VII International Congress of the
Latin American Systemic Functional Linguistic Association

"FROM GENRE TO CLAUSE: SFL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
STUDY OF LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY"

Film Language and Audio
Description: two genres in one.
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Part One.
Film Language

1. From 'the silents' to Seinfeld
2. Brief Encounter
3. Ken Loach
4. A challenge

Hypothesis: the existence of 'filmese'

- Film language is a genre in itself, in that the language written in film scripts and then performed by actors differs from everyday dialogue.
- (Taylor, 1999, Pavesi, 2005, Quaglio, 2009, Forchini, 2010)

Silent movies

- From the days of the Magic Lantern, silent films needed verbal assistance of some kind, and this was provided (partly) by

INTERTITLES

Intertitles

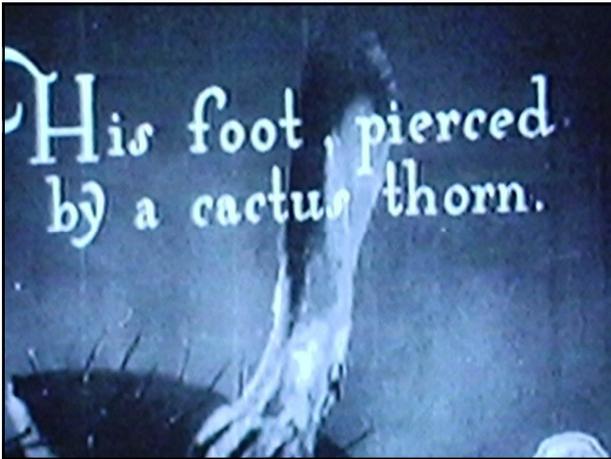- Forerunners of subtitles (on cardboard placards), used for example in

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Eliza pleads with Uncle Tom to go away

The graphics of intertitles

- Multimodal texts within multimodal texts

- Written language integrated with film in terms of layout and verbal and non-verbal content.

  No emotive or dramatic effects (no appraisal)

... and then along came talkies

- Film is a complex semiotic event
- In everyday conversation, much language use is in fact formulaic in nature, and much ordinary talk is humdrum and banal, whereas the time and space constraints of films, and the need to relate interesting, exciting or engaging stories, leads to an excess of highly pertinent, dramatic or intriguing exchanges.

Ordinary spoken language

phatic devices

discourse markers

fillers

interjections

hesitations

false starts

etc.

Brief Encounter

- **Brief Encounter** (1946) is director David Lean's brilliantly-crafted, classic British masterpiece. It is one of the greatest romantic tearjerkers of all time, with a very downbeat ending. The romantic couple includes a wife/mother (stage actress Celia Johnson) looking for escape from her humdrum life and sterile marriage, and a dashing doctor (Trevor Howard in his third film).

Brief Encounter 2

- The screenplay was adapted and based on playwright Noel Coward's 1935 short one-act (half-hour) stage play *Still Life*.
- The film still maintains chaste minimalism.

Brief Encounter 6
Stuart Maconie

- "Two nice middle-class people, married but not to each other, have an unconsummated love affair after a chance meeting at a railway station. She gets cold feet and he goes off to South Africa."

Maconie 2

- Perhaps the greatest British film ever made.

Video Brief Encounter

Brief Encounter 3

- Laura (speaking about Dolly to herself): I wish I could trust you. I wish you were a wise, kind friend, instead of a gossiping acquaintance I've known casually for years and never particularly cared for. I wish, I wish...
  Dolly: Fancy him going all the way to Africa. Is he married?
  Laura: Oh yes.
  Dolly: Any children?
  Laura: Yes. Two boys. He's very proud of them.
  Dolly: Is he taking them with him, his wife and children I mean?
  Laura: Yes, yes he is.
  Dolly: Well I suppose it's sensible in a way, rushing off to start anew in the wide open spaces and all that sort of thing. But, ha, ha, wild horses wouldn't drag me away from England and home and all the things I'm used to. I mean, one has one's roots after all, hasn't one?
  Laura: Oh yes, one has one's roots.

Laura

- "I stood there trembling right on the edge, but I couldn't. I wasn't brave enough. I should like to be able to say that it was the thought of you and the children that prevented me but it wasn't. I had no thoughts at all, only an overwhelming desire not to feel anything ever again. Not to be unhappy anymore..."

