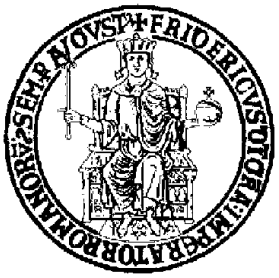
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II



FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE POLITICHE

DIPARTIMENTO DI TEORIE E METODI DELLE SCIENZE UMANE E SOCIALI

SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO IN

SCIENZE PSICOLOGICHE, PEDAGOGICHE E LINGUISTICHE

DOTTORATO DI RICERCA

IN

LINGUA INGLESE PER SCOPI SPECIALI

XXIII CICLO

TESI DI DOTTORATO

The Language of Filmic Audio Description: a Corpus-Based Analysis of Adjectives

CANDIDATA
dott.ssa Saveria Arma

RELATORE
Prof.ssa Giuditta Caliendo

COORDINATORE
Prof.ssa Gabriella Di Martino

NAPOLI 2011

The language of filmic audio description. A corpus-based analysis of adjectives

Acknowledgments

It was May 2007 when I attended the MuTra Conference in Vienna. I had just finished presenting a paper on real time reporting at the Italian Parliament, and I had left the room for a short break. I remember I was curiously attracted by another room, where I thought I could have a bit of rest. When I entered that room, it was love at the first sight. Joel Snyder, one of the most renowned audio describers globally, was holding a seminar on audio description. At that time, I had almost no idea of what audio description was about. But I *felt* audio description was one of the most exciting things I had ever seen and heard in my life. I felt it was some kind of missing link in my life. I had no doubt I should start working on audio description. Joel is the first person I shall thank for sharing his passion so truly and so authentically with students and professionals worldwide.

However passion and love were may be not sufficient for a PhD thesis, as I was looking for AD scripts to analyze. One year later, in Barcelona, I met Andrew Salway, whom I had contacted by email some months before, and he encouraged me to keep on researching and writing. But above all, he allowed to me to access the greatest corpus of audio description scripts ever. My warmest thanks to Andrew, because this thesis would not have been written without his collaboration, his comments and help.

I understood that carrying out a corpus-based analysis, however, was not just a matter of corpus. Actually, a corpus-analysis required more and more skills. Professor Silvia Bernardini has not only provided me with comments and deeper insights into the matter, both day and night, but has encouraged me to do more, and had definitely been a real 'guide' through corpus analysis tools, to which this thesis owes a great deal.

I also have to say thank you to my tutor, Professor Giuditta Caliendo, for believing in this project and in the innovative value of audio description. Thank you for providing many stimulating ideas and comments. My thanks to Professors Gabriella di Martino, Vanda Polese and Cristina Pennarola for understanding that a PhD is much more than a thesis and for supporting me so warmly over the last year.

I have to say a big thank you to Alex Polidoro, who has revised the language of this thesis and has worked day and night to help me.

Maybe it could be enough, but it is not. These four years were maybe the most difficult years of my life so far and there are some people whom I would not thank at all. But as soon as I started working on audio description, I felt I should make it more than a topic to investigate. I started audio describing theatre performances and some films, one of the greatest

experiences ever. I will do my best to keep on audio describing and helping audio description being used in Italy more and more over the next years. My warmest thanks go to all the blind people that I have met and to all those that have helped me in my accessibility projects. In particular, I have to thank Roberto Ellero who has generously shared his knowledge on audio description and web accessibility.

I have to thank my parents and my sisters and above all, my little sweet daughter Rossella, who has definitely got acquainted with audio description and subtitling before the age of four and has always been there with the warmest embrace.

Perhaps only in a world of the blind will things be what they truly are.
(Josè Saramago, Blindness)

Introduction

Audio description is a relatively new technique aimed at enhancing the accessibility of different types of audiovisual products primarily to the blind and the visually impaired, using a pre-recorded or live audio track which is inserted into non-meaningful pauses within dialogues in order to 'translate' into words the visual elements otherwise only accessible to sighted users. Giving the translational inspiration of audio description, in recent times it has attracted scholars from various disciplines (Braun 2007; Orero 2005; Vercauteren 2007), namely Translation, Interpreting and Film Studies. It has started to be taught as an academic discipline in language and translation-related faculties in a few countries (such as the UK, Spain and Belgium). However, the discussion on the position of audio description vis-à-vis Translation Studies and Audiovisual Translation is still ongoing (Braun 2007; Gambier 2004; Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004; Hyks 2005; Orero 2005). On a more practical side, ITC guidelines (ITC 2000) are rated among the main references for all audio description professionals, both in the UK and abroad, but the applicability of some recommendations - especially with regard to objectivity, linguistic choices and selection of relevant information - is still under discussion (Benecke 2007; Braun 2007; Snyder 2008). Indeed, if a number of articles and presentations have dealt so far with controversial issues in audio description (Braun 2007; Bourne and Jiménez Hurtado 2007;

Matamala and Rami 2009), only few research works have been conducted on corpora to find more extensive evidence of the characteristics of the language of audio description (Piety 2004; Salway 2007). In particular, a project called TIWO (Television in Words) has recently analyzed 91 film scripts paving the way for a definition of audio description language as a Language for Special Purposes, given the regular presence of highly statistically evident idiosyncrasies as well as of grammatical and semantic patterns which are rather unusual in general language. Nevertheless, if regularity and specificity of "actions" (Salway 2007; Vassiliou 2006) are today a matter of fact, what can be argued about linguistic regularity?

This thesis intends to bridge a gap in the corpus-based knowledge of the language of audio description, with a specific focus on the adjectivation of filmic audio description. Adjectives play a fundamental role in this discipline, in that they define, limit and specify the characteristics of a filmic entity through a semantic categorization of the features to be conveyed to people who cannot see.

For a full understanding of audio description, Chapter 1 addresses the discipline as a whole, by defining the existing guidelines, the story of audio description, the technical requirements in various settings (from theatre to cinema, from stadiums to TV), as well as the legislation into force and the past and present research in the field.

Since the technique is primarily aimed at people who cannot see, Chapter 2 provides useful insights into the world of the blind, with a specific focus on eye-related pathologies, the education of the blind, the way in which visually impaired people get acquainted with the reality and the brain reorganization supplementing and complementing the sight loss. In this regard, we will see that both acoustic and haptic information are of the utmost importance and deeply influence the language used by audio describers.

In order to position the analysis discussed in the corpus-based study of adjectivation, Chapter 3 considers audio description from multiple perspectives, from Translation Studies to Visual Literacy, from Narratology to University courses and Languages for Special Purposes. An instrumental use of audio description as a tool for improving foreign language skills will be presented, along with the academic value of audio description as a University and cross-disciplinary matter of study.

Since we are dealing with the analysis of filmic audio description, Chapter 4 provides an overlook of films from a semiotic perspective. For this reason, we will deal with filmic language, in particular with semiotic codes, and we will draw a comparison between the codes and the signs involved in audio described and non-audio described films. Chapter 4 will also clarify the differences between narration and description and the interrelation

between sight and hearing in films, which will be instrumental to the introduction of the corpus-based analysis of Chapter 5.

Drawing on the high importance attached to the descriptive language in general and to the language of audio description in particular, Chapter 5 presents the results of an unprecedented corpus-based analysis of adjectives conducted on 69 film scripts drawn from the aforementioned larger TIWO corpus. The hypothesis on which this investigation relies is that among the unusually frequent class of words found by Salway (2007) adjectives play a vital role. In addition, since they are meant to convey carefully selected features of a visual content to people that cannot see, they will probably belong to specific semantic categories. We will analyse the most recurrent adjectives, as well as their collocations and semantic preferences against two sub-corpora (spoken and fiction) of the BNC corpus. In order to carry out this research, we will use AntConc in combination with Corpus Query Processor (CQP) tools. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses will allow us stressing the semantic 'stem' of the most recurrent categories of adjectives, their preferred position (predicative or attributive, subject or object) within the sentence, the use of adjectival sequences and the mechanisms of comparison (comparative and superlative adjectives in particular). Based on this, we will see that, even though generally considered not canonical by AD guidelines - because of the degree of subjectivity and vagueness that it triggers - comparison plays an outstanding role in this

language, especially when it comes to audiovisual products for children. In this sense, we will conduct a corpus-based analysis of similes and we will highlight the ‘structures’ of similes and their correlation with a variety of audiovisual contents.

1. Introduction to audio description

1.1 For a definition of audio description

Audio description (AD) involves the accessibility of suitable audiovisual products (such as movies, opera and theatre performances) or social life experiences (such as visits to museums and city tours) by the blind and the visually impaired. An additional voice track is used to explicit the characters' appearance, gestures, settings, costumes and the relevant visual information normally received through the eyes. As a general rule, audio description is supposed to not overlap dialogues or relevant music tracks. For this reason, the audio description, especially for films and theatre performances, is intended to be inserted in non-semantically meaningful pauses inside dialogues or music tracks, thus supplementing and complementing the audio elements received through the ears. In this respect, audio description is an activity for which time constraints often count among the most relevant factors from the linguistic point of view.

From a terminological perspective, audio description has received a variety of different names. According to Hernàndez and Mendiluce (2009: 162):

> AD has received a variety of denominations, such as 'video description', 'descriptive video service' (DVS), 'audio captioning', 'descriptive narration' and 'audio vision' (Navarrete 2003, Clark 2001).

In addition, audio description, which is the most used term among experts, is also often referred to as 'audio narration'[1]. However, it is worth stressing that there is an outstanding difference between the words 'audio description' and 'audio narration', although they are often used as synonyms. As Pujol (2007) explains, the word 'description' is often used in contrast to the word 'narration'. Indeed, action does not represent a primary feature for description, but is of the greatest importance in narration (Pujol 2007). For this reason, since the action of audio describing implies dealing not only with actions, the word 'audio description' should be preferred to 'audio narration'. In addition, the ultimate goal of audio describing is not telling a story, but showing and portraying it, that is helping visualize the relevant elements to understand the plot (setting, costumes, gestures, appearance, movements and similar elements).

The act of narrating also implies taking a viewpoint from which the

[1] The word 'audio narration' is very often used in the USA not only to indicate a descriptive service for films and similar products, but also to refer to accessibility of education-related products. As an example, a Power Point (PP) presentation could be audio narrated through the insertion of an audio track that presents the content of slides. For more information about this specific use in an educational context, see http://www.slideshare.net/delhionlineeducation/adding-audio-narration-to-powerpoint (last accessed 19/02/2011). For a comprehensive tutorial on how to combine the use of PP with audio narration, see also http://masterview.ikonosnewmedia.com/2005/08/31/powerpoint_and_audio_narration_a.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011). In this regard, audio narration can be considered a dramatically important tool to increase the literacy of disabled persons and to improve their skills. Finally, the word 'audio narration' is very often associated to audio books: the narrator is the voice reading aloud the story, including both the dialogues and the description/narration of the story.

story is revealed. However, the act of audio describing should be as objective as possible, that is refusing to take a special perspective on events, but finding the right words to allow the end user visualize them[2]. Nonetheless, as we will see, each audio description relies on partial and subjective selection of information[3] and complete objectivity is only a mere notion, and possibly even not always desirable. Finally, from a more linguistic point of view, while narration often uses both first and third person to tell a story and includes various mode and tenses, audio description almost always uses the third person and the present tense[4]. In a way, the word 'audio narration' could be applied to the original track (including dialogues, sound track, music track and any other oral elements) plus the audio description, as if it was some sort of audio book. However, the time of the story and the time of the plot are dealt with differently by books and films. Audio description is

[2] The literature on the differences between description and narration is abundant. The ultimate goal of this research work not being of mere terminological nature, we will only provide the reader with the most outstanding differences that we consider instrumental to the field of audio description.

[3] Partiality in audio description is one of the most controversial issues to be discussed among AD experts and Audiovisual Translation (AVT) scholars. We will briefly see in the following chapters how the issue is usually dealt with. While the USA are in favour of total objectivity both from a content-selection and a linguistic point of view (Snyder 2008), the Spanish 'way' is more in favour of 'suggesting', in order to make the comprehension easier for the final user. As an example, to describe a character opening his mouth as if he/she was laughing (that is suggesting laughing but not openly doing it), while a Spanish describer would often say 'He/ She is laughing', an American describer would rather describe the movements of the lips, to leave enough room for personal inferences and imagination.

[4] Third-person audio description is generally recognized as a common practice. However, the first Italian home video released with audio description, "*Fuga dal call center*" offers a first person audio description (the voice of the describer being the one of the main character). The service was offered by the Italian association *Cinema senza Barriere*.

called to ‘translate’ into words the images that appear on the screen, or on a stage in case of theatre performances, and to fit in the pauses perfectly. Therefore, an audio description follows the time imposed on the story not by the describer but by another ‘narrating entity’, be the movie itself or a stage director. In addition, a film is not only images and music but also written text: credits, subtitles, if any, possible transcriptions and/or title-bands.

Even though the differences between audio description and audio narration are relevant, the characteristics of audio description do not match with the definition of mere description, since any audio description is also filled with action (Pujol 2007). At the same time, Pujol (2007) explains that since narration is intended in Film Studies as a structure with an initial situation developing into a sequence leading to a change or reversal, audio description scripts do not evolve, since they are supposed to convey only relevant visual information not expressed verbally. To bridge this gap, Pujol (2007) suggests that AD should be intended as a “form of partial narration based on intersemiotic translation with phatic and poetic elements”[5]. This statement defining audio description recalls Jakobson’s language functions, since audio description scripts are acknowledged the tasks of checking “whether the channel is working (phatic function)” and expressing “with words the beauty of images [...] trying to compensate with words the aesthetic pleasure caused by images” (Pujol 2007). In this regard, we think

[5] The article by Pujol (2007) is available at http://www.euroconferences.info/2007_abstracts.php (last accessed 19/02/2011).

audio description could be intended as a form of intersemiotic compensation, which requires deep knowledge and understanding of the product features.

As to the word 'videodescription', also used under the written form 'video description', it may refer to a more general discipline concerning the analysis of visual elements[7] - and therefore having nothing or less to do with AD - or to the amount of information tags given about a specific video. In this case, audio description is used to make the retrieval process on the Internet and the optimization of video localization easier[8]; in addition, it can be used as a synonym of 'audio description' but more in the United States than in other countries[9]. 'Video description' as an online accessibility tool is also a synonym of 'auditory description' in documents concerning the accessibility of the Internet and more specifically, of an online video content. Indeed, an auditory description is defined as "an example of a non-text equivalent of visual information"[10]. This definition was elaborated by the

[7] In this regard, the word 'video description' is often used in the field of web accessibility as a tool to describe videos on the Internet. For further information about this particular use see also http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[8] Video description as a retrieval process is used in a number of semantic and hierarchical models. This model expresses semantic meaning contained in videos. The terms 'object', 'action' and 'relation' are used to specify semantic meanings in a video query.

[9] Indeed, the term 'video description' is used to indicate the American Descriptive Video Service (DVS) that is the national service to make television programmes accessible to the visually impaired people. More info about the service can be found at http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/mag/services/description/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). The DVS is provided by the Media Access Group at WGBH; the mentioned website is also a very powerful source of information for all AD-related issues.

[10] See http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

W3C group and is included in the guidelines aimed at web developers, designers and authoring tools managers to make online multimedia content more accessible to a wider audience.

Although both 'video description' and 'audio description' seem to be used in the same context to indicate the same practice, that is AD, we believe there is a slight difference between them. In particular, the term 'audio description' is meant to represent the product of the AD process (an audio track) and is mainly oriented towards the target audience, which can only hear or partially see. The term 'videodescription' seems to refer more to the source product and, in particular, to its visual component to be transferred in the AD process and to the source community of audio describers or sighted people to whom the visual elements are fully accessible. According to the Arts Access Inc. by the American Council of the Blind, the word 'videodescription' tends to be used more for DVD and TV, while 'audio description' is more often associated with performing arts, theatres and museums[11]. The LARRS (Los Angeles Radio Reading Service) also defines 'audio description' and 'video description' as follows[12]:

> **Audio Description** – Audio description for low vision and blind people is the art and technique of using the natural pauses in dialog or narration during live theatre performances to insert descriptions of the essential visual elements: actions, appearance of characters, body language, costumes and settings,

[11] See http://www.artsaccessinc.org/definition.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[12] Unless otherwise specified, bold faces are in the original quotations.

lighting, etc. Descriptions are delivered through a tiny earpiece thus permitting visually impaired people to sit anywhere in the audience.

Video Description – Video Description is the art of audio description applied to television, videos and motion pictures. In Video Description the credits and subtitles are voiced. Descriptions are delivered via separate audio channel permitting TV viewers and moviegoers to hear or not hear the descriptions according to their wishes[13]".

Evidence is also found of the use of the word 'audio commentary' instead or alongside with the word 'audio description'. In this case, too, we believe there is a semantic discrepancy between the two terms, although they are often used as synonyms. According to most definitions, an audio commentary is a bonus track which contains lectures or comments read by one or more speakers talking about the movie as it progresses[14] in order to add informative or entertaining information about the movie. In addition, such information is provided to show what most audience members would not be at all aware of. There are several types of audio commentaries, whose classification may vary according to the length (partial, feature-length), the type of delivery (live or edited), the number of people involved in it (single, multiple) and/or the role of the commentator(s) against the product

[13] See http://www.larrs.org/guidelines.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[14] See http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Audio_commentary_(DVD) (last accessed 19/02/2011).

(cast/actor/director, scholar or the so-called Carrottop[15]). An audio commentary may also vary according to the movie *genre* or the person providing the spoken track. Such a definition of audio commentary has something in common with the inner features of audio description. Indeed, both share the presence of one (or more) additional audio track(s) adding important elements most people would not be aware of. Both audio commentary and audio description should fit between non-meaningful pauses between dialogues and should not overlap dialogues. However, the content and the way it is conveyed strictly depend on the purpose of the communication. An audio description is aimed at people with sight impairment and is supposed to explain visual elements accessible to the sighted audience. It is not supposed to disclose any hidden meaning or explain details about the film production or (as a general rule) making use of meta-language. In addition, audio description is normally read by an external voice, while an audio commentary can be even delivered by one or more actor(s). An audio commentary is meant to give further information about the cast, the credits, or bring to the audience's attention some possibly hidden phenomena. An audio description should not disclose information that is not clearly visible. Credits and lists can be read at the end of the audio description but are not part of the film itself; unless a character is played by a

[15] This type of audio commentary is called 'Carrottop' because the Carrot Top commentary track on Roger Avary's "The Rules of Attraction" features someone not associated or knowledgeable about the film in any way, shape, or form. He often sings during the film and expresses judgments on the physical appearance of actors, all the while making self-deprecating jokes.

very important actor/actress, the describer would not say who is playing whom. An audio commentary triggers a higher degree of personal involvement of the audio describer, whereas an audio description is meant to be, once again, as objective as possible.

The word 'audio captioning' is also used in a variety of contexts and situations in the USA. Here again, we find that the word 'audio captioning' with regard to the visual impairment has been used just like 'video captioning' for the deaf and hard of hearing. However, if 'audio captioning' seems to focus specifically on the product/output and on its channel, that is, captions delivered through an audio channel, the word 'audio description' strictly refers to the type of linguistic and semantic operation made on the visual content, that is describing.

The word 'descriptive narration' is also used to refer to audio description. Evidence of this use is found on a number of websites and accessibility-related resources[16]. However, as already pointed out, the word 'narration' does not seem to fit the purpose of audio description, whose intent is not to tell stories or to narrate, but simply to describe what is happening. In essence, to help the narration flow consequently.

Finally, the word 'audio vision' is also used but openly refers more to

[16] As an example, see http://www.infinitec.org/totalresource/visual/motionpicture.htm and http://www.text2u.com/dn.html (last accessed 19/02/2011). In both cases, the word 'descriptive narration' is used to refer to audio description. However, it seems to be more frequent in the USA than in other countries and namely Europe, where the word 'audio description' is the most widespread.

the channel through which audio description is received, that is, ears (audio) than on the action carried out to produce it (description)[17].

In the following sections we will see what can be audio described, how audio description is made and how it is technically provided.

1.2 What can be audio described?

Films (cinema, DVD, TV) are the first candidates for AD. Theatre performances can also be audio described, as well as sport and religious performances. As far as theatre shows are concerned, a pre-organized touch tour often allows the blind or the visually impaired audience to familiarize with the actors, while touching their clothes, portraying their appearance and describing the characters beforehand along with their personalities and attitudes on the stage. However, touch tours, though very much appreciated, are not always possible because of time and space constraints. Theatre and opera shows are usually audio described live (Cabeza and Matamala 2008; Matamala 2005; Weaver 2010). When it comes to cinema and DVD productions, a touch tour-like track should give all these details in advance on a separate additional track to play before the movie itself. However, as far as we know, this opportunity has not been explored yet.

The scope of application of audio description is not limited to films and

[17] Evidence of the use of the word 'audio vision' can be also found at http://www.freewebz.com/audiovisionavtom/ (last accessed 19/02/2011) where it refers - however - not specifically to audio description but to radio reading services for the blind.

theatre shows. Sport matches can be audio described live, although time constraints cannot be considered as binding as in pre-registered audio description, while the audience listens to it through special infrared headphones.

Museums, tourist destinations and cultural destinations can be also audio described. In fact, an audio description track in these cases is more likely to be an audio guide track. Some of the linguistic features which characterize traditionally intended audio description, such as given time slots to fit in and objectivity of the description, may not be valid for audio guides. Indeed, the ultimate goal of audio description for films and theatre is to increase the comprehension of images and the enjoyment of the final user, while audio guides have a more commercial soul that is selling a destination and often describing what cannot be seen, that is past history. For this reason, we believe that audio description in museums and similar cultural places should be treated as a different pathway for an accessible culture and should not be confused with the technique of audio description.

1.3 How is audio description produced?

1.3.1 The audio description process

The process of audio describing may differ from one country to another, from one type of product to another, from company to company, and within

the same company accordingly to the *genre* and the person who audio describes or records the script[18]. However, as a general rule, audio description usually entails the following operations: choosing the suitable programme for description, seeing the programme, writing a draft script, reviewing the script, adjusting the sound level, recording the script and reviewing the recording (ITC 2000).

Not all audiovisual products can be considered equally suitable for audio description, even within the same *genre*. Indeed, since this activity aims at providing full access and enjoyment to the blind and the visually impaired, audio describing some products could be more a hindrance than a help. This could be the case:

1. For many action films, where action is so fast that the audio description would be too tiring or difficult for the audience.

2. For tightly-worded scripts, where little or no space is left for audio description insertion.

3. For television news which are also characterized by a relatively high number or words.

The same goes for theatre, even though it strictly depends on the type of performances, such as opera and ballet among others, and on the possibility

[18] Guidelines about the production of AD are available in various countries, namely the UK, Spain, Germany, Austria, France, Poland and the USA, although the quantity and the quality of guidelines might differ. Specific guidelines from countries other than the UK will be discussed in the following sections. This research work intends to concentrate on English but also aims at giving a general overview of the other European countries in the field of AD.

to organize touch tours or similar events before the play begins.

Viewing the programme plays a vital role for understanding the *genre* to audio describe and the type of approach required to carry out the task. Some audio describing teams may choose to view the entire programme and to wear a pair of simspecs, which are particular lenses that isolate the eyes from the environment and give the impression to be blind. Some others might decide not to view the entire programme at once, but to listen to it one or more times, along with the sound track alone, and then viewing it with the images. In Germany, at the *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, the programme is listened to/viewed by a team of three people. One of them is a blind person (Benecke and Dosch 2004). This is particularly fitting because a blind person is able to repurpose the first audio description draft, suggest major corrections and ask questions to find out more about the events and/or ask for their inclusion/exclusion in the final version of the script.

During the third phase, the team might start to fill in a form with the names of the characters and the places where actions take place along with crucial narrative points of the plot or any other useful information. Usually, the broadcasting companies make screenplays, credits and other related information available so that the audio describer task is somehow facilitated by comparison with other existing material to check against. The preparation of the draft consists in preparing the audio description strings and associating them with the time code available for recording, usually corresponding to the

pauses available. Most AD software allow for quick and easy retrieval of time slots available for AD while providing time-in and time-out codes to insert the string. A workstation is usually consisting in a personal computer equipped with software for word processing, video recording and encoding. After the draft has been revised and finalized, it is submitted to a senior describer and is sometimes submitted to the director or the film producer for final approval.

Later, the audio description is recorded whereupon the voice might be the one of a member of the audiodescribing team or of an external professional narrator who reads the AD script aloud and is allowed to make minor adjustments during the recording phase. The audio and video settings are then adjusted to allow perfect synchronization and harmonization of the different audio tracks available such as audio description, dialogues, music tracks, other background noises. The audio description recorded should be stored for future changes and contains all time in and time out information to allow the narrator to re-record in case of mistakes. Once the recording phase has ended, it is necessary to review the whole delivery and to listen to the audio description again to make sure there are no omissions or imperfections. In this phase, the audio describer might still be asked to make minor adjustments. Usually the recording phase requires a two and half hour recording for each hour of the original product.

1.3.2 Special guidelines for special *genres*

In addition to these general phases, ITC (2000) also provides with specific advice on how to audiodescribe given types of audiovisual products. In some cases, like in feature films, it could be useful to have the screenplay or reference books available for a deeper knowledge of the background. The awareness of the background against which the film has been produced is of great help. Knowing the director and the actors can also increase the accuracy of the audio description and make it more adherent to the original as to the mood and style.

For films and musicals, time constraints are particularly important, because the audience might want to listen to the music without the 'interference' of a spoken track. For this reason, the audio describer can choose either to signpost some information before the song, to fit the audio description in the short pauses between music, or audiodescribing nothing at all, thus, emphasizing the 'musical' aspect first.

In case of dancing scenes or dancing performances, the overall effect should be rendered while single movements do not need to be audio described. However, things are not always that easy. The audio describer should not only behave in such a way as not to bore his/her audience but also fit the description in the pauses between music pieces, and whereas not possible, find the suitable position to overlap music without hindering the

enjoyment of the performance itself.

As to soap operas, ITC (2000) suggests inserting a kind of reminder at the beginning of the programme, since there is less need to repeat the cast that is actually always the same. In case a new character is introduced, it might be useful to insert a short description of the character, to help visually impaired viewers familiarizing not only with his/her voice but also with his/her physical appearance and behaviour.

In nature documentaries, although there is already a commentary, it can be useful to insert audio description in the long pauses where only sound is heard. In addition, since part of the viewing impaired population is totally blind and has no mental image of the appearance of nature elements, whether it is vegetation or animals, audio description might intervene to explain how things look like, which is not usually provided by own commentary within a documentary. In current affairs documentaries, which traditionally need little or no description at all because they are mostly spoken, sometimes it is useful to voice the on screen subtitles that are inaccessible to visually impaired people.

Sport events are also quite difficult to audiodescribe. Indeed, a distinction should be made between live sports and pre-recorded sport performances. For the latter, although it is possible to insert some audio description strings, putting this principle into practice is somehow impossible because of the short time audio description should be delivered. This

prevents the audio description from being accurate and complete. In addition, any sport event has already its own commentator. However, this type of commentary does not take into account the fact that visually impaired people do not know the field or the position of the players. In addition, commentators always add background information about past events or circumstances, which actually stops the description of what is happening during the performance of the match. This is the reason why live audio description in sport is almost impossible if one wants to keep the original audio track. The audio description would irreparably overlap the original sound. However, isolating the audio description means eliminating not only the original commentary but also those elements such as the public, which make sport events a socialization opportunity. We are still not up to date with respect to the full awareness of the viewing impaired needs. However, a deeper understanding of some challenges faced could dramatically increase the awareness and the accessibility of the original commentary.

Foreign programmes with subtitles in the local language also represent a major challenge. Indeed, visually impaired people with little or no knowledge of English (most subtitled programmes in northern countries, for instance, are in English or American) cannot follow the programme, unless the subtitles are voiced and an audio description is inserted in the pauses between the dialogues, as in traditionally non audio described programmes. This last frontier of audio description is being currently experimented in

some countries and especially in Spain where it is called 'audio subtitling' (Braun and Orero 2010).

In children programmes, audio describers should bear in mind that the visual impairment is often associated to delayed language development and other handicaps. For this reason, the audio description should help children develop their understanding potential and their linguistic skills. For example, ITC (2000) recommends that AD should not overlap music but if vital messages are to be conveyed, then should be inserted after the first verse or overlap the refrain. This is very important for the audio description to be considered as a real tool for children literacy (Snyder 2006)[19].

Comedy is another challenge for audio description, since it is not only conveyed by words but also by images. Audiodescribing a comic scene exactly in the moment when it is happening means sometimes preventing the audience from enjoying the original. Often the way the audio description is written may result to be funny and comic itself. In this sense, an accurate choice of words to use is of the utmost importance.

Love and sex scenes should be handled very carefully because the use of a too explicit description could offend or embarrass the audience. Indeed, sounds and other effects can help the visually impaired people understand the scene. In this case, as for dance scenes in particular, the audio description

[19] For this reason, Snyder (2006) suggest that the audio description should use vivid, colourful, evocative and imaginative words, so as to provide final users with effective tools for a full understanding and enjoyment of the performance audio described. We will discuss linguistic issues in the following chapters.

should evocate more than precisely describing movements or body parts. Violent scenes should also be approached by taking into consideration that, just like viewing audience, the public could be terrified or embarrassed. In this case, the audio describer should be smart enough to respect the original without over-interpreting or adding information and use a language that complements the sounds without adding further 'verbal' violence.

1.4 What should audio description describe?

The issue of 'what' should be audio described is a controversial matter which has been addressed by professionals and scholars but has also developed into formal guidelines and norms. Provisions with regard to AD exist in some countries, notably Spain, the UK and Germany, whereas the practice is still at an emerging phase in others (such as Greece, Norway and Italy). As we have already seen, ITC (2000), the English regulator for broadcast access, has published an extensive set of guidelines which addresses audio description not only as an access service, but also specifically refers to the type of product to audio describe in relation as to what needs to be audio described. In Spain in 2004, the Minister of Labour together with CEAPAT (*Centro Estatal de Autonomia Personal y Ayudas Tecnicas*) organized a forum and invited academics, experts in the field of accessibility and associations to discuss the quality of audio description in such a delicate

phase as the shifting from analogue to digital television[20]. Indeed, before the 2005 shifting, a group called *La accessibilidad en TV digital para personas con discapacidad* worked on this issue. One year later, the group created the norm UNE 153020: 2005 (AENOR 2005), "*Audiodescripción para personas con discapacidad visual. Requisitos para la audiodescripción y elaboración de audioguías*", that was passed on 26th January 2005 (Orero 2005). This norm is articulated into various sections and covers the issue of pre-recorded AD, live AD and audio guides. Similarly to ITC (2000), this norm also gives provision about the types of product to be audio described and the audio description workflow, though some norms (such as the 'quantity' of audio description or the voice talent to choose for children AD) cannot be considered as binding because they often rely on personal choices or style. However, they can therefore be considered as an important step towards the standardization of guidelines. In Germany, one of the most outstanding personalities in the field of AD, Bernd Benecke, also Head of the *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, has collaborated to the creation of German guidelines for Audio description (Benecke and Dosch 2004). In the USA, there is a large and comprehensive set of guidelines elaborated by the American Council of the Blind (ACB) that can be applied to a wide range of events[21].

[20] On the shift from analogue to digital television both in Spain and in the rest of Europe, see also Coromina and Delgado 2007.

[21] Further information about guidelines in the USA is available at http://www.acb.org/adp/guidelines.html (last accessed 19/02/2011). Snyder (2006) also provides a comprehensive framework for American AD guidelines.

All guidelines in these countries address the way in which audio description should select and describe moving images.

According to ITC (2000), only relevant information should be audio described. Relevance is, however, a very controversial matter in general and in also in AD (Braun 2007; Gutt 2000; Sperber and Wilson 1995; Vercauteren 2007a, 2007b). Indeed, due to time constraints, the audio describer could be forced to say just a few words, if not only one, but the one(s) that is (are) most relevant to convey the meaning to the audience. For example, to highlight an important scene change, the audio description could sometimes just use some deictic references by saying 'now' or 'outside'. The absence of a verbal form is not a problem in this case. ITC (2000) also stresses that audio description should clarify the categories 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'when'. We believe that a 'how'- category would need to be added, because for blind people it is very important to understand how actions are performed and furthermore the way characters behave also reveals their attitude and their personality. There is not a hierarchical relationship between the mentioned categories, since the focus of the description on one or more of them strongly depends on the time available for description as well as on the previous audio description and on all the pieces of information that can be retrieved from dialogues and/or other sounds. For example, if information about the location (where) or the moment (when) has already been provided (be it through another audio

description string or through the dialogues or an external narrator or a caption/subtitle) then the audio description will not repeat the same information again. Indeed, redundant descriptions may bore the audience or result to be exhausting or even irritating. However, if – as a general rule - redundancy should be avoided in audio description (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004), for scenes with many characters the audio describer would need to mention the names of all characters as they speak, in order to avoid confusion in the audience mind. In addition, when a character is played by a famous actor, normally mentioned at the beginning of the audio description by 'x is played by', or 'x in the role of y', it might be sufficient to mention the character fewer times than in a case of unknown actors/voices. In the selection of relevant elements to audiodescribe, the audio describer should pay attention to objects or situations that will recur later in the film or in the performance. However, since the sighted viewer saw the object but maybe did not pay attention to it, or if the intention of the film maker/director was not to stress its presence, the audio describer will have to use linguistic instruments to make the presence of that particular object less intrusive as possible in the audio description.

The issue of relevance goes hand in hand with the issue of quantity in audio description. Indeed, the extent to which a scene should be audio described and the degree of specificity of audio description has been addressed by different scholars (Bourne and Jimenez 2007). Generally

speaking, the first principle of a 'good' audio description should be describing what you see: 'what you see is what you say' is the motto of Joel Snyder, American pioneer in the field of audio description and Head of the Audio Description Associates. This means that the audio describer should not add personal considerations, judgments or express her/own taste (ITC 2000; Fryer 2010; Salway 2007; Vercauteren 2006). This goal should be reached through the choice of right words in a descriptive language perspective. The quantity of information to give through audio description is a matter of time and selection. Firstly, it is important to give special and temporal coordinates, if not already provided, then adding information if there is enough time. However, as already said, too much description can dilute the mood of a scene. This is why the audio describer should wisely choose the elements to convey trough the audio description, by operating specific analysis of the original product. According to ITC (2000), young blind people want to know as many details as possible because they wish to be addressed as normally sighted people. However, it is not always a matter of patronizing the audience, but of selecting important information in order to convey the meaning of a story.

According to Ballester Casado (forthcoming) the elements to be audio described can be divided into two main categories: non-verbal visual elements and verbal visual elements. The first category includes physical appearance, such as clothes, facial expressions, body language, ethnical

elements, age and setting, such as special spatial distribution of the characters, temporal distribution in terms of hour, year, month, day of the week. The second category includes written visual elements such as subtitles, credit list, title bands and other written information.

When characters appear for the first time, it is necessary to describe their appearance, possibly their age and if they have special characteristics. If a complete description is not possible, the audio describer might choose to postpone some elements, thus operating a selection of the elements to describe first, or might decide that the audience could infer them from the context. Places and settings should be described, provided that the audio describer has enough time to do that. This means providing the blind audience with special categories which may help them understand against which background the characters play. Describing the position of characters is also important to help visualize the scene. Blind people are intimately linked to the space since their very early childhood. In case of congenital/total blindness, they learn how to move and behave with proportions and dimensions.

Sound effects are normally described just before they happen, even though sometimes if a sound is meant to create a kind of suspense effect, the description might be postponed.

Normally, logos, opening titles, beginning and end credits are also read; however, they might be too fast, so it is up to every single audiodescribing

team to decide whether the credits list - in which usually sighted users are not that interested - should be read or not or even provided in advance through some kind of bulletin to be circulated beforehand. American audio describers stress the importance of reading all credits and guaranteeing the completeness of information provided to the blind audience, even if this means that the voice of the audio describer overlaps the blanks. However, this type of approach seems to be criticized by ITC (2000) because it seems to be hardly feasible at TV, while for DVD it seems to be easier. Logos are also usually audio described and this is often a static and standardized element, since the same credit is likely to be audio described the same way each time, unless the audio description provider is different. As an example, the audio description of the Touchstone Pictures as presented in our corpus appears as follows:

(1) A pale blue line pushes across the black screen and contracts to a circle, leaving the words Touchstone Home Video behind it. A lightning flash strikes the blue circle. Touchstone Pictures Presents a Wildwood Enterprises Production.

As it will be made clearer, relevance and objectivity deeply inform the type of language used by the audiodescribing team. Although different approaches to both relevance and objectivity seem to be equally acceptable and admitted (for example the existence of an American vs. Spanish approach is

recognized) in film AD, it is in theatre audio description that practices are sometimes more unconventional. Indeed, as reported by Udo and Fels (2009: 3)[22] "most of these guidelines tend to rely heavily on anecdotal evidence and the historical use of a specific process, rather than one validated by published research". Evidence shows that unconventional audio description at theatre involves the use of an emotional rather than an objective language and that audio description is considered to be one of the creative components of an entertainment experience. Audio describer Leishman used an iambic pentameter to audio describe a Shakespeare's play and used a more interpretative attitude relying on less factual information and on an emotional language. As noted by Brocket and Ball (2004: 22) "the spectator may need to imagine much that is merely suggested by a few set pieces, project images, lighting, or dialogue […]"[23].

In section 1.5 we will see how audio description has developed in Europe and abroad and will sketch a short story of audio description in its different application fields (cinema, DVD, TV, theatre, opera).

1.5 Short story of audio description in Europe

[22] The full document is accessible at http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/trsitm/16 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[23] For example, to represent Hamlet's confused state of mind, the describer uses a maze metaphor: "A home is now transformed into a maze/ As Hamlet passes through the castle halls/ Upstairs to landings leading to more stairs/ Through secret chambers into hidden rooms". For more information about unconventional and alternative audio description strategies, see also Gerber 2007; Peli, Fine and Labianca 1996; Sandahl 1999; Schmeidler and Kirchner 2001.

Audio description is a relatively young discipline from an academic perspective, but its use has been documented since the early 1940's in Europe. According to Orero (2007) the first country for which documented audio description attempts exist is Spain, where audio description started to be provided after the Civil War once per week in the late 1940's by journalist Gerardo Esteban. Audio description was transmitted at that time on radio frequencies and played a vital role both for the blind and the sighted users until the birth of television. In addition, even before the Audetel project in the UK, Spanish blind doctor Michel Hidalgo suggested to ONCE (the Spanish Union of the Blind) that audiovisual programmes and performances should be audio described. Thanks to Hidago, the system *Sonocine* was born. According to Hernàndez and Mendiluce (2004) this type of transmission, along with the guidelines established by the Audetel Project in 1991 (*Audiovision* in France), paved the way for the Spanish system *Audesc*, used by ONCE (*Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles*) to audiodescribe the films to be distributed among its members. The audio description delivered in the late 1940s was only in Spanish and not in Catalan because of the persecutions by Franco. The first AD in Catalan dates back to 1989 when "The Ten Commandments" was broadcast by TV3, which has been always at the cutting edge in the field of accessibility, thanks to the implementation of audio description, off-line subtitling and real-time subtitling (Matamala

2007). During the 1990's, many more films were audio described, even though not on a regular basis.

The Andalusian Autonomous Channel started in 1995, audiodescribing 76 films; it was then followed by the *Cine para todos* project broadcasting 132 audio described films until 2001. Sitcoms started to be audio described in 1999 by Channel TV3 (the CCRTV's main channel) broadcasting "*Plats bruts"* with AD in Catalan. TV3 and ONCE also worked together on the sitcoms "*Majoria absoluta"* and "*L'un per l'altre"*. In 2002 RTVE produced the audio description for "*Nicòlas"*, an animated series for children, whose protagonist was a blind child. As to cinemas, though Spain cannot rely on DTS or Dolby, some films are provided with open audio description, a type of description that can be heard by all cinemagoers (Orero, Pereira and Utray 2007). The first audio described film shown in public dates back to 2006 ("Something to talk about" followed by "The Majestic" and "The Pledge") and was part of a bigger ambitious project, *La Gran Pelicula*, which aimed at audiodescribing one film per week. In 1994 already the film "The Motorcycle Diaries" had been shown in a commercial movie theatre by the Catalan Association for the Blind; however, the AD was in Spanish and not in Catalan because the film was in Spanish itself (Matamala 2007). This experience had been followed by "*Mar adentro"* and "*Amor idiota"*, both screened in 2005. On the festival side, some films are also audio described since 2002 for the International Badonet Festival in Spain, for which, in 2005

only, 12 films were made accessible to the blind. As to theatre performances, Matamala (2007) reports audio description starting in Catalonia in 1994 at the *Teatroneu* with "Death and the Maiden". Other audio described performances have followed in cooperation with blind associations and theatres themselves[24]. From 2004 Spain also successfully provides closed and open audio description for opera, about 6 opera performances per year, in Barcelona and Madrid. The first audio described opera was delivered at Barcelona Opera House *Liceu* in 2004. Since then, about 10 operas per year are audio described. In 2005 and 2006, audio description was also combined with audio subtitling, and the results have been used by the Transmedia research group to test different types of audio description. As Matamala (2007) points out, the way in which opera AD is made in Spain differs from the UK, because overlapping with dialogues and music is not considered as negative as it is in the UK. In addition, the blind audience seems generally to be appreciating the audio describer 'jumping in' when something crucial happens and needs to be described.

Audio description in the UK started to be delivered at theatre, thanks to the initiative a small family run theatre in Nottinghamshire took in the mid 80's. Drawing on this experience the Theatre Royal Windsor started to audio describe theatre performances regularly from 1988. The year 1991 played an important role for the UK, because of the European project Audetel (Audio

[24] For a more extensive list of the audio described plays and theatre performances, see Matamala (2007).

Described Television) being launched in the same Disability Year and inspiring a variety of AD initiatives. The Audetel Project gathered professionals, associations, broadcasters and regulators to assess the needs and the requirements in the field of audio description. The Audetel consortium started to bring extensive audio description in the UK. Among videotapes, the first film to be audio described was "Hear my Song" (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004). Based on the outcomes of the Audetel project, English ITC (Independent Television Commission), now Ofcom, set out guidelines for the production of different types of audio description, each type following the characteristics of the programme to broadcast, together with future prospects on the programme percentage to audiodescribe. The 1996 Broadcasting Act decided that ten per cent of terrestrial production should be audio described by the tenth year after issue of the digital license. The 2003 Communication Act and the 2004 Code on Television Access Service by the new born Ofcom, the independent regulatory organization for TV broadcasting, were important steps towards the increase of accessible programmes in UK. In 2002 the platform BSkyB, a digital satellite broadcaster, provided audio description for a number of channels and was the first platform to let the general public access audio described programmes. In 2005, Channel Five added its AD to the digital satellite provision and in 2004 the BBC, together with Channel 4 and ITV, announced that it would be making AD available via digital satellite television. In cinemas, audio

description was screened for the first time in 2002 with "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" using the new transmission system called DTS (Digital Theatre System) which associates video and audio description by means of time code correspondence, thus, reducing the risk of delays and problems in the signal emission. DTS replaced Cinetracker, a previously developed system that, however, had shown synchronization problems during the transmission and caused miscomprehension of the film screened. Since then, over 350 films have been audio described in the UK. From 2003, the UK Film Council agreed to fund technical AD equipment purchase and installation in about 78 cinemas in the UK (now their number has increased to about 180). Although legislation does not regulate audio description for cinema, today UK cinemas have 80% to 100% of films audio described, whether in English or in another language. In this regard, much effort is being made towards effective audio subtitling.

In Germany the first attempts to provide audio description date back to 1989, when a group of 4 people (Andrea Hartwig, Robert Muller, Bernd Benecke, now Head of the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* and Helmar Dosch, a blind person) teamed up, and inspired by the film festival held in Cannes, they founded the *Munchner Filmbeschreibergruppe.* In December 1989, thanks to the financial support of Columbia TriStar and 20th Century Fox, the group audio described some American comedies, "*Die Glucksjager"*, "*Kuck mal, wer da spricht"* and "*Angst von der Dunkelheit"*. In 1992, thanks to the

support of the Bavarian Union of the Blind, the group could start working on TV and DVD broadcasting. The film "*Eine ungeheilige Liebe"* was the first German audio described film included in a Film festival and in TV broadcast programming. In October 1993, the film "Tootsie" was the first audio described video to be presented to the wide public by ZDF (which unfortunately audio described only one or two films in the following years). The 1990's were characterized by a huge increase of initiatives aiming at enhancing AD performances, among which the *Munchner Filmfest* in 1993 and the *Kinotournee* with Pro7 in 1995. Both experiences presented to the wide public, although not on television, a film concerning a blind witness of a murder. In 1997, the broadcaster ARTE also started to provide audio description. In 1997 Bernd Benecke was appointed *Horfilm-Redakteur* at *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, where he still holds the position of Head of the Audio Description Department, which currently audio describes about 12-14 films per year, that is one audio described film every one or two weeks (considering repeats and audio described versions borrowed from other broadcasters).

Portugal started audiodescribing in 2003, thanks to the initiative of *Radio e Televisão de Portugal* (RTP). The film "*Menina da Ràdio*" could be followed by the blind and the visually impaired by means of a special device connected to the television set box. In the same year, RTP provided audio description to two more films and the fiction series *A Ferreirinha.* In 2004,

TV Cabo and Lusomundo Gallery started providing AD through the digital television set-top box. Today, Lusomundo Gallery broadcasts one audio described film per month, in addition to repeats. In 2006, the total number of films audio described accounted for 106.

Audio description in the Flanders is a relatively young phenomenon. It started in 1995 when the *Blindenzorg Licht en Liefde*, a Flemish blind organization drew on the results of the 1991 European Project Audetel enjoying contacts with Markus Weiss from RNIB in the UK and started audiodescribing some episodes of the series "*Langs de kade*" and the theatre performance "*Driekoningenavond*" performed in Antwerp in 1995. This initiative was then followed in 1996 only by the audio description of a soap opera episode, "*De Kampioenen*" presented to a group of 120 people in Brussels in 2006 in the *Amerikaans Theater* of VRT, *Vlaamse Radio en Televisie,* the Belgian Television Broadcaster. This experiment drew on the collaboration between the director of the Soap, Guido De Craene, the umbrella organisation *Belgische Confederatie voor Blinden en Slechtzienden* (BCBS, the Belgian association for the blind and visually impaired) and the University College Antwerp, with Aline Remael (UCA) and Harry Geyskens (BCBS) providing the AD. So far, Belgium has not produced any audio described film for television. Yet, in 2006 a group of students from the University of Antwerp produced the first audio described film for television, "*Karakter*", which was however only presented to the press. The same year

saw the projection of the audio described film "*De Zaak Alzheimer*" to the Ghent International Film festival, thanks to the efforts of a local association.

In Italy, the first audio described film was broadcasted by *RAI* in 1991, the Italian Television Broadcaster. The film "Spartacus" by Stanley Kubrik was described by Sergio d'Ottavi, head of CTT, the company which still provides audio description at television and invented the so-called *Teleaudio* system. This system allowed visually impaired people to access the audio description on medium waves radio frequencies. The system was produced thanks to the commitment of the Head of the Unit, Lidia Sacerdoti and Giovanni Boldati, coordinator of *Radio Rai*, on which the audio description was transmitted. The idea was to duplicate the original audio track, to mix it with the recorded audio description, and to send the audio described film on radio frequencies. The experiment was a success and since then *RAI* has provided audio description for some movies weekly. The Italian blind audience seems to be generally happy with the type of service provided, although they complain about the scarcity of audio description and the fact that only movies and some fiction episodes are audio described, while talk shows and other entertainment programmes, such as sport or music programmes, have neither audio description nor live commentary. As far as cinema is concerned, there is not a single audio described film. However, a number of films have been audio described for festivals, in particular for the Venice Film Festival, for the Rome Fiction Fest and the International Film

Festival held yearly in Rome. The association *Cinema senza Barriere,* based in Milan, Rome and Bari, organizes one or two audio described and subtitled screenings per months, while the new born association *CulturAbile Onlus* is striving to collaborate with cinemas and majors to make audio description available already in the production phase. In addition, this association is strongly committed on the education side to raise awareness about the importance of audio description as a tool for literacy; they have audio described a dance performance in 2010 for the first time ever in Italy, and they are currently working on audio description for children. On the DVD side, the *Senza Barriere* Cooperative based in Trento offers audio described DVDs on a regular basis to visually impaired people against the payment of a yearly fee. Apart from these local activities, Italy cannot rely on an audio description tradition, and this practice, although started in 1992, is very far from being recognized and duly supported[25]. The only DVD to be released with audio description is the already mentioned "*Fuga dal call center*", where there is a controversial first-person AD. Nowadays, however, thanks to some technological advances, the audio description at TV is also available both on a digital channel and streaming mode on the web site of the *Segretariato Sociale*, a *RAI*-managed public service to which access services

[25] More information about the Italian situation in the field of audio description can be found at http://www.audiodescrizione.it (last accessed 19/02/2011). For further references, see also Antifona 2002; Arma (forthcoming); Pini 2005.

such as audio description and subtitling belong[26].

In France, audio description has developed in the late 1980's thanks to Auguste Coppola, brother of Francis Ford Coppola and father of Nicolas Cage. Auguste Coppola was appointed new doyen of the University of San Francisco, where in 1975 young professor Gregory Frazier had 'invented' audio description. Once back to France, Auguste Coppola relied on the association *Valentin Haüy* for the development of the so-called *Audiovision* system, which is still used today, although not yet systematically. In 1998, the *Audiovision* Project changed into *ARTE*, providing audio description for both films and theatre performances (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004). The first audio described film was "Tucker" by Francis Ford Coppola in 1988. Today, Arte provides two audio described films per month since 2000. *TF1* and *TF2* also provide some films with audio description, but the service is not systematically organized. On the website of the association *Valentin Haüy*[27] (*VHA*) it is possible to access the catalogue of the DVDs audio described by the association itself. So far, about 300 titles are available. The website-blog of French audio describers on *VHA*'s website also stresses the

[26] More information about the initiatives of the *Segretariato Sociale* can be found at http://www.segretariatosociale.rai.it (last accessed 19/02/2011). Despite all efforts to make TV programmes more accessible, unfortunately this website is not accessible to the blind and the visually impaired.

[27] The website of the association http://www.avh.asso.fr/ is very rich in information about media access and audio description in France. The *VHA* provides with specific materials addressing audio description and also organizes professional courses for future audio describers. The issue of training will be also specifically addressed in the Chapter 4.

importance of training and suggests some audio description courses; in particular, the course provided by the *VHA* itself is completely free of charge. Apart from the association *Valentin Haüy*, another association called *La Cause* has been providing audio description for its members. In addition, they also lead a TV programme entitled "*A vous de voir*" which provides information on blindness-related problems on a monthly basis. Audio description is also available in some theatres thanks to the initiatives of some associations, namely *Accès Culture* and *Pretes moi tes yeux au theatre*. Theatres providing audio described plays are the *Théâtre national de Chaillot*, the *Théâtre national de Strasbourg*, the *Théâtre de la Criée* in Marseille, the *Scène nationale d'Orléans*, the *Comédie Française*, *L'odéon*, the *Théâtre de l'Europe*, *L'Opéra Comique*, the *Châtelet*, *L'Opéra de Paris*, the *Théâtre National de Bretagne*. In addition, the association *Les amis des aveugles* contributes to raising awareness on the issue of audio description in the whole country, along with *La Lumière* et *Les Grignoux*, especially with regard to AD in festivals, which is still not very known to the general public.

While the first attempts to audio describe films in Europe are documented by Orero in Spain and were mainly aimed at improving the accessibility of audiovisual products even before the very birth of television, audio description in its full and broader sense started to be provided in USA from the late 1970's. In 1974 Gregory Frazier developed some principles of audio description for his broadcasting master thesis in 'television for the

blind' that is considered by Piety (2004) the first academic research work on AD. In 1981 Margaret and Cody Pfanstiehl from the Metropolitan Washington Ear started collaborating with the Arena Stage theatre in Washington DC to produce audio description of live theatre performances, the first one being "Major Barbara" in 1981. The activity of Metropolitan Washington Ear extended over the following years to radio simulcast audio description for TV (1982) and for museum tours and exhibits (1989) like the Statue of Liberty and Castle Clinton (NY), for which the first audio description cassette was produced. In 1986, Professors Gregory Frazier and August Coppola founded the AudioVision Institute at San Francisco University. Over the following years various attempts were made to join forces and bring experienced professionals together to start audio describing films through satellite devices. Later in 1990, the MoPix created the Descriptive Audio Service with AD on videotapes. This was the beginning of audio described home products. As to TV, in the same period for the first time synchronized, pre-recorded audio description was provided on the Second Audio Program (SAP channel) for the season's 26 "American Playhouse" productions. Later, AD developed in theatres, operas and radio as a radio reading service. In 1994, a group of audio describers gathered and decided to organize a conference. The first annual international conference on AD took place in 1995. From 1999 to 2002, the FCC (Federal Communications Committee) called upon all TV broadcasters for binding

commitment to regular provision of audio description and required 50 audio described hours per quarter starting April 2002. Nevertheless, according to the Federal Court, FCC acted beyond its scope of application and the bill did not pass, nor did the amendments suggested by federal representatives. From 2006 to 2009, the Audio Describer Coalition (one of more than 200 national, regional, state, and community-based disability organizations) published some reference documents, such as the Standards for Audio Description and the Code of Professional Conduct for Describers[28] that are nowadays among the most important reference documents for all researchers in the field.

1.6 Research on audio description: the state of the art

Audio description appears to be a very recent field of investigation once only empirically dealt with by professionals. Nowadays, it is attracting more and more attention from the academic sphere, because it is intrinsically interrelated with other forms of audiovisual translation, such as subtitling and translation for dubbing, and involves socially relevant linguistic manipulations for special purposes, that is, the enjoyment by the blind and visually impaired. Indeed, although audio description is relatively common and consolidated in the United States and in the UK, it has become one of the most interesting research trends in AVT only in recent years. Following

[28] Further information is available at http://www.audiodescriptioncoalition.org/atoz.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Gambier (2004), audio description, intralinguistic or interlinguistic, can be considered as a form of translation and in particular of the quite recently developed audiovisual translation.

Audio description is a vast research issue, which calls for convergence of multiple disciplines, such as Linguistics, Philosophy, Semiotics, Semiology, Perception and Reception Studies, Translation and Film Studies. Therefore, it requires a multidisciplinary integrated approach to accommodate contributions from all these areas and give adequate answers to many arising research questions. Nowadays, Spain and Germany, along with the United States and the UK, which are leaders in the provision of AD, produce the most advanced research work on audio description from the academic point of view.

Even though we cannot yet rely on a whole comprehensive approach for this discipline, an ever-growing group of experts and scholars with different backgrounds (mainly professionals back to University for a Master Degree or a PhD, PhD students with initial experience in AD, or professors with AVT background) are approaching this matter from different perspectives.

Many are the possible research questions worthy of being investigated. First of all, due to the specificity of the audience concerned, is it possible to suggest which kind of audio description is suitable for a certain type of audience? Which are the characteristics of this audience? The blind are not a

homogenous group, be it because of the blindness cause, age, profession or education. Secondly, the different blind communities in Europe can rely on different legislation or no legislation at all governing the use of AD in social life. In this respect, should possible guidelines be the same for all blind communities? Is there a way a blind community could be educated to audio description? As an example, a research carried out by Schmeidler and Kirchner (2001) stressed that AD for television science programmes is of great importance to the blind audience, because it fosters the degree of comprehension, as well as of integration and social inclusion. Thirdly, from the linguistic point of view, only a few research works have focused on AD language as a language for special purposes (Salway 2007), and have shown how the most frequent verbs in AD scripts refer to characters' "focus of attention" in a physical environment (Salway 2007: 160). Less research has been carried out so far on its syntactic, grammatical and pragmatic aspects (Piety 2004; Jiménez Hurtado 2007; Salway 2007), as well as on the macro-structure of AD language and the coherence/cohesion creation mechanisms in AD discourse. Fourthly, audio description is generally considered to be a discipline falling under the scope of Translation Studies (TS) and in particular of (Multimodal) Audiovisual Translation. Yet, given the hybrid nature of audio description, which is a non-autonomous form of (linguistic) transfer but cannot rely on faithfulness as traditionally intended in TS, much research is still needed on possible contributions by Semantics, Film Studies,

and Relevance Theory to the issue. Moreover, from a professional perspective, since many researchers are already experienced audio describers and given the recentness of AD as an academic discipline, the approach has been more descriptive than prescriptive. Research on how AD can be taught and learnt is an outstanding issue worthy of further and deeper investigation. Finally, new trends in Audiovisual Translation and in AD in particular suggest that audio description scripts may be translated from one language to another, thus raising questions about quality and time-effectiveness of the efforts made. In addition, audio describing films for subtitling countries bring new questions about audio subtitling. Which competences should be requested to AD professionals? Should they rely on a translation or filmic background or a combination of both? These are just a few questions emerging from a completely new field of investigation like audio description[29].

In this section we will outline the most recent studies carried out on AD by European and non-European scholars, though we will not embark now on a discussion about which theoretical approach AD fits into. We will approach

[29] In this section, we will not address into detail the number of recent seminars and conferences addressing audio description. However, in the last few years, many scholars have met at the occasion of these conferences to discuss new topics in audiovisual translation and audio description in particular. Among the most prominent: Media for All 2007-2010 and Languages and the Media 2006-2010 conference series, the Advanced Research Seminar in Audio Description (Barcelona 2009 and Barcelona 2011), the Seminar on Audio Description (held at the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* in December 2008), MuTra Euronferences 2005-2017 and Points of View in Education and Culture (Warsaw, October 2011).

this section mainly from a geographical perspective, though some issues are of common interest and experts in AD belong to a small scientific community for which geographical barriers do not always shape the research interest focus.

