a lover's lane?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> ) Q. "Could not tell right from wrong nor understand the consequences of his actions. Therefore, legally insane?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> ) Q. "I'll rephrase. Jeffrey, did you ever want to give Santiago a code red?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> )
5. Reporting Evidence (RE)	Lawyers often report spoken or written testimonies previously rendered by witnesses and defendants, either to support their own version of events or to show discrepancies in the testimonies provided by the witnesses during direct examinations (i.e. impeachment by prior inconsistent statement).	Q. "According to the deposition, you said you were thrilled, impressed, overwhelmed by the quality of Andrew Beckett's work. Do you remember saying that?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "You've testified the lesions on your face were visible to the people you worked with, correct?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "As you left the bar, do you remember Alphonse Paquette stopping you and saying you'd better not run away from this? ... and your reply...do you want some, too, Buster?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
6. Suggesting blame (SB)	In order to deconstruct the other party's version of events, lawyers usually try to cast doubts on the credibility of hostile witnesses or defendants by suggesting some kind of blame on their part. However, they can never unnecessarily harass or embarrass them, in which case the question can be objected to by the other party for being unfair or prejudicial (i.e. they paint the party in a bad light to the judge or the jury) or for being argumentative (i.e. the lawyer is arguing with the witness during the cross examination).	Q. "Did you have anything to do with this file being... misplaced?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "Isn't it true you have spent your life pretending to be something you're not, so much so that the art of concealment and dishonesty has become second nature to you?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "And that's why it had to be, poison, right, Commander? 'Cause Lord knows, if you put a man with a serious coronary condition back on duty with a clean bill of health, and that man died from a heart related incident, you'd have a lot to answer for, wouldn't you, doctor?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> )
7. Eliciting an Emotional Response (EER)	Lawyers often try to elicit an emotional response from their friendly witnesses in order to prompt a favorable and empathetic reaction on the part of the jury. However, this technique can also be used to provoke an emotional response into a hostile witness who may disclose some important elements of the case and affect negatively his or her position in the eyes of the jury and/or judge.	Q. "How did that make you feel?" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "Do you think they should deserve to die?" ( <i>A Time to Kill</i> ) Q. "Do you still love her?" ( <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> )
8. Eliciting Physical Gestures and Actions (EPGA):	During the trial, witnesses can be asked to perform physical gestures or actions related to the evidence presented in court (e.g. the accepted practice of pointing at the accused when asked "Do you see the person, here in this courtroom, who committed this crime?").	Q. "If it pleases the court, I'd like to ask Mr. Beckett to remove his shirt, so that the jury can have an accurate idea of what we're talking about" ( <i>Philadelphia</i> ) Q. "Would you turn to the chapter that deals with code reds, please?" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> ) Q. "Would you read your hand written remarks at the bottom of the page, please, sir" ( <i>A Few Good Men</i> )

Table 2. *Movie Corpus*: Question types classification according to pragmatic purposes

2.3. Movie Corpus: *quantitative and qualitative analysis of question types in direct and cross-examinations*

After the in-class discussion, students were provided with the results obtained from the construction of the *Movie Corpus* containing all legal scenes set in a courtroom collected from the movies analysed, where each defendant and witness examination had been classified and annotated in terms of morphosyntactic type and communicative function performed (see Table 1 and Table 2), as well as contextualized in accordance with the legal procedures in which courtroom questioning occurred, i.e. direct and cross-examination of lay and expert witnesses <sup>4</sup>.

The extensive coding scheme adopted (Table 3) (Table 4) shows the results of this quantitative analysis out of a total of 666 questions and stresses the main pragmatic purposes as well interactional mechanisms potentially realized by each question.

PRAGMATIC FUNCTION	DIRECT EXAMINATIONS (LAY WITNESSES)										TOTALS, QT (direct exam. lay witnesses)		CROSS-EXAMINATIONS (LAY WITNESSES)										TOTALS, QT (cross-exam. lay witnesses)	
	CONSTRUCTION OF EVIDENTIAL DISMISIVE (CED)	ELICITING CONTEXT (EC)	ELICITING EVALUATIONS (EE)	REFORMULATION AND REPAIR (RE)	STRATEGIES (RS)	REPORTING EVIDENCE (RE)	SUGGESTING BLAME (SB)	ELICITING ANSWERS AND RESPONSE (ER)	ELICITING GESTURES AND ACTIONS (EPGA)	N°	%	CONSTRUCTION OF EVIDENTIAL DISMISIVE (CED)	ELICITING CONTEXT (EC)	ELICITING EVALUATIONS (EE)	REFORMULATION AND REPAIR (RE)	STRATEGIES (RS)	REPORTING EVIDENCE (RE)	SUGGESTING BLAME (SB)	ELICITING ANSWERS AND RESPONSE (ER)	ELICITING PHYSICAL GESTURES AND ACTIONS (EPGA)	N°	%		
BROAD WH-QUESTIONS	21	4	17	0	1	0	3	0	46	25,8	6	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	15,4			
NARROW WH-QUESTIONS	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	12,9	18	23	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	47	13,3			
INDIRECT QUESTIONS	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	4,5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0,6			
ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6	1,7			
GRAMMATICAL YES/NO QUESTIONS	51	0	16	2	4	0	3	0	76	42,7	50	71	13	0	2	9	3	1	149	42,1				
NEGATIVE GRAMMATICAL YES/NO QUESTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	4	0	0	18	5,1				
PROSODIC QUESTIONS	3	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	12	6,7	7	41	1	6	1	12	1	0	69	19,5				
TAG QUESTIONS	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2,8	7	19	0	1	1	9	0	0	37	10,4				
OTHER	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	4,5	3	2	0	0	2	2	0	5	14	3,9				
TOTALS N°	113	6	34	11	5	0	6	3	178		94	174	19	9	7	41	4	6	354					
%	63,5	3,4	19,1	6,2	2,8	0	3,4	1,7	100		26,5	49,1	5,4	2,5	2	11,6	1,1	1,7	100					

Table 3. *Movie Corpus*: Direct and cross-examinations (lay witnesses)

<sup>4</sup> Scenes staging the private lives of fictional characters and not concerned with the exercise of the legal profession were excluded from this corpus of legal-specific courtroom scenes, as well as those trial phases not dealing with direct and cross-examinations (i.e. opening statements, closing arguments, other lawyer-client interactions).

PRAGMATIC FUNCTION	DIRECT EXAMINATIONS (EXPERT WITNESSES)										CROSS-EXAMINATIONS (EXPERT WITNESSES)													
	CONSTRUCTION OF EVIDENTIAL DISCOURSE (CED)	ELICITING CONSTANTS (EC)	ELICITING EVALUATIONS (EE)	REPHRASING STRATEGIES (RS)	REPORTING EVIDENCE (RE)	SUGGESTING BLAME (SB)	ELICITING AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE (ER)	ELICITING PHYSICAL STATES AND ACTIONS (EPGA)	TOTALS, QT (direct exam. expert witnesses)		CONSTRUCTION OF EVIDENTIAL DISCOURSE (CED)	ELICITING CONSTANTS (EC)	ELICITING EVALUATIONS (EE)	REPHRASING STRATEGIES (RS)	REPORTING EVIDENCE (RE)	SUGGESTING BLAME (SB)	ELICITING AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE (ER)	ELICITING PHYSICAL STATES AND ACTIONS (EPGA)	TOTALS, QT (cross-exam. expert witnesses)					
QUESTION TYPES (QT)											N°	%											N°	%
BROAD WH- QUESTIONS	9	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	24,6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,3		
NARROW WH- QUESTIONS	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	12,2	6	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	12	15,6		
INDIRECT QUESTIONS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,3		
ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3,9		
GRAMMATICAL YES/NO QUESTIONS	13	4	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	46	5	18	1	0	1	1	0	1	27	35		
NEGATIVE GRAMMATICAL YES/NO QUESTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1,3		
PROSODIC QUESTIONS	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8,8	0	7	0	0	1	2	0	0	10	13		
TAG QUESTIONS	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5,3	1	8	0	2	0	2	0	0	11	14,3		
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1,7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	9,1		
TOTALS N°	33	7	12	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	57		12	49	4	3	2	6	0	1	77			
TOTALS %	54,7	13,2	22,6	7,5	0	0	0	1,8	1,8	1,8	100		15,6	63,6	5,2	3,9	2,6	7,8	0	1,3	100			

Table 4. Movie Corpus: Direct and cross-examinations (expert witnesses)

Students were first of all asked to analyse these data by focusing on the overall frequency of question types according to legal domain (figure 1).

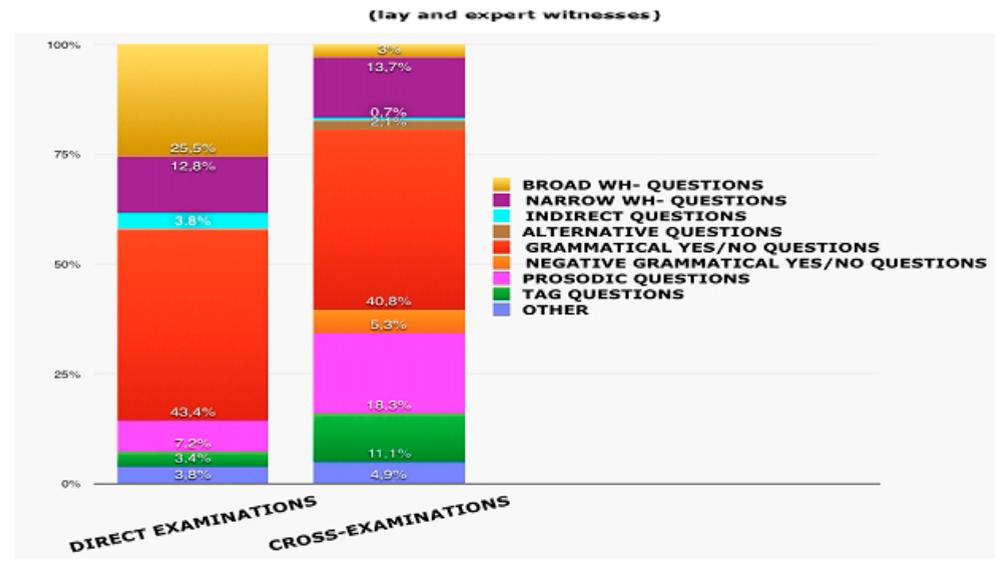
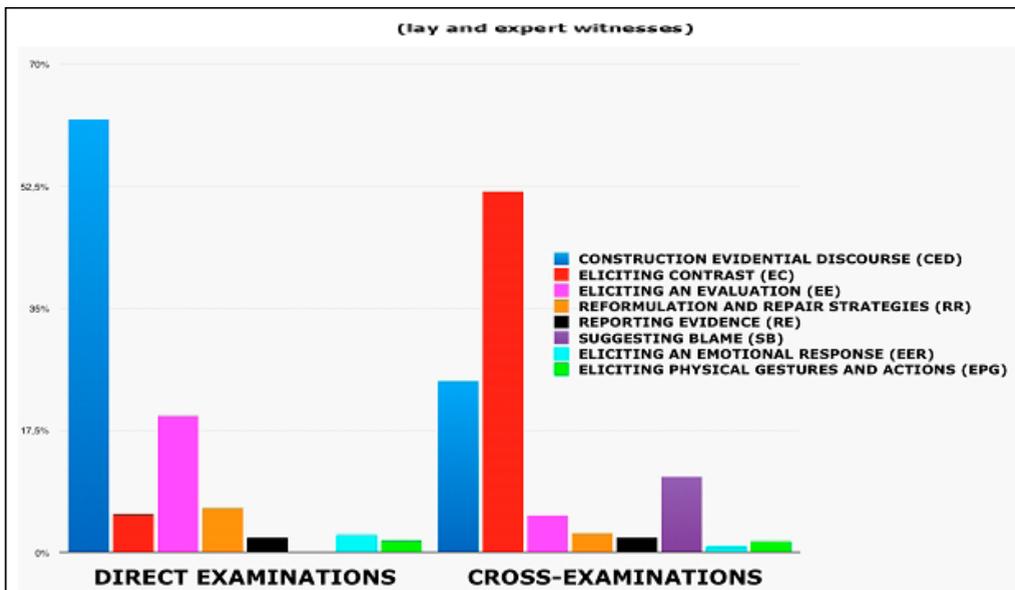


Figure 1. Movie Corpus: Overall frequency distribution of morphosyntactic types in direct and cross-examinations (lay and expert witnesses)

In this regard, the results appeared to be highly realistic, since direct examinations exhibited a far higher degree of broad questions (25%) as compared to cross-examinations (3%), thus demonstrating the non-confrontational nature of this legal context,

while in cross-examinations the percentage of closed questions<sup>5</sup> accounted for 75% of all question types, a result that turned out to be in line with Cotterill's research (2003) on real-life trials which, in re-elaborating the studies by Harris (1984), Woodbury (1984), Graffam-Walker (1987) and Luchjenbroers (1997), demonstrated that closed questions usually account for between 65 percent and 87 percent of all questions in cross-examinations. Moreover, students noticed that the face-threatening value of courtroom questions does not only depend on strictly morphosyntactic categories but rather on the intention behind it. In particular, yes/no questions – the least controlling type among the category of closed questions – appeared to be widely used not only in cross-examinations, where the main aim is to exercise coercion over the witnesses, but also in direct examinations (46.1% and 43.4% respectively) to maintain topic control, given the impossibility of using leading questions, i.e. prosodic and tag questions, which are not allowed for being suggestive since they help the witness provide the desired answer<sup>6</sup>, hence performing a completely different pragmatic aim as compared to cross-examinations where these questions are widely used to express the speaker's beliefs and provide a complete and ready-made incriminating proposition which leaves witnesses and defendants with no other choice but to confirm or deny. As far as the main communicative functions performed by questions in direct and cross-examinations (figure 2)



**Figure 2.** *Movie Corpus*: Overall distribution of communicative functions in direct and cross-examinations (lay and expert witnesses)

<sup>5</sup> By drawing upon Woodbury's (1984) continuum of control, this study considers question types from the most controlling and closed to the least coercive in the following order: (I) tag-questions, (II) prosodic questions, (III) alternative questions, (IV) negative grammatical yes/no questions, (V) grammatical yes/no questions, (VI) *wh*-questions with only the latter category being considered as open.

<sup>6</sup> Their occurrence in direct examinations in the *Movie Corpus* as well as in real-life trials should not surprise us since lawyers may fail to comply with this regulation eventually stumbling into an objection of the other party, a demeanour which is portrayed and sometimes emphasized in popular legal movies.

are concerned, results, once again, demonstrated that legal movies can be exploited as powerful tools to introduce students to courtroom questioning by underlining that “the dualism specialized vs. popularized texts is an oversimplification and a distortion of a highly complex and rapidly evolving situation” (Williams 2014: 6).

In particular, students found out that in direct examinations questions were mainly used to construct evidential discourse (CED) (62.1%), elicit evaluations (19.6%) and exploit reformulation and repair strategies (RR) (6.4%). In this regard, it is also worth noticing that while suggesting blame, as expected, was not represented, eliciting contrast, did rank in direct examinations (5.5%). This result, at first sight awkward, reflected, however, an important strategy used by lawyers in courtroom questioning which could be defined as ‘anticipating contrast’. In other words, lawyers often bring out those elements they think will be used by the opposing party as a weapon during the cross-examination in order to neutralize or at least try to diminish blame allocation on their friendly witnesses and defendants by providing an anticipatory explanation. On the other hand, in cross-examinations questions appeared to be mainly used to elicit contrast (EC) (51.7%), construct an alternative evidential discourse (CED) (24.6%) and suggest blame (SB) (10.9%) (figures 3-4), which in turn reflected the main goal of this trial procedure, i.e. deconstructing the version of events presented by the opposing party.

#### 2.4. *Real-life trials: speech styles, modality, hedging and violation of conversational maxims*

The second part of the syllabus was designed to bring students’ understanding of the spoken language of the law closer to real-life settings by focusing on those micro-pragmatic cues which can reveal the strategic use of language in courtroom discourse. In particular, students were required to watch selected scenes from the Amber Guyger Trial<sup>7</sup> and the Conrad Murray Trial<sup>8</sup>, two law proceedings which aroused great interest in the USA, available on YouTube.

Moreover, in order to maximize the effectiveness of these audio-visual resources and to tune the new input to the learners’ state of proficiency, I asked them, before introducing new tasks, to identify in these real-life trials the communicative functions previously analysed in the *Movie Corpus*. The main aim was to prompt their critical thinking and make them realize that those parameters are actually a valid preliminary scaffolding resource to rely on when confronted with courtroom questioning in professional settings where the adoption of a top-down approach can really make a difference in remaining detached from source-text syntax in order to avoid “atomistic lexical segmentation” (Garzone 2000: 80). In particular, the ability to predict and make use of specific inferences can help interpreters contextualize – at least at the macro-level and within the limited amount of time characterizing courtroom interpreting – the commu-

<sup>7</sup>On September 6, 2018, Dallas Police Department patrol officer Amber Guyger entered the apartment of 26-year-old Botham Jean and fatally shot him. During the trial she said that she had entered the apartment believing it was her own and that the victim was a burglar.

<sup>8</sup>Conrad Murray, Michael Jackson’s personal physician, was charged with involuntary manslaughter for the pop singer’s death on June 25, 2009, from a massive overdose of the general anesthetic propofol.



**Figure 3.** Amber Guyger describes the moments before the shooting



**Figure 4.** Amber Guyger becomes emotional and cries during direct examination

nicative aims performed, prior to concentrating their comprehension efforts on lower level linguistic elements.

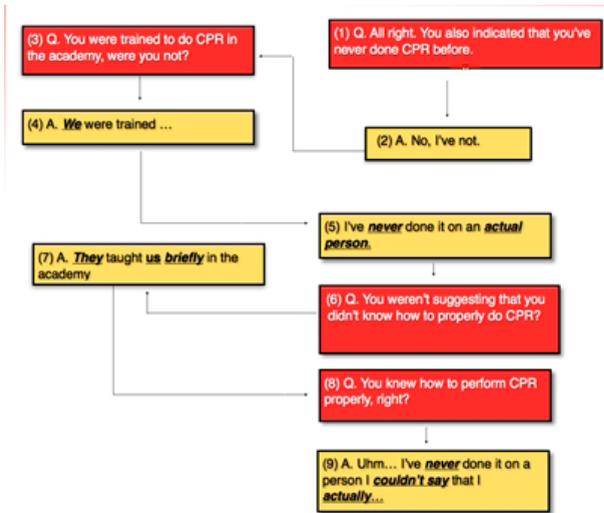
In that respect, it is worth briefly mentioning that during the warm-up activity students expressed doubts about the possibility of finding in real-life trials two parameters out of the eight analysed, that is, eliciting an emotional response and eliciting physical gestures and actions which they thought to be sensational and unrealistic cinematic representations of real-world situations.