John Sessions

- Only the most cold-hearted, Ray-ban wearing, *Face* reading, post-modern cynic could possibly not be moved by her.

Celia Johnson

- 'going up north for four weeks' location at some horrible railway station'

Filmese – The Rope (Hitchcock)

A Well, come on, we don't have too much time. Mrs. Wilson will be comng back soon.

B I didn't forget. I have her key. I told her I have lost mine. How are you going to explain this'

A I am not.

(polished and rehearsed)

Video Seinfeld

Seinfeld - 'The Revenge'

- LEVITAN: Remind me to tell you what we did in Lake George. Get this ... I got it all on video. (laughing)
- GEORGE: That's it. This is it. I'm done. Through. It's over. I'm gone. Finished. Over. I will never work for you again. Look at you. You think you're an important man. Is that what you think? You are a laughing stock. You are a joke. These people are laughing at you. You're nothing! You have no brains, no ability, nothing!. I quit!

Film language

Return to hypothesis:

- The 'context of situation' of a film is an 'artificially produced situation' (APS) and does not totally reflect a real situation, however much a director strives for that effect.

- It is "written to be spoken as if not written"

- It is 'filmese'.

How is a film text read?

- Films can be read at three levels (Monaco, 2009)
- Physiological
- Mental
- Psychological

Physiological

- Efficient and extensive saccadic patterns
  - Follow camera movement, etc, as director wished.
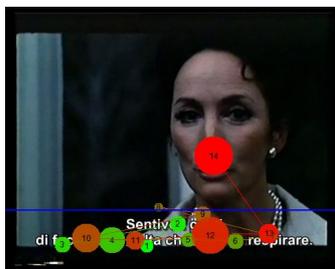 - How viewers view dynamic scenes

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AD: cosa audio-descrivere?

AD: cosa audio-descrivere?

Tempi di lettura e rilettura

Mental

- Needs experience and knowledge to understand cultural and visual conventions.

Kramer versus Kramer

- We didn't have the Mets, but we had the Brooklyn Dodgers, we had Polo Grounds and Ebbets Field.

- Non avevamo i motorini, ma avevamo i monopattini, le pistole a schizzo e non a laser.

- Equivalent effect

Psychological

- Integrate all sets of meaning (physiological, mental, cultural,…).
- Films are understood through a multiple semiotic barrage.

The Loach Style

dialogues based on spontaneous conversation;

in casual talk speakers effect a semantic activity, a continuous process of construction and negotiation of meaning…

… but they do it subconsciously.

The Loach Style 4

essential extra-linguistic information from the visual – through the use of 'symbols';
e.g., bleak council estates, conditions of poverty, poor clothing, etc.

characters thus interact in habitual and informal contexts and discuss everyday matters: work, family, friendship, etc.

Eggins and Slade (1997)

The paradox (of casual conversation) lies in the fact that casual conversation is the type of talk in which we feel most relaxed, most spontaneous and most ourselves, and yet casual conversation is a critical site for the social structure of reality.

Amateur actors

Since his early experience in television Loach has tried to use amateur or semi-professional actors because
"they don't think technically and give themselves completely to the film without questioning."
They are often actually unemployed people, women whose children have been taken into care, ex alcoholics, etc. who are allowed to create dialogue around the script, in the search for the "right balance between scripted dialogue and life"

Acting means REacting

Amateur actors 3

Loach's dialogues are consequently rich in colourful expressions, proverbial usage, colloquialisms and language variety in the form of dialectal expressions and regional accents.

"If yer a worker it rains stones seven days a week"

But all this begs the questions...

IS IT REALLY REAL?

experiment

The use of the following discourse markers in Loach films (My name is Joe, Raining Stones, The Navigators) and in the Cobuild corpus was subjected to comparison.

Well, but, so, now, then, You know, I mean

Loach vs. Cobuild

Discourse markers	Cobuild corpus	Loach films
Well	246	220
But	366	230
So	342	210
Now	120	80
Then	162	105
You know	264	240
I mean	192	170

Loach vs Cobuild
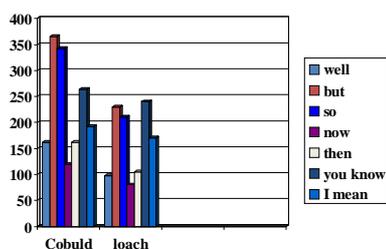
Insert video Raining Stones

Raining Stones - script

Anne - What's up?
Bob - Nothin.
Anne - Then what you snappin' for?
......
Anne - I told you last night it'd be summat liike that.
Something's wrong, isn't it?
Bob - I've had the van nicked.