According to Piety (2004), the first academic record of audio description is to be found in a dissertation written in 1975 by Frazier entitled "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman: An All-audio Adaptation of the Teleplay for the Blind and Visually Handicapped", in which the author discussed new born audio description as a way to enhance the blind listeners' comprehension. Nowadays audio description seems to be a well-established set of practices, although much research is still needed, especially to evaluate the quality of the audio description produced.

In Antwerp, Belgium, Gert Vercauteren has been working for some years now on existing guidelines and standards by ITC (2000), currently applied and used in the UK and looked at as a landmark in other countries. He is also working on possible parameters to define a theoretical framework for AD to be studied as an academic discipline. Drawing on the results of his recent experience as an assistant professor at the University of Antwerp, Vercauteren (2007b) points out the importance for the audio describer to have solid knowledge of film narrative, film *genres*, film techniques and film language. This background is useful to provide good interpretation of all communicative clues and to be able to convey their meaning to the final

audience. In a paper presented in Montpellier in 2008, and in line with the research carried out in the same period by Paula Igareda from Spain, Orero and Vercauteren (2008) challenged the FACS system (Facial Action Coding System) by Ekman and Friesen to discuss possible ways of describing facial expressions objectively and to see to what extent these are stereotyped.

A corpus-based analysis of the language of audio description has been recently carried out by Andrew Salway (2007) at the University of Surrey. He has been investigating the language of AD within the framework of the TIWO (Television in Words) project, which has gathered experts from the academic world, professionals, representatives of broadcasters and blind associations from the English speaking community of audio description. The TIWO project run from January 2002 to January 2005 and was funded by EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council). ITFC, the BBC Audio Description Unit, and RNIB contributed to the project with their expertise and advice and provided the research group with audio described films to analyze[30]. The main objective of the project was to consider the regularity of the audio description language as a tool for semi-automatic extraction of information about the visual content of a film, and to pave the way for computer-assisted audio description. The research team at Surrey included Andrew Salway, some PhD students (Elia Tomadaki, Yan Xu and Andrew Vassiliou) and MSC/BSC students (Mike Graham, Peter Sessions,

[30] Extensive notice of the TIWO Project will be provided in Chapter 5.

Elizabeth Jones and Gabriela Argiros). The contribution of Andrew Vassiliou has played an important role in this sense, because his PhD thesis is based on the TIWO preliminary results and investigates further the implications of audio description language for computer assisted narrative analysis, by drawing a comparison between the language of audio description scripts and the language of screenplays. The TIWO project has analyzed 91 AD scripts and used the Quirk tools for this purpose. First of all, lists of words and keywords were extracted. Evidence shows that some categories of words are far more frequent in audio description than in general language. In order to compare the two, contrastive analysis was conducted on the BNC corpus. The results of frequency lists were manually investigated to find out relevant collocations and concordances. All information extracted was then classified and subdivided into five main subcategories: characters' appearance and characters' focus of attention, characters' personal interactions, characters' emotional states, change of location of characters and objects. The comparison between a language for special purposes (LSP) and general language (GL) led the team to the quite pioneering idea that the language of audio description is a language for special purposes. Citing Hoffmann, Salway (2007: 151) states the following:

> The use of language, by trained professionals, to communicate about a restricted field of discourse and for a specific purpose, normally results in a 'special language' characterized by a preponderance of linguistic features that are idiosyncratic in comparison with everyday general language.

This idea specifically relies on the hypotheses that audio describers use a special language and that this language is also shaped by the communicative needs of its users. Indeed, Salway (2007: 151) stresses that:

> The existence of a special language is explained, in part, by the fact that audio description is produced by trained professionals following established guidelines, and its idiosyncrasies are explained by considering its communicative function - in particular that it is being used to tell a story. Encouraged by the relatively high degree of regularity observed in the corpus, we go on to speculate about the application of language technologies for 'assisted audio description' and for repurposing audio description as a basis for indexing digital video archives.

The TIWO project team also drew on some preliminary results published in two articles by Piety (2004) and Turner (1998). Working in the context of media accessibility, Piety (2004) adapted spoken discourse analysis techniques in his analysis of the audio description of four films, totalling 23,000 words. He suggested a set of concepts to analyze the structural and functional properties of AD and these concepts included four structural elements: insertions, utterances, representations and words. Furthermore, they involved seven types of information: appearance, action, position, reading, indexical, viewpoint and state. Working in a different context, Turner (1998) was interested in the potential to reuse audio description scripts as a basis for automatically indexing television programmes and films

in digital video collections. His analysis focused on two issues that would determine this potential: how well aligned audio description is with the visual contents and what aspects of visual contents are described. He analyzed the AD and accompanied visual contents in 27 minutes of each of a television documentary, a television drama and a feature film. As explained by Salway (2007: 153) when referring to Turner's investigation:

> For this analysis, 15 types of information conveyed by AD were defined: physical description of characters, facial and corporal expressions, clothing, occupations and roles of the characters, attitudes of the characters, spatial relationships between characters, movement of the characters, setting, temporal indicators, indicators of proportions, decor, lighting, action, appearance of titles, and text included in image.

The TIWO project team has carried out the first research on AD based on a huge amount of data. However, the scope of application of the results has been mainly repurposed for computer assisted indexing and extraction of visual content information. For this reason, there seems to be still enough room for further investigation of the lexical features of AD language compared to general language, for deeper analysis of the language used to audio describe particular categories of situations and for the investigation of specific parts of speech, such as adjectives. At the University of Surrey, German researcher Sabine Braun is actively working on how to progress in AD research and paving the way for effective focus on audio description

through a discourse perspective. In a paper presented in Vienna, Braun (2007) stresses the need for investigation on how AD fits into text analysis and discourse analysis perspectives, and suggests further research on local and global coherence mechanisms in AD, within and between the different parts of the audio described event, as well as on the comprehension of the source material.

Spain is also very actively researching on new trends in audiovisual translation and in audio description in particular. The Catalan research group Transmedia has been working for years on issues related to translation, dubbing, subtitling and audio description. The group has also organized conferences, round tables, meeting and seminars (last one held in Barcelona in June 2009). Coordinated by Professor Pilar Orero from the University of Barcelona (*UAB*), the Transmedia Group is currently working intensively on audio description and has been providing audio description for opera, movies and live performances. The group is also working on a brand new application of audio description, i.e. audio subtitling, which is targeted at most subtitling countries and consists in combining audio description with the subtitles on the screen for non-dubbed films. According to Matamala (2007), the Transmedia Research group was founded in 2004, after various researchers from different countries met in London for the conference "In so many Words". They decided to focus on audiovisual translation and accessibility at a first stage, including subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, audio

description for the blind and accessibility of web pages. Always on the Spanish side, Cristòbal Cabeza, PhD Student at the *UAB* has been working for some years on the audio description of opera and theatre performances as well as on live audio description and AD didactics. Ana Matamala, from the same University, has been dealing so far with many theoretical issues and with contrastive analysis of different audio described versions of the same product, for example the two different scripts in Spanish and in German of the film "Good Bye Lenin". The results of the investigation are available in Matamala and Rami (2009). She has been also dealing with the competences and the skills of the 'good' audio describer (Matamala 2006), with live audio description in theatre (Matamala 2005). Lately, Matamala has also worked on the creation of a multimodal pragmatic analysis framework for Film Studies and AVT to be applied to audio description. Pilar Orero, one of the most known European specialists of AVT, has published extensively on AVT, in particular subtitling and audio description. Among her most interesting research works, a specific focus on culturally bound audio description and the relations between different audio described versions on the same narrative sequence, drawing on previous Chafe's "Pear Story" experiment, and universals in narrative clues processing[31]. She is currently exploring viable options to set up audio subtitling, which combines audio description and voice-subtitling, for the countries which cannot rely on

[31] More information on the experiment available at http://dea.brunel.ac.uk/dtv4all/ICT-PSP-224994-D22.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

dubbing tradition and need to have their subtitles voiced and suitably combined with the audio description track. This type of investigation seems to be particularly fitting also for cost determination and for the definition of the good audio describer's profile, that does not always coincide with the person physically voicing and recording the script. Moreover, Pilar Orero and Catalina Jimenez have also been working for some years on possible translation of audio description scripts, always in a cost-effective perspective. The Spanish researchers have also been promoting and leading a research team for the DTV4All project (Digital Television for All)[32]. This project is supported by the European ICT PSP (Information and Communication Technology Programme Support Policy) and aims at fully exploring the potential benefits brought by the digital television for the deaf/hard of hearing and the blind/visually impaired. The overarching working areas of the project are the following: ensuring the widespread adoption of mature access services for first generation digital television; identifying, assessing and promoting emerging access services for second generation digital television. The project aims at reformulating guidelines, providing assistance and guidance to broadcasters, professionals and beginners to extend the use of AD and to educate the user to the switch off to digital television, thus

[32] The Project in all its phases and deliverables is available at http://www.psp-dtv4all.org/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). The website provides more information about the project and the expected outcomes, as well as on the participant countries and the organizations involved. The DTV Group has participated in a number of international activities and seminars, among which the ITU-EBU Joint Workshop on Accessibility to Broadcasting and IPTV ACCESS for ALL, which has made presentations and speeches available on the website of the DTV Project.

minimizing the risk of marginalization from this technologically advanced transformation. The Spanish team has also accumulated reasonable amount of research on the expression of emotions in AD. Paula Igareda, from *UAB* University, has worked so far on the audio description of emotions and gestures in Spanish-spoken films. This type of investigation stresses the importance of understanding culturally bound body expressions and gestures of any film that might be dubbed/subtitled and audio described into another language. Indeed, facial and body expressions are not the same in all cultures and the ideal audio describer should be able to detect cultural differences and to interpret body language properly. Pilar Orero has conducted some deeper research with Gert Vercauteren from Belgium to check whether, and to which extent, it is possible to describe them in an 'objective' manner (Orero and Vercauteren forthcoming). Of course, it is necessary to take into account that facial expressions are not always stereotyped and that desirable universality of any model need to accommodate cultural and social differences as well. Alicia Palomo, from the University Jaume I (Castellón) in Spain has approached audio description from a semiotic perspective and put the relevance theory in connection to the theoretical framework provided by Film Studies and the analysis of meaning codes provided by Chaume (2004). She has also focused on the social role AD plays with regard to the education and literacy acquisition of blind children (Palomo 2008).

One of the latest trends in audiovisual translation, AD and subtitling in

particular, is eye tracking research. This process of measuring eye movements is being investigated by the Spanish Transmedia Research Group. With eye-tracking technology, one is able to chart what a person is looking at, what a person fixates on and where the eye 'rests' or gazes. Eye tracking is performed by using a video camera to film the eye movements, for example, while reading or watching a particular object or screen. The camera videotaping the eye presents the result on a screen, in the form of picture that consists of dots and lines. The dots represent when the eye fixates on a specific position, for instance, the beginning of a word. The lines represent when the eye moves from one fixation to another, a movement called a saccade. The idea underlying the use of an eye tracker is that the movements of the eye on the screen could provide an aid to the selection of the most relevant information to be conveyed by the audio description. Unfortunately, though further investigation is being carried out in different countries, also in the framework of the DTV4All project, no proven evidence shows a clear relation between the different positions of the human eye on the screen and the relevance of the information processed by the human brain. Preliminary results show some areas of the screen where the eye movements are more frequent than in others but data available so far have not been investigated or classified in a manner that would allow a theoretical interest for research on AD. It is also worth mentioning that Spain can rely on a dedicated *Centro Espanol de Subtitulado y Audiodescripcion* (*Cesya*)

whose activities range from training to social awareness campaigns, from legislative initiatives to research. The website also includes a database with all subtitled and audio described materials. The Spanish national 2012-2020 Strategy for people with disabilities also includes actions aimed at improving the accessibility of audiovisual products. In addition, to increase research initiatives, the Centre also encourages all parties to participate in the *AMADIS Congresso de Acesibilidad a los Medios Audiovisuales para Personas con Discapacidad*, which takes place almost every year and is food for thought for all national and international researchers within the field of audio description.

On the German side, Bernd Benecke is an example of an AD professional now back to University for a PhD project on audio description. As already mentioned, he is the Head of the AD Department at the Bavarian Broadcast. In particular, in his research project, he is focusing on hyper- and hypo-description, that is two different forms in which information is conveyed by audio description, the one giving more than necessary, the second providing less than expected. For example, the notion of 'intended hyper description' is defined as a form of "holistic connection that is at that moment not made explicit in the film itself" (Benecke 2007: 6). Benecke is investigating the consequences that such intended or non-intended processes have on the final users from the point of view of the comprehension and coherence construction throughout the text. Moreover, he has been

investigating new trends in AD research and in particular to what extent audio description can be considered a form of translation. The study is based on the analysis of the audio description of a 90 minutes movie "Slurb in Danger" ("*Sams in Gefahr*") which he analyzed through the categories provided by traditional translation theory. The analysis was conducted in 2006 and was supported by the Bavarian Broadcast Audio Description Unit, the Saarland University and the Gerzymisch Foundation.

In Italy, little or no research at all has been done on AD from the academic point of view. In fact, only a few dissertations have been written so far on audio description and no PhD thesis has focused on it (Antifona 2002; Casabianca 2010; Pini 2005). So far, no PhD thesis on AD has been discussed in Italy. Barbara Marsala from the *ISIVIU* association provides AD for opera in Sicily and was trained in France to opera and theatre audio description. Her team has been providing this service from 2007. Roberto Ellero, specialized in web accessibility and audio description for web resources, has been working for years now on accessibility issues and has approached AD mainly from a technological perspective. We can include him among the most skilled experts in the field of accessibility and media in Italy[33].

Poland has funded a 3 year project called AD-*Verba* and carried out at

[33] Some samples of research work and activities carried out by Roberto Ellero are available on the WebMultimediale website http://www.webmultimediale.org which is an outstanding example of how a website can be made accessible to the blind and the deaf users in all its parts. The website was last accessed 19/02/2011.

Adam Mickiewicz University, coordinated by Agnieszka Chmiel and Iwona Mazuur and focusing on the bottom up efforts made by the Polish blind community to promote audio description in the country. The Polish project also aims at improving professional skills and providing adequate guidelines for setting up adequate training courses for future audio describers.

Outside of Europe, the United States is the most audio describing country of the world. Joel Snyder, Head of ADA (Audio Description Associates) has been the father of American audio description and one of the most known audio describers at international level. Despite a long career and absolute expertise of the audio describing profession, he has just started a PhD on AD at the University of Barcelona, under the guidance of Prof. Pilar Orero. Joel Snyder has worked on AD as a tool to improve children literacy (Snyder 2006) and has been teaching audio description for more than twenty years now, both in the USA and abroad. In particular, he has focused overtime on training teachers of blind and visually impaired children to describe images through vivid, well-chosen words to conjure long lasting images in children memory. Snyder has also organized several presentations and workshop around the world and participated in conferences as invited speaker because of his long professional experience and solid background.

In Brazil, Eliana Franco from TRAMAD group (Translation, Media and Audio description) and Fafà Daltro from the GRUPO X, which includes a paraplegic dancer, have been working on audio description of Dance Clips

and have provided different types of audio description of the same clips, to test preferences, expectations and impressions of the intended audience.

Jan Louis and Haidee Kruger from the North West University of South Africa have been looking at audio description from a narratological perspective and have tried to repurpose the role of the audio describer within this framework (Kruger 2010a and 2010b).

To conclude, based on Braun (2008), research on AD is by necessity incomplete. In an excellent effort to systematize the state of research so far, she stresses some possible future research trends in this field (Braun 2008). To begin with, from a semantic perspective, there is little research on how visual, acoustic and textual elements in audio description can complement each other and contribute to the meaning making process (Bourne and Jiménez Hurtado 2007; Doloughan and Rogers 2005). Translation Studies could also contribute to this investigation with regard to the notions such as equivalence, identity and similarity. Multi-modality and multi-mediality, insights from Narratology and Film Studies as theoretical frameworks can help increase the awareness of semiotic issue in AD. From the point of view of the end user, much research needs to be carried out on focus and control groups to test which type of audio description can fit the needs and the expectations of end users best. Acceptability, credibility and adequateness deserve the utmost attention in this ever-changing phase and need to be at the very heart of accessibility policies. In addition, from a professional

perspective, the role of the audio describer needs to be investigated further as to the degree of obtrusiveness and pro-activity towards audio description itself (Yeung 2007, York 2007). Finally, from a more *genre*-based perspective, the attitude towards opera and theatre audio description more generally deserves more attention in order to point out the differences and the similarities between the English and the Spanish 'attitude'.

1.7 Technical delivery of audio description

AD is traditionally intended as a tool to facilitate the blind and the visually impaired in the enjoyment of audiovisual products. Nevertheless, the blind are not a homogenous group, as to age, education level, literacy and sight-deficiency level. Consequently, their level of aural acuity might not be the same. The sound track might include some different audio elements, which do not belong to the audio description, audio describers might show major differences in voice timbre and pitch and several voices might be used to audio describe the same product. For this reason, audio signals perform differently for different receivers.

First, to discuss the delivery modes of audio description, it seems relevant to distinguish between pre-recorded and live audio description. Pre-recorded AD is prepared for cinema, DVDs, television (movies), museums

and similar events. Live AD is suitable for theatre performances, opera, sport events and other types of events (also live TV programmes) in which the interaction is not perfectly planned.

European practices concerning the way to get AD are not homogenous. According to RNIB website[34] users in the UK can receive AD only on digital TV. Actually, some night zone programmes also provide some form of open AD available on radio frequencies under the name of 'enhanced commentary'. According to Greening (2006), the passage from analogue to digital in the UK has started in 2008 and is due to be completed by 2012. If users do not have digital television, they will have to buy a set-top box converting the original terrestrial signal into digital, or replace their old TV equipment with an Integrated Digital TV (IDTV). However, not all IDTVs are suitable to receive AD. This can happen through Freeview, satellite or cable. With Freeview, users need to buy the above mentioned set-top box or a Freeview-integrated digital TV to connect to AD. However, since Freeview coverage in the UK is not yet 100%, users need to get more information from dedicated contact centres before buying any new equipment. Freeview covers 34 TV and 24 free radio channels plus 11 subscription TV channels through Top-up TV, a kind of additional set-top box which allows to free tape-recording, pausing and rewinding TV programmes. The first receiver, the so-called Netgem iplayer, came out in November 2003 but was withdrawn from

[34]http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/tvradiofilm/television/adtv/Pages/audio_description_tv.aspx?printmode=true (last accessed 19/02/11)

the market in 2006. Since then, blind users could rely on the Nebula DigiTV PC card or the Portset Media Centre which were designed for the blind audience but cost over 1000 pounds. There are currently three set top box providers, Tvonics (MDR-300 and MFR-300 set top box are available for online purchasing from RNIB and TVonics websites) Portset (also available for online purchasing) and Logic LDR V3 (available on RNIB website for online purchasing). Digital TV providers, such as Panasonic, Toshiba, Sony and Philips from 2007 already produce TV devices suitable for AD reception. Audio described programmes on BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and a number of other channels are available on Sky satellite. Satellite TV includes both Freesat and Sky. In order to receive AD on BBC1, BBC2 and ITV outside London or outside England, users need to connect to dedicated channels. Users can activate AD temporarily or permanently through adjustments in the system setup section with their remote control. In 2007, Sky has developed a fully accessible easy grip remote control with raised buttons and larger text. Freesat digital boxes also fully support AD from some BBC channels and provide 140 channels and high definition subscription for free. Virgin Media also provides audio description from most BBC channels and allows activating AD on the remote control by pressing the AD button and adjusting the dedicated functions. BBC also provides the so-called ‘iplayer’, an AD player available on the Internet to hear streaming mode AD tracks from the last 7 days. Today, not all BBC

Channels have AD, as do all ITV channels, Channel 4, E4 and Five. The most popular digital channels also have audio description. These include the UKTV channels, Living TV, Sky 1, Sky 2, Sky 3, Sky Travel, Sky Sports, Sky Movies, Sky Box Office, Bravo, Discovery and a few others.

As to the mixing system, digital terrestrial broadcasters have opted for a 'receiver mixed' system, which allows the user to adjust the audio tracks volumes and keep the two tracks independent. Cable and satellite operators have opted for a 'broadcast-mixed' system, in which they previously mix the tracks. The original track and the AD track are mixed together and the user can choose between the original track only and the original track with incorporated AD, which means that the bandwidth required is greater than with the 'receiver-mixed' system.

In fact, it often turns to be difficult to choose the suitable audio description toolbox. Major requirements of the visually impaired audience have been surveyed by Tanton, Ware and Armstrong (2000) and include understanding whether the absence of description is intended or not, being aware of transmission, decoding or scheduling problems and being able to make some minor adjustments to audio settings for the AD track to be suitably received. For this reasons, a good AD system should provide closed AD. In this perspective, AD can be compared to subtitling, where closed captioning or subtitles *tout court* can be provided, guarantee the adjustment of volumes and determine promptly whether a programme is described

without problems. From the provider's point of view, major needs deal with bandwidth or bit-rate type of delivery, accommodation of new or existing guidelines and ISO norms. Volume levels are traditionally controlled by the service provider. This means that the audio mixing is carried out before the programme undergoes final checking. However, a study conducted by Audetel in 1992 has provided evidence that it could be useful to provide the means of controlling the main programme audio volume during a description passage and restoring it when the description is over (Audetel 1992). This operation would be feasible through an adjustable (rather than simply 'on' and 'off') fading system embedded in the AD track. In 2002, DTT operators commissioned the design of a PCMCIA card which fulfils the major requirements described and can be inserted in a DTT set top box with a so called 'Common Interface' socket, which is connected via infrared to its remote control and supports outputs for VCR, headphones and hi-fi. This card transmits the audio signal analogue mode, while audio description is de-multiplexed, decoded and processed by an AD module (ADM) which also manages fading and pan processes. Since 2003, three cards have been implemented to meet the users' expectations: Netgem I-Player, Nebula Electronics and Philips Semiconductors. The first also contains a speech synthesis engine that allows reading a short Mp3 file and gives the listener some information about the service.

In Portugal, blind users also need to have a set-top box to get the digital

signal of AD for TV Cabo and Lusomundo Gallery, a premium cinema channel (Orero, Pereira and Utray 2007).

According to Orero, Pereira and Utray (2007) in Spain, the Andalusian TV channel, Canal Sur used both radio and TV, as it still is the case in Italy. Canal Sur started to provide AD in 1995 and audio described 76 films before the end of 1996. Users who need audio description have to turn both TV and radio on. After 1996, the initiative *Cine para todos* (Cinema for All) used Canal Sur Radio to broadcast the audio description of 132 films until 2001. However, starting 1999, the Catalan TV has opted for the Nicam Dual stereo system, which allows to decode stereophonic signals into digital stereo signals (Orero, Pereira and Utray 2007).

In Germany, audio description at TV was broadcast using PAL system and splitting the stereophony into two tracks, the one with the original track, the other, broadcast right, with the AD track. This was common practice in the analogue era, while with the digital switchover some broadcasters had to face problems originated by the transmission of both analogue and digital signals on air, cable and satellite. In Italy, few audio descriptions are available at TV, and they can be heard on radio medium wave frequencies or streaming mode. Until mid 2010, however, the Italian visually impaired had to turn on their TV equipment and their radio at the same time, and adjust volume settings on television in a way as to be able to listen to the radio only, otherwise they would have been disturbed by the *décalage* existing

between the two different tracks broadcast. From mid 2010, the Italian blind can follow the audio description on a dedicated digital channel activated on purpose or listen to the audio description tracks streaming mode on a special website section hosted by the above-mentioned *Segretariato Sociale*. In theatres and cinemas, provided only under the *Cinema senza Barriere* festival and a few other performances, audio description is provided with infrared headsets. The new born Association *CulturAbile Onlus* has audio described theatre and dance for the first time ever in Italy in 2010 with the same system, with the technical support of EVM Service.

On DVDs, audio description can be easily incorporated as an open description and be included in the final release as an additional track which can be autonomously selected by the final user. In the UK, the system relies on an Audio described Sound Track instead than on a 5.1 Dolby version, more often used in countries such as the Netherlands. The 5.1 Dolby version, however, seems to be more accurate and clean from an acoustic perspective.

As to cinema audio description in the UK, it is delivered through a headset system and transmitted through infrareds while the original track is heard from the surround sound in the hall. Unfortunately, as van der Heijden (2007) points out, though the volume can be adjusted by the blind or visual impaired, in silent scenes the description could be heard by the rest of the audience and give the impression that people are whispering in the cinema hall. In addition, the screen should also be accessible for the transmission of

the audio described track. In fact, some cinemas can rely on movable equipment and although in the same cinema more than one projected film could support audio description, just one of them can be effectively shown with AD. The transmission system from 2001 is based on Dolby Screen Talk (DST) and on DTS (Digital Theatre System). According to van der Heijden (2007), in the UK only there are 80 cinemas out of 200 that are equipped with DST, the others rely on DTS. The first one allows the AD track to be recorded on a CD-Rom or another type of device in TAR format and be delivered along with the original track by means of time code information which helps synchronize both. The AD is loaded into a Linux-based Dolby software and is connected directly to the cinema transmitting system. DTS is a new technology created in the USA. It makes eight separate audio channels available and ensures a better sound quality and management. With the introduction of DTS, the previous technology proves to be even redundant. The AD track is inserted in one of the available channels. As to transmitters, different countries use different devices. For example, Dutch cinemas use Sennheiser transmitters, while most cinemas in the UK rely on William Sound equipment (van der Heijden 2007). Headphones Guideport GT 3 are the ones used more often by the blind. They are open, and that means that sometimes the normally sighted cinemagoers could be listening to the audio description when the original audio volume is low. However, as van der Heijden (2007) points out, close headphones would completely isolate the

blind from the rest of the audience. Maybe a possible solution would be to pre-adjust the AD volumes so that it does not turn out to be annoying for the rest of the audience. Always from a cinema perspective, Germany has two different broadcasting modes: the first one is to put the AD track on a CD with the AD track time codes corresponding to the movie encoded times. Only the blind and the visually impaired then hear the track. The second mode consists in mixing up the two tracks, the original one and the audio track, but this system is suitable only for special screenings, since AD volume cannot be reduced or eliminated and therefore is to be heard by everybody. In the Netherlands, whose experience in AD is very recent, only a few cinemas are equipped for AD transmission, though relevant investments have been made in the right equipment to ensure a good sound quality from the very beginning. Indeed, the AD track on DVD has always been transmitted as a Dolby Digital track, while in the UK it is mostly a Stereo Soundtrack, usually due to lack of space or production costs. AD is still not available on TV in the Netherlands, but some experiments have been made to make it real for the blind audience.

Outside Europe, in the USA, the switchover from analogue to digital TV ended in June 2009. So did SAP (Secondary Audio Program) audio channel, which had allowed until then to receive AD through a dedicated set-top box, as already described for the UK. Today, even though analogue signal is still available in some situations such as low power stations,

translator stations or mountainous regions, people wishing to get audio description at television will need to buy a digital-to-analogue converting box and double-check the presence of audio description services on the engines they buy[36].

At theatre, audio description is delivered live, though the show is generally rehearsed several times. During rehearsals, the audio describer takes note of pauses, music and dialogues and prepares the AD script, which is then delivered aurally through a microphone. Usually the describer sits in a soundproofed booth during the performance and describes what is happening on stage. However, since theatre performances are sometimes left to improvisation or contain some improvised scenes, the audio describer should be able to add descriptions where it is required or be flexible enough to modify the script during the performance. This means that the audio describer should know the performance in advance. This may turn out to be a very difficult task. Depending on the theatres and on the audience, the blind audience could be able to attend a touch tour before the performance starts, during which they get familiar with costumes, settings and characters they will hear on stage. During the show, the blind wear a single headphone connected through infrared or radio system. With one ear, they can listen to the voices on stage and with the other they get the audio description (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004). This service is generally available in the

[36] For further information about the technical equipment available in the USA, see http://www.acb.org/adp/tech.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

most popular theatres of countries where AD is a concrete opportunity of integration for blind people (and namely, in the UK, USA and Spain).

Some opera houses and concerts also provide a sort of audio introduction, which is similar to audio description in a way that helps people understand in which order the characters will appear on stage, and provide the users with a resume of the story and a description of the setting. Tvhelp.co.uk web site is the main reference for all services relating to AD provision in theatres, with a number of listed companies with accreditation to produce AD for theatre performances[37].

Sport performances in stadia or similar locations can also be provided with audio description. This track can be sent live by commentators or narrators via loud speakers. Sometimes loud speakers can be put in special areas dedicated to disabled users only. Most cricket, football and rugby venues in the UK and USA are equipped with dedicated areas and provide trained commentators who often work on a voluntary basis. The 2012 London Olympic Games will also provide access to sensory impaired people through special equipment. Museums, art galleries exhibitions provide guides and audio description via headphones to describe visual elements, but more and more often also supply touch tours for a more comfortable understanding of the blind users.

As far as cultural spaces are concerned, normally audio-guides are

[37] See http://www.tvhelp.org.uk/audes/theatre.html (last accessed 19/02/11).

available for the blind people, and they usually consist in hand-free devices with Braille or vocal guide to help blind people enjoy a museum tour, a visit in a natural park or similar. However, this cannot be called audio description properly but is more an audio guide service. Audio description can be used in these contexts where audiovisual materials are also available, for example, a short movie or a documentary to be shown to visitors.

A new type of audio description is the one delivered via the Internet. According to Hernàndez and Mendiluce (2004), the first fully accessible film being delivered with both subtitles and audio description on the web while simultaneously projected in UK cinemas, dates back to 2003. The film title is "This is not a love song" by Bille Eltringham.

As to audio description software, various solutions are available today on the market to suit both broadcasters' and users' need. In general, all software available offers authoring and broadcasting facilities. The first include an offline process to create the script as well as pan and fade information and time code references. This kind of information is stored in a standard interchange format, so that it can be used on different engines. The second category of functionalities includes file-processing and real-time delivery. The output can be produced in two different modes. A mono AD audio track and an associated control track are used to create the final audio via user-adjustable controls in a TV receiver, a set-top box or a user-selectable audio track that has already been pre-mixed with normal

programme. In this case, it is not adjustable by the listener. According to van der Heijden (2007) two AD softwares are worth a mention. The first is AdePT by Softel[38] and the other is Starfish Isis AD (used by ITFC and Red Bee Media for BBC). They work exactly in the same way, although the second seems to have limited control functions. Figure 1 below, drawn from Softel website, shows how the software can help create, edit, record and encode an AD:

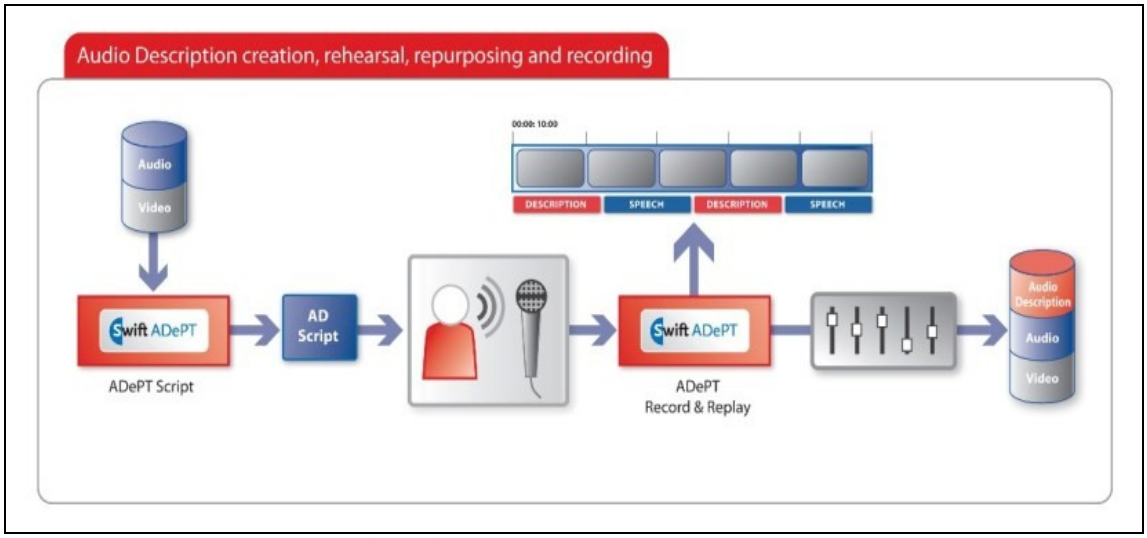


Fig. 1. Creation, editing, record and encoding audio description with Softel AdePT software

Recently, the Center for Learning Technology[39] has launched a new freeware called LiveDescribe that allows the production of audio description for .avi, .mp4 and .mov files. The audio description can be uploaded on www.livedescribe.com at the end of the production phase, to be shared for

[38] See http://www.softelgroup.com/DAM/StreamHandler.ashx?SubscriptionID=28341 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[39] More information at www.livedescribe.com (last accessed 19/02/2011).

future use with the registered users[40].

Interestingly enough, Polish researcher Agnieszka Sarkowszka, is exploring possible ways of producing audio description combining traditional authoring methods with speech synthesis. An experiment was made producing an AD script in text format that was split into chunks and inserted as a subtitle in the pauses between the dialogues. A speech synthesis application was then launched to convert the AD subtitles into audio segments read by a synthetic female voice. The usefulness of this kind of application would be found in the cost-effectiveness of the whole process: indeed, since the AD script is delivered as a text, no specific AD software is needed. In addition, the availability of one or more synthetic voices (whose quality has improved dramatically over the last years) would exclude 'human' audio describers. Most blind and visually impaired people are already familiar with speech recognition applications, so they would not have to buy new software, but just have the AD text be encoded by the one they like. Even though some criticism has been raised about the use of speech synthesis for AD (Sarkowszka 2009), in February 2010, IBM has launched an online survey for blind and visually impaired people to investigate the matter further.

1.8 Norms and legislation: the European Union framework

[40] More information about LiveDescribe tools can be found at www.livedescribe.com (last accessed 19/02/2011).

The European Union protects the rights of disabled people through a number of norms and recommendations. The first version of Article 13 of the first Treaty establishing the European Union[41] did not address the rights if the disabled openly. The article was amended in 2003, 2005 and 2007 and the consolidated version today mentions disabled people as well. Indeed, Article 19 of the new version[42] (amending previous Art. 13) states that:

> Without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties and within the limits of the powers conferred by them upon the Union, the Council, acting unanimously in accordance with a special legislative procedure and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In addition, Article 10 states that:

> In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In fact, the consolidated version of the Treaty does not give any special

[41] The first Treaty is available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html#0001000001 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[42] The whole consolidated version of the Treaty (Official Journal of the European Union 2008) is available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0047:0199:EN:PDF (last accessed 19/02/2011).

provision to protect the rights of the disabled (it even does not state what those rights should be) so it remains vague and generic. Disabled people are here included in the same category as other disadvantaged categories (such as foreign people or ethnic minorities). Europe also has a Disability Strategy (2003-2010) whose core is the 2003-2009 Disability Action Plan (DAP)[44]. The goal of the DAP is to mainstream disability issues. This means that disability issues should not be treated as a separate area, but should be rather included and treated as part of general provisions, norms and policies. The DAP is divided into 2-year action phases. The 2008-2009 action phase is focused on accessibility. The report on this phase draws on the results of the previous phase in the field of accessible goods and services but, unfortunately, it does not address the access to audiovisual products and mainly concentrates on accessible tourism, administration and assistive technologies, flexible employment schemes and active measures to boost the employment rates of the disabled. Secondly, the report describes the priorities of the 2008-2009 action plan and stresses the need to complement the existing non-discrimination legislation, to invest on the Design for All and on the adaptation of work places to disabled workers. Audiovisuals are not mentioned, except in Annex 5 of the report, which mentions the efforts made by the Italian TV broadcaster *RAI* in the field of accessible TV programmes and the work carried out by French TV broadcasters which are

[44] EU Disability Strategy available at http://www.epractice.eu/files/documents/workshops/13771-1224861230.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

subtitling more and more programmes (unfortunately no mention is made about the percentage of subtitling provided). In addition, Annex 5 also mentions efforts made in the field of research for live subtitling for the deaf users. Blind people are not mentioned, except for the encouragement to build up RFID guided paths. Audio description does not seem to find adequate room in the European accessibility policies and seems to be left to the initiative of single Member States.

The 2010-2020 European Disability Strategy[45] stresses that the sensorial impairment is not distinguished from other types of impairment or disability and that the majority of actions are targeted at people with physical, mental or mobility problems. The working document for the new strategy points out that there are several differences among the Member States and that the country with the highest number of disabled is the UK (27%) while the country with the lowest percentage is Italy (7%). However, there is a reason to believe that these figures may depend on the information surveyed in each country and on the fact that disability undergoes different categorizations in each country. Here again, the document only mentions subtitling as a strategy to boost accessibility for sensorial impaired people (but unfortunately 'forgets' to stress that the mentioned VOICE project from the European Commission is no longer funded!); on the blindness side, the

[45] Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF (last accessed 19/02/2011).

SESAMONET Project is mentioned but it does not address audiovisual issues. The working paper, however, points out that investing on disability is a socially relevant issue. Supermarket Tesco, for example, has dramatically increased its revenue by making the website fully accessible to the blind. Finally, the document points out that except for the UK where the share is higher, less than 1% of TV programmes are audio described in EU Member States.

EU initiatives organized for the 2007 Disability Year also follow the same trend, with less or no focus at all on audiovisual accessibility. This confirms that the issue is not duly covered by the European Strategy for Social Inclusion. For this reason, the integration of the disabled from a cultural point of view seems to belong to other policy areas, such as cinema policies and/or technologies, because the field of audio description does require specific technology. Once again, the initiative is left to single Member States. As an example, it is worth mentioning that an Advisory Network on Disability Equality was created in the UK and that an Independent Living review is regularly carried out. These two initiatives also take into consideration the state of art and the future development of audiovisual access for blind and deaf people. However, even the 2007 UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities[46] states that disabled people should have guaranteed the right to make their own choices and to be

[46] Available at http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

independent, non-discriminated and fully integrated into the society. Equality of opportunities, accessibility and respect for identities are the pillars of this convention. However, almost 4 years after the Convention itself, none of these principles seems to have been implemented in many States, whereupon lies unfortunately Italy as well.

Specific EU legislation available in the field of audiovisual and media accessibility is scarce. In addition, though a number of directives and regulations do state the rights of disabled people to access audiovisual products without barriers, they unfortunately are quite vague and only represent an encouragement for Member States to implement access services but are not legally binding. European Directive number 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated March 10th 2010, which represents a consolidated version of the 2007 Directive on media and audiovisual (AVMS) access no. 2007/65/EC, addresses the issue of audiovisual access for disabled people as follows (Official Journal of the European Union 2007)[47]:

> The right of persons with a disability and of the elderly to participate and be integrated in the social and cultural life of the Union is inextricably linked to the provision of accessible audiovisual media services. The means to achieve accessibility should include, but need not be limited to, sign language, subtitling, audio-description and easily understandable menu navigation.

[47] The full text of the Directive is available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:332:0027:0045:EN:PDF (last accessed 19/02/2011).

However, it is not clear whether the Member States should implement audio-description and to what extent. Indeed, Art. 7 of the same Directive states that:

> States shall encourage media service providers under their jurisdiction to ensure that their services are gradually made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability.

The vagueness of the new AVMS Directive also emerges from a number of answers that the Contact Committee provides in its meetings. The Contact Committee should make sure that the Directive is implemented and should also be aware of any development in this area. Indeed, in a meeting held in Brussels in October 2010, the commission for the implementation of the Directive urged the member states to find out possible solutions because of Irish complaining that the re-transmission of programmes on satellite and cable TV was not provided with audio description or subtitles. Here again, the EU has suggested to find a viable option but has not provided solutions or started infringement procedures.

Interestingly, the website dedicated to the AVMS Directive also hosts a section on the measures that guarantee adequate access to TV programmes for people with hearing or visual loss. In this section, it is possible to check the state of art of legal provisions with regard to accessibility issues and also

updated information about the percentages that broadcasters should respect[49]. The survey shows that the situation of the Member States is not homogenous. For example, in the UK, Art. 3 of the 2003 Communication Act[50], sets out a code for the provision of sign-interpreting, audio description and subtitling at TV. Following the Communication Act, as well as previous regulations, in particular the 1990 and the 1996 Broadcasting Acts, Ofcom, the English broadcast regulator, has elaborated the 2004 Code on Television Access Services. Based on this Code, some public TV broadcasters and some commercial TV channels are subject to public requirements of access services and 10% of their programmes should be provided with audio description[51]. In Italy, there is no legal provision on the use of subtitles/audio description, even though the so-called *Legge Gasparri* encourages broadcasters to make programmes more and more available to

[49] More information available at: http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/access/index_en.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[50] The original Communication Act and the amended version are available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/contents/enacted (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[51] The full version of the Code on Television Access can be found at: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/broadcast-codes/code-tv-access-services/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). This version has been reviewed almost every year, in particular with the switchover from analogue to digital; issues on quality of the access services were also raised in many occasions and discussed under the form of public consultation; all reviews and consultations, as well as reports, amendments and updates are available on Ofcom website http://www.ofcom.org.uk. In particular, there was a review concerning audio description in 2008, that has investigated the awareness levels of both broadcasters and end users. The full report is available at: http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/tv-research/access_services_audio/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). An audio version for blind people is also available.

hearing/visually impaired people. The Public Broadcaster RAI should, in compliance with the so-called *Contratto di servizio*, improve the quality of the reception of audio description (only recently also available on a digital channel, but so far available only on AM radio frequencies) and the quantity of both audio described and subtitles programmes. In particular, the last contract states RAI should improve the percentage by 10% if compared to 2002 levels. Elaborated in these terms, this norm does not really provide any binding provision within the field of accessibility. Commercial broadcasters are not covered by any specific legislation and none of them (except for *Mediaset* which has shifted from sign language to live subtitling in 2011 and *La7* which also provides some subtitles on page 776 and has carried out a single experiment in the field of audio description) now provides access services on a regular basis. The situation in Germany seems to be similar from a legal perspective. However, although access services are not imposed by law, both public and commercial broadcasters provide audio description and subtitles[52]. The same is for Spain, where broadcasters offer subtitles and audio description on a voluntary basis[53]. In general, the audiovisual market in Europe seems to be more likely to provide subtitling than audio description

[52] For further information about the German situation see http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/tvwf/national_measures/de_impaired.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[53] For further information about the Spanish situation see http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/tvwf/national_measures/es_impaired.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

(e.g. the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, though some countries already rely on a subtitling tradition). The 2010 Directive on Television Without Frontiers[54] is a development of the 1989 Directive Television without Frontiers, which was revised in 1999 and finally amended in 2007 (after consultations carried out between 2005 and 2007)[55]. The European Blind Association (EBU) has recently contributed to setting up a strategy for digital television access, whose progress is documented in the EBU Digital TV Report[56], which keeps track of the state of art and advances made in the field by the European Member States. Although EBU has succeeded in negotiating a document with DigitalEurope for the introduction of talking screens and accessible menus, the proposal has only been submitted end 2010 and needs therefore to be approved before it becomes a general address for all Member States. However, these are not norms and cannot be considered as binding provisions for them. In the website section dedicated to TV access, EBU has included two surveys which have been submitted to the Member States and which describe the European situation as to the state

[54] The original text of the Directive and its amendments are available at http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/audiovisual_and_media/l24101_en.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[55] The TWF Directive replaces the new normative framework of AVMS Directive is opposed by business groups who claim that the extension of the application of TV-related access norms to an 'open' broadcasting market (that is TV-like operators including the Internet, for example) could prevent investors from setting up new businesses in Europe. On this controversial issue, see also http://www.out-law.com/page-7319 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[56] More information can be found at http://www.euroblind.org/working-areas/access-to-information/nr/62 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

of art in the field of audio description by 2008. From the report, it emerges that some European countries are legally bound to provide audio description while in others there is no specific legislative provision but the service is provided on a voluntary basis. Interestingly, the report shows that Italian AD is criticized because the description is filled with irrelevant or personal judgments (Arma forthcoming) and that the country with the highest variety of programmes audio described is the UK[57].

2. The target audience. Blindness and visual impairment

2.1 Blindness and visual impairment

The blind and the visually impaired are not a homogenous group. Figures about the number of people with a visual impairment in the world, be it a temporary or a permanent impairment, are not 100% reliable because the parameters of medical, psychological, neurological and sociological nature used worldwide to define blindness can vary from one country to another.

Blindness is defined by the WHO as "the inability to see"[58]. However, not all people unable to see are totally or congenitally blind, while all of them have a visual deficit. This can be defined as a handicap of the organs or

[57] For a comprehensive analysis of the state of art in Europe, see http://www.euroblind.org/working-areas/access-to-information/nr/62 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[58] More information about WHO definition of blindness and visual impairment is available at http://www.who.int/topics/blindness/en/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

the anatomical structures of sight, or as an alteration of sight functionalities (Dadone and Gargiulo 2009). People with a sight loss or who are partially-sighted also suffer from a visual deficit. Both blind and partially-sighted people can be seen as visually impaired. The visual impairment is often a consequence of sight diseases or trauma where the functionality loss has reached such an extent that cannot be corrected by conventional means. Within the classification of visual impairments, a distinction is drawn between the following variables:

1. The perceptive dimension: this variable indicates the quantity and the quality of information available to the blind or the visually impaired. In this respect, it is important to stress that blindness and low vision are two separate issues and that they need to be addressed separately.

2. The temporal dimension: this variable indicates the period of time during which the visual impairment has emerged. In this category, it is possible to distinguish between people who are congenitally blind and people who have become blind at a later stage.

3. The global functioning dimension: this variable describes the relation between the visual impairment and other correlated diseases or co-morbidities hindering the residual visual compensation.

Concerning the first point, the WHO draws on the definitions provided by the ICD (International Classification of Diseases) and distinguishes between normal vision, moderate visual impairment, severe visual impairment and

blindness[59]. The current classification by ICD[60] provides a description of the visual impairment based on the visual acuity and the residual visual functions[61]:

Category of visual impairment	Visual acuity with best possible correction

[59] This classification is based on fact sheet no. 282 of the WHO, reviewed in April 2011. However, the classification of visual impairment dates back to 2006. Despite this classification, there are countries such as Italy, who legally adopt other types of classification. As an example, Italian law 138/2001 distinguishes between low vision and blindness. The first category includes four subcategories (low -low vision, moderate low vision, moderate-severe low vision and severe low vision), the second includes two (partial and total blindness). The main reason for such categorization is that each type corresponds to different State aids and benefits. The categories are based on the degrees of residual vision found through the visual functional diagnosis. This diagnosis should however not be confused with a clinical diagnosis, which identifies the diseases causing blindness.

[60] The current classification dates back to 2007 and is the actual reference point for all definitions of blindness and visual impairment. However, a revision draft has been submitted and is available at http://www.who.int/blindness/Change%20the%20Definition%20of%20Blindness.pdf. In particular, the document suggests revising the expression 'best possible correction' which risks overseeing many people with low vision or even blindness. In addition, the current definition of 'low vision' ("A person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, and has a visual acuity of less than 6/18 to light perception, or a visual field of less than 10 degree from the point of fixation, but who uses, or is potentially able to use, vision for planning and/or execution of a task") also includes blind people and can therefore mislead to an incorrect count of people with visual impairment. The draft revision proposal will be finally submitted to the World Health Assembly in 2014. For additional information see also http://www.vision2020.org/documents/publications/SotWS%20Report_wth_Stop_Press.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[61] Table no. 1 is available inside the section 'Visual disturbances and blindness' at http://apps.who.int/classifications/apps/icd/icd10online/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

	Maximum less than	Minimum equal to or better than
1	6/18	6/60
	3/10 (0,3)	1/10 (0,1)
	20/70	20/200
2	6/60	3/60
	1/10 (0,1)	1/20 (0,05)
	20/200	20/400
3	3/60	1/60 (finger counting at 1 metre)
	1/20 (0,05)	1/50 (0,02)
	20/400	5/300 (20/1200)
4	1/60 (finger counting at 1 metre)	Light perception
	1/50 (0,02)	
	5/300	
5	No light perception	
9	Undetermined or unspecified	

Table 1. Classification of visual impairment according to the WHO/IDC

As far as the second function is concerned, the temporal dimension identifies the age or the period of time when the visual impairment has started. In particular, there are people who are congenitally blind and some who become totally blind or lose their visual functions more or less permanently through different low vision stages. Finally, people with low vision are often affected by correlated diseases or other handicaps. The presence of limitations to the normal development is an ever-changing factor during the course of life. Even though there can be differences between sighted children and children with a 'simple' blindness, the same cannot be said of children who suffer from the absence of the functions that usually compensate the loss of sight, in particular touch and hearing.

2.2 Facts and figures about blindness

In March 2011, the WHO has updated figures about blindness in the world. Indeed, it appears that 285 million people have a visual impairment; 65% of them are over 50 years old[63]; in addition, most of them have low vision (about 246 million people and 63% are over 50 years old). Lastly, 39 million are classified as totally blind, of which 82% over 50 years old.

As to the geographical distribution, a WHO Report dated 2004 draws on statistical estimates and evidence of 2002 (WHO 2004). A total of 55

[63] Globally, Vision 2020 stresses that 85% of visual impairment is avoidable, this is the reason why all actions are aimed at reducing collateral and direct causes of blindness-related diseases.

countries, subdivided into 17 Regions[64], were surveyed following a same set of parameters[65]. Table 2 below, drawn from the WHO website, shows that the highest number of people with low vision or blindness is to be found in the West Pacific Regions and in South East Asia Regions[66]:

WHO Regions	Visual impairment (millions)	Blind (millions)
AFR	26.3	5.9
AMR	26.6	3.2
EMR	23.5	4.9
EUR	28.2	2
SEAR	90.5	12
WPR	90.2	10.6

[64] The classification of the countries into 17 categories was carried out according to the Global Burden of Disease 2000 Project. For further information see http://www.globalburden.org/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[65] The full list of surveyed countries and parameters used is available at http://whqlibdoc.who.int/bulletin/2004/Vol82-No11/bulletin_2004_82(11)_844-851.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011)

[66] More extensive information about the coverage of visual diseases at a global level can be found at http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=WEF&itemid=2623#anchor_multi (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Table 2. Geographical distribution of blindness

The vast majority of visually impaired people is over 50; 28% of them range between 15 and 49, while 7% are younger than 15 (WHO 2004). These figures do not specify whether the people with total blindness have become blind or are congenitally blind, however they stress that most people with total blindness are elderly people and consequently that elderly people are more likely than others to become totally blind. It appears that nearly 8/10th of the world population with visual impairment are likely to become blind but also that policies regarding rehabilitation, care and accessibility are mostly targeted on this group. In addition, as a consequence of the population ageing, millions of young people in the world, who are affected today by some sort of sight diseases, run the risk of becoming totally blind over the next decades.

In Europe the EBU (European Blind Union) widely accepts the definitions provided by WHO about blindness and visual impairment but in addition also stresses the importance of 'functional sight' parameters to take into consideration when targeting the needs of the visually impaired. The functional sight parameters can be seen as the result of the visual deficit and the interaction of the visually impaired with the society, so they are strictly

dependent on contextual factors. Indeed, Article 4 of the EBU Policy Statement defines this concept as follows[67]:

> **Article 4: Functional definition of Low Vision**
>
> A partially sighted person is defined as a person for whom the reduced vision affects one or several of the following activities:
>
> - Reading and writing;
> - Orientation and mobility;
> - Activities of daily life;
> - Communication;
> - Maintenance of any visual task.

The concept of functional sight is the result of a ten-year discussion within the EBU and is the key idea to all EBU policies aimed at advocating for the rights of disabled people. It has the advantage of connecting the medical parameters with the social ones, and therefore of considering improvements in society as long-term policies in favour of the sensorially impaired.

In Italy, the number of blind people is approximately 362,000 while the number of visually impaired people could reach 1,500,000[68] in the near future. Unfortunately, the figures about blindness in Italy have been only updated in 2005, and they do not take into consideration the number of

[67] The full document is accessible at http://euroblindstatic.eplica.is/fichiersGB/pspolicy.html#32 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[68] See http://www.iapb.it/news3.php?id=1928&ia=43 for further information (last accessed 19/02/2011).

children under 6 years of age and living in special institutions[69]. In addition, ISTAT (2005)[70] also makes it clear that the relative error rate can be higher than 75% and that a same person can have one or more handicaps. This means that the Italian figures related to blindness cannot be considered as reliable. In addition, the Italian law helps complicating the definition of blindness because it is strictly dependent on the type of benefits that the disabled can be entitled to obtain[71].

According to RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind), there are almost two million people with some form of visual loss in the UK. This represents almost 1 out of 30 people. Two thirds of the population with visual loss are women and among the population over 75 years almost 1 out of 5 is experiencing a visual deficit. This means that in the next years, with an increasing number of aged people, the number of visually impaired people

[69] Until 1976, in Italy blind children had to attend special schools. Since 1976, they are allowed to attend normal schools and they have the right to receive a special assistance based on two main instruments that facilitate their integration: the so-called GLIP, that is a Provincial Interinstitutional Work Group (made up of educators, teachers and social assistants) and the so-called PEI, Individual Educational Plan. An extensive list of the 2005-2006 (year to which Istat figures refer) special schools is available at http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/reclutamento/allegati/grad_speciali2005.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[70] Figures about handicap in Italy (blindness is included in it) are available at http://www.handicapincifre.it/prehome/tipologie_disabilita.asp but unfortunately they only consider people aged more than 6 years and living with their families.

[71] The economic benefits provided by law to the Italian blind people are available at http://www.handylex.org/gun/importi_pensioni_2010.shtml (last accessed 19/02/2011); blindness-related definitions in the European Countries are different from the ones elaborated by WHO and the discrepancy from the terminological level is one of the main reasons for the lack of homogeneity in European policies.

will also increase. In addition, ethnical minorities are more at risk of becoming visually impaired because of their social marginalization. By 2040, RNIB claims that the UK population with sight impairment will have most doubled[72].

2.3 Blindness as a gender-related concern and costs of blindness

WHO and IAPB (International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness) promote the so-called Vision 2020 initiative, an umbrella global programme for the reduction of blindness. Vision 2020 works with NGOs, national institutions and associations whose mandate is in the "elimination of avoidable blindness by the year 2020"[73]. The main objectives of the programme are raising awareness about the causes of blindness, identifying the resources, providing adequate instruments for blindness prevention and facilitating the planning, the development and the implementation of the initiatives in all the countries. Almost twenty years after its foundation, Vision 2020 has succeeded in monitoring blindness at a global level and has

[72] Interestingly, the WHO and the IAPB stress at the end of 2010 that a significant reduction of blindness has been reached. However, this seems to refer to developing countries only, where sight loss is a major problem than in Europe and where sight-related pathologies are also one of the most important causes of death.

[73] See http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=IAPBHISTORY (last accessed 19/02/2011).

carried out an important number of studies and research works on the issue of distribution of blindness among the world population[74].

One of these studies concerns gender-related blindness[75] and stresses that women are more likely to become blind for a number of different reasons, among which the lower degree of access to health care system, the fact that women usually live longer than men, and that biologically they have higher risks to develop cataract. Of course, this situation is particularly evident in under-developed and developing countries where generally women also suffer from isolation and social marginalization. This means that tackling the causes of blindness in these countries does not only mean addressing the issue from a medical perspective but more importantly, tackling poverty and implementing early childhood policies properly. In addition, in these countries blindness and low-vision do not only exclude people from being able to enjoy an active life but also constitute a reason for further marginalization[76].

Also in industrialized countries, two thirds of visually impaired people are women. Experts and epidemiologists put this evidence in correlation with nutrition and age-related pathologies, in particular macular degeneration,

[74] All publications, presentations and results are available on Vision 2020 website www.vision2020.org (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[75] For the complete report see http://www.vision2020.org/documents/world_sight_day_2009/WD09_Downloads/WSD_Report_2009_FINAL_v2.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[76] Unfortunately, as we will see, blindness is stigmatized also in the so-called developed countries.

cataract, glaucoma and dry eye. In addition, there are pathologies, for example multiple sclerosis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and many others that for hormonal reasons show a higher incidence on women and can result in negative consequences for vision. These pathologies have been also put in correlation with unhealthy life styles: sedentary life, unhealthy food and smoking are a few examples which can therefore be considered as risk factors and risks to increase the number of blind people (and women, in particular) over the next decades[77].

From a socio-political perspective, it appears difficult to assess the costs of blindness and the consequences of blindness-related pathologies on the economic system. It is undeniable that visual impairments impose huge costs on the society as a whole. A detailed quantification attempt was made in 2003 by Ethical Strategies Ltd., partially drawing on the data provided by the NICE (National Institute for the Clinical Excellence) and the NHS (National Health Service). The study has demonstrated that (Ethical Strategies Ltd. 2003: 5):

> Annual Costs for those registered as blind or partially sighted in England alone range from £1.4 to £2.9 billion (2002 costs). This represents £7,561 per person. If we take the RNIB evidence of underreporting of blindness and visual impairment the cost estimates increase to £4.1 to £8.8 billion. These costs include social benefits and productivity losses and exclude condition

[77] For more information about autoimmune diseases and blindness among women see also http://www.nei.nih.gov/eyedata/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

specific treatment costs. They therefore understate the total costs imposed by eye conditions causing blindness and visual impairment.