In actual fact, however, Amber Guyger's direct examination proved to be particularly useful to show students that also those features could be considered as highly realistic. In particular, students noticed that Guyger's defendant lawyer heavily relied on these two strategies to persuade the jury about his clients' unintentional conduct, by asking her to physically re-enact the moments which preceded and followed the murdering of Botham Jean (figure 3) and by eliciting an emotional confession, with Amber Guyger breaking down and tearfully expressing remorse (figure 4).

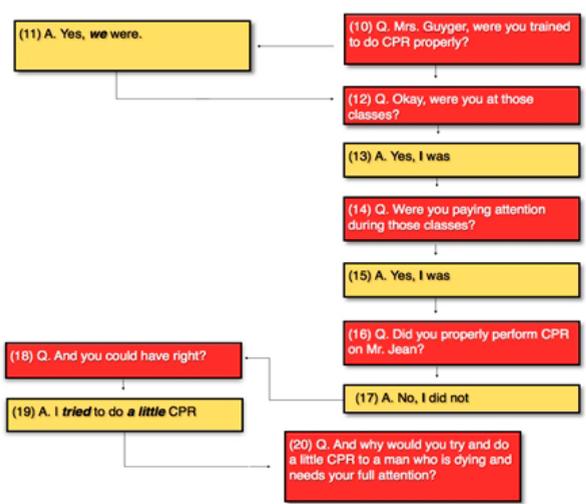
*Amber Guyger's cross-examination.* Some extracts from Amber Guyger's cross-examination (figures 5-6) proved to be particularly useful in showing students that also witnesses, as well as lawyers, perform their own communicative aims during the interplay, a strategic use of language which – more or less subtly and more or less successfully – inevitably leads to constant realignments on both sides.

In particular, students were recommended to pay special attention to the interactional and constantly negotiated nature of courtroom questioning in order to foster their capacity to identify shifts within the speakers' speech style and raise their awareness with regard to the importance of maintaining these nuances during the interpreting process, thus avoiding altering the dynamic of the interaction.

As a matter of fact, students noticed that Guyger – while attempting to resist prejudice and bias allocation for not having properly performed CPR on the man she shot – made a very specific use of personal pronouns and disclaimer strategies. Their anal-



**Figure 5.** Disclaimer strategies employed by Amber Guyger in cross-examination



**Figure 6.** Lawyer's realignment strategies in Amber Guyger's cross-examination

more directly the witness by repeating her name (10) – which is again disregarded by the defendant who keeps answering with the first personal plural pronoun “we” (11) – the lawyer engages in the battle to construct his own version of the story (12-20). This change in demeanour is signalled by the discourse marker “Okay”: questions become

ysis is shown in Figure 5: on the left Guyger's answers are basically aimed at softening the prosecution's case by using the first person plural pronoun “we” which accompanies verbs like “teach” and “train” (4) (7) so as not to fully admit that she should have known how to perform CPR, even though the questions are clearly addressed to her and not to the police corps as a whole. On the right, Guyger's answers demonstrate that she is willing to shift to the first personal pronoun to stress her own version of the story by also adding new elements throughout the interaction (2) (5) (9), thus subtly implying a disclaimer strategy aimed at explaining to the jury the reason why she did not perform this life-saving medical procedure which could have saved Botham Jean.

The qualitative analysis carried out in class also demonstrated specific realignment strategies developed by the lawyer in order to finally obtain yes/no confirmatory answers from Amber Guyger. As shown in Figure 6, the effectiveness of this strategy is signalled by fewer answers on the left – which portray the defendant's efforts to digress – as compared to those on the right, where Guyger gets cornered by the lawyer. In particular, after a first attempt to address even

even more specific, increasing the pace of the interaction and leaving the defendant with no choice but to confirm. Nonetheless, Guyger tries one last time to regain ground (19) by partially rejecting the main accusation (18), a justification immediately discarded by the prosecutor who, through the next broad *wh*-question (20), nullifies her last attempts to avoid incriminating herself, therefore suggesting blame and simultaneously eliciting contrast with respect to her version of events.

*Conrad Murray Trial: Kenny Ortega's cross examination.* The following excerpt (figure 7), this time taken from the Conrad Murray Trial, was employed to introduce students to powerful and powerless speech styles by considering speakers' linguistic choices from the perspective of the modality system<sup>9</sup>.

In particular I wanted students to focus their attention on the varying degrees speakers can express their attitudes toward the truthfulness of what they are saying and commit themselves to the proposition they are uttering, hence controlling or losing control of language during courtroom questioning, a feature which should be maintained during the interpreting process.

Therefore, students were prompted to recognize that while the subjective use of interpersonal metaphors with a low modal value (Halliday 1994) on the part of Kenny Ortega (2) (6) (10) (12) could be considered as one of the most common features in cross-examinations to express vagueness – so as not to fully commit to the lawyers' ar-



Figure 7. Defense counsel Edward Chernoff cross-examines Kenny Ortega in Conrad Murray Trial

<sup>9</sup> According to Halliday (1994: 356), “modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no: the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity”.

guments – Chernoff’s use of “would” (5) (7), a modal verb with median value of modality, to discuss important details of the case, seemed quite odd. On closer inspection, however, students also observed that it was precisely thanks to this verb that Chernoff was able to test the willingness of the witness to disclose important information about the rehearsals, without therefore providing him with the exact answer in advance. Indeed, after an initial factual question (1) the lawyer, given the negative answer provided by the witness, changes his strategy and – by pretending not to know these details – makes sure that the jury perceives the elusiveness of the witness, only to strike a decisive blow (13-21) by impeaching him and showing his real intention from the beginning, i.e. to cast doubt on Kenny Ortega’s character and indirectly on the testimony previously released during the direct examination which Chernoff is trying to attack, if not on its merits, at least by suggesting its unreliability.

*Conrad Murray Trial: Dr. Robert Waldman’s cross examination.* Finally, other excerpts from the Conrad Murray trial were employed to show students why interpreters should not act as intermediaries to restore conflicts arising from the conversation, since conversational maxims<sup>10</sup> are often deliberately and voluntarily flouted by the speakers within the linguistic battlefield of courtroom questioning. (figures 8a-b) show students’ in-class analysis of Dr. Waldmann’s cross-examination when tensions between prosecutor David Walgren and Dr. Robert Waldmann reached a peak.

	
<p>(22) Q. And you also do the dialysis work?          (23) A. I do.          (24) Q. Is that full-time?          (25) A. What do you mean by full time?          (26) Q. Well typically means 40 hours a week. Something like that.          (27) A. I wish I worked 40 hours a week and so does my family.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VIOLATION OF THE MAXIM OF RELEVANCE</b></p> <p><u>The witness deviates from the subject of conversation, thus avoiding to provide an informative answer (27).</u></p>
<p>(28) Q. So the question’s still out there. Do you...          (29) A. I work a great deal of hours every week.          (30) A. Okay. How many hours do you work in dialysis?          (31) Q. You know I’m not being glib but the real answer is... I see every patient every week and I work as long as I need to... <b>its variable... sometimes it’s many many hours, sometimes it’s less hours.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VIOLATION OF THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY</b></p> <p><u>Quantity hedges e.g. “a great deal” (29), “variable”, “many many hours” and “less hours” (31) indicate that the information provided is not as much precise as required.</u></p>

**Figure 8a.** Violation of Gricean maxims of Relevance and Quantity in Conrad Murray case

<sup>10</sup> The Cooperative Principle (Grice 1975) describes four categories which language users should ideally adhere to in order to establish an effective and efficient conversation: the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner.

<p>(32) Q. Approximately how many hours a week do you work in dialysis?</p> <p>(33) A. I don't know. I couldn't quantify that, Sir. I don't keep track of that.</p> <p>(34) Q. You can't give me a range?</p> <p>(35) A. I really can't. I <b>honestly</b> I don't count them, I don't track them.</p> <p>(36) Q. Is there a reason why it's so difficult for you to answer my questions when it was so easy for you to answer Mr. Chernoff session?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Objection!</i> <i>Judge: Sustained!</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VIOLATION OF THE MAXIM OF QUALITY</b></p> <p><u>The witness violates the maximum of quality (33) (35) which requires the speaker to be truthful, a violation emphasized by the use of "honestly" (35) a quality hedge which prompts the prosecutor to express his annoyance (36), almost forgetting his institutional role.</u></p>
<p>(37) Q. You can't answer how many hours in dialysis, is that correct?</p> <p>(38) A. What you're asking me is extremely non-specific and I'm telling you honestly I don't measure.</p> <p>(39) Q. How many hours did you work in dialysis last week?</p> <p>(40) A. I-I-I don't know.</p> <p>(41) Q. I was specific.</p> <p>(42) A. I was at the dialysis unit Monday morning and afternoon, Tuesday for a few hours, Friday for a few hours. That's my typical week. Sometimes I go in Thursdays sometimes I don't, sometimes I go on Tuesday sometimes I don't.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>VIOLATION OF THE MAXIM OF MANNER</b></p> <p><u>The witness witness refuses to be brief, clear and orderly in his answer (42).</u></p>

Figure 8b. Violation of Gricean maxims of Quality and Manner in Conrad Murray case

2.5. Enhancing students' specific performance skills in court interpreting: corpus linguistics as a tool for discovering cross-linguistic patterns

The last part of the course was devoted to corpus linguistic research conducted for didactic purposes. In particular, this shift from audio-visual tools to more analytical activities was justified by the need to expose students to high-frequency language elements from a cross-cultural and contrastive perspective, in order to help them foster their procedural knowledge, i.e. the ability to predict and find the best interpreting solutions in professional situations when constrained by time pressure and extremely high-level expectations.

Given these premises, but without running the risk that the sheer volume of data would become unmanageable, I decided to build two relatively large corpora <sup>11</sup>, one in Italian (*Italian Trial Corpus*, 1,245,293 words) and one in English (*American Trial Corpus*, 1,336,206 words) containing direct and cross-examinations from murder trials conducted respectively in Italy and in the USA <sup>12</sup>. Students were first of all prompted to

<sup>11</sup> According to O'Keeffe *et al.* (2007: 4) any spoken corpus containing over a million words of speech is considered large.

<sup>12</sup> As far as the *Italian Trial Corpus* is concerned, instances of naturally occurring language were collected from the trial of Amanda Knox and the Garlasco murder. This choice was especially determined by the high profile of the legal actors involved in these cases (e.g. Carlo Della Vedova, Giulia Bongiorno, Giuliano Mignini, Carlo Taormina) which I expected could provide food for thought in order to shed light on the best forensic practices and strategic use of Italian legal language in courtroom settings. With regard to the *American Trial Corpus* the bulk of linguistic data was selected from the Jason Van Dyke Trial which proved to be particularly interesting given the nature of the proceeding which concerned the murder of Laquan McDonald. In particular, the very fact that police officer Van Dyke shot a 17-year-old 16 times led to a detailed account of the shooting timeline which involved the presence of a particularly high number of both experts and lay-witnesses during

Pragmatic function	Discourse Markers (Italian)	Common Italian Phrases and Examples	Discourse Markers (English)	Common English Phrases and Examples
<b>Construction of evidential discourse (CED)</b>	<i>E, quindi, dunque, prima, dopo, poi.</i>	<i>D. Ricorda la circostanza... D. Vuole spiegare/riferire alle Corte D. Ci può spiegare/illustrare/raccontare .... D. Può dirci / Ci può descrivere ... D. Lei era a conoscenza / Lei sapeva.../ D. Che lei sappia D. Poi che cosa accadde? D. Poi che è successo? D. Può dirci chi vide? D. Me la descriva, per favore D. Ci Descriva queste attività per favore D. Dopo cosa accadde? D. E poi? Ci racconti tutto</i>	And, so, then, after, before.	Q. Do you... know/recall/remember/... Q. Can/ could you (please)...explain/ /tell us/ tell me/ tell the court/ tell the jury... Q. (If you can )Please describe/explain/ tell the jury/ us... Q. (Please) Tell me/us/the jury/ Q. To your knowledge... Q. Are you aware... Q. As far as you know Q. Just tell us/ describe Q. And at some point you learned/ told/ heard Q. What did you see/ say Q. What happened? Q. Then what happened?
<b>Eliciting Contrast (EC)</b>	<i>Veramente, ma, tuttavia, beh.</i>	<i>D. Mi corregga se sbaglio... D. Se non erro ... D. Scusi, ma lei non ha riferito.... D. Ma lei non può escludere che D. Lei dice tuttavia che D. Tuttavia, è corretto dire che... D. Beh, a me risulta che... D. Veramente ci sono dei verbali di udienza... D. E' vero o non è vero che... D. Sarebbe corretto dire che .... D. E' corretto dire che...</i>	Actually, but, in fact, really?, well	Q. But correct me if I'm wrong ... Q. But you also indicated that .. Q. But you said/ told/ testified Q. Actually, you didn't say... Q. Well you testified/ told the police Q. Isn't it right/ correct that you...? Q. Isn't it correct that...? Q. But would it be fair to say that... Q. Is it fair to say that...
<b>Eliciting an Evaluation (EE)</b>	<i>Secondo lei, in base alla sua esperienza, secondo le sue conoscenze/ competenze...</i>	<i>D. Che cosa vuol dire secondo lei che...? D. Lei cosa ne pensa di...? D. Lei ritiene anomalo che...? D. Lei ritiene le impronte assolutamente compatibili? D. In base alla sua esperienza crede che... D. Lei presume che...? D. Aveva, a sua conoscenza, dei motivi? D. Che lei sappia...</i>	- In your opinion/ experience, mind/ knowledge/ training/ investigation... - About this matter... - Based on your evaluation/ experience... - As far as you could tell... - As far as you know...	Q. Do you think... Q. How would you describe... Q. Did that seem odd to you? Q. Was it your understanding/ impression/ belief ... Q. Describe .... Q. How would you characterize / describe...
<b>Reformulation and Repair Strategies (RR)</b>	<i>Ovvero, ovvero, cioè, ancora meglio, ancora una volta, di nuovo, quindi</i>	<i>D. Tanto per chiarire, lei prima ha detto... D. La riformulo in altro modo. D. Riformulo meglio la domanda. D. Ancora meglio. Voglio dire... D. Io le ho chiesto di ... D. Le ripeto la domanda... D. Ripeto ancora una volta, che cosa avete fatto... D. Intendo dire questo... D. Di nuovo, quali sono ...</i>	- (Once) again, - I mean, - I asked you - I'm not asking you - I said, - In other words	Q. You are telling the jury that Q. Are you suggesting that Q. Are you still telling the jury that Q. Are you telling this jury, under oath Q. Let me rephrase this Q. Let me try that one
<b>Reporting Evidence (RE)</b>	<i>Secondo/ nella sua deposizione/ testimonianza/ interrogatorio</i>	<i>D. Lei ha dichiarato/ riferito/ testimoniato/ detto... D. Lei (mi) conferma... D. Lei quindi conferma... D. Ricorda di aver testimoniato...</i>	- In your deposition/ testimony/ interview... - according to your deposition... - Based on/ upon your direct examination...	Q. You mentioned /said/ testified Q. I believe you said/ told us Q. Is it your testimony Q. Remember testifying Q. You admitted/ mentioned / said
<b>Suggesting Blame (SB)</b>	<i>Come mai, ma come, mai.</i>	<i>D. Ma come ha potuto fare la doccia con la porta aperta e il sangue in casa? D. Lei ha mai fatto delle analisi, delle autopsie in caso di morte a seguito di violenza sessuale di gruppo? D. Come mai ha parlato di "identità probabile" malgrado tutte queste indicazioni di coincidenza?</i>	Never, why.	Q. You never told that to the sheriffs, correct? Q. You never witnessed that yourself, correct? Q. Why didn't you tell the jury....
<b>Eliciting an Emotional Response (EER)</b>		<i>D. Che cosa ha provato in quella circostanza? D. Quale sensazione ne ha ricevuto?</i>		Q. How did you feel? Q. And you felt ... Q. And you were angry about that, right?
<b>Eliciting physical gestures and actions (EPGA)</b>		<i>D. Le chiedo cortesemente di farci vedere a tutti la fotografia. D. Può leggere due o tre righe?</i>		Q. Could you (please) look at the document... Q. Please read to us the first sentence... Q. Please turn to the last page to Q. If you could turn around an look at the screen behind you...

*Table 5.* Example from a student's analysis of the most recurring phrases according to communicative function performed in the *Italian Trial Corpus* and *American Trial Corpus*

the trial, an element that could potentially testify to a great variety of communicative functions performed by the legal actors involved as well as varying nuances of witnesses' speech styles.

analyse concordance lines<sup>13</sup> and complete Table 5, designed to summarize their results qualitatively by showing the most recurrent discourse markers and common phrases used to express the eight communicative functions previously investigated during the course.

The main objective of this preliminary screening was clearly to promote the acquisition of the specialized use of language employed by professionals in this domain, both in the source and target language, a communicative competence which would eventually increase students' confidence and proficiency in matching lawyers' speech style, thus diminishing the risk of sounding insecure, as often happens when interpreters, lacking quick and fast references of language-in-use to rely on, rephrase their own utterances, even in cases of unproblematic translations from the semantic point of view, therefore failing to maintain the same level of coerciveness, formality and illocutive force of the original.

Similar research was also carried out with regard to witnesses' speech styles, an analysis of which – even though more varied in terms of patterns of use as compared to questions – fruitfully hinted at the multifaceted issues related to legal equivalence in court interpreting, such as the use of idiomatic and colloquial speech, as well as of profanity and sexual slang, often employed to report important details of the case through direct and indirect speech. The following tables (Table 6) (Table 7) (Table 8) show some

Original excerpt from the Italian Trial Corpus	English translation provided by students
(43) <i>D. Senta, si ricorda che cosa gridava questo signore quando stava facendo la telefonata?</i>	(47) Q. Mr. XXX Do you remember what was this man screaming while making the phone call?
(44) <i>R. Sì, posso dirlo?</i>	(48) A. Yes. Can I say it?
(45) <i>D. Sì.</i>	(49) Q. Yes.
(46) <i>D. "Tammazzo, puttana!"</i>	(50) A. "I'll kill ya, bitch!"