Raining Stones - transcription

What's up?
Nuthin.
What yer snappin' at me fo?
......
I told yer last nigh it was gonna be summat li tha.
What is wrong with you?
I've had the van nicked.

Language varieties

Dialect

Sociolect

Film language

Translated film language (dubbing/subtitling)

Language varieties 2

Dialect

Sociolect

Film language
script
transcription

Dubbing

Subtitling

gradual

dilution

Language varieties 3

Dialect

Sociolect

Film language

Dubbing

Subtitling

specific
to
generic

Language varieties 4

Dialect

Sociolect

Film language

Dubbing

Subtitling

localisation
foreignisation
neutralisation
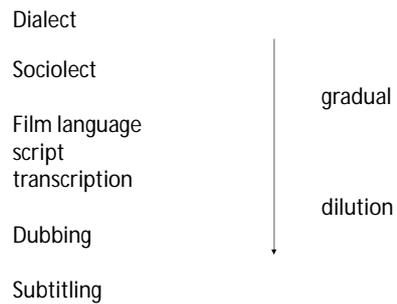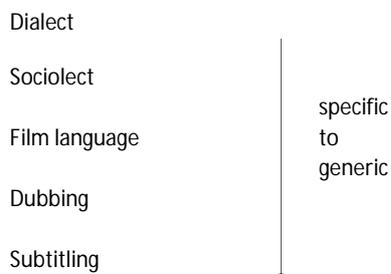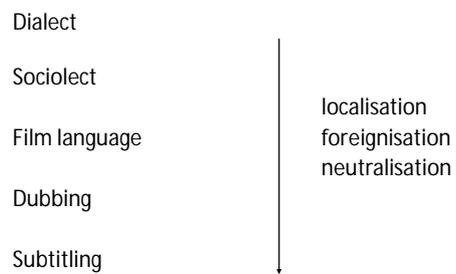
BUT

A challenge

Forchini 2010

– The America Movie Corpus
– The Longman Spoken American Corpus

Study of 'real movie data', i.e. transcriptions of films not scripts.

– applying Biber's Multidimensional Analysis

Forchini

- "… both face-to-face and movie conversation are informal, non-narrative, situation-dependent and not highly persuasive. Consequently, since these are all factors linked to the spontaneous nature of conversation (cf. Biber, 1998), it can then be concluded that also movie language has a significant amount of spontaneity."

'you know'

- The expression 'you know' appears in both domains though occurences are higher in the spoken corpus (0.35%) than in the movie corpus (0.15%). But it has extremely similar patterning.
- More interestingly, 'you now' is the most frequent 2-gram in both domains.
- And 20 out of the 30 most frequent 2-grams in movies correspond to the spoken language data.

Film genre

- Multidimensional analysis shows that "comedies have 3 dimensions out of 5 in common with face-to-face conversation whereas non-comedies have 2."

- Thus discrepancies can still be detected but the question is not as clear-cut as we once thought.

And now

Audio Description

Briefly AD is the process that
  "transforms visual information into words, transforms the visual into spoken language, completing in this way the sounds and dialogues of films".
 (Lopez Vera, 2006: 1)

Plan

1. AD features;
2. What the end-user wants;
3. Translation or start from scratch;
4. Different perceptions;
5. Where do we go from here?

via

1. Little Dorrit;
2. Bianco, Rosso e Verdone;
3. The Dead Poets Society;
4. The Pear Tree Project;
5. ADLAB.

Video Little Dorrit

Little Dorrit

- 1808 Marshalsea Debtors Prison (+ subtitle)

- The doctor shows the baby to a boy and girl

- Old discs spinning on lengths of thread in the darkness – (list of names) BBC Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens

- 21 years later

Little Dorrit (cont.)

- A neatly dressed man in his 20s with short brown hair unlocks a small wooden door.
- Wearing a smart grey dress and white pinafore, a straw bonnet and light blue cape, Amy climbs through the door carrying a wicker basket and walks into the busy streets outside.
- She passes a horse-drawn carriage and two men in top hats on their way across a bridge.
- A tiny figure dwarfed by its enormity.