In addition, the study has also shown that it is fundamental and cost-effective to act in a preliminary phase of the pathology in order to save resources dedicated otherwise to treatments and care (Ethical Strategies Ltd. 2003: 6):

- Total costs of glaucoma (in the working age and elderly population) range from £16 to £38 billion annually with average annual costs per patient ranging from £7,239 to £17,246.
- If only 10% of the glaucoma population received earlier treatment that arrested the development of visual impairment this kind of programme could save the government between £555 million and £1 billion.
- Total costs of cataracts in the elderly population range from £7 billion to £15 billion or between £2,521 and £5,579 per patient.
- If an early screening programme could reduce the prevalence of cataract by 10% (to a prevalence of 20% in the elderly), the UK government could save £3.1 billion annually.

The costs of accessibility services - and audio description in particular - is not included in these estimates. Indeed, although it has become mandatory in some forms, it still very often relies on private initiatives and good will.

2.4 How the human eye works

The human eye belongs to a group of eyes called "camera-type eyes"[78]. This organ of sight receives the light through an aperture and focuses through a lens. This lens fixes the images onto a light detector, the retina. When the light first enters into the eye, it is intercepted by the cornea then progresses through the pupil, at the middle of which lies the coloured iris. Since the dimension of the pupil changes according to the exposure to the light, the reaction is called papillary light response. Behind the iris and the pupil lies the crystalline lens. The light arriving into the eye and going through the lens is then inverted and reversed by a nodal point. Afterwards, the light continues to the vitreous humour and back to the retina behind the vitreous. At the centre of the retina is the macula, which is the best point of the eye where light can be perceived. In fact, we do not see with our eyes but more with our brain: after the light has reached the macula, it is transformed into electric impulses that are sent through the optic nerve and reach the occipital cortex of the brain, where they are interpreted as visual stimuli and images[79].

2.5 Blindness-related eye pathologies

[78] See http://zfin.org/action/ontology/term-detail?termID=ZDB-TERM-091209-24458 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[79] A very interesting and clear resource of information about the anatomy of the eye is available online at http://www.tedmontgomery.com/the_eye/index.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

According to Vision 2020, the refractive errors are globally the main cause of visual impairment[80]. The 1997 document drafted jointly by the WHO and Vision 2020 entitled "A global initiative for the elimination of avoidable blindness"[81] stresses that the major causes of blindness are cataract, trachoma, glaucoma, onchocerciasis and diseases of the posterior segment of the eye.

Refractive errors are common eye disorders that cause an incorrect perception of the image with an unclear focus leading to a blurred vision. They are mainly caused by anomalies of the eye length, the curvature of the cornea and the curvature of the lens. Among the most common refractive errors are also myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism and presbyopia. Worldwide, about 153 million people suffer from visual impairment caused by refractive errors and since most errors can be corrected but usually worsen during the course of life, severe visual impairment is often a 'natural' consequence of refractive errors. Refractive errors cannot be prevented. However they can be diagnosed and corrected through corrective lenses, corrective glasses and surgery. Uncorrected refractive errors can result in visual impairment ranging from mild blurring into legal blindness and seem to be more common among women than among men. In addition, while myopia decreases with age, hyperopia

[80] See also http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=FACTS (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[81] Available at http://www.vision2020.org/documents/WHO%20Publications/WHO_PBL_97.61_Rev.1.pdf (last accessed at 19/02/2011).

behaves exactly the opposite. According to the *Womens' Eye Health Organization* it is estimated that "more than a half of visual impairment and about a quarter of legal blindness is due to refractive errors correctable with lenses"[82]. In addition, in presence of an uncorrected refractive error in childhood, the risk of amblyopia, that is the loss of vision of both eyes in consequence of two different errors, is very high. Globally, the incidence of both corrected and uncorrected refractive errors is very important, so the WHO has needed to consider both and review the classification of visual impairment and blindness taking into account the impact of uncorrected errors. In addition, Vision 2020 has started specific campaigns to raise awareness about refractive errors[83].

Cataracts are caused by a deterioration of the cell disposition inside the lens. Usually the lens is clear, which makes the visual stimuli be fixed directly onto the retina. However, through the course of life, the lens can become mistier and cloudier. This situation affects the way in which images are perceived because they do not pass through the lens and are barely fixed by the retina. Cataracts today are the leading cause of visual impairment in low-income countries[84]. They can be corrected surgically and mostly emerge

[82] See http://www.womenseyehealth.org/causes/ure.php (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[83] Indeed, the 10th revision of the WHO classification of diseases is based on the "best corrected vision", that is the "visual acuity obtained with the best refractive correction" (see http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/1/07-041210/en/, last accessed 19/02/2011).

[84] According to the Vision 2020 Program "Globally, uncorrected refractive errors are the main cause of visual impairment but in middle and low-income countries cataracts remain the leading cause" (http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=FACTS, last accessed 19/02/2011).

over the age of 65 for a number of different reasons (this means that 'simple' ageing could also but be an indirect cause), among which tobacco smoking, diabetes, trauma, medications (steroids in particular), poor diet and long exposure to sun rays. Today, one out of three citizens over 65 in the UK suffers from cataract. In other cases, cataracts can also be congenital. In this case they are referred to as 'infantile cataract' or 'childhood cataract'. They can be unilateral or bilateral and might affect the vision in different ways, depending on the density of cataracts themselves. Today, it seems that 200 children every year are born with congenital cataracts (Wright, Christensen and Noguchi 1992). Some types of congenital cataract do not need surgical interventions, while others do. Finally, congenital cataracts can be idiopathic, inherited or caused by mother diseases during pregnancy, rubella in particular. According to the type of cataract, special interventions are needed to correct the error surgically or to intervene on the risk factors to reduce the number of people affected. This seems to have a very strong impact from a socioeconomic perspective.

Trachoma is an infectious disease (classified by the WHO as a NTD or Neglected Tropical Disease) caused by bacteria of Chlamydia Trachomatis, a microorganism that transmits the disease through contact with eye discharge from the infected person. The infection can occur through the contact with towels, fingers or eye-seeking flies. This infection causes an inversion of the eyelid towards the inner of the eye and the lashes rub on the eyeball so the

cornea is scarred (this condition is called trichiasis). Globally 3% of the blind population is affected by trachoma and 84 million in total. Although many improvements have been reached towards its eradication, it remains endemic in some of the poorest regions of Asia, Africa, South America and Middle East. In European Western countries and in the UK in particular, the 2005 statistics elaborated by the Get2020 Program show that no trachoma is reported, as can be seen in Figure 2 below:

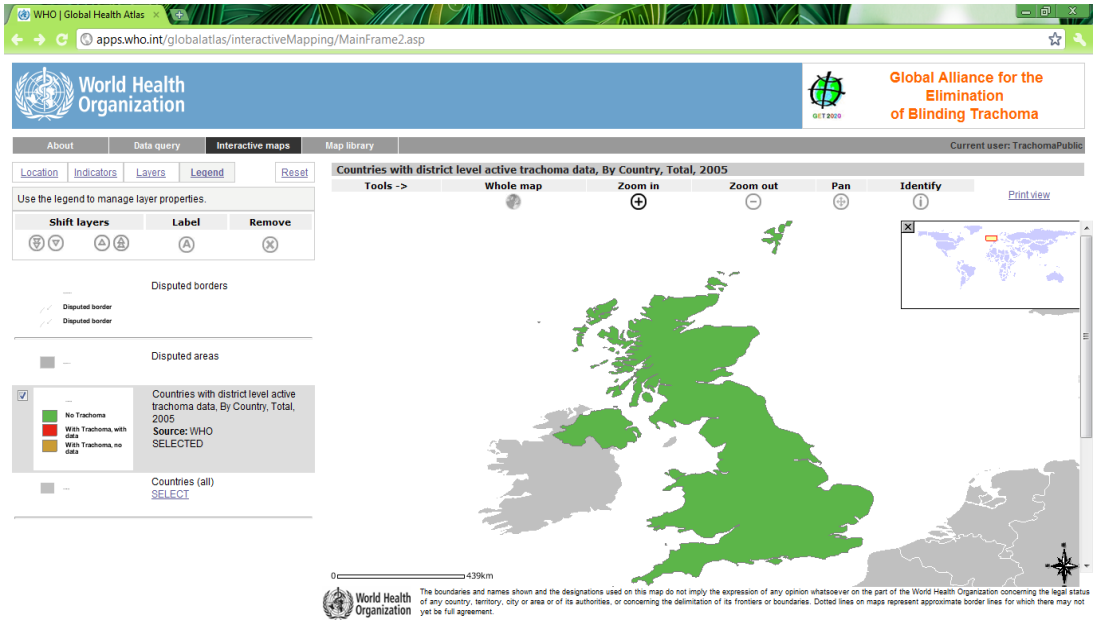


Fig. 2. Interactive map with geographical distribution of trachoma by country

The major causes of trachoma are poor diet and poor water conditions, flies and overcrowded houses. In the poorest areas of the world, children and women are the most affected by trachoma. This evidence is simply explained by the fact that children are most vulnerable to flies and that women spend more time with children than men do. Current actions of the WHO aimed at

combating trachoma are carried out by the SAFE Program which is actively operating in affecting areas to improve facial cleanliness and environmental conditions[85]. Trachoma is today the first cause of blindness worldwide and also represents the highest rate of avoidable sight diseases.

'Glaucoma' is the word used to refer to a group of optic neuropathies that constitute the second leading cause of blindness worldwide. It consists in a weakness of the optic nerve or in an enhanced eye pressure that can lead to severe impairment or even blindness if the nerve detaches. However, both eye pressure and optical nerve weakness are strictly interconnected. Too much blood in the nerve can damage the nerve itself just like the near-absence of blood pressure in it. In addition, glaucoma can also occur as a consequence of the deficit in the drainage channels running in the space between the cornea and the iris. When the aqueous fluid is not drained properly, it may accumulate and cause a rise in the eye pressure. There are several different types of glaucoma, but two in particular are the most widespread and globally known. The first one is the so-called POAG (Primary Open Angle Glaucoma) also known as chronic glaucoma. The second one is the co-called ACG (Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma). POAG is the first glaucoma as to number of cases and is caused by a long-term rise in the eye pressure due to slowly worsening deficit in the fluid drainage

[85] For further information about trachoma, see also http://www.trachoma.org/trachoma-frequently-asked-questions#Q. What is trachoma?, with information provided by ITI, International Trauchoma Initiative (last accessed 19/02/2011).

mechanisms. The consequences of POAG are primarily a loss of the peripheral sight and a tube-like vision that isolates the rest of the visual field from the centre of the image. People aged more than 55, having diabetes, being very short-sighted or from African origins are more likely to develop POAG. POAG can be treated surgically or through temporary solutions, such as eye drops. However it cannot be corrected permanently and the existing damages cannot be cancelled. The second type of glaucoma is more violent and occurs when there is a sudden rise in the eye pressure as a consequence of an accident or an acute attack. It may lead to complete blindness or severe visual impairment in a few minutes and it should be treated as soon as the patient feels pain. Today, both POAG and ACG are very common in the Western countries although the causes are not yet completely known. Minor types of glaucoma include low-tension glaucoma, secondary glaucoma and very rarely, developmental glaucoma in children[86].

Onchocerciasis is a parasitic infection caused by an insect, the roundworm *Onchocerca volvulus*, and is today the primary cause of blindness in African countries. It spreads through the bit of female black flies and may cause intense itching to severe visual impairment and total blindness. The infection is usually diagnosed because of a larval form of the insect in the skin. 18 million people are affected worldwide by this infection but not all of them have a visual impairment; 270.000 of them are blind and

[86] More information about glaucoma can be found at http://medweb.bham.ac.uk/easdec/eyetextbook/poag/poag.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

the double are visually impaired. It is also known as 'river blindness' because of the black flies living near the flowing waters[87]. Onchocerciasis does not only develop in the eye but also on the skin, leading to disfigurement, de-pigmentation or a darker skin depending on the areas. Treatments aimed at eradicating this infection are mainly focused on the provision of sprays to keep the black flies away from humans. The infection does not seem to have any particular incidence by sex, age or race, although the symptoms could vary according to the environmental conditions (Duerr, Raddatz and Eichner 2008, Eichner and Renz 1990).

Although not among the first causes of blindness in the world, there are other diseases that may affect the sight directly or indirectly, most of which are likely to hit the posterior area of the eye. First, the diabetic retinopathy identifies a number of different lesions occurring in people having suffered from diabetes mellitus for many years. It is characterized by vascular closure or the growth of new blood vessels on the retina and posterior surface of the vitreous. Contrary to the leading causes of blindness that have been examined so far (trachoma and onchocerciasis in particular), diabetic retinopathy is increasing in the Western countries as a consequence of blood glucose increase, hypertension and cataract surgery. In addition, pregnancy and puberty can accelerate the pace of its development[88].

[87] See http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/224309-overview (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[88] More information about diabetic retinopathy can be found at http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/diabetic.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Macular degeneration is the first cause of visual impairment in the Western countries and mostly affects people over 50 years causing a loss of the central (macular) vision. There the cells begin to die, which leads to usually reported black spots and distorted vision. There are several types of macular degeneration but two of them are likely in particular to affect the Western countries: wet and dry AMD (the abbreviation for age-related macular degeneration). The first case is the most common and occurs when small yellow deposits called ‘drusen’ remain between the retinal epithelium and the membrane behind. Over the course of time, such deposits affect the functions of the macula and the central vision as well. This type of AMD can be subdivided into early, intermediate and advanced stages according to the quantity of drusen in the eye. The second type of AMD occurs when blood vessels grow behind the macula as the photoreceptors die. These vessels are very fragile and can leak fluid and blood. Even though this type of AMD is less frequent, in fact, almost all people affected become legally blind. It is an invalidating disease that cannot be corrected but is eventually preventable. Indeed, among the risk factors are age, family history, smoking and poor diet. For this reason, giving the relative frequency of almost all risk factors in western societies, macular degeneration is proliferating also in Europe and is becoming one if the greatest concerns of all health policies in the European countries.

Finally, there are also genetic pathologies that can lead to severe visual impairment or to total blindness. These pathologies can vary from one country to another and although there are no reliable statistics about their incidence on sight loss globally, they seem to be more and more important[89]. As an example, 'corneal opacity' is an umbrella term used to refer not only to glaucoma and trachoma but also to secondary diseases which nevertheless account for an important percentage of global blindness with infectious and inflammatory pathologies whose epidemiology is unfortunately still very difficult.

As we have seen, causes of blindness in the Western countries are mainly cataract, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and eventually genetic diseases. Trachoma, glaucoma and onchocerciasis prevail in the poorest areas of the world along with other direct or indirect pathologies. In the Western countries, apart from a low percentage of people with congenital blindness, most people become blind during the course of life for accidental causes or because of natural ageing. In this case, we are dealing with people who have some residual vision (people with low vision) or people with - at least - visual memory of the world (totally/legally blind). In sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 we will see how blind people learn and which are the most common practices aimed at improving their knowledge of the world around them.

[89] http://www.who.int/blindness/causes/priority/en/index10.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

2.6 The development of visually impaired people

As we have seen, a visually impaired person might be affected by other diseases during the course of life, which are directly or indirectly linked to blindness itself. In particular, when a hearing impairment also occurs, the person lacks the necessary channel to know and control the environment, as well as to recognize and anticipate the presence of other people, or globally identify contexts and situations. The hearing is, along with the touch, usually considered as a compensation for the visual impairment. When people do also experience a hearing deficit, getting in contact with the world might become particularly difficult. The human brain is characterized by a high degree of plasticity, this means that it rewires itself according to the loss occurred. In blind people, the neuroplasticity brings to a sharpened sense of the hearing. It has been demonstrated that blind people can listen at a much higher rate than normally sighted people do (Fields 2010)[90]. This happens because the areas of the brain devoted to sight seem to be at the service of speech in blind people.

As an extreme situation, deaf-blindness is a very invalidating condition for which the communication relies on specific systems, in particular, a tactile sign language, similar to the language used with signing deaf people, but realized through the hands.

[90] Article available on line at http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=why-can-some-blind-people-process&WT.mc_id=SA_CAT_MB_20101215 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Deficits to motor skills, manipulation and touch can also interfere with the opportunity of taking full advantage of haptic capabilities that is the bi-manual coordination. According to Revesz (1950), the features of haptic perceptions rely on the following movements: the stereo-plastic movement (to understand the tridimensional form) and the cinematic movement (according to which an object should be explored by hands). In addition, hands are 'metric' in such a sense that they can be considered as a form to measure things, 'intentional' because the exploration relies on the willingness to know, 'analytical' and 'structural' because the perceptive field is somehow limited (Revesz 1950). The tactile knowledge of the world is fundamental for the cognitive development of the blind, because blind people use the touch to learn how to explore the world around them (Miles 2003; Rochat 1989; Stilwell and Cermak 1995). The touch reveals to be the predominant compensation sense for the visually impaired. Indeed, while the hearing and the olfactory function as receptive/passive senses, the touch performs an active function. As for the hearing, the touch is also processed by the same brain areas normally devoted to the sight. The journal 'Neuron' has published an article in 2010 clarifying that the brain of the blind seem to be built on modules, that is on typical representational patterns which are 'filled in' by inputs deriving from touch and hearing[91]. These modules are additional to the areas already devoted to these two senses. This is the reason

[91] See http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/10/101006131203.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

why haptic and hearing sensations would be more acute in the blind people than in the normally sighted. The neuroplastic mechanisms in the brain would therefore lead to a repositioning of the sight areas in favour of other areas. The same can be said of the way in which language is also processed. Indeed, a spike of blood flow in the visual cortex has been observed in the blind people when performing 'linguistic' tasks (of phonological, lexical and semantic order). This would suggest a functional connectivity in the brain that is yet unexplored but would dramatically contribute to the research on blindness and communication.

Memory deficits can also have a negative impact on the development of blind people. Indeed, they might experience difficulties in carrying out the simplest tasks or organize their life. However, usually people with visual impairment have a performing short-term (or working) memory because they continuously memorize and build visual images of the reality around them. Through the touch, visually impaired people re-construct a global idea of the objects structure. In addition, they use memory to keep track of their position and to orientate themselves, as well as to build an image of their own movements and of the environment, that is, to create a cognitive map of the world (Darken and Peterson 2002; Jacobson 1993; Lahav and Mioduser

2004; Passini and Proulx 1988) [92]. Indeed, according to Lahav and Mioduser (2004: 1):

> The ability to explore unknown spaces independently, safely and efficiently is a combined product of motor, sensory and cognitive skills. Normal exercise of this ability directly affects individuals' quality of life. Mental mapping of spaces, and of the possible paths for navigating these spaces, is essential for the development of efficient Orientation and Mobility (O&M) skills. Most of the information required for this mental mapping is gathered through the visual channel […]. People who are blind lack this information, and in consequence they are required to use compensatory sensorial channels and alternative exploration methods […].

The visual impairment determines the need of 'thinking things' to understand better how they work, how they look like and how they modify, especially if these aspects are not directly experienced through the touch. Blind people continuously need to use topological coordinates to organize and structure their behaviour. For this reason, 'thinking things' is strictly linked to

[92] Children affected by early blindness or visual deficit can also experience delays in the acquisition of motor skills (postural skills, movement awareness, assisted or autonomous ambulation) orientation and mental mapping as well as the control of topological concepts. The object permanence, a concept coined by Jean Piaget, deals with the awareness that an object continues to exist even when it disappears from the visual field. In normally sighted children, this awareness develops around 7-12 months, while it emerges between the age of 13-18 months in visually impaired children. For these children, things stop to exist when they disappear from the hearing or the touch (for example when something falls down, which they cannot see but barely perceive). For further reference, see Baillargeon and DeVos 1991; Kalat 2008; Langer and Killen 1998).

'thinking spaces'. We will see how these two aspects are likely to influence the way in which reality, especially filmic reality, can be described to blind people.

2.7 Facilitating knowledge acquisition for visually impaired people

Analyzing how the visually impaired know the environment is important to find out how they categorize and prioritize information through sensorial experiences. Firstly, the visually impaired use environmental acoustic information for the orientation and the ambulation. This means that the acoustic sources and the acoustic properties of objects are fundamental and that the dimensional as well as the physical properties of spaces determine the acoustic quality of their environment[94]. Clear and straightforward sounds are very important to avoid confusion in the blind's mind and therefore are preferable to noisy places where sounds can be amplified. Secondly, the shape of objects can facilitate the orientation and also the process of memorization of space coordinates. Communicating clearly how distant objects are located from the standpoint of the blind person is of greatest help to keep track of their dislocation. During childhood, usually objects should be kept closer to the blind children because they can experience tactile

[94] In this respect, a major role is played by the sound reflection and the acoustic shadow. These phenomena are very important because they allow understanding the presence of obstacles between the acoustic source and the hearer. For more information, see Reynell 1977 and Tomatis 2000.

feelings and memorize them[95]. This determines the replication of the experience of recognizing objects in the space. For visually impaired children with residual memory of colours, the visual comfort means creating a suitable chromatic contrast and eliminating elements of disturbance, that are elements that do not have a functional value or are only virtual. Lighting uniformity is important to avoid dangers and to increase the recognition of special reference points. Not only is the shape of objects important but also their smell, texture, temperature, material, weight, resistance to digital pressure (Dadone and Gargiulo 2009). For this reason, during the course of life, especially in childhood it is important to 'present' objects. About this point, Dadone and Gargiulo (2009: 45) stress the following[96]:

> […] adults could […] very briefly comment with a few clear words: "This is the nose", "This is the sound of daddy's new alarm clock […]. Each verbal description should be essential, because the goal is not talking about things but stimulating the curiosity to get to know them.

[95] This determines the replication of the experience of recognizing objects in the space. For visually impaired children with residual memory of colours, the visual comfort means creating a suitable chromatic contrast and eliminating elements of disturbance, that is elements that do not have a functional value or are only virtual. Lighting uniformity is important to avoid dangers and to increase the recognition of special reference points.

[96] Own translation of the Italian *"[…] l'adulto […] potrebbe brevissimamente commentare, con poche e chiare parole: ad esempio 'quello è il naso', 'il suono della nuova sveglia di papà' […]. Qualsiasi descrizione verbale dovrebbe essere la più essenziale possibile, perché l'obiettivo non è parlare delle cose, ma stimolare la curiosità per conoscerle"*.

Presenting an object to a blind person means, preferring the act of showing to the act of talking. When showing an object it is important to leave adequate room for touching, thinking and building a mental map of the object itself. The verbal presentation should be more a description than a commentary (Dell'Osbel and Veglia 2001; Galati 1992; Gargiulo 2005; Mazzeo 1988). On this regard, Dadone and Gargiulo (2009: 48) point out the following[97]:

> Who describes should explicit forms, dimension, quantities, if they are relevant for the comprehension. If dealing with the description of a complex scene, it is always necessary to elicit the subjects, the objects and the modes of actions. When dealing with more than one person, it is highly recommended to remember that the visually impaired people might find it difficult to understand who the recipient - more than the sender - of the communication is. For this reason, in ambiguous situations, when there could be more than one recipient, he/she should be named.

Describing more than commenting also means respecting people with visual impairment and help them building their own opinion (Dadone and Gargiulo 2009: 48)[98]:

---

[97] Own translation of the Italian "*Chi descrive dovrebbe esplicitare forme, dimensioni, quantità, se esse sono rilevanti per comprendere. Se si tratta della descrizione di una storia complessa, è necessario sempre esplicitare i soggetti, gli oggetti e i modi delle azioni. Quando si parla in più di una persona, è utile tenere presente che il più delle volte per chi ha problemi di vista è difficile individuare il destinatario della comunicazione, più che il mittente. Quindi in situazioni ambigue, quando ci potrebbe essere più di un destinatario, è utile nominarlo*".

[98] Own translation of the Italian "*Invece di dire 'E' entrata una signora che portava una bambola brutta, vecchia e malconcia', si dovrebbe dire 'E' entrata una signora che aveva in braccio una bambola con i capelli strappati e con dei buchi nel vestito […]*".

> For example, instead of saying "A woman with an ugly, old and battered puppet has entered the room" one should say "A woman carrying a puppet with torn hair and a holed dress has entered the room".

In an enchanting commentary of the tale "*Il Principe cieco*" (The Blind Prince) by the Italian writer Gianni Rodari, Caldin (2006) provides a pedagogical interpretation of Zerbino, an old man who understands the limits of Medoro (the Prince) and after listening to the misleading conclusions of various doctors, approaches Medoro and starts describing the reality under the form of story-tale. The description of gestures, settings and objects, which apparently seems nonsensical to the people around them, makes the child open his arms and smile. Caldin (2006: 22) concludes: "He sees only when the narrator speaks to him. If Zerbino does not speak, he remains in his dark blindness". In addition, as Caldin puts it (2006:22):

> Zerbino is not a doctor […], is only a man who mediates between the external reality and the little prince using the narration as a mediation tool. Indeed, the tale that Zerbino tells is an "area of intersection between the external reality and the imaginary world" and allows Medoro to "discover" the world even though he cannot see through the eyes. (Varano 1998: 9)[99]

[99] Own translation of "*Zerbino non è un medico […] è soltanto un uomo che media tra la realtà esterna e il piccolo principe utilizzando la narrazione come strumento di mediazione. La fiaba che Zerbino racconta, infatti, rappresenta 'un'area di intersezione tra la realtà esterna e l'immaginario' e consente a Medoro di 'scoprire' il mondo pur non vedendolo con gli occhi* (Varano, 1998, p. 9)".

This area of intersection becomes tangible thanks to the words of a narrator. However, not all words are equally relevant and the way in which the description is built needs to suit the cognitive needs of the blind person. With the highest probability, Rodari was not aware of audio description. However, the narration of the reaction of the prince and of the behaviour of Zerbino represents a solid literary foundation of the importance of audio description from a pedagogical perspective. Unfortunately, as we have seen in Chapter 1, audio description has developed in Europe and in the rest of the world at different paces. In section 2.8, we will look at how blind people gain access, under challenging circumstances, to education and culture and, more generally, how they can succeed in interacting with the rest of the society.

2.8 Facilitating access to culture for the visually impaired

Accessing cultural products is not an easy task for the sensorially impaired. In addition, since most cultural activities are based on audiovisual products, such as cinema, museums and theatre performances, visually impaired people risk to be excluded from fully enjoying them.

Today, the Braille system still plays a vital role in the life of the blind: it was invented by Louis Braille in 1825 but France itself adopted it only in 1854 and officially recognized it in 1878 after banning it for some years. The Braille system shows how important tactile communication for blind people

is. Although attempts have been made overtime to replace the Braille with other systems, it still remains the best option for hundreds of thousands of blind people. The World Braille Council set up by UNESCO in 1950 has advocating for extending the use of Braille to the less known languages, and today it is officially used in voting procedures in some countries (for example France, Germany, Colombia, Costa Rica, India)[100]. The Braille system can be considered as the frontrunner of all present assistive technologies. These technologies can be found in all the countries, even though the pace of development is inhomogeneous. In the UK, for example, an important number of resources and websites provides with useful information on how to mainstream accessibility in workplaces, schools and public administrations. Among the various types of assistive technologies, some are designed or adapted for the blind people or people with residual sight such as screen magnifiers, fusers, swell papers, Braille translation bars, note-takers, embossers and alternative keyboards. Other equipment exploiting the existing technology can be used without distinction by normally sighted and visually impaired people, such as speech technologies, namely TTS Text-to-Speech exploiting speech synthesis, screen readers, OCR systems, large monitors, closed circuit televisions, embossed locator dots on the keyboard. These technologies are deployed for an increases access to information. When dealing with the accessibility of buildings and

[100] For further information, see also http://www.worldblindunion.org/en/publications/other-publications/Documents/A_UNIVERSAL_VOICE.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

places, other devices need to be considered, in particular under the general umbrella term of 'barrier-free design', a term used to refer to all projects showing a holistic approach and increasing the participation of all citizens in the social and economic life.

The issue of the 'Design for All' is at the heart of different European policies aimed at improving the quality of life of the disabled people[101]. However, when it comes to cultural products, in particular museums, cinema and theatre, the situation is more complicated. In many countries where audio description is sufficiently developed such as the USA and the UK, blind people can regularly enjoy tactile tours and specially designed museum visits. In most countries where the sensitiveness about sensorial impairment is not sufficiently developed, accessible museums barely exist and when they do, it is more the exception than the practice. As an example, the *Omero* tactile museum in Ancona (Italy) is one of the best in Europe but it does not really attract the attention it deserves. Italian national policies aimed at improving life conditions of the disabled still do not invest sufficient resources on the accessibility of culture. In this regard, audio description is now attracting more and more attention from an academic perspective, but not enough from a social and an economic one.

Culture has been accessible for longtime through the radio. For example, in Italy, audio description has been delivered on radio frequencies

[101] One of the most renowned initiatives promoted by the EU is visible at http://www.designforalleurope.org/Design-for-All/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

until 2010, before the digital switchover has allowed for the creation of a dedicated additional channel. Radio is also the bridge between culture and people who are not able to read Braille. It provides with fast and easy access to the programmes and the news and therefore is to be considered one of the most preferred 'technologies' for the blind population globally. In Galane (2008: 30) Mojapelo recalls the emotions when he was a radio announcer and stresses the following:

> It was here that I learned the importance of the radio to the blind. It reads news, entertains, educates and checks time for them. In fact, in those days my uncle would tell me that without a radio next to him, his world was even darker. When I became a radio announcer my number on listener was a blind listener; I would imagine the students at Siloe School for the Blind sitting around the radio set listening to Max the Mixerboy (my name on air).

Evidence and research show that radio is a preferred and valued pastime for them. A research report drafted by RNIB has found that the blind and the partially sighted tend to rely more on the radio than the normally sighted[102]. People surveyed by the RNIB have stressed that the use of radio can help alleviating the sense of exclusion, frustration and marginalization. In addition, it results that nearly 40% of the sample have five or more radio related equipments.

[102] The full report is accessible at http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/i2_RNIB_AreYouReallyListening.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

The first audio books were also delivered on radio waves by professional actors and readers. This is still the case in some countries where audio description is not yet adequately developed. The presence of professional actors to perform these readings could be one of the reasons for some audio description being more narrative than descriptive, as it happens in Italy (Arma forthcoming). Today, not only audio books are delivered also through the Internet, but have established themselves as reliable instruments to improve numeracy and literacy of both young and adult blind persons. Today it is possible to download and listen to audio books in different formats on computers, iPods, tablets and many more devices while also accessing the Braille version of the text.

Since we will focus on the language of English audio description in the UK, we find useful it useful to provide some information about the access of UK-based blind people to culture and in particular to cinema and television. Today, the English blind citizens can have adequate access to any source of information on dedicated websites providing all necessary details about the audio described screenings in cinemas or the audio described programmes at television[103]. By the end of 2008, 300 cinemas across the UK

[103] There is a vast number of website suggesting audio described screenings and programmes all across the UK. As an example, the website http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/index.2.html (last accessed 19/02/2011) provides with all information about cinemas equipped for audio description and subtitles, and suggests whether the customer should be booking in advance or not. One of the UK-Government managed websites, http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Everydaylifeandaccess/Everydayaccess/DG_4018357

have offered both subtitles for the deaf and the hard of hearing and audio description for the visually impaired. Around 2,200 subtitled screenings are offered per month and more than 1000 films are in an accessible format[104]. All provisions aimed at improving the accessibility of movies are based on the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act amended by the 2010 Equality Act[105]. This stresses the importance of protecting the rights of the disabled through all necessary means both in the public and the private life. This document is meant to work jointly with other important legal provisions[106]. No specific mention is made of audio description binding frameworks or percentages. However, the Draft Act states the following (Equality Act 2010: 118):

> Provision of information
>
> 7.48. The Act states that where the absence of an auxiliary aid or service places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, and this relates to the provision of information, the steps which it is reasonable for a service provider to take, include steps to ensure that the information is provided in an accessible format.
>
> Example: A cinema chain ensures that subtitled performances of films are shown in all its branches, and that the times of these are advertised prominently. It also purchases equipment to provide audio description of films

(last accessed 19/02/2011) also provides the sensorial impaired with information about the different forms of access to culture in a user-friendly web environment and a fully accessible interface.

[104] See http://www.cinemauk.org.uk/keyissues/disabilityandaccess/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[105] Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[106] All acts regarding the rights of the disabled are available at http://www.epractice.eu/en/document/347488 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

for visually impaired customers. These are likely to be reasonable steps for the cinema chain to have to take.

A public consultation launched by the WBU (World Blind Union) in March 2011 also sets the targets to be reached by broadcasters in the field of audio description that is 10% programmes in the following 5 years. However, three broadcasters BSkyB, BBC and Channel 4 committed to audio describing 20 per cent of their programming. The range of programmes and channels covered by audio description may vary between the different broadcasters even though, in general, the overarching majority of audio described products are films and theatre performances.

3. Audio description as a research topic

Over the last decades, audio description has attracted a growing attention from the academic community and, in particular, from researchers in the field of linguistics and audiovisual translation. Braun (2008) has outlined the current research trends in the field of audio description and suggested possible pathways, drawing in particular on AD as an intermodal form of mediation or translation, on the comprehension of the audiovisual source and on the creation/reception of the description. In this chapter, we will analyze audio description as a research topic and will therefore concentrate on a few areas that are particularly interesting for the whole investigation. To begin with, we will afford audio description from a translation perspective (3.1). Secondly, we will look at the audio description script from a functional perspective (3.2). Thirdly, we will consider audio description against the background of English for Special Purposes (3.3). Fourthly, we will introduce how audio description can fit within visual literacy (3.4), and will compare description and narration in a narratological perspective (3.5). Finally, we will address the issue of audio description as a learning tool and as an academic subject (3.6).

3.1 For a categorization of audio description against a translation background

Audio description can be seen as a form of audiovisual translation, which is defined by Gambier (2004: 1) as follows:

> *La traduction audiovisuelle (TAV) relève de la traduction des medias qui inclut les adaptations ou éditions faites pour les journaux, les magazines, les dépêches des agences de presse, etc. elle peut être également perçue dans la perspective des la traduction des multimédias qui touche les produits et services en ligne.*

For many years, Translation Studies and Audiovisual Translation in particular, have underestimated the importance of audio description and have attached importance to dubbing and subtitling only[107]. However, as pointed out by Lambert and Delabastita (1996: 33):

> *Cela revient à ignorer les autres modes de traduction audiovisuelle qui ne cesse de se développer même si leur importance socio-culturelle est, pour l'instant, bien plus limitée que celle des deux modes les plus répandus.*

Audiovisual translation forms have been considered more as adaptations rather than as translational phenomena because of the constraints in which they are produced, namely the image-sound correspondence and the textual

[107] To audio description could apply what Pavesi (1994: 129) states about dubbing: "dubbing should be defined […] not as a 'total translation' but rather a 'bound translation', for its being slave to non-verbal predetermined codes and the world being represented on the screen". Own translation of: "*Il doppiaggio andrebbe […] definito non tanto "traduzione totale", quanto "traduzione vincolata" proprio per la sua schiavitù nei confronti di codici non verbali predeterminati e del mondo che viene rappresentato sullo schermo*". For further reference, see also Bollettieri Bosinelli 2002; Heiss 1996.

compression (Lambert and Delabastita 1996). However, in the approach suggested by Descriptive Translation Studies, these phenomena appear fully contextualized in the target culture, that represents a multidimensional area or, in Even-Zohar terms, a "polysystem" (1990: 45 and *passim*).

In a well-renowned article, Gottlieb (2005: 1) provides "conceptual tools for dealing systematically with any type of translation encountered in today's media landscape" through a "semiotically based taxonomy of translation". According to this taxonomy, translation is based on two dimensions: time (process) and space (product) and the translation itself is seen as (Gottlieb 2005: 3):

> Any process, or product hereof, in which a combination of sensory signs carrying communicative intentions is replaced by another combination reflecting or inspired by the original entity.

Hereby, we consider audio description as the activity of expressing verbally a selection of the relevant visual elements to be conveyed to visually impaired people. In audio description, the replacement of the original combination by another combination consists in an intersemiotic shift. Indeed, the original "text[108]" is a polisemiotic audiovisual product carrying both audio and visual signs (the audio component can be represented by dialogues, special effects, sound track and the narrator's voice; the visual component includes images,

[108] As a definition of 'text', we hereby consider the one provided by Gottlieb (2005: 3) that is "any combination of sensory signs carrying communicative intention".

subtitles and title bands) 'translated' into a monosemiotic entity (the audio described film, indeed, can be only heard, for this reason it can be considered as an audio product).

Given the difference in the number of channels between the source and the target text, audio description can be considered as a hyposemiotic translation. In addition, audio description is not the exact correspondence between the source and the target text (though the notion of freedom and faithfulness in translation is very controversial). In this perspective, audio description is also, in Gottlieb's terms, an "inspirational" type of translation. Inspirational translation is the one which, considered as a product, relates to the original one "in a way which is more free and less predictable that what is found in conventionalized translation" (Gottlieb 2005: 5). Finally, considering the "presence or absence of verbal material in source and/or target text" (Gottlieb 2005: 5), audio description as a product can be defined as a type of translation which departs from non-verbal elements and introduces verbal ones.

From the perspective offered by Lambert and Delabastita (1996), we could consider the audio description of filmic products[109] as a translation operated on a part of the original product only. Indeed, as pointed out (1996: 38):

[109] An overview of Film Studies and filmic products from a semiotic perspective will be offered in Chapter 4.

> […] *le film et la télévision utilisent en règle générale deux canaux matériels: le canal visuel et le canal acoustique, et plusieurs codes ou systèmes sémiotiques. Cs derniers peuvent être subdivisés en deux groupes : les codes verbaux (linguistiques, paralinguistiques) et les codes non-verbaux (vestimentaires, de maquillage, de politesse, cinématographiques, iconographiques, etc.). Les notions de canal et de code ne se recoupent pas, le premier portant sur la transmission matérielle du texte, le deuxième portant sur les structures et les règles génératrices de signification.*

In addition, on the horizontal axis, it is possible to distinguish between a visual and an acoustic transmission of both verbal and non-verbal signs (Lambert and Delabastita 1996). Audio description mainly translates visual non-verbal signs, such as dresses, movements, make-up, etc. Acoustic-based verbal (dialogues) and non-verbal (noises, background sounds) signs are usually not translated by audio description, unless their translation is needed for the comprehension by the end users because it is particularly opaque or unclear. Finally, verbal signs transmitted visually (subtitles) are usually read aloud, in the same language as the original product or in the language of the final audience (if different). Interestingly, for the types of signs that audio description 'usually' does not (or barely) translate, the classification of transformations[110] suggested by Lambert and Delabastita (1996: 39) is of

[110] The idea of transformation is implicit in the concepts of adaptation and transposition, which, in the terms used by Bazin (1958) would apply to filmic audio description. Dusi (2003) however, points out that from a definitional perspective the word "adaptation" seems to be more strictly oriented towards the target text, to which it is reduced, while the word "transposition" brings the

great help. Indeed, they borrow the following definitions from ancient Greek rhetoric[111]:

1. Repetitio, when the sign is reproduced without any formal transformation.
2. Adjectio, that is reproduction with some form of adding or amplification.
3. Detractio, when the reproduction is incomplete (reduction).
4. Transmutatio, when the components are reproduced in a different textual order.
5. Substitutio, when the sign is replaced by another sign, more or less equivalent, belonging to a different code.

In audio description, the above-mentioned transformations occur at different stages and refer to different semiotic shifts. In an audio described film, the original dialogues and sound track are non translated, that is, they are repeated without any type of transformation (*repetitio*)[112]. However, it may happen that even though a background noise is left as it is in the original, the sound is technically or linguistically amplified. In the first case, when the audio description and the original track are mixed, the volume of the background noise is amplified so as to make it more 'visible'. In the second

idea of "an ordered and flexible structure that supports the transformational shift from one text to another, while respecting differences and internal coherences". Own translation of "*una struttura ordinate e certo flessibile, che regge il passaggio trasformativo da un testo all'altro rispettando le differenze e le coerenze interne*" (2003: 16). The issue adaptation/transposition in audio description will be further addressed in Chapter 4.

[111] Our translation.

[112] Of course, they could have been translated from another language, but here we are referring to the audio described film as a product, that is, at the end of any process of translation/adaptation.

case, the audio description string which follows the noise might repeat it, for example, by saying that the object producing the noise has fallen or that a person is gone away and closed the door. This would be a clear example of *adjectio*. Examples of *adjectio* are also to be found in the anticipation or signposting of some actions in order to make the comprehension easier for the final audience. In addition, in audio description there are always *transmutatio* and often *detraction* phenomena, because the orders in which entities are described do not always correspond to the order in which they are presented to the audience. From a cinematographic perspective, this would correspond to the camera movements and/or to the director's intentions. Finally, *substitutio* is unavoidable, since all visual signs are somehow transformed into verbal/acoustic signs.

This description applies if we consider 'traditional' audio description, whose most renowned expression is realized in films. However, inside an audio described film there could be other types of translation. As an example, in audio subtitling (Braun and Orero 2010; Orero 2007), the dialogues subtitled in a language (in countries which do not rely on a dubbing tradition) are read aloud into the language in which the audio description is made. For this reason, from Gottlieb's perspective, the resulting audio described film is a form of mono- and hyposemiotic product in which the audio component is partially based on an intersemiotic translation (images versus description) and partially on the aloud reading of an interlingual, intersemiotic translation

(original dialogue versus subtitles, subtitling being also a form of diasemiotic translation because it usually uses a single channel as in the original text). In addition, the fact that the subtitles are read aloud makes it a form of intralingual intersemiotic and diamesic translation (the original message being a written subtitle, the resulting product being an audio subtitle produced aurally).

The inspirational nature of audio description, however, is a controversial matter. The degree of predictability or adherence to the original text is difficult to measure. Even though it was possible to predict it, to what extent would it be possible to measure it? In audio description, time constraints are very important and determine the quantity, the prioritization and the informative level to convey. In this perspective, would the adherence of audio description be measured against time parameters or not? And yet, being the predictability of information difficult *per se*, would the priorities suggested by international AD guidelines (ITC 2000) be a reliable reference point to define the nature of audio description from a semantic/translation perspective? As Eco (2003) points out, translating is saying almost the same thing, all the more in audio description, where a reverse translation would never result in the same original, given also the different nature of the semiotic systems in use.

In line with on Gottlieb (2005: 5), audio description can be seen as a "text substitute", considering that it is intended for people with "sensory or

linguistic impairment […] not able to decode the original". In addition, it is also a translation "crossover" if we look at audio description other than from the 'disabled' perspective. In fact, listening to an audio described film can be an experience for both the visually impaired and the sighted audience. Gottlieb (2005) also argues that a football match can be 'translated' differently if transmitted at radio or at television. In the first case, the commentator describes the images and leaves background sounds, while at TV he/she comments the actions and gives more than what can be simply conveyed by images[113].

These definitions of audio description assume that the source texts in audio description are simply made of images and in the majority of cases, they are. However, it might happen that even though audio description 'translates' images into words, the *ancrage* of the target text resides in dialogues or in sounds which can be heard, or even that - as we have seen - the audio description postpones or anticipates information that have not been yet been provided visually. In addition, the notion of 'text' seems to be very broad. More than considering the visual images as the source text of audio description, one should better consider the original film as the source text of the corresponding audio described film (Bourne and Jiménez Hurtado 2007;

[113] Unfortunately, here the author does not take into consideration that also the blind audience might want to listen to a football match and that an audio description could also possibly be added and made available through a dedicated audio channel.

Reiss 1971) and evaluate the audio description as the resulting product of the intersection and the interaction of different audio and visual components.

3.2 Audio description from a functional approach to translation

Audio description is a form of translation made for an intended specific audience - the visually impaired, blind or partially sighted - and for a specific purpose that is, communicating the contents of an audiovisual product which would remain otherwise inaccessible. In this regard, audio description is configured, from a translation perspective, as a process for which making the original text optimally understood by the target audience is essential. The target audience is not an homogenous one and this does not only depend on 'traditionally' acknowledged differences in personal hermeneutics, aesthetic and neuro-physiological responses, but especially on the fact that the sensorial impairment may determine major differences in what can be seen, perceived, imagined or even recalled through the residual visual memory. However, if it is true that "societies are made of humans with similar modes of behaviour" (Vermeer 1998: 42), we can assume that, beyond specific differences existing in any other type of human 'community', the visually impaired can be considered as a community within the community. They share almost everything with the original 'community' but they substantially differ in the way of perceiving and experiencing life. At the same time,

culture and knowledge are not fixed notions and are permeable to a variety of changes, which are sometimes culture-specific.

Audio description, as any other type of translation, is a process of interpretation of the source text followed by, and this is a specificity of audio description maybe comparable only to subtitling, a selection of the most relevant information based on the time available. According to Vermeer (1998: 44):

> a translator translates her/his interpretation […], which starts from her/his source-text surface structure (not "the" surface structure). Logically it would be more correct to say the translator starts from her/his individual text derived from a general texteme.

In audio description, there is a great variety of source-texts (a film, a theatre performance, a sport match or a museum), which combine with different modes of delivery (live, semi-live, pre-recorded) and give birth to other texts. However, the audio describer shall interpret the original text before putting down the relevant strings to record. This means that the audio describer cannot simply rely on the scratch surface of the text. He/she should understand how the grammatical and semiotic elements of a given text combine to make sense, and select among all possible combinations offered to his/her cognitive system, the one or the ones that prove to be more relevant for the plot comprehension by the visually impaired. If an audio describer delivered everything he/she could say in limited time slots and did

not prioritize or organize the way in which information is given, the audio description would perhaps be faithful to the original text (description of all the elements of a scene) but not adequate nor acceptable from an end-user perspective. This means that audio description is a strictly target-text dependent activity[114] and that it can be seen as a culturally sensitive type of translation, where the word 'culture' indicates the set of habits and behaviours of a society. Such an approach to translation is called Skopos theory.

According to the Skopos Theory[115] (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Schäffner 1998; Snell-Hornby 2006; Trosborg 1997), a text is seen as an "offer of information" (Baker and Saldanha 2009: 117) made by a producer for a recipient. In the audio description script, the producers are both the audio describer and the narrator, because the ways in which the script is written and read contribute to the creation of meaning. According to Inigo Ros (2004: 4) the following factors should be considered when translating:

[114] The same film audio described for different cultures could lead to a totally different selection of information. This is particularly true for films which are strictly culture-dependent. As an example, the films 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' and 'Tea with Mussolini' present many Italian cultural elements, which do not need to be 'translated' for the Italian blind audience and would therefore not be among the priority elements to describe. For a foreign audience of visually impaired people, it would be important to know more, for example, about the typical sound of fresh made coffee, which is still absolutely natural to most Italians.

[115] The Skopos Theory was born in the late '70s with Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer. According to them, the translation is a process that depends on the function(s) assigned to a text in accordance with the expectations and the background knowledge of the final audience. The translation becomes a target-oriented activity and an interaction, which is based on a "*bikulturell"* translator (Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 26).

1. The interpretation done by the translator as initial recipient.
2. The function that the translator assigns to the text.
3. The spatial and/or temporal distance between a text and its 'translator' (the so-called 'cultural distance') that may change or alter the text's function.
4. The dilemma faced by the translator between translating literally or according to the sense.

Applied to audio description, the interpretation that the audio describer-translator of the visual image is called to provide is informed/influenced by the function of the audio description itself, which is strictly communicative. In addition, the audio describer should bridge a gap not only between images and people who cannot see them but also, between possibly two or more different cultures (in case the film does not belong to the target culture). In this perspective, Nord maintains (1997: 124), "the purpose of translation justifies the translation procedure". This means that an effective communication in audio description can be achieved through the translator's/audio describer's awareness that it could be "necessary to add, change or remove information as a part of the translation process" (Byrne 2006: 45). At the same time, the Skopos Theory interprets two important concepts in translation, that is, intentionality and faithfulness to the source text. However, both of them are influenced by the way in which the translator, the audio describer in this case, thinks and behaves, that is, by an unavoidable relativism for which he/she never has the possibility of an

ultimate proof but will always rely on "what we assume/presume/believe to be" (Vermeer 1998: 48). In audio description, the concept of faithfulness is all the more vague since, as we have seen in section 3.1, it is not a conventionalized translation inside the same semiotic system, but rather, a hyposemiotic type of translation for which images become words in a very limited span of time. We believe that the idea of 'functional approach' (Vermeer 1998; Holz-Mänttäri 1984) can fit well for audio description intended as a form of translation[116], where "function" is used for "target-culture recipients, in principle independently of a source text and its source-culture wording purpose and intended recipients" (Vermeer 1998: 50) and its primary aim is "to design a target text capable of functioning optimally in then target culture."

We have stated so far that audio description should produce a 'text' capable of working in the target culture. We have seen that audio description can apply to a variety of contexts and settings, among which we will explore film audio description in particular. A film[117] can be considered as a text, and the audio description is called to translate only a part of it, that is, its visual component, where time and dialogues allow the insertion of a spoken

[116] Here we are looking at audio description from a target text perspective and mainly from a structural/functional approach. However, it should be pointed out that the way in which audio description is linguistically produced also strictly depends on the source text. Here we assume that the source text is a film, since films cover most part of audio description scripts ever.

[117] In the next chapter, we will explore films more in details and will contextualize audio description more in detail against film semiotics and Narratology.

description utterance. As a result, a new film/text is produced: a text that will hopefully work in the target culture (the blind and the partially sighted) and that is still a film. From a translation perspective, this means that only one part of the source text is translated and is conveyed through the same channel used by the unchanged part of the film: the acoustic channel. As a paradox, we find that the target text is a mixture of translated and non-translated text, in which a selection of the visual clues has been operated. Based on this, audio description appears as a form of 'selective' translation. One could argue that only the visual elements should be considered as a text since they are the only to be 'translated'. However, this is only partially true. Indeed, in any audio described film, the audio describer might need to translate proxemic and para-linguistic features which, though not purely verbal, are still of linguistic nature. In addition, an audio description script cannot be fully understood if it is not inserted in between the dialogues, which limit and reinforce audio description at the same time. Similarly, a film with dialogues but no images could not be accessible without audio description[118]. Based on this, evaluating the 'equivalence' between the source and the target text becomes very difficult. Indeed, which should be the minimum unit to consider? Shall we consider the shot, the scene, or an action between the pauses of a dialogue? Even the concept of 'effect,' which is very popular in

[118] This is true for most films, of course, but not for all of them. In addition, there could be other audiovisual *genres* (such the documentary) which are more easily accessible also without audio description because of the presence of an internal narrator/describer.

translation, seems to be a controversial matter in audio description for two main reasons. Firstly, it does not happen too often that the same person sees the same film before and after becoming visually impaired. Secondly, the studies on the 'effect' of audio description from an end-user perspective should seek at comparing the reaction of visually impaired against normally sighted people which, of course, is quite difficult to do[119]. For the audiovisual translator, the ideas of 'effect', 'adequacy' and 'equivalence' are well grouped into the main concept of "accessibility" (Gambier 2004: 8) which is based on (linguistic) "*acceptabilité*", "*lisibilité*" (not applying to audio description), "*synchronicité*", "*pertinence*" and cultural "*étrangéité*". Among these factors, the linguistic acceptability, the synchronicity and the pertinence are the most relevant for audio description and any qualitative judgment on the quality of audio description should take these parameters into account. All of them have a strong focus on the target audience, which is a constant paradigm of functionalist approaches to translation[120]. Always from a

[119] In addition, as Vermeer (1998: 52) stresses "How would one measure and compare the effect of Tchaikovsky's 5th symphony on a Russian, a Chinese and a Scotsman, a connoisseur and a layman […] Under what circumstances and conditions would the effect be considered similar? Similarly, Gambier (2004: 9) states the following about the idea of acceptability in AVT and audio description in particular: "*Suivant le degré et l'ancienneté de la cécité, les besoins quant au contenu et aux détails de l'audiodescription varieront: certains spectateurs se souviendront des couleurs, des formes; d'autres seront en plus familiers avec le terminologie du cinéma, des narrations filmiques; d'autres n'auront guère l'expérience de l'audiovisuel…*".

[120] Gambier cannot be considered as a functionalist. His approach to audiovisual translation has been used to highlight the importance of some of his parameters for audio description in particular and to stress how important the final audience is for any type of translation and for audio visual translation in particular.

functional perspective, Baker (1992) considers three pragmatic concepts, that is, coherence, presupposition and implicatures:

1. The coherence "depends on the hearer's or the receiver's expectations and experience of the world" (Baker 1992: 219). Applied to audio description, this means that the final audience expects the additional audio track to provide a description of things that cannot be seen and that are functional to the understanding of the actions occurring on screen. As an example, if during a pause (where the audience expects to be an audio described string) the audio describer inserted an advertisement or a joke, the final product would not be coherent.

2. Presuppositions are linked to "the linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge the sender assumes the receiver to have or which are necessary in order to retrieve the sender's message" (Munday 2008: 97). In audio description there are two types of presuppositions:

a. Sensorial: most visually impaired have either a residual memory of colours or associate colours with physical feelings. For this reason, the audio describer should not omit colours because they are part of the background knowledge of most part of the final audience.

b. Cultural: though the notion of culture-sensitive audio description has not been sufficiently explored yet, it is self-evident that audio describing a foreign film also means choosing adequate linguistic means to audio describe culture-specific entities. As an example, if the name of a street is associated

with specific ideas in one country (High Street to banks and economics) and therefore would need little or no description, it could not be the same in another culture. Another example: in the centre and in the south of Italy it is pretty common to see laundry hanging on washing lines and any audio description would avoid remarking it, unless not specifically 'narrative'. However, since this is not usual for an English audience, the audio description in English should not omit this.

3. Implicatures are defined as "what the speaker means or implies, rather than what he says" (Baker 1992: 223). Implicatures were firstly introduced by Grice (1975: 45) who distinguished between four types of conversational maxims, that can be perfectly applied to audio description:

> 1. Quantity: make your contribution as informative as required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than required.
> 2. Quality: do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
> 3. Relevance: be relevant.
> 4. Manner: be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity, be orderly).

It is acknowledged that too much description can dilute the mood of a scene or confuse the audience. Similarly, a poor description with a few (irrelevant) details can have the same effect, that is, compromise the comprehension and

even irritate the audience. As we have seen, every audio described string needs to have a concrete *ancrage* to what can be seen. For this reason the interpretation of behaviours and feelings are to be avoided because they imply personal judgment to a certain extent.

Relevance is maybe the most important conversational principle for audio description. Relevance is the compass needle that orientates the choices of the audio describer. Indeed, what is not relevant should not be audio described. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995: 7) "individuals must focus their attention on what seems to them to be the most relevant information available" and "a phenomenon is relevant to an individual if and only if one or more of the assumptions it makes manifest is relevant to him" (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 152). Of course, to be relevant the new information should combine with the old, in other words, there should be a rheme/theme pattern that creates a contextual effect. In audio description, the old information is provided by previous audio description strings but also by previous dialogues and sounds.

According to Gutt (2000), the relevance theory contains the key for a unitary vision of translation. He also distinguishes between two types of language used, that is, descriptive and interpretive. The second one is considered as a secondary type of communication and is described as follows (Smith 2000: 39):

> In the interpretive use a) thought belongs (originally) to someone other than the speaker and b) the speaker intends his/her utterance to accurately represent the original thought.

Audio description would be then considered as a form of interpretive translation but the definition of the descriptive use may also fit well our purpose. Indeed, as recalled by Smith (2000: 39):

> In descriptive use a) the thought belongs to the speaker and b) the speaker intends to accurately represent reality.

In audio description, one of the speakers of the source text can be the film director. The audio describer, however, is not called to explain or to deploy the director's intentions to the final audience if they are not directly 'visible' to the sighted audience. In addition - in case of filmic audio description - films are considered as a form of equivalent reality, so the audio describer becomes a sort of mediator between this reality and the blind audience. For this reason, he could also be considered as the primary speaker of the communication. Nevertheless, what he says cannot but be informed by what he/she sees. Based on this, we could conclude that from the point of view of the relevance theory, audio description configures again as a hybrid form of communication[121].

[121] Based on my personal correspondence with Professor Gutt, the most complete bibliographical resource on relevance theory is available at http://www.ua.es/personal/francisco.yus/rt.html (last accessed 19/02/2011). The application of the relevance theory by Gutt to audio description is still

We have seen that in audio description, the maxim 'less is more' is an important pillar for a good and efficient communication. Ordered, clear, direct and mono-semiotic expressions are preferable. This also relies on an intended cooperation between the speaker and the receiver of the message, that is, on the cooperation between the participants in the communication acts (Grice 1975) in order to make sense of what is said.

3.3 Audio description within the framework of ESP

The language of audio description has not been yet sufficiently investigated through quantitative evidence. For this reason, almost all attempts to define it rely on deductive and evidence-based information and on single case studies. In this section, we will try to provide arguments to position the language of audio description against the framework of LSP (Language for Special Purposes). To this purpose, we will start from the following statement by Hernàndez and Mendiluce (2004: 4):

> Though it may seem obvious, AD resorts to the language we use everyday, and so, it does not differ from the general one, contrary to sign language. This language design may be due to the varied audience we have drawn before, which partially explains this situation: the blind and visually impaired people are not the only addressees of AD, and consequently, it cannot comprise a type

undergoing. During the PhD School on audio description organized by MuTra, Gutt has suggested some possible pathways for the interpretation of audio description against the relevance theory background.