**Table 6.** English translation provided by students. Focus on slang and profanity and on the Italian word *senta*

Original excerpt from the American Trial Corpus	Italian translation provided by students
(51) Q. <b>Again, let me just rephrase the question.</b> You told the police you were told by XXX that you were pulled off because he did not want anyone to do PR work for Michael Jackson, right?	(57) <i>D. Le riformulo ancora una volta la domanda. Lei hai detto alla polizia di essere stato rimosso da XXX perché lui non voleva che nessuno facesse il PR per Michael Jackson, vero?</i>
(52) A. Well, as you said, that's a summary of my tapes...	(58) <i>R. Beh, come ha detto lei, si tratta di un riassunto delle mie dichiarazioni</i>
(53) Q. Okay.	(59) <i>D. Okay.</i>
(54) A. -- and I don't remember saying those words exactly.	(60) <i>R. ... E non ricordo di aver detto esattamente quelle parole</i>
(55) Q. <b>Well, didn't you tell the police that this made no sense to you?</b>	(61) <i>D. Scusi, lei non ha dichiarato alla polizia che questo per lei non aveva senso?</i>
(56) A. Yes, I did.	(62) <i>R. Sì.</i>

**Table 7.** Italian Translation provided by students. Focus on the Italian word *scusi*

<sup>13</sup> Both corpora were investigated with AntConc 3.5.8 (Anthony 2019), a free software program developed for corpus linguistic analysis.

American Trial Corpus	Italian translation provided by students
(63) Q. <b>Now</b> , with regard to the confidentiality issue, obviously it would be improper if somebody tape-recorded a confidential conversation between you and somebody you were investigating, correct? (64) Yes. (65) Q. You indicated during direct examination that you're familiar with the contents of this document; is that right? (66) A. Sure. (67) Q. <b>Now</b> , so at some point during your career you were made aware of the contents of this document; is that right? (68) A. Sure.	(69) D. <b>Ora</b> , a proposito della questione sulla riservatezza, ovviamente sarebbe scorretto se qualcuno registrasse una conversazione tra lei e qualcuno su cui sta indagando, vero? (70) R. Sì. (71) D. Nell'esame diretto lei ha dichiarato di conoscere il contenuto di questo documento, è vero? (72) R. Certamente. (73) D. <b>Ecco</b> , quindi ad un certo punto della sua carriera lei è stato messo al corrente del contenuto di questo documento, è vero? (74) R. Certamente.

**Table 8** Italian Translation provided by students. Focus on the English discourse marker “now”

of the specific tasks carried out by students as homework, together with the ensuing in-class discussion.

As suggested in Table 6, the use of contrastive corpus research helped students focus on idiomatic translations while self-discovering language usage in this domain. In particular, the search for a pragmatic equivalent for the Italian word *sentà* (43) led students to find out that in the *American Trial Corpus* there was no occurrence of expressions like “look”, “listen” etc. used as appellatives to introduce questions, hence signalling that the choice of these expressions, although semantically equivalent, would have been far too colloquial in this formal context. On the contrary “Mr” (8246 tokens) “Mrs” (487 tokens), and “Ms” (190 tokens) appeared to be hyper-employed to address witnesses and defendants both at the opening as well as throughout the entire questioning. The possibility of using “Mr” to match the Italian lawyers’ register was then confirmed by further corpus research which revealed that even though appellative markers are less frequent in Italian compared to English courtroom discourse, they actually show greater variety in terms of lexical choices, with *Signor* (285 tokens) and *Signora/ina* (418 tokens) only used at the opening of the questioning, and *sentà* (804 tokens) also employed throughout the entire testimony. It is also worth remarking that when confronted with profanity and slang expressions, students strove to avoid translation loss and decided to render the informal contraction used in the Italian original utterance (46) with the expression “I’ll kill ya, bitch” (50).

The lawyer’s speech style was also maintained in the excerpt shown in Table 7. In particular, even though the first line (51) portrays a very common legal expression which is quite straightforward in its meaning, students sensed that a strict literal translation, such as *Lasci che riformuli nuovamente la domanda*, would have sounded far too polite in Italian courtroom discourse, as demonstrated by the concordance lines in the *Italian Trial Corpus*.

However, in order to maintain the face-saving elements characterizing the original, they also added the object pronoun *le* (57), thus recognizing that without this element the back translation would have been “I’ll ask you again”, thereby leading to a slightly different perlocutionary act as compared to the original intention of the speaker.

Furthermore, this excerpt provided the chance to focus the students' attention on the discourse marker "well" (55) which, in cross-examinations, is mostly employed to preface disagreement, i.e. to indicate "rejection of the witness's/defendant's previous answer" (Hale 1999: 60), characterized, however, by "a more conciliatory tone" as compared to "but" (Schiffrin 1985: 653). According to these findings, students chose to preface the Italian negative question (61) with *Scusi* which appeared to be widely used in the *Italian Trial Corpus* to express contrast (1678 tokens), being weaker and more neutral than *ma*, as well as more appropriate than *sentà*, commonly employed to elicit contrast before having received an answer from the witness in order to catch him/her off guard by introducing a new topic. Finally, the English expression "Okay" (59) was maintained in the Italian version as being a common expression used by lawyers in the target language courtroom discourse, as demonstrated by corpus research.

The excerpt in Table 8 shows two different Italian translations provided by students of the discourse marker "now" (63) (67). In particular, they noticed that the main communicative functions performed by this linguistic feature, i.e. (I) controlling the flow of information, (II) reiterating a previous point, and (III) showing disagreement (Schiffrin *ibid.*; Hale 1999), were matched by *ora* (525 tokens), *a questo punto* (190 tokens), and *ecco* (1885 tokens) in the *Italian Trial Corpus*, with the latter being hyper-used. On a closer look, while *ora* and *a questo punto* were mainly employed to bring out new elements, as exemplified in "Now, with regard to the confidentiality issue" (69), *ecco* was used to focus the attention on specific details previously mentioned by the witness or defendant (II), a linguistic choice underlying the willingness to reiterate a point by eliciting more details (73).

### 3. Conclusion: reviewing course syllabus, material selection and teaching methodology

This contribution has highlighted the centrality of tailoring the input to students' background knowledge and needs by offering various didactic solutions to syllabus design and material selection aimed at contextualizing, within effective learning environments, the specialized use of language in courtroom settings, before exposing learners to all the pitfalls of real-life situations.

Moreover, it is my contention here that introducing ESP through blended learning scenarios can strongly promote the acquisition of a "multimodal literacy" (Walsh 2010: 213) which proves to be especially important in court interpreting training in order to provide students with ample authentic, or at least highly reliable, input to be processed through the same sensory channels engaged while performing this activity in professional contexts.

In that respect, as my course testified, in this field of ESP teaching there is a strong need for more inclusive approaches, since for most students courtroom discourse is not only far removed from their previous studies, but also antithetical to their everyday experience of the language of the law, usually more related to written documents. From this it also follows that offering students a chance to familiarize with this specific legal environment is a *sine qua non* to prepare them to perform in very formal, adversarial and emotionally charged atmospheres where the pressure of time constraints and pub-

lic speaking are significant challenges to be overcome while they are required to render accurate interpretations without any sort of hesitation.

Consequently, it is plausible to argue that in the first training stages employing video materials can offer students a framework within which to contextualize the ensuing specific activities aimed at developing their interpreting skills. In particular, audiovisual tools can prove to be much more adequate resources than printed texts in order to substitute with meaningful and first-hand learning experiences what could only be achieved through visits to both source and target language professional settings.

Furthermore, the results of this research suggest that popular legal movies can be fruitfully exploited whenever there is the need to establish a shortcut communication with trainees with limited professional expertise in order to introduce complex facts, difficult to explain on their own, more effectively. In particular, while creating a storehouse of knowledge through popular culture references, students become engaged on an emotional level, a situation which can powerfully lead to “meaningful learning” (Ausbel *et al.* 1978) therefore offering teachers the possibility of tapping into these existing schemas on later stages of the course to introduce new input.

Similarly, it should be noted that the plethora of opportunities offered by multimedia tools and new technologies can provide the springboard for the creation of extremely stimulating learning environments where the inclusion of the flipped classroom model can foster a didactic approach moving from global to analytical and provide students with the big picture before asking them to complete in class, under the teacher’s guide, more logical thinking tasks, such as analysing specific pragmatic aspects of court interaction, as well as collecting data and classifying corpus linguistic results. In this way teachers, while better connecting to the students’ preferred learning style, which has shifted in the past two decades towards a more dynamic and visual pattern, can enhance experiential learning, whereby knowledge “results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb 1984: 41), an approach which can maximize students’ chances of developing higher order thinking skills by discovering language at the discourse level, beyond the boundaries of sentence structure.

Ultimately, the positive results of the final examination, as well as the students’ enthusiasm about the learning opportunities offered by Internet and popular audio-visual tools, demonstrated that learners had not only widened their cross-cultural procedural knowledge in court interpreting – which was actually the main objective of the course – but had also developed some sort of meta-learning strategies, an aspect signalled by a growing awareness with regard to how these resources, together with corpus linguistics, can be exploited to gain mastery over the pragmatic issues related to court interpreting, hence ultimately fostering their interest and autonomy in learning ESP. Indeed, it was particularly this last aspect which influenced the most the students’ preparation for the final exam when they were advised to practise at home by recording their voice while interpreting selected scenes from both mock and real-life trials, and to check their performance in case of doubts through corpus linguistic analysis.

As shown in Figure 9, in this learning approach even teachers are invested with a more dynamic role, being related to designing tailor-made materials, providing scaffolding techniques, while monitoring students’ feedback through face-to-face classroom interaction and learning materials. The main aim becomes, therefore, making students ‘experience’ the unique demands of court interpreting, by improving their understand-

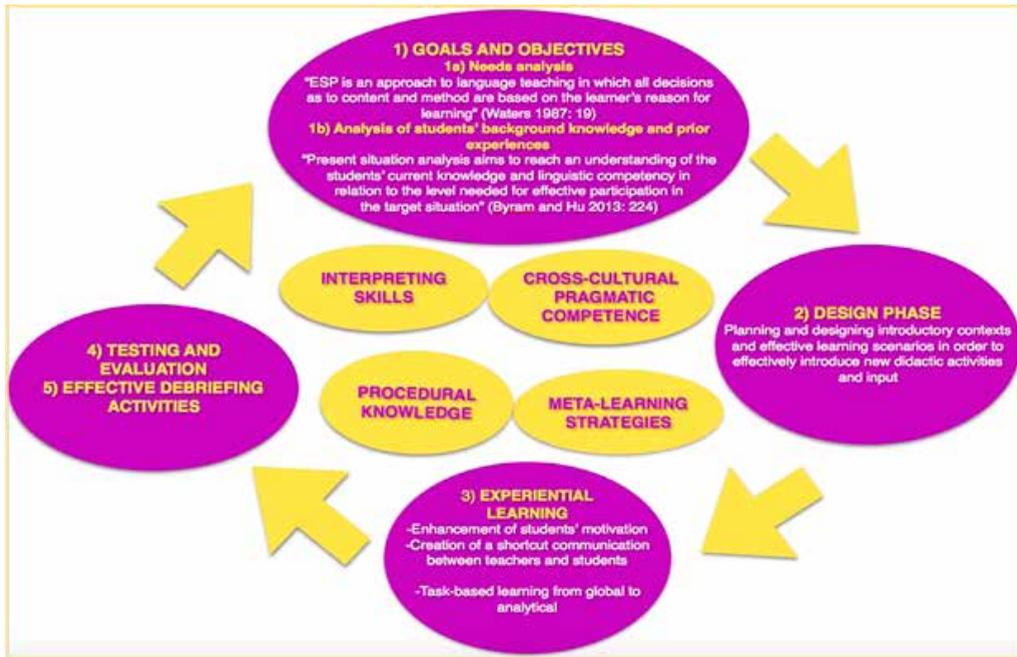


Figure 9. Review of the teaching model presented in this study

ing of this legal environment, while fostering their procedural knowledge and educating them about how to improve their proficiency in this field.

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# MUSEUM AD: INTERPRETATIVE OR UN-INTERPRETATIVE AUDIO DESCRIPTION?

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## Abstract

Museum audio description (AD) has emerged as a research topic in Translation Studies only in recent years, especially since AD started to move from being a service for the visually impaired to become a paradigm in Translation Studies. Many AD guidelines have been produced over the years to promote accessibility and support best practices for the visually impaired. From a comparison of AD guidelines available in the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, Greece and the United States in 2010, it is clear that film and television AD still have priority over museum AD and that only some general features of museum AD are outlined. In this paper I will first introduce museum AD as described in these guidelines and try to show the main features of museum AD in relation to the question of objectivity and interpretation in the major studies available. I will also illustrate the theoretical background that explains how interpretation has become a major issue of museum AD and how this issue of interpretation, which has also engaged theorists in Translation Studies, must be gauged against the wider backdrop of museums as multimodal and multi-sensory spaces. Finally, I will show how cohesion, coherence and the discourse-based notions of microstructures and macrostructures are relevant for a comparison between an early un-interpretative example of museum AD and its later interpretative version.

## 1. Introduction

Museum audio description (AD) has emerged as a research topic in Translation Studies only in recent years. Over the last thirty years AD “[has begun] to come of age” (Reviere 2016: 232), especially since AD started to move from being a service for the needs of the visually impaired and has become “a modality in the field of Translation Studies” (Matamala and Orero 2017: 7). Increasingly recognized as part of audiovisual translation (AVT), AD has been defined by Braun (2007: 2) as “intersemiotic, intermodal or crossmodal translation or mediation” and by Gambier (2004: 3) as “intersemiotic

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translation with an inverse definition – an interpretation of non-verbal signs system by means of verbal signs”.

Museum AD, a verbal description that makes the visual elements of museum content accessible to the visually impaired, is a form of AD that has benefited from the social and cultural changes that museums started to experience from the late 1970s onwards (Vergo 1989; Hooper-Greenhill 1989; Andersen 1997; Dodd and Sandell 1998). These changes made accessibility a key notion, and they have been facilitated by the development of legislation in various countries over the last thirty years, from, for example, the *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA 1995) in the United Kingdom and the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA 1990), to *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), which came into force in 2008. Pioneering studies saw AD as a powerful means against exclusion and marginalization in the information society. These studies started from the premise that, in our contemporary technological society, access is crucial for participation in the benefits of globalization, for example, in relation to economic and cultural growth. Exclusion from information is “the result of age (the fast-growing elderly population in Europe), (remote) geographic location, and/or lack of funds and financial means” (Díaz-Cintas, Orero and Remael 2007: 12). Access and accessibility formerly meant overcoming physical and sensorial barriers for the disabled, but it has now become a discipline *per se* – encompassing assistive technology, Universal Design, tourism management and services, and new media technology – with the paramount purpose of fighting the economic inequalities and illiteracy that undermine the realization of democracy in many countries. Accessibility has become a ‘proactive principle’ promoting “human rights as a whole for all”, whose benefits extend “to all citizens, not only to those with disabilities” (Greco 2016: 27).

Many AD guidelines have been produced over the years to promote accessibility and support best practices for the visually impaired. From a comparison of some AD guidelines available in the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, Greece and the United States in 2010 (Rai, Greening and Petré 2010), it emerges that film and television AD still have priority over museum AD and that only the general features of this type of AD are outlined. In this paper I will first introduce museum AD as generally described in the above-mentioned AD guidelines and try to show the main features of museum AD in relation to objectivity and interpretation in the major studies available. I will also illustrate the theoretical background that has contributed to the development of interpretation as a major feature of museum AD and how this issue of interpretation, which has also engaged theorists in Translation Studies, must be gauged against the wider backdrop of museum as multimodal and multi-sensory space. Finally, I will show how cohesion, coherence and the discourse-based notions of microstructures and macrostructures enhanced an interpretative museum AD, entitled ‘Ramparts’ by the British painter Ben Nicholson, with respect to its previous un-interpretative version. These two versions feature in *Talking Images: Museums, galleries and heritage sites: improving access for blind and partially sighted people*, a project developed in collaboration with Vocaleyes and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) between 2001 and 2003.

## 2. Museum AD in some recent AD guidelines

A comparison conducted by the RNIB of existing guidelines in Spain, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Greece and the United States in 2010 in *A Comparative Study of Audio Description Guidelines Prevalent in Different Countries*, illustrates in some detail what constitutes the main features of museum AD (Rai *et al.* 2010: 1-112). For example, the Spanish guidelines, published by AENOR and entitled “Norma UNE: 153020. Audiodescripción para personas con discapacidad visual. Requisitos para la audiodescripción y elaboración de audioguías”, discusses museum AD in relation to adapted audio guides, and shows not only how museum objects can be made accessible but also outlines how the museum space must be described (“Location of the entrance, location of the exit, route for movement throughout the entire space which can be visited, location of useful services, such as bathrooms, cafés, shops, location of accessible materials, location of layout maps and other information published in relief or touch-significant, location of culture, location of each room”). A “proper terminology” (*ibid.*: 19) must be used for the description of the objects: a) if objects can be touched, their description must be “simple and organised” (*ibid.*) so that the visually impaired visitors can understand the most significant aspects of the objects; b) if objects cannot be touched, as in paintings, their description must give all significant information “avoiding any personal interpretations” (*ibid.*: 20). The American and British guidelines adapt indications from various sources and recommend “to describe what you see”, to be specific, that “less is more” (Snyder 2007: 100), “to be clear” (ITC Guidance on Standards for Audio Description, UK) and “describe when necessary, but do not necessarily describe” (Clark 2001). Other well-known American guidelines are *The Art Beyond Sight’s Guidelines for Verbal Description* (Salzhauer *et al.* 1980). They recommend giving standard information on a label (the name of the artist, nationality, title of the artwork, date, dimensions or scale of the work, media and technique), to promote museum tours and create audio guides with “extensive verbal description of artworks”. They also suggest that descriptions give information on the subject, form and colour of the artwork; orient the visually impaired person with directions; move from the general to the specific; explain art conventions; indicate where the curators have installed a work; refer to other senses as analogues for vision; explain concepts with analogies; encourage understanding through re-enactment; incorporate sounds in a creative way and allow people to touch the works of art (*ibid.*). Like the Spanish guidelines, the American Audio Description International Guidelines also state that this type of AD must be “a coherent description [that] should provide visual information in a sequence” (Rai *et al.* 2010: 68), so that the visually impaired “may assemble, piece by piece, an image of a highly complex work” (*ibid.*) and that “clear and precise language is crucial to any good description” (*ibid.*: 100).