Bianco Rosso e Verdone (video)

Experiment

The experiment was designed to gauge the efficacy of a professional audiodescription on end-users.

1. Rittmeyer Insitute for the Blind, Trieste.
(subjects young and suffering other disabilities);
2. Union of the Blind, Pordenone.
(subjects adult, educated and not suffering from other disabilities);
3. Seeing students as control group in normal conditions and with AD only.

Questionnaire

- Four sections with questions on
- A. the general assessment of the film;
- B. the assessment of the audiodescription;
- C. the visual details;
- D. the general understanding of the film.

Example:
the general assessment of the film;

- Did you find the film:
- very boring
- boring
- fairly boring
- neither boring nor captivating
- fairly captivating
- captivating
- very captivating

Example:
the assessment of the audiodescription

- Did you find the audiodescription suitable for this type of film?
- not at all
- fairly
- neither yes nor no
- very
- very definitely

Example:
the visual details

- The lorry driver has:
- a black beard
- a long beard
- a white beard
- a short beard

Example:
the general understanding of film

- The person who has just woken up at the beginning of the film is:
- A German emigrant to Italy
- An Italian emigrant to Germany
- An Italian who lives in Italy

Table 1 - visual details

- The yellow lines show the average value function for each answer.
- 0 corresponds to an incorrect answer
- 1 corresponds to a correct answer

Table 2

- The students (with and without AD) remembered details better, especially those related to colour.
- The Rittmeyer blind group fared worst but probably because of age, lack of experience of a 'seeing' world and other disabilities.

Comment

- What is interesting about the results of this questionnaire, apart from the help it can give to audiodescribers, is that it is informative in terms of the genre.

- What do the end-users want the AD to be like?

End users' comments

- Aside from the charts and graphs, the free comments of the participants were of great interest.

Comment 1

- As in many films several stories/plots run parallel. It is necessary to characterise each separate thread.

Comment 2

- Characters appear at the beginning of films (eg. the lorry driver) and then appear again, often much later, and at various intervals. This could be explained so as to avoid confusion later.

  * These are the 'discontinuous phases' discussed by Baldry and Thibault.

Comment 3

- It transpired that the level of detail provided was overloaded. In a long film attention wavers.
- The mention of a teddy bear lying on the bed was, for example, considered superfluous.
- The colour of various objects seemed immaterial.

Comment 4

- The diktats of AD say that objective description is the name of the game, and in the case of the man trying to shave by moving up and down, the description tells us only this.
- An attempt should be made to describe the comic element involved.

Comment 5

- The lady is called 'a blonde', 'the lady', the blonde woman' and never 'the wife'. This should be clarified at the beginning.
- Similarly the man is simply called 'the man' and when he is called Pasquale by his friends in the bar, it is not clear who is being addressed.

Comment 6

- In the bar scene two Italians are speaking in broad southern accents. It is not clear whether this bar is still in Munich or whether the action has shifted to Italy.

The Dead Poets' Society

- Original ad versus translated version by 'Senza Barriere', and Italian company that provides audiodescription.

The Dead Poets Society

	AD ORIGINALE INGLESE	AD TRADOTTA IN ITALIANO	AD ORIGINALE ITALIANA S.B.
PAGINE	33	34	25
PAROLE	6.946	7.176	6.504
CARATTERI (spazi esclusi)	33.918	37.424	32.866
CARATTERI (spazi inclusi)	40.268	43.975	39.750
RIGHE	1.014	1.041	1.223
FRASI	755	766	509

Tabella 1. Dati preliminari concernenti le due audio descrizioni, italiana e inglese.

Comment

- The English version is concise and paratactic, while the Italian translation is hypotactic and 'pompous', with uneconomic syntactic structures.
- The original Italian version, on the other hand, is actually slightly shorter than the original English version.
- Is this because translation is a different genre (there is a lot of evidence to suggest that this is the case), or is it a policy of the 'Senza Barriere' describers, or is it due to poor describing?

Translator's comment

- The translation reads like a translation and often the lines spill over the time-code.
- By trying to say the same things in Italian, the result is a longer text.
- Stylistically the temptation is to impose Italian written style (full sentences, correct sentences, hypotaxis).