> of language per se. With this in mind, we will not commit the following expectation error: sign language is addressed to a determined group, the deaf and hard of hearing people; thus, blind and visually impaired groups might be expected to communicate in their own language, and this might be reflected on AD. However, this deduction is not true: partially sighted people do not need a special language. In fact, the situation is quite different: it is the general language which resorts to its versatility and variability in range to allow the communication of the entire speaking community. In the case of AD, the language used highlights its descriptive charge; that is to say, language deepens in objects, colours, shapes, and gestures… because it is the iconic information, which needs to be conveyed into words to allow the understanding of the audiovisual work. We cannot say it is a 'special use' of the general language, nor even a 'special function', but a particular 'activation' of some intrinsic characteristics of general language.

In this paragraph, the authors state that the language of audio description cannot be considered as a language for special purposes for a number of reasons that we will discuss and consider against the evidence found by Salway (2007: 2) through a corpus-based analysis of audio description. This analysis has led the author to the conviction that "audio describers use a special language that is shaped by the communicative needs placed on audio description". Salway (2007: 1) also states the following:

> The existence of a special language is explained in part by the fact that audio description is produced by trained professionals following established

guidelines, and its idiosyncrasies are explained by considering its communicative function – in particular that it is being used to tell a story.

Audio description is addressed to the blind and the partially sighted 'primarily'; however, it can be extended for various reasons to other types of audiences. Indeed, audio description can be enjoyed by people who see and also by foreign people as an instrument to improve their literacy (Snyder 2006). Even though these categories are different from the other, there is a common feature that is the permanent or temporary impossibility to see. The argument according to which "though it may seem obvious, AD resorts to the language we use every day. In fact, it does not differ from the general one, contrary to sign language" (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004: 4) is not obvious at all. Indeed, sign language does not 'differ' from the general language because it is 'another' language, whereas audio description is not. The 'translation' operated by audio description could be as well rendered in sign language, however it would remain inaccessible to the blind people and to people who do not understand sign language. Therefore, we think that sign language and audio description are not comparable because the first is a language *per se*, with its own grammatical, lexical and syntactical rules, while the second does not pretend to be one. Comparing the two only in the name of a pretended similarity would mean confusing the purpose (making a multimedia content accessible to people with a sensorial impairment) with the final audience (blind and deaf evidently two separate groups) or with

their communicative needs. Maybe a comparison of the language of audio description in terms of specific needs could be possible with subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, for which some attempts have already been made (Baaring 2006; Neves 2005). In addition, it is true that sign language is targeted at the deaf and hard of hearing, nevertheless in most countries worldwide, signing deaf are only a part of the hearing impaired community. It is undeniable that the deaf and the hearing impaired have, just like the blind and the partially sighted, specific communicative needs, which arise from the sensorial deficit. When the authors state that the blind people do not need a special language, they are not asserting that audio description language is not one. In addition, versatility and variability, as well as the activation of intrinsic functions are also characteristics of special languages. Most special languages resort from the general language, however are specifically addressed to a community and are used for a special purpose.

According to Cabré (2000), a special language can be considered as a specific subsystem of the general language[122]. For many decades, the degree of specificity of a special language against the general language has been measured on lexicon and register (Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens 1964). However, a mere quantitative approach has paved the way for a qualitative perspective aimed at identifying the peculiarities of special languages from

[122] See also Berruto 1980 and 1993; Bollinger 1975; Cabré 1998 and 2000; Cortelazzo 1990.

the point of view of micro-languages (Gotti 1991). Indeed, according to Gotti (1991: 7):

> *[I linguaggi specialistici] non si differenziano dalla lingua comune per il possesso di regole linguistiche speciali e non comprese nella lingua comune, quanto per un uso quantitativamente diversi di tali convenzioni*.

In addition:

> *I linguaggi specialistici non sembrano presentare quelle limitazioni o semplificazioni rispetto alla lingua comune che talora sono state ipotizzate, ma sono dotati di tutte le potenzialità di natura lessicale, fonetica, morfosintattica e testuale tipiche della lingua comune. Tali potenzialità vengono regolarmente utilizzate (in alcuni casi, addirittura iper-utilizzate) nella costruzione di testi specialistici.*

Based on this, we find that the definition of special language applied to audio description can be widely accepted for a set of reasons that will be explained shortly[123]. If it is not (only) the specificity of the lexicon that makes a special language, the same can be said of the subject treated by the language itself. Halliday (1978) distinguished mode, field and tenor, where mode indicates the channel and the means used in the communicative process, field refers to the object of the communication and tenor is the relation between the

[123] We would however avoid the definition of "sectorial language" or "restricted language" or "microlanguage" because they all seem inadequate and refer more to those restricted codes who only use some of the general language sentences without any creative or varied use.

participants. In audio description, the channel (mode) is oral. The field is the content of the product audio described, while the tenor is generally the relation between the audio describer/narrator and the final audience. The narrator adds through his/her voice paralinguistic features that were only imagined or suggested by the audio describer. In audio description, there is a sort of multilevel 'contract' between the participants in the communication. Once again, it is necessary to distinguish between audio description as a process and audio description as a product because stratification occurs at linguistic level as well. Considered as a process, audio description is a written product[124], which is addressed to the person who is going to voice it. The audio describer has written the script and has inserted the utterances that are going to be recorded by a professional actor or actress in a studio. For this reason, the script contains many internal communications, which specifically deal with technical aspects of audio description, as shown in the following examples drawn from the AD script corpus:

(2) (fast) A shabby young woman steals a gold compact from an open handbag ('Chocolat')

(3) 01:05:41 (change of scene) ('Chocolat')

In these examples, 'fast' and 'change of scene' represent implicit messages which indicate to the narrator that he/she should pronounce the words faster

[124] It is worth recalling that we are referring to filmic audio description.

than expected (2) and that there is a change of scene in correspondence of a given shot (3). Examples (4) to (6) below, drawn from the AD script corpus, contain the following annotations:

(4) A birds-eye view of flooded farmland. The sun is completely covered by dark grey clouds, lending an eerie gloom to the scene below. There are earthmovers and diggers building defences to hold back the water, but nearby only the tops of tree and barns roofs are visible above the dirty grey flood-water. REWORD!!!! (‘Iris’)

(5) The (van) ploughs through water covering the road outside a cemetary, sending up a cloud of spray (‘Iris’)

<The truck plunges through water on the road....

(6) Mike fires.

<just so we know whom it is shooting.. it crashes the first shot though, how's it sound? (‘Iris’)

In example (4), ‘reword’ is meant to ask the ‘voice’ to reformulate the content of the communication. In (5), ‘(van)’ indicates that the actor/actress should look at the movie and decide which word is better to indicate the object, while the words following the sign ‘<’ show an alternative to the suggested text. In example (6) the audio describer is telling the actor/actress that there might be some problem about the text cohesion and the semantic

unity of the film. As it can be noticed, most of these annotations are inserted to ask the 'voice' to do something: they are perlocutionary speech acts.

Once the script is recorded, it is possible to distinguish between two different types of description, more or less codified. Both types strictly depend on the nature of the product audio described (a film, in our case). The first category includes the audio description of initial and final logo/credits. The second type is typically represented by the content of the film. Whereas this second type changes obviously from one film to another, the first one is more codified, that is, it has reached a certain degree of formalization. Below are a few examples:

(7) Paramount - A Viacom Company

Mutual Film Company...

and Polygram Filmed Entertainment,

Marubeni, Toho-Towa, Tele-Munchen, BBC, UGC PH and Nordisk Film present...

in association with Paramount Pictures

A Mark Gordon-Gary Levinsohn production...

A Mikael Salomon film…

Starring Morgan Freeman as Jim; Christian Slater as Tom; and Randy Quaid as the Sheriff

('Hard Rain')

(8) TRISTAR PICTURES PRESENTS

A GRACIE FILMS PRODUCTION

A FILM BY CAMERON CROWE

STARRING TOM CRUISE

The film also features:

CUBA GOODING, JR.

('Hard Rain')

In examples (7) and (8) above the producers of the film are to be found, introduced by formulaic and formalized expressions which are known in this context and that would not be otherwise acceptable, even though understandable, by the final audience. For this reason, a film 'features' an actor, or an actor is 'starring' as 'name of the character'. On the side of audio description of logos, below are a few interesting examples:

(9) A sky filled with billowing clouds. A bright light shines intensely then fades to reveal a white winged horse. In large gold letters above the horse: TRISTAR. In smaller white letters below: a SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT company. ('Jarry Maguire')

(10) A bright white star falls through the blue sky, and behind it a pale blue fairy castle appears, with little flags flying from its pointed turrets. Walt Disney Pictures! ('Lady and the Tramp')

(11) In gold letters against brilliant blue - the logo of Miramax Films ('The English Patient')

(12) Spotlights illuminate a stone edifice on which are the words 20th Century Fox ('Road to Perdition')

(13) A spinning frame of film against a black background....New Line Cinema Presents… ('Pleasantville')

(14) Film studios washed over in gold. The letters WB in a gold and blue shield. Warner Brothers Pictures ('ScoobyDo')

(15) Liberty, in her sleeveless white robe and blue sash holds aloft a shining torch at the top of some steps while (soft puffy) clouds drift across the blue sky behind her. COLUMBIA... ('Stuart Little')

All examples show that the audio description of logos is made of nearly standardized formulas. However, a same logo is not always audio described the same way, as can be seen comparing examples (15) above to example (16) below:

(16) Set against a moody blue sky with towering white and gold clouds, a woman in Grecian style robes holds aloft a shining torch. COLUMBIA - A Sony Pictures Entertainment Company ('Spiderman')

Frequent audio description users can be able to identify the logo from the first words as well as the company/organization that has produced the audio description. A professional audio describer should know how logos and other fixed elements are audio described in a company in order to be able to adapt to the 'rules' and communicate efficiently with both his/her peers and the final audience, which has linguistic expectations. The transition from the logo to the first scene of a film also contains a number of codified expressions, which belong to the cinematographic/technical language, as shown in example (17) below:

(17) As the names flash on and off the screen, so the colours behind the spider's web change from black to dark blue ('Spiderman')

Some organizations also choose to adopt metalinguistic tools to audio describe the transitions, that is, to explain what is happening from a technical perspective, as shown in example (18) and (20):

(18) The film opens in woods near Quantico in the state of Virginia. With a backdrop of stark black trees, silhoutted against a blue and grey morning sky, the film titles begin, black letters with a white shadow: A Strong Heart/ Demme Production… The cast list continues: Ted Levine, Anthony Heald ('The Silence of the Lambs')

(19) Further credits include the music, by Howard Shore.

The film is based on the novel by Thomas Harris ('Chocolat')

Both types of 'communication' include specialized language addressed to a non-specialized audience (Widdowson 1979) and have a strong illocutionary force. Indeed, they indicate that the film is going to start/end (in the case of final credits) or/and that an audio description string is likely to occur, that is, attention should be paid on what follows.

The existence of this codified use, as well as of grammatical and lexical features that will be further analyzed, can provide with sufficient reasons to believe that the language of audio description can be considered as a language for special purposes. Indeed, as Schröder (1991: 5) points out:

> 1. LSPs are not defined as the opposite of common language; […] they use the linguistic and other means of communication of a certain language and culture system in a specific way and with a specific frequency of occurrence depending on the content, the purpose and the whole communication situation of a text or a discourse.
> 2. LSPs are neither only stylistic variants, nor only terminological systems (Hoffmann 1982a, 18). What we need to do is consider all essential features of special texts in their entirety.

The "specific way" and the "specific frequency of occurrence" of words in audio description are fundamental. Indeed, since audio description is linked to an audiovisual product which is meant to reproduce reality (e.g. a filmic

audio description), the language used cannot but be general language. However, as we will see in Chapter 5, the specific use made of language to describe images makes it a (special) language for a special purpose. Indeed, as stressed by Opitz (cited in Schröder 1991: 322) "it is not the language that is specialized but the purpose to which it will be applied". However, the languages for special purposes are also characterized by a number of choices from a pragmatic and functional perspective that have an impact on the linguistic 'form' of the communication (Hoffmann 1984; Sager *et alii* 1980). In particular, the notions of 'economy', 'precision' and 'appropriateness' are three interdependent features to reach the highest communicative effectiveness (Gotti 1991). According to Sager *at alii* (1980: 323):

> Appropriateness is the measure of the effectiveness of the intention […] and it arbitrates between precision and economy, decides the amount and type of cognitive effort involved in a speech act and therefore influences the presuppositions that can be made about prior knowledge.

The notion of effectiveness and cognitive effort are also important in audio description. A message can be rightly understood if the way in which it is conveyed meets the expectations and the needs of the receiver, that is, if

linguistic and semiotic choices converge in a single and univocal interpretation of the content[125].

Based on Gotti (1991), we will now discuss some of the characteristics of special languages which can be also found in the language of audio description.

1. Self-referentiality: it is not intended as the univocal correspondence of a word with its signifier but as the denotative aspect privileged by any LSP. In audio description, this means that a connotative intention will have to be avoided, because the language should be as precise and objective as possible.

2. Neutrality: this is a controversial issue in audio description as we have seen in Chapter 1. The use of a mono-referential language should help maintaining a neutral tone. However, since the primary goal of any cultural product - whether it be audiovisual or not - is its enjoyment, absolute neutrality is difficult to reach. From a linguistic perspective, this means using constructs and words that are not ambiguous and avoiding literary or poetic expressions, unless special description effects want to be conveyed.

3. Precision: in audio description, the notion of precision is always linked to the original text (e.g. film) and the original semiotic system (e.g. images). The correspondence between the image and its description should

[125] The cognitive load of the final audience in audio description also plays an important role. An audio description that is too fast and with too many words or concepts can result to be ineffective and therefore inappropriate for the intended purpose.

be as precise as possible within the limits of the time allowed by dialogues and narration. This means, for example, not saying something like 'he is sad' but rather 'he is clenching his fist'. As it can be observed, nor 'sad' or 'clench' belong to a special vocabulary, but 'clenching' is more precise (in a situation where the character rightly does so) because it limits the range of all possible 'movements' on both paradigmatic and syntagmatic level. From a semantic perspective, precision also means providing information from the general to the specific and from the known to the unknown according to a thematic/rhematic scheme.

4. Transparency: avoiding obscure words does not mean in audio description avoiding precision or being less effective. On the contrary, preferring words that are clear, precise and transparent means 'presenting' the object in such a way that it can be easily understood and 'visualized' by the final audience with less effort and more straightforwardly. This also means avoiding the description of states of mind which could be subject to personal interpretation.

5. Synthetic information: the need to be short and synthetic in audio description is mostly imposed by the fact that the time available is often very short and that audio description cannot be too fast. This means that the form of the sentence should be as concise and clear as possible, in the conviction that "less is more"[126]. From a linguistic perspective, in audio description this

[126] See http://www.acb.org/adp/conf2010.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

is translated into short sentences and preference for parataxis instead of hypo taxis.

From a lexical and syntactical perspective, the language of audio description includes many of the features listed by Gotti (1991) which, in our case, also depend on the temporal constraints and on the channel (written vs. oral[127]). In particular[128]:

1. Omission of phrasal elements/ellipsis.

2. High use of derivative adjectives (-able, -ive, -ent) and compound adjectives.

3. Use of the present participle (at the beginning of the sentence or in adjectival position) and past participle, that is, of non-finite forms (-ing and -ed) to eliminate the auxiliary or eliminate passive forms.

4. Intense use of pre-modifying adjectives.

5. High lexical density.

6. Simplification of the syntactic structure and preference for a 'Subject+Verb+Object' structure.

7. Use of the verbal tenses: present simple active, present progressive, present perfect active, very low presence of imperative, future and past simple (Barber 1962).

[127] On this specific point, see Chapter 5.

[128] Chapter V provides with corpus-based evidence of some of the listed features (adjectives, in particular). Indeed, it is not sufficient to say that the language of AD shows a number of features to be able to include in LSPs: quantitative and qualitative evaluations should be used to support evidence.

These linguistic features also trigger a variety of textual aspects (anaphoric repetition and thematic/rhematic progression in particular). However, for the scope of this investigation, we should consider not the script only, but the film as a whole since the unit of an audio described film derives from both the original track and the audio description.

From the point of view of language functions, it is worth stressing that AD mostly has a referential one. However, the poetic function is not rare at all, though it is more focused on paralinguistic factors, such as the intonation or phonetic choices.

3.4 Audio description from the perspective of visual literacy

In various articles and courses across Europe and the USA, Joel Snyder, one of the major audio describers globally, stresses how important the notion of 'visual literacy' is to learn how to read and interpret images, as well as to develop an "active seeing"[129]. In a world where the power of images is stronger than ever, visual literacy as a discipline is at the cutting edge between semantics, semiotics, psycholinguistics, technology, humanities, science, philosophy and more. The word 'visual literacy' generally indicates the ability to send and receive messages through movable and still images. It

[129] On this specific aspect, see also http://www.leagueofchicagotheatres.org/component/industryaudition/industryauditiondetails/273.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

is strictly linked to the idea of teaching how to read and interpret images. This has therefore a very strong pedagogical vocation (Elkins 2008). For this reason, the word 'visual literacy', which might sound as a contradiction in terms, is also nowadays preferred to other terms including 'visual skills', 'visual languages', 'visual practices' or 'visual competencies.' However, images can be considered as a language that needs to be learnt just like spoken or written language. Considering this type of approach, Mitchell (2008: 13) states:

> It is not enough to have light impressions fall on the retina and stimulate the visual cortex. One must learn to use and understand the visual impressions by coordinating them with tactile impressions. Thus normal seeing is, in a very real sense, a form of extended, highly flexible *touch*. There is no "pure" visuality, or, as Gombrich pointed out longtime ago, "[T]he innocent eye is blind". And *innocent* here means, quite precisely, *un*touched.

According to Fries (1952), the language of images can be compared to the human language because it is also made up of syntax and grammar that should be known in order to understand visual utterances and make a meaning out of them. On the same line shown by Chomsky, many followers of the generativist grammar assumed that images possess a grammar and that the combination of images as lexical elements can originate visual texts whose understanding could be innate (Feldman 1976). The presence of image universals has therefore been considered as a potential step forward in

the interpretation of cinema and other audiovisual products (Barley 1971; Harpole and Hanhardt 1973) and as a milestone in children pedagogy. Indeed, children move from tactile and kinaesthetic impressions to the acquisition of a visual language which then brings to verbal language or, to say in Piaget's terms, they move "from sensorimotor […] through pre-operational […] concrete operational and formal operational" (cited in Brainard 1976: 18). In Flory (1978: 5), we find an interesting explanation of the parallel between visual and natural language (to summarize Turbayne's views on the matter) but also of the nature of visual literacy[130]:

> […] seeing is a complex conceptual process than depends on our having learned the relationships between our tactile definitions of physical objects and our visual perceptions of the same objects. […] the primary elements of visual language are line, shape, form, size, color and movement. […] As with verbal language, the visual language is learned by comparison of the physical/tactual world with what is seen on the world.

Fransecky and Debes (in Hortin 1994: 20), on a same direction, draw a difference between spoken and written visual language and state the following:

> The 'spoken' form of visual language is body language, body signs, body English –gestures, movements, postures we use deliberately or unconsciously, to communicate without or with accompanying words. […] The 'written' form

[130] For a comprehensive and visual representation of the convergence of different disciplines into visual literacy, see Hortin 1994.

> of visual images is recorded images on film, videotape, paper or other visual image carriers.

Perceiving and interpreting images is not only a matter of pure 'vision', but of 'how' the visual stimuli can create meaning through the convergence of memory, cognition and learning. In addition, our mind is 'analogical' in the sense that it builds images to compare objects and representations of the world and proves to be efficient to help people 'see' things they have never experienced before. However, when describing images, analogy is a limited instrument because it can be distorted and ultimately still highly depends on personal perception. For this reason, visual literacy needs a "precise, concrete, specific language that describes as comprehensively as possible […] what the communicator is attempting to translate" (Stern and Robinson 1994: 34). Perception is divided into three steps (Stern and Robinson 1994: 35): "selection, organization and interpretation of stimuli". However, this 'chain' of visual literacy is not the same for everybody because it is 'filtered' through the lens of the frame of reference. These lenses are sets of parameters that make it possible to interpret the same 'image' in different ways. Interpretation is influenced by physiology, psychology, culture, past experiences and personal judgment, but also by language, which 'cuts' the reality into portions. As to the organization of images, according to Stern and Robinson (1994: 39 and *passim*) researchers have identified various principles, among which "simplicity and pattern, proximity, similarity, figure

and background, closure and good form, perceptual constancy[131]". In the interpretation of visual elements, visual stimuli are considered as carrying meaning. This meaning would exist *per se,* regardless of the person who carries out the operation. In fact, it is the opposite: the process of interpreting is influenced by attitudes, beliefs, values, expectations (Adler and Rodman 1985) as well as by the way we see ourselves as to role, intended actions and influence on the others; ultimately, interpretation is also influenced by the way short-term and long-term memory work together to fix or retrieve interpretations.

In essence, there is reason to believe that the concepts envisaged by the theorists of visual literacy also play a very important role in the theory and practice of audio description. Indeed, with regard to visual language, audio description should be considered under a double perspective: the one of the audio describer and the one of the (visually impaired) audience. Questions arising from the study of the visual language in this particular field are: to which extent can visual literacy contribute to effective audio descriptions? Is the perception of images subjective or are there universals allowing for possible univocal interpretation? Should both audio describers and the final public be educated to visual literacy? How can the blind and the visually impaired be educated to 'see' through the words? Which is the role of tactile impressions in the passage from visual to verbal? And yet, in the

[131] For a detailed explanation of all the categories see Moore and Dwyer 1994: 39-40.

transformation from images to words, what are the features to be audio described to maintain objectivity and neutrality?

As we have stressed, this research is concerned with the study of the language of filmic audio description. The study of the object 'film' from a semiotic perspective and of audio description from a film-studies perspective will be mainly treated in Chapter 4. Now we limit ourselves to define whether there is a filmic literacy, what it is and how the combination of visual and film literacy can contribute to audio description as a research topic.

Film literacy has been defined by Selby (1978: 2) as "the ability to use and understand the film medium" and as an activity which is not innate but needs to be learnt. Evidence of this can be found in the use of the *benshi* in the early beginnings of the Japanese films. The *benshi* was 'the' person on which the audience relied to understand silent movies at the turn of the century. He/she was supposed to narrate, explain and even interpret the movies. According to the tradition, the *benshi* stood at one side of the screen and used to perform a narration and a general commentary, but also played multiple roles. The *benshis* can be somehow considered as the precursors of the modern audio describer, however they were profoundly different because they were the real attraction of the show and they often changed the dialogues or even the film itself to be able to give their own interpretation of the storyline. According to Anderson and Richie (1982: 352-353) a *benshi*:

> Essentially was […] telling you what you were going to see and then, as the film progressed, telling you what you were seeing.

The American audience also relied on a 'film explainer', as described with great emphasis by Hofmann (1995: 1) in the book "The film explainer" (which also inspired the homonymous film):

> Watch out, don't node off, here comes a wonderful sequence, maybe the most wonderful in the whole film, cried Grandfather, reaching for his pointer. […] You could, said Grandfather, have heard a mouse…well whatever it is a mouse does.
>
> The minute he was in his little tailcoat, the sentences started to come. He took more risks: more forceful expressions, more subclauses, outlandish comparison, more surprising turns of phrases and imagery.
>
> The style of the other film explainers, even in big cities, was pompous, their articulation was flaccid, the connections between the images and the screen – and how they used to flicker! – and their words were often baffling the audience. And they mispronounce long words, said Grandfather. Either they are too long with their explanations – before the picture – or too slow – after it's gone – so that between what you see and what you hear… you can't find the connection.

These few lines describe the work of the 'explainer': not a describer, but more of a narrator, who also used to put particular emphasis on language, with "outlandish" comparisons, surprising sentences and imaginary words. Matching images with words was already a concern for this film explainer,

who criticized the lack of 'connection' with the screen. The role of both the *banshi* and the film explainer was to raise awareness in the public about the visual literacy, that is, to make explicit those elements which would have been accessible only through adequate knowledge of the visual 'language'. In other words, they operated for all the people who were still visually illiterate since, as Hoffmann (1995: 53) puts it:

> An audience needs someone to explain a film to them, at least its finer points. They have no idea of what is contained in a film if you look at it closely, in every single shot. No, no, said Grandfather. This must be explained. Otherwise, it would be lost.

Today, film explainers have turned into audio describers for the visually impaired audience. As we have seen in the previous Chapter 2, today blind people, especially in the USA and in the UK, are very used to going to the cinema and enjoying accessible screenings and performances. The literary and hearing habits of the visually impaired have changed profoundly since the time when Hofmann wrote his novel. If 'that' public had a low visual literacy[132], the blind people nowadays know what the visual language is. For this reason, the audio describer does not explain the meaning revealed by the images but discloses the primary surface of language, which allows the public to form their own interpretation. To a certain extent, we could argue

[132] However, in the novel 'The film explainer' the grandfather of the narrator risks to lose his job. The cinema director, indeed, says "Your profession no longer exists. It has withered away as entertainment has advanced, it is no longer required" (Hofmann 1995: 54).

that along with the visual literacy, the visually impaired have a 'hearing literacy'. This word is often employed to refer to musical education in choirs (Holt and Jordan 2008; Jordan and O'Regan 2008; Kerr 1991) and more often in the field of deafness (Brueggemann 1999; Daniels 2001). However, we think it might fit very well the field of blindness to refer to the set of hearing habits of the visually impaired. Evidence shows that, from the perspective of biological psychology, the brain tends to reorganize and to adapt when a sense is lost (i.e. sight). Indeed, the occipital cortex and the cortical area which are normally occupied by sight only, in the visually impaired people is 'invaded' by touch and hearing (Kalat 2008). This means that their occipital cortex serves the verbal function as well. Also for this reason, the blind people are said to have a more developed sense of touch and hearing, as we have pointed out in Chapter 2.

If modern audio description is supposed to suggest the surface of visual language to people without sight but with a developed 'hearing' literacy, which are the elements that an audio describer will accordingly select? As we have seen Turbayne (1970), Fransecky and Debes (1972) had analyzed the visual language and identified 'primary' or 'spoken' features among which shape, size, line, shape, form, size, colour, movement and position. As we will see in Chapter 5, this is exactly what emerges from a corpus-based perspective through an investigation into the English language of audio description. However, the issue that we intend to address here is whether this

'primary' or 'spoken' visual literacy might be sufficient to form an idea of the reality or if, based on the grammar of visual literacy and film literacy in particular, audio description should consider adding more. Of course, this implies taking into consideration film components, most of which will be analyzed in the following chapter. We will limit ourselves to sketching how important the issue is from a research perspective. According to Bamford[133]:

> [...] being visually literate is a combination of **syntax** and **semantics**. The syntax of an image can be regarded as the pictorial structure and organization. Visual literacy includes, but should not be limited to, graphic composition of images (eg shapes, lines, colours, etc.) it can also includes things such as camera placement, editing and juxtaposition and point of view (eg. low angle will make someone appear more imposing). This can also have other impacts such as to change your sympathy towards a character or raise tension. An image might also involve manipulation of proximity and placement (eg close-ups or zoom).

Among the example of "syntax" provided by Bamford are those elements traditionally included in audio description: dimension, motion, light, colour, movement, relative size, line, shape, direction, tone, scale; in addition, the author also stresses some interesting elements that very rarely happen to be audio described: metaphor, manipulation, harmony, simplification, resemblance. This is partly due to the nature of audio description, partly to

[133] See http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

the nature of the object (in our case, films). However, we believe that especially in film audio description these features, that play a vital role, are often misinterpreted and therefore are not always (duly) rendered. Especially in film audio description, the way images are built through the use of the camera provides the 'visual literate' with dramatically important information about the intents of the director and cinematographic meanings. The issue of whether these elements should be audio described or not remains unanswered. From one perspective, an audio visual product has, such as any other type of text, a sender and a receiver, thus the communicative intentions should also be conveyed. From another perspective, giving too many details can dilute the mood of a scene or appear patronizing to the final audience. Finally, the use of a cinematographic meta-language or alternative linguistic tools to express technical use of the camera remains unexplored. This might depend on the fact that most researchers in the field of audio description belong to audiovisual translation or translation studies. Therefore, the contribution of many other disciplines would be necessary to find out whether the insertion of cinematographic descriptions could improve the comprehension and the enjoyment of the audience which is the ultimate goal of audio description. On the semantic side, Bamford[134] points out the following:

[134] See http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

> Semantic refers to the way images relate more broadly to issues in the world to gain meaning. […] In practice, visual semantics refers to the way images fit into the cultural process of communication. This includes the relationship between form and meaning. Semantics might include looking at the way meaning is created through:
>
> 1. Form and structure
> 2. Culturally constructed ideas that shape the interpretation of icons, symbols and representations
> 3. A social interaction with images

In audio description, the semantics is not openly disclosed like syntax but rather suggested through syntax itself. However, audio describing the cultural interpretation of images is not a simple task, especially when dealing with products that have not been produced by the target culture. This would mean localizing meanings both in the source and in the target culture and somehow influencing the way in which they are perceived.

3.5 Audio description between narration and description

As we have seen, while providing the audience with 'primary' visual language, audio describers suggest a pathway to interpret images, that is, to assign a 'semantic' identity to the visual patterns identified through words. However, meaning is not based on single utterances but depends on the whole text, in other words on how coherence is built throughout the product.

In an audio described film, the script contributes to the cohesion of the whole text the same way dialogues and sound track also do. This means that audio description is also used as a narrative tool. From this perspective, one of the first precursor of audio description is to be found in ekphrasis, an old and particular type of visual description dating back to the Greeks. At that time, ekphrasis was used to describe visual works of art to make images and actions more 'tangible' through words (Pujol and Orero 2007). In the Republic, Book 10, Plato philosophized about the notions of 'bed' and 'bedness' to explain the concept and finally asked: "Which is the art of painting designed to be? An imitation of the things as they are, as they appear or of the appearance of reality?" In this respect, ekphrasis is meant to reproduce objects by providing with the illusion of reality - which is, of course, very fitting for all modern visual arts. Overtime the ekphrasis has been used not only to depict painting, sculptures or other works of art, but has become widespread in literature, where it exists as a form of imitation of another written work or as a description of an artistic product (Al-Joulan 2010; Cheeke 2008; Mandelker 1991; Mazzara 2007; Sager Eidt 2008). Today, it is also used in digital art as a way of 'touching', that is, literally 'digitalising' arts through verbal language. When it comes to films, there is also a filmic ekphrasis (Sager Eidt 2008)[135]. Applied to audio description, the interest is not focused on the object of ekphrasis but more on its nature. Is it

[135] Most research works about this topic deal with the ekphrasis of paintings. Applied to the 'description' of films or other media, ekphrasis is still underexplored.

more a description or a narration? Which are the relations between audio description and narrative/descriptive ekphrasis? To which extent can the investigation of ekphrasis contribute to a good audio description?

According to Barthes (1970: 183), the ekphrasis "*est un fragment antologique, transferable d'un discours à l'autre*" and it is intimately linked to narration. In "Frontiers of Narrative", Genette (1982) deals with the issue of narration from three different perspectives. The second one affords specifically the opposition between narration and description. According to the author, narration has "to do with actions and events, the second with objects or characters" (Selden, Widdowson and Brooker 2005: 114). This means that whereas narration is active, description is more contemplative, "ancillary and ornamentary" (2005: 71). However, Genette (1988) recognizes that verbs, that is, actions and events, are also interested by a descriptive function. This reveals the relative impurity of narration and description, which are intimately linked. Indeed, in the general economy of narration, description is not only a pause but plays a diegetic role, as stated by Genette (1988: 36):

> In short, not all description constitutes a pause; but then again, certain pauses are, instead, digressive, extradiegetic, and in the nature of commentary and reflection instead of narration.

Genette was not the first one to acknowledge the controversial side of description: overtime, indeed, many theorists and rhetoricians have

mistrusted description (Chatman 1990), relegating it to a secondary role or even defining it as subordinate to narration. However, as Chatman affirms (1990: 24):

> Description has a logic on its own, and it is unreasonable to belittle because it does not resemble to the chrono-logic of Narration. Hamon has characterized this logic as metonymic: the description of a garden, for example, presupposes almost necessarily the numeration of diverse flowers, paths, parterres, trees, tools, etc. which constitute the garden. The metonymic structure may entail the relation of objects to each other as they occur in the world on in the imagination, but also the relation of objects to their own qualities, where "quality" is to be understood in the broadest sense.

Based on this, Chatman (1990) concludes that there is no value judgment or question of nobility in preferring narration to description because they are two different modes of realizing texts. Their profound structures are totally different but they are fused on the text's surface according to prevalence, which should not be confused with "subservience" (1990: 28). This is a controversial matter because there can be implicit or explicit ways a description can be rendered in a text's surface. In particular:

1. Assertions.
2. Non-assertive mentions or inclusions.
3. Elliptical implications.

However, there are sentences where it is difficult to distinguish the limits between narration and description; in this perspective, Chatman (1990: 28 and *passim*) explains that where narration "recounts", description "depicts". In other words, the word "fusion" refers to abstraction, whereas in the "actualization" of the text, even though the description refers to the setting, it might play a narrative function.

The notion of narrative function is strictly connected to the one of "narrative agent" that may work as well into film narrative. Indeed, it is not the 'movement' that causes the shift from description to narrative, as many theorists have argued, because that same movement might play a descriptive function only. This happens when the relation between the objects is somehow 'limited' to a scene/shot and does not carry any other consequence on successive scenes/shots from a narrative perspective. The description of a flying bird could be only descriptive and therefore accidental, if that movement was not relevant from a narrative perspective. However, it would play as a narrative agent if it was supposed to enchain with other objects of the story. It is the disconnection with other elements of the story that makes a description. If we apply Genette's criteria to audio description, we could define its language as 'descriptive' from a merely linguistic perspective. From a semantic standpoint, it appears to be both descriptive and narrative. It is descriptive when the objects are not relevant for the story and it is narrative when it describes those objects that will be relevant from a

narrative point of view. For example, the audio description of settings could be defined as only 'descriptive' if its elements are not relevant for the whole story. However, if the audio description described a relevant object with a specific narrative role, the same would be defined as 'narrative'. Reversely, even the audio description of the main character of a film (that would ideally be defined as narrative) could simply be descriptive in some parts, since the description could simply be irrelevant to narrative purposes.

3.6 Audio description from a didactic perspective

In this section we will discuss to which extent audio description can be beneficial for didactic purposes. The issue will be analyzed from different standpoints. In particular, we will discuss the following issues:

1. Audio description as a literacy tool for both blind and normally sighted children.

2. Audio description as a didactic tool for learning a foreign language (from an adult perspective) or in translation courses.

3. Audio description in academic contexts, that is, how a course in audio description should be designed and how the professional figures of audio describer and narrator can be duly trained from a theoretical and academic perspective.

3.6.1 Audio description as a tool for literacy

In the presentation shared at the 2006 edition of Media for All, Joel Snyder fascinated the audience with the following challenging question:

> A picture is worth 1000 words? Maybe. But the audio describer might say that a few well-chosen words conjure vivid and lasting images.

Based on Snyder (2006), these few well-chosen words can bring potential benefits to both visually impaired and normally sighted children. Indeed, during a workshop conducted in 2006, Snyder experimented this hypothesis on different professional figures, in particular day care workers and reading teachers, as described[136]:

> Not too long ago I conducted a workshop in New Haven with day care workers and reading teachers on what I think represents a new application for audio description--literacy. We experimented with developing more descriptive language to use when working with kids and picture books. These books rely on pictures to tell the story. But the teacher trained in audio description techniques would never simply hold up a picture of a red ball and read the text: "See the ball." He or she might add: "The ball is red--just like a fire engine. I think that ball is as large as one of you! It's as round as the sun--a bright red circle or sphere." The teacher has introduced new vocabulary, invited comparisons, and used metaphor or simile -- with toddlers! By using audio description, you make these books accessible to children who have low

[136] See http://www.disabilityworld.org/09-11_04/access/audio.shtml (last accessed 19/02/2011).

vision or are blind *and* help develop more sophisticated language skills for all kids.

We believe that the crucial points in this argument rely on two issues: 1) the accessibility (or even better, the degree of accessibility) for blind children. 2) the development of literacy for all children. As to the first issue, reception studies on blind children are not systematic and limited to a few case-oriented observations. Improvements in the understanding in pre-school children have indeed been observed also to counter the arguments against television[137]. From a literacy-perspective, the use of audio description in television and their enjoyment by children with visual impairments would bring about dramatically important benefits. However, we also believe that the question is not really whether films/cartoons/ are audio described or not, but the extent to which the audio description makes really use of a descriptive language, that is, to which extent programmes are really accessible. As stressed by Snyder (2006) a red ball might be described in many different ways and for children, especially through metaphors or similes. If audio describers avoid utilizing the vague or too abstract words, it will become easier for visually impaired children to understand the described objects based on kinaesthetic sensations (in particular those based on the

[137] Further reference about the beneficial use of audio description for the improvement of children literacy is available at http://www.dcmp.org/descriptionkey/description_key_meta_analysis.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011) and http://www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh237.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

touch and the hearing), but also to become acquainted with the use of new vocabulary. As an example, saying, 'the ball is as large as one of you' contributes to increase the tangibility of the description for the visually impaired and to make the description more incisive. Again, saying that something is "as tall as a skyscraper" means stimulating the connection with a whole set of attributes (height, largeness), adjectives (high, imposing, etc.) and attitudes (fear, uneasiness, etc.). The RNIB guidelines for children audio description (2009: 2)[138] also suggest "Audio described films for children can help with language development in several ways". In particular, RNIB (2009) stresses that visually impaired children often show co-morbidity and language development problems. For this reason, the use of audio description, in particular songs, rhymes and the repeated listening of the same films/cartoon/programme, can be beneficial for the development of echolalia, that is, the process of imitation through which children start speaking, even though the words pronounced are not yet understood. In addition, it is also crucial that additional sounds should be very well heard: the sound of a train or of a laugh accompanied by the corresponding word ('train', 'laugh') helps the children associating both the sound and the word with the referent-object. However, it should be noted that just as adults, children are not a homogenous group. Among them, there can be children with congenital blindness and/or pathological conditions or worsening sight.

[138] The document is available online in the 'Professionals' section of the website of RNIB www.rnib.co.uk (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Many of them also have cerebral problems. However, since the areas deputed to sound and speech are not the same (RNIB 2009), it is important that audio describers do not overlap with sounds. Based on AFB[139] it should also be stressed that visually impaired children learn more inductively rather than deductively and that the acquisition of knowledge happens incidentally than deliberately, and we assume that this is also true from a linguistic perspective. For this reason, children audio description requires the need to use short and simple sentences (however the simplicity does not imply meaning reduction or poverty of linguistic expression!), however the introduction of occasional difficult words may increase the literacy and improve the vocabulary of the child. Alliteration and rhymes should not be avoided but rather encouraged because they create an 'entertaining' acoustic impression. Finally, it should also be asserted that children normally 'see' the programme repeatedly and that the repetition will help them fix both sounds and words better. These linguistic 'traces' though aural, will not be characterized by volatility but will be better associated with the words and with the whole plot and therefore will become part of the knowledge of the children.

[139] On this point, see http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=44&TopicID=338&DocumentID=4032 (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Drawing on these considerations and on Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning, Ferrell and Siller[140] have reaffirmed that learning is more effective when the information is conveyed through multiple modes. For this reason, they have considered audio description as being beneficial for all children with visual impairment. We also argue that audio description can be positive for all children, including the normally sighted (Snyder 2006). According to Jewitt (2006: 19) the meaning making process in modern pedagogy and literacy can be seen through the lenses of multimodality:

> Social semiotics and multimodality offer conceptual tools for the analysis of meaning making. […] Bringing activity theory in conjunction with multimodality constitutes a challenge to activity theory to 'look beyond' language alone. Positioning language (speech and writing) as 'one part' of a multimodal ensemble serves to insist that semiotic mediation is also multimodal.

For children without visual impairment today many courses worldwide foresee the use of multimedia contents, be they on CDs, DVDs, or audio books accompanied by the written version. The stimulation of different abilities and skills reveal to be crucial for the development of new vocabulary. Furthermore, the image-word association, as well as the acquisition of a meta-language of storytelling and description are very

[140] See http://www.descriptionkey.org/background.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

important elements to consider. In Sachs and Kelis (1992), we find a descriptive approach to the literacy of blind children and to their acquisition of both verbal and non-verbal language. In particular, Pogrund and Strauss (1992: 189) state that:

> Gestures can convey confidence and freedom and can emphasize the significance of what one is saying, for both positive and negative feelings (Scheflen, 1972). A list of gestures and facial expressions to be incorporated into a program on non verbal communication is found below. Next to each action is the usual message conveyed:
>
> *Cocked head*: attention; *lids narrowed*: suspicion, anger; *folding arms*: distance; *winks*: flirtation; *shrug shoulders*: perplexity; *hands on hip-thumb on belt loop*: dominance; *eye avoidance*: inattention; *eyebrow flash*: recognition; *punch own palm*: emphatic; *nods head*: comprehension; *motioning gestures*: "Come here", "Go away", wave; *pointing gestures*: there, here, this, that, you, he, I; *descriptive gestures*: big, tiny, small, huge, large, round, flat, near, far, tall, short, long, wide, thick, narrow, straight, curved, rough, smooth, ordinal and cardinal numbers.

Learning how to describe objects, attitudes and facial expression and how to reproduce them is based on the imitative behaviour. In particular, the "actions" described by Pogrund and Strauss (1992) are also pertinent to audio description. In other words, the linguistic and semantic associations made around a given entity make it easier for blind children to understand the reality and to interpret it the right way. In addition, the adjectives listed in

the “descriptive gestures” category recall both action (especially through the touch) and vision. Lacking the sight, the blind and visually impaired people rely on the touch to ‘measure’ dimensions (for example “big, “tiny”, “small”, “large”), forms (ex: “round”, “curved”) and other physical features of objects around them. As we will see in Chapter 5, the use of this type of descriptive language is, of course, also very highly recurrent in filmic audio description. Similarly to the introduction of descriptive literacy in the education of blind children, we also believe that the ‘frequentation’ of audio described video programmes should be considered as a tool to improve the skills and both linguistic and numeral literacy of these children[141].

3.6.2 Audio Description in foreign language or translation courses

The instrumental use of audio description within the framework of translation teaching programmes has not been yet explored, but it has started to attract more and more attention from the international audiovisual translation community. As we have seen, the audio description process involves a form of intrasemiotic translation from the visual into the verbal within a number of constraints, which strictly depend on the source text *genre* and on the final audience. At the same time, the purpose of teaching

[141] The universe of teaching is full of resources on visual literacy and the important of descriptive language. Among the experiments conducted on groups of children, we find it useful to highlight those presented at the 2010 CABE and available here: http://www.share2learn.com/cabe2010workshop.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

translation has been defined as a "communicative translational competence" (Colina 2003). This competence does not only involve linguistic knowledge of both the source and the target language, but also interlingual and intercultural translation competence (Angelelli and Jacobson 2009). This means that the translational ability is not only to render a text into a target language properly, but also to carry our specific translational tasks within a given context and a specific text in order to meet the needs and the expectations of the final 'user'. The communicative translational competences are also built through communicative competences (Bachman 1990). In particular, Bachman (1990) describes the communicative competences as the intersection of organizational and pragmatic competences. The first category is subdivided into grammatical and textual competences, while the second is distinguished between illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences. From this perspective, we find it useful to stress the analogies between intersemiotic and intrasemiotic translation, in which audio description is also categorized. Similarities between the processes involved are even more evident when approaching the more comprehensive approach to translation teaching provided by the PACTE (Process for the Acquisition of Translation Competences and Evaluation). Angelelli and Jacobson (2009: 27) stress the laying foundation of the PACTE approach as follows:

> The PACTE model presents two major competences: transfer competence and strategic competence. Transfer competence is defined as "the ability to

> complete the transfer process the from the ST to the target text (TT), taking into account the translation's function and the characteristics of the receptor" (Orozco 2000: 199). This competence is further broken into down into comprehension competence, the ability to de-verbalize the message and control interference, re-expression competence, and competence in choosing the most adequate method. Transfer competence is seen as being informed by four other competences: communicative competence in two languages, extra-linguistic competence (world and specialist knowledge), psycho-physiological resources (using various cognitive, psychomotor and attitudinal competence), and instrumental-profession competence (the ability to use the tools and apply the norms of the profession). The final element in this model is strategic competence in which all these processes are used in finding and solving problems in the translation process (Orozco 2000).

The description of the PACTE approach, though applied to verbal languages only, describes a whole set of competences which can be applied also to the audio describing process. In addition, the 2011 report published by the PACTE stresses that the investigations conducted on both translators and translation teachers reveal a strong "dynamic" approach to translation[142]:

> The reason for this lies, no doubt, in the fact that both groups are specialists in the use of language and are therefore aware of its communicative function. […] This finding corroborates theoretical models that have been proposed in the field of Translation Studies such as the Nida's dynamic

[142] The full report is accessible at http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/pacte/sites/grupsderecerca.uab.cat.pacte/files/2011_PACTE_Continuum.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

> equivalence (Nida 1964); Seleskovitch and Lederer's equivalence of meaning (Seleskovitch 1968, Seleskovitch and Lederer 1984); Reiss, Vermeer and Nord's functional equivalence (Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Nord 1991), Hatim and Manson's communicative translation (Hatim and Manson 1990), etc…

Translation Studies and the Skopos Theory approaches underlined in the report are the same that have been recalled in section 3.2 to position audio description within the framework of translation. As recalled by Peralta, Martinez Sotomayor and Lemus[143] there are evident similarities between the competences required for translation and those required for audio description, as recalled in their table, which draws on a re-elaboration of Jimenez (2005) and ASTC (Association of Science-Technology Centres). In particular, both require a "command" of both languages, a "decision making process about transferring the message", a "transfer to target language", the "use of communicative resources" and the "use of both information and technological resources" (Jimenez 2005: 7). Of course, it is crucial to stress, as we have highlighted in the section 3.1, the "command" of the language of audio description is less a matter of linguistic competence than of understanding both the product and the final audience. Based on the similarities between the competences required in both interlingual and intersemiotic translation, we believe that teaching and learning audio

[143] The document is accessible online at http://idiomas.tij.uabc.mx/plurilingua/volumen5eng/developing.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

description could be also extremely beneficial for another reason, that is, improving the knowledge of a foreign language. Indeed, learning a foreign language or improving one's proficiency is often based on visual materials or audiovisual products such as DVD and interactive media. Students enrolled in a language course may find it useful to listen to audio described films in a foreign language. Indeed, they could watch the film while listening to the audio description, possibly with the script available, in order to practise the pronunciation, the orthography and the sentence structure. In addition, as they become more acquainted with the technique of audio description, they could make possible hypotheses about the selection of information and the match between words and images. In this sense, and given the availability of audio described films in English, we believe that this type of activity would be crucial for any type of English course. Reversely, we also think that watching and listening to an audio described film would increase the writing abilities in a foreign language because students could eventually try to transcribe segments of the audio description. From a phonetic perspective, the audio description is a positive experience because students can improve their pronunciation abilities (this would be even more productive if students themselves could try to record the script and then compare with the original). In addition, it offers the advantage to be a 'selective' description, which needs to be linked to dialogues and the visual objects on the scene; for this

reason, it is likely to stimulate semantic connections and inferences on selection and relevance criteria.

From a different perspective today, the translation of audio described scripts from one language into the other is becoming quite frequent (Hyks 2005). According to Matamala (2007), huge exchanges occur between the United States and Germany for the translation of scripts. The same can be said of the UK, which can be considered as one of the most relevant 'producers' of audio description worldwide. Translating a script, however, is not only a matter of language. It is, indeed, also a matter of culture.

From a simple technical perspective, it should be necessary:

1. To shorten sentences to fit within the same time span due to the potentially higher average length of words in the target language.

2. To assess if the target language relies on dubbing or subtitling; in the latter case, it would be necessary to consider audio subtitling.

3. To evaluate whether the speed of delivery in the source text is transferable to the target text.

4. To assess whether the target text prefers the voice of men or women.

From a rather cultural and linguistic standpoint, there are different issues to take into consideration:

1. What is relevant in the source culture could not be as relevant in the target culture.

2. Original culture-specific objects (for example an Italian coffee-machine, or the 5 pm tea in England) should be paid attention in the target audio description.

3. Some countries, like Italy, are today more used to audio narration than to audio description. A rigorous, descriptive and precise language like the language used in the UK, for example, should paradoxically not achieve the same goal on produce the same effect on the target audience. When translation audio description scripts, audio describers should decide whether taking a more descriptive or a more narrative approach.

Hyks (2005) is very critical about the possible developments in the field of audio description translation. Indeed, the translation of an existing script could turn to be more expensive and time-consuming rather than a new script designed from scratch. A different opinion is expressed by López Vera (2006) according to whom a skilled translator has the right skills to carry out both the tasks of an audio describer and that of a reviser.

As we have seen, audio describing entails a 'special' education to become aware of the meaning lying under the world of image. In other words, it is based on a visual literacy. Education to visual literacy is instrumental not only in the field of audio description but also in translation teaching activities. In fact, looking at images does not only trigger revealing their true hidden meaning but also learning how to describe them. However, learning how to describe still images is different from describing moving

images and film scenes in particular. Describing images that are transmitted in a film also means activating special connections to fill the semantic blanks and activating a 'special' film literacy background.

3.6.3 Audio description in academic contexts: designing a course in audio description

As we have seen in Chapter 1, an audio describer is a very specialized professional figure. The profession is not only based on a solid background in accessibility issues or on the ability of summarizing, describing or narrating, but also on a specific training including other crucial aspects. In the past, however, audio description was mainly a volunteer-based activity. Indeed, according to Matamala (2007: 329):

> Audio Description (AD) for the media has been carried out mainly by volunteers who have acted as social intermediaries in making audiovisual material accessible, transforming images into vivid narration and allowing those with sight problems to gain access to culture. With the increasing percentages of AD that will be implemented either by law or by broadcasters' goodwill – as is the case for the BBC, Spanish State TVE and Catalan National TV3 –, the need for a new professional profile will arise (Remael and Vercauteren 2007).

This means that an interest in audio description as a profession is rapidly growing at international level and is paving the way for new training opportunities. Matamala (2007) points out the different perspectives about the skills required to an audio describer. The author draws on the opinions provided by professional audio describers and academics (Diaz-Cintas 2007; Hyks 2005; Navarrete 1999; Vidal 2004) and points out the most relevant characteristics an audio describer should have. Diaz-Cintas (2007) divides the competences into four main categories[144]: linguistic competences, competences related to the content, technological/ applied competences and personal competences. Some of the competences are pertinent to the field of audio description specifically, namely accessibility knowledge and understanding of the needs of the blind. Others might intersect with other disciplines such as personal care and rehabilitation; many other competences - such as excellent knowledge of the source/target language, linguistic creativity, sensitiveness and the ability to summarize - can be considered as intended skills for any other kind of translation course.

Today, a limited number of post-graduate courses and Masters degrees offer specific training in audio description. The ADA (Audio Description Association) in conjunction with the West and North Yorkshire Open

[144] The article by Diaz-Cintas draws on a study commissioned by the Cesya Centro Espanol de Subtitulado y Audio Descripccion and on the reactions that its presentation in Madrid raised in the year 2006.

College Network organizes a certificated course in Audio Description skills. This course has some specific entry requirements[145], among which:

1. Summarization abilities.
2. Good command of the language.
3. Clear and pleasant voice.
4. Attitude to team-working.

At the end of the course, the attendants are proficient in the fundamentals of audio description (drafting preparatory notes or a first draft script) and are well aware of the voice qualities required to a narrator as well as of the relationships with other departments within the work environment. Finally, this course is specially conceived for students that will be working in theatres and therefore also provides with specific information on the *genre*. At University, audio description in the UK is taught at the University of Surrey (MA in Monolingual Subtitling and Audio description) and at the University of Rohampton (MA in Audiovisual Translation). Both courses do not provide for any special entry requirement, except for a perfect mastery of the English language, also for non-native speakers. The second one seems to place higher attention on the perspective of audiovisual translation as a research field but,

[145] The full description of the course provided by the ADA is available online at http://www.developingaudiences.com/documents/ADApdf7.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011). A calendar of the courses can be also seen at http://adascotland.com/calendar.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011). In 2011, the course is held every Saturday. The duration of each lesson is of approximately 5 hours.

on a more general level, they are both aimed at offering valuable training in accessibility issues.

In the USA, we find a large number of both academic and professional courses dealing with audio description. As an example, Audio Description Solutions provide short in-house courses[146] aimed at all federal agencies wishing to produce audio description for specific situations or events. The Audio Description Associates LLC also provides with short-term training in audio description[147]. Joel Snyder, one of the first audio describers at international level, is sharing his experience in these courses and has put a particular emphasis on the practical aspects of the profession. In particular, one slot in the course is dedicated to oral, breath and interpretation skills. The Audio Description Coalition also offers a short training programme in audio description as well, with audio describers delivering on-site training activities within public administrations, offices and companies. On occasions, the Disability Network of the City of New York has provided a training course in audio description completely free of charge, provided that the attendants would also audio describe a performance for free. The same

[146] The courses are normally articulated into 2 consecutive days and 1 additional day several months later to monitor the progress made by the attendants. More information about the courses is to be found at http://www.audiodescriptionsolutions.com/film-training.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[147] The duration of the course may vary from a few hours (the course in this case is provided under the form of workshop) to five days. More information about the contents can be found at http://www.audiodescribe.com/training/schedule.php (last accessed 19/02/2011).

can be said of the ORBI association[148] and many more companies and private/public bodies that offer short term training in the field of visual accessibility[149]. All of them have some crucial points in common, that is, an investigation of the target *genre* (dance, opera, film, theatre, musicals, works of art) and exercises on pre-written draft scripts. They are preliminary and preparatory courses for a future training as a professional (and not only occasional) audio describer.

In Germany, the training is usually done at the *Bayerischer Rundfunk* by Bernd Benecke, Head of the Audio Description Department, and normally involves working with blind and normally sighted people just as in real professional settings.

In Spain, there are various short courses aimed at providing the attendants with the fundamentals of audio description such as the courses at the Universities of Granada and Las Palmas. However, only a few of them provide with real competences to work as a professional audio describer (Matamala 2007). In particular, the *METAV* (European Master in Audio Visual Translation), provides a course in audio description in which some of the exercises suggested to the attendants have proven to be particularly successful. Indeed, students often work in small groups to simulate a

[148] See http://orbiartsnetwork.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/audio-description-workshops-in-huntington-wv-and-wheeling-wv/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[149] As an example, the State Organization of Art and Disability of Texas provides an audio description course on tapes and video is to be purchased online. More information is available at http://www.vsatx.org/audio.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

professional setting, one of which involves them pretending to be blind in order to find out similarities and differences between the different perceptions of relevance and objectivity. The course is designed according to a bottom-up approach. In the first phases, students are called to describe concrete objects like cookery or tools with a maximum number of words in a decreasing order (from 50 to 5 words). They are then shown some textiles, faces, settings and film clips to be audio described.

In Italy today, there are no specific courses in audio description. The Master in Audiovisual Translation at the Forlì-based School for Translators and Interpreters has provided an introduction to AD since 2010. Unfortunately, despite a growing interest in the topic, the academic world is not yet ready to accommodate audio description as a new emerging modality of audiovisual translation and too often, it neglects audio description as a practical matter of accessibility with little or no interest for linguistic theoretical research. In 2012, a course in audio description should be designed within the framework on the Italian edition of the *METAV* and should be conducted fully online in blended modality.

The country-based differences with regard to the training in audio description are very broad. However, the *METAV* master's programme adopted in Spain could pave the way for a standardization of training practices and for an inclusion of audio description training activities within traditional translation courses and audio visual translation specializations. A

great deal of the tasks the audio described is called to perform upon is genre-based and for this reason, the knowledge of the implications brought by the very creation of a script cannot avoid dealing with genre-specific features. Audio description is at the cutting edge between different disciplines. In this research work, we will deal with films. In essence, it is for this reason we believe this should be necessary to deal with the film semiology and Film Studies for a full understanding of the product. This aspect we will discussed in the next chapter.

4. Audio description from a filmic perspective

Cinema can be seen as a device of representation, with its mechanisms, roles and spaces. It presents analogies with theatre, literature and painting, even though its peculiarities are mainly due to image production techniques, such as camera movements or screen types. Cinema is also a device that predetermines roles. For example, if the audience identifies with the point of view offered by the camera, it will contribute to produce meaning and to determine the success of the director's/narrator's strategies (Bettetini 1985; Costa 1985; Metz 1972). Therefore, cinema can be defined as a very complex phenomenon, which also triggers a psychological and emotional function. For this reason, Barthes (1975) used to call it "the festival of emotions". The audiovisual nature of cinema allows for dramatically rich combinations from a syntactical and semantic perspective. A film is the ideal place to experiment multiple *genres*, narrative systems and writing styles. The amount of information available to cinema is impressive, due to the presence of five different media elements: images, phonetic emissions, background sounds, written material and music. In this perspective, if a picture is worth a thousand words, what about the many shots made up of hundreds of pictures that act simultaneously? However, in filmic audio description, the ultimate goal is often the opposite. Indeed, a single word might be called to describe a thousand pictures. In addition, according to

Abel Gance, cinema has provided men with a kinaesthetic experience. However, if traditional cinema provides the spectators with the opportunity of hearing through the eyes, in audio described cinema the audience will be able to see through the ears.