From the above-mentioned guidelines, a general advocacy of objective description of the artwork seems to prevail in museum AD. However, as will be discussed in the following section, the notion of un-interpretative description in museum AD has been questioned in several studies on museum AD. Hycks (2006), Udo and Fels (2009), Mazur and Chmiel (2012) were among the first to suggest that, in theatre and film AD, more creative and subjective ADs should be beneficial for the visually impaired. Nevertheless, it has been noted that subjectivity is a controversial aspect of AD because of the

contradiction between some guidelines that favour a neutral or an objective approach (ADC 2008; AENOR 2005; ITC 2000; Salzhauer *et al.* 1980; Snyder 2010) and the advantages that more subjective descriptions seem to have for the visually impaired, as in RNIB and Vocaleyes (2003) (Gallego and Colmenero 2018: 141; Gallego 2019: 709) and in the ADLAB guidelines (Ramael, Reviers and Vercauteren 2015). It has also been suggested that museum AD must be analysed against the wider museum experience (Eardley *et al.* 2017; Hutchinson and Eardley 2019; Hutchinson and Eardley 2020). Museum AD, therefore, has received growing attention from diverse methodological perspectives in very recent times (Neves 2016; Gallego 2018; Randaccio 2017; Randaccio 2018; Spinzi 2019; Perego 2019; Taylor and Perego 2020; Colmenero and Gallego 2020).

### 3. Features of museum AD as interpretation

De Coster and Mülheis (2007) and Neves (2012, 2015) are among those who favour interpretation in museum AD. De Coster and Mülheis (*ibid.*) see the language of museum AD as interpretative and describe the extent to which the verbal can render the visual and when ambiguity in the visual has to be represented through other senses. They start from the assumption that every work of art deals with signs, which can be either clear or ambivalent. Clear signs are those that are perfectly translatable into words. Ambivalent signs, instead, have more layers of meaning and, although they can still be put into words, they are difficult to translate, especially if the visual effects are difficult to represent through other senses. De Coster and Mülheis (*ibid.*) give Gombrich's head as a well-known example of an ambiguous sign, which might represent the head of a duck or a rabbit, thus containing two different images within one structure. This image is a visual phenomenon with strong intensity but, if it cannot be translated into another sensual phenomenon (touch or hearing), its ambiguity remains purely visual. De Coster and Mülheis (*ibid.*) make a distinction between translatable and untranslatable visual impressions and give the following guideline: "every sign or meaning of an object or a work of art that can be clearly identified can be translated into words, but one can give an idea of visual ambiguity only if a comparable ambiguity exists in another sensorial field (touch, hearing)" (*ibid.*: 193). As already stated, they believe that this ambiguity can still be expressed in words: museum AD thus becomes interpretative as it "encourages reflection between visual and verbal signs, and the ratio between sensory and semiotic modes" (*ibid.*). Neves (2015) also reflects on the ambiguity of museum AD. In analysing descriptive guides (DGs), Neves (*ibid.*: 69) states that

there is no 'original text' to go by because the descriptive guide is the original text. There is however an original non-verbal text that will live as a co-text [...] and that will determine the nature and structure of the descriptive guide. Thus, with descriptive guide relevance is seen in terms of a variety of open co-texts that require contextualization and interpretation and, above all, selection.

Therefore, there is less concern with 'when to say it' and a greater emphasis on 'how' and 'what' to say 'about what' (*ibid.*). For Neves, unlike AD for film and theatre where visually impaired people can still integrate information coming from film and stage aurally, the language of museum AD has to resort to a higher level of interpretation:

Neves goes further to promote a ‘multi-sensory approach’ to AD. She names some museums that successfully incorporate this multi-sensory communication, like the Museo Anteros in Bologna and the Museo Tifologico in Madrid, but asserts that the greatest problem to achieve successful artistic communication is to overcome visual ambiguity in paintings, and that this can be reached through what she calls ‘soundpainting’ which she describes as follows (Neves 2012: 290):

Carefully chosen words and a careful direction of the voice talent to guarantee adequate tone of voice, rhythm and speech modulation can all work together with specific sound effects and music to provide the ‘story(ies)’ and emotions that a particular piece of art may offer.

It is interesting that the sensorial ambiguity of museum AD has been compared to soundpainting in a similar way to which the word/image relationship in AD was to ekphrasis (Pujol and Orero 2007: 49). Soundpainting and ekphrasis, used in other disciplines, such as music, literature, and the plastic arts, bear witness to the complexity of sensorial interpretation in museum AD.

#### 4. The theoretical background of museum AD: soundpainting and ekphrasis

Neves (2012) and Pujol and Orero (2007) tackle the issue of sensorial and visual ambiguity in museum AD. Neves is aware that ambiguity and subjectivity in film ADs must be avoided and that description should be precise and concise. However, “when addressing a work of art, in which creativity and subjectivity are central, audio description necessarily needs to be addressed in a different manner” (Neves 2012: 289). Although there are clear differences between the two, Neves sees museum AD as similar to soundpainting in terms of its capacity to make audio and visual elements part of the creative process.

The process of soundpainting has been described by its creator, the composer Walter Thompson (cited in Minors 2012: 87), as:

a multidisciplinary live composing sign language. It comprises more than 1200 gestures that are signed by the live composer – known as the Soundpainter. It indicates specific material and chance material to be performed. The Soundpainter, standing in front of the group (usually), signs a phrase to the group [and] then composes with the responses.

In this manner, a performance is constructed by the continuous succession of gestures and responses between the soundpainter and performing group. The soundpainter acts as a catalyst for creation in a process that is not restricted to representation, prior structural model or formal requirement. The musicians and dancers involved are directed through various gesture types in an interactive and collaborative manner and, in some performances, the audience is part of the performance. Minors (*ibid.*) notes that “the active combination of different media is central to this process. At the heart of Soundpainting lies a hypothesis that performers across disciplines are able to, and should, create a dialogue”. She adds that the term soundpainting includes the metaphorical basis of the gestures as well as the mapping between the audio and visual ele-

ments as integral to this creative process: “a gesture is a silent movement, which bears meaning, but it is only realized when someone responds by interpreting it in sound and/or movement” (*ibid.*: 89).

Pujol and Orero (2007: 49), instead, see an analogy between AD and ekphrasis, “a literary figure that provides the graphic and often dramatic description of a painting, a relief or other work of art”. Ekphrasis was originally used as a rhetorical device in epic poems in Ancient Greece to bring the experience of an object to listeners through detailed descriptive writing. If we consider that epic poems were initially handed down orally before they were written down, “the analysis between ekphrasis and audio description is even stronger” (*ibid.*). Pujol and Orero cite many well-known examples of ekphrasis in literary and artistic studies, such as the description of Achille’s shield in the *Iliad* and the depiction of the urn in Keats’ ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ (1819). The two scholars then highlight what ekphrasis has in common with AD. In their opinion (Pujol and Orero 2007: 54), there is the “narrative potential of images” that can also be found in “still images that sometimes tell complex narration” (*ibid.*). They also note that ekphrasis is composed of elements that can be considered objective and elements that can be considered subjective and they conclude (*ibid.*): “Even if the audio describer chooses to be as objective as possible when describing the audio description, it is undeniable that the work will depend on the individual interpretation of reality”.

In the contemporary debate, ekphrasis<sup>1</sup>, however, continues to be defined as “the verbal representation of graphic representation” (Heffernan 1991: 299), and Western civilization sees it as the endless struggle to reconcile the ‘natural signs’ of visual arts with the ‘arbitrary signs’ of verbal languages (Krieger 1991: 300). A more reconciling position on ekphrasis is that adopted by Mitchell: for him, ekphrasis does not entail a conflict between the verbal and the visual as all arts and media share text and image (Mitchell 1994: 94-95). Mitchell, who together with Jenks (1995), Rogoff (1998) and Mirzoeff (1999) is one of the proponents of visual culture, also believes that “the disembodied image and the embodied artefact are permanent elements in the dialectics of visual culture” (Mitchell 2002: 170):

The image/text problem is not just something constructed ‘between’ the arts, the media, or different forms of representation, but an avoidable issue within the individual arts and media. In short, all arts are ‘composite’ arts (both text and image); all media are mixed media, combining different codes, discursive conventions, channels, sensory and cognitive modes.

Not only does Mitchell see ekphrasis as an unavoidable issue in the arts because all arts are composite arts, but he also makes a broader reflection on the intersemiotic nature of “mixed media”. According to Mitchell (*ibid.*: 179), visual culture that investigates mixed media “entails a meditation on blindness, the invisible, the unseen, the unseeable, and the overlooked [...] it also compels attention to the tactile, the auditory, the haptic, and the phenomenon of synesthesia”.

<sup>1</sup> On ekphrasis there are some interesting publications in Italian such as Eco (2003), Mazzara (2007) and Cometa (2009).

This shows how soundpainting and ekphrasis influence many contemporary cultural and artistic suggestions that inscribe AD in the wider context of multisensoriality and multimodal translation.

## 5. Museum AD and Translation Studies

A recent article on museum AD makes a detailed and extensive analysis of the problem of textual fidelity in museum AD and illustrates some of the translation strategies that can be relevant both for screen AD and for museum AD (Hutchinson and Eardley 2019). They are broadly grouped into three categories (*ibid.*: 43): “those that relate to the objectivity/visibility of the describers; those that are specific to and contingent on the source texts; and translation decisions that specifically influence the experience of the receiver”. Hutchinson and Eardley (*ibid.*) pose, through the words of the major theorists in Translation Studies, the question on text fidelity and show that objectivity and interpretation represent a thorny issue in museum AD. They concede (*ibid.*) that “the translation of the visual aspects of a museum’s artworks and artefacts brings with it new considerations that are as yet largely unexplored, and that are central to development of museum AD”. In fact, the practice of museum AD, which is not fully professionalized, leaves space for the “art of AD to change and develop” (*ibid.*: 42). Museum AD can thus be reconfigured to change and develop and must be considered the result of the changes, in terms of accessibility, that museums have experienced since the late 1970s and early 1980s.

## 6. Museum AD as accessibility to the multimodal and multisensory museum

Museum AD was born as part of the evolution that museums have experienced since the 1970s. This evolution had been analysed within the field of Museum Studies, first within the paradigm of the New Museology, and, more recently, within Critical Museology. These two fields of study break with the traditional view of museums and seek to revise old notions of museums as places where national identity is celebrated and education, object display, and art perception are still shaped according to outdated narratives. They “re-examine and reformulate traditional theories of text analysis so that they can be used to obtain new insights into these [museum] text types” (Jiménez Hurtado and Gallego 2013: 577). These new text types establish a dialogue with its visitors and “avoid using narrative perspectives that impose one type of interest or another” (Jiménez Hurtado and Gallego 2015: 278).

Museum AD is, in fact, the result of a process of democratization that started to consider museums as new, interactive places for social and cultural encounters. New Museology has had the merit of breaking with the ‘how’ – “how to administrate, how to educate, how to conserve” (Vergo 1989: 3) – to promote museums as places of social and educational inclusion. It has also offered the opportunity to overcome social inequality and remove the barriers that excluded different audiences, especially in terms of physical, emotional and psychological barriers. Above all, it denounced the contradictions of the public museum. On the one hand, the museum was considered until then both as the “elite temple of the arts, and that of a utilitarian instrument for democratic education” (Hooper-Greenhill 1989: 63); on the other, it was also viewed as the perfect instru-

ment to maintain discipline, national identity, linearity in the object display, a univocal form of art perception, an institution designed to make citizens accept and internalize the established order (Bennett 1995). Thus, in the 1990s the discourse of accessibility, favoured especially by British and American legislation, as outlined above, promoted the museum “as a space of public address” (Barrett 2011: 9) and new forms in interactivity in museums. For example, Ravelli (2007: 1), in *Museum Text. Communication Frameworks*, proposes to analyse “texts in museums” that visitors and professionals are familiar with: labels, extended texts, catalogue entries, brochure description. Her framework seeks to be the means of a “broader sense of communication that in museums encompasses all other institution practices which make meaning” (*ibid.*). This is reflected in the contextual pragmatic effects of whether or not “there is an admission charge, the impact of visitors on the building, the layout of the galleries or whether exhibitions are promoted as written texts on walls or written on a brochure” (*ibid.*: 2). She does not limit her scope to written texts, but she also looks at “museums as text”, i.e., the way a whole institution or exhibition within it makes meaning, communicating to and with its public. Such new forms of interactivity widened the horizons of communication in museums: Witcomb (2003: 7) divides them into “technological, spatial and dialogical”. They include, for example, an increase in information and didactic materials, differentiation of exhibition organization according to audience (adult, children, post-colonial subjects) and changing the role of the curator, who becomes more a promoter rather than an expert. Another form of interactivity is how corporate museums develop into “blockbuster”, “superstar” museums. These museums promote tourism, the distinctiveness of (usually) big cities for prestige and a place in the global market, and they reflect corporation image marketing. McDonald (2006: 2) calls it “promotional culture” and gives the example of how a seventeenth-century doorway became the logo of V&A Enterprises, the Victoria and Albert Museum’s commercial company. A further form of interactivity is the integration of performance, dance, music, theatre and video into museum spaces. Started by the avant-garde movements, the introduction of increasingly intertwined modes of aesthetic creation has become an essential part of the museum mission to collect, conserve, and promote understanding of present and past art. The most disruptive and controversial form of interactivity, however, is that related to technology. Although technology had already been used in some museum types for decades such as in science museums, technology started to become ubiquitous in all museums. This technology includes hand-held information devices, installation art, display supports, archiving systems, and systems to keep track of visitors. Moreover, this technology, some of which requires a high degree of involvement on the part of visitors, has been hailed as a means to democratize knowledge, to modernize, popularize and increase the efficiency of museums.

Museum AD as a resource available to the visually impaired is related to these forms of interactivity in museums, which have become multimodal communicative events. Jiménez Hurtado, Seibel, Gallego and Díaz (2012: 7) describe the structure of the multimodal discourse in the museum as follows:

a macro-level of the text (the exhibition as a genre) and b) a micro-level of the text (the exhibits and the relationships between them as texts that are the realization of text types), both levels being linked to a specific situational macro-context (the museum).

Jiménez Hurtado, Seibel, Gallego and Díaz (*ibid.*: 7-10) propose this multi-layered structure which sees the exhibition as a set of conceptual objects that act as a first translation of the exhibition discourse. From a genre perspective, for them the first step is to determine the functional and pragmatic elements to establish communication, i.e. the communicative and social-semiotic context. Then, museum types – science museums, archaeological museums, contemporary art museums – will be seen as the socio-cultural context of the exhibition. The specific time and space in which the exhibition takes place will instead be viewed as the situational context of exhibits. Once contexts (museum types) and genre (exhibition type) have been studied, the next step is to analyse the exhibits as the source text (ST) *par excellence* in museums. These exhibits use a specific type of multimodal grammar determined by their visual, acoustic and linguistic nature. To give an example of a multimodal grammar applied to museum multimodal texts, Jiménez Hurtado and Gallego (*ibid.*) show how in videos, for example, the ST analysis includes a semantic analysis of the objects appearing in an image; a morphosyntactic analysis including the object morphology (colour, texture, size, etc.); a syntactic analysis describing the time-space relation between the objects as they appear in the video, and the setting in which they appear. Moreover, the study of images requires an analysis at the pragmatic and discourse levels that focuses on the perspective from which objects are shown in an image (*ibid.*):

Obviously, this grammar analysis of videos can be applied to other types of exhibits requiring a study of non-verbal visual codes, such as paintings, sculptures, illustrations or objects.

This approach to museum AD comes from the idea that the combination of multimodality and multimediality gives rise to new methods of universal access to knowledge (Ventola and Kaltenbacher 2004: 1-6). As stated by Jiménez Hurtado and Gallego (2015: 577):

the study of this phenomenon requires a detailed description of the new modes and their semiotic function as reflected in their discourse combination. This means that it is necessary to re-examine and re-formulate traditional theories of text analysis so that they can be used to obtain new insights into these text types.

Another approach to museum AD is that of a multisensory translation promoting accessibility, which is based on the idea that museums have lost their primary function as sites of seeing and privileged places where one can experience objectivity. In his introduction to *The Senses and Society*, Howes (2014) enthusiastically welcomed the rediscovery of the 'sensorium' across disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. This rediscovery has brought key insights into the sociality of sensation and the cultural contingencies of perception, challenging the dominance of the psychological approach in this area. The most outstanding result of this return of senses is the emergence of "sensory museology" (*ibid.*: 259) that has rehabilitated, first of all, the sense of touch, and then, the senses of smell and taste, traditionally classified as 'base'. This approach to museum AD focuses more on aspects of artistic fruition and creative response and emphasizes the importance of using creative and interpretative language in AD, as championed by De Coster and Mülheis (2007) and Neves (2012).

## 7. Ben Nicholson's drawing 'Ramparts'

The AD of Ben Nicholson's abstract drawing titled 'Ramparts' is a well-known example of AD for the visual arts and one of the first examples of museum AD. This AD was written twice and, in comparing the two ADs, the audio describer Andrew Holland outlines the process that brought him from a more objective description to a more interpretative and subjective view and treatment of reality for the blind and visually impaired. As Holland (2009: 180) recalls:

In 2003, VocalEyes worked with the RNIB and English Heritage on The Talking Image Project. We undertook three case studies to examine the use of three audio descriptions within the visual arts, working with galleries who were interested to opening up collections for the blind and visually impaired.