Dead Poets video

But even the original Italian is more hypotactic.

- *A wall painting in muted colours of a class of clear skinned adolescent boys with short haircuts, wearing ties and sports jackets. In front of the mirror a small boy in his red school cap is having his tie adjusted. A teenage boy wearing a Scottish piper's cap opens his bagpipes case and carefully fits the pipes together. A black-robed master wielding a camera focuses on the eight year old and his older brother. A bulb flashes.*

- *Nella penombra di un austero salone di un college, dalle pareti affrescate con scene di vita quotidiana e religiosa diversi studenti, sorvegliati da alcuni professori alteri, si stanno preparando per una cerimonia. Con loro le mascotte: due bambini accuditi dalla mamma. Un allievo estrae la zampogna dalla sua valigetta, mentre un signore - che impugna una macchina fotografica - si rivolge ai due bambini.[...]*

and

- [...]Shadows of boys are moving downstairs. A light from a torch throws a shadow on the school mural. In his room, Dr Hager hears the barking. The boys silence the school dog with biscuits. Hager shines his torch down the corridor but sees nothing. [...]
- Poco dopo, quando tutte le luci sono state spente, una fila di ombre scivola lungo le pareti delle scale; il gruppo di giovani attraversa i locali del refettorio. Zittito il cane con un pugno di biscotti, continua la fuga, mentre il professor Mecalister, insospettito, esce a controllare sul corridoio, munito di torcia. [...]

Proper names

	AD ORIGINALE INGLESE	AD TRADOTTA IN ITALIANO	AD ORIGINALE ITALIANA S.B.
NOMI PROPRI	KEATING 68	KEATING 67	KITING* 38 + JOHN 2
	NEIL 107	NEIL 107	NYLL* 51 + PERRY 11
	TODD 65	TODD 65	TÖM* 3 + TÖD* 29
	KNOX 60	KNOX 59	NOKS* 33 + OVERSTRIT* 2
	CHARLIE 44	CHARLIE 44	CIARLY* 19 + DALTON 6
	CAMERON 34	CAMERON 35	CHEMERUN* 4 + CHEMERUM* 9
	MEEKS 28	MEEKS 28	MIKS* 16
	PITTS 26	PITTS 25	PITZ* 9
	NOLAN 29	NOLAN 24	NOLAN 5
	MR. PERRY 24	SIGNOR PERRY 24	SIGNOR PERRY 0
	MRS. PERRY 2	SIGNORA PERRY 1	SIGNORA PERRY 0
	MCALLISTER 10	MCALLISTER 10	MECALISTER* 6

Comment

- Where a proper name is regularly repeated in English, Italian practice is to use a personal pronoun (eg. Keating→lui/egli), or zero anaphora (eg. Keating entra in classe→ Entra in classe), or a title (es. Keating→Il professore) or a generic term (es. Keating→l'uomo).

- However, in translation, the proper names appear in similar numbers.
- Is this slavish intervention?

Pronouns

PRONOMI PERSONALI	HE 879	LUI 20	LUI 9
	SHE 25	LEI 7	LEI 5
		EGLI 0	EGLI 4
		ELLA 0	ELLA 0

Comment

- Interestingly, when the analysis turns to pronoun use, the original English and the translation differ markedly: English uses personal pronouns to a great extent while both the Italian translation and the original Italian practically ignore them.
- Italian prefers to join clauses, or resort to zero anaphora.

Surplus information

- Todd's eyes widen as he scans the photos.

- Davanti alla bacheca con i trofei [Todd] aveva fissato a lungo una foto che gli rassomigliava: forse era il fratello Jefry.
- In front of the trophy cabinet (Todd) has stared for a long time at a photo that resembled him: perhaps it was his brother Jeffrey.

But - details

- The English and Italian ADs differ in relation to detail:
- The English version goes into great detail over the characters, the clothes they wear, their personal effects, their appearance and their gestures.

gestures

- *In the grounds outside, younger boys throw their arms round their mothers' necks, some weeping.*

- *I ragazzini salutano i genitori.*
- *The boys wave to their parents*

Interpretation

- *Knox's mouth drops opened as he stares at the young blonde girl in a white mohair sweater who opens the door.*

  Una donna, giovane e carina, si para davanti agli occhi sbalorditi di Overstrit.
  A woman, young and pretty, appears before Overstrit's startled eyes.