Among the various approaches to cinema, we have chosen to take a descriptive *démarche* to highlight some of its most relevant features for audio description. The ultimate goal of this research work is not being an analysis of cinema but rather a linguistic and semiotic contextualization of the object of study. For this reason, this chapter will deal with cinema from a semiotic perspective and will consider audio description in the light of the interrelation between Film Studies and Narratology.

4.1 Cinema from a semiotic perspective

According to Costa (1985), analyzing cinema means taking both an aesthetic and a communication standpoint. The first perspective deals with the relations between cinema and other forms of art, whereas the second looks at the relationship between cinema and language. Semiotics has always acknowledged the role of aesthetic codes and in particular of poetic functions within the communication processes (Jakobson 1966; Arnheim 1957). The structural approach to cinema has focused on the differences between cinema and the reality that it seeks to reproduce and has found in this autonomy and

in this differencing potential the 'linguistic' formativity of the medium itself (Arnheim 1957)[150]. From a strictly semiotic standpoint, the approaches suggested by Metz (1968, 1972), Bettetini (1975) and Costa (1985) are intended to examine how the linguistic model is also applicable to cinema, that is, if there also exists a specific cinematographic language, which is its articulation and how it is actualized by cinema itself. These issues were afforded systematically by the so called "filmolinguistics". Indeed, as recalled by Stam (2000: 107-108):

> The core of the filmolinguistic project was to define the status of film as a language. Filmolinguistics, whose origins Metz attributed to the convergence of linguistics and cinéphilia, explored such questions: Is cinema a language system (*langue*) or merely an artistic language (*langage*)? (Metz's article "Cinema: langue ou langage? was the founding essay within this currenty of enquiry.) Is it legitimate to use linguistics to study an "iconic" medium like film? If it is, is there any equivalent in the cinema to the linguistic sign? If there is a cinematic sign, is the relation between signifier and signified "motivated" or "arbitrary", like the linguistic sign? […] What is the cinema's "matter of expression"? is the cinematic sign, to use Piercian terminology, iconic, symbolic or indexical, or some combination of the three? Does the cinema offer any equivalent to *langue*'s double articulation […]? What are the analogies to Saussurean oppositions such as paradigm and syntagm? Is there a normative grammar for cinema? What are the equivalent of "shifters" and

[150] From a rather different perspective, Benjamin (1936) and Bazin (1958) have contrasted the opinion of formalists and insisted on the mechanical action of reproduction in cinema, that is, the absence of interpretation and deformation (Costa 1985).

> other marks of enunciation? What is the equivalent of punctuation in the cinema? How do films produce meaning? How are films understood?

On the existence of a cinematographic language, Casetti and di Chio (2007: 55) stress that:

> If a language consists in a device that allows attributing a meaning to objects and actions, and also allows expressing ideas or feelings, as well as communicating information, cinema appears to be a fully-fledged language[151].

However, even though the linguistic nature of cinema is generally acknowledged as a matter of fact, it should be noted that on the one hand, cinema is at the cutting edge between different disciplines and expressive areas, while on the other hand it does not seem to be characterized by homogeneity and a systematic structure. Therefore, it is more like an open laboratory than a set of recurrent and shared rules. It appears at the same time too rich and too vague to be analyzed through traditional linguistic parameters. This is the reason why Metz (1968) concluded that cinema cannot be defined as a linguistic system but rather as a *langage*. Indeed, even though cinema does not generate its products on the basis of an underlying system (it lacks arbitrary signs, the smallest meaning units and a double

[151] Casetti and di Chio (2007: 55), own translation of the Italian "*Se infatti un linguaggio, quale esso sia, consiste in un dispositivo che consente di dare significato a oggetti o a gesti, che consente di esprimere sentimenti o idee, che consente di comunicare informazioni, il cinema appare pienamente come un linguaggio*".

articulation), it can be considered as a *langage* because of its "matters of expression" (Stam 2000). Drawing on Casetti and di Chio (2007: 56 and *passim*), we will try to recall the 'linguistic' features of cinema and we will apply the same analysis to audio described cinema. In order to do so, we will take into consideration the following pathways:

1- Signified/signifiers (expression/content).

2- Signs.

3- Codes.

4.1.1 Signified and signifiers

In traditional films, there are two categories of 'signified', visual and acoustic. The first category includes both moving and still images and written texts that are meant to be read such as subtitles and title bands. The second category includes all acoustic traces and in particular dialogues (voices), sounds and music. Both categories form the material expression of films. In audio described films, this material expression is not made of visual signified, but only of acoustic material. Indeed, images are described through an intersemiotic operation of translation, while subtitles and title bands are eventually read aloud. The same goes for the credit lists and the logos, which normally are not considered as a part of the film but should be taken into consideration in audio description.

Each signified creates an expressive area. Indeed, dialogues belong to natural language; hence, so do written title bands and captions. However, the channel is different because dialogues make use of the acoustic channel, whereas title bands and captions use a visual channel. In addition, both dialogues and written 'messages' can make use of an extended range of registers and variables, in particular of diastratic, diatopic and diamesic nature. Images recall all the visual artifices and iconicity, as well as the visual literacy codes that we have sketched in Chapter 3. Music is also linked to instruments, notes and timbres.

4.1.2 Signs

The relationship between signified, signifier and external referent is based on signs. According to Pierce (1958: 404) a sign is:

> […] anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the later is thereby mediately determined by the former.

Each sign is characterized by an object and by an interpretant; the object is the entity to which the sign is attached, while the interpretant relates to the understanding of the object/sign relation. According to Pierce, there are three

basic types of signs[152]: indexes, icons and symbols. An index refers to the existence of an object to which it is linked by a relationship of implication, but it does not describe the object itself. As an example, a baby crying is an index of an action, however it does not tell anything about the causes, nor explains the implications or the modalities. An icon does not necessarily imply the presence of an object because it expresses its qualities. For example, a photograph can say much about the qualities of the object but this does not pre-supposes its existence. A symbol is an arbitrary sign used in compliance with a convention or an agreed norm. Words, for example, are conventional signs whose material expression does not say anything about the existence of the object it refers to, but at the same time is an agreed 'bridge' between the expression and the content itself.

In traditional cinema, images are icons because they immediately reveal a scenario. However, they do not tell anything about the real existence of the referred objects. They also tell about the qualities of these objects thanks to cinematographic codes that we will see in the next sections. Objects do exist in the fictional space only but not in a realism format, where they are looked upon and interpreted by real audience. Music and words are symbols, while sounds or noises are to be intended as indexes.

In audio description images, that is icons, are translated into words that are symbols. In a sense, the biggest issue about audio description resides in

[152] The semiotics of Pierce has undergone various changes. Here we are not including all different types of signs and subcategories, but only those that we find more pertinent to the object of study.

this passage from icons to symbols. Indeed, in the specific case of audio described films, if icons 'show' something, symbols 'tell' something. The difference between what images/icons say (and which naturally goes beyond the image itself and is somehow impalpable or mainly based on cultural or everyday knowledge) and what words/symbols say constitutes the unsolved striking imbalance between neutrality and interpretation in audio description. Images sometimes say, explicitly, ostensibly; sometimes, they simply suggest. When translating icons in audio description, the process of explaining the 'intentions' beyond images is often perceived as 'too much'. In other words, only the surface should be audio described, that is, the material expression of the icon itself, not the relationship between the sign-vehicle and the interpreter. For example, let us consider a film showing a person who lifts his/her lips in such a way that everybody (from the context, from the plot or everyday knowledge) would understand the feeling of 'deception'. For most American audio describers, this scene should be just described as a 'he/she lifts his/her lips', which is the material expression of the sign 'deception', while the content of the sign (deception) would be left to the spectator's interpretation. On the contrary, for most Spanish audio describers, describing the feeling would be more useful because this would not fall within the field of interpretation; in this sense, the 'visual literacy' also helps interpreting 'signs' unanimously. For this reason, we think there is reason to believe that part of the general 'vagueness' encountered in the

language of audio description is due to this process of translation from icons into symbols. As a result, we see a deductive vs. inductive approach. Whereas the deductive approach would deduce the 'feeling' from the material expression of the sign, the inductive approach would begin with acquiring the 'name' of that particular feeling and then retrieving the form of the icon/image, that is the expression of the actor/actress in the film. Not all the signs are only indexes, icons or symbols. Often, we find that one feature prevails over the others. For example, natural language is mostly symbolic but it can also be iconic. This is the case of onomatopoeic words. Iconic language can be of great help in audio description for children because words 'show' and also 'tell' something. The evocative value of sounds helps creating the mental images that words alone cannot create.

4.1.3 Codes

A code is generally considered to be a system of equivalences, in which each element of the message has a given correspondence; all the options are included into a single system and into 'ratified' attitudes. In other words, both the sender and the receiver of the message know they are communicating on the same ground. Cinematographic codes appear 'weaker' than natural languages because the polysemiosis of images is higher than the polysemiosis of words. Furthermore, they are based on a formalization that is

apparently an expressive freedom. A first distinction should be drawn between cinematographic codes and filmic codes (Casetti and di Chio 2007). Cinematographic codes are part of the cinematographic language, that is, they are strictly inherent to the medium. The filmic codes are not always part of the cinematographic language and they are mostly added or borrowed from other disciplines (the political language used to characterize a politician in a film can be an example). Drawing on Casetti and di Chio (2007: 66), we hereby propose the table elaborated by the authors to distinguish the cinematographic codes in five different categories integrating the components that have been isolated in section 4.1 (two for the visual track and three for the acoustic track)[153]. The categories included in Table 3 will be discussed against the reference framework of audio description:

Cinematographic codes
Basic technological codes 1- Codes of the support 2- Codes of the 'running' 3- Codes of the screen
Visual codes – Iconicity 1- Codes of the denomination and the recognition

[153] Own translation and elaboration from Italian into English.

Cinematographic codes
2- Codes of iconic transcription 3- Codes of iconic composition 4- Iconographic codes 5- Stylistic codes Visual codes – Photography 1- Perspective organization 2- Sidelines 3- Shooting modes 4- Illumination modes 5- Black and white/colour Visual codes – Mobility 1- Type of movement of the profilmic 2- Types of effective movements of the camera 3- Types of apparent movements of the camera

Table 3. Categories of cinematographic codes (adapted from Casetti and di Chio 2007)

4.1.3.1 Basic technological codes

The basic technological codes determine, for example, if a product is going to be recorded on a more or less sensitive film intended as a support and not as a final product. Indeed, the grain of the film determines a difference in the

image resolution can create special visual effects. Also the format of the film, in terms of millimetres, allows the product to be more or less bright or close to the objects. In addition, the frame/minute ratio is also an indicator of how the movement is rendered in the final product. The screen also plays an important role because it can have a reflecting or a transparent surface, with a more or less marked brightness. Finally, the screen itself can be of small or big dimensions, according to the type of hall where the film is going to be screened. When considering the technological codes in audio description, a first relevant question arises. In particular: shall the audio describer render these choices or not? If so, which are the linguistic means the audio describer shall use to convey them? One of the biggest issues is the use of a cinematographic meta-language opposed to, or in alternative to, the description of the 'effect' caused on the normally sighted audience. Traditionally, audio description would not make use of cinematographic meta-language. However, if the effect that the director intends to produce on the final audience is particularly evident or is meant to have an impact on the perception, an audio introduction would be particularly useful. As far as we know, however, none of the filmic scripts produced so far contains notes or comments about basic technological codes.

4.1.3.2 Visual codes

As to the visual codes, denomination and recognition allow the audience to recognize and identify portions of the filmic fiction on the basis of their analogy with reality. Thanks to these codes, it is possible to recognize a finger, or a hand (Casetti and di Chio 2007). The iconic transcription ensures the correspondence between semantic features and the graphic traits that reproduce them. The lights that play around a wrinkled hand are an example. The codes of the iconic composition regulate the construction of the visual space that is the way in which 'objects' are grouped and distributed on the surface of the image. Figuration and plasticity are two functions associated with this category of visual codes. Objects are more 'plastic' if their form emerges more firmly and is more relevant than the background. There are various ways in which a figure can stand more or less evidently against a background. For example, the position occupied on the screen plays a vital role. Indeed, the objects positioned in the middle of the screen are considered, and thus perceived, as being more important. Furthermore, moving objects attract more attention than still ones. Additionally, the most relevant objects remain longer on the screen during the same scene or recur more times than others. Finally, the use of rhetoric artifices should not be forgotten. As an example, the so-called 'iris' announces the transition from one scene to the other or isolates a detail of a given object. The iconographic codes regulate the construction of complex, strongly conventionalized and fixed-meaning figures. An example of this construction is the typical uniform

of policemen, as recalled by Casetti and di Chio (2007). The stylistic codes represent the features that show the idiosyncrasies of their creators; for example, the presence of particular objects or 'signs' can be considered as the 'signature' of a film director. In audio description, the utmost attention is paid to the iconic transcription, especially in countries where objective and neutral audio description is considered as a must. Indeed, if the camera shows a hand that clearly stands for a man or a woman, the audio describer will tend to describe it as a hand and not as the 'entity' it stands for (man/woman or his/her role in the film). However, no study has dealt so far with the consistency of representation of visual iconicity and stylistic codes in audio description. The semantic value of position, permanence and rhetoric artifices often gets lost in audio description. This is partly due to time constraints, partly to the pretended objectivity and non-obtrusivity of audio description, and partly to insufficient knowledge of the cinematographic language and of the director's intentions. In this sense, a strong and solid background in cinematography, Narratology and Film Studies should be considered as a departing point for the profession of audio describer.

The photographic composition of visual codes is determined by various factors. Firstly, the perspective shows how objects tend to appear to the audience in the most 'natural' way; however, some films may show different or upside down perspectives, through the use of wide-angle lens or other

perception instruments. The ‘format’ of the screen also plays a very important role. This format is determined by the relationship between height and width of the images. These are normally rectangular, however some films may experiment multiple solutions or make a rectangular image become square. Shooting an object also means detaching it from the background and from the rest of the objects. Usually a distinction is drawn between the so-called ‘in’ space that is the space that openly appears to the sight and the ‘off’ space that is the space that remains outside the image. The framing can be also articulated in different modes, according to the point or the angle from which things are observed. These choices have their relevance from a semantic perspective because they can add more features to a given object. The scale of shots and field types also has an important impact on the way in which objects are perceived because they establish the distance from which things are recognized. As an example, there can be extreme long shots, long shots, medium/long shots, near-shots, semi close-up shots, two-shots, close-ups, big close-ups and details. These are technical terms to indicate the degree of distance of the camera from the object. As to the angle of observation, it is possible to distinguish between a frontal shot, *plongée* and *contre-plongée* (if the camera is respectively at the same level, under or above the object); the degree of inclination can be normal, oblique and vertical (on an imaginative line that departs from the same inclination as the

object until 90 degrees)[154]. Lighting also plays a vital role. Lights can be used to illuminate objects or can be themselves an object on which the film director intends to draw the attention of the audience. Gradualism in lighting variation creates realism, surrealism and hyperrealism, that is, it generates feelings and impressions (for example fear or tenderness), or tends to underline or hide specific qualities of an object. In this sense, colours are among the most relevant instruments, however maybe also among the most underestimated (Casetti and di Chio 2007). Black and white as opposed to coloured images or chromatic codes are very deeply linked to impressions, perceptive reactions, ideological references (black for Fascism or Nazism, red for the progress or the Communism) or narratological functions (each colour associated to a given character of a film). Of course, it is necessary to know the effects produced by these artefacts on the normally sighted audience. At the same time, the audio describer should be able to understand the intentions of the film director, that is, the message that he/she intends to convey. In other words, he/she should have a solid filmic literacy. To which extent is this filmic literacy also shared by the blind audience? To what extent and through which linguistic artifices can filmic codes be rendered through audio description? These are just a few of the questions that still need to be addressed in the field of audio description. For example, the importance of audio describing colours is generally acknowledged by experts

[154] See Kress and van Leuwen 1996.

and researchers. However, in countries where audio description has a more narrative attitude, colours tend to be underestimated or less described (Arma forthcoming).

Mobility is also important when approaching the study of visual codes in films. There seems to be two main types of mobility (Casetti and di Chio 2007). One has to do with the moving (fictional) reality and the other one represents the movements of the camera. In other words, cinema reproduces both the movement of objects inside the scene and the movement of the operator(s) using the camera. In this sense, a distinction is made between the profilmic (the represented reality) and the camera movements. Observing from a fixed point of view inevitably triggers a sense of detachment as well as an absolute and objective 'gaze'; on the other hand, adopting a moving point of view implies a strong sense of involvement and subjectivity. In this perspective, the camera may move according to the following 'modes': pan shot and tracking shot. A pan shot is operated when the camera moves in a vertical, horizontal or transversal sense, and the upper/bottom, left/right borders of the image move accordingly. A tracking shot is operated through different types of dollies or even a steady-cam, that is, a camera that appears to be very sensitive to the human movement. In general, audio description does not clearly render camera movements. The use of a cinematographic meta-language is normally unacceptable because it resembles an incursion of the diegetic into the extra-diagetic and therefore of the subjective world,

which audio description usually aims to avoid. In addition, describing camera movements means choosing a perspective, a point of view and a focalization point, that is, identifying with the camera operator or another diegetic presence.

4.1.3.3 Graphic codes

From the point of view of the graphic codes, we have seen that these regulate the filmic expressive material that, along with the moving graphic image, participates in the visual component in cinema. Captions are the graphic traces that are used to explain the content of images. For example, in dumb cinema, subtitles are generally impressed on the film or added in the post-production phase and can be both interlingual and intralingual; in the latter case, they are aimed at the deaf or the hearing impaired. Titles are the graphic traces at the beginning or at the end of a film (credits and cast lists) or contain instructions, such as the very well known 'the end'. Title bands can be diegetic, that is, inside the story, or extra (or non-)diegetic, that is, outside the story. In audio description, intralingual captions and title bands are generally read aloud, as well as subtitles. The issue of subtitles, however, appears to be very complicated at a closer analysis. Indeed, many countries, unlike Italy, do not rely on dubbing but on subtitling only. In this case, the audio description in the target language is inserted into a film that originally

carries another language. In this case, audio subtitling allows reading all the subtitles aloud. Generally speaking, this is made by one or more actors other than the AD reader. Interlingual graphical traces can be read in the original language or translated into the language of the audio description in accordance with the intentions of the director and the way they integrate with the rest of the product.

4.1.3.4 Acoustic codes

It is possible to distinguish between diegetic and non-diegetic sounds and voices. From the first perspective, sounds can be onscreen or off-screen if they are within or outside the frame shot. They can be interior or exterior if they come from within the soul of characters or from a physical objective reality. All non-diegetic and interior sounds are also called 'over' sounds (Casetti and di Chio 2007). Noises might also come from the inside or the outside and they contribute to the creation of effects. Music can be used to create a sequence, to accentuate the passage between consecutive scenes as well as to create the right 'mood' or emphasis on rhetoric or pathetic scenes. Acoustic codes create the so-called "audiovisual illusion" (Chion 2009). Indeed, sound is not only meaningful *per se* but also plays a vital role in the sound-image syncretism. This allows establishing an immediate relation between what is heard and what is (not) seen. According to Chion (2009),

cinema is based on *voco-centrisme*, because it prefers 'voice' to other 'matters of expressions' and separates it from other sounds. By 'voice', Chion (2009) means a support to the verbal expression. In this sense, the *vococentrisme* approach is accompanied by *verbocentrisme*, which underlines the importance of a film 'text' in structuring both sight and understanding. In general, ears analyze works and synthesize much faster than eyes (Chion 2009). This happens because ears are the vehicle through which natural language is communicated. In the audiovisual 'contract', while eyes perform spatial tasks easier, ears perform temporal tasks much faster. It is not a coincidence that, similarly to the hearing capabilities of eyes, there is also a visual ability of ears (Bettetini 2009, Chion 2009). This would allow reconstructing a situation or a mental image based on the sounds only. This happens, for example, in some Bresson's films, where sounds are exceptionally built and orchestrated. If images are not the content but the container, with sounds it is rather the opposite. In fact, sounds can be inserted in a container without limits since, unlike images, they cannot rely on a container. In this respect, the classical form of cinema can be seen as a place of images and sounds, being the sounds that something that seeks the place where to be (Chion 2009). In audio described films, dialogues should be left untouched and the audio description track shall not overlap with it. The same applies to noises and sounds, which announce the presence of objects/persons on the scene and therefore also play a narrative role.

However, it is not always possible to preserve music ‘untouched’. For this reason, if music has a semantic role within the fictional reality, the audio describer will try to overlap with it as little as possible and the volumes will be adjusted accordingly.

4.1.3.5 Syntactical codes

Thus far, we have been considering how images are built within a film, which are the semantic and rhetoric strategies that allow interpreting their meaning and determine, in essence, the effect that they are supposed to produce on the final audience. However, an important role is also played by the way in which shots and scenes are linked, that is, by the syntactical structure of the film itself. This includes the multiplicity of cinematographic expressive means. It is important to stress that all the components contribute to build a film, even though not always to the same extent. As we have seen so far, the syntax is also articulated on a double level that is how codes can be combined within an image or between images. In the first case, codes, whether visual or acoustic, are aggregated in accordance to the principle of simultaneity. In the second case, they are built following a progression that can take multiple forms. Among the most widespread in cinematography, composition techniques privilege the following: association by identity (that follow a sort of narrative/causal pathway), association by analogy or contrast,

association by proximity, association by transitivity and association by simple juxtaposition (Casetti and di Chio 2007). These forms of association allow to find more general schemata that use syntactical constructions and reach, through a bottom-up progression, global linguistic and expressive options. In particular, they concentrate around the notions of classic, baroque and modern cinematography, all characterized by a specific combination of the visual/acoustic codes and the syntactical constructions introduced thus far (Casetti and di Chio 2007: 104 and *passim*).

Most of the time, audio description cannot render syntactic choices explicitly. However, the use of carefully selected linguistic resources can be instrumental to render the rhythm of actions and their syntactic construction indirectly. As an example, the use of multiple juxtaposed temporal or spatial adverbs at the beginning of shot changes, such as 'Now', 'Later', 'There again,' could prove that scenes are shot more or less quickly. Similarly, analogy, progression and juxtaposition could be also suggested through language resources.

4.1.4 The level of representation

According to Casetti and di Chio (2007), the presence of moving images on a screen simultaneously implies the presence of three main representation modes. To begin with, the 'content' representation that deals with the

presence of moving objects, persons and actions that occupy the space. Secondly, the 'modality' deals with the 'form' acquired by the entities on the screen. Finally, the 'links' between images and situations deal with the way stories are built, juxtaposed and how they relate to each other. These three levels correspond to three phases of the cinematographic production, respectively the setting, the photographic presentation of contents and the editing phase[155]. The first dimension relies on four categories of entities: informants (explicit information such as age, physical appearance, sex, quality, form of an action, etc.), indexes (something that partially remains implicit such as the causes of an action, the sense of a setting, an atmosphere, the hidden side of a particular attitude, i.e. a nervous and scattered look at a window that reveals anxiety or worry), themes (that is the issues or the content units around which the film is built) and patterns (that indicate the possible directions of the story, emblematic or recurring situations). The second dimension is maybe less intuitive and has to do with the influence that given shooting modalities have on the presence and the distribution of objects within the filmic space. The choice of a long shot, a close shot or a wide-angle means not only choosing an expressive modality but also being aware of the effects that these perspectives will produce on the final audience. The shooting can be stable or variable and dependent or independent from the content itself. The third phase deals with editing

[155] In Italian respectively "*messa in scena*", "*messa in quadro*" and "*messa in serie*".

images according to specific modalities, such as simple juxtaposition or association by identity. This phase describes the way in which images integrate with each other and appear on the screen as a single unit. The three levels of representation move on a double axis of space and time that are summarized in Tables 4a and 4b below:

Level of representation: space	
Axis of organization: space	Analytic categories
In/off	In Off (not perceived) Off (imaginable) Off (defined)
Static/dynamic	Static (fixed) Static (moving) Dynamic descriptive Dynamic expressive
Organic/inorganic	Flat/deep Unitary/fragmented Centered/eccentric Closes/open

Table 4a. Representation of the filmic space (adapted from Casetti and di Chio 2007)

Level of representation: time	
Time as a collocation "it was in…": - Époque - Year - Period	Time as a form of 'becoming' "organized in" - Order - Length - Frequency
Time as a form of becoming	
Axes of organization: Time	Analytic categories
Order	Circular Cyclic Linear Not chrono-logical
Length (apparent) - Normal - Abnormal	 Natural (absolute/relative) Summary, ellipsis, extension, pause
Frequency	Single Multiple Repetitive Iterative/frequentative

Table 4b. Representation of filmic time (adapted from Casetti and di Chio 2007)

We will not explain all the categories in details. However, both space and time in films play a vital role for the articulation of the cinematographic language. As an example, rendering the dilatation or the compression of time in audio description is only one of the challenges. Indeed, as we have seen in this chapter, images tell more than what language does. Images are by definition polysemiotic and multilayered, while language is not. In addition, audio description pretends to be objective, clear, straightforward and mono-semiotic; evidently, there is a sort of hiatus between the features AD is called to have for communicative purposes and the aesthetic function it shall comply with, which are strictly depending on the original medium.

4.2 On the interrelation of hearing and sight in films

Hearing and seeing are the product of a strict interrelation between waves that go through the space under the form of vibrations and oscillations. In audiovisual products, the visual track is mixed with the audio track, made up by voices, sounds, music and paradoxically, silence. It is not a coincidence that Bresson stated the sound films have invented silence (Bettetini 2009; Chion 1985). The vibratory waves hit the human sight and hearing. Nevertheless, this process does not occur separately but is based on a synthesis because the spectator perceives at the same time two different categories of stimuli. The exchange between the two audiovisual sources and

the ‘spectators’ is not limited to the production and the reception of these stimuli but triggers a representative dimension, rich in connotative and denotative aspects, that is, semantics. According to Arnheim (1957), both the hearing and seeing dimensions should complement in filmic products. Indeed, their use as expressive means relies on artistic grounds that make them integrated into a single semantic unit. The resulting product is different from each single component, however components undergo an operation of synthesis that is based on similarities and interferences (Cano and Cremonini 1990) between dialogues, sounds, music, silences and moving images. Based on this synthesis, the spectator becomes ‘victim’ of an audiovisual illusion and is therefore convinced that images contain everything he/she needs to understand. This results in ‘sounds’ that are there to reinforce but to also, to supplement images. In drawing a distinction between eyes and ears, Chion (1985) demonstrates that images do not semantically prevail on sounds and shows that whereas eyes are characterized by selection, exclusion and particularization, ears, on the other hand, cannot avoid hearing the sounds emitted in a sort of acoustic space. At the same time, the audio track, including dialogues, have not a semantic value *per se* and do not produce sensorial solicitations if not considered in their relationship with images. Mulder (2004: 196) used to define sound as “the blind spot of visual culture”. The double ‘articulation’ of audiovisual products works only if the components do not tell the same things but mutually complete in treating the

same matter in two different ways. Each medium shall represent it its own way and the resulting differences should correspond to the differences between the media themselves (Arnheim 1957). The relationship between acoustic and visual stimuli occurs in the form of "interferences" (Cano and Cremonini 1990) or "*occurrences*" (Jost 1987), that give birth to the audiovisual combinations interested in narratological combinations. In this perspective, the acoustic track plays a fundamental role, in that it reinforces the visual elements or even proceeds or subordinates it to its manifestations. Just as the point of view, there also exists a 'point of hearing' or, to tell it with Chion (2009), a "*point d'écoute*". This deals with the perspective of sounds, defined in accordance with the collocation of sounds during the production process. The notion of *point d'écoute* can be very interestingly applied to audio description. As we have seen, the audio described products are exclusively based on one or more track(s) that can be (pre)mixed or released live. In this sense, in Chion's (2009) terminology, audio description would be ascribed in the category of 'acousmatic' sounds. These sounds are heard but the source or the cause cannot be seen. In a certain sense, it could be argued that the blind or the visually impaired can see none of the audio sources of an audiovisual product. However, they know where dialogues and other types of sounds come from because an audiovisual 'contract' also occurs in audio described cinema. This contract provides for the additional audio track to serve as an 'off-sound' that describes what happens on the

screen and helps identifying where internal sounds do come from. Audio description itself, however, is not only absent from the screen but is also, non-diegetic. In other words, it is temporally and spatially situated elsewhere. As we have repeatedly underlined, an audio description is meant to express what the blind audience cannot see. In this process of 'translation', whose language will be partially analyzed in Chapter 5, just as in 'normal' cinema, there are correspondences and intersections between the senses. Kinaesthetic experiences in cinema are far from being infrequent. They deal with the association of stimuli of different nature, one of which is real and objective. The permeability of different perceptive areas facilitates intersensorial connections (Cano and Cremonini 1990). Indeed, as eyes can 'ear', ears can 'see' by means of visual reminiscences that help the brain reconstruct images that are not seen on the screen but only re-built by the blind audience from scratch. The greatest experiments in this sense are to be found in Godard's cinema (Chion 2009). Sounds are often treated as if they were cuts and often reverberate in spaces reproducing walls and interiors. In audio description, however, words are generally meant to precisely describe and not to suggest or evoke. Nevertheless, the use of onomatopoetic words especially in horror movies or animation films could be explored more in detail to track the effects produced by acoustic artifices on the blind audience. In Chion's terms, words used for this purpose could also be seen as a "*parole-texte*" (Chion 2009). It inherits some of the qualities of intertitles

in dumb cinema and performs as long as images run on the screen. They have the power of evocating the image of objects, settings, places and characters.

Words, intended as an acoustic linguistic message, are intimately linked to the visual message, as pointed out by Barthes (1964) who distinguishes between the functions of "*relais*" and "*ancrage*". The first one fulfils a complementary function: words are fragments of a syntagmatic unity (see comics for example). Through the second, the text orientates the interpretation to counter the scattered sense of images and fixes the meaning as a guide for the interpretation itself. Its function is denominative and definitory (Bettetini 2009). The *ancrage* might also fulfil an ideological function because the text leads the interpretation of the receptor, which guides him/her through all possible meanings towards the intended one. The notion of *ancrage* might be as well referred to audio description. Indeed, the relationship between a film and its audio described 'text' (or script) can be intended in these terms. The audio description, for its selective nature, is a type of verbal communication, which selects visual entities and renders them in such a way as to orientate the interpretation and the meaning assigned to images themselves. In doing so, audio description uses linguistic artifices. In fact, it does not express itself through judgments or interpretations but seeks at using a 'neutral' language to provide the audience with the semantic inferences and occurrences to create meaning. Audio description, however, is

not only a matter of words. Indeed, a fundamental part in audio description is played by supra-segmental features that can be inferred from the narrator's voice intonation or another audio source[156].

According to Chion (1983), there are three different listening modes:

1. Casual listening, the most frequent one, tends to collect and compose information on the cause of the hearing itself (for example a sound that indicated the level of a liquid into a container).

2. Semantic listening, which is based on the pertinent differences in the realization of a code or a language and is therefore aimed at interpreting a message.

3. Reduced listening that is concentrated on the qualities and the forms of sounds. This notion is taken from Schaeffer (1966) and is linked to the listening of music and film sounds in particular and is hardly natural.

In audio description, the three listening modes are to be found. However, the casual and the reduced mode seem to be the most pertinent to the object of study. Indeed, the casual listening allows the audience to understand where the sounds come from, that is, where they originate from and which are the related causes and effects. Through the reduced listening, the audience may often 'isolate' one or more of the four different audio sources (dialogues, sounds, music, audio description) in audio described films to concentrate on their features.

[156] For an extensive discussion of the differences and the similarities between the audio and the visual source in films, see Bettetini 2009.

4.3 Linguistic acts in films and audio described films

In films, as well as in many other audiovisual products, three linguistic acts are usually performed: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary (Austin 1962; Bettetini 1985; Bettetini 2009). The first one implies the action of saying something. The second one has to do with the communicative intentions of the message sender, while the final one deals with the effects produced on the message receiver. The last two are particularly important when approaching the visual-verbal/oral shift. Illocutionary acts are characterized by indicators in the enunciation and in particular segmental (ex: verb modes) and suprasegmental features (ex: voice intonation). In addition, Austin (1962) also draws a distinction between direct and indirect linguistic acts, where the first ones rely on a 'literal', direct and referential correspondence, while the second ones refers to the modes of the enunciation, that is, to suprasegmental features. Perlocutionary acts are aimed at inducing the receiver to do something. As an example, the act of informing someone of something has the perlocutionary effect of making the receiver aware of that message and inducing her/him doing something.

In audiovisual products, the linguistic acts are much more complex than in everyday life (Bettetini 2009). Indeed, the interrelation between sounds and images for both the fictional reality and the spectators entails a number of different acts. For example, in a film scene, not only the characters move

or speak but also the settings and the camera 'speak' to the audience, that is, "audiovisual products […] do not limit themselves to do something by saying but more often say something by doing" (Bettetini 2009: 30)[157]. While the enunciation fulfils its illocutionary function, the settings and the scene perform other linguistic acts in a progressive *mise en abyme* of the semiosis between doing and saying, as pointed out by Bettetini (2009: 36)[158]:

> In the cinematographic or television experience, the spectator is shown and – at the same time – is performed the actions (among which the linguistic and communicative acts 'on the scene') that cooperate to the production of meaning and to the emotional solicitation of the "dictum" and the "modus": this morphological feature of the audiovisual products (and of theatre performances) makes it possible to separate the "dictum" from the "modus" only through sophisticated analytical approaches. In audiovisual products (and in theatre) the "dictum" is always permeated by the "modus", they have the same material and composite configuration of the signified.

In films, we shall distinguish between the linguistic acts performed 'within' the fictional space, that is, the filmic scene and the acts performed on the

[157] Own translation of the Italian: "*gli audiovisivi […] non si limitano ad agire dicendo, ma quasi sempre dicono agendo*".

[158] Own translation of the Italian: "*Nel caso dell'esperienza cinematografica o televisiva, lo spettatore assiste a, e, nello stesso tempo, subisce le azioni (fra le quali gli atti comunicativi e linguistici "messi in scena") che collaborano alla produzione di senso e alla sollecitazione emotiva del "dictum" e del "modus": è proprio questa caratteristica morfologica dell'audiovisivo (e del teatro) a far sì che, nel loro caso, il "dictum" sia separabile dal "modus" solo in virtù del ricorso a sofisticati approcci analitici. Nell'audiovisivo (e nel teatro), il "dictum" è sempre impregnato di "modus", è formato nella stessa configurazione materiale, e composita, del significante.*

spectators, that is, 'outside' the fictional space. In addition, when dealing with an audio described film, part of the initial messages (original dialogues, sounds and music) are addressed to the whole audience, while the audio description is addressed to blind or partially sighted people only. However, the effect of the linguistic acts performed by audio description will strictly depend on the interrelation of audio description with the original sound(s), that is, the effect that the original linguistic acts have performed on the visually impaired audience and the way in which audio description has been 'anchored' to the original product. In other words, this effect also entails a psychological and aesthetic dimension.

4.4 Audio description and Narratology

Defining the way in which images and sounds make meaning together is a dilemma. This challenge would need to deal with their narrative dimension. If 'verbal' texts seem to be easier at this operation (because the non-narrativity of some forms of discourse is generally recognized as a difference, essays and novels are a few examples), in audiovisual texts (and films in particular) this operation is more difficult and confused. As Kruger (2010a: 7) states:

> In written fiction the act of telling is often hidden through the use of a covert narrator or narrator without any obvious and identifiable characteristics that allow the reader to form a picture of that narrator (i.e. an implicit narrator).

> This creates the illusion that the novel 'shows' the reader the fictional world and the actions of characters almost as a camera does even though the narrative is always verbalised through the device of the narrator. […] In contrast, although film does not require a narrator figure to narrate the story, and although the use of an overt voice-over, or even on-screen narrator, may create the illusion that the story is told by a stable narrative figure, much of the filmic narrative still rests on the audiovisual presentation or 'narration' without the aid of linguistic presentation, even though the dialogue in film obviously does carry significant narrative weight. The unifying narrative voice found in the narrator of written fiction (and that ties the dialogue together) is replaced in film by the unifying 'voice' of the audiovisual presentation (including visual aspects such as camera angle and movement, and auditory aspects such as sound effects and dialogue). This presentation depends to a large extent on the 'point of view' the audience has on the story world, which brings us to the concept of focalisation.

Films appear to be naturally narrative entities. It is not clear if this narrativity pertains to the contents of images or to the way in which images are organized, linked and presented to the public. In other words, if it regards the 'story' or the form of representation, that is the 'plot' (Casetti and di Chio 2007). Despite these preliminary difficulties, it is possible to state that narration deals with situations in which events are performed and characters act in specific settings. The multitude of sensory inputs provided by narrative films is explained by Chatman (1990: 39):

> It is their nature to show - and to show continuously - a cornucopia of visual details […] The film offers a multitude of visual details, more than any viewer could mentally specify; the specification would be in words, and we do not name every detail we see.

This "cornucopia" of visual details is enchained through structural factors such as characters, settings, events and transformations, as shown in Table 5 below that summarizes their roles within a narrative film:

	Character	Action	Transformation
Phenomenological level	Person	Behaviour	Change
Formal level	Role	Function	Process
Abstract level	Actant	Act	Structural variation

Table 5. Narrative roles in films (adapted from Casetti and di Chio 2007)

For each of the structural level represented in the table above, it is possible to further specify the pertaining categories (Casetti and di Chio 2007: 205 and *passim*). All levels of the film 'communicate' through narration, that is, 'make meaning'. This passage or exchange triggered by the notion of communication happens in films thanks to - and around - images and sounds but 'outside' them because the audience is not inside the filmic

representation. In this sense, an analysis of internal filmic codes could seem incorrect. However, at a closer look, it is evident that the object of communication also defines the conditions for communicating and is the place or the area in which the communication happens. In other words, the content of a conversation - and of a film, as well - will have a strong representational impact on the linguistic acts of the parts involved. Furthermore, it is possible to distinguish between a sender and a receiver, that is, vicarious figures that do not intervene directly into a film but intervene into the communication. For example, all the persons having participated into the production of a film and listed in the credit list are vicarious figures. In addition, there is also an implicit author and an implicit spectator. Such are abstract figures that represent the 'logics' of the text and the 'key' that should interpret it in accordance to 'reading conventions' or 'conditions'. Both the implicit author and the implicit spectator might have corresponding vicarious figures in the film. In such a case, a figurativisation process marks their presence and their actions. In particular, the sender, which is generally called the narrator, can take the form of extradiegetic presence(s) such as shop signs or voices over, as well as of particular stylistic solutions, that is, objects recalling that images and sounds do not stand alone but there is a 'first person' presenting them. Furthermore, 'informers' also play an important role: they are people who narrate or talk about past presences through flashbacks or flash forwards. Moreover, there are some

particular professional figures within the filmic space such as photographers, producers, directors and finally, the author/protagonist (like Truffaut's film "Day for Night"), that contribute to the narration as well. From the point of view of the receiver, that is the implicit spectator, some figures are indicated by Casetti and di Chio (2007) to be listed in this category and they are mainly extradiegetic presences (e.g. the fictive 'hey, you there') and the 'observer' (e.g. detectives, journalists, travellers and all other figures that are meant to observe, investigate or report).

These figures have a lower/higher communicative function and degree of explicitness in carrying out their actions. However, this framework should be completed with some considerations on the point of view, that is a very complex issue and that is the bridge towards a consideration of audio description from a filmic perspective. Evidently, in film narrative, the point of view is the point where the camera has been placed, and is precisely from where the reality is presented on the screen (Casetti and di Chio 2007). In this perspective, the point of view coincides with the eye of the sender. At the same time, the point of view is also the point from where the spectator is looking, which is in other words, the eye of the receptor. In addition, the point of view also shows the point from where and until where the image exists, that is, everything that is filmed or not and included or not into the filmic space. In this sense, the point of view is made up by the type of vision presented, by the perspective, the dislocation points and the position of

objects. Finally, the point of view carries a triple nature. The first one is perceptive ('I see from where I am'), the second is conceptual ('from my point of view, in my opinion') and the third relates to the interest ('as far as I am concerned'). Perceiving relates to 'seeing' (and is an optical activity), conceiving relates to 'knowing' (and is a cognitive activity), and the third category relates to 'believing' (that is an epistemic activity with all related axiology and beliefs). In film narrative, evidently the first category is the most present at all. Entities are offered, given and presented on the screen to the eyes of the spectator. However, the way in which a portion of reality is selected, chosen and presented has to do with a cognitive activity. Finally, in accordance with 'how' the image is built, the point of view can express values, ideologies, convictions and conveniences. The adoption of a point of view 'limits' the reality, that is, identifies a part of it and leaves the rest aside. This *démarche* leads to a focalization that is a double movement of restriction and valorization. All films are made up of focalizations and the 'focalizers' we have dealt with so far are the figures that establish the point of view from which things are considered (seen, known, judged)[159]. In general, film focalizations can take four different configurations as summarized in Table 6 below:

[159] In accordance to the relative and the specific 'weight' of the focalizers it is possible to distinguish between a sender/receiver relation and an extradiegetic/omo-diegetic focalizer relation (Casetti and di Chio 2007). However, not all homodiegetic focalizers carry the point of view of the implicit author. There can be misleading points of view carried by characters that turn out to be the opposite of the intended and implicit narrator himself.

	Seeing	Knowing	Believing
Objective	Exhaustive	Diegetic	Firm
Objective unreal	Total	Meta-discursive	Absolute
Interpellation	Partial	Discursive	Contingent
Subjective	Limited	Infra-diegetic	Transitory

Table 6. Focalization categories (adapted from Casetti and di Chio 2007)

The figures that have been identified (implicit author and spectator, sender and receiver) create a number of complex and strictly related configurations that form a communicative framework. According to Casetti and di Chio (2007), this framework is based on 'mandates', 'competences', 'performances' and 'sanctions', that is, four phases or moments through which the action is meant to be assigned, verified, performed and finally checked. These configurations are based on both a pragmatic and a cognitive ground and give birth to a referential and a metalinguistic communication (Casetti and di Chio 2007). The first one aims at 'showing' and transmitting content and has to do with the denotative aspect of reality. This form of communication is typical of 'objective' focalization, occurring when the author and the spectator obliterate their presence in favour of a neutral presentation of the reality. The metalinguistic communication is more focused on the very act of communicating. The object of this type of communication is not the reality but the very fact of seeing and showing. The

metalinguistic communication is therefore concentrated on the relationship between the parts involved in the communication. When it is more focused on the sender, it is an emotive communication and therefore mainly concentrated on the way and the intentions beyond the act of showing. When the communication is more focused on the receiver, there is an identifying communication that brings the communicative exchange at the heart of the organizational structure. In this type of communication, there is a strong tendency towards the identification of the point of view of the addressee with the point of view of a character. When the communication focuses on the relation between the addresser and the addressee, there is a phatic type of communication. When it focuses more on the form of the message itself than on its content, there is more of a poetic communication. Evidently, in films all forms of communication are strictly linked and are not independent from each other. In particular, the type of communication carried by dialogues is not independent from what images also communicate through a great variety of stimuli. How can audio description cope with this multitude of stimuli? And how can description cope with the intrinsic narrative nature of films?

As we have seen, films are far away from being objective. Markers of subjectivity are present in films under various forms and focalization first. At the same time, an effective audio description is generally claimed to be objective, neutral and unobtrusive. At a first look, the clash between narration and description would seem to be irresolvable. However, as we

have seen, description and narration are not two opposites but are rather situated on a *continuum* line. Audio description, indeed, is not extraneous to subjectivity. Indeed, as Kruger (2010a: 9) observes:

> The subjectivity contained in filmic focalisation poses a problem in any form of audio access since a mere description of or commenting on what is shown fails to convey the narrative effect of the focalisation. However, as Salway and Palmer (2007) indicate, AD does contain orientational markers that pull the audience into a position of access to the thoughts of characters (an important element of focalisation). For example, phrases containing the verb 'to look' in Salway's corpus analysis of 91 AD scripts produced in the UK 'tend to provide information about a character's current focus of attention' (2007, p. 160), and also describe characters' attention on other characters and on events or actions. Although AD therefore does contain markers of subjectivity, research on how this is inscribed in AD (Salway and Palmer, 2007) also indicates that this is not done consistently. Whether such focalisation present in AD does, however, create the narrative effect of the filmic focalisation still has to be investigated.

The hiatus between description and narration, objectivity and subjectivity, relevance and irrelevance in audio description is at the heart of the investigation carried out by Kruger (2010a, 2010b). Based on this, a distinction should be drawn between audio description (AD) and audio narration (AN) that is a particular tendency to adopt a more objective or subjective perspective about films. Audio narration would tend to re-narrativize films and to form a coherent filmic unit. On an extreme of the

continuum, audio description would be the simple replacement of visual codes through words; at the opposite extreme, audio narration would take into consideration the way in which images are built and the focalization intentions of the addresser in order not to reproduce the integrity of visual objects but to focus on the message to convey. As Kruger (2010a: 4) explains:

> Explicitly descriptive AD (as in a documentary) would be closer to the clinically objective, descriptive extreme.
>
> - AD that supplements description with some narrative markers and subjective interpretation would be around the middle of the continuum.
> - AN that moves away from a strict fidelity to what can be seen on-screen in favour of a coherent narrative would be situated closer to the explicitly narrative extreme.

As an example, Kruger (2010a) brings two hypothesis of audio description of the same film ("Everything is illuminated"), the one realized with a focus on description, the other on narration. The first audio description is (Kruger 2010a: 13):

> 4.1. Scene 1 (2:48_3:10) AD (what is shown)
>
> Jonathan Safran Foer, a grim, solemn-faced young man of about 20, with pale skin, handsome features, and striking blue eyes behind a pair of large thick spectacles, stares at the tombstone of Safran Foer, 1921 to 1989. A gardener uses a leaf blower to blow leaves across the graveyard.

The second is (Kruger 2010a: 14):

> In a Jewish graveyard surrounded by trees, Jonathan, a forlorn figure among rows of gravestones, stands staring at the gravestone of his grandfather with a seriousness beyond his years. From up close a star of David can be seen, above the words, Safran Foer, 1920-1989, with a Hebrew inscription carved underneath.

The second proposal (AN) contains focalization marks ("from up close" is an example) that provide the audience with the point of view from where the scene is observed. In addition, the description of the physical appearance of the character is put in the background in the audio narration proposal, while it is foregrounded in the original audio description. The audio narration proposal has a stronger narrativisation impact, because it tells more about the attitude or the feelings of the character ("with a seriousness beyond his years") and about the fact that the surname 'Foer' belongs to the Jewish tradition. In addition, the audio narration makes more use of a metalinguistic communication. The expression "can be seen" makes reference to the camera movement and the camera angle, that is, the position from where the images are filmed. Finally, this audio narration already specifies that Safran Foer is the grandfather of Jonathan, while the audio description does not because it sticks to the description of what can be observed and does not provide hyper-description (Benecke 2007). Further investigation on the saliency and the relevance in audio description from a narrative perspective include

experiments based on the use of the eye-tracking techniques. The application of the eye tracking allows keeping track of the movements of the eyes on the central and the peripheral areas of the screen. Kruger (2010b) has shown that the normally sighted audience firstly looks at narrative-relevant elements and, secondly, puts cognitive relevance forward. This means that (Kruger 2010b: 25):

> [...] to make meaning in AD/AN, to create an equivalent effect, we should prioritise elements with narrative saliency, even if these elements happen to have lower visual saliency, and re-narrativise accordingly.

However, eye tracking experiments have been conducted so far on normally sighted people only and as far as we know, similar experiments on narrative saliency in films have not been conducted on partially sighted or blind people. As we have seen, the cerebral and cognitive functions in the brain of visually impaired people are subject to a reorganization that privileges tactile and hearing impressions. Therefore, it would be necessary to combine the results of eye tracking experiments (visual saliency/narrative saliency) with those coming from psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics.

5. A corpus-based analysis of adjectives in audio description

5.1 The language of audio description in guidelines

The American 2009 edition of the "Standards for Audio Description and Code of professional Conduct for Audio Describers", issued by the Audio Description Coalition[160], sets out the famous "describe what you see" and "less is more" as first golden rules for a good audio description (Audio Description Coalition 2009: 1 and *passim*)[161]. This means that the language used to describe a visual content to the blind and the visually impaired should be as objective as possible and should not offer value judgments or be subject to interpretation itself[162]. In addition, the language used in audio description should tend to be highly descriptive and avoid vagueness. Furthermore, the audio describer should trust the final audience to be able to build their own sense of the story being narrated and their own image of what

[160] The document is available at http://www.audiodescriptioncoalition.org/adc_standards_090615.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[161] So far, the issue of quality in audio description has been discussed against the existing guidelines. Even though a number of research works and case studies exist, still much needs to be done to assess what quality in audio description should consist in. In addition, apart from the UK and the USA where audio description has developed at a rapid pace and exists since longtime, reception studies are lagging behind in the other countries.

[162] As an example, the authors suggest that the word 'beautiful' means nothing if the audio describer does not explain what this beauty consists of. In addition, reference to size should be accurate rather than approximate. On the contrary, ITC guidelines state that the audio describer should not "shy away from using terms such as 'pretty'/'handsome'" (RNIB 2010).

is occurring on screen or on stage. In addition, the point of view of the director should also be respected: for example, if he/she intends to use a 'first person' perspective and this is clear to sighted users, the same experience should also be guaranteed to the visually impaired through audio description[163]. This also triggers the use of meta-language when the audience is addressed by filmic strategies or when the camera moves (Matamala 2006; Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004). From a strictly linguistic perspective, American guidelines (Audio Description Coalition 2009: 6) state that audio description should use short sentences in place of full long sentences, choose a language that is consistent with the type of product to audio describe and appropriate for the listeners[164]. In general, metaphors and similes should be avoided[165], as well as colloquialisms and regional terms, unless specifically requested by the situation. An important note is made about the use of the

[163] For further information on filmic aspects in audio description, see also Chapter 4.

[164] Audio description for children should select words that children may be able to understand. The audio describer should spell the words clearly and avoid expressions that are not already part of the life experience of the youngest.

[165] However, Joel Snyder argues audio description is a type of poetry, a *haiku* and metaphors in audio description for children are described as a tool to improve children literacy. See http://technorati.com/entertainment/article/how-audio-description-gives-blind-viewers/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). Always on children audio description, RNIB guidelines (RNIB 2009: 3) include the following: "Sentence construction should be kept simple. Long descriptive sentences are difficult for children to follow. The occasional difficult word is acceptable and may even add interest. A child will find it easier to ask for help with an occasional difficult word than to ask about a whole passage that is beyond that child's comprehension. Audio description should add enjoyment to the film. Using interesting sounding words, rhyme and alliteration can help to keep the child's attention. The audio description should not be off-putting for children who are not yet able to understand it." The full document can be downloaded from the 'Professionals' section on RNIB website www.rnib.co.uk (last accessed 19/02/2011).

most descriptive words, concise phrases and structures, as well as of succinct, vivid precise verbs (Audio Description Coalition 2009: 5):

> People frequently "walk" but they also amble, stagger, shuffle, saunter and stroll. Choose the word that best matches the action.

This means that the audio describer should know his/her language perfectly. In addition, the job of the audio describer is not merely to explain but firstly and foremost to convey visual meanings by means of linguistic artifices. Finally, these guidelines also indicate that colours should be audio described, especially for people with low vision who have residual experience of colours and often associate colours with emotional states. A paper issued by British RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) in December 2010 seems to confirm these linguistic issues by drawing a comparative study between international standards and guidelines in Germany, Spain, France, the UK, Greece and USA in the field of audio description, most of which have been already explored in Chapter 1. Among others, the study raises some interesting linguistic points[166] (RNIB 2010):

1. Audio description is usually written in the simple present. Indeed, audio description follows on-screen or on-stage actions as they occur and the simple present seems the most appropriate tense to use. However, ITC

[166] For the purpose of this analysis we list only those guidelines which strictly refer to linguistic choices. However, guidelines also regard intonation, volumes and paralinguistic features and prove to be particularly important for the profession of the audio describer.

(2000) also suggests the use of the present continuous and present participle to give a better narrative feel. In particular, as ITC (2000) puts it[167]:

> The mixture of simple present and present participle gives the text a better narrative feel. If the simple present is used throughout, it can sound abrupt. Where there is the luxury of enough time, a description should read like a piece of writing that makes sense on its own.

2. Audio description should be in the third person. Indeed, an external voice is describing the action mostly from the point of view of an external narrator, so the description could not but be in the third person[168]. In addition, the use of the third person is a key element to keep the highest objectivity and detachment.

3. Specific adjectives should be used, thus leaving aside those with a too generic or vague meaning (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004; ITC 2000;

---

[167] See ITC 2000. Guidelines available at http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/itc/itc_publications/codes_guidance/audio_description/audio_2.asp.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[168] As a general rule, audio description should be in the third person. However, as already mentioned in Chapter 1, an experiment carried out by the Italian association *Cinema senza Barriere* on the first audio described DVD Italian release ever ("*Fuga dal Call Center*") uses a first person audio description voiced by the protagonist of the film, actor Angelo Pisano. Even though there is no feedback available from the blind audience, the use of the first person does not seem to be an isolated case. Indeed, Udo and Fels (2009) have carried out a similar experiment and found out that first person audio description turns out to be perceived positively because the describer seems to be more involved - which is quite the opposite of pretended objectivity and neutrality preached by almost all audio description gurus. Indeed, first person audio description is considered as experimental and is used purposely to create a higher involvement of both the narrator and the spectator into the story. For this reason, it is recorded with the voice of one of the actors playing in the movie or on stage.

Matamala 2006; Orero 2005; Snyder 2006). However, contrary to American standards, ITC (2000) also suggests that the use of adjectives such as 'nice' or 'pretty' should not be avoided if they convey the general impression the audience should receive from the image. Finally, all guidelines agree on the fact that colour adjectives play an important role and should not be avoided (RNIB 2010). Interestingly, the German guidelines state that the expression 'in black and white' should be kept because of many partially sighted people having residual memory of the visual image of old films.

4. On the terminological side, all international guidelines agree on the use of vivid, creative and rich vocabulary and stress the need to avoid poor and basic use of language resources. Ambiguous words or homonyms should be disambiguated before use or within the context.

5. The use of definite/indefinite articles is instrumental to the creation of a coherent text; this is the reason why the determiner 'the' can be used if there is only a single object of a defined category on the screen, or if that object has already been named.

6. Pronouns should be used clearly to indicate characters on the screen. If there is only one person, the use of the personal pronoun could be acceptable; otherwise, if more people can be seen on the screen, using proper nouns is better. The use of the –ing form is encouraged but not as a continuous form (e.g. 'Stomping up the stairs, he…' will be preferred to 'He is stomping up the stairs.').

Ballester Casado (forthcoming) also stresses the importance of using a language that is "*descriptivo, preciso, sucinto, fácilmente comprensible y apropiado. Y la descripción, fluida*." According to Hernàndez and Mendiluce (2009: 8):

> [...] syntax should be grammatical; vocabulary, rich and precise; and descriptions, next to literary excellence. But do not let these features mislead us: AD should not be poetic or lyrical, but realistic and objective, and as such, personal values and interpretations are to be avoided. [...] Audio describers are likely to be creative and accurate in the vocabulary choice, and quick when describing images. They should also be able to conduct a proper research on whatever the topic (Navarrete 1997b: 72). As regards the language in the intersemiotic and intralinguistic phases, terms are selected in order to show a wide and varied standard vocabulary, with no presence of regionalisms, localisms or idiolectal features. [...] Active sentences and grammatical and complete utterances should prevail in the text, as well as accurate and correct terminology; moreover, it should avoid cacophonies and lack of basic idiomatic resources, so as to comprise a correct speech. [...] Adjectivation should be as abundant as needed in order to convey the film tone. This does not mean that the audio describer can invent, but that adjectivation should emerge from the image to communicate as much data as possible. Nevertheless, adjectives are recommended to be concrete to prevent indefinite interpretations. Further, audio descriptive language should be varied in range, and avoid repetitive words that may distract the audience. This rich vocabulary, though, should not prevent AD from being accessible and coherent.

Most guidelines however, regardless of how thorough and detailed they are, do not include a specific section on language. Linguistic issues (be they strictly lexical, morphological or semantic) are too often associated with discussions about relevance and objectivity in audio description. It is evident that both principles do influence the choice of words but they represent more an *a priori* mental process or an operation to be carried out beforehand on the original product. In other words, they represent a methodological approach to the practice of audio description and can only be mirrored by language but should not be confused with it. The descriptive/prescriptive approach used with regard to language remains, generally speaking, too vague and so appears the comparative study mentioned before (RNIB 2010). Indeed, what does 'specific' mean? Which is the degree of specificity the audio describer should seek to obtain? Also by 'specific', guidelines do not explain which characteristics should be highlighted in the description. What does 'imprecise'/'vague' meaning stand for? What is it that makes an adjective " 'imprecise'? Is the word or the semantic/visual connection to the real world object to be imprecise? And still, imprecise for which type of audience? Does 'imaginative' mean 'creative' or is it just a call for variance? Can metaphors be used or not? If yes, should they be used when children are being addressed, as well? From a lexical/semantic perspective, do the words used by audio description belong to special categories? These are just a few linguistic aspects, which are not duly covered by international guidelines and

standards in audio description and which researchers have tried and are still trying to cover with their empirical research work.