Before analysing Holland's two ADs, I will first describe the theoretical background referring to interpretation and narratology, coherence, cohesion and discourse structure that helped, in Holland's (*ibid.*) own words, "to give a narrative creat[ing] some emotional relationship with the piece". Holland (*ibid.*), as a long-term audio describer for the theatre in the UK, claims that audio describers cannot avoid interpretation but they can try not to be judgemental. As outlined in Section 3, the issue of interpretation is a delicate matter in AD and, as Mazur and Chmiel (2012: 173) remind us, has always been 'a bone of contention' among scholars, AD researchers and audio describers who have not found agreement on what interpretation should be. In their contribution, Mazur and Chmiel (*ibid.*) define interpretation "as the subjective treatment of reality perceived by audio describers in films and the equally subjective verbal expression of that reality in description for the blind and partially sighted". They therefore propose "that instead of applying the binary opposition of objective versus subjective, we should rather be using an objectivity–subjectivity scale, which can help determine which interpretive descriptions are less subjective and can consequently be used in AD" (*ibid.*). Objectivity, which was one of the key principles in early AD guidelines, was later questioned. Mazur and Chmiel cite a number of scholars that reject objectivity altogether and favour subjectivity and interpretation. For example, Udo and Fels (2009: 179) claim that the task of objective interpretation is impossible, and Hyks (2006) suggests that AD is highly subjective even if the describers try to be objective. As discussed above, De Coster and Mülheis (2007) and Neves (2012) see the language of AD museum as interpretative of sensorial ambiguity, and Pujol and Orero (2007) describe how the 'narrative potential of images' depends on the individual interpretation of reality. Vercauteren (2012) has also discussed the procedures of content selection and formulation of the descriptions in AD. Although he mainly refers to film AD, he describes the dual role of the audio describer in narratological terms. In fact, the audio describer "is not only the author of the audio described target product, but he is also a member of the audience of the source product" (*ibid.*: 211). Moreover, according to structuralist theories, he sees *fabula* (what can be told) and *story* (a way of telling the fabula) as components of narrative. One fabula may be realized in many stories. The fabula is the logical and chronological order of events of the real world, whereas the story is how the events are organized in 'a certain manner' and revealed to the readers. Holland, therefore, was aware that it was necessary to tackle the issue of sensorial and visual ambiguity with

a more subjective and creative interpretation (Neves 2012; Pujol and Orero 2007) using the most appropriate similes and analogues for vision to express tactile qualities. He also had to make decisions that influence the experience of the receiver (Hutchinson and Eardley 2019) and to revise the *story* of his first AD (Vercauteren 2012). My analysis of ‘Ramparts’ is also focused on issues of coherence and cohesion that played a crucial role for interpretation in the revised AD. Coherence and cohesion are not new topics in the field of AD, especially for film AD and multimodal discourse in general (Braun 2011; Taylor 2014, 2017). In particular, Braun (2011: 650) notes how coherence needs to be achieved across different modes of communication and makes a distinction between ‘local coherence’ created within individual scenes; and ‘global coherence’ that reaches out across scenes. She also shows how coherence in film emerges from links within and across different modes of expression (e.g. links between visual images, image-sound links and image-dialogue links). Consequently, she outlines a new model of coherence which embraces verbal and multimodal texts and which underlines the importance of source text author and target text recipients in creating coherence (Braun 2011: 647-652). Similarly, from a functional systemic perspective, Taylor (2014: 42) sees “the audiovisual text such as a film [...] still governed by cohesive ties of both a verbal and visual nature”. Specifically, “in the case of audio descriptions (ADs), the text is written to be read and needs to be both linguistically cohesive within itself and cohesive with the visual content it describes” (*ibid.*).

Although Braun’s and Taylor’s contributions are particularly interesting for AD and multimodal discourse, my analysis of the two ADs of ‘Ramparts’, which is conducted exclusively on the written texts, will instead take into account Alonso’s (2014) observations on coherence and discourse structure. Alonso (*ibid.*: 52) starts from the assumption that there is no stark opposition between coherence and cohesion and states that both “cohesion and coherence should be seen as interactive constituents of text and discourse structure”. Thus, “meaning relations and properties existing in any text which are not cases of cohesion, are expressions of coherence” (*ibid.*). In line with some early studies on discourse coherence (van Dijk: 1977, 1980, 1985; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983), she sees how this relation can be made explicit or implicit, with or without explicit markers. She then goes on to analyse coherence at a local and global level. Local coherence refers to “the meaning expected to hold between individual propositions or portions of texts which are normally physically adjacent to one another” (Alonso 2014: 53). Van Dijk refers to this sequential connectivity of the adjacent portions of text as microstructure. At this microstructural level, relations may be of different types (chronological, general-particular, cause-effect, explanation) and may be marked by cohesive devices (explicit relations) or by different semantic operations (hierarchical ordering, choice of syntactic correlations, identity or difference relations, topic recurrence, etc.). The macrostructure of a text is, instead, characterized by the many semantic relations co-existing within large portions of a text or discourse. These semantic relations are essential to recover the general content of a discourse and their interdependence with microstructures are of fundamental importance for coherence. Drawing on van Dijk and Kintch (1983: 150-51), Alonso (2014: 54-55) asserts that the microstructural level of analysis gives a step-by-step treatment of discourse, whereas the macrostructure recovers meaning as a result of the arrangements chosen and the selection made. Importantly, the semantically interrelated propositions found in a text:

do not develop independent topics or pursue independent goals, but function together towards the construction of the general message or the achievement of a communicative plan as represented by the totality of the text.

I will mainly draw on Alonso's notions to analyse Holland's two ADs of 'Ramparts'. I will first consider how cohesive relations contribute to create coherence, thus enhancing the construction of meaning, through the implicitness and explicitness of the linguistic markers in the two ADs. I will then focus on how coherence works both at local and global level and on how the interdependence of microstructures and macrostructures are relevant for the more interpretative and subjective rewritten AD.

I have divided the two ADs of 'Ramparts' into two comparable sections: first, the un-interpretative version (from now on UN) is divided into seven sections (nine sentences); while the second, interpretative version (from now on IN) is divided into eight sections (23 sentences). My analysis, however, will only include some excerpts taken from the two versions and I will use the terms un-interpretative and interpretative to refer to objectivity and subjectivity, as described above.

The ADs describe a relief with three rectangles and two trapeziums (figure 1).



*Figure 1.* "Ramparts"

Although the first two sections are similarly phrased in the two versions, the IN version shows a higher level of explicitness between and within sentences. The first sentence states that the work of art is "this relief" and gives contextual information on the author, where he was living and the year of production ("this relief was made in

	Un- interpretative	Interpretative
1	A rectangular backboard, some 19 inches high and 21 inches wide, that is about 48 by 53 centimetres, is painted a smooth earthy brown.	Subtitled “Ramparts”, <u>this relief</u> was made in 1968, whilst Ben Nicholson was living in Switzerland.  <u>A rectangular backboard, just over eighteen inches high and nearly two feet wide – that’s about 48 by 53 centimetres</u> – is painted a smooth earthy brown.

1968, whilst Ben Nicholson was living in Switzerland”). “This relief” is also in cataphoric position to the phrase “subtitled ‘Ramparts’”, which gives the title to the relief and draws attention to the artefact itself, its height and width (“just over eighteen inches high and nearly two feet wide – that’s about 48 by 53 centimetres”).

Section 1 is explicitly linked to section 2 in the IN version through substitution (“relief/backboard”) and the cohesive marker “this”:

2	Standing proud of it is a slightly smaller rectangle - this one divides up into a number of smaller, overlapping shapes.	<i>This backboard</i> frames, as it were, a collection of overlapping geometric shapes.
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This is shown in “this relief [...] A rectangular backboard [...] This backboard frames, as it were, a collection of overlapping geometric shapes”. Although the corresponding UN version reports ‘standard information’ which is traditionally considered as one of the requirements for successful museum AD<sup>2</sup> and makes an interpretative reference (‘standing proud’), the UN version is less explicit and cohesive (“A rectangular backboard [...] standing proud of it a smaller rectangle – this one divides up into a number of smaller, overlapping shapes”) (Sections 1 and 2).

This ‘backboard frames a collection of overlapping geometric shapes’ in the IN version refers anaphorically to the three rectangles and allows us to organize the following sentences in a hierarchical ordering: “three different sized rectangles [...] the one to the left is the smallest [...] the central [...] the third rectangle [...]” (Section 4):

4	The light created by these three rectangles starts off – to the left – as horizontal and almost central. But a little way across, the line shifts so that the two rectangles centre and right slope downwards. From a far right is a tall rectangle – painted the same brown as the background.	Separating the top frosted section from the bottom, three differently sized rectangles progress across from left to right. The one to the left is the smallest and is painted a similar earthy brown to the background, but with a scuffed quality. The central rectangle is a darker brown –with a blacker sheen – which makes it sink back away from us into the relief – although it actually stands proud of the one to the left. The third rectangle – in fact almost a square – is a lighter, orangey brown.
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<sup>2</sup> This is the first requirement for museum AD listed in *Art Beyond Sight Guidelines for Verbal Description* (1980).

3	At top and bottom are areas of white. Between them a line of three differently sized rectangles. The one to the left is brown like the background. The central one is a darker brown, and the third, a lighter, orangey brown.	At top and bottom are areas of frosty, silvery white. These have been scratched and rubbed in places to create an irregular, uneven surface, like snow drifting across dirty ice. A patch at the top left has been roughly scraped so that a grubby brown shows through like a stain. Elsewhere, are smudges of thick, powdery white.
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For example, the noun phrase “areas of white” framing the three rectangles becomes “areas of frosty, silvery white”, and underlines the tactile and visual qualities of the artefact. In the sentence “These have been scratched and rubbed to create an irregular, uneven surface”, not only does ‘these’ anaphorically refer to “areas of frosty, silvery white” but also the use of the passive – “have been scratched and rubbed” – draws attention to the process these areas have undergone, which techniques have been used, and how they feel like to touch. The sentence concludes on a simile “like snow drifting across dirty ice”, which gives a clear analogue for vision. A similar microstructure is repeated in the following sentence – “A patch at the top left has been roughly scraped so that a grubby brown shows through like a stain” – in which attention is drawn to the process-making and the technique used, and it closes with a simile, which is another analogue for vision. Furthermore, in the IN version important spatial indications relevant to the visually impaired visitors are provided, with indications of where the various components of the relief are located: “At top and bottom are areas”, “A patch at the top left” (Section 3), “separating the top frosted section from the bottom”, “three differently sized rectangles progress across from left to right”, “stands proud of the one to the left” (Section 4), “down towards the right” (Section 5), “between the frosted white sections at top and bottom”, “a tall rectangular form to the far right”, “to the top right corner of the orangey brown square” (Section 6). This is particularly evident if compared with the fewer indications given in the UN version (“at top and bottom” (Section 3), “to the left” (Section 4)). Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the IN version portray the three rectangles, especially their colour (“earthy brown”, “darker brown, lighter, orangey brown”). Finally, Sections 6, 7 and 8 introduce the trapeziums.

The trapeziums are also described in more detail than in the un-interpretative version. They are more clearly ordered from general to particular (“Two other forms...”, “Both of a similar shape – trapezium”, “One of these trapeziums...”, “The other trapezium”). Their colour is expressed through similes showing tactile and visual qualities that can help the visually impaired visitors: “In colour both shapes reflect the two frosty-white sections [...] giving these a more insubstantial feel” (Section 6), and the circle carved within the first trapezium is “painted white, creating a moonlike glow” (Section 7).

As I have shown, the IN version is significantly different from the UN version in its use of coherence, by substitution, repetition and hierarchical ordering, at the microstructural level<sup>3</sup>. However, it is in the interdependence of microstructure and mac-

<sup>3</sup> In a recent work Perego (2019) conducted a study on the scripted and recorded museum AD texts of 18 paintings from the British Museum. The result was that they only partially complied with the recommendations of existing guidelines. On the one hand, the author showed that her corpus still

6	<p>The other form seems to float above the relief. Their colour is similar to the two white sections. Both are similar in shape – a trapezium – with parallel sides, horizontal tops, but with a bottom edge which slopes down towards the right.</p>	<p>Now sloping, these two rectangles seem in danger of slipping out of the composition – squeezed out from between the frosted white sections at top and bottom. The only thing which stops them going any further and holds them in some kind of equilibrium is a tall rectangular form to the far right – painted a similar brown as the background. But even this seems to have been affected by the strong movements within – and the top right corner of the orangey brown square dents into it.</p> <p>Two other forms animate the relief further. Both are a similar shape – a trapezium – with parallel sides, horizontal tops, but with a bottom edge which slopes down towards the right. In colour both shapes reflect the two frosty-white sections as though somehow related to them – though the texture of the board is allowed to show through, giving these a lighter, more insubstantial feel.</p>
7	<p>One is positioned within the top white section and to the right. Its slanting edge runs along the top edge of the slanting brown line. Carved within it is a circle – the inner edge painted white.</p>	<p>One of these trapeziums is positioned within the top frosted section to the right. Its slanting bottom edge seems to be holding the dark brown rectangle and orange square in their downward slope. Carved within it is a circle – the inner edge of which is painted white, creating a moon-like glow.</p>
8	<p>The other trapezium sits next to it – just left of centre – and a little lower. In this, another circle has been inscribed rather than cut.</p>	<p>The other trapezium sits next to it – just left of centre – and a little lower. Within this is another, larger, circle. Inscribed rather than cut, this circle has an ethereal quality – like an echo of the first. Hovering in front of the darker brown rectangle – the trapezium appears like a guillotine, which having severed the line of rectangles, pushing it downwards and backwards into the relief – now holds the pieces in their final balanced positions.</p>

rostructure that the rewritten AD especially reveals its subjective and interpretative value. The macrostructure recovers meaning as a result of the arrangements chosen and the selection made to create ‘an emotional response’ both for the audio describer as a member of the audience and for the visually impaired visitor. Holland’s story focuses on his subjective description of the relief. The four macrostructures of the AD (Sections 1-3, 4-6, 7, 8) show many semantic relations. For example, “the collection of overlapping geometric shapes” acquires a more complete meaning when the areas at the top and bottom of these shapes are described (Section 3); while “the three differently sized rectangles” become more meaningful when Holland describes their colour and qualities in detail (Section 4). Similarly, the other “two forms [that] animate the relief further”

guaranteed vivid and imaginative language, text informativity through the combination of high lexical diversity, extensive use of descriptive adjectives, and substantial lexical diversity. On the other hand, her museum ADs seemed more lexically and syntactically complex due to the use of opaque technical terms, heavy adjectival phrases, and long sentences.

show their full meaning when these two forms are described as trapeziums that have the same colour as the two frosty-white sections mentioned earlier (Section 6).

However, the most significant semantic relations are those deployed in macrostructures 4 to 8 that create, according to Holland himself, 'a sense of slow, powerful movement' eventually ending in a balanced equilibrium. Thus, from the previous, more objective description, the revised 'Ramparts' has become highly subjective and interpretative, as the reference to 'movement' is made in every macrostructure, as shown in the following examples: "three differently sized rectangles progress across from left to right" (Section 4); "the central rectangle is a darker brown – with a blacker sheen – which makes it sink back away from us into the relief" (Section 4); "the other two forms have shifted downwards" (Section 5); "Now sloping these two rectangles seem in danger of slipping out of the composition" (Section 6); "Its [referring to the trapezium] slanting bottom edge seems to be holding the dark brown rectangle and orange square in their downward slope" (Section 7) and "the trapezium appears as a guillotine, which having severed the line of rectangles, pushing it downwards and backwards into the relief – now holds the pieces in their final balanced position" (Section 8). This strong sense of movement in the revised AD of 'Ramparts' is the result of the use of coherence at the microstructural level, and of the interrelation of microstructures and macrostructures at the discourse level.

## 8. Conclusion

My analysis shows how the emerging topic of museum AD has started to become a paradigm in the field of Translation Studies. Museum AD has been the result of the changes that museums have been experiencing from the 1970s onwards and it has also been favoured by legislation which, in the 1990s, made accessibility a priority in many countries, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States. The legislation has promoted accessibility at every level of the museum experience. Access has to be 'physical', i.e. the museum building must be accessible; 'cultural', i.e. exhibitions and collections should reflect the interests of their audience; 'emotional', i.e. the museum environment has to be welcoming; 'financial', i.e. affordable in terms of museum admission, free transport, etc; there must be 'intellectual access', which aims at including people with learning difficulties or with limited knowledge having access to the museum; and, finally, 'sensory access', i.e. museum exhibitions must cater for to the needs and requirements of people with visual and hearing impairment.

The issue of accessibility has led to the creation of many AD guidelines, and I have tried to identify the characteristics of museum AD in relation to objectivity and interpretation. I have also illustrated the theoretical background that has made interpretation become a major factor of museum AD and outlined how interpretation can be gauged against the wider backdrop of multimodal and multi-sensory museums. However, I have also shown how the issue of interpretation vs. objectivity still remains a bone of contention among AD scholars and audio describers. Finally, I have compared the un-interpretative and a later interpretative museum AD of Ben Nicholson's artwork 'Ramparts' (1968). In conclusion, my analysis has illustrated how, in the interpretative version, there are more similes and analogies for vision; how, in narratological terms, the story is rewritten; how cohesive ties contribute to create coherence through explicit

and implicit linguistic markers; and, finally, how the interrelation of microstructures and macrostructures that emerges at discourse level plays a crucial role in making the later version of 'Ramparts' more interpretative.

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# A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF DEONTIC MODALITY IN ENGLISH EUROLECT

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## Abstract

The law-making environment of the European Union is a very specific language contact setting in which English has been used as the main drafting language since the 2004 round of enlargement. This situation has produced a specific variety of legislative English, namely English Eurolect. Although its most striking characteristic is the presence of specific EU-related vocabulary, there are also notable morpho-syntactic and textual traits, such as differences in modal usage. The English section of the *Eurolect Observatory Multilingual Corpus* (EOMC) includes an A corpus of EU directives, a B corpus of matching UK national transposition measures and a recently added C corpus of UK domestic legislation that is unrelated to the EU setting. The comparison between A and B has already highlighted significant differences in relation to obligation, permission and prohibition modals (Sandrelli 2018). The present study, based on a mixture of quantitative data (obtained via *Wordsmith Tools* 6.0) and qualitative observations, aims to obtain a more fine-grained view of such differences by adding the analysis of the C corpus of domestic legislation.

## 1. Introduction

EU legislation is the outcome of extensive negotiations involving various stakeholders in Brussels and in the Member States, via a complex multilingual legal co-drafting process which produces equally authentic versions of every text in all the EU languages. As Wagner *et al.* (2002: 70) point out, “[...] in most cases the authors are unidentifiable: the texts are collectively produced with disparate input from various sources, in the process of consensus formation and political compromise”. While in legal terms there is no ‘original’ source language version as such, in actual practice the text is drafted in one language, altered several times in an iterative process, translated into all the other languages and revised.