Conclusion

- Better to start from scratch till guidelines, both general and for translation, are put in place.

- Which brings me to ....

The Pear Tree Project (SFL)

- SFL analysis conducted to ascertain whether there exist:
- (a) different perceptions and different approaches to describing audiovisual material across different languages/cultures;
- (b) differences of this type within the same language/culture;
- (c) how this might impact on the practice of audio description for the blind and partially sighted.

(Martin, Matthiesen & Painter, 1997)

An SF grammar is "a grammar that respects the speakers' right to make up their own minds about how they choose to talk (or write): at the same time it makes speakers explicitly aware of the choices they have available, so they can make an informed decision about the options they choose."

Trieste 2

- In addition to the survey of the different nationalities, a second Italian test was carried out in Trieste.
- The findings of the separate Trieste survey are to be seen in the light of the wider aim of the whole Pear Tree Project, which was to assess, as explained above, whether cross-linguistic or cross-cultural differences across Europe were statistically significant or not.
- The findings of the Trieste investigation would be compared to those of the other nationalities, but also to the other Italian group, to see whether the observable differences or similarities were in any way culture bound.

topics

- theme choice and development
- clause type
- appraisal

Theme choice (Trieste 2)

- 1. The song of the rooster. (Canto del gallo)
- 2. We are in the open countryside, ... (Siamo in aperta campagna, ...)
- 3. The video opens on a countryside scene: (Il video si apre con una scena campestre:)
- 4. We are in the countryside. (Siamo in campagna.)
- 5. It is early in the morning a pearpicker has already filled three baskets, (È' mattina presto, un raccoglitore di pere ne ha già raccolte quasi tre ceste,)
- 6. A rural scene, ... (Scena rurale,)
- 7. A farmer picks some pears from a tree and puts them in three baskets at the bottom of the tree. (Un contadino raccoglie pere dall'albero e le mette in tre ceste poste ai piedi dell'albero.)
- 8. The scene opens on a landscape, ... (La scena si apre con l'inquadratura di un paesaggio,)
- 9. In the countryside a man is picking some pears from a tree, ... (In una campagna un contadino sta raccogliendo le pere da un albero,)
- 10. The video opens on a countryside scene. (Il video si apre con una scena campestre.)

Theme breakdown

- NOUN: 11
- PRONOUN (1st person) 2
- PLACE ADJUNCT   4
- TIME ADJUNCT   2
- 'THERE IS'   1

nouns

the picker	2	A farmer; A man
the rooster's song	1	
the film/video/scene	4	
simple noun phrases	4	eg., A rural landscape
Pronoun (We)	2	

other themes

- place adjuncts 4
- time adjuncts 2
- 'There is'.   1

- This breakdown in English reflects the original Italian pattern exactly, in that there are no forced translations, except for the very first sentence in which the song is thematised in Italian and a more natural version in English might have read 'A rooster crows', thematising the bird, but here the rules of comparative syntax come into play.

Theme choices across languages

- A similar breakdown was then observed regarding the English transcription of the eleven groups in the project (Afrikaans, English, Catalan, Flemish, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Polish and Spanish). The theme choice in the first clause was thus elicited from 213 texts.

THEME	A	E	C	Fl	Fr	Ge	Gr	Ir	It	P	S
A man	7	12	6	8	7	9	2	10	5	3	5
film	6	3	1	5	3	0	2	4	10	7	7
Allusion to film	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	1
There is	4	2	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Time adjuncts	2	0	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
It is…	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	3
I	1	1	0	1	0	0	4	3	0	0	1
We	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
You	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
A farmer	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
The story	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
A cock	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Someone	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
A boy	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
The most noticeable thing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pears	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
A hispanic pear picker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Most favoured theme choices

- A man
- A film/video/scene

Significant differences

Afrikaans	4 existential clauses
	• (totally absent in 5 groups)
Spanish	predicated theme 'It is…'
Catalan	most time adjuncts
Irish	most place adjuncts
Greek and Irish	personal pronouns

Individual theme selections

Polish	Pears…
Irish	The most noticeable thing…
Spanish	A Hispanic pear picker…

Differences

- Culture bound?
- Linguistically determined?
- Random personal choices?