5.2 The language of audio description as a research topic

Research on the language used to audio describe an audiovisual product is scarce. However, many professionals and researchers have attempted so far to define on empirical grounds the characteristics of a language that is used to verbally convey images to people with a visual impairment. One of the first descriptions of the AD language is provided by Piety (2004). Drawing on the results of his master dissertation (Piety 2003), he explains that audio description is a process that fundamentally involves the use of human language by a speech community (the blind and the visually impaired) whose language is normally shaped by the language used by the sighted world. However, the visual stimuli that audio describers intentionally translate into words, as well as the way words are selected, chosen and 'assembled' do not only depend on the sighted world of audio describers but also on the cognitive process triggered in their mind of visually impaired people. Indeed, the final audience is mainly blind and as we have seen in Chapter 2, the way their mindset is configured is likely to influence the choice of relevant instances to audio describe as well as the words to use. In addition, audio description should fit limited pauses within dialogues and may represent a

continuous linguistic challenge for the audio describer. Drawing on the results of a study carried out on a small corpus of four AD film scripts (for a total of 23.000 words) Piety (2004: 9) shows that:

> […] the language used in audio description is not entirely the same as spoken or written language. Below the level of the word, at the morphological and phonological levels, this language does not seem distinctive. Above the subword level, however, it can be seen as having four distinctive structural components - insertions, utterances, representations, and words […].

While the notions of 'insertion' and 'utterance' are already intrinsically linked to audio description and would not therefore constitute a structural component but more a distinctive syntactical mark from a text-based perspective, the notion of "representation" seems to be very important for a first definition of what is called 'focus' by one of the major AD scholars, Andrew Salway (2007). Piety (2004) explains that there are seven types of representation in audio description scripts, namely: appearance, action, position, reading, indexical, viewpoint, state[169]. Each category has its own dominant linguistic characteristics. For example, the category 'appearance' is more characterized by adjectives and nouns, prepositional attachments and adverbial phrases. The category 'action' is characterized by verbs, 'position' by adverbs and position locutions, 'reading' by verbs of introduction such as 'read', 'appear' and 'show', 'indexical' mostly by words belonging to the

[169] For a more comprehensive framework of the 'representation' categories, see Piety 2003, 2004.

context, 'viewpoint' by words referring to the change of scene or special effects and have therefore a special *ancrage* with the filmic techniques used in the original. Finally, the category 'state' deals with information which is not visible but draws on the describer's cultural background or knowledge of the audiovisual text. From his analysis, which is clearly very partial because it is based on limited available data, Piety (2004: 19-20) concludes that the words used in audio description represent a "very restricted set of words, relating only to what is actually occurring on the screen at the time or close to the time that the words appear". In addition (Piety 2004: 20):

> […] unless they are part of something that is included in a representation of reading, there should be no words indicating conditions, past or future states, or any number of other valid language constructs that do not reflect the immediate reporting required for audio description […].

The "immediate reporting" mentioned by Piety (2004: 20) is the present of the actions occurring on the screen. Since audio description is meant to facilitate the understanding of actions themselves as they occur, audio description could not but be in the present tense.

From a rather different viewpoint, a small corpus of audio description (27 minutes of a feature film, a documentary and a television drama) had already been used by Turner (1998) to investigate the potential reuse of audio description for indexing the visual content of an audiovisual product. In his

research, Turner had found and had classified 15 categories of information provided by audio description (Turner 2007) [170]:

> […] physical description of characters, facial and corporal expressions, clothing, occupation and roles of the characters, attitudes of the characters, spatial relationships between characters, movement of the characters, setting, temporal indicators, indicators of proportions, décor, lighting, action, appearance of titles, text included in image.

However, if this investigation says much about what audio description includes from the point of view of the content, it does not address linguistic issues in detail. On the other side, even though the results obtained by Piety (2003, 2004) can be considered as a good starting point for quantitative corpus research in the field of audio description, it is only with researcher Andrew Salway that corpus analysis has been consistently applied to audio description language. It is not by coincidence that this type of research has been carried out by a non-translation/audio description specialist but by a professional in research and development of multimedia information extraction[171]. Salway was one of the experts invited to participate in the TIWO (Television in Words) project. This project run from 2002 to 2005 and gathered experts from the audiovisual world and blind associations to

[170] See http://www.mapageweb.umontreal.ca/turner/english/texts/TurnerJTS2007.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[171] A full list or published downloadable articles and talks by Andrew Salway is available on his personal website http://www.bbrel.co.uk/publications_and_invited_talks.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

develop a computational account of narrative in multimedia systems. The TIWO project has explored how audio description scripts convey the visual content of images by translating them into words. In this perspective, audio description scripts are considered as an interesting and worth investigating example of collateral text and a source for generating machine-executable representations of video data, specifically films and television programs[172]. The main goals of the project were developing a computational framework for the investigation of narrative in multimedia systems, adapting existing representation schemes to the task of video annotation through audio description, adapting existing language engineering techniques to annotation and generation of audio description, creating a system for assisting during the creation of audio description (namely the AuDesc system)[173]. The TIWO

[172] The TIWO research team at the University of Surrey was composed by Andrew Salway as principal investigator, Elia Tomadaki, Yan Xu and Andrew Vassiliou as PhD Students, RNIB, ITFC as representatives of the blind associations and Softel as one of the major audio description and subtitling softwares providers. Video annotation, the representation of semantic video content and the narration of moving images as well as the relation between language and vision were the core research interests of the TIWO project. For further information see also http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWO.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[173] A full description of the objectives, tools and methodology used in the TIWO project is available at http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWOcaseforsupport.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011). The final report of the project with deliverables and results can be found at http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWO%20Final%20Report%20web%20version.htm (last accessed 19/02/2011). Interestingly, this report shows that previous to TIWO, the AUDETEL was the only remarkable project about audio description and that the TIWO has dramatically contributed to attract the attention of corpus linguistics towards audio description. We will not describe into details the ultimate goals of the TIWO project; they remain, however, a fundamental instrument to increase awareness about audio description globally. Indeed, combining

team has shown, among others, that the language of audio description is influenced by its communicative function (that is, conveying visual images to people with sight impairment); that it refers to a limited domain of discourse (that is, what can be seen on a screen, on stage or in an arena in case of audio description other than filmic); that it is meant to express cause-effect relationships and emotional states in a limited time and within the

---

audio description with computer technology would allow envisaging semi automatic extraction of information about the visual content from screenplays and stage directions. Systematizing all information available on a visual content from a corpus-based perspective would allow the semi automatic production of audio description combined with speech recognition and editing technologies. The availability of an audio description corpus aligned with the visual content it refers to would be an occasion for all beginners and professionals to get in touch with the very practice of audio description as well as an opportunity to find out how a given type of scene has been audio described in the past and accordingly to which type of context and situation. Technological advances in the audiovisual field, in addition (such as the Blue-Ray technology) could pave the way for alternative audio descriptions to choose among a set of fully customized options to respond to the needs and the preferences of the final audience. In this perspective, audio description could be marked up, for example through XML, to make explicit to the machine the interdependencies between dialogues and utterances in audio description itself. This would constitute a real challenge also for translation-based audio description production: the match between visual content and description utterances could contribute to the understanding of the clues to translate and even facilitate the task of adapting/translating. The information retrievable from audio description seems to be more reliable and accurate than information based on scripts, screenplays, stage directions and subtitles (Salway 2007; Vassiliou 2006). The precision of information retrieval about characters has reached more than 80% and is documented extensively by articles and reports by Salway, Vassiliou and Ahmad (2005) and Salway (2007). Some of the most prominent uses of archiving and indexing audio description scripts could be: video retrieval, hypervideo browsing, video summarization, questions answering, enhancement of the viewer's experience, proactive links to related information (Salway 2007). In addition to this, the TIWO project has also carried out research on the technological side and focused on a software work package to provide the audio describer with live access to documentation resources and archives.

framework allowed by dialogues. For this reason, as Salway, Vassiliou and Ahmad (2005) put it[174]:

> The use of language by trained professionals to communicate about a restricted field of discourse and for a specific purpose normally results in a special language characterized by a preponderance of linguistic features that are idiosyncratic in comparison with everyday general language. Here we investigate the hypothesis that the language used for audio description is a special language, in other words that there exists a 'language of audio description'.

The TIWO has worked on a corpus of 91 films and has demonstrated that unusually frequent words in the corpus compared to general language samples extracted from the BNC (British National Corpus) make the language used by audio description a language for special purposes[175]. Some categories of words, in addition, present a SL/GL[176] ratio of more than 30. Unusually frequent words and collocations have been classified according to a preliminary categorization into the following "actions" (Salway 2007: 159 and *passim*):

[174] Available at http://www.bbrel.co.uk/pdfs/The%20Language%20of%20Audio%20Description.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[175] For a complete analysis of the TIWO corpus, a full list of papers, articles and presentations available for free download is available at http://www.bbrel.co.uk/publications.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[176] SL/GL refers to the ratio between special language and general language. This value corresponds to the representativeness of a word within a given corpus. With a ratio equal or around 1, the use of a word can be defined as 'normal', whereas a SL/GL equal or more than 30 means that the word recurs 30 + times than normal.

1. characters' appearances;
2. characters' focus of attention;
3. characters' interpersonal interactions;
4. changes of location of characters and objects;
5. characters' emotional states[177].

As it has already been illustrated, various papers (Lakritz and Salway 2006; Salway 2007; Salway and Palmer forthcoming) have demonstrated through a corpus-based approach that the language of audio description can be considered as a special language, which is shaped by the communicative needs placed on audiodescription itself. Indeed, such communicative needs are linked in functional linguistics to language idiosyncrasies (Hoffmann 1984). These idiosyncrasies have been further investigated by Vassiliou (2006) in his PhD thesis that has focused on the comparison between audio description scripts and screenplays that is between two different *genres* of collateral texts providing information about the same visual content. Among the problems addressed by Vassiliou (2006), a first issue concerns a semantic gap in film, which is explained as follows (Vassiliou 2006: 12):

> The semantic gap for film content refers to the lack of coincidence/correlation between what a human views, understands or wants returned from a query,

[177] A full representation of all the types of actions mentioned can be found in the online available preliminary results of the TIWO project at http://www.bbrel.co.uk/pdfs/Pre-edited%20version%20Audio%20Description%20a%20Corpus-based%20Analysis.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

with respect to film content, and what a machine can interpret automatically from a film (audio-visual analysis, text analysis).

This issue is of great concern to audio description. Indeed, if researchers have approached the language of audio description as a potential tool to facilitate the understanding of a visual content by machines, this is because of the pattern regularity of AD scripts, which makes contents suitable for being processed by computers. Vassiliou (2006) has studied the regularity of expressions in audio description by retrieving collocations of the most recurrent words in the corpus and comparing their use and lexical environment against the BNC corpus. The research has demonstrated that the so-called Finite State Automata existing in audio description language can be grouped into four main categories corresponding to event types: focus of attention, change of location, non-verbal communication and scene change. The entity relationship diagram presented by Vassiliou (2006: 95) also depicts the entities associated with each of the events along with their presence in a film. Each type of event is characterized by semantic nodes and semantic preferences from a collocation-based perspective. The predominance of idiosyncratic expressions and collocations in audio description makes it a potential candidate for semi-automatic extraction of written information about a visual content. This idea, as already seen, relies on the fact that audio description language is a language for special purposes

and films are characterized by a local grammar (Salway 2007; Vassiliou 2006).

The analysis of filmic instances and nodes, however, falls beyond the scope of the present work; here we intend to analyze AD scripts from a purely linguistic perspective. As we have seen, some research has already been conducted in this field, but with insufficient quantitative evidence. The only remarkable exception is the TIWO Project that, as we have stressed, has involved computational linguistics experts and more partners on a project aimed at exploring the possibilities offered by audiodescription in automatic information retrieval processes. So far, apart from the TIWO, which has approached language in terms of 'nodes' and 'actions', there are not quantitative-based analyses of parts-of speech in audio description. In an attempt to bridge this gap, we have decided to focus on the use of adjectives in audio description by means of corpus linguistics tools and a combination of both quantitative and qualitative evidence. To begin with, we will define how the language of audio description relates to both written and spoken language. This analysis will allow us to define the type of language we are dealing with. Secondly, we will introduce our corpus of filmic audio description (69 film scripts drawn from the TIWO corpus) and will process the language used in order to identify relevant adjectival patterns. The choice of focusing on adjectives derives from the fundamental role they play in description and from the fact that, as we have already stressed, no studies so

far have approached their role in audio description specifically. Finally, we will provide with a preliminary investigation into corpus-based research of similes in audio description.

5.3 Audio description between spoken and written language

The phenomenology of the differences between spoken and written language has been analyzed extensively over the last decades[178], however, it seems to lack sufficient scientific systematization. Spoken and written language(s) are not only linguistic phenomena, but also proxemic, situational, psico-linguistic and more generally speaking, cultural phenomena and therefore require a very complex empiric representation which should consider both the synchronic and the diachronic dimension. Spoken language has been for long time the victim of literary and linguistic prejudice. Indeed, instead of describing spoken language as to what it is, some aesthetic prejudice has tended to describe it in opposition to written language that is from the point of view of a negative ontology. We do not intend to address in a few lines such a complex issue but will draw on the main differences between spoken and written language to define to which extent the language of audio

[178] For the differences between spoken and written language see Bazzanella 1994; Berruto 1980; Biber 1988; Cortelazzo 1985; Goffmann 1981; Lehmann 1988; Marcato 1985; Nencioni 1976; Ochs 1979; Ong 1986; Parisi and Castelfranchi 1979; Sabatini 1985; Serianni 1988; Sornicola 1981; Tannen 1982; Voghera 1992.

description can relate to them. The principle underlying our considerations is that all differences between these two linguistic modes can be inscribed in a diamesic perspective (Bazzanella 1994).

First of all, for a literature review on the matter, it is worth pointing out that 'spoken' language should not be confused with 'oral' language, which indicates the "complex of communicative habits, not purely from a verbal but more from a cultural perspective, of a given community, or social group which does not know written language[179]" (Voghera 1992: 15). In this regards, Ong (1986) draws a distinction between primary and secondary orality cultures. Cultures based on primary orality communicate mainly through words, that is, sounds to be heard (hearing), while cultures based on secondary orality mainly communicate through the written channel, that is, words to be read (sight). The spoken language used in modern cultures would also belong to this second category because it would be ontologically linked to written language. From a more interactional perspective, according to Chafe (1982: 45), "speakers interact with their audience, writers do not". In this regard, spoken language would be characterized by a feedback effect that is the possibility to monitor almost real-time the effects that the communication produces on the interlocutor. Written language would be more "detached" while spoken language would be more "involved", that is

[179] Own translation of the Italian original "*complesso di abitudini comunicative, non solo verbali, ma più generalmente culturali di una comunità, o gruppo sociale, che non conosca la diffusione della scrittura*".

"concerned with the experiential richness" (Chafe 1982: 45). Evidence for the detachment of written language would be found in the higher use of passive forms, while the involvement of spoken language would be particularly evident in the frequent use of the first person pronoun, which is intrinsically linked to the control of mental process during input and output information flows. As Marcato (1985) also stresses, it is the situational context that makes the difference. However, according to Biber (1988), it is the channel that allows renegotiating the meaning in spoken language. For this reason, the channel should be considered as the most outstanding difference between spoken and written language, even more important than situational differences. The physical absence of all interlocutors who interact in written language would make this negotiation less evident in written language. At a closer analysis, this negotiation is only deferred in time but is however important. As Eco (2003) points out, translation is also a mediation process which embarks on a continuous renegotiation of meaning. Irrespectively of the type of focus on the nature of variations, it is undeniable that spoken and written language cannot be considered as two opposite aspects (from a diamesic perspective, although correlated because of the double graphemic and phonetic dimensions) of linguistic expressions. If that was the case, each feature of spoken language should find its correspondence in written language and *vice versa*. But as Halliday (1978) observes, some features of spoken language cannot be translated into written language. Such

is the case of rhythm, intonation, volumes, voice quality variation, pauses and reformulations. From a purely linguistic perspective, Halliday (1978) stresses that the differences between spoken and written language are to be found in the 'functional variation' or 'register'. This is divided into 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode' that correspond to what happens, who participates and which role language plays (Halliday 1978 *passim*). These aspects determine the configuration of semantic and grammatical-lexical models are especially typical for written language. In addition, spoken and written language should be considered in a triple perspective of channel, function and form. Spoken language tends to be less dense from a lexical perspective but not from an informative point of view. If written language represents phenomena as products, spoken language represents them as choreographic processes, as they occur. For a categorization of written and spoken language, it is acknowledged that linguistic phenomena should be better described as part of a *continuum* (Bazzanella 1994; Berruto 1983; Biber 1988; Lehmann 1988; Halliday 1978; Nencioni 1976; Voghera 1992). Texts are not defined in terms of opposition between written and spoken language but as intermediate levels between the extremities spoken-spoken (casual-conversational texts) and written-written (formal-planned written texts). Parameters of formality and informality of language, often adopted to describe spoken and written language, could be also considered against this *continuum*. In this perspective, the distance between spoken and written language can be

defined as a qualitative difference of the features traditionally associated with them. This type of approach avoids too limited or restricted classifications which would be appropriate for pure taxonomy but less for pragmatics and allows considering the degree or the quality of phenomena. Indeed, the description of linguistic phenomena is not only a matter of presence/absence of given features but more of higher/lower degree of representativeness. Table 7 below translates the description suggested by Arma (2007) that draws on an original re-elaboration of Bazzanella (1994):

Phonological/phonetic and graphemic aspects[180]

	Spoken Language	Written Language
Macro-features		
Channel	Acoustic	Graphemic – visual
Development of communication	Continuous	Discrete
Reception and codification times	Immediate	Delayed
Micro-features		
Planning	Micro-planning	Macro-planning

[180] Table 7 and Table 8 are in Italian in the original (Arma 2007). Both tables have been translated into English for this research work.

	Spoken Language	Written Language
Macro-features		
Correction	Yes (as a process, not as a product)	Yes (as a process, not as a product)
Permanence of the message	Evanescent (as a process, less as a product)	Permanent (as a product, less as a process)
Prosody, suprasegmental aspects, deictic and paralinguistic features	High incidence	Only in reported speech, through punctuation, deictics or determiners
Phatic function	High incidence	Low incidence
Feedback	Immediate	None or delayed
Encyclopaedic background	Refer to encyclopaedic and shared knowledge	Refer to encyclopaedic knowledge, less to shared common knowledge

Table 7. Macro- and micro-features of the language of audio description between spoken and written language

From these micro and macro-features a number of grammatical aspects derive. In particular, as can be observed in Table 8 below:

		Spoken Language	Written Language
Micro-features			
Planning	Word order	Marked order	Organized
		Dislocations and topicalizations, split sentences	S+V+O structure
	Syntactical style	+ Nominal	+ Verbal
		Prevalence of hypotaxis	Prevalence of parataxis
		Ellipses, implicitness	Explicitness
	Variation in planning	High	Low
	Textual cohesion	Low	High
	Lexical aspects	Hesitations, pauses	Strategic only
Corrections	Auto-correction strategy	Auto-correction, paraphrases, modal particles	Suspense or Comicality

		Spoken Language	Written Language
Micro-features			
Message permanence	Lexical aspects	Redundancy, modulations, lexical retrieval	Pronominal retrieval
Suprasegmental, prosodic features	Deictics and paralinguistic tools	Intonation-syntax relation	Punctuation-syntax relation
Phatic function	Phatisms, modulations and courtesy mechanisms	High	Low
Feedback	Variations	High	Low
	Simultaneity, interruptions	High	-
	Signs of assent/ dissent	High	From the public (if any)

Table 8. Grammatical aspects of the language of audio description between spoken and written language

As we have seen in Chapter 1, according to most definitions audio description is a pre-prepared audio track delivered by a narrator and semantically linked to both the visual and the audio track of the audiovisual product they refer to. Though audio description is meant to translate images

and to be inserted in the pauses within dialogues and is therefore anchored to the source text, it can be considered as a process/product *per se*. From the point of view of the process, audio description is characterized by the graphemic/visual channel. Indeed, a script is a written process which leads to a product delivered aurally. This means that from a product perspective, audio description is characterized by the acoustic channel. From these very first considerations, it is easily understood that audio description language is in between written and spoken language. Just like in written language, the development of the communication is not immediate and both reception and codification times are delayed. Indeed, the audio description is pre-prepared so is the development of communication, which is well planned before the delivery. Similarly, audio description as a product is received and codified as it is delivered (as in spoken language) but as a process, its reception is delayed if compared to the script preparation time.

As to the micro-features, audio description appears to be characterized by a high degree of macro planning. A script can be changed in progress (so from the point of view of audio description as a process) but not during the delivery (unless it is delivered live) therefore, not from a product perspective. In live audio description, the script can be changed as it is delivered. For example, in theatre audio description the script can be changed following improvised scenes. In sport events, audio description can only be micro-planned locally (in this case the script cannot be pre-recorded

but not even pre-prepared in advance, unless for very general guidelines). From the point of view of the permanence of the message, audio description seems to have a dual nature. Indeed, it is evanescent as in spoken language because as soon as it is delivered, audio description somehow disappears. However, in DVD or cinema, audio description is a permanent product since it is recorded on a support and can be therefore re-listened to as many times as wished. The fact that the audio description can be stored and retrieved with the same characteristics as the first delivery makes the message permanent. Paralinguistic features are not always reproduced in audio description. ITC (2000) suggests that the voice of the audio describer should be unobtrusive and neutral but at the same time, it should not bore the audience. In this respect, intonation can be very important especially when dealing with special *genres* such as children or horror movies. Feedback of the final audience is delayed, as in written language and the encyclopaedic knowledge to which audio description refers is the knowledge shared by the final audience. It is not unusual that in translating audio description, the describer/translator adapts the audio description strings to suit the background knowledge of the target public.

From a purely linguistic perspective, the sentence structure of audio description is typically 'Subject+Verb+Object' and is based on parataxis. This happens for two different reasons. To begin with, time slots available are often very short, so the audio description should adjust to them.

Secondly, being the audio description written to be heard and being also necessary to keep the number of words per minute at a constant pace to facilitate the audience comprehension, the paratactic structure is the one which best accommodates this need. Hypotaxis is not infrequent in audio description but it is mostly used when the time available for description is longer. Examples 20 to 22 show paratactic constructs in the corpus, while examples 23 to 25 show hypotactic sentence structures:

(20) Cole looks down. Malcolm watches him turn and walk down the aisle. ('The Sixth Sense')

(21) Eden glances round at Cockrill and walks into theatre. ('Green for Danger')

(22) As the man goes to the till, the boy whips a tobacco packet off the counter and pockets it. ('Road to Perdition')

(23) Her hands go to her mouth in horror to see that the figure kneeling in front of her is her daughter. ('The Others')

(24) She seems to have taken him by surprise, as if he has forgotten she is there. ('American Beauty')

(25) In pine woods, a shaggy dog runs into a clearing, where it stops and sniffs the earth at its feet. ('Enigma')

As it can be observed and as recommended by ITC (2000), audio description is normally at the present tense, though present perfect can be also found as

in example (24). In addition, the use of gerund is also very much appreciated by audio describers as a timesaving solution because it helps avoiding relative clauses, which are longer. Gerund forms are also used at the beginning of sentences in order to express simultaneity of actions, as shown in the following examples:

(26) Standing amongst the crew Milo gulps with surprise as the floor of the loading bay sinks into the bowels of the ship. ('Atlantis: the lost Empire')

(27) Giving the man a weary look, Noah ambles inside room one twenty-five. ('The Amazing Howard Hughes')

(28) Moving toward the quayside, she passes a company of German infantry marching stiffly along the street. ('Captain Corelli's Mandolin')

In addition, the language of audio description is characterized by a high degree of explicitness. Given its special function, that is, describing what blind people cannot see, it should provide with a type of information that is by necessity anchored to the image and is, by definition, explicit. However, the degree of explicitness/implicitness of an audio description is difficult to evaluate. From a sentence perspective, audio description is explicit, but a certain degree of implicitness could be considered if looking at it from a text-based perspective. In this regard, it should be pointed out that an audio description cannot stand autonomously and that all functions normally

attributed to a traditional text are - in the case of audio description - strictly dependent on its relation with both video and sound inputs. For this reason, it is not possible to say that an audio description script is not a coherent text, nor we can say the opposite. Audio description indeed is a non-traditional form of text that supports the comprehension of another text, be it audiovisual or not. In this regard, it could be seen as a 'complementary' text. It is written to be read and delivered aurally and is inserted into another text of which it replaces the video component.

From a lexical perspective, audio description is not characterized by pauses or hesitations that are typical of spoken language. Indeed, the use of such features would be counterproductive for the comprehension of the end users. Auto-correction mechanisms and redundancy that are also typical of the spoken language do not find any correspondence in the language of pre-recorded/live audio description as a product. However, if we consider audio description from a process-perspective, it is likely to contain auto-corrections, because the script always undergoes a number of changes and transformations before it is finally recorded.

To conclude, on the basis of what has been shown in terms of linguistic features, the language of audio description appears to be in the middle of the *continuum* between spoken and written language. Considered as a process, it tends to be closer to spoken language. However, from a product perspective, it appears to be closer to written language. In the following sections we will

see focus on adjectivation in audio description and in particular we will examine the relationships between the AD corpus, the LSWE (Longman Spoken and Written English) and two subsets of the BNC.

5.4 Research questions and objectives

As already illustrated, the purpose of audio description is not telling a story but describing a scene. In other words, it is meant to provide the end users with sufficient tools to build their own mental representation of the ongoing actions[181]. In addition, we have reviewed some literature regarding the language of audio description from a corpus-based perspective and we have defined the characteristics of the language of AD in the *continuum* between spoken and written language. However, any investigation into the language of audio description cannot be duly addressed without recalling that description is often considered in contrast to narration and that contributions adopting this approach can also help increasing the comprehension of the language of audio description. Lukács already in 1936 stated that the prose writer can adopt two different structural approaches, the one based on narration and the other based on description. Narration is a kinetic and stylistic approach which allows a dynamic totality to the reader's experience, while description focuses on minute details and is characterized by

[181] By 'action' here we do not intend movements or action movies, but simply the instances of a film or a theatre representation, or whatever part of a product that could be audio described.

dissolution and fragmentation which transform both the writer and audience into observers (Lukács 1936). Although Lukács' preference for narrative was mainly based on philosophical and political reasons driven by Hegelian interpretation, the notion of observation seems to be very important for audio description. Indeed, the audio describer should seek at being a simple observer of the action and describing it through vivid and precise language. However, the very notion of observer cannot be applied to the final audience, because audio description is all the time integrated into another audio visual product (be it a film or another category of performance) whose primary aim is namely to involve the audience and have an emotional impact on them. In the wake of Bonheim (1982), both Chatman (1990) and Adams (1996) have distinguished three narratologically relevant texts or discourse types: narrative, description, and argument (Chatman 1990); narrative, description, and exposition (Adams 1996). In particular Chatman makes two important points about description that are applicable to audio description as well[182]. First, he defines description as a "non-narrative text type which […] render[s] the properties of things typically, though not necessarily, visible or imaginable to the senses" (Chatman 1990: 6). In this perspective, audio description does suggest the properties of objects to the senses of people who cannot experience them directly through the eyes. In addition, Chatman (1990) draws a relevant distinction between explicit and tacit description. A

[182] See also Chapter 3 and 4.

film is far more "visually specific than novel" (Chatman 1990: 38) and would be characterized by tacit description because this medium privileges the visual mode rather the verbal mode. Films would be extremely rich in images and extremely poor when these images become words (Chatman 1990: 39):

> Because narrative films keeps characters and props persistently before our eyes and ears with virtually limitless sensory particularity, there seems no *need* for films to describe; it is their nature to show, and to show continuously – a cornucopia of visual details.

Films are considered as ostensive channels that are inherently but not explicitly descriptive because every specification of qualities as performed by description would be reductive for the medium itself. Literary narrative can offer description and name qualities with precision but always "within a relatively narrow scope" (Chatman 1990: 40). In addition, they can "employ many adjectives but not dictate mental images; they can only stimulate them" (Chatman 1990:40). Interestingly, while claiming that "cinema cannot help describing, although it does so only tacitly", Chatman (1990:40) also states the following:

> Every screen "noun" is already, by virtue of the medium, totally saturated with visual "adjectives". The screen image cannot avoid them; it cannot present a minimal verbal account like "A woman entered the room". Rather, it must provide an exhaustive set of visual details, transcribable by a potentially unlimited verbal paraphrase: "A woman with a Roman nose, high cheekbones,

and blond hair piled elaborately on her head (etc., etc.) flounced ostentatiously into a ornate ballroom lit by hundred candles in a glass *candelabra* (etc., etc.)

Audio description cannot be considered as a type of literary description since a single script cannot be considered as a traditional text nor a collection of scripts could be defined as a *genre*. As we have seen, an audio description script can be duly understood only with the film it refers to. When it comes to filmic audio description, it is supposed to describe, in Chatman's terms, a product that paradoxically "cannot help describing" (1990: 40). Apparently, the impossibility of inducing a description would lead the audio describer to an impasse. However, being the audio describer aware of both time constraints and the relevance of given clues, he/she will accurately select 'nouns' from the screen and describe them through verbal, though visual-related 'adjectives'.

So far, it appears that no work has approached adjectives in audio description specifically from a corpus-based perspective. Among others, Salway (2007) states that when a character appears on the scene, his/her physical appearance is often described through an adjective mainly following verbs like 'to be'/'to look'. However, adjectives themselves are not investigated any further. The present research is a first attempt to bridge this gap and contribute to a better comprehension of the linguistic and semantic mechanisms underpinning audio description adjectivation. The hypothesis is that among the unusually frequent class of words found by Salway (2007)

adjectives play a vital role, since they are meant to convey carefully selected features of a visual content to people who cannot see. It is evident that audio description appears to be a hybrid activity because it explicates a selection of observation-based relevant qualities that are tacitly expressed in the original product. However, explaining that films describe tacitly and that the quantity of "adjectives" (Chatman 1990: 40) they contain is such to make every verbal expression limited *per se* does not help defining which of these adjectives are most pertinent to audio description. Since this is an activity that cannot render every object (be it human or non-human) of a given action, some of the research questions underpinning the present work are: which are the most frequent adjectives used by audio describers? Since each adjective exist because of a "noun" (Chatman 1990: 40), denoting an external referent that exists inside the film itself, which are the properties of the referent that the audio describer usually selects? Describing every single detail of each film scene would mean reducing cinema to a juxtaposition of attributes and still such a list of adjectives would not be exhaustive. Indeed cinema but also theatre or sport, to mention only a few other fields of application of audio description, is clearly something that goes beyond the simple process of adjectivation, just as audio description goes far beyond the boundaries of simple description. Both appeal to involvement and experiential richness of vision, be it through sight or not. However while cinema does it ostensively, audio description represents a discrete bridge

towards it.

Drawing on these considerations and given the high importance attached to the descriptive language in general and to the language of audio description in particular, we will analyze a corpus of film AD scripts and we will examine the most frequent adjectives and their position in the sentence, along with their collocations and semantic preferences. In addition, we will also examine adjectives in comparative and superlative degrees. However, a stand-alone analysis of adjectives not being the ultimate goal of this research, we will countercheck our findings against a larger sample of 'general' language. For this reason, we will compare the top 100 most frequent adjectives in our corpus with the 100 most frequent adjectives in two sub-corpora of the BNC, in particular the 'spoken' and the 'fiction' ones, whose linguistic features are closer to the opposite ends of the *continuum* in which we have placed the language of audio description. We will see which adjectives are common in the top frequency lists of the three corpora and which is the degree of representativeness for each of them. In addition, we will stress that the relative frequency of non-shared adjectives has also much to say about the language of audio description. Finally, we will approach the use of figurative language in audio description, even though from a corpus-based perspective this is not an easy task to perform. In particular, the grammatical and the semantic value of function words 'like' and 'as' will provide for a first insight into similes in audio description. We will see that

though quantitatively not yet remarkable, the use of similes proves to be one of the major evidence of a "succinct, vivid and imaginative language"[183] of audio description and appears to be strongly *genre*-related.

5.5 Corpus analysis

5.5.1 Corpus collection and description

Collecting a corpus of audio description scripts is not easy. Indeed, the availability of scripts is considered as an exception more than the practice. The AD scripts of films belong to the broadcasters who have bought them from the companies or the associations who have produced them. When it comes to theatre audio description, even though the script is pre-prepared, the delivery is mostly live, so the final product might differ from the original one. Transcribing the delivery of the real-time narrators is time consuming and not cost-effective, at least outside the research environment. Transcriptions can be more or less faithful to the delivery phase or the recording phase and can be realized by hand or by means of speech recognition software. In the latter case, it is possible either to run a speech-to-text application which automatically transcribes the script. However, the precision of speech recognition software not having yet reached 100%, be the system speaker-dependent or speaker-independent, the presence of a person

[183] See Joel Snyder's article available at http://www.audiodescribe.com/about/articles/fundamentals_of_ad.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

for the editing phase would be a prerequisite for any good transcription. The only significant project with a considerable amount of scripts ready to be studied is the corpus used by the TIWO, the afore-mentioned English project that run from 2002 to 2005 with the outstanding participation of the University of Surrey.

The corpus analyzed in this research consists of 69 AD film scripts that have been obtained with the operational support of Andrew Salway, former researcher at the University of Surrey and one of the coordinators of the TIWO project. However, since the project is funded no longer and the scripts still belong to the broadcasters, even though the TIWO team had all authorizations required, a special authorization has been requested to use the scripts for research purposes only. The corpus can be defined as a part of the larger TIWO corpus on which the team has carried out investigations. Audio description scripts for this research were made available by BBC, ITFC and RNIB[184]. Three films ('In the Name of the Father', 'Slingblade' and 'Schindler's List') are divided into two parts and have come therefore as

[184] BBC is the British Broadcasting Corporation, ITFC is the Independent Television Facility Center and RNIB is the Royal National Institute for the Blind. In particular, ITFC expertise covers different ranges of broadcast content, from audiovisual authoring to format management and media access management. Among access services, ITFC covers about 40,000 hours subtitling both in the UK and in Europe for TV channels like ITV, Five, Virgin Television, GMTV and RTE. In addition, ITFC team has pioneered the use of audio description in feature films. RNIB is an organization that supports blind and partially sighted people across the UK and provides guidance and training in the field of AD as well as serious commitment in the field of audio description, both from a production and a research perspective. More information about the three providers can be found at www.bbc.co.uk, www.itfc.co.uk and www.rnib.co.uk (last accessed 19/02/2011).

composed by two different AD scripts. For this reason, each of the three films has been counted for a double audio description script but as one film only. It is worth recalling that the audio description scripts do not usually contain the original dialogues and sound track but only the supplementary descriptive audio track, which is delivered to the blind people through different technical equipment[185]. For this reason, this investigation has not considered the original dialogues but the audio description script only. Indeed, since the ultimate aim of our analysis is to conduct a study on adjectival patterns of the language of audio description, an inclusion of both audio description and the dialogues would have been fallen beyond the scope of this research[186].

The linguistic choices of an audio describer are partly due to the description text-type in Chatman's perspective and style, partly to the movie itself and partly to the special needs of the final audience. However, since audio description is not an independent or a stand-alone product *per se*, we have decided to classify the scripts available in accordance to the classification of the movie they are inserted in. However, classifying movies into *genres* is not an exact science. *Genre* classification has been usually

[185] For a comprehensive overview of the technical delivery of audio description, see Chapter 1.

[186] Transcribing both the dialogues and the audio description could pave the way for an observation of important features of audio description itself. A possible investigation on the semantic cohesion in a film with audio described film would include both tracks. However, a mere transcription would not be sufficient in this case. Annotation of time slots, voice tones and delivery speed are only a few of the features that would need to be examined and - therefore - annotated.

applied to narrative as a means of description. However, when it comes to taxonomy of movies, this notion of *genre* does not seem to be satisfactory and appears to be even inconsistent. As Stam (2000: 14) points out:

> A number of perennial doubts plague genre theory. Are genres really 'out there' in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural? Should genre analysis be descriptive or prescriptive?

Pretended scientific classification of movie *genres* relies on both nominological and typological taxonomy in biology and on the broad literary and classical distinctions between poetry, drama and prose, inside which other sub-categories are to be found, for example tragedy and comedy within drama. Overtime, different approaches have been adopted to attempt or justify a classification of movies, though none of them has been widely accepted among researchers. As an example, the issue of *Familienähnlichkeiten* - a concept coming from Wittgenstein philosophy and cited, among others, in Fowler (1989) and Swales (1990) - has been criticized because it would exclude *a priori* the intentionality of a product and would paradoxically let every product be defined by an indefinite number of *genres* and as a result, by no *genre* at all. Prototypicality is the type of approach that has been introduced to classify movies in accordance with the extent to which a certain product can be considered as prototypical

of a given *genre*. However, this type of theory provides for *genres* to be pre-existing and from a purely philosophical perspective, none of the products defined by a *genre* could ever have all the characteristics of the *genre* itself. The world of movie classification is not an objective procedure with undisputed maps of the system (Chandler 1997). According to some theorists (Fowler 1989; Freedman and Medway 1994; Wales 1989) some *genres* or *sub-genres* have not been yet identified while others are strictly dependent on society and therefore do not rely on indisputable universals. Furthermore, practitioners and the audience often make use of their own routinely used *genres*, which makes the boundaries between *genres* even less defined. Neale (1980) sees *genres* as instances of repetitions and differences and as processes of systematization, that is, not as fixed forms but a continuous process of culture and community-based renegotiation and change with permeable boundaries (Abercrombie 1996; Buckingham 1993). In addition, film techniques, style and mode might be regarded to as inherent features of a *genre,* yet, they might be looked at as *genres* themselves or as realization modes. For other researchers *genre* is a relation between the form and the content of the product or a relation between the author, the interpreters and the final audience (Kress 1988; Fowler 1989)[187]. The notion of relation is maybe a generic one but provides a good representational framework for this

[187] For a more comprehensive framework of the research in genre classification see Allen 1989; Bordwell 1989; Chandler 1997; Hayward 1996; Knight 1994; Kress 1988; Neale 1980; Stam 2000.

research. Indeed, as we have seen, the attribution of a *genre* to a movie not being an exact science, it turns out that most movies have a relation with one or more *genres*, which makes them closer to content, semantic and form based features of a particular, non-permanent *genre*. Consistency with these features is a fundamental issue, even if *genre* is not an exclusive notion, as pointed out by Tanenbaum (2008)[188]:

> Genre is not a simple container into which a narrative can be placed, but is instead a property which a film can demonstrate in varying degrees and combinations. While the presence of aliens may mark a film as Science Fiction, it does not discount if from also being a Comedy (as in *Men in Black*), a Survival Horror film (as in *Alien*), an Action Adventure (as in *The Fifth Element*), or even a Retro-Futurist Film Noir (as in *Dark City*).

Indeed, most movie classifications available do attribute multiple *genres* to the same movie but they do not prioritize their presence nor specify to which extent the same movie. For example, the film 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' can be considered as a 'drama', 'romance', 'music' or 'war' movie. Vasconcelos and Lippman (1997) draw a distinction between 'action', 'romance' and 'comedy' films based on the average shot length and the shot activity but this distinction is not sufficient to explain what the identified *genres* should consist in. An interesting attempt to combine micro and macro features has been made by Rasheed and Shah (2002) who introduce the

[188] Article available at: http://www.thegeekmovement.com/Tanenbaum_GenreTree_Paper.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

notion of "visual disturbance", defined as the "motion content of a visual clip" (2002: 1) to firstly differentiate 'action' from 'non-action' movies, then combine colour, audio information and cinematic techniques to detect sub*genres*. However, this research was only conducted on film previews and would need to be extended further to be adopted scientifically as a reliable computer-based classification method. Drawing on past research on movie classification, Tanenbaum (2008) has tested an automatic tool (the so-called GenreTree) to attribute a *genre* to a small corpus of movies, thus reaching an acceptable accuracy rate. However, much research is still needed in this direction, since the tool finally does not seem to perform exactly for the purpose it was meant to serve that is the categorization of a group of features into an associated *genre*[189]. Tanenbaum has tested the GenreTree on a group of films categorized by the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), an Amazon.com company operating on the Internet since 1990 and featuring 1,533,681 titles with *genre* classification[190]. IMDb also provides local websites for most countries, including Italy, and is a huge information source for all cinemagoers and researchers in the audiovisual field. It stores an enormous quantity of data and overtime it has established as a reference authority. For this reason, though we are aware that just like all other online and off-line instruments it is also subject to mistakes and human errors, we have decided to attribute to the movies of our corpus the movie *genres*

[189] For more exhaustive information about the GenreTree, see Tanenbaum 2008.

[190] See http://www.imdb.com/stats (last accessed 19/02/2011).

attributed by the IMDb.

On the IMDb, each movie has one or more dedicated page(s), where it is possible to find out the *genres* it belongs to and more extensive information, as showed in the following example of the already mentioned 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin'[191]. The page contains general information such as the date, the title, the director, the stars, the novel writer, if any, and the plot. Table 9 below shows the IMDb information in the left column, and the corresponding information category on the right:

IMDb information	Information Category
Il mandolino del capitano Corelli (2001)	Film title and film date
Captain Corelli's Mandolin *(original title)*	Original title
131 min - Drama | Music | Romance | War	Length and genre
5.8/10	Viewers' rating
Users: (14,862 votes) 212 reviews | Critics: 102 reviews	Number of votes, critics and reviews

[191] The dedicated page is available at http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0238112/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

IMDb information	Information Category
When a fisherman leaves to fight with the Greek army during WWII, his fiancee falls in love with the local Italian commander.	Plot
Director: John Madden	Director's name
Writers: Shawn Slovo (screenplay), Louis de Bernières (novel)	Writers' name(s)
Stars: Nicolas Cage, Penélope Cruz and John Hurt	Stars' name(s)
Release date: 9 November 2001 (Italy)	Release date and Country
Watch Trailer	Link to trailer
40 photos, 4 videos, 44 news articles	Additional online material available to the users
4 nominations	Nominations and awards

Table 9. IMDb representation of filmic information

The page also contains information about the storyline of the movie, and a link to the plot summary and the plot synopsis. The content of the storyline is authored by one or more viewers, as in the following excerpt drawn from the IMDb website for the same film:

Storyline

In 1941, Italy allies with Germany and ruthlessly conquers the much weaker country of Greece. On a remote Greek island, an Italian artillery garrison is established to maintain order. One Italian officer, Captain Corelli, adopts an attitude of mutual co-existence with the Greeks and engages in such activities as music festivals and courting the daughter of a local doctor. In 1943, however, after Italy surrenders to the Allies and changes sides in the war, Captain Corelli must defend the Greek island against a German invasion.

Written by Anthony Hughes <husnock31@hotmail.com>

Plot Summary | Plot Synopsis

The storyline is then followed by the so-called 'plot keywords' which help the retrieval process in the search-engine queries.

Plot Keywords

Italian | Greek | Captain | Island | Love | See more »

Each film is also defined on the basis of one or more *genre*(*s*) assigned. As an example, the film 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' is included in the following *genres*: drama, music, romance, war. In accordance with IMDb.com, the *genre* classification is meant to be "simply a categorization of certain types of art based upon their style, form or content. Most movies can easily be described with certain umbrella terms, such as Western,

dramas, or comedies"[192]. The categorization is based on peer-to-peer attribution and is considered to be as very reliable by a number of studies and research works, though its correctness cannot be demonstrated from a scientific perspective (Charoenchasri 2007; UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2010, Zhou, Hermans, Karandikar and Regh 2010[193]). Finally, the IMDb includes meta-tags and other information, such as the so-called MPAA (Motion Picture Rating) containing, if any, notice of violence, sexuality or language. Details such as the distributor's official site, the country and the languages in which the film is available, the release date and the filming locations are also shown. Budget information is provided with regard to estimated income from the screening and the budget of the opening weekend. Technical specs include aspects such as the runtime, sound mix, colour and ratio. Interestingly, the website also reports fun facts about the movie analyzed, as in the following excerpt drawn from the IMDb website for the same film:

> Fun Facts
>
> Trivia
>
> Katie Holmes auditioned for the role of Pelagia. See more »

[192] More information can be found at http://www.springerlink.com/content/3h84751t3m221726/ (last accessed 19/02/2011). Additional information on the criteria for the classification provided by IMDb is available at http://www.imdb.com/help/search?domain=helpdesk_faq&index=2&file=genres (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[193] Accessible at http://sy10.ukfilmcouncil.ry.com/pdf/Chapter4-GenreAndClass.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

Goofs

Errors made by characters, possibly deliberate errors by the filmmakers: Captain Corelli says "Mussolini has surrendered to America and Britain, not Germany". Benito Mussolini didn't surrender to anybody; he was arrested by his fellow Fascist Party Council members, supported by some Italian Generals and the King of Italy. After he was rescued byAdolf Hitler's SS commandos, he continued to fight the allies. See more »

Quotes

Corelli: [upon first seeing Pelagia] Bella bambina at two o'clock! See more »

Connections

Referenced in "Una mamma per amica: The Road Trip to Harvard (#2.4)" (2001).

The corpus under investigation has been categorized on the basis of the IMDb classification. In Table 10 below, the first column shows the title of the movie, the second and third columns show the production year (P) and the year in which the audio description was made (AD). The fourth column contains the name of the audio description provider; the fifth and sixth columns show the film *genre* (FG) attributed by the IMDb:

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
A Midsummer Night's Dream	1999	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Fantasy Romance
A Month by the Lake	1995	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama, Romance
A Murder of Crows	1998	2001	ITFC	Action Thriller Crime
A rather English Marriage	1998	*Not available*	BBC	Drama
American Beauty	1999	*Not available*	BBC	Drama
Atlantis: the lost Empire	2001	2002	RNIB	Animated Adventure Family
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2001	*Not available*	BBC	Action Drama Fantasy

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
Captain Corelli's Mandolin	2001	2002	RNIB	Drama Music Romance
Chocolat	2000	2001	RNIB	Drama Mystery Romance
Dinosaur	2000	2001	RNIB	Animation Adventure Family
Enigma	2001	2002	RNIB	Drama Mystery Romance
Gone in 60 Seconds	2000	2001	RNIB	Action Crime Thriller
Green for Danger	1947	2002	ITFC	Crime Mystery Thriller
Hard Rain	1998	*Not available*	BBC	Action Crime Thriller

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone	2001	*Not available*	RNIB	Adventure Family Fantasy
High Fidelity	2000	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama Music
In the Name of the Father part I	1993	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama
In the Name of the Father part II	1993	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama
Insomnia	2002	2003	RNIB	Crime Drama Mystery
Iris	2001	*Not available*	RNIB	Biography Drama Romance
Jerry Maguire	1996	2000	ITFC	Comedy Drama Romance

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
Lady and the Tramp	1955	1999	RNIB	Animation Family Music
Leaving Las Vegas	1995	*Not available*	BBC	Drama Romance
Lilo and Stitch	2002	*Not available*	ITFC	Animation Adventure Family
Losing Isaiah	1995	*Not available*	BBC	Drama
Love is a Many Splendored Thing	1955	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama Romance
Monsters, Inc.	2001	2002	RNIB	Animation Adventure Comedy
Mrs. Doubtfire	1993	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama Family

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
Nine Months	1995	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Romance
One True Thing	1998	*Not available*	ITFC	Drama
Out of Sight	1998	*Not available*	BBC	Action Comedy Drama
Pleasantville	1998	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama Fantasy
Red Corner	1997	*Not available*	BBC	Crime Drama Thriller
Road to Perdition	2002	*Not available*	ITFC	Adventure Drama Crime
Robin Hood: Men in Tights	1993	2002	ITFC	Comedy
Schindler's List part I	1993	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama History
Schindler's List part II	1993	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama History

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
See no Evil, Hear no Evil	1989	2002	ITFC	Action Comedy Crime
Shakespeare in Love	1998	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama Romance
Shrek	2001	*Not available*	BBC	Animation Adventure Comedy
Slingblade 1	1996	*Not available*	BBC	Drama
Slingblade 2	1996	*Not available*	BBC	Drama
Some Like it Hot	1959	2001	RNIB	Comedy Music
Spiderman	2002	*Not available*	ITFC	Action Adventure Fantasy
Spy Kids	2001	200	RNIB	Action Adventure Comedy

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
Stealing Beauty	1996	*Not available*	BBC	Drama Romance
Stuart Little	1999	*Not available*	BBC	Adventure Comedy Family
Tea with Mussolini	1999	*Not available*	ITFC	Drama Comedy War
The Amazing Howard Hughes	1977	2002	ITFC	Biography Drama
The Buddy Holly Story	1978	*Not available*	BBC	Biography Drama Music
The Daytrippers	1996	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy
The Emperor's new Groove	2000	2001	RNIB	Animation Adventure Comedy
The English Patient	1996	2000	ITFC	Romance Drama War

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
The Great Escape	1963	2002	RNIB	Adventure Drama History
The Horse Whisperer	1998	1999	RNIB	Drama Romance Western
The Indian Fighter	1955	2002	ITFC	Western
The Others	2001	2002	RNIB	Drama Mystery Thriller
The Pelican Brief	1993	2002	ITFC	Crime Drama Mystery
The Royal Tenenbaums	2001	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama
The Shipping News	2001	*Not available*	RNIB	Drama Romance
The Silence of the Lambs	1991	2000	ITFC	Crime Thriller
The Sixth Sense	1999	2000	RNIB	Drama Mystery Thriller

Title	Year (P)	Year (AD)	Audiodescribed by	Film *genre* (FG)
The True Story of Jesse James	1957	*Not available*	BBC	Action Biography Crime
The Truth about Cats and Dogs	1996	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy, Romance
The Wizard of Oz	1939	*Not available*	RNIB	Adventure Comedy Family
To End all Wars	2001	*Not available*	BBC	Drama War Action
Unbreakable	2000	2001	RNIB	Drama Fantasy Mystery
Wag the Dog	1997	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama
Waiting to Exhale	1995	*Not available*	BBC	Comedy Drama Romance

Table 10. List of the movies and their classification based on the IMDb

There are some differences between the categories attributed in this research and the ones attributed to the same films in Vassiliou's PhD thesis (Vassiliou

2006), which is based on almost the same corpus and on the IMDb classification. This means that in the meantime (about 4 years), other categories have been attributed to some films. As an example, the film 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' was listed as a Drama/Romance/War movie in 2006, while it is listed as Drama/Music/Romance in 2011. The film 'Road to Perdition' has acquired in 2001 the category 'Adventure' which had not been attributed at the time Vassiliou carried out his study. Since it does not appear to be any leading category in the *genre* classification provided by IMDb, we should assume they all have the same pertinence for the film content. Drawing on this consideration, the *genre* distribution can be figured out as shown in Table 11 below[194]:

Ad	Ac	An	B	C	Cr	D	F	Fan	H	R	Mu	Mi	T	W	Wa
				X		X				X					
	X				X								X		
						X									
						X									
X		X					X								
	X					X		X							
						X				X	X				
						X				X		X			
X		X					X								
						X				X		X			
	X				X								X		
					X							X	X		
	X				X								X		
X							X	X							

[194] The following abbreviations have been used: Ad (Adventure), Ac (Action), An (Animation), B (Biography), C (Comedy), Cr (Crime), D (Drama), F (Family), Fan (Fantasy), H (History), R (Romance), Mu (Music), Mi (Mystery), T (Thriller), W(Western), Wa (War).

Ad	Ac	An	B	C	Cr	D	F	Fan	H	R	Mu	Mi	T	W	Wa
				X		X					X				
				X		X				X					
			X			X									
					X	X						X			
			X			X				X					
		X					X				X				
						X				X					
X		X					X								
						X									
			X			X				X					
				X				X		X					
X		X		X											
				X		X	X								
				X						X					
						X									
	X			X		X									
					X	X						X			
				X		X	X								
					X	X							X		
X					X	X									
				X											
				X		X									
			X			X			X						
	X			X	X										
				X		X				X					
X		X		X											
						X									
				X							X				
X	X			X											
X	X							X							
						X				X					
X				X			X								
				X		X									X
			X	X											
			X	X							X				
				X											
X		X		X											
						X				X					X
X						X			X						
						X				X				X	
														X	
						X						X	X		

Ad	Ac	An	B	C	Cr	D	F	Fan	H	R	Mu	Mi	T	W	Wa
					X								X		
						X				X					
						X						X	X		
	X		X		X										
				X						X					
	X					X									X
		X		X			X								
	X									X					X
X	X														
X	X		X												
14	13	8	8	24	11	35	9	4	2	14	5	6	8	2	4

Table 11. *Genre* distribution in the corpus

As it can be noticed in Table 11 above, most films are categorized under the *genre* 'Comedy' (24) and 'Drama' (35). 'Adventure' and 'Romance' are also frequent in the corpus (14 films each) but they seem to be combined with the most frequent categories, as if they were semantically sub-categories. Indeed, combinations such as 'Drama+Romance', 'Drama+Comedy+Romance', 'Adventure+Comedy' are very frequent. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of the corpus on the basis of the AD authority that has produced the audio description:

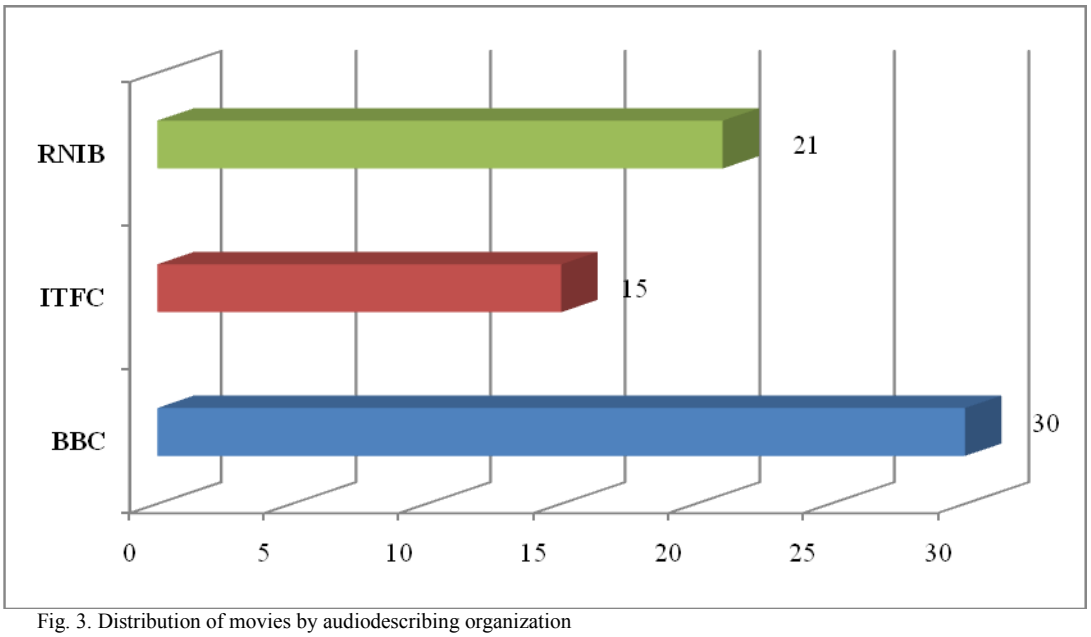


Fig. 3. Distribution of movies by audiodescribing organization

As shown in Figure 3 above, almost half of the script belong to BBC (30 out of 66 films, which corresponds to about 50% of the whole corpus). The other half is distributed between ITFC (15 scripts) and RNIB (21 scripts). From a methodological perspective, we have conducted a brief side research on both the audio described movies and their scripts: the results of this investigation did not reveal any outstanding differences between the way in which different organizations audiodescribe films. Indeed, the three of them are generally in line with the agreed guidelines by ITC (2000). We are aware of the fact that there could be both a sintagmatic and a paradigmatic variance if we analyzed the audio description of a same film done by different organizations; however, this would seem to be more dependent on a pure 'human' factor than on intended procedural differences. It should be also pointed out that even though we had wished to conduct the research on the

same quantity of scripts for each organization, this would have proved very difficult and time-consuming because of the near-impossibility to have other AD scripts available.