This unique law-making process taking place in a multicultural and multilingual scenario has produced specific EU legislative varieties, known as *Eurolects*. In 2013 the Eurolect Observatory was set up at Università degli Studi Internazionali-UNINT in Rome with the aim of describing the key features of Eurolects in several EU languages

through corpus data<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, the project is focused on one of the types of binding legal instruments adopted by the EU, namely directives. The reason for this choice is that, while regulations and decisions are directly applicable, directives require transposition into national law before they can be implemented in each Member State; this mechanism creates a close link between directives and the related national transposition measures that is very interesting from a linguistic point of view as well as a legislative one. Indeed, Robertson (2010: 149) points out: “There is thus a direct relationship between EU language and national legal language. They are separate kinds of discourse, and legally and linguistically distinctive, but closely linked and intertwined”.

During the first phase of the project (2013-2016), an A corpus of EU directives covering a 10-year time span (1999-2008) was collected in all the languages involved in the Observatory. It was decided to include all the directives adopted over that period (i.e. those adopted by the European Parliament and Council and those adopted by the Commission), as they all require national transposition to become applicable in the Member States<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, it was decided to include both basic acts and amending acts, which contain text that must be inserted into older acts. Although the drafting style of amending acts is influenced by that of earlier acts, it was decided to include them in the corpus too, as they make up a significant proportion of the directives adopted each year and our aim was to obtain as full a picture of the directives adopted over the ten-year period as possible. Then, a B corpus of all the related national transposition measures (NTMs) adopted by the various Member States was compiled for all the languages involved in the project<sup>3</sup>. More specifically, “[...] only the laws that were directly promulgated by the national Parliament or were delegated to the Council of Ministers were taken into account as first choice. Consequently, both local norms and ministerial regulations were not included [...]” (Tomatis 2018: 36). As regards the time span of legislation included in the B corpus, it stretches up to 2013, as the transposition process often requires several years.

The resulting Eurolect Observatory Multilingual Corpus (EOMC) is a comparable corpus of EU directives and matching national transposition laws in 11 languages. The Observatory team adopted a common research template that distinguished between EU-rooted phenomena, contact-induced features, and intra-linguistic variability at lexical, morpho-syntactic and textual levels (Mori 2018b). By comparing directives with their matching NTMs via corpus linguistics techniques, it was possible to identify several Eurolect-specific traits, i.e. features that were either not present or were used differently in the domestic varieties of legislative language; the results of this phase of the project have been published in an edited volume (see Mori 2018a). However, as the

<sup>1</sup> Initially, the project included English, French, German, Italian, Maltese and Spanish, but the range of EU languages was expanded by adding Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Latvian, and Polish as soon as partners in other universities were identified; Hungarian has recently been added too. For more information on project partners, research activities and publications, see <https://www.unint.eu/it/ricerca/progetti-didattica/1219-eurolect-observatory-project.html>.

<sup>2</sup> I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out that only the directives adopted by the European Parliament and the Council undergo the full EU legislative process and have been checked by the lawyer-linguists of the three EU institutions; it might be interesting to investigate language patterns in the two types of directives in a future study.

<sup>3</sup> Information was retrieved from the Eur-Lex portal: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>.

purpose of the national laws in the B corpus is to transpose the provisions contained in EU directives, they cannot be considered as a ‘pure’ product of the legislative drafting tradition of each Member State. Therefore, in the second phase (2017-2020) of the project a C corpus of domestic legislation that was originated entirely domestically (i.e. bearing no relation to the EU setting) was added for English, German, Greek, Italian, Polish and Spanish (at the time of writing). By comparing patterns identified in the three components (A, B and C), it should be possible to obtain a more fine-grained view of Eurolect-specific usage versus the domestic legislative variety of the language.

As regards the English section of the EOMC, one of the aspects in which interesting differences emerged from the comparison between the A corpus and B corpus is usage patterns in deontic modality (Sandrelli 2018: 79-83), one of the key linguistic features of prescriptive legal texts. Thus, the aim of the present contribution is to refine the analysis by adding a comparison with the C corpus of domestic legislation. Our hypothesis is that there is a Eurolect-specific way of using obligation, permission and prohibition modals and semi-modals in EU directives, and that differences will be identified not only between the corpus of directives and the two corpora of UK legislation, but also between the corpus of NTMs (B) and the corpus of domestic laws with no relation to the EU setting (C). The paper begins with a literature review on deontic modality in English legislative language (Section 2); then, my data and methodology are briefly presented in Section 3, the results are illustrated in Section 4, and my conclusions in Section 5.

## 2. Deontic modality in legal language: a brief overview

The frequency of deontic modals and semi-modals is relatively high in legislation, because “[t]he fundamental functions of law, that is, to impose duties and confer power [...] are realised through deontic modality – modals and related patterns which convey obligation and permission” (Biel 2017: 157). More specifically, the duty-imposing function of laws is expressed via deontic obligation modals, while the power-conferring function is conveyed by deontic permission modals. Traditionally, the most widely used obligation modal is *shall*, which conveys both futurity and obligation. The same nuances are also expressed by the other deontic modals used in prescriptive texts:

One of the major characteristics of deontic modality is precisely the fact that, unlike epistemic modality, it is intrinsically connected with ‘futurity’ [...]. This obviously applies not only to *shall*, but also to the other modal auxiliaries to be found in prescriptive legal texts, notably (in terms of frequency) *may*, as well as *must*, *should* and *can*. In short, when prescribing what people may or may not do, the law cannot but regulate their behaviour or situation *prospectively* with respect to the present moment (Williams 2005: 87).

Over the last few decades, the use of modals in legislation has undergone profound changes in English-speaking countries, as a result of the Plain Language (or Plain English) movement which originated in the US in the 1970s, and then spread to the UK and other English-speaking countries (Williams 2007)<sup>4</sup>. The general aims of this modern-

<sup>4</sup> Of course, this is not to say that the importance of writing clearly and avoiding *officialesse* was never taken into account before then (see for example Ernest Gowers, *Plain Words*, 1948).

ization drive are to make legal texts more accessible to ordinary citizens by removing several features of *legalese*. One of them is the modal *shall*, considered a superfluous archaism to be replaced with “[...] *must* or the semi-modal *is/are to* construction (as in *There is to be a body corporate*) or the present simple” (Williams 2011: 40).

Williams (2005) compiled the World Data Corpus (about 145,000 words), made up of 36 prescriptive texts from the UK, EU, US, UN and ILO, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Ireland, and New Zealand; all the legislation was adopted between the 1990s and the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most widely used modal in the corpus was *shall*, with a frequency of 11,200 per million words, although the most common prescriptive verbal construction was actually the present simple (21,500 per million words)<sup>5</sup>. However, Williams also found examples of *shall-free* legislation adopted in Australia and South Africa and hypothesized the existence of a North-South divide in this respect, namely that English-speaking countries in the southern hemisphere had fully embraced the *shall-free* policy, unlike those in the northern hemisphere and unlike the major international organisations.

In the UK the first steps towards the modernization of legislative drafting were taken with the Revenue and Customs Tax Law Rewrite Project, which began in 1997 and lasted 13 years; moreover, both the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel in Westminster and the Office of the Scottish Parliamentary Counsel in Edinburgh were involved in drawing up drafting guidelines to improve the linguistic quality of legislation. Williams (2007, 2008) analysed the text of the 2007 Income Tax Act and a number of Acts passed by the Scottish Parliament between 2000 and 2007 to identify relevant style changes. In relation to deontic modality, Williams (2007: 108-109) found that in the Income Tax Act “[...] a considerable portion of the text is also free of the controversial modal auxiliary that so typifies traditional legal texts, i.e. *shall*”; *shall* was generally replaced by *must*, the *be to* construction and the present tense. As regards Scotland, two sets of Scottish Acts were compared, the first one including all the Acts passed in 2000 and the second one most of the Acts passed in 2006-2007. In the later set of laws, the frequency of *shall* had decreased by almost 80%, while the use of *must* had more than doubled. *Shall* was retained especially in those parts of the documents that amended older Acts: “Drafters often adopt the style of the Act being amended while making textual changes and so they continue to use *shall* in these circumstances even if they use *must* or other formulations elsewhere” (Williams 2007: 114).

Williams (2013) continued his investigation of prescriptive verbal constructions in legislation by collecting five subcorpora of UK legislative texts passed in 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010, and a corpus of EU legally binding texts adopted over the same period. This diachronic study shows that in the UK the frequency of *shall* went from 12,700 (per million words) in 1970 to 200 in 2010; by contrast, in the EU its frequency remained practically unaltered until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and then dropped slightly.

Garzone (2013a) also focused her analysis on the UK context. Firstly, she argued that it is reductive to consider *shall* as a pointless archaism; *shall* can have a performative (constitutive) function as well as a deontic one, and the two have an element in

<sup>5</sup> All the frequency values identified by the various scholars cited in this section have been normalized to 1 million words for consistency and to make them directly comparable with our own data.

common, namely “the guarantee that the relevant action will be accomplished, either by means of the imposition of an obligation the fulfilment of which is guaranteed, or through the immediate realization of the action predicated” (Garzone 2013a: 79). Secondly, Garzone carried out a diachronic study on modal frequency by collecting four subcorpora of UK General Acts of about 1 million words each (1973-74, 1989-90, 2005-06 and 2010-11). She found that the use of modals remained more or less unaltered until the turn of the 1990s; then, between 1989 and 2005 there was a five-fold decrease in the frequency of *shall*, followed by a further five-fold decrease in the following five years up to 2010-11. The decrease in *shall* was accompanied by a parallel increase in the use of *must* (over 17 times more frequent in 2010-2011 in comparison with 1973-1974) and an increase in the use of *is to/are to* (3.5 times more frequent over the same period of time). In order to determine the timing of such changes more accurately, Garzone also analysed a corpus of all the Finance Acts passed between 1989 and 2012 (over 3.7 million words); as this kind of Act is passed once a year, it can be used as an indicator of the ‘switch’. Her analysis shows that, although the use of *shall* decreased constantly, the decline became especially marked after 2005, until its frequency became almost 0 in the 2012 Finance Act. It can be concluded that the UK drafting reforms have certainly had an effect in relation to the use of modals. However, Garzone (2013a: 79) also argues that “the suppression and replacement of *shall* in legislative drafting is not as unproblematic as it is often presented to be in the relevant literature. Firstly, not all substitutes have exactly the same meaning as *shall* [...]. Secondly, if the meaning of *shall* has been shown to be characterized by a degree of fuzziness, it is also true that most *shall* substitutes are not totally free from fuzziness or pragmatic ambiguity either [...]”.

In another study, Garzone (2013b) investigated deontic modals in three corpora, one of UK General Acts (just over 1.1 million words), another one of US Federal Acts (same size) and an EU corpus of directives and regulations (1 million words). She found further empirical evidence of the sharp decrease in the use of *shall* in the UK, while neither the US nor the EU seemed to have been affected by the changes in the use of modals; in parallel, the other modal forms replacing *shall* were found to have much higher frequency in the UK corpus than in the other two. Indeed, her study “clearly indicates a situation where the use of *shall* in legislative discourse is very uneven in different legal systems, with Britain using it very sparingly, and the other two jurisdictions considered utilizing it much more generously [...]” (*ibid.*: 113).

In relation to the EU, the existing literature does seem to confirm resistance to change in relation to the use of modals. Foley (2001) compiled the EULEG corpus, comprising one Treaty, four regulations, four directives and two decisions (about 160,000 words in total). Foley studied the distribution of modals across the three main textual sections, namely preambles, enacting terms and annexes, and found that *shall* is especially frequent in the enacting terms, while *must* is more common in the preambles. As regards *shall*, he also investigated usage in a small sample of occurrences from the enacting terms; more specifically, he studied the frequency of the modal with a human subject or an inanimate one, and whether it appears in active or passive sentences. Only 40% of the occurrences analysed involved a human subject; therefore, Foley (*ibid.*: 192) argues, “[I]f one adopts relatively strict criteria for agency, e.g., that the logical and grammatical subject coincide and the subject be human, 60% of the occurrences of

*shall* analyzed are unmotivated [...]. If the passives are included as agents recoverable from context, then some 45% of the occurrences of *shall* in this data are unmotivated [...].”

The EUROFOG corpus was compiled by Biel (2017) to study both Polish and English Eurolect. The English section of the corpus is made up of the JRC Acquis in English (53.8 million words)<sup>6</sup>, which includes a subcorpus of regulations (15.8 million), a subcorpus of directives (just over 8.7 million) and a subcorpus of miscellaneous instruments, including decisions, recommendations, opinions, and so on (Biel 2014). Biel compared the frequency of modals in regulations and directives. Starting with obligation modals, *shall* was found to account for two thirds of all obligation modals in the JRC Acquis corpus, once again confirming its popularity in the EU setting. Moreover, its frequency was higher in directives (10,626 per million words vs. 8,879, respectively); the frequency of *must* was also higher in directives. Biel explains this result by correlating it with the fact that regulations are immediately applicable and are addressed directly to their addressees, while directives impose obligations on Member States, which will then need to transpose them into national legislation. In other words, directives tend to feature obligation modals more than regulations because “[d]irectives, which are addressed to the Member States, indirectly define rights and obligations via the intermediation of the Member States [...]. They impose an obligation on the Member States to ensure that an objective will be attained. Directives are worded in a more general way to leave discretionary power to the Member States in transposition” (Biel 2014: 15). Similarly, permission modals (less frequent than obligation modals in the overall corpus) are 1.5 times more frequent in directives than regulations, because the former must allow for different circumstances in the Member States. In directives the most frequent permission modal was, of course, *may*, followed by *can*, *could*, *might* and *need not*, but it must be highlighted that *may* on its own accounted for over 78% of all permission modals identified in the corpus and had a frequency of 3,245 per million words.

Anselmi and Seracini (2015) compared EU directives with UK national transposition measures, like the present contribution. They collected a corpus of consumer law, ENG CoL, which includes 16 EU directives on consumer law issued between 1984 and 2014 (about 133,000 words) and the 16 UK regulations that transposed them into UK law (about 165,000 words). A 100,000-word reference corpus of UK regulations on related topics (health and safety, fair trading, student loans, and so on) adopted over the same period of time was also collected, “[...] to establish whether the differences that emerged from the analysis were the result of a tendency of the British drafters to adapt to the national language conventions or whether they were ascribable to other constraints linked to the implementation process” (*ibid.*: 43-44). In relation to the use of modals, they found that *shall* was the most common obligation modal in all the corpora. However, while in the older texts (1984-2000) there was a similar frequency of use across the three subcorpora, over the 2000-2014 period (which overlaps with the present study) there was a marked drop in frequency in the NTMs and in the reference corpus of UK

<sup>6</sup> The JRC Acquis is a corpus of the “*Acquis Communautaire*” legislative texts in 22 languages (i.e. the total body of EU law applicable in the EU Member States), compiled and made available to the research community by the Joint Research Centre of the EU. See Biel (2017) and <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/language-technologies/jrc-acquis> for more information.

regulations. More specifically, the frequency of *shall* was 12,190 per million words in directives, 2,840 in the transposition measures and 4,420 in the reference corpus.

Finally, a recent study compared the English and the Italian versions of the same EU directives, regulations and decisions on consumer law with a focus on translation-al patterns for modality; as well as the ENGLEX and ITALEX components, the EURO-CoL corpus also includes two monolingual reference corpora, UK-LAW and LEGITALIA. Seracini's (2020) study found that *shall* was the most frequent modal in all types of legislation, but especially in decisions and directives, and that it "[...] occurs almost exclusively in the enacting terms" (*ibid.*: 78). Moreover, the frequency of *shall* in the monolingual reference corpus of UK legislation was far lower than in the EURO-CoL corpus. At the same time, *must* and the semi modal *is/are to* have a much lower frequency than *shall* in EU law, while they are very frequent in the UK-LAW corpus. As regards *may*, its frequency was slightly higher in directives than in decisions and regulations and, just like *shall*, it was much more commonly found in the enacting terms than in other sections of each text; *can*, on the other hand, is mostly used in the preambles, generally with a non-prescriptive meaning.

This brief literature review has shown that in recent years there has been a significant change in modal usage in the legislation of most English-speaking countries; there is a widespread tendency to avoid *shall* and to replace it with other modals or prescriptive verbal constructions (in the UK this trend became especially marked after 2005). By contrast, in the EU *shall* is still frequently used, especially in directives (more than in other types of EU legislation). The chapter on English Eurolect in the Eurolect Observatory book (Sandrelli 2018) compared the frequency of obligation, prohibition and permission modals in directives and NTMs and found some interesting differences too; therefore, the present paper expands that study by adding data from the C subcorpus of domestic legislation that is unrelated to the EU setting, in order to compare and contrast frequency and usage of such forms across the three subcorpora, as is illustrated in Section 3.

### 3. Methodology and data

The English section of the *Eurolect Observatory Multilingual Corpus* (EOMC) includes an A subcorpus of EU Directives (1999-2008), a B subcorpus of UK national transposition measures (Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments; 2000-2014), and a C corpus of UK domestic legislation (UK Public Acts and Statutory Instruments; 1999-2013)<sup>7</sup>. The corpus of directives is just over 4 million words, while the two corpora of English law run to just over 8 million tokens each.

After collecting the texts and converting them into a machine-readable format, annotation and mark-up were added to each document to record useful information, such as the subject (as it is indicated in the EUR-Lex database), and to mark the different sections in each document (title/ preamble/ disposition/ annex). This makes it possible to select samples of texts on a specific topic (e.g. all the directives on energy), to select

<sup>7</sup> The time span of the NTMs is slightly later than the directives because the transposition process takes some time (from a few months to two years, in some cases).

a specific section of each document (e.g. only the preambles) or both (e.g. only the preambles of energy directives).