- And what does this mean for audio description research?

THEME CHOICE in the AD of 'The English Patient'

- Nouns and noun groups   302
- Circumstantial
- adjuncts of Time   38
- adjuncts of Manner   26
- adjuncts of Place   62
- Pronouns (3° person)   239
- Non finite clauses   77

Cf. Trieste

- In percentage terms, the noun and pronoun themes in the audio description accounted for 72%, roughly the same as in the Trieste sample, whereas there were no non-finite clause themes in the latter.

Cf. country for country

- Looking at the larger picture, in all 213 texts the theme choice for the first clause was a noun or pronoun in 169 cases, almost 80 % and therefore broadly similar to the other findings. Looked at country for country, there is again close proximity in the use of nouns and pronouns as themes, at least for the opening clauses. There were, however, no non-finite clause themes.

Non-finite clauses

- It would seem that this particular grammatical construct is specific to audio description and not to simple off-line descriptions such as those resulting from the Pear Tree Project.

- Or they simply don't occur in initial clauses.

Warning

- This is, however, a minor warning sign that, in some respects, descriptions and audio descriptions are different sub-genres, and not all variables are comparable.

But...

- this is not enough to invalidate further investigation and, indeed, the next stage in the analysis was to observe all the theme choices in all the clauses in all the twenty texts in two sets of examples, namely the randomly selected Flemish group and the first Italian group.

Theme type	Nouns	3° person pronouns	Time adjts	Place adjts	Reason adjts	2° person pronouns	1° person pronouns	There is/are	Manner adjts
Flemish	247	388	166	18	12	11	11	9	6
Italian	97	145	113	18	4	3	1	4	

Theme choice in the Flemish and Italian Pear Film samples

When the total number of words is taken into account, we see that the Flemish students wrote a great deal more than either of the Italian groups. In fact the twenty Flemish texts totalled 7,522 words while the first Italian texts totalled only 4,426 words (interestingly, the other Italian group from Trieste totalled a broadly similar 4,733 words). When this discrepancy is factored in, some differences and some similarities can be observed.

Findings

- Both groups favour nouns and pronouns as theme in roughly similar proportions, whereas the Italians tend to use more time and place adjuncts.

Cf. audio description of 'The English Patient'

- In the actual audio description of 'The English Patient' the number of nouns is greater than the number of pronouns, whereas in the Pear Film descriptions it is the pronouns that predominate. This could be attributed firstly to the fact that in a short description the use of anaphoric reference through a repeated use of pronouns is sufficiently cohesive and coherent for the receiver. In a two-hour film, with many more characters and scene changes to describe, it may be necessary to use more actual nouns.

An Italian Pear Tree text

- <u>This little boy</u> runs away,
- <u>he</u> meets a little girl on the road,
- <u>he</u> takes her hat and then,
- as <u>he</u> is rushing off,
- <u>he</u> falls to the ground.

Cf. Italian with Italian

- Comparing the two sets of data derived from the two potentially homogeneous groups of Italians (the official Pear Tree contingent from Macerata and the Trieste group) we find the following breakdown.

Theme type	Nouns	3° person pronouns	Time adjuncts	Place adjuncts	Reason adjuncts	2° person pronouns	1° person pronouns	There is/are	Manner adjuncts
Italian 1	97	145	113	18	4	3	1	4	6
Italian 2	123	149	101	14	2	2	1	2	0

Comment

- As can be seen there is a substantial similarity in the choice of theme items, particularly as regards the use of the third person pronoun, time and place adjuncts and other pronoun use. There is more of a discrepancy in the choice of nouns as theme but the difference is not great. But again the figures are totals, and the differences registered between Italian and Italian must not be ignored.

Clause/process type

- Material clauses are to be expected, given the series of actions that take place;
- Mental clauses bring the describer into the discourse;
- Relational clauses refer to the situation of being or of possession;
- Behavioural clauses involve the verb 'look' or equivalents;
- Existential clauses eg. 'there are three boys standing there'

Material clauses

- Multiple clause sentences such as 'In a while, a little boy with a bicycle passes by; when he sees the pears he stops, (he) gets off his bicycle, (he) puts one basket on the bike and then (he) leaves' are common.