The corpus contains films whose release date range from 1947 to 2002, which is the launch year of the TIWO project. However, the audio description was produced in a relatively short time span, that is in the late 90's and until 2002. Figure 4 below shows the distribution of the corpus in accordance with their production year:

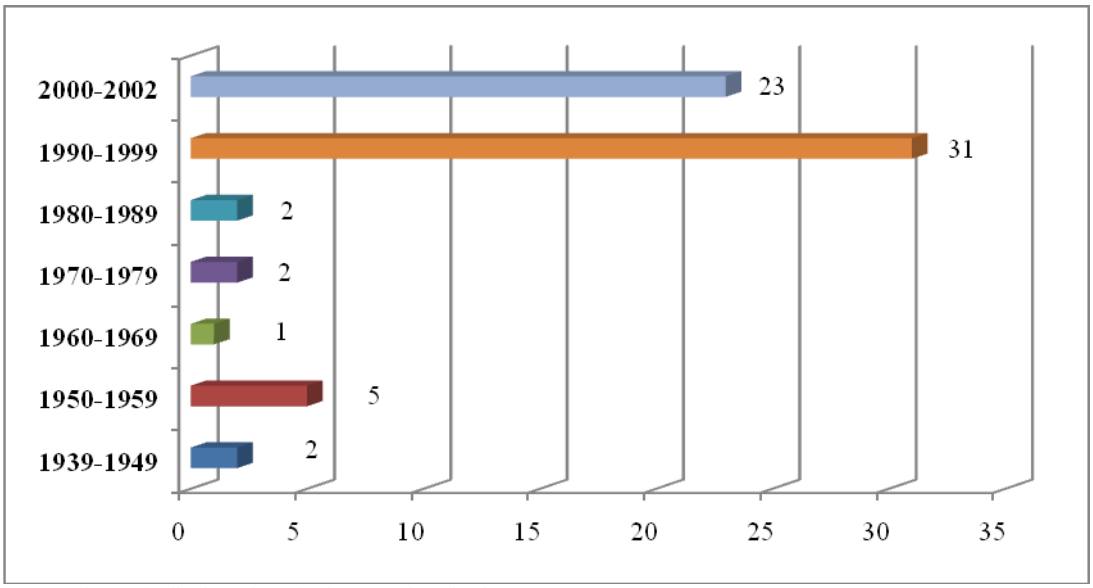


Fig.4. Distribution of movies by year of production

Figure 4 above shows that the majority of AD scripts belong to films produced in the late 90's or in between 2000 and 2002. Only a few of them refer to films produced in the past decades. However, since the audio description of these movies was realized in the same period as the others, we

have decided to include them in the corpus. The release year of the film was retrieved by the IMDb and in case of ambiguity the date has been counter-checked against the TIWO corpus description in the PhD thesis of Vassiliou (2006)[195]. The year in which the audio description was produced comes from the analysis of the scripts themselves. Indeed, some description meta-tags also contain temporal information about the audio description work as shown in the following excerpt from the AD script of the film 'Enigma':

(29) ENIGMA

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

by

William Roberts

(May, 2002)

or the AD script of the movie 'The Indian Fighter':

(30) <normal>Indian Fighter

Describer: Lonny Evans and Aimee De Larry

Tx date: 17/03/02

Programme no:23067/001

Spool no: 461960/090

[195] Indeed, some films have undergone different remaking operations and the research in the IMDb archives is likely to retrieve many hits. As an example when searching 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', the search results show 20 different possible correspondences. However, each entry is provided with the year and the original title (if any) which makes the identification easier.

In both cases, it is possible to retrieve, at least, the year in which the audio description was produced; in addition, the name(s) of the audio describer(s) is (are) also mentioned. Unfortunately, the scripts provided by BBC do not contain the date in which the audio description was produced and this information could not be retrieved anywhere else to date. Interestingly, many of the scripts analyzed contain, in their rough version, that is, not the one we have analyzed but the original version obtained by the TIWO project in the earliest phase, comments and communications often addressed to the person who is going to record the script with his/her voice[196]. In general, such comments can be divided into two subcategories. In the first, we find comments on the workflow and in the second, we find both comments related to the film and interesting linguistic issues raised by those who wrote the commentary. Example (31) below illustrates the first category (boldface not in the original):

(31) <note>Programme duration:1 hr 25 mins

Number of boxes:322

Word count:7611

Writer: Lonny and Aimee

Writing time: 20 hrs

[196] The corpus contains so many comments addressed to the narrator that it would easily make the object of another possible thesis on audiodescription. In this research work, we have only mentioned a few.

Write checker: 0

Write check time:0

Recorder: Aimee

Record time: 1 hr 45 mins (**would have taken less time without glitches in the computer and crashing**)

Rec. checker: James

Rec. check time: **Only the boss knows!**

Number of re-records: **11 proper re-records plus 7 because recording wasn't there despite the fact it said OK!**

Linearise for Ch4.

Examples (32) to (35) show some comments belonging to the second category (boldface not in the original):

(32) Karen gets her bag and picks up the [gun in the giftbox] <<**giftbox with the gun inside**>>. ('Out of Sight')

(33) Samuel and Marty emerge from under the trolley, awestruck as they look at the doctor cradling the newborn girl in his arms.. <**tight** ('Nine Months')

(34) (**Breath**) The room is in daylight. (**Gasp**) She grabs a watch from a bedside table, sees the time, (**gasp**) presses her face into the pillow, (**breath**) replaces the watch. (**Clunk**) She's wearing a white nightgown. (**Gasp**) She raises herself slowly (**breath**) and sits unsteadily (**breath**)

on the edge of the bed. (‘The Others’)

(35) A band is preparing to perform on a low stage that has been constructed [on] <<**halfway down**>> the roller rink (‘The Buddy Holly Story’)

In examples (32) and (35) above the first version (between […]) has been removed and the final version (the one recorded by the narrator) is the other included between <<<...>>>. In both cases, corrections have been made to describe the action in a more accurate way. Indeed, in example (32) the character ‘picks up the gun in the gift box’ becomes ‘picks up the gift box with the gun inside’ (which was not clear from the rough version); in example (35) a location specification has been provided to clarify the scene. In example (33) the operator is warning the narrator that the time for the recording of the audio description string is tight; that can be easily counterchecked against time-in and time-out codes, which make it clear that the audio description should fit in about 7 seconds time. Example (34) intends to signal at which point, or after which action(s) the audio description should start[197].

All the AD scripts have been made available by Andrew Salway under the TIWO project in .txt format. However, the visual output is not always the same in all the texts. There are three types of layout. Example (36) below is an excerpt of the audio description script of the film ‘The Sixth Sense’,

[197] These types of comments contain a vast variety of verbs and are of great interest for the investigation of the linguistic richness of description.

produced by RNIB:

(36) AUDIO DESCRIPTION SCRIPT

OF

The Sixth Sense

By

Peter Wickham

Recorded at : 4MC 142 Wardour Street

On : 16.5.00

Narrator: Diana Bishop

Engineer:

All time-codes in bold

All cues, FX, pauses, etc. in italics

* indicates a fast cue

00 00(over black) This audio described video has been made available by the RNIB Home Audio Description Service.

01 00 00 A sphinx is silhouetted against a blue disc. The light from the disc intensifies, revealing the sphinx to be golden, with a man's face. Underneath the sphinx, blue letters spell Hollywood Pictures.

01 00 10 ****Gentle ripples cover a lake under an evening sky, and hills on the far shore stand black against the horizon. The picture is reflected in the lens of a brass telescope. From a distance, we see the telescope is held by a man; he swivels so that the lake is behind him. White letters spell Spyglass Entertainment. (The credits are all to picture)

00 30 Hollywood Pictures and Spyglass Entertainment present...

00 41 A Kennedy/ Marshall/ Barry Mendel Production...

00 48 Bruce Willis...

00 55 The Sixth Sense.

The script contains important information about the audio description production. In this case, we know that Mr. Peter Wickam wrote the script and

Mrs. Diana Bishop voiced it. In addition, the script explains where and when it was recorded. It contains the time when the audio description should start and warns against the risk of overlapping music or dialogues. Indeed, '*' indicates a fast cue while the string starting by '****' should be voiced very quickly and the narrator should pay particular attention to the recording phase. Unfortunately, since the scripts have been made available in .txt format, the strings interested by the following information 'All time-codes in bold' and 'All cues, FX, pauses, etc. (…)' are not in italics as originally suggested in the script itself.

AD scripts by RNIB can be even different and contain the original dialogue, as in example (37) below representing an excerpt of the script of 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin':

(37) CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

by

William Roberts

(January, 2002)

(All audio description narrations are given in bold; cues for narrations are in italics.)

WARNING: This motion picture, including its soundtrack, is

protected by copyright and any broadcast, public performance, diffusion, copying and editing are prohibited unless expressly authorised.

This audio described video has been made available by the RNIB Home Video Service.

59 44 00 Against a black background, a blue capital letter M sweeps across the screen, leaving in its wake luminous golden letters nestled within another large letter M silhouetted against a radiant blue light: Miramax Home Entertainment.

01 00 00 Beyond an expanse of rippling blue water, a high-rise modern city. Day turns instantly to night and the twinkling lights shining from the skyscrapers converge to form the words: Miramax Films.

01 00 14 A revolving earth radiates bright lights from its continents as it slowly turns against a star-spangled blackness. Bold white capital letters orbit from the back of the globe: Universal. Below, an internet web address: www.universalstudios.com.

01 00 34 From a field of shooting stars and lightning flashes against a black background, letters appear and gather into groupings. A flash of light, and the letters are fixed within two black and white rectangles: Studio Canal, a Canal+ Company.

01 00 50 A geometric design of turning circles resolves into a simple bold dark letter 'O' silhouetted against a blue glow. Letters are superimposed over it: Working Title.

01 01 05 Against black, a caption appears in bold white letters: Cephallonia, Greece, 1940. From the black screen comes the sound of voices.

01 01 34 Here's a fish-hook . . . and a hammer.

01 01 37 Universal Pictures, StudioCanal, and Miramax Films present a Working Title Production: CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN.

01 01 46 Right. Now, keep still! . . . Oww!

01 01 52 An image appears from the blackness.

01 01 54 A pea.

01 01 55 A shrivelled pea on the straightened fish hook.

01 01 57 It is very papilionaceous, is it not?

01 02 00 He passes it to the wife.

01 02 35 or to stoke up the fire before we go to church.

01 02 39 The doctor leaves the house.

01 02 50 ... there'll be some peace in this house, after all this time.

01 02 53 Carrying a chicken by its feet, the doctor moves from Stamatis's house down to the road leading to the town.

01 03 00 Antonio, do you remember our island?

The greatest challenge of this type of script resides in the presence of the original dialogues. This means that in order to obtain the script only, dialogues have been eliminated manually. Often dialogues alternate with audio description, so the operation of eliminating dialogues had to be carried out very carefully.

Another type of script format is the one produced by BBC. Example (38) below is an excerpt from the script of 'The Day Trippers':

(38) In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 09:59:40:00

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 09:59:49:00

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

FILM: Day Trippers

LPB F814H/03

BRD15954

Title number: 2

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:00:07:03

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:00:08:23

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

The Day Trippers

Title number: 3

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:00:15:02

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:00:17:02

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

Starring Hope Davis

(…)

Title number: 16

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:01:56:22

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:06:15

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

Night time and a vehical is travelling through suburban streets. Neon signs, Glass fronted buildings and rows of trees ellaborately decorated with fairy lights pass by in a blur.

Title number: 17

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:08:14

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:13:08

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

A large shopping Mall spills cold blue light onto its busy parking lot

Title number: 18

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:14:15

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:22:02

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

Inside the car now. The driver, Luis, is a clean shaven man. Sitting beside him is the blond haired Eliza who gazes reflectively at him.

Title number: 19

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:51:05

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:53:08

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

Luis looks at her with warm expression.

Title number: 20

In Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:02:56:18

Out Cue Time(HH MM SS Fr): 10:03:02:03

Duration (MM SS Fr) :

Her smile towards him broadens, before she turns to look at the christmas lights passing by outside.

In this case, the audio description script is divided into ‘titles’. Time in and

time out codes are assigned to each title, so that it would be possible to retrieve the length of each string. As it can be noticed, punctuation is not always present. This means that punctuation has needed to be inserted manually as a tool for separating sentences. Punctuation was inserted only at the end of unmarked sentences. We are aware of the fact that the arbitrary insertion of punctuation at the end of strings could have in a few cases altered the communicative intentions of the author, however since the study places more attention on grammar than on pragmatics, we feel that this insertion might have affected the corpus insignificantly.

Finally, the third type of script available is the one provided by ITFC, as shown in example (39), an excerpt from the film 'The English Patient' (boldface not in the original):

(39) <AverageReadingSpeed>0000</**AverageReadingSpeed**><**Peak ReadingSpeed**>0078</PeakReadingSpeed><EstimatedMaxBand width>0078</EstimatedMaxBandwidth>
<FirstProgrammeTC>00:00:00.00</FirstProgrammeTC>
<LastProgrammeTC>00:00:00.00</LastProgrammeTC>
</ThreadDescriptor>
</FileHeader>
<FileBody>
<AudioDescriptionScript> <Block>1</Block>
<ThreadValidity>FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF</ThreadValidity>

<OverallInTime>09:59:14.07</OverallInTime>

<OverallOutTime>09:59:55.18</OverallOutTime><ScriptText><

![CDATA[<normal>title: The English Patient

contract No: 27437/001

spool number 373757/120

tx date 13.5.00

describers Louise Fryer and Michael Baker

]]></**ScriptText**>

<AudioAccessString>default</AudioAccessString>

<AudioInTime>09:59:15.00</AudioInTime>

<AudioOutTime>09:59:55.00</AudioOutTime>

<GroupStart>09:59:14.07</GroupStart>

<FadeControl>FF</FadeControl><PanControl>00</PanControl>

<FPRate>12</FPRate>

<GroupStart>09:59:55.00</GroupStart>

<FadeControl>00</FadeControl><PanControl>00</PanControl>

<FPRate>12</FPRate>

</AudioDescriptionScript>

<AudioDescriptionScript> <Block>2</Block>

<ThreadValidity>FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF</ThreadValidity>

<OverallInTime>10:00:01.04</OverallInTime>

<OverallOutTime>10:00:49.20</OverallOutTime><ScriptText><

![CDATA[<normal>10.00.01

a blue letter M passes over gold letters to spell out

Miramax films

The screen goes black. In small yellow letters: Miramax films presents a Saul Zaentz production. An Anthony Minghella film. Ralph Fiennes, Juliette Binoche, Willem Dafoe, Kristin Scott Thomas, in The English Patient. The background becomes the colour of sand with the grainy texture of parchment. With Naveen Andrews, Colin Firth, Julian Wadham, Jurgen Prochnow, Kevin Whately, Clive Merrison, Nino Castelnuovo, Hichem Rostom, Peter Ruhring,

original music composd by Gabriel Yared

This third type of script is probably the most complicated one from a visual perspective because it contains the highest quantity of information and tags. Tags referring to audio description are <ScriptText> and <normal> which respectively show the beginning of the audio description string and the text to be recorded. Interestingly, this type of output also provides information about the peak and the average reading speed and the software used to produce the script.

5.5.2 Methodology of analysis

As seen in section 5.5.1, this research is firstly an investigation into the use of adjectives in film AD scripts and secondly a deeper insight into the use of figurative language (similes in particular) in audio description. The overarching goal is discovering recurrent adjectival patterns in audio description used to convey a visual meaning to people who cannot see or barely see.

For this reason, the research is configured as a corpus-based investigation which seeks to combine quantitative evidence with qualitative considerations about the language in use. Among the varieties of corpora described by Partington (1998), we are dealing with a lexis-driven corpus investigation, defined by Partington (1998: 2) as follows:

> […] the main sort of corpus-based research into lexis conducted using corpora. It investigates the frequency of words and word senses in different types or language varieties and their collocational behavior, that is their patterns of combination with other words.

As we have seen, an audio description script cannot be considered as a text *per se* because it lacks generally acknowledged textual parameters such as cohesion and coherence which would be found only through the combination of the script with the audiovisual product it refers to (e.g. a film or a theatre performance). For this reason, a discourse-based research through corpus

analysis would fall beyond the scope of application of this study and could possibly make the object of other research works based on intentionality of an audio description discourse, if any. However, we intend to point out that the present research uses corpus analysis as a tool for linguistic observation but is not limited to it, since results are counterchecked and discussed through qualitative evaluation. Indeed, in line with Partington (1998) combination of introspection and data observation is the most viable option to investigate specialized communication, and audio description is part of it (Salway 2007).

Using corpus analysis tools to investigate corpora of texts proves to be useful "for verifying the falsifiability, completeness, simplicity, strength, and objectivity of any linguistic hypothesis" (Leech 1992: 112-113). In addition, as stated by Partington (1998: 1):

> The reason why corpus analysis can enhance other resources is that it not only constitutes a new technological device, but also provides a new philosophy for language description. […] In reality the corpus represents both a resource against which to test such intuitions and a motor which can help generate them. Corpus research is generally carried out the following manner. A researcher has an intuition about language, checks this against the data the corpus provides, and this checking process frequently suggests other avenues of research to be taken, often entirely unsuspected at the start of the process (the co-called 'serendipity' principle, Higgins 1991). Intuition and data collection go hand in hand […]

The research value of linguistic corpus analysis is further reinforced by Hunston (2011: 4):

> Corpus linguistics is more than a simple set of techniques, but it is a field where technological advancement and theoretical development go hand in hand. […] Corpus linguistics, then, is more than a way of investigating existing models of language. The methodologies it uses can be used both to change and to complement our understanding of these models.

The linguistic investigation illustrated moves from the adjectival micro-features to the semantic and textual macro-features[198] through the extraction of adjectives and their concordances which will be interpreted with reference to the contextual factors. This is strategic for the interpretation of data against existing guidelines and will pave the way for possible applications in didactic and academic contexts. Based on Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998) approach to corpus analysis, this is a study on the structure of use that is an investigation into the actual language of naturally occurring texts in audio description. In addition, the study mainly draws on "associations" (Biber, Conrad and Reppen 1998: 6) considering two parts:

1. Lexical associations – investigating how the linguistic feature is systematically associated with particular words;
2. Grammatical associations – investigating how the linguistic feature is systematically associated with grammatical features in the immediate context.

[198] Here 'text' is intended not as a unit of sense but as a synonym for script.

Firstly, to make the scripts processable by corpus analysis tools, it has been necessary to clean and tag the scripts. In this case, all the scripts have been cleaned manually. Indeed, since many texts also contained dialogues and these were not tagged, it would have been impossible to eliminate them automatically. Cleaning the scripts means that all tags - if any - time codes and technical information have been removed and that only the audio description text has been left unchanged. Punctuation, if any, has been kept unchanged, in order to preserve the original style. However, as we have seen, many scripts barely contain punctuation. For this reason, since full stops are needed for the text to be processable, full stops have been introduced manually at the end of unpunctuated strings. Of course, no other punctuation mark has been inserted but full stops. After cleaning, scripts become simple .txt documents, like the following one which is an excerpt of the AD script of the film 'One True Thing':

(40) The muted shimmering colours become trees seen from a passing car. A family the Guldens, are in the car. They wear 60's style clothes. bearded, bespectacled Mr. Gulden, George, drives and reads a newspaper article. blonde Mrs Gulden, Kate, sits next to him knitting. In the back their two children, daughter Ellen and curly haired son Brian are squabbling. Ellen purses her lips thoughtfully. Ellen picks a large book up. Caption March 1988. Ellen is now in her 20's. They sit at a desk. Clutching a paper cup

of coffee Ellen is in the midst of a crush of commuters making their way onto an escalator in a station. Later she's in the offices of the newspaper where she works and pursues her editor Mr.Tweedy as he walks past. In the office late she drinks coffee granules in coke. A young man bangs on her door. She's on a train.

The texts obtained after cleaning have been tagged with TreeTagger[199]. This is a program developed by Helmut Schmidt at the University of Stuttgart and is also available with a Windows interface (the one used in this research work). This tool allows for POS (part-of-speech) tagging and the output text is in a one-per-line format as in the following sample output from the previous film:

(41)

Rays	NNS	Ray
Of	IN	Of
Golden	JJ	Golden
Light	NN	Light
Shooting	VVG	Shoot
Out	RP	Out

[199] The program can be downloaded for free from http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/ (last accessed 19/02/2011) along with the language tagset.

From	IN	From
The	DT	The
Dark	JJ	Dark
Globe	NN	Globe
Of	IN	Of
The	DT	The
Earth	NN	Earth
As	IN	As
It	PP	It
Turns	VVZ	Turn
In	IN	In
Space	NN	Space
.	SENT	.
3D	JJ	<unknown>
White	JJ	White
Letters	NNS	Letter
Appear	VVP	Appear
,	,	,
curving	VVG	Curve
Round	NN	Round
The	DT	The

Sphere	NN	Sphere
,	,	,
To	TO	To
Spell	VV	Spell
Out	RP	Out
The	DT	The
Word	NN	Word
.	SENT	.

In example (41) below, the left column shows the word analyzed, the central column shows the tags associated with it and the right column contains the corresponding lemma[200]. A total of 58 tags have been identified by the TreeTagger but not all of them are present in our corpus[201]. The corpus obtained this way cannot be directly queried into the tagger; for this reason, we have used two different tools to interrogate the corpus: AntConc 3.2.1[202] and CQP, Corpus Query Processor, the central and efficient central

[200] According to Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998: 29), "the term lemma is used to mean the base form of a word, disregarding grammatical changes such as tense and plurality".

[201] The complete tag set for TreeTagger is available at http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/Penn-Treebank-Tagset.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011) where a list of problematic cases is also provided.

[202] A tutorial on the use of AntConc 3.2.1 is available at http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software/AntConc_Help_3.1.2/AntConc_Help.htm (last accessed on 20/12/2011). The software can be dowloaded for free from http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

component of the Corpus Workbench developed by the IMS (*Institut fur maschinelle Sprachverarbeitung*) in Stuttgart[203]. AntConc is a freeware concordance that supports many text analysis features and contains the following tools: concordance, concordance plot, file view, clusters, n-grams, collocates, word list and keyword list. In CQP we have used the corpus of tagged scripts directly. However, in order to make the tagged texts processable by AntConc, we have used the Textpad application and replaced each space in the tagged texts (search function '\t') by '_'. Textpad is a multi-purpose text editor used to process big quantity of data and files. It is not a text processing tool such as 'Word' but more advanced substitute editor of Notepad for Windows[204]. Using Textpad, we have isolated the tag between the words contained in the first column and the lemma contained in third column. The output format is shown in example (42) below (excerpt from the film 'One True Thing'):

(42) The_DT_the

muted_JJ_muted

shimmering_VVG_shimmer

colours_NNS_colour

become_VV_become

[203] For a comprehensive tutorial on the use of QCP see http://cwb.sourceforge.net/documentation.php (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[204] An interesting and complete tutorial for Textpad (in Italian) can be found at http://www.ledonline.it/ledonline/giuliano/giulianoanalisiautomatica1-2.pdf (last accessed 19/02/2011).

trees_NNS_tree

seen_VVN_see

from_IN_from

a_DT_a

passing_VVG_pass

car_NN_car

._SENT_.

A_DT_a

family_NN_family

the_DT_the

Guldens_NP_<unknown>

’_’_’

are_VBP_be

in_IN_in

the_DT_the

car_NN_car

._SENT_.

They_PP_they

wear_VVP_wear

60_CD_@card@

's_POS_'s

style_NN_style

clothes_NNS_clothes

._SENT_.

bearded_JJ_bearded

’_’_’

bespectacled_JJ_bespectacled

Mr.Gulden_NP_<unknown>

’_’_’

George_NP_George

’_’_’

drives_VVZ_drive

and_CC_and

reads_VVZ_read

a_DT_a

newspaper_NN_newspaper

article_NN_article

._SENT_.

Being all TreeTagger tags respectively preceded and followed by the word and the lemma they refer to, tags can be easily retrieved by means of search queries in Antconc 3.2.1. At this point we have obtained four different corpora, which we have interrogated separately (but not all of them for the same purpose) during the course of our analysis:

1. Rough scripts (obtained directly by the TIWO project).
2. Cleaned scripts (cleaned manually).
3. Tagged scripts (tagged with TreeTagger).
4. Textpad-scripts (elaborated by the Textpad application).

Corpus no. 2 has served for a first preliminary investigation of the corpus (namely the number of tokens and types) while corpus no. 4 has been used to retrieve the tagged POS in AntConc. In addition, for a quicker and more precise data retrieval, we have used corpus no. 3 in CQP in order to analyze a selection of adjectives from the point of view of collocation[205] and semantic preference as well as to investigate comparative and superlative degrees. In the following sections, we will see that preliminary results of the analysis show that the adjectives used in audio description belong to specific semantic categories. Those categories also provide mutual information on the nouns they collocate with. For this reason, they constitute useful insights into the types of entities selected by audio describers.

5.5.3 Analysis of the corpus

Investigations on the language of audio description have been conducted on

[205] By collocation, we intend "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" (Sinclair 1991: 170) in Partington (1998: 15). The statistical definition if that "collocation has long been the name given to the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context" (Hoey 1991: 6-7 cited by Partington 1998: 15).

corpora no. 2, 3 and 4 for different purposes. First, corpora no. 3 and no. 4 could be better accessed by CQP and AntConc respectively. Corpus no. 2 represents the real corpus (it does not contain tagging) and was used for the manual retrieval of information. In addition, it can be considered as the real sample of audio description language. Corpus no. 2 has been loaded in AntConc and a wordlist has been run, which has allowed finding out the total number of tokens (376735) and word types (16501)[206].

The first 23 words occurring in the corpus under investigation are functions words. Those words include pronouns ('his', 'her', 'she', 'him', 'it'), prepositions ('to', 'of', 'in', 'at', 'on', 'up', 'with', 'out', 'into', 'down', 'back'), articles ('the', 'a'), conjunctions ('and') and the verb 'to be' ('is'). The first content word is 'looks' (1998 occurrences, ranking 24th), followed by 'door' (1398 occurrences, ranking 32nd), 'turns' (1111 occurrences, ranking 36th), 'man' (1009 occurrences, ranking 40th), 'head' (969 occurrences, ranking 41st), 'face' (887 occurrences, ranking 44th), 'room' (881 occurrences, ranking 45th), 'takes' (862 occurrences, ranking 48th), 'eyes' (836 occurrences, ranking 50th), 'hand' (814 occurrences, ranking 52nd) and 'walks' (814 occurrences, ranking 53rd). We can therefore confirm the prevalence of words indicating movements, body parts and spaces, as

[206] The option 'treat all data as lower case' has been selected; this allows, for example, 'the' and 'The', to be counted as for one word type only.

already pointed out by Salway (2007) and Vassiliou (2006)[207].

5.5.3.1 Corpus-based analysis of adjectives

5.5.3.1.1 Adjectives as a part of speech

Describing the nature of adjectives is not easy in that the very boundaries of the adjectival category are often difficult to delimit. For example, other word classes can be used in a similar way to adjectives - nouns, verbs and semi-determiners in particular. According to Hoffher and Matushansky (2010: 2), the following general statements about adjectives can be considered to be true:

a. Adjectives allow direct modification of nouns […].
b. Adjectives differ from other predicates in the comparative construction […].
c. Adjectives do not have their own gender, they agree in gender with the modified noun […].
d. Adjectives can appear without a preposition in the resultative predications […].

[207] Indeed, according to their investigation, the first 300 most frequent words refer to three classes: 1) characters and body parts; 2) actions; 3) objects and scenes. The frequency wordlist retrieved by Salway (2007) provides with useful insights into the vocabulary of audio description but does not address the degree of deviance that the language of audio description presents if compared to general language with regard to the adjectivation process. While investigating the concordances of words which, though not particularly frequent in audio description, are much more frequent in the AD scripts than in the BNC corpus, Salway (2007) has stressed that most of these words are actions, and therefore can be identified with verbal entities.

From a more informational/semantic perspective, Chatman (1990: 16) states that adjectives "perform further description" while Biber *et alii* (1999: 37) maintain that "adjectives and adverbs seem to expand and elaborate the information presented in a text". Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen (1997: 447) stress that "adjectives typically express *properties* in relation to the things or entities expressed by (pro)nonimals". From a distributional perspective, Biber *at alii* (1999: 504) underline that:

> Adjectives and adverbs are extremely common in all registers but considerably less common overall than noun and verbs, the other two lexical word classes. Furthermore, these two words classes are distributed very differently across registers […]: adjectives are most frequent in the written registers, especially academic prose, while adverbs are most frequent in conversation and fiction. Interestingly, this distribution mirrors the distribution of nouns and verbs […]. Adjectives are frequently used to modify nouns, thus adding to the informational density of expository registers such as news and academic prose.

A first distinction can be drawn between central and peripheral adjectives (Biber *et alii* 1999). Central adjectives are defined by their morphological, syntactic and semantic features. In particular, many central adjectives can be inflected to show degrees of comparison (e.g. 'nice, nicer, nicest'). In this sense, usually a difference is made between gradable and non-gradable adjectives. Gradable adjectives denote scalar qualities and can be therefore

modified by adverbs allowing also for comparison, while non-gradable adjectives denote "categorical or determinative properties and are not normally compatible with intensification or comparison" (Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen 1997: 449). From the syntactical point of view, central adjectives can be subdivided into attributive and predicative. The adjectives belonging to the first category modify nominal expressions and are mostly part of a noun phrase. The second category includes adjectives occurring in a separate clause element "as subject predicatives following a copular verb" (Biber *et alii* 1999: 505). In addition, according to Biber *et alii* (1999: 506), "across registers, attributive adjectives differ in frequency to a much greater extent than predicative adjectives". From a semantic point of view, central adjectives are (Biber *et alii* 1999: 506):

> […] descriptive, typically characterizing the referent of a nominal expression […]. Further, they are **gradable** in meaning, that is, they can denote **degrees** of a given quality[…]. Many of the most common adjectives are central adjectives that have all of these characteristics; they include adjectives of color (e.g *black, red, dark*), adjectives of size and dimension (e.g. *big, small, long, thin*) and adjectives of time (*e.g. new, old, young*).

Interestingly, both attributive and predicative adjectives seem to be rare in spoken language. However, while attributive adjectives are more frequent in expository written registers, predicative adjectives are more common in fiction (Biber *et alii* 1999).

Peripheral adjectives do not have one or more of the features listed for central adjectives. In particular, some of them have only a superlative form, while others often can have either a predicative or an attributive position.

A second distinction can be drawn between descriptors and classifiers (Biber *et alii* 1999). This is a crucial difference from a semantic standpoint. Indeed, if descriptors are typically gradable and express features like colour, age, size, quantity, dimension, age and emotion, classifiers are aimed at restricting a noun's referent (they are subdivided into the following sub-categories: relational/classificational/restrictive, affiliative, topical and misc.) and are non-gradable. If all registers use descriptors, fiction uses more than the others. Classifiers, on the other hand, are used especially in the informational written registers such as academic prose, newspapers. In fiction, attributive adjectives functioning as descriptors are more frequent than in other registers (Biber *et alii* 1999) and they are especially represented by the categories of size, colour, time and evaluation.

Third, from both a morphological and syntactic standpoint, it is possible to distinguish between single adjectives and adjectival groups (Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen 1997) with pre-head or post-head dependants. Adjectival groups seem to be more frequent in that construct where semantic and temporal dynamism is more accentuated, that is with adjectives expressing a quality or a property subject to rapid change. The issue of stative and dynamic adjectives, as well as their position on the paradigmatic level, are

interpreted by Givón (1984) as a relatively stable semantic concept situated towards the left or the right on a temporal stability scale. According to this theory, the adjective expressing size, shape and texture would be situated towards the left-hand side of the scale, while the others expressing temperature, mood and personality would tend to be collocated towards the right-hand side. In Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen (1997), this 'actional' distinction results in the relation between property/quality and action. In this perspective, adjectives expressing a physical quality would be considered as stative, while those expressing attitudes or behaviours would presuppose an activity and are therefore to be considered as dynamic[208].

Fourth, a distinction is drawn by Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen (1997) between inherent and non-inherent adjectives. The first "ascribe a property to the referent of the head they modify and may used equally well as pre-head modifiers and as subject complements" (Bache and Davidsen-Nielsen 1997: 449). The second relates to the referent by means of an association rather

[208] Many adjectives in our corpus will tend to be part of the first category; this would situate them on the left-hand side of the semantic stability *continuum*. For this reason, based on Givón (1984) and as we will see in the following sections, they would mainly express static meanings. From a semantic perspective and in line with Film Narratology, the fact that most adjectives in the corpus would tend to be defined as stative coincides with precise narrative clues: the presentation of characters as they first appear on the scene and the description of people and objects as they move, speak and act. In this sense, stative adjectives can be considered in audio description as *points d'ancrage* to fix in the blind audience memory the features of figures (be they human or not) moving on the scene. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the fact that while most adjectives are stative, most verbs associated to them are dynamic (e.g. 'to look', 'to walk', 'to turn', 'to pull' are among the most frequent verbs in our corpus).

than the expression of a property or an inner feature. Generally they cannot be used with the same meaning in either pre- or post-modifying position[209].

Based on this, we believe that an investigation on adjectives could be crucial for a corpus-based research of audio description for a number of different reasons. First, no study has focused so far on the use of adjectives in this type of language for special purposes, as greater attention has been paid to other grammatical categories like nouns or verbs. However, since a descriptive text proves very rich in adjectives *per se*, and audio description is a written/aural text with a descriptive intent, the study of adjectives could not but be beneficial. Second, since we expect adjectives to have a very significant frequency on the whole corpus and therefore to be a well-represented sample of special language, we are interested in finding out their grammatical and semantic aspects in order to contribute to a better understanding of the language of audio description. Finally, based on Biber *et alii* (1999), the fact that adjectives are more frequent in written registers and among them fiction seems to be quite interesting, a first comparative study of adjectives should reveal crucial to understand the nature of an audio description 'text'. For this reason, in section 5.5.3.1.2 we will extract the

[209] The observation suggests that the majority of adjectives used in audio description belong to the first category, as they attribute a property to the referent of the head they modify. This mainly happens because non-inherent adjectives express a meaning-association with the referent (for example 'a sheer nonsense') and appear to be less objective as inherent ones, and are therefore less preferred in audio description.

most frequent adjectives from the corpus and we will categorize and analyze them by means of CQP and AntConc.

5.5.3.1.2 Adjectival list and classification in the AD corpus

In order to look at the adjectives in the corpus we have loaded in AntConc corpus no. 4, the one that contains the scripts previously tagged using TreeTagger[210]. The total number of occurrences of the tag 'JJ' in the corpus is 18770. Based on this, we can assume that each time 'JJ' appears in the corpus, it is because of the presence of an adjective. It is therefore possible to state that there are about 18770 adjective-tokens in the corpus.

As we have seen, the overall corpus consists of 376735 tokens. This means that there is a ratio of 376735/18770=19.96. This means that almost 1 word out of 20 is an adjective in our corpus. This is important if compared to the LSWE corpus as described by Biber *at alii* (1999). Indeed, it appears that a similar percentage of adjectives characterize the 'fiction' sub-corpus, while conversation shows a lower number of occurrences and news/academic sub-corpora a higher percentage of hits, the highest on the whole LSWE corpus. The concordance plot run in AntConc shows a very high concentration of

[210] Attempts of using AntConc to examine the behaviour of adjectives have been successful but the results were particularly difficult to systematize and the retrieval of tags also presented a number of challenges. For this reason, we have counterchecked the data retrieved in AntConc against the data retrieved in CQP through a PuTTY interface.

adjectives in almost all the scripts[211]. For example, the script of the film 'Chocolat' contains 277 adjectival hits and the file length is of 76379 characters. It is also possible to note that the highest concentration of adjectives is to be found at the beginning and in the middle of the script. Indeed, in this film in particular, the beginning corresponds to long silent scenes with more audio description strings, characters and landscapes to describe. The middle of the film presents two important scenes: a dinner and a party, which are particularly interesting to audio describe. For this reason, the concentration of adjectives is not only a matter of style but always also a matter of time. The concordance plot of 'The Amazing Howard Hughes' shows that the lowest concentration of adjectives can be found in the middle of the film. The interpretation of these differences cannot rely on a single explication but should draw on a series of considerations. First, a high concentration of adjectives and in general of words in an AD script, can be put in relation with the presence of silences. These can occur within dialogues, during actions or descriptive scenes with no dialogues at all. From a more narratological and filmic perspective, the highest concentration of adjectives can be connected to the description of the physical appearances of the characters. This is one of the reasons why adjectives can be very frequent at the beginning of a film and during the description of spaces and time, that is, when dialogues are usually infrequent. In addition, as we have seen, most

[211] See Fig. 1, Annex 1.

guidelines in audio description suggest prioritizing the pieces of information to provide, with a special focus on the physical characteristics and locations of both persons and objects on the scene. Therefore, these adjectives should mainly express a quality or a property of the person/object they refer to. In order to verify this hypothesis, a list of the top 100 most frequent adjectives in the corpus was retrieved through Unix-based CQP. Table 12 below shows the results of the query, ordered by frequency[212]:

	Adjective	Frequency
1	Unknown	895
2	Other	618
3	White	513
4	Black	396
5	Young	365
6	Small	358
7	Next	322
8	Dark	318
9	Red	302
10	Large	294

[212] The list contains 101 adjectives because the last two ('unable' and 'plastic') have the same frequency.

	Adjective	Frequency
11	Open	289
12	Long	285
13	Blue	259
14	Little	258
15	Front	194
16	Wooden	187
17	Old	171
18	Green	152
19	High	150
20	Grey	134
21	Huge	133
22	Big	132
23	Full	127
24	Tall	123
25	Bright	121
26	Brown	117
27	Empty	117
28	Short	117
29	Past	116

	Adjective	Frequency
30	Few	109
31	Wide	97
32	Yellow	95
33	First	93
34	Pale	93
35	German	88
36	Deep	87
37	Heavy	86
38	Outside	85
39	Blonde	81
40	Same	76
41	Last	75
42	Back	75
43	Major	74
44	Low	73
45	Narrow	72
46	New	67
47	Own	67
48	Thick	66

	Adjective	Frequency
49	Light	66
50	Second	65
51	Close	64
52	Dead	63
53	Naked	62
54	Tiny	59
55	Top	59
56	Busy	58
57	Right	57
58	Main	56
59	Italian	55
60	Golden	53
61	Pink	53
62	Thin	51
63	Motionless	49
64	Wet	48
65	Several	47
66	Elderly	45
67	Double	45

	Adjective	Frequency
68	Hard	45
69	Far	44
70	Single	44
71	Haired	43
72	Flat	43
73	Nearby	42
74	Bare	41
75	Clear	41
76	Indian	39
77	Ready	39
78	Broken	38
79	Great	37
80	Hot	35
81	Whole	34
82	Silver	34
83	Purple	34
84	Opposite	34
85	Free	33
86	Straight	33

	Adjective	Frequency
87	Shadowy	33
88	Upper	32
89	Attractive	32
90	Tight	32
91	Quiet	31
92	Female	31
93	Third	30
94	Sunny	30
95	Left	30
96	Armed	29
97	Remote	29
98	Gold	29
99	Dusty	29
100	Unable	28
101	Plastic	28

Table 12. Top 100 adjectives in the AD corpus ordered by frequency

The above listed adjectives seem to belong to recurrent semantic categories. Preliminary observations show that there would be a few frequent semantic

categories, listing the above-mentioned adjectives as follows[213]:

a. Colour (‘white’, ‘black’, ‘dark’, ‘red’, ‘blue’, ‘green’, ‘grey’, ‘bright’, ‘brown’, ‘yellow’, ‘pale’, ‘blonde’, ‘light’, ‘golden’, ‘pink’, ‘clear, ‘silver’, ‘purple’).

b. Position/Direction/Order (‘next’, ‘front’, ‘past’, ‘first’, ‘outside’, ‘last’, ‘back’, ‘second’, ‘close’, ‘top’, ‘right’, ‘far’, ‘nearby’, ‘opposite’, ‘upper’, ‘third’, ‘left’, ‘straight’, ‘main’).

c. Dimension (‘small’, ‘large’, ‘long’, ‘little’, ‘high’, ‘huge’, ‘big’, ‘tall’, ‘short’, ‘wide’, ‘low’, ‘narrow’, ‘thick’, ‘tiny’, ‘thin’, ‘tight’).

d. Age (‘young’, ‘old’, ‘elderly’).

e. Quantity (‘few’, ‘several’, ‘double’, ‘single’, ‘whole’).

f. Material/Fabric (‘wooden’, ‘hard[214]’, ‘gold’, ‘plastic’).

g. Container-contained relation (‘open’, ‘full’, ‘empty’, ‘deep’, ‘bare’).

h. Quietness/Movement (‘dead’, ‘busy’, ‘motionless’, ‘quiet’).

i. Weather-related conditions (‘wet’, ‘hot’, ‘shadowy’, ‘sunny’).

j. Physical appearance and physical conditions (‘haired’, ‘attractive’, ‘female’, ‘broken’, ‘flat’, ‘dusty’, ‘naked’, ‘heavy’, ‘ready’).

The distribution of the adjectives ‘German’, ‘Italian’ and ‘Indian’ is limited

[213] The adjectives are ordered by decreasing frequency, from the most to the less frequent in each category.

[214] The adjective ‘hard’ is sometimes intended as a material property, others to characterize something difficult to carry out. For this reason, given the predominance of the first sense, we have decided to include it in this category.

to the movies which deal with specific countries and nationalities. As an example, the adjective 'German' is used in the movie 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' with the highest number of hits, as well as in 'Schindler's List', 'Enigma', 'Tea with Mussolini', 'The English Patient', 'The Great Escape' and 'The Amazing Howard Hughes', but 'Indian' is used only in 'The Indian Fighter' and 'The English Patient'.

Other adjectives such as 'same', 'ready', 'own', 'new', 'unable', 'great', 'armed' and 'remote' do not seem to belong to any of the above-mentioned categories, since their categorization proves to be more problematic. Their behaviour can be analyzed through the AntConc concordance function, as happens for ambiguous 'JJ'-tagged hits like 'free', 'past', 'hard', 'next', 'major', 'straight', 'right', 'main', 'last' or 'past'. For example, the tag 'JJ' attributed to 'free' turns out to be an 'error' of the tagger. Indeed, by searching the query 'free_JJ_free' (which isolates the adjectival entry 'free') in the corpus and sorting the results by the first word left, AntConc shows that the presumed entries 'free' tagged adjectives ('JJ') are not adjectives but part of a phrasal verb ('to pull free', 'to break free')[215]. The same happens for 'past', which is tagged as an adjective in the corpus when it should have been tagged as 'IN', that is, a conjunction/subordinate preposition[216]. 'Straight' which is tagged 'JJ' with 33 entries in the corpus (entries retrieved in CQP, though AntConc only retrieves 31) is sometimes

[215] See Fig. 2, Annex 1.

[216] See Fig. 3, Annex 1.

used as an adjective and often used as an adverb[217]. The collocation 'straight+preposition (+determiner)(+noun)' is very frequent in the corpus: 'straight into his hand', 'straight through the middle', 'straight in the eye', 'straight across', 'straight ahead' belong to this type of construct. 'Straight' is preceded by a noun or a verb (+pronoun) and is followed by a preposition ('gloves straight into', 'look him straight into'). The cases in which 'straight' is really used as an adjective occur when the adjective is followed either by a noun or (conjunction+) another adjective ('the straight road', 'the straight stretch', 'a straight and narrow lane') and is preceded by a determiner or another adjective ('long straight', 'short straight red-brown'). The adjective 'right' that has been attributed to the category 'position/dimension' presented some problems ('right' as opposed to 'left' or also 'right' in the sense of 'fine', 'correct'). However, the investigation of its semantic and syntactic environment confirms the adjectival attribution[218]. Indeed, 'right' as an adjective is mainly followed by body parts: 'arm', 'cheek', 'ear', 'eyebrow', 'foot', 'hand', 'leg'. In two single cases the adjective 'right' is not associated to any positional meaning: 'searching for the right words' and 'find the right words'. The use of 'right' in this context relies on an implicit judgment (can the audio describer say which are the right words?) or on the interpretation of a third party idea. Since AD guidelines almost suggest avoiding personal consideration, the quantity of such expression in the corpus is extremely

[217] See Fig. 4, Annex 1.

[218] See Fig. 5, Annex 1.

limited (two hits only)[219]. The adjective 'main' shows a very interesting behaviour in relation to the type of words it collocates with. Indeed, the concordance window[220] shows that 'main' never expresses a qualitative judgment ('main' intended as 'important', 'knowledgeable') but always the position of a building or a part of it. Indeed, this adjective is followed by words like 'bedroom', 'building', 'chamber', 'court', 'desk', 'door(s)', 'entrance', 'gate(s)', 'hall', 'house', 'road', 'room', 'square', 'street'. In addition, this adjective is usually preceded by a determiner ('the main'). The adjective 'last' has been attributed to the category 'position' and this attribution can be checked against the collocation of the entries in the corpus. Indeed, the collocation window shows that this adjective is used both in a temporal and in a space-related sense[221]. 'Last' is used as a temporal reference in the following expressions/phrases: 'last moment', 'last time', 'the last to go'. In a more space-related sense, the adjective 'last' is used in 'last carriage', 'last door', 'last few steps', 'last doorway'. The adjective 'first' can express both temporal and space relations but in our corpus the second category seems to be more frequent than the first[222]. 'The first car', 'the first Gestapo man', 'the first floor' and 'the first tank' are a few examples of the use of the adjective 'first' in our corpus. Temporal use is not

[219] 'Right' is used in an evaluative sense in 'Corelli frowns, searching for the right words' ('Captain Corelli's Mandolin') and 'He looks down at the floor and struggles to find the right words' ('The Daytrippers').

[220] See Fig. 6, Annex 1.

[221] See Fig. 7, Annex 1.

[222] See Fig. 8, Annex 1.

infrequent but limited to the expression ‘at first’, ‘to come in first’ or in ‘reaches the door first’, ‘gets to it first’. In general, the corpus shows that when ‘first’ is proceeded by a determiner (‘DT’), it does not express a temporal relation, while when it is proceeded by other categories such as preposition/subordinate conjunction (‘IN’), noun (‘NN’), preposition (‘PP’), verb (‘VVZ’), it does. The adjective ‘same’ can also be ambiguous.[223] The collocation window shows that ‘same’ in this corpus is always preceded by a determiner (‘the same’) except in two cases, where we find a modifier, the adjective ‘exact’ (‘the exact same’). It is generally used in the corpus in expressions like ‘the same time’, ‘doing the same’, ‘the same direction’, ‘the same as’ or ‘the same way’. Another problematic entry is ‘major’. Indeed, the TreeTagger has tagged 74 out of 86 entries with the tag ‘JJ’. However, at a closer look, we find that ‘major’ is always referring to a profession (‘the major’) and is not an adjective[224]. When ‘major’ is written with a capital ‘M’, the tagger assigns the tag ‘NP’ (proper noun), while if there is a possessive ‘‘s’, the tagger assigns the tag ‘NN’ (noun). In all other cases, ‘major’ is written with a small ‘m’ but refers to a profession and is not to be intended as an adjective. Interestingly, almost all occurrences are to be found in a few movies, namely in ‘To End all Wars’ and ‘A Month by the Lake’. ‘Own’ in the corpus is always preceded by a possessive pronoun or a genitive case (respectively tagged as ‘PPS’ and ‘POS’). It can be used to express possess

[223] See Fig. 9, Annex 1.

[224] See Fig. 10, Annex 1.

of an object/entity (as in 'his own pocket', 'his own car') or in expressions like 'on his/her own'). The presence of 'own' is well distributed throughout the whole corpus[225]. The tag 'JJ' applied to 'remote' is also an 'error' because the word mostly refers to 'remote control' and should therefore be considered as a noun (as a noun, it would require the tag 'NN')[226]. The adjective 'new' seems to be strategic and transversal throughout the whole corpus because it rarely expresses the quality of an object ('new' as opposite to 'old'/'used' as in 'new dress'). Indeed, it introduces an unknown element on the screen and plays therefore an important function from a narratological perspective, since it often expresses the rhematic element of a given phrase[227].

'New' is used to introduce new characters ('new friends', 'new girl', 'new passengers', 'new son', 'new parents') or objects ('new coat', 'new chauffeur-driven car'). It also expresses the temporal coordinates of actions as shown in 'the new day'. The adjective 'unable' is always associated to an action (inability to do something) as in 'unable to speak', 'unable to look', 'unable to do'). Interestingly, this adjective often follows a punctuation mark, be a full stop (and therefore it is used as a detached predicative) or a comma[228]. 'Great' is used as a synonym of 'big' ('great stone', 'great hall/s'), 'extreme/high' ('great tenderness', 'great care', 'great comfort', 'great

[225] See Fig. 11, Annex 1.

[226] See Fig. 12, Annex 1

[227] See Fig. 13, Annex 1.

[228] See Fig. 14, Annex 1.

difficulty', 'great seriousness', 'great reverence') and 'positive' ('great time'). This means that it can either be used in a more objective sense, for example to express dimensions, and in a more subjective way. For this reason, its attribution to a pre-defined category proves to be particularly complicated[229]. 'Armed' can be found in a few scripts only and collocates with words like 'soldiers', 'troops', 'forces', 'guards', that is with a war-related semantic environment[230].

The JJ-tagged 'other' expresses in most cases a relation between two or more characters and objects[231]. 'Each other' (determiner+adjective) is expressing a positional relation. The expression in the corpus is normally preceded by a preposition (tag 'IN') as in 'around each other', 'at each other', 'from each other' 'to each other', 'in each other', 'into each other', 'towards each other'. The use of such prepositions also strictly depends on the verbs introducing 'each other'. Indeed, the most frequent verbs are 'to look', 'to stare', 'to gaze', 'to glare', 'to glance', 'to smile', 'to face'. When 'other' does not collocate with 'each' on the left, it is often preceded by another determiner, in particular 'the'. On the right 'the other' collocates mainly with nouns and the most frequent cluster is 'the other side', followed by 'the other end'. Both express a positional relation between objects or characters on the scene ('the other side of the ring', 'the other side of the

[229] See Fig. 15, Annex 1.

[230] See Fig. 16, Annex 1.

[231] See Fig. 17, Annex 1.

wall', 'the other side of the room', 'the other side of the road'). Apart from 'side', 'the other' collocates on the right with words representing human actors: 'the other woman', 'the other officers', 'the other boys', 'the other creatures', 'the other man' and 'the other prisoners'.

5.5.3.1.3 Attributive adjectives in the AD corpus[232]

As we have seen, attributive adjectives generally pre-modify a noun, while predicative adjectives are used as post-modifiers. In addition, while attributive adjectives are mainly associated with a permanent state or a property, predicative adjectives are associated with temporariness[233]. According to Biber *et alii* (1999):

1. Attributive adjectives are more frequent than predicative adjectives (across all registers).
2. In conversation, both types are rare.

[232] Adjectives can occur in a range of other syntactic roles, of which we have covered a few, since our corpus is not parsed syntactically and it proves to be difficult both from a technical and a descriptive perspective to find the corresponding syntactic phrases in each sentence. For this reason, many of the results that will follow are also based on pure manual retrieval and observation. However, based on Biber *et alii* (1999), we have manually retrieved the possible grammatical sentence configurations of adjectives in our corpus and have found no relevant occurrences of adjectives in initial position, or postponed adjectives at the end of a sentence. We have only found a few hits of adjectival phrases, such as 'unable to speak' or 'unable to enter'. This is the reason why they have been excluded from an extensive description in this section.

[233] Of course, there are exceptions to this general grammatical and syntactical behaviour. Indeed, the adjectives that modify an indefinite pronoun appear in predicative position: an 'interesting man' but 'someone interesting'.

3. Attributive adjectives are more frequent than predicative adjectives in expository written registers.

4. Predicative adjectives are more frequent in fiction than in other registers.

5. Attributive adjectives functioning as descriptors are much more frequent in fiction than in other registers, especially through the categories of size, colour and evaluation.

6. Classifiers are more used in academic prose than in other registers, in particular the presence of relational adjectives is particularly evident ('different', 'general', 'major').

As to the adjectives with attributive position, we have found 12987 occurrences with the query string [pos='JJ'] [pos='N.*']. Table 13 below lists those with a frequency higher or equal to 8:

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
1	Front	Door	99
2	Young	Man	97
3	Other	Side	70
4	Young	Woman	59
5	Old	Man	52
6	Next	Day	37

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
7	Blue	Sky	33
8	Short	Man	26
9	Next	Morning	25
10	Blonde	Hair	22
11	Deep	Breath	22
12	Far	End	19
13	Tall	Man	19
14	Other	End	19
15	Back	Seat	19
16	Black	Hair	18
17	Double	Doors	18
18	Open	Door	18
19	Little	Boy	17
20	Young	Boy	17
21	Yellow	Suits	17
22	Early	Morning	16
23	German	Officer	16
24	Long	Line	16
25	Few	Steps	16

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
26	Right	Hand	16
27	Italian	Soldiers	15
28	Opposite	Direction	15
29	German	Soldiers	14
30	Next	Door	14
31	Black	Car	14
32	Bright	Sunlight	14
33	Wrought	Iron	14
34	Blue	Light	14
35	Other	Men	14
36	Sunny	Day	13
37	Bright	Sunshine	13
38	Slow	Motion	13
39	Few	Paced	13
40	White	Horses	13
41	White	Shirt	13
42	Open	Window	13
43	Back	Door	13
44	Indian	Braves	12

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
45	Slight	Smile	12
46	Elderly	Man	12
47	Short	Distance	12
48	Left	Hand	12
49	Blue	Eyes	12
50	Young	Man	12
51	Young	Couple	12
52	Barbed	Wire	11
53	Public	Performance	11
54	Sandy	Beach	11
55	Blonde	Woman	11
56	Older	Man	11
57	Black	Dress	11
58	Closed	Door	11
59	Big	Bird	11
60	Front	Room	11
61	Red	Light	11
62	Other	Prisoners	11
63	Other	Way	11

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
64	Dark	Glasses	11
65	Filthy	Luka	10
66	Great	Hall	10
67	Far	Side	10
68	Little	Birds	10
69	Few	Yards	10
70	Few	Feet	10
71	Old	Woman	10
72	White	Hair	10
73	Brown	Paper	10
74	Merry	Man	9
75	Busy	Street	9
76	Bearded	Man	9
77	Wooden	Door	9
78	Grey	Suit	9
79	Blue	Water	9
80	Back	Tears	9
81	Dim	Light	9
82	Small	Boat	9

	Adjective	Noun	Frequency
83	Small	Boy	9
84	Hooded	Figure	8
85	Straw	Hat	8
86	Upstairs	Window	8
87	Whole	Body	8
88	Elderly	Woman	8
89	Next	Room	8
90	Older	Woman	8
91	Black	Background	8
92	Black	Leather	8
93	Black	Screen	8
94	Haired	Man	8
95	Haired	Woman	8

Table 13. Adjectives in attributive position in the AD corpus with frequency > or =8

Interestingly, a number of adjectives listed in Table 13 above can be also found in the list of attributive adjectives of the LSWE fiction sub-corpus. Most of these adjectives belong to the category of descriptors (size, time and colour). Indeed, according to Biber *et alii* (1999: 508-509):

> […] fiction uses a wider range of descriptor adjectives than any other register taken from the full range of semantic domains. These forms add the

> descriptive detail characteristic of fictional narrative. […] Interestingly, several of the most common attributive adjectives in both conversation and fiction comprise contrasting pairs:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | size/amount | *big/little, large/small, long/short, high/low* |
> | time | *new/old, bright/dark* |
> | color | *black/white, bright/dark* |
> | evaluative | *good/bad* |
> | other descriptor | *hot/cold* |
> | relational(classifier) | *same/different, full/empty* |

As expected, the categories of evaluators and relational classifiers are not fully covered in the audio description language sample. In addition, some adjectives are remarkably more frequent in the AD corpus, and namely: 'other', 'next', 'front' and 'blue'. As a matter of fact, most attributive adjectives in our corpus are, in Ferris' (1993: 24) terminology, "ascriptive". Indeed, ascription is used:

> […] for the case where the adjective conveys a property, which is valid for the entity instantiated by the noun, and **association** for the case where it is valid for something else. A case of the contrast which may be helpful as mnemonic is that between a *symphonic ouverture* (ascriptive) which is symphonic in and by itself, and *operatic ouverture* (associative) which does not have the usual characteristics of opera (not only is purely orchestral, it is often played with the curtain not yet open) but which is, nonetheless, designated by a phrase where the property OPERATIC is associated with OUVERTURE in order to describe sufficiently what the speaker wishes to

identify.

In our corpus, colour adjectives are particularly fitting to this ascriptive role. Indeed, they express an inherent feature of the entities described. In addition, they also appear to be restrictive adjectives, in that they limit or restrict the field of possible inherent entity features. Finally, always in Ferris' perspective, the most frequent adjectives in our corpus can be looked at as "mode adjectives" (Ferris 1993 *passim*) rather than as comment adjectives. This means that semantically they tend to be strictly anchored to the reference entity. As far as ascription moves towards association, there is also a tendency shift from descriptors to classifiers. In this regard, we will relist the categories suggested in 5.5.3.1.2 and we will redefine them as descriptors or classifiers:

a. Colour	descriptor
b. Position/Direction	classifier
c. Dimension	descriptor
d. Age	descriptor
e. Quantity	descriptor
f. Material/Fabric	descriptor
g. Container-contained relation	classifier
h. Quietness/Movement	descriptor
i. Weather-related conditions	descriptor

j. Physical appearance and physical conditions descriptor

Once again, the re-listed categories suggest a strong relation between the language of audio description and the language of the fiction sub-corpus. However, even though the presence of classifiers is limited to a few categories, these include particularly important semantic categories of adjectives that play a vital role for audio description and are not really typical for the register of fiction (position/dimension adjectives are an example). This apparent paradox is a confirmation of the extremely complex reality of the audio description language, and of the intended high use of specific categories of words, which makes this language a new language register.

From the point of view of the nouns the adjectives collocate with, a first broad distinction can be drawn between human and non-human referents.

a. Human body parts and appearance: ‘man’, ‘woman’, ‘boy’, ‘men’, ‘prisoners’, ‘couple’, ‘soldiers’, ‘girl’, ‘officer’, ‘braves’, ‘brave’, ‘figure’, ‘body’, ‘feet’, ‘eyes’, ‘hand’, ‘smile’, ‘breath’, ‘tears’, ‘hair’, ‘figure’; ‘hat’, ‘suit’, ‘glasses’, ‘dress’, ‘shirt’, ‘suits’.

b. Non-human: ‘leather’, ‘screen’, ‘background’, ‘room’, ‘window’, ‘boat’, ‘light’, ‘water’, ‘door’, ‘paper’, ‘yards’, ‘birds’, ‘side’, ‘hall’, ‘glasses’, ‘way’, ‘bird’, ‘beach’, ‘performance’, ‘wire’, ‘distance’, ‘motion’, ‘sunshine’, ‘day’, ‘iron’, ‘sunlight’, ‘car’, ‘direction’, ‘steps’, ‘line’, ‘morning’, ‘seats’, ‘end’, ‘sky’, ‘room’.