As was mentioned in the Introduction (see Section 1), in the first phase of the project the A and B corpora were investigated. More specifically, the analysis was conducted on the enacting terms of both corpora, as they contain the actual provisions of each law and are therefore potentially more linguistically interesting at all levels (lexical, morpho-syntactic and textual). Indeed, the analysis identified many differences between the language of the directives and the language of the transposition measures, thus proving the existence of an English Eurolect as a legislative variety in its own right (Sandrelli 2018). This is hardly surprising, for a number of reasons. Firstly, in the European Union English is used to express legal concepts which tend to be closer to the civil law tradition than to common law (Pozzo 2012). Secondly, some differences between the language of directives and the language of UK domestic legislation are to be expected on account of the transposition process. Although the recommended method for transposition is copy-out (i.e. using the same wording as the directive), elaboration is actually much more common (Steunenbergh and Voermans 2006), because EU legislation tends to be written in fairly vague and general terms (Robertson 2010), while “common law drafting has traditionally tended towards exhaustiveness by covering every imaginable situation” (Williams 2008: 3). Thus, as Anselmi and Seracini (2015: 41) remark:

The transposition of an EU directive into the British legal system, which may be regarded as intralingual translation according to Jakobson’s model (1959), involves the rewording of a text written in English using the same language in order to adapt it to a new audience. This process, [...] involves mediation and adaptation to a new context.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, since the 2004 round of enlargement, English has become the main drafting language for practical reasons (Pozzo 2012); more specifically, it has been estimated that 80% of European Commission documents are routinely drafted in English (Robinson 2008). However, although 95% of Commission drafters write in English, only 13% have English as their native language (Wagner 2010). It is unclear whether English will maintain its role of institutional *lingua franca* in the post-Brexit EU, but the issue has no bearing on the present study, as the directives in the A corpus were adopted between 1999 and 2008; however, it is bound to have an impact on the evolution of the English Eurolect, which will need to be investigated.

One aspect in which the analysis conducted on the enacting terms of the A and B corpora found interesting differences is usage patterns in deontic modality (Sandrelli 2018). Therefore, in the present study it was decided to expand the analysis to the C corpus, to try and obtain a more sophisticated description of Eurolect-specific usage of modals and semi-modals in directives versus domestic legislation.

Given the importance of the above-mentioned verb forms in prescriptive legislation, there are some guidelines available to EU drafters, lawyer-linguists and translators. The most important reference can be found in the *Joint Practical Guide of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for persons involved in the drafting of European Union legislation*, which states:

2.3.1. The choice of verb and tense varies between different types of act and the different languages, and also between the recitals and the enacting terms (see Guidelines 10 and 12).

2.3.2. In the enacting terms of binding acts, other languages, such as French, use the present tense, whilst English generally uses the auxiliary ‘shall’. In both languages, the use of the future tense should be avoided wherever possible. (JPG 2015: 12)

More detailed instructions can be found in the *English Style Guide* of the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission, aimed at translators rather than drafters. This is what the Guide says (ESG 2020: 54) on the use of modals in the main clauses of the enacting terms of EU legislation:

The enacting terms of EU legislation (articles) can be divided broadly into three categories: imperative, permissive, and declarative. Imperative and permissive provisions can be positive or negative. They require or oblige (imperative) or allow (permissive) someone to do or not to do something. Declarative provisions are those that are implemented directly by virtue of being declared, for example definitions or amendments.”

Table 1 summarizes the recommendations of the Guide on the use of modals depending on the type of provisions in which they appear:

	<b>positive</b>	<b>negative</b>
<b>imperative</b> (conveying command)	<i>shall</i> (obligation or requirement)	<i>shall not</i> (prohibition)
<b>permissive</b> (conveying permission)	<i>may</i> (permission to do)	<i>need not</i> (permission not to do)
<b>declarative</b>	present tense + optional <i>hereby</i> (direct implementation) <i>shall</i> (future implementation)	

**Table 1.** Guidelines for the use of modals in enacting terms

Interestingly, as regards positive imperative usage, the guide also specifies that “[h]ere, *shall* means the same as *must*. In contrast with EU usage, most English-speaking countries now generally use *must* instead of *shall*. So you may do the same when translating non-EU legislation as long as you do so consistently” (ESG 2020: 54). In other words, DGT is aware of the recent trends in legislative language use in English-speaking countries (see Section 2). Moreover, on modal verbs used to convey permission, the Guide clarifies that, although *may* is the preferred option for positive forms, negative permission must not be expressed via *may not*, “[...] since it could be interpreted as expressing possibility” (ESG 2020: 55). As legislation drafted in English is translated into all the other languages, it is essential to avoid potential ambiguity.

Neither the *English Style Guide* nor the *Joint Practical Guide* are binding; therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the above principles can actually be seen at work in our A corpus. The first step in this study was the extraction of the enacting terms for the three subcorpora; Table 2 presents the data used in the analysis. As can

be seen in the table, the A subcorpus is about one third smaller than B and C, which are of very similar sizes. Interestingly, however, the number of laws in subcorpus C is more than double the number in corpus B; this means that, on average, the texts in the C subcorpus are shorter than those in B.

	Corpus A directives	Corpus B NTMs	Corpus C UK law
documents	660	674	1,429
tokens	1,475,255	4,622,434	4,645,381

*Table 2.* Corpora used in this study

The analysis focuses on the occurrences of the obligation, permission and prohibition modals and semi-modals, all retrieved via *Wordsmith Tools 6.0*<sup>8</sup> (Scott 2013). Since the three corpora differ in size, frequencies were normalized to 1 million words, to make results comparable. Section 4 presents our results, with a few selected examples.

#### 4. Analysis and results

Starting with obligation modals and semi-modals (see Table 3), the first aspect that is worthy of note is that their overall frequency is much higher in the enacting terms of directives than in the other two corpora, with 19,076 occurrences per million words vs. almost 9,000 in the NTMs and almost 8,000 in the UK laws with no relation to the EU setting. This is attributable to the nature of directives, whose purpose is to impose obligations on Member States (see Section 2).

	Corpus A (per 1 m)	Corpus B (per 1 m)	Corpus C (per 1 m)
<i>shall</i>	17,687	6,174	4,503
<i>must</i>	753	1,686	2,041
<i>is to/ are to</i>	407	817	1,257
<i>should</i>	177	189	165
<i>has/have to</i>	52	23	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	19,076	8,889	7,986

*Table 3.* Obligation modals and semi-modals

*Shall* was by far the most frequent obligation modal in all three subcorpora, but its frequency in the directives was 2.8 times higher than in the NTMs and almost 4

<sup>8</sup> In the near future it will be possible to investigate other prescriptive verbal structures as well, such as the imperative and present simple forms, as the part-of-speech (POS) tagging of our corpora has recently been completed. POS-tagging is a process whereby all the words in a corpus are assigned a grammatical tag; this makes it possible to retrieve all the occurrences of a given linguistic structure automatically via tools such as *Sketch Engine* (see <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>).

times higher than in the UK laws (C corpus). Indeed, in the corpus of directives *shall* accounts for about 90% of all obligation modals, while in the NTMs the proportion is about 70% and in UK laws it is about 56%. In other words, obligation is almost always expressed via *shall* in directives, while there is more variation in corpus B and corpus C, in which the other alternatives are not uncommon. Indeed, both *must* and *is/are to* are over twice as frequent in NTMs as in corpus A, and almost three times as frequent in corpus C<sup>9</sup>. The fact that *shall* is more frequent in NTMs than in domestic laws could be attributed to the transposition process, especially when the copy-out mechanism is involved. In the C corpus (the legislation drafted in the UK with no relation to the EU) there is a more even distribution of obligation modals across the three most frequent forms (*shall*, *must*, *is/are to*); these results are in line with the recent trends in UK legislation described in Section 2, namely the gradual replacement of *shall* with other obligation modals and semi-modals.

In all three corpora *shall* is very often used in intra-textual references, i.e. sentences in which reference is made to a section of the text itself (article, paragraph, section, schedule, and so on) or to the whole text (this Directive; this Act), and in extra-textual references (another directive or law), in order to affirm the legal validity of the instrument or to introduce amendments to the text. Example 1 features a sentence that establishes the applicability of several articles and of another directive to a specific case (A corpus); a sentence that sets the date for the coming into force of a regulation (B corpus); and a sentence that amends the text of a paragraph in a Schedule (C corpus). In all three corpora there are plenty of examples of such uses of *shall*.

A	B	C
Articles 3(1) and (2), 4(4), 6(1), 12, 17(1), 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 40 to 52, 70 to 85, 101 to 108, 111(1) and (3), 112, 116 to 118, 122, 123, 125, 126, second subparagraph, and 127 of this Directive as well as Commission Directive 91/356/EEC(6) <b>shall apply</b> , by analogy, to traditional-use registration granted under this chapter.	This regulation, regulations 2, 7, 9 and 10 and Part 1 of Schedule 2 <b>shall come into force</b> on 30th May 2006.	Where the notice is required to be given under section 86B(2)(b) of the 1974 Act it <b>shall also include</b> the information set out in Part 3 of Schedule 3 and the statement in paragraph 4(1) of that Schedule <b>shall be amended</b> as specified in paragraph 13 of that Schedule.

*Example 1. Shall used in textual references*

However, taking textual amendments as an example, a quick concordancing query showed that while in the corpus of directives the passive “*shall be amended*” is the most common option, in the C corpus the most frequent options are the present simple forms of the verb, in the active (*amends*) and passive voice (*is amended/ are amended*). Once again, the B corpus is between the two poles, as the frequency of *shall be amended* is lower than in directives but higher than in the C corpus, while the opposite is true of the

<sup>9</sup> The other options considered here (*should*, *has/have to*) have almost negligible frequencies in all three corpora.

frequency of the above-mentioned present simple forms<sup>10</sup>. However, it must be noted that the latest edition of the *English Style Guide* (ESG 2020) prescribes the use of the present tense in such cases rather than *shall* (e.g. article 1 *is replaced* by... rather than *shall be replaced*); it would be interesting to collect a corpus of recent amending acts to see whether there is a significant difference in this respect in comparison with our A corpus.

Example 2 shows a sentence from the corpus of directives in which *shall* is used with an inanimate subject in the phrase *shall be subject to*. A quick concordancing query showed that the frequency of *shall be subject to* in the B corpus is about half the frequency of the corpus of directives, and it is even lower in the C corpus (150 occurrences per million words in A, 85 in B and 66 in C). In the B and C corpora the preferred option is the present simple (*is subject to*).

A	B	C
These objectives <b>shall be subject to</b> approval by the Member States or competent authorities and their implementation shall be monitored by them.	(1) This section applies where: (a) by virtue of section 91 or 92, a planning permission <b>is subject to</b> a condition that the development to which the permission relates must be begun before the expiration of a particular period, that development [...]	(3) A statutory instrument containing an order under section 88 which neither amends nor repeals any provision of primary legislation <b>is subject to</b> annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament. (4) If a draft of an instrument containing an order under section 88 [...]

**Example 2.** *Shall be subject to /is subject to*

Moving on to prohibition modals, the top frequency ranking follows a similar pattern in all three corpora, with the most frequent one being *shall not*, followed by *may not* (see Table 4). However, in the corpus of directives the third most frequent alternative is *cannot*, which is much less frequent in the other two corpora of UK legislation. By contrast, in the B corpus and the C corpus the third option is *must not*, much less frequently used in directives (about half as frequent as in the NTMs).

The fact that *shall not* is the most frequent prohibition modal in directives is in line with the recommendations in the *English Style Guide* (see Table 1); indeed, it accounts for almost 68% of all such forms in directives. What is interesting, however, is that its frequency is almost the same in the national transposition measures (B corpus), where it accounts for about 68% of all prohibition modals, but it is considerably lower in the C corpus, where it covers about 48% of the total. Once again, therefore, it would seem that the corpus of legislation originated in the UK (corpus C) has a more even distribution of the available options. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the semi-modal *is not to/ are not to* is hardly ever used in the enacting terms of directives, while it is not so uncommon in the other two corpora. With the exception of *shall not* (whose frequency

<sup>10</sup> In the near future, it will be possible to carry out a more sophisticated query in the POS-tagged versions of the three corpora, to obtain more accurate frequency information and automatically retrieve other textual alternatives as well, such as the use of the imperative (*amend*).

	Corpus A (per 1 m)	Corpus B (per 1 m)	Corpus C (per 1 m)
<i>shall not</i>	1,115	1,018	583
<i>may not</i>	308	200	332
<i>must not</i>	57	108	130
<i>is not to/ are not to</i>	7	68	93
<i>should not</i>	13	26	17
<i>cannot</i>	136	80	76
<i>could not</i>	13	27	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,649	1,527	1,248

**Table 4.** Prohibition modals and semi-modals

in directives and NTMs is very similar), the frequency of prohibition modals in the B corpus is in many cases an intermediate value between the two poles of A and C.

Finally, let us now move on to permission modals and semi-modals. Our analysis of such forms in A and B revealed that the most frequent permission modal was *may* in both the directives and the NTMs, with all the other forms in Table 5 being much less common. The same trend can be seen in subcorpus C.

	Corpus A (per 1 m)	Corpus B (per 1 m)	Corpus C (per 1 m)
<i>may</i>	3,942	5,854	5,646
<i>can</i>	174	114	26
<i>could</i>	80	91	111
<i>need not</i>	63	39	38
<i>might</i>	66	76	65
<i>is/are not required to</i>	9	15	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	4,334	6,189	5,922

**Table 5.** Permission modals and semi-modals

*May* accounts for 91% of all permission modals in the A corpus A, 94.5% in the B corpus and 95.3% in the C corpus; in other words, it is by far the preferred option to convey permission. However, in terms of actual occurrences *may* is much more frequent in subcorpus B and subcorpus C than in A (almost 6,000 occurrences per million words vs. almost 4,000). This may be related to the nature of national laws, which need to specify what the addressees of the law (citizens, businesses, and so on) are allowed or not allowed to do; by contrast, directives only lay down provisions in very general terms, leaving it to the national authorities of EU countries to flesh out the details.

Another interesting result is that (although their frequencies are much lower than that of *may*) both *can* and *need not* seem to be over-represented in subcorpus A in comparison with B and C. While *need not* is the recommended modal to convey negative

permission (i.e. permission not to do something) in the *English Style Guide* (Table 1), the higher frequency of *can* is harder to explain with any certainty. It may be related to the multilingual language contact in which EU directives are drafted (and therefore the influence of other languages in drafting, such as French) or to the high proportion of European Commission drafters who are not native speakers of English, or to other factors. What is certain is that, although the frequency of *can* in directives is not very high in absolute terms, it is almost seven times higher than in the corpus of UK laws.

## 5. Conclusions

The present study aimed at verifying whether obligation, prohibition and permission modals and semi-modals are used differently in the enacting terms of directives (A corpus), NTMs (B corpus) and UK domestic laws (C corpus). Our results have provided further confirmation of the high frequency of modals in the enacting terms of directives, which can be explained by the fact that they are binding legal instruments but require transposition into national legislation before their provisions become applicable; therefore, their purpose is to illustrate the obligations imposed on Member States and explain what must be done and what is and is not permissible (see Biel 2017 in Section 2). This is clearly shown by the high frequency of the obligation modal *shall*, the prohibition modal *shall not* and the permission modal *need not*, whose frequencies are much higher than in the other two corpora, and by the under-representation of the alternative modal and semi-modal forms identified in the B and C corpora.

More specifically, in our corpus of directives the frequency of *shall* is even higher than in Biel's (2014, 2017) work and in Anselmi and Seracini's (2015) work; while the analyses conducted by these scholars were carried out on the whole text of directives, the present contribution was focused only on the enacting terms, where a higher frequency was indeed to be expected (Foley 2001). *Shall* seems to be preferred in the EU setting for the sake of clarity, since "[...] *shall* has a value in a multilingual context as its function is well understood as normative and it is a clear and unambiguous sign [...]" (Robertson 2010: 156). As many drafters are not native speakers and they are aware that the English text of each directive will be translated into all the other EU languages, they seem to resort to a well-known marker of prescriptive texts (to facilitate translation), unlike their UK counterparts. The studies carried out by Williams (2005, 2007, 2013) and Garzone (2013a, 2013b) demonstrated a gradual decrease in the use of *shall* and a parallel increase in the use of other obligation modals in UK legislation. Such patterns were confirmed by our data; indeed, the patterns that had already been identified in the A-B comparison (Sandrelli 2018) have emerged even more clearly after adding the C corpus to the picture. In both corpora of UK legislation (B and C) there is a wider variety of obligation, prohibition and permission modals than in the corpus of directives. The increase in the use of other obligation modals and semi-modals is especially marked in the C corpus, made up of laws drafted in Westminster with no direct link with EU laws; by contrast, the B corpus has emerged as a 'hybrid' between the two poles of English Eurolect and national legislative English in relation to the use of modals. In other words, modality usage patterns in Eurolect seem to differ considerably from those found in the domestic variety of legislative English in the UK.

The present study has a number of inherent limitations. Firstly, it has a limited scope, as it is focused exclusively on directives and does not take into account other legal instruments such as regulations and decisions; other scholars (Biel 2014, Seracini 2020) have found some differences in modality usage patterns between directives, regulations and decisions, which probably need to be investigated further. Secondly, there is a geographical limitation as well, since for the time being the only variety of English being considered in the Eurolect Observatory project is UK English; an analysis of Irish legislation may add interesting insights to the study of modality in legislative texts.

Thirdly, the study is based on corpora collected over a specific time-span and results cannot be generalized; it would be useful to investigate modality usage patterns in more recent legislation, to check how stable these features are in the English Eurolect and in the UK domestic variety of legislative language. Indeed, the key questions for the future of the English Eurolect are strictly connected with political developments, namely the impact of Brexit on language policies and (above all) language practice in Brussels (see Williams 2017). While it seems likely that for practical reasons English will still be used as the EU's institutional lingua franca, the UK's exit will also produce a decrease in the number of English native speakers in the EU institutions, which is bound to have an impact on Eurolect.

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# ‘THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES’: USING OPEN BADGES TO SUPPLEMENT AND INTEGRATE TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY CREDITS IN ESP

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## **Abstract**

This article describes the use of an Open Badge certification for an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at the Turin University Language Centre. Open Badges are online records of achievement which document field-specific, soft and technical skills. They consist in a visual image and a set of embedded metadata. They are endorsed by the institution which issues them and recognized on an international level. The information packaged within the badge image file is provided in an open source format and can be shared on social media platforms, as part of an online e-portfolio, as a link on an electronic CV, and on the platform which hosts the badge. The ‘Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services’ was introduced by the Turin University Language Centre in 2019 in order to supplement the university credits already awarded for the course. Open Badge certifications are particularly suited to this kind of ESP course for a number of reasons. The detailed metadata provided via the Open Badge format makes it possible to describe training activities which would otherwise go undocumented on the academic transcripts. Then, Open Badges are of a uniquely ‘glocal’ nature, inasmuch as they are internationally recognized awards tailored by local providers in response to local demands. As such, they are particularly suited to English for professional purposes since, although learners need to be able to share their credentials on international platforms using a common language, it is important that we do not lose sight of the specific characteristics of professional activities at a local level. This is particularly true in the case of the three-year degree programme in “Educazione professionale” at Turin University, which trains students for a profession which would fall under the umbrella term of social work but does not have a direct equivalent in the English-speaking world.