Mental clauses

- 'I saw a tree standing in a field'
- 'You can hear an animal crying'

Relational clauses

- 'The first one is a man'
- 'On his head he has a hat'

Clause type	Material clauses	Mental clauses	Relational clauses	Behavioural clauses	Existential clauses
Flemish	604	101	69	50	13
Italian	315	55	26	15	7

Comment

- The breakdown of clause type selection shows very similar patterns in all cases except behavioural clauses.

Clause type	Material clauses	Mental clauses	Relational clauses	Behavioural clauses	Existential clauses
Italian 1	315	55	26	15	7
Italian 2	351	48	24	23	4

Comment

- Again (taking the respective word counts into consideration) the figures are very similar.
- Again discrepancies are found in behavioural clauses.
- But the figures relating to the second Italian set are closer to the Flemish statistics and might indicate that the first Italian set is an exception.

Stats

- Chi-square testing was applied to the figures in order to check the significance of the differences between observed frequencies and theoretical frequencies.
- In order to judge whether significant differences exist between the variables examined, it is necessary to assess the expected frequency. If the distribution is similar to that expected, then any difference must be linked to chance and therefore not statistically significant.

Theme choice

- With reference to theme choice between the Flemish group and the first Italian group, the chi-square calculated was much higher than the theoretical chi-square, which means that in this case the difference in choice was significant.
- This would suggest that a Flemish audio describer should favour a largely nominal approach and provide fewer thematised adverbial markers than an Italian describer.

Clause choice

- In the case of the other three comparisons reported here between the two Italian groups and between the Flemish and Italian group regarding clause choice, the chi-square calculations show no statistical significance.
- In this case a Flemish or Italian audio describer could proceed in the same way, giving the same weight to material, mental and relational clauses.

Appraisal

- The describers in the Pear Tree Project, although they were not aware that the experiment in which they were participating was designed to provide useful information for audio description practice, used very few appraisal tools.
- There was some use of adjectives such as 'puzzled', 'surprised' and 'astonished' and adverbs such as 'unwittingly', 'suspiciously' and 'indifferently', but with an absolute maximum of two cases per text. Many texts contained no appraisal at all.

Appraisal?

- These observations also showed that the limited use of appraisal was spread fairly evenly across the three groups of students, indicating no national or cultural preference.

Appraisal - yes

- There is now a groundswell of current opinion in favour of some degree of appraisal being introduced into audio description, and the results of the Pear Tree Project would seem to support these timid beginnings.

Conclusions

- But it is also evident that a number of variables do not fit neatly into national/cultural/linguistic categories and that many theme choices are common to all groups.

Conclusions

- It is equally clear that individual choices can deviate from all the norms with choices like 'Pears' 'A hispanic pear picker' and 'The most noticeable thing' occurring only once and in different groups.

Conclusions

- But whatever the final and exact calculations of further research will prove, for example from a study of theme and clause type choices in all of the clauses of all of the texts and from a comparison of the themes and clauses selected in the original language and those in the translations, it would seem that the main aim of the Pear Tree Project, that of eliciting strategies for audio description for all languages, has been useful.

Conclusions

- A quick look at the figures would point to a few potentially different approaches to audio describing: the Polish use more detailed descriptions than the Greeks in that more Poles mention all the objects involved in the fall scene whereas only a few Greeks do so; the English differ from the Italians in their use of verb tense; interestingly the Spanish and the Catalans differ in their attributing of the causes of the fall. The Germans and Poles did not use any single noun phrases in isolation to set scenes, but some members of all the other groups do so. The Flemish differ from the Italians in the choice of theme to a significant extent.

Conclusions

- The counterbalancing factor is that the differences recorded between Pole and Pole, Greek and Greek, Catalan and Catalan, etc. are noticeable enough to be relevant. Even within the seemingly homogeneous results obtained from the two Italian groups, it can be seen that one student used twenty-six material clauses in her description and another used seven. One used five relational clauses while the average was nearer to one and a half.

Impression

- Thus the overriding impression is that it is not possible to formulate any definitive national/cultural tendencies, and that individual choice, regardless of nationality, is probably a more powerful force.
- Any proposal for the formulation of international guidelines for audio description would be supported.

ADLAB

- Audiodescription: lifelong access for the blind
- European Union project
- EACEA - Lifelong Learning
- Ersmus Multilateral Projects – cooperation between HEI and Enterprises
- This project has been funded with support from the European Commision