Within the ‘non-human’ category, it is possible to subdivide the results into the following categories:

a. Parts of the day/time: ‘sunshine’, ‘day’, ‘sunlight’, ‘morning’.

b. Natural elements: ‘light’, ‘water’, ‘sky’, ‘beach’.

c. Space coordinates: ‘room’, ‘door’, ‘feet’, ‘yards’, ‘side’, ‘hall’, ‘distance’, ‘direction’, ‘steps’, ‘line’, ‘end’, ‘seats’, ‘way’, ‘paces’.

d. Animals: ‘horse’, ‘bird’, ‘birds’.

e. Materials: ‘leather’, ‘paper’, ‘iron’.

f. Other objects: ‘car’, ‘screen’, ‘performance’, ‘wire’, ‘motion’, ‘background’.

From the point of view of the adjectives and the categories involved, it is possible to state that they belong to the same categories analyzed in 5.5.3.1.2. The collocational range of these adjectives could be potentially very high, however it seems they tend to collocate with specific semantic categories. The range is defined by Baker (1992: 49) as the “set of collocations, that is, other words, which are typically associated with the word in question”. According to Beekman and Callow (1974) the collocational range of a given word strictly depends on the degree of specificity and on the presence of semantic ambiguity. The first factor determines a higher quantity of collocational possibilities if the word is a very generic one. The generic-specific relation also implies that hyperonyms will be more likely to collocate with a broader set of paradigmatic choices, while hyponyms will

collocate with a more restricted number of words. The second factor also determines a higher number of collocates; as they increase, the number of possible meanings also increases[234]. The notion of collocational range as a way to understand the word-in-context above the pure word level is highly appreciated in translation and interpreting studies. In this research, however, the meaning of collocations tends to be strictly 'literal' and anchored to the action because the language needs to be descriptive and denotative. The observation of data retrieved suggests the presence of common use adjectives, which would pave the way for a high collocational range. However, the words which follow them are not only limited but also belong to specific semantic fields. As an example, the 'JJ+NN' (Adjective+Noun) collocation has a semantic preference for the categories of 'age' and 'physical appearance' (applied to 'human' referents) as well as of 'parts of the day', 'natural elements', 'space coordinates', 'animals' and 'materials' (applied to 'non-human' referents). The most frequent 'JJ+NN' collocations include both human and non-human referents that have a solid *ancrage* on the action, in particular characters, locations and object on the scene. These seem to be the overarching categories prioritized by audio description. At the periphery of these categories we find the other specifications that add details and further descriptions.

[234] Reversely, it could be also argued that it is the collocational patterning that makes it possible to recognize which sense is to be attributed to a specific word. However, it is undeniable that there is a string relation between the collocational range and the possible meanings (or "senses" as defined by Baker 1992) of a word.

5.5.3.1.4 Predicative adjectives in the AD corpus

According to Biber *et alii* (1999), predicative adjectives are divided into two main categories: subject and object. The first complement a copular verb and represent the "nominal expression in subject position" (Biber *et alii* 1999: 515). It is not easy to extract subject predicative adjectives in the corpus but we have made some attempts to retrieve fairly reliable data from CQP on the basis of string queries including the following verbs: 'to be', 'to look', 'to become', 'to seem', 'to lie'. The results show a general trend towards the very low use of object predicative adjectives and a very prominent presence of subject predicative adjectives. Table 14 lists the most recurrent predicative adjectives used in both subject and object function, although we can assume almost all of them are in the subject position. We are aware of the fact that this number is not exhaustive and that it could possibly not include all the predicative adjectives in the AD corpus. However, it seems fairly representative from a semantic perspective, since it confirms the findings highlighted in 5.5.3.1.2 and 5.5.3.1.3. Table 14 below includes predicative adjectives with a frequency higher or equal to 3[235]:

[235] Since Table 14 includes only adjectives in predicative position, their frequency will be clearly lower than in Table 13. For this reason, we have decided to adjust the minimum frequency of occurrence to 3.

	Adjective	Frequency
1	Open	75
2	Next	58
3	Past	49
4	Outside	41
5	Motionless	36
6	Close	35
7	Full	24
8	Empty	23
9	Busy	20
10	Low	20
11	Black	19
12	Hard	19
13	Red	19
14	Free	17
15	Naked	16
16	Asleep	15
17	High	15
18	Wide	15
19	Confused	14

	Adjective	Frequency
20	Dark	14
21	Ready	14
22	Blank	13
23	Clear	13
24	Deep	13
25	Down	12
26	Up	12
27	Visible	12
28	Available	11
29	Wet	11
30	Thoughtful	10
31	Closer	9
32	Dead	9
33	Flat	9
34	Shocked	8
35	Uneasy	8
36	Back	7
37	Concerned	7
38	Uncomfortable	7

	Adjective	Frequency
39	Unconscious	7
40	Apprehensive	6
41	Aware	6
42	Awkward	6
43	Dark	6
44	Expressionless	6
45	Higher	6
46	Nearer	6
47	Short	6
48	Able	5
49	Oblivious	4
50	Pale	4
51	Peaceful	4
52	Quiet	4
53	Sick	4
54	Tall	4
55	Afraid	3
56	Alight	3
57	Alive	3

	Adjective	Frequency
58	Bright	3
59	Brighter	3
60	Curious	3
61	Damp	3
62	Inside	3
63	Jar	3
64	Late	3
65	Lifeless	3
66	Serious	3
67	Smaller	3
68	Unable	3
69	Unaware	3
70	White	3

Table 14. Adjectives in predicative position in the AD corpus with frequency > or = 3

If we compare the results reported in Table 14 against Biber *et alii* (1999: 517), we find that some of the adjectives are also included in the list of the most frequent predicative adjectives of the LSWE corpus. However, the most outstanding finding is the fact that some predicative adjectives ranking under 20 occurrences per million words in the LSWE are far more frequent in the

audio description corpus, such as: ‘open’, ‘next’, ‘past’, ‘outside’, ‘motionless’, ‘close’, ‘empty’, ‘busy’, ‘low’, ‘black’, ‘naked’, ‘free’, ‘low’, ‘black’, ‘asleep’, ‘high’, ‘wide’, ‘confused’, ‘dark’, ‘blank’, ‘deep’, ‘down’, ‘up’, ‘visible’ and ‘thoughtful’. Many of these adjectives express a position, a colour or a container/contained relation. The adjective ‘visible’ is also remarkably used in the audio description corpus. It seems to be used for narratological and filmic reasons[236]. Indeed, with the use of the adjective ‘visible’, the audio describer communicates to the audience which portion of reality can be seen, mainly in accordance with the filmic strategies put in place by the director. In particular, the use of ‘now’, as in ‘her bed is now visible beyond the shelf’, ‘now clearly visible in the distance’, ‘momentarily becomes visible under a street’, is clearly aimed at reproducing camera movements. Some of these adjectives are also in the top 100 most frequent adjectives reported in Table 12, although with extremely low frequencies in predicative position. The adjectives that are not listed in the top 100 most frequent adjectives (Table 12) but are listed in Table 14, even though not very frequent, are mainly evaluative/emotive. Such is the case of ‘important’, ‘amazed’, ‘misty’, ‘confident’, ‘delighted’. For their evaluative nature, they are less likely to be frequently used in audio description.

If compared to attributive adjectives, there seems to be a general trend of the predicative list to include also ‘evaluative’ or ‘emotive’ adjectives,

[236] See Fig. 18, Annex 1.

such as ‘thoughtful’, ‘confused’, ‘unaware’, ‘serious’, ‘curious’, ‘afraid’, ‘shocked’, ‘concerned’, ‘uncomfortable’, ‘unconscious’ and ‘apprehensive’. This tendency confirms the grammatical nature of predicative adjectives in their being semantically more detached from the name they refer to and more dependent on affective/evaluative/emotional states. More generally, as pointed out by Hunston (2011: 129):

> Adjectives are in any case the word class most associated with evaluation or, to put it more properly, evaluative meaning is most canonically articulated using what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 219) call ‘intensive’ clauses (e.g. *Sara is clever*) where an Attribute is assigned to a Carrier. Again, most canonically, the word realizing the Attribute is modifiable with an intensifier such as very (Sara *is very clever*) and may modify another word (*Sara is a clever girl*); in short, it is what is commonly termed a gradable adjective. It is, of course, possible for adjectives, especially classifiers, to construe non-evaluative meaning (*electric fire*, *Catholic Church*, *a tall building*), but the patterns that complement adjectives almost co-occur with evaluative meaning of some kind.

In 5.5.3.1.2 and 5.5.3.1.3, we have seen that the most frequent adjectives in the AD corpus are gradable adjectives that we have classified as descriptors. This would trigger the highest ‘risk’ for audio description to incur into evaluative language. According to Hunston (2011: 130), it is possible to identify specific patterns of evaluative language, expressing “what someone thinks about something (Affect), or how good or bad an entity is

(Appreciation), and or how good or bad what someone does is (Judgment)". Based on the appraisal patterns identified by Hunston (2011: 137 and *passim*), we have looked at the adjectives expressing affect/judgment/appreciation and have found that none of them is in the list of the 100 most frequent adjectives in the AD corpus under investigation, except for 'full'. This adjective, within the pattern 'adjective of noun', is meant to be a marker of appraisal. Looking at the concordances of 'full of' in the AD corpus, we find out that it can be used to express a material quantity ('full of puppets', 'full of Italian soldiers') or be used in a more evaluative sense, as shown in examples from (43) to (50) below:

(43) Full of panic ('The Pelican Brief')

(44) Full of emotion ('The Pelican Brief')

(45) Full of regret ('The True Story of Jesse James')

(46) Full of hatred ('In the Name of the Father')

(47) Full of remorse ('The Daytrippers')

(48) Full of uncertainty ('Losing Isaiah')

(49) Full of conviction ('The Wizard of Oz')

(50) Full of concern ('The Pelican Brief')

In these cases, the audio describer uses the pattern 'full of' to express an intensification of a character's expression. However, even though the appraisal patterns identified by Hunston (2011) are scarcely used in the AD

corpus under investigation (they are very rare also among the less frequent adjectives in the AD corpus), this does not mean that audio description does not use adjectives in evaluative sense at all. Indeed, just to mention a few examples, the adjective 'surprised' is not used within the pattern 'Adjective that-clause' but nevertheless seems to be used with some evaluative meaning in examples (51) to (55) below:

(51) The German looks surprised. ('Captain Corelli's Mandolin')

(52) She turns to look at him, surprised. ('Captain Corelli's Mandolin')

(53) He looks at them surprised. ('Enigma')

(54) David is surprised by the question. ('Pleasantville')

(55) He seems surprised when Fiona looks at him. ('Shrek')

As can be observed, the audio describer uses the adjective 'surprised' because he/she has interpreted a face expression or the movement of a character. In particular, 'surprised' is preceded by verbs like 'to look', 'to seem', 'to turn (at someone) to Verb)'. The extent to which a character appears 'surprised' is based on the interpretation and the evaluation of the audio describer and is strictly dependent on a filmic expression. This dependence has been already demonstrated by a number of studies (Salway 2007; Vassiliou 2006), meaning that there is a certain degree of standardized correspondence between images and the descriptive language of AD. Similarly, the adjective 'worried', represented by Hunston (2011) as a

marker of ‘disquiet’ is represented with an evaluative meaning also in our corpus, but not included in the ‘Adjective+that’ pattern. In particular, for the adjective ‘worried’, we have found the following interesting examples:

(56) Wearing a worried expression (‘Love is a Many Splendored Thing’)

(57) Nani heaves a worried sigh. (‘Road to Perdition’)

(58) He responds with a worried stare. (‘Green for Danger’)

(59) David is now really worried. (‘Pleasantville’)

(60) Harry looks worried. (‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone’)

(61) Charlie seems worried. (‘Losing Isaiah’)

(62) Now he is getting worried. (In the Name of the Father’)

It emerges that when the adjective is linked to an image/action whose interpretation might be controversial or is not well codified, audio describers tend to use verbs like ‘to seem’ or ‘to look’. Even though adjectives, predicative adjectives in particular, are not invested by the same connotation patterns as described in Hunston (2011), the audio description language does not seem to be alien to evaluative meanings. Nevertheless, to be able to conduct a proper analysis on the extent to which language in audio description is used in evaluative sense, it would be necessary to include also the original video track, which falls beyond the scope of the present research and would therefore make eventually the object of a dedicated study.

5.5.3.1.5 Comparing the corpus with the BNC

The results of the investigation illustrated so far have been compared against the BNC. A free web interface to access and interrogate the BNC corpus has been used[237]. This interface allows for querying the corpus as well as for searching specific parts of speech and their collocations. The BNC corpus collects 100 million words from 1980 to 1993 and is subdivided into various sub-corpora: spoken, fiction, magazine, miscellaneous, academic, non-academic and newspaper. Each of the sub-corpora can be queried separately or in conjunction with one or more subsets of the same corpus[238].

A query was made for the POS [aj*] for two subsets of the corpus. The first one is the 'spoken' sub-corpus, while the second corpus is the 'fiction' sub-corpus. The choice of these two sub-corpora relies on the fact that as previously explained, the language of audio description is a hybrid form of written-to-be-read-aloud language and therefore the comparison to both a spoken and a written corpus seems to be particularly fitting. Indeed, the sub-corpus 'fiction' contains subsets from drama, poetry and prose.

The results of the query are shown in Table 15 below. 'Corpus 1' refers to the 'spoken' sub-corpus, while 'Corpus 2' represents the fiction sub-

[237] The web interface used to this purpose is available at http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/ (last accessed 19/02/2011).

[238] The choice of including poetry is based on the fact that audio description has been often defined as a type of poetry, or a "haiku" (Snyder 2006). The language of poetry, for this reason, also seemed to be particularly fitting for this type of analysis on the language of audio description.

corpus. ‘Tokens 1’ and ‘Tokens 2’ represent the number of tokens of a given entry in corpus 1 and corpus 2. ‘Pm 1’ and ‘Pm 2’ show the normalized frequency per million words respectively in Corpus 1 and Corpus 2 (the normalization being proportioned to 1 million words). The ‘Ratio Pm 1|2’ field contains the ratio between ‘Pm 1’ and ‘Pm 2’. Boldface was used to highlight the adjectives present in the top 100 most frequent adjectives of the two sub-corpora but not present in the AD corpus. The adjectives are ordered by frequency.

Corpus 1: 9,963,663 words

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
1	**Good**	16195	15255	1,625.41	958.87	1.70
2	Other	13569	13560	1,361.85	852.33	1.60
3	Right	10533	7100	1,057.14	446.28	2.37
4	Little	7252	10976	727.84	689.91	1.05
5	Nice	6246	2796	626.88	175.75	3.57
6	New	6216	7388	623.87	464.38	1.34
7	Big	5696	5500	571.68	345.71	1.65

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
8	Old	5478	14115	549.80	887.22	0.62
9	**Different**	5151	3870	516.98	243.25	2.13
10	**Sure**	4961	8338	497.91	524.10	0.95
11	**Sorry**	4451	4621	446.72	290.46	1.54
12	**Alright**	3779	67	379.28	4.21	90.06
13	Long	3775	8610	378.88	541.19	0.70
14	Great	3763	7264	377.67	456.59	0.83
15	**Able**	3486	4157	349.8	261.29	1.34
16	**Better**	3179	3951	319.06	248.35	1.28
17	**Local**	3113	1601	312.44	100.63	3.10
18	**Bad**	3066	3699	307.72	232.51	1.32
19	**Important**	2891	2308	290.15	145.07	2.00
20	**Wrong**	2719	4033	272.89	253.50	1.08
21	**Bloody**	2561	1461	257.03	91.83	2.80
22	Whole	2561	4044	257.03	254.19	1.01
23	**Only**	2519	4266	252.82	268.14	0.94

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
24	**Lovely**	2394	1612	240.27	101.32	2.37
25	Small	2239	8704	224.72	547.10	0.41
26	**Best**	2237	3762	224.52	236.47	0.95
27	**Particular**	2157	955	216.49	60.03	3.61
28	Full	2130	4582	213.78	288.01	0.74
29	**Difficult**	2090	2191	209.76	137.72	1.52
30	**Fine**	1935	2767	194.21	173.92	1.12
31	High	1907	3912	191.40	245.89	0.78
32	Young	1860	7711	186.68	484.68	0.39
33	**True**	1826	3261	183.27	204.97	0.89
34	**Happy**	1822	3165	182.86	198.94	0.92
35	**Certain**	1748	2448	175.44	153.87	1.14
36	**National**	1714	398	172.03	25.02	6.88
37	**General**	1669	717	167.51	45.07	3.72
38	**Funny**	1669	1274	167.51	80.08	2.09
39	Hard	1588	3510	159.38	220.63	0.72

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
40	Open	1566	4873	157.17	306.30	0.51
41	Black	1527	6189	153.26	389.02	0.39
42	**Possible**	1522	2865	152.76	180.08	0.85
43	**Interesting**	1505	1191	151.05	74.86	2.02
44	**British**	1457	1101	146.23	69.20	2.11
45	Clear	1449	2740	145.43	172.23	0.84
46	**Easy**	1406	2292	141.11	144.07	0.98
47	**Concerned**	1384	1252	138.90	78.70	1.77
48	Main	1383	1612	138.80	101.32	1.37
49	**Supposed**	1375	1293	138.00	81.27	1.70
50	**Fair**	1374	1499	137.90	94.22	1.46
51	White	1358	6169	136.30	387.76	0.35
52	**Real**	1355	3704	135.99	232.82	0.58
53	Ready	1341	2768	134.59	173.99	0.77
54	**Okay**	1328	206	133.28	12.95	10.29
55	Short	1310	2927	131.48	183.98	0.71

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
56	Red	1298	3517	130.27	221.07	0.59
57	**Special**	1293	1514	129.77	95.16	1.36
58	**Labour**	1222	94	122.65	5.91	20.76
59	**Extra**	1215	697	121.94	43.81	2.78
60	**Social**	1194	777	119.84	48.84	2.45
61	Large	1190	3596	119.43	226.03	0.53
62	Free	1171	2583	117.53	162.36	0.72
63	**Fucking**	1169	466	117.33	29.29	4.01
64	**Actual**	1157	246	116.12	15.46	7.51
65	Far	1147	1745	115.12	109.68	1.05
66	**Interested**	1141	1610	114.52	101.20	1.13
67	**Cold**	1131	3690	113.51	231.94	0.49
68	Major	1075	394	107.89	24.77	4.36
69	**Early**	1068	1801	107.19	113.20	0.95
70	**Public**	1058	979	106.19	61.54	1.73
71	**Late**	1055	2572	105.88	161.67	0.65

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
72	Available	1054	490	105.78	30.80	3.43
73	**Various**	1048	817	105.18	51.35	2.05
74	**Poor**	1040	3389	104.38	213.02	0.49
75	Hot	990	2637	99.36	165.75	0.60
76	**Awful**	947	1011	95.05	63.55	1.50
77	**Quick**	943	1617	94.64	101.64	0.93
78	Single	942	1426	94.54	89.63	1.05
79	**Likely**	941	1250	94.44	78.57	1.20
80	Low	933	2187	93.64	137.47	0.68
81	**Normal**	914	1130	91.73	71.03	1.29
82	Green	911	2377	91.43	149.41	0.61
83	Blue	896	3454	89.93	217.11	0.41
84	**Well**	892	1039	89.53	65.31	1.37
85	**Aware**	886	2452	88.92	154.12	0.58
86	**Terrible**	876	1850	87.92	116.28	0.76
87	**Stupid**	849	1417	85.21	89.07	0.96

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
88	**Simple**	835	1401	83.80	88.06	0.95
89	**Involved**	830	612	83.30	38.47	2.17
90	**Financial**	809	307	81.20	19.30	4.21
91	**Strong**	797	2489	79.99	156.45	0.51
92	**Odd**	795	1395	79.79	87.68	0.91
93	**Bigger**	784	530	78.69	33.31	2.36
94	**Proper**	776	878	77.88	55.19	1.41
95	**Brilliant**	754	649	75.67	40.79	1.86
96	**Double**	742	664	74.47	41.74	1.78
97	**Political**	735	444	73.77	27.91	2.64
98	**Necessary**	735	1104	73.77	69.39	1.06
99	**Central**	729	596	73.17	37.46	1.95
100	**Worse**	727	1632	72.97	102.58	0.71

Table 15. Comparing the 100 most frequent adjectives in the AD corpus with the top 100 adjectives in the spoken subcorpus of the BNC

Corpus 2: 15,909,312 words

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
1	**Good**	15255	16195	958.87	1,625.41	0.59
2	Old	14115	5478	887.22	549.80	1.61
3	Other	13560	13569	852.33	1,361.85	0.63
4	Little	10976	7252	689.91	727.84	0.95
5	Small	8704	2239	547.10	224.72	2.43
6	Long	8610	3775	541.19	378.88	1.43
7	**Sure**	8338	4961	524.10	497.91	1.05
8	Young	7711	1860	484.68	186.68	2.60
9	New	7388	6216	464.38	623.87	0.74
10	Great	7264	3763	456.59	377.67	1.21
11	Right	7100	10533	446.28	1,057.14	0.42
12	Black	6189	1527	389.02	153.26	2.54
13	White	6169	1358	387.76	136.30	2.85
14	Dark	5784	409	363.56	41.05	8.86
15	Big	5500	5696	345.71	571.68	0.60
16	Open	4873	1566	306.30	157.17	1.95

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
17	**Sorry**	4621	4451	290.46	446.72	0.65
18	Full	4582	2130	288.01	213.78	1.35
19	Dead	4540	650	285.37	65.24	4.37
20	**Only**	4266	2519	268.14	252.82	1.06
21	**Able**	4157	3486	261.29	349.87	0.75
22	Whole	4044	2561	254.19	257.03	0.99
23	**Wrong**	4033	2719	253.50	272.89	0.93
24	**Better**	3951	3179	248.35	319.06	0.78
25	High	3912	1907	245.89	191.40	1.28
26	**Different**	3870	5151	243.25	516.98	0.47
27	**Best**	3762	2237	236.47	224.52	1.05
28	**Real**	3704	1355	232.8	135.99	1.71
29	**Bad**	3699	3066	232.51	307.72	0.76
30	**Cold**	3690	1131	231.94	113.51	2.04
31	Large	3596	1190	226.03	119.43	1.89
32	Red	3517	1298	221.07	130.27	1.70

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
33	Hard	3510	1588	220.63	159.38	1.38
34	Blue	3454	896	217.11	89.93	2.41
35	**Poor**	3389	1040	213.02	104.38	2.04
36	**True**	3261	1826	204.97	183.27	1.12
37	**Afraid**	3181	604	199.95	60.62	3.30
38	**Happy**	3165	1822	198.94	182.86	1.09
39	**Beautiful**	2943	723	184.99	72.56	2.55
40	Short	2927	1310	183.98	131.48	1.40
41	**Possible**	2865	1522	180.08	152.76	1.18
42	**Nice**	2796	6246	175.75	626.88	0.28
43	Deep	2786	367	175.12	36.83	4.75
44	Ready	2768	1341	173.99	134.59	1.29
45	**Fine**	2767	1935	173.92	194.21	0.90
46	Clear	2740	1449	172.23	145.43	1.18
47	**Strange**	2709	437	170.28	43.86	3.88
48	Close	2678	699	168.33	70.15	2.40

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
49	Hot	2637	990	165.75	99.36	1.67
50	Free	2583	1171	162.36	117.53	1.38
51	**Late**	2572	1055	161.67	105.88	1.53
52	**Warm**	2517	557	158.21	55.90	2.83
53	Strong	2489	797	156.45	79.99	1.96
54	Quiet	2467	539	155.07	54.10	2.87
55	Heavy	2465	580	154.94	58.21	2.66
56	Aware	2452	886	154.12	88.92	1.73
57	**Certain**	2448	1748	153.87	175.44	0.88
58	Empty	2422	335	152.24	33.62	4.53
59	Green	2377	911	149.41	91.43	1.63
60	**Alone**	2336	295	146.83	29.61	4.96
61	Grey	2308	242	145.07	24.29	5.97
62	**Important**	2308	2891	145.07	290.15	0.50
63	**Easy**	2292	1406	144.07	141.11	1.02
64	**Soft**	2204	268	138.54	26.90	5.15

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
65	**Difficult**	2191	2090	137.72	209.76	0.66
66	Low	2187	933	137.47	93.64	1.47
67	Bright	2161	255	135.83	25.59	5.31
68	Front	2154	647	135.39	64.94	2.09
69	**Surprised**	2126	498	133.63	49.98	2.67
70	**Silent**	2121	63	133.32	6.32	21.08
71	Tall	2112	231	132.75	23.18	5.73
72	**Angry**	2056	145	129.23	14.55	8.88
73	Huge	2020	460	126.97	46.17	2.75
74	Thin	2001	227	125.78	22.78	5.52
75	Brown	1982	318	124.58	31.92	3.90
76	Pale	1975	96	124.14	9.64	12.88
77	Tiny	1916	378	120.43	37.94	3.17
78	**Glad**	1916	525	120.43	52.69	2.29
79	**Tired**	1910	490	120.06	49.18	2.44
80	**Sudden**	1858	79	116.79	7.93	14.73

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
81	**Terrible**	1850	876	116.28	87.92	1.32
82	Early	1801	1068	113.20	107.19	1.06
83	Far	1745	1147	109.68	115.12	0.95
84	Thick	1744	384	109.62	38.54	2.84
85	Left	1718	295	107.99	29.61	3.65
86	**Safe**	1699	408	106.79	40.95	2.61
87	**Human**	1696	524	106.60	52.59	2.03
88	**Worse**	1632	727	102.58	72.97	1.41
89	**Quick**	1617	943	101.64	94.64	1.07
90	Main	1612	1383	101.32	138.80	0.73
91	**Lovely**	1612	2394	101.32	240.27	0.42
92	**Interested**	1610	1141	101.20	114.52	0.88
93	**Local**	1601	3113	100.63	312.44	0.32
94	Wide	1586	500	99.69	50.18	1.99
95	Alive	1560	265	98.06	26.60	3.69
96	**Dear**	1554	424	97.68	42.55	2.30

	Adjective	Token 2	Token 1	Pm 2	Pm 1	Ratio Pm 2|1
97	Busy	1551	644	97.49	64.63	1.51
98	**Pleased**	1549	571	97.36	57.31	1.70
99	**Usual**	1531	224	96.23	22.48	4.28
100	**Private**	1519	714	95.48	71.66	1.33

Table 16. Comparing the 100 most frequent adjectives in the AD corpus with the top 100 adjectives in the fiction subcorpus of the BNC

Table 16 shows that many of the adjectives that were isolated in 5.5.3.1.2 are also frequent in these two BNC sub-corpora. Firstly, it can be observed that colours are well represented in both sub-corpora, although the following categories are scarcely represented: 'position/direction', 'physical appearance' and 'dimension'. Second, most adjectives represented in these two sub-corpora but completely absent from the top 100 most frequent adjectives of our corpus, seem to express an evaluation or attitude/behaviour/state of mind referred to a person or an object: 'pleased', 'necessary', 'proper', 'brilliant', 'involved', 'simple', 'stupid', 'terrible', 'awful' 'poor', 'angry', 'surprised', 'silent', 'glad', 'tired', 'special', 'concerned', 'lovely', 'interesting', 'happy'[239]. The reason why these

[239] As an example, the adjective 'stupid' recurs in our corpus only 2 times within a same script, 'Spiderman', and refers both times to a 'stupid smile'. The adjectives 'lovely' and 'necessary' never

adjectives are not representative for the corpus of audio description language is that audio describers should refrain from expressing judgments or personal considerations and should describe more than narrate or interpret the characters' behaviour or attitude. In addition, some adjectives such as 'lovely', 'brilliant', 'okay', 'interesting' and 'alright' are very frequent in the spoken language and have therefore a particularly low frequency in the AD language sample analyzed.

The results of this analysis provide sufficient evidence to affirm that the purpose for which adjectives are used in audio description are primarily instrumental to the temporal, dimensional and spatial *ancrage* of characters and objects on the scene. However, we have seen that the most frequent adjectives used in audio description are not special adjectives; indeed, they do not only appear to be common language words but also rank among the most frequent adjectives at all in non-specialized language, although with a higher frequency and adapted to a special purpose. In order to verify this hypothesis, a comparison has been drawn between the adjectives, which are common to the three corpora (AD corpus, BNC spoken sub-corpus, BNC fiction sub-corpus) to evaluate the relative weight of each adjective on the

---

appear in the corpus of the audio description scripts. The adjective 'brilliant' is used in the AD scripts 14 times only and always precedes another colour adjective (as in 'brilliant red', 'brilliant yellow', 'brilliant white', 'brilliant sunshine'). 'Terrible' is used in the audio description corpus only twice, in 'terrible expression' and 'terrible deep wound'. 'Proper' is only present with hits in 'Enigma' and 'The great Escape' in 'the proper connections' and 'into the tunnel proper'. 'Happy' occurs 12 times and collocates mainly with 'face' and 'expression' in strings such as 'happy smiling face', 'happy expression' and 'happy mood'.

whole corpus. For this reason, all proportions have been calculated against 1 million, since this information is already available for Corpus 1 and Corpus 2. Boldface was used to stress the relative frequencies, which are remarkably higher in our corpus than in the two sub-corpora. Again, 'Corpus 3' refers to the AD corpus and Pm 3 refers to the normalized frequency of the tokens in Corpus 3 (376375 tokens). The results are shown in Table 17, where the adjectives are ordered alphabetically:

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Big	5696	5500	132	571.68	345.71	350,3
Black	1527	6189	396	153.26	389.02	**1051**
Blue	896	3454	259	89.93	217.11	**687**
Bright	2161	255	121	135.83	25.99	**321.2**
Brown	1982	318	121	124.58	31.92	**321.2**
Clear	2740	1449	41	172.23	145.43	108.8
Close	2678	699	64	168.33	70.15	169.9
Dark	5784	409	318	363.56	41.05	**844.1**
Dead	4540	650	63	285.37	65.24	167.2
Deep	2786	367	87	175.12	36.83	**230.9**

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Double	742	664	45	74.47	41.74	**119.4**
Empty	2422	335	117	152.24	33.62	**310.5**
Far	1745	1147	44	109.68	115.12	117.1
Free	2583	1171	33	162.36	117.53	87.6
Front	2154	647	194	135.39	64.94	**514.9**
Full	2130	4582	127	213.78	288.01	**337.1**
Great	3763	7264	37	377.67	456.59	98.2
Green	2377	911	152	149.41	91.43	**403.4**
Grey	2308	242	134	145.07	24.29	**355.7**
Hard	3510	1588	45	220.63	159.38	119.4
Heavy	2465	580	86	154.94	58.21	228.2
High	1907	3912	150	191.40	245.89	**398.1**
Hot	990	2640	99.36	165.94	35	92.9
Huge	2020	460	133	126.97	46.17	**353**
Large	1190	3596	294	119.43	226.03	**780.3**
Left	1718	295	30	107.99	29.61	79.6
Little	7252	10976	258	727.84	689.91	684.8

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Long	3775	8610	285	378.88	541.19	**756.5**
Low	2187	933	73	137.47	93.64	**193.7**
Main	1612	1383	56	101.32	138.80	**148.6**
Major	1075	394	74	107.89	24.77	**196.42**
New	6216	7388	67	623.87	464.38	177.8
Old	5478	14115	171	549.80	887.22	453.9
Open	4873	1566	289	306.30	157.17	**767.1**
Other	13569	13560	618	1361.85	852.33	**1640.4**
Pale	1975	96	93	124.14	9.64	**246.8**
Plastic	316	883	31.72	55.50	28	**74.3**
Quiet	2467	539	31	155.07	54.10	82.2
Ready	1341	2774	39	174.36	134.59	103.5
Red	1298	3517	302	130.27	221.07	**801.6**
Right	10533	7100	57	1,057.14	446.28	151.3
Short	2927	1310	117	183.98	131.48	**400.8**
Single	942	1426	44	94.54	89.63	**116.8**
Small	2239	8704	358	224.72	547.10	**950.2**

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Tall	2112	231	123	132.75	23.18	**326.5**
Thick	1744	384	66	109.62	38.54	**175.2**
Thin	2001	227	51	125.78	22.78	**135.4**
Tiny	1916	378	59	120.43	37.94	**156.6**
White	1358	6169	513	136.30	387.76	**1361.7**
Whole	2561	4044	34	257.03	254.19	90.2
Wide	1586	500	97	99.69	50.18	**257.5**
Young	1860	7711	365	186.68	484.68	**968.9**

Table 17. Normalized frequencies of the most frequent adjectives shared by the three corpora

The following entries tagged 'JJ' in the TreeTagger are tagged as 'ORD' (ordinals) in the BNC, this is why they are listed apart, in alphabetical order, in Table 18 below:

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Third	1361	1295	136.60	81.40	30	79.6
Several	654	2781	65.64	174.80	47	124.7
Second	2310	2691	231.84	169.15	65	**172**

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	Pm 3
Next	646	6412	322	616.84	403.03	**854.7**
Last	8148	9494	817.77	596.76	75	199
First	9884	13845	93	992	870	246.8
Few	3570	9262	358.30	582.17	109	298.3

Table 18. Normalized frequencies of the most frequent ordinals adjectives shared by the three corpora

Tables 17 and 18 above shows that some adjectives in Corpus 3 are characterized by a relatively higher frequency compared to Corpus 1 and Corpus 2. For this reason, we can assume that these adjectives, although also used in general language, contribute to the creation of a special language of audio description. In particular, 'next' is remarkably used in the AD corpus (with a normalized frequency of 854.7). We have seen to which extent it is important to express the positional coordinates of a person/object on the screen or on stage.

Table 19 below shows the list of adjectives, which are present in our corpus among the 100 most frequent ones but are not represented in the top 100 of the two sub-corpora of the BNC. This will dramatically contribute to highlight the peculiarities of the audio description language. Again, the

normalization is against 1 million words[240]. The adjectives are ordered by decreasing value of field 'Pm3':

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	**Pm 3**
Wooden	183	1332	187	18.37	83.72	**496.3**
Past	347	779	116	34.83	49.87	**307.9**
Yellow	543	1327	95	83.81	54.50	**252.1**
Outside	312	405	85	31.31	25.46	**225.6**
Blonde	73	493	81	30.99	7.33	**215**
Back	313	645	75	31.31	40.54	**199**
Narrow	171	1360	72	17.16	85.48	**191.1**
Light	321	1401	66	33.22	88.06	**175.1**
Naked	81	913	62	8.13	57.39	**164.6**
Top	661	938	59	66.34	58.96	**156.6**
Golden	118	1094	53	11.84	68.76	**140.7**
Pink	335	1101	53	33.62	69.20	**140.7**
Motionless	1	274	49	0.1	17.22	**130.1**

[240] Reversely, however, a number of adjectives are present in the top 100 most frequent adjectives of the two sub-corpora but are not in the top frequent adjectives of our corpus. However, we will not analyze their relative frequency.

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	**Pm 3**
Wet	343	1187	48	34.43	74.61	**127.4**
Elderly	276	432	45	27.70	27.15	**119.4**
Bare	74	976	41	7.43	61.35	**108.8**
Nearby	33	276	42	3.31	17.35	**111.4**
Haired	35	28	43	3.51	1.76	**114.1**
Flat	333	842	43	33.4	52.92	**114.1**
Broken	163	962	38	16.3	60.47	**100.8**
Upper	147	661	32	14.75	41.55	**84.9**
Straight	411	735	33	41.25	46.20	**87.6**
Tight	217	677	32	21.78	42.55	**84.9**
Shadowy	6	207	33	0.6	13.01	**87.6**
Attractive	212	70	32	21.2	44.44	**84.9**
Silver	12	65	34	1.20	4.09	**90.2**
Purple	109	390	34	10.94	24.51	**90.2**
Opposite	284	574	34	28.50	36.08	**90.2**
Sunny	90	226	30	9.03	14.2	**79.6**
Female	162	523	31	16.26	32.87	**82.3**

Adjective	Token 1	Token 2	Token 3	Pm 1	Pm 2	**Pm 3**
Gold	15	82	29	1.51	5.15	**77**
Dusty	12	399	29	1.20	25.08	**77**

Table 19. Normalized frequencies of adjectives in the top 100 of the AD corpus but not present in the top 100 most frequent adjectives of the two BNC sub-corpora

Figures contained in the field column 'Pm 3' of Table 19 above show that the relative frequency of most adjectives (e.g. 'haired') is much higher in the audio description corpus than in the two sub-corpora of the BNC. In addition, there is almost a constant higher frequency of the listed adjectives in the 'fiction' sub-corpus than in the 'spoken' one. This makes the 'fiction' sub-corpus closer to the audio description corpus from a linguistic perspective. It should be pointed out that we have only provided a list of the most recurrent adjectives, but we have not specifically looked into their extended collocations, nor have we examined their synonymic or register-dependent alternatives. However, it can be stated with reliable corpus-based evidence that the semantic categories to which these adjectives belong are specific preferences of the language of audio description, partially shared with the fiction sub-corpus.

5.5.3.1.6 'Unknown' adjectives and compound adjectives

As shown in Table 12, the highest number of 'JJ' entries is associated with 'unknown'. The 'unknown' lemmas with a frequency higher than 1 have been listed by frequency in Table 20 below:

Adjective	Frequency
Grey-haired	11
Quoyle	7
Moustachioed	7
Glass-paned	5
Hagrid	5
Blobby	4
Almasy	4
Stony-faced	4
Tear-filled	4
Open-topped	4
Stern-looking	4
Lensed	3
Orange-overalled	3
Short-handled	3
White-painted	3

Adjective	Frequency
Multi-coloured	3
Separate	3
Irate	3
Glass-fronted	3
Bare-chested	3
Unshed	3
Curly-heade	3
.David	2
Beaten-up	2
30's	2
Back.They	2
Kate	2
60's	2
Emerald-shaped	2
Metal-barred	2
Side-parted	2
Ice-field	2
Unconscious	2
Cream-coloured	2

Adjective	Frequency
Smartly-dressed	2
Semi-circular	2
Half-buried	2
Unclipped	2
Brightly-lit	2
Bladed	2
Dual-winged	2
Blue-painted	2
Caped	2
Gold-rimmed	2
Japaneese	2
Striken	2
Riden	2
Thin-lipped	2
Wide-mouthed	2
Bullet-riddled	2
Embroided	2
Snow-laden	2
Blood-spattered	2

Adjective	Frequency
Paned	2
Conjested	2
Half-open	2
Sun-dappled	2
Paneled	2
Flesh-coloured	2
Ivy-clad	2
Grimey	2
Infront	2
Dream-like	2
Gobsmacked	2
Fluorescent	2
Rhino-like	2
Unseeing	2
Blood-streaked	2
Dark-suited	2

Table 20. Adjectives tagged with 'unknown' lemma

All the adjectives listed have a relatively low frequency if compared to others that were analyzed in the 5.5.3.1.2 and 5.5.3.1.3. However, the overall

number of adjectives with 'unknown' lemma is very high. These adjectives are tagged 'JJ' but their lemma remains 'unknown' for the tagger. This could be explained by the presence of new words that are still unknown to the tagger. In this sense, corpus-based evidence seems to shows how productive the language used by audio describers is. Indeed, as most guidelines (ITC 2000) suggest, the language used in audio description should be imaginative, evocative, vivid and powerful. At a closer analysis, most adjectives in Table 20 above are, from a lexical perspective, compound adjectives. According to Biber *et alii* (1991: 533), compound adjectives are used for a "compact and integrated expression of information". In audio description, the need to condense information is high because of the short time allowed for description[241].

In our corpus, compound adjectives tagged 'unknown' are: 'grey-haired', 'glass-paned', 'stony-faced', 'tear-filled', 'open-topped', 'stern-looking', 'orange-overalled', 'short-handled', 'white-painted', 'multi-coloured', 'glass-fronted', 'curly-headed', 'beaten-up', 'emerald-shaped', 'metal-barred', 'side-parted', 'cream-coloured', 'semi-circular', 'half-buried', 'brightly-lit', 'dual-winged', 'blue-painted', 'gold- rimmed', 'thin-lipped', 'wide-mouthed', 'bullet-riddled', 'snow-laden', 'blood-spattered', 'half-open', 'sun-dappled', 'flesh-coloured', 'ivy-clad', 'dream-like', 'rhino-like', 'blood-streaked', 'dark-suited'. As it can be easily noticed, from a

[241] In this point, see also Oostdijk (2008).

semantic perspective, most adjectives belong to the categories highlighted in 5.5.3.1.2.

In particular, in the AD corpus, modifiers mainly belong to the semantic fields of 'colour' ('grey', 'white', 'brightly', 'blue', 'cream', 'dark', 'orange', 'blood') and 'material' ('glass', 'gold', 'emerald', 'stony', 'metal'). Compound bases mainly belong to the semantic fields of 'physical appearance' ('haired', 'painted', 'coloured', 'dappled', 'suited', 'lipped', 'mouthed', 'headed', 'looking', 'faced', 'winged', 'dappled', 'riddled'), 'form/dimension' ('parted', 'shaped', 'circular', 'handled', 'laden', 'filled') and 'position' ('buried', 'open', 'topped'). The predominance of these categories seems to generally confirm the high presence of the same semantic patterns as in the adjectival analysis conducted so far. As to 'moustachioed', it is tagged 'unknown' while the form 'moustached' is preferred and recognized, although less frequent in the corpus[242].

As stressed in the analysis of the unknown adjectives, most tagged words refer to colours, forms and positions in the space that is to visual elements that the blind users cannot receive through their eyes. Colours are confirmed to be among the most important elements to audio describe[243].

[242] The high frequency of the moustache-related adjectival production is to be found in the frequent use of the noun 'moustache' for the description of the characters, irrespectively of the adjectives 'moustached' and 'mustachioed'.

[243] A comparative study conducted by Arma (forthcoming) on the language of audio description in the UK and in Italy on the audio described scripts of the film "Chocolat" confirms that the utmost attention is paid to colours by audio describers in the UK. The variety of words used to indicate chromatic variations reflects very well the variety of colours used in the film (in particular the

As we have seen from this analysis, colours in compound adjectival production are very often associated to tactile impressions, that is, objects that can be touched by the blind people such as stone, glass, metal and blood. The other categories (form/dimension, material, position) are visual clues which can be easily transposed into tactile information. Indeed, materials such as glass carry both visual and tactile impressions. The latter, in particular, are very important for blind people because their knowledge of the world is mainly drawn from touch and olfactory information. These are the reference points for their knowledge of the world around them.

5.5.3.1.7 Sequences of adjectives

Finally, we have retrieved the strings of two or more adjectives (Frequency > 1). Table 21 below, which lists the sequences of adjectives by frequency, shows that the semantic classes of the adjectives involved in this structure are the same as single adjectives:

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Pale	Blue	17

opposition red/black and bright/dark). The Italian audio described version of the same film, though very rich in literary expressions, shows a more narrative than a descriptive attitude and does not seem to fully respect the semantic pattern of colours, which is - however - an outstanding features of this product.

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Dark	Blue	15
Long	Black	14
Dark	Haired	13
Bright	Red	11
Long	Dark	10
Small	Wooden	10
Bright	Blue	9
Dark	Brown	9
Small	Black	8
Attractive	Young	7
Large	White	7
Long	Blonde	7
Heavy	Wooden	6
Long	White	6
Clear	Blue	5
Handsome	Young	5
Indian	Brave	5
Last	Few	5
Long	Brown	5

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Lush	Green	5
Other	Indian	5
Small	Brown	5
Thick	Black	5
Ugly	Green	5
Attractive	Blonde	4
Big	Blue	4
Blonde	Haired	4
Bright	White	4
Cloudless	Blue	4
Large	Wooden	4
Large	Blue	4
Little	Blue	4
Old	Wooden	4
Polished	Wooden	4
Several	Other	4
Short	Dark	4
Small	White	4
Tall	Dark	4

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Thick	Grey	4
White	Haired	4
Big	Black	3
Big	Red	3
Big	Brown	3
Bright	Green	3
Burly	Dark	3
Crisp	White	3
Curly	Haired	3
Dark	Grey	3
Dark	Red	3
Dark	Green	3
Deep	Blue	3
Dotted	Red	3
Exact	Same	3
Few	More	3
Flowing	White	3
Grey	Haired	3
High	Rocky	3

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
High-rise	Modern	3
Huge	Black	3
Huge	Red	3
Large	Black	3
Large	Red	3
Large	Brown	3
Large	Green	3
Large	Yellow	3
Light	Blue	3
Light	Brown	3
Long	Wooden	3
Long	Thin	3
Long	Haired	3
Long	Curly	3
Long	Red	3
Long	Black	3
Loose	White	3
Narrow	Wooden	3
Olive	Green	3

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Other	Italian	3
Pale	Red	3
Pale	Green	3
Pale	Young	3
Piercing	Blue	3
Red	Liquid	3
Red	Short	3
Red	Haired	3
Short	Black	3
Thick	Wooden	3
Thick	White	3
Thick	Brown	3
White	Wooden	3
Wide	Open	3
Young	German	3
Young	Blonde	3
Average	Comic	2
Bal	Middle-aged	2
Bare	Chested	2

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Beautiful	Blonde	2
Big	Double	2
Black	Open-top	2
Blonde	Haired	2
Blue	Electric	2
Bright	Red	2
Bright	Sunny	2
Bright	Clear	2
Bright	Light	2
Bright	Yellow	2
Camel	Coloured	2
Cold	Grey	2
Dark	Bushy	2
Dark	Wavy	2
Eerie	Green	2
Emerald	Green	2
Fluffy	White	2
Fresh-faced	Young	2
German	Military	2

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Glowing	Green	2
Half	Naked	2
High	Ranking	2
High	Above	2
Huge	Wooden	2
Intense	Young	2
Last	Precious	2
Light	Grey	2
Little	White	2
Long	Rectangular	2
Long	Silky	2
Long	Golden	2
Long	Pink	2
Low	Grey	2
Luminous	Golden	2
Modern	Glass-fronted	2
More	Dark	2
Mysterious	Bearded	2
Old	Black	2

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Old	Battered	2
Open	German	2
Pale	Blue	2
Pale	White	2
Plump	Tabby	2
Pure	White	2
Radiant	Blue	2
Red	Light	2
Rich	Red	2
Rich	Green	2
Shabby	Young	2
Sharp	Featured	2
Shiny	Black	2
Shiny	Red	2
Short	Brown	2
Silver	Birch	2
Silver	Full	2
Single	Large	2
Skinny	Old	2

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Sleek	Blue	2
Sleeveless	Black	2
Slim	Black	2
Small	Rocky	2
Small	Red	2
Smart	Black	2
Smart	White	2
Soft	White	2
Stark	Naked	2
Tall	Wooden	2
Tall	Handsome	2
Tall	Pointed	2
Tall	Blonde	2
Tall	Grey	2
Thick	Lensed	2
Thick	Blonde	2
Thin	Black	2
Thin	Little	2
Thin	White	2

Adjective 1	Adjective 2	Frequency
Tight	Black	2
Tiny	Golden	2
Tiny	Red	2
Tiny	Blue	2
Vivid	Red	2
Warm	Reassuring	2
White	Coated	2
White	Blonde	2
White	Lacy	2
Wide	Wooden	2
Young	Black	2
Young	Female	2

Table 21. Sequences of two adjectives in the AD corpus

Table 21 above shows that there are two different types of adjectival sequences (two consecutive adjectives) in this corpus. The first one includes two adjectives (in attributive or predicative position), both referring to a person or an object (boldface not in the original), as shown in the examples below:

(63) A handsome young man with **thick black** hair leaves the crowd and climbs to a terrace of packed earth […] (‘Captain Corelli’s

Mandolin')

(64) A **handsome young** fire juggler called David is performing on an open air stage at a Hotel restaurant. ('Lilo and Stitch')

(65) Noelle, the **tall blonde** neighbour, stands dishevelled and shell shocked. ('The Truth about Cats and Dogs')

In the second type of adjectival sequence, the first adjective reinforces or specifies the second one. This is particularly true for colours. The following examples are useful to clarify this concept (boldface not in the original):

(66) In the midst of the crowd, a pretty young blonde woman, in a **light grey** suit with her silver fur stole worn off the shoulder, walks along, expressionless. ('Enigma')

(67) Hendley pulls on a **light grey** trilby and slips down the ladder behind Colin. ('The Great Escape')

In both cases, 'light' refers to 'grey' and is used to explain the colour nuance. The same is true for the collocation 'dark grey' (boldface not in the original), as shown in the examples below:

(68) More credits appear on a **dark grey** back ground. ('Green for Danger')

(69) The sun is completely covered by **dark grey** clouds. ('Hard Rain')

(70) He's wearing a **dark grey** suit, the top button of his pale green

shirt is undone, his tie loosely knotted. (‘Unbreakable’)

Also in the aforementioned examples, the first adjective ‘dark’ is meant to specify the following adjective ‘grey’. More generally, grouping these adjectival sequences by head proves that most of them are meant to further specify colours. Before a colour (‘red’, ‘black’, ‘green’, ‘grey’, ‘blue’ in the corpus), we can find ‘dark’, ‘light’, ‘pale’, ‘bright’, ‘shiny’ , ‘pure, ‘glowing’, ‘radiant’, ‘luminous’ ‘vivid, ‘clear.’ ‘Emerald green’ and ‘blue electric’ are two different colours and constitute more a single compound adjective than an adjectival sequence referring to a chromatic nuance.

Adjectival sequences consisting of three or more adjectives are also frequent but adjectives are separated by a comma or a conjunction as shown in examples (71) to (86) below (boldface not in the original):

(71) Inside, she runs a hand through her **short, straight red-brown** hair, strides into the kitchen and pours coffee from a filter machine. (‘The Horse Whisperer’)

(72) As he looks down again, the colours and the words and colours fade, leaving a **more detailed black and white** version of the comic cover. (‘Unbreakable’)

(73) **Trimmed, polished, ringletted and restuffed**, the four friends leave the beauty parlour. (‘The Wizard of Oz’)

(74) Inside is a small bedroom, its walls covered in **pale green and**

white flowered wallpaper, the room dominated by a green-painted single bed next to which is a dressing table made to look like a puppet theatre. (‘A Murder of Crows’)

(75) Underwater everything's **dark blue and clouded**, Tom finds the bag that had the money. (‘Hard Rain’)

(76) Torches flare up, showing a floor of **huge black and white** squares. (‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone’)

(77) She rubs steaming red powder into the crystal ball, creating a huge rolling meadow full of **bright red and pink** poppies stretching from the edge of the forest into the far distance. (‘The Wizard of Oz’)

(78) In the toilets, another young man, in a **red, white and blue anorak**, half off his shoulders, is washing his hands. (‘Unbreakable’)

(79) Clearing the valley and more dark woodland, the plane crosses a lake, with **sharp, jagged and snow-capped** mountains ahead. (‘The Great Escape’)

(80) A last piece of fur is ripped off, leaving George **small, pink and hairless.** (‘Monsters, Inc.’)

(81) Ahead, a range of mountains rears up, **misty, grey and white**. (‘The Horse Whisperer’)

(82) Silhouetted against the setting sun, the courting display begins as

the sky turns **red, pink and orange.** (‘Dinosaur’)

(83) There are **delighted, tired and weary** smiles everywhere as the reality sinks in. (‘To End all Wars’)

(84) She sighs. Lilo drifts in, wearing a **long red and white patterned** dress. (‘Lilo and Stitch’)

(85) The Tuscan countryside stretches out with the **muted yellow and ochre** hues of an impressionist painting. (‘Stealing Beauty’)

(86) She gazes in wonder as she steps out onto a yellow brick path, towards an ornamental bridge, across a bright blue lily pond festooned on all sides by beds of **fantastical, shiny multi-colourful** hollyhock like flowers, in the background an emerald green meadow beyond, against a backdrop of pink, craggy rocks. (The Wizard of Oz’)

These examples show that almost all adjectival sequences made up of three or more adjectives, contain a colour, as in ‘fantastical, shiny multi-colourful’, ‘misty, grey and white’, ‘small, pink and hairless’. Some of them fall in the abovementioned category, that is, they specify another adjective (for example ‘dark blue and clouded’, ‘pale green and white flowered’). Others contain stable adjectival expressions such as ‘black and white’ (this recurs 62 times on the whole corpus, both as single adjective and in adjectival sequences). Interestingly, many adjectival sequences occur in children animation films

(in particular 'The Wizard of Oz'). This reflects the high importance attached to adjectives in children audio description (Snyder 2006).

5.5.3.1.8 Comparative and superlative adjectives

The issue of gradable adjectives is very useful to analyze to which extent the language of audio description can be vague or not. Indeed, if guidelines (ITC 2000) recommend the use of vivid, imaginative and precise language, gradable adjectives (and descriptors in particular), which are predominant in our corpus, are the best candidates for linguistic vagueness. The analysis of gradable adjectives relies on important studies (Bierwisch 1989; Cresswell 1975; Hellan 1981; Kennedy 1999; Klein 1980; Seuren 1978) and on two main approaches: degree-based approaches and delineation approaches (Ronzitti 2011, Van Rooij 2011). Both of them, however, are strictly context-dependent. The Gricean pragmatic principle of cooperative communication would exclude linguistic vagueness from having a positive value and all the more in audio description, since the final audience is blind or, at least, visually impaired. However, vague or indirect use of language can be strategically used by the speaker (the audio describer, in this case) because he/she is unsure about the preferences of the audience. In addition, as pointed out by Van Rooij (2011), the use of a more flexible language[244] could help

[244] For the notion of 'flexibility' of language, see Van Rooij (2011).

the hearer/receiver to make less comprehension efforts. It should be also pointed out that in the case of film audio description, communication is constantly reinforced by sound effects and dialogues. This means that apparently the use of vague language could result into precise information if duly supported by context variables and by the dialogues[245]. As the analysis conducted so far has shown, the most frequent adjectives describe the relations between persons, objects, places and actions on the scene. For this reason and given the importance of adjectives for a descriptive task, a more detailed investigation into comparative adjectives could contribute to the comprehension of their role in audio description itself. According to Biber *et alii* (1999), there are two sorts of comparative and superlative adjectives: inflectional and phrasal. The first category is characterized by adjectives like 'strong/stronger/strongest', while the second category includes adjectives marked by 'more', like in 'difficult/more difficult/the most difficult'.

Table 22 below contains the list, ordered by frequency, of the comparative adjectives (JJR) in the AD corpus with frequency > 1:

Adjective	Frequency

[245] As far as we know, no studies have been conducted so far on vagueness in audio description as well as on intentional/non intentional use of vague language. Surely it would make the object of interesting research insights into end-user perception of the quality of audio description. A study of this type should, however, not only be conducted in close cooperation with the blind audience, but should also rely on the availability of huge amounts of audio visual data, including dialogues and stage directions.

Adjective	Frequency
More	140
Older	40
Younger	30
Lighter	25
Closer	24
Lower	21
Later	16
Smaller	13
Better	13
Higher	13
Nearer	13
Further	12
Wider	9
Brighter	7
Deeper	7
Taller	5
Darker	5
Earlier	5
Bigger	5

Adjective	Frequency
Tighter	5
Larger	4
Faster	3
Bludger	2
Greater	2
Stronger	2
Shorter	2
Elder	2
Quieter	2

Table 22. Comparative adjectives (JJR) in the AD corpus

The adjectives involved in the comparative mechanism belong to the same categories identified in the previous sections. Indeed, the most represented categories are age (‘younger’, ‘older’, ‘elder’), position (‘closer’, ‘nearer’) and dimension, which is characterized by the highest number of modified or comparative adjectives within this corpus (‘shorter’, ‘greater’, ‘bigger’, ‘taller’, ‘wider’, ‘smaller’, ‘higher’, ‘lower’, ‘tighter’, ‘deeper’, ‘larger’). Colours are also present with generic adjectives such as ‘brighter’, ‘darker’, ‘lighter’. Interestingly, two entries also express time coordinates: these are ‘later’ and ‘earlier’ even though at a closer look, these appear to be mostly adverbs and not adjectival entries. Another interesting note is to be made

about the frequency of ‘more’ (‘more’ and ‘More’ for a total of 140 entries). It could be argued that the high frequency of ‘more’ is to be associated to the presence of other adjectives and therefore this hypothesis can be checked with a concordance list of ‘more’ (tagged ‘JJR’) in AntConc[246]. The concordance list shows that only a few entries of ‘more’ (tagged ‘JJR’) refer to an adjective (‘more confident’, ‘more sprightly friend’)[247]. Most of the time ‘more’ is followed by a noun. In particular, plural nouns (tagged ‘NNS’) are the most frequent collocates of ‘more’. In addition, ‘more’ also collocates with prepositions (as in ‘she pours more over herself’) or the conjunction ‘and’ in ‘more and more’ (+ ‘NN(S)’).

‘Less’ also presents a very limited number of entries, as shown in the examples below:

(87) Her less-than-enthusiastic woodland servants hoist Titania's bower into the forest canopy. (‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’)

(88) Less than eager, they do as they're told, and Miranda goes to the door. (‘Mrs. Doubtfire’)

(89) Elsewhere in town and form another direction Cole and his two buddies arrive, at a slightly less leisurely pace. (‘The True Story of Jesse James’)

[246] See Fig. 19, Annex 1.

[247] ‘More’ is very ambiguous in these cases, since it could also play the role of intensifying a quantity: ‘more industrious prisoners’ could either refer to the fact that prisoners are more industrious or increase the number of prisoners being