## **1. Introduction**

The present article discusses the motivations for the introduction of an Open Badge certification for a first-year undergraduate ESP course at the Turin University Language Centre. The course in question is part of the three-year degree programme in ‘Educazione professionale’, a branch of social work particularly concerned with the pedagogical aspects of rehabilitation, which has been jointly run by the Departments of Public Health and Pediatrics, Philosophy, Education and Psychology since 2004, when

the degree was introduced as a requisite for professional practice in the field. The University Language Centre has been responsible for English language training since the launch of the degree programme. As of the 2019-2020 academic year, we have chosen to supplement the three university credits awarded for the end of course exam with a digital Open Badge entitled ‘Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services’. Over the following pages I will explain the motivations behind this choice and suggest that Open Badges are particularly suited to ESP in general and to the activities of university language centres in particular. I will further outline the ways in which Open Badge certifications can provide a valuable supplement to traditional university credits.

## 2. About Open Badges

Open Badges are online records of achievement which document field-specific, soft and technical skills. They consist in a visual image and a set of embedded metadata which indicate the skill gained or objective reached, the learning process and method of assessment, and provide information about the issuer. They are endorsed by the institution which issues them and recognized on an international level. The information packaged within the badge image file is provided in an open source format and can be shared on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, as part of an online e-portfolio, as a link on an electronic file of the candidate’s CV, and on the platform which hosts the badge.

Open Badges were first introduced by the Mozilla Foundation with funding from the MacArthur Foundation in the wake of the publication of the 2010 seminal white paper ‘Open Badges for Lifelong Learning’ prepared by Erin Knight together with collaborators from the MacArthur Foundation and Peer2Peer University and following the fourth Digital Media and Learning Competition of 2011 (See All4 Ed and Mozilla Foundation 2013). In the following years, the Open Badges Technical Specification 1.1 was drawn up, standardizing the technical features and the structure of the metadata for all Open Badges<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.1. *Open Badges in Italian universities*

In Italy, Open Badges are hosted on the Bestr platform ([www.bestr.it](http://www.bestr.it)) which was developed by Cineca, a non-profit consortium made up of 70 Italian universities, four national research centres, and the Ministry of Universities and Research (MIUR) which aims to support the Italian scientific community through supercomputing and scientific visualization tools. Badges are displayed in an open-source format which is compatible with all the other platforms which issue and display Open Badges in accordance with Mozilla’s technical specifications. The Bestr platform defines itself as “the meeting point between learners, employers and trainers” – as seeking to bridge the gap between formal and informal training, the individual trainee and prospective employees. The electronic badge links the prospective employer straight back to the Bestr website and is therefore much more reliable than a simple scan or photocopy of the certifica-

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.imsglobal.org/sites/default/files/Badges/OBv2p0Final/faq/index.html>. See also Cytzer (2018), Kerver and Riksen (2016) and Dowling-Hetherington and Glowatz (2017).

tion. Although Open Badges are a relatively new phenomenon, they are rapidly gaining ground within the Italian university system. In June 2018, the CRUI (Council of Italian University Vice Chancellors) declared Open badges and the Bestr platform a national point of reference for skills certification<sup>2</sup>. As of spring 2020, 15% of Italian universities have issued Open Badges, accounting for 70% of the badges on Bestr. These badges are gaining an increasing level of institutional recognition, with 23% of these badges being eligible for university credits<sup>3</sup>. Looking to the future, the universities of Padua and Milan Bicocca have already introduced fully digitalized degree certificates<sup>4</sup> on the Bestr platform, using the Blockcerts standard<sup>5</sup>.

### 2.2. *The Open Badge Project at the Turin University Language Centre*

The Turin University Language Centre has been the first university organization in Italy to issue Open Badge certifications for specialized language courses. We currently have a portfolio of eleven Open Badges, catering for undergraduate and graduate students as well as members of the university's academic, technical and administrative staff:

- Certificate of Competence in English Medium Instruction (B2 and C1)
- Certificate of Competence in Academic Writing and Presentation Skills (B2 and C1)
- Certificate of Competence in English for Administrative Purposes (B1, B2 and C1)
- Certificate of Competence in English for Research Technicians (B2 and C1)
- Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services (B1 and B2)<sup>6</sup>

The fact that the 'Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services' is the only one of these certifications to be issued subsequently to a course and exam which is already accredited by the university perhaps begs the question of what added value the Open Badge award gives beyond the university credits which have already been awarded. In the sections which follow I will present various arguments in favour of supplementing university credits with Open Badges for ESP programmes, ultimately suggesting that this course might provide a useful model for future practice in ESP at a university level.

## 3. Language accreditation and university examinations

On non-language degree programmes in Italy, English language modules typically carry a relatively low number of university credits (two or three) and such exams

<sup>2</sup> See "Competenze Crediti Certificazioni", CRUI (<http://www.cruai.it/archivio-notizie/università-digitale-gli-atenei-al-lavoro-per-un-piano-da-presentare-al-prossimo-governo.html>).

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.agendadigitale.eu/cultura-digitale/digital-credential-in-universita-con-open-badge-e-blockchain-i-sistemi/>.

<sup>4</sup> [www.blog.bestr.it](http://www.blog.bestr.it).

<sup>5</sup> Blockcerts is an open infrastructure for academic credentials first developed by the MIT Media Lab Learning Initiative and published on the Blockchain. See Bertazzo and Cacciamani (2018).

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the project and links to the various Badges, see <https://bestr.it/project/show/115?ln=en>. A detailed study of the project, entitled "The University Language Centre as an Open-Badge Issuer: New Directions in ESP Assessment and Accreditation" is forthcoming in the 2019-20 Special Issue of the journal *Language Learning in Higher Education*.

rarely have any value outside the university context. Prospective employers, overseas universities and national English-language degree programmes will typically request international certifications such as Cambridge or IELTS exams rather than recognizing English language credits obtained during undergraduate study. It is perhaps for this reason that a growing number of Italian universities have begun either to accept these international certifications as an alternative to in-house training or exams or to directly prepare their own students for these exams, with the university language centre often coming to function primarily as an examination centre for the international examining company. This is the case, for example, at the Turin Polytechnic, which adopted IELTS as its compulsory English exam in 2007.

In this way, Italian universities may feel that they are ‘killing two birds with one stone’, inasmuch as they are providing high quality language training for their students at the same time as providing them with an internationally recognized certification. However, there are disadvantages to such an approach. Firstly, although international examining bodies offer special prices to students from partner universities, the costs of these examinations remain high enough to represent a further obstacle to students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This is one of the reasons why partner universities involved in the Erasmus project will now accept language-level certifications from the incoming student’s university language centre as an alternative<sup>7</sup>. Secondly, this trend has led to a significant decline in ESP teaching at university level. This, I would argue, constitutes a significant loss, since, in general, the language training which students receive no longer reflects the specific needs of their future profession. At a deeper level, this globalizing trend in language teaching and testing at university level tends to come at the expense of any attempt to convey specific local professional and academic cultures in the target language. International standardization in language training inevitably comes at the expense of localized cultural diversity, and this results in an impoverishment of the resultant international dialogue since it is no longer authentically intercultural.

I would argue that the international recognition which is increasingly being afforded to University Language Centre certifications, combined with the capacity of the digital Open Badge format to package detailed information about specific training and experiences, may present us with a valid alternative. If, instead of replacing in-house training with preparation for an international certification, universities were to supplement university credits with Open Badge certifications, they would be able to offer the added value of international validity without any sacrifice of more localized professional and academic culture (Abramovich *et al.* 2013).

#### 4. Blending the global and the local

Open Badges are internationally standardized credentials awarded and designed by local providers, who tailor certifications to meet specific local needs. Originally conceived of by multinational tech-giants, they are issued by internationally renowned public universities in order to document and accredit training experiences which may

<sup>7</sup> The “Passaporto per l’Europa” project at the Turin University Language Centre, which offers free language testing and certification to all out-going Erasmus students, is an example of such a scheme.

well be unique to the issuer as a consequence of that institution's local context. As such, they constitute a peculiarly 'glocal' form of accreditation.

I consider 'glocality' to be a useful quality for any ESP course, since, surely, these courses can only truly be said to have achieved their objectives if, as well as understanding and absorbing aspects of Anglophone professional culture in the field in question, the student also becomes able to share their own academic and professional outlook. Even where English is being used as a common international *lingua franca*, surely the cultural exchange should flow both ways. Otherwise, to quote Swales' (1997: 374) famous article, English will become a culturally imperialist "tyrannosaurus rex" – "a powerful carnivore gobbling up the denizens of the other academic linguistic grazing grounds". Rather than teaching students how to express and share their own academic and professional culture, ESP becomes rather a means to superimpose an international mono-culture<sup>8</sup>.

Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that students following ESP courses are not necessarily doing so with a view to studying or working in Britain or the United States. Certainly, in the specific case of students attending the 'Educazione professionale' degree course in Turin, student international mobility is very limited, and those graduates who go to work overseas are involved primarily in international projects run by NGOs in developing countries. English is also useful for many of the students who remain in Italy to begin their careers and, indeed, who are already practising social work as undergraduates. However, the students in question are using English in order to liaise with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, helping them to navigate Italian bureaucracy and to understand their rights. Again, the professional linguistic needs of these individuals would not really be met by the kind of textbook which might be produced by an international US or UK-based publisher. As David Crystal's (1997) work has taught us, these students will be encountering "Englishes" in the plural, rather than a singular Anglo/American linguistic framework. Ironically, despite its lower budget and more limited resources – and, indeed, precisely because of its smaller scale and more localized perspective – I would suggest that the university language centre is actually better equipped to meet these specific student requirements.

## 5. Documenting and acknowledging specific skills and experiences

I will now proceed to consider how these glocalized certifications can document and acknowledge locally specific and internationally relevant skills and experiences. I have already mentioned that the transition to recognizing international certifications in lieu of in-house university examinations leads to a decline in ESP training and testing. Where ESP training is available at universities, no documentation of this training is provided on traditional academic transcripts. For example, at the Turin University Interdepartmental Language Centre we currently teach ESP courses for students in social work, agriculture, veterinary science and primary education. All four of these carefully designed, field-specific courses appear on the students' academic transcripts under the single heading of 'Lingua inglese'. There is, therefore, no way for prospec-

<sup>8</sup> For a further consideration of the ways in which English as an International Language of Science can act as a hegemonic "tyrannosaurus rex" or a liberalizing "lingua franca," see Tardy (2004).

tive employers to differentiate students who have been trained in the specific language skills required for the job from those who have simply followed a general English course at a given level.

On a rather basic but important level, the introduction of Open Badges has enabled the University Language Centre to document the CEFR levels attained by students who have passed the exam. The basic pass-mark level for the exam (which is ungraded) is B1. However, it was felt that the introduction of two distinct badges would provide a much deserved and a potentially very useful recognition for many students who now demonstrate a B2 level in English in the final assessment.

More generally, among the “value propositions offered by Open Badges for Learners” listed by Devedžić and Jovanović (2015: 606), we find “recognition of otherwise under- or non-recognised skills and prior learning”. They further add that badges supplement “traditional certification of skill and knowledge mastery”, facilitating a “more informed narrowing [of] the pool of job applicants” by prospective employers (*ibid.*: 610). The detailed metadata provided through the Open Badge format makes it easier to document previously uncharted areas of language learning, providing detailed descriptions of highly specialized training experiences. This also means that Open Badges are able to document skills which are vital for effective ESP performance, but which are not always easy to demonstrate and record.

This is particularly relevant in the case of the ‘English for the Social Services’ Badges, which contain highly detailed metadata precisely because of the unique nature of the training offered. The text published in the link is as follows:

The *Certificate of Competence in English for the Social Services (B1/B2)* is awarded by the Interdepartmental Language Centre of the University of Turin to students who have attended at least 70% of the taught course in “English for the Social Services” course, who have satisfactorily completed the coursework and who have passed the written and oral exams demonstrating a B1 or B2 level of English.

The course in English for the Social Services is divided into the following modules:

- Introduction to Social Work
- The History of Social Work in Great Britain
- Different Fields of Social Work
- Burnout, Compassion Fatigue and the Importance of Self-Care
- Child and Family Support
- Divorce and child custody
- Teenage pregnancy
- “Looked after” and “at risk” children
- Domestic violence
- Old Age
- Formal and informal care
- Problems faced by older adults
- Ageism and elder abuse
- Reduced autonomy
- Bereavement
- Dementia
- The ageing population phenomenon
- Mental Illness

Overview of common mental illnesses  
The multidisciplinary team  
Eating disorders  
Focus: mental illness and the internet  
Addiction and Substance Abuse  
Experimental use, recreational use, dependency  
Approaches to treating addiction  
The debate on legalisation  
Poverty and Social Exclusion  
Immigration and racism  
Austerity and its repercussions  
Social housing  
Gang culture

During the course, students will need to prepare at least two of the following pieces of coursework in groups:

A brief research presentation on one of the following topics:  
The “Baby P Effect on Child and Family Social Work”  
The Grenfell Tower Disaster and Social Housing  
A brief role-play of the kind that might be used in a peer-education context  
A consideration of how online resources can be deployed in social care

Students will only be admitted to the final exam if they have fulfilled the attendance and coursework requirements. The final exam will consist in:

A computer-based written test including multiple choice reading and listening exercises, designed to test the student’s knowledge and understanding of the grammatical and lexical content of the course  
An oral presentation, using Powerpoint or similar, on a topic of the candidate’s choice pertinent to their field of study. The assessment will take into account:  
Language accuracy and pronunciation  
Content  
Structure  
Presentation skills  
Ability to respond to questions

Overall, the course aims to familiarize students with the core terms and concepts of their field of study in the English language, to invite them to reflect on the contrasts between the social services in Italy and the UK and to acquire the linguistic skills and intercultural awareness that might help them to practise social work overseas or in an international context.

On the basis of this information, prospective employers will have a clear idea of the kind of training the students have received, the issues they have considered and the practical simulations they have undertaken. The use of digital credentials means that it is also possible for students to attach examples of their coursework, which is preserved online on the Language Centre’s Moodle platform, to their online CV or digital portfolio. The role-play activities are often particularly pertinent and in the year of writing,

during the Covid-19 emergency, the “deployment of online resources in social care” option has given rise to some highly innovative proposals and descriptions of practice.

## 6. Flipping the learning process and fostering academic community<sup>9</sup>

Open badge certifications have the further advantage of placing the learner at the centre of the learning process, inasmuch as they are able to reflect the precise professional needs of relatively small subsections of the working population and also since they allow for more ongoing assessment and a greater flexibility in the type of tasks being assessed. Because of their more descriptive nature, badges can document activities such as role-plays and drama and research projects. Such activities enable students to foreground, share and benefit from their existing knowledge of their professional field, becoming active protagonists in the learning process. The language teacher is no longer the only expert in the room, since students also have invaluable knowledge to share with the class. Such activities empower course participants and break down traditional classroom hierarchies which can cause resentment, especially among adult professional students. ‘Educatore professionali’ were allowed to practise professionally without a university qualification until 2002, so some of these students continue to be somewhat resentful of having to undertake university study in general, let alone non-elective language modules. In general, this re-empowerment of the students is beneficial in mandatory language modules in non-language departments, which are often seen as an unwelcome imposition. Returning for a moment to the paradigms described by Swales (1997) and Tardy (2004), it can help students to recognize English as a *lingua franca* – a vehicle for their own ideas – in a context where the language requirement might otherwise be seen as “tyrannosaurus-rex”, distracting them from and refusing to take into account their own academic and professional experiences.

The research and drama components of the course further enabled students to give voice to their own specific field of social work – ‘Educazione professionale’. Although the ‘Badge’ refers to the social services in general, these activities allowed students to approach the various themes in the textbook from the perspective of their own future career, focusing on specific pedagogical-rehabilitative initiatives.

## 7. Combining hard and soft skills

Another facet of Open Badges which is of particular relevance for this course is their capacity to document ‘soft skills’ specifically, in this case. The ‘Skills’ section of the Badge contains the following text:

The owner of this Badge has acquired the following linguistic knowledge:

Terminology pertinent to the field of the social services  
A rudimentary knowledge of issues pertaining to the social services in Britain  
English grammar (B1/B2 level)

<sup>9</sup> On the concept of “learning community” see Tinro (2003) and Kemp (2010).

The skills acquired during the course include:

Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in English with particular reference to the field of the social service

Professional / academic presentation skills

Lastly, the owner proved to own the following soft skills:

Teamwork, intercultural awareness, problem solving, empathy, presentation skills, communication skills, paralinguistic skills.

Whereas international language certifications and traditional academic transcripts simply document language skills, the Open Badge format makes it possible to integrate language knowledge with professional and soft skills. This is important in the field of English for Professional Purposes, especially when considering the linguistic needs of professionals such as social workers for whom effective professional communication involves much more than knowledge of grammar and lexis: see Robles (2012) and Kic-Drgas (2018).

## 8. Conclusion

To conclude, in this article I have sought to demonstrate how supplementing traditional university credits with Open Badge credentials issued by a university language centre can be a valid alternative to recognizing international certifications. I have argued that the 'glocal' character of Open Badge certifications renders them more conducive to a genuinely intercultural dialogue and to the use of English as a *lingua franca*. Their capacity to provide detailed information on the training experience undertaken makes them potentially useful for recruitment purposes. Their digital format means that they can be supplemented with further examples of coursework etc., where relevant. The fact that Digital Open Badges refer to both hard and soft skills makes them particularly useful in the field of ESP, where linguistic skills alone are not sufficient to guarantee effective communicative competence in the language.

The digitalization of teaching and learning resources is leading to an increased globalization of education and the dominance of English is proving a core element in this. I would nonetheless argue that this should not necessarily lead to global standardization of academic culture and practice. The use of Open Badges in ESP shows how, on the contrary, digital credentials can be used to acknowledge and promote local academic and professional expertise within an international framework.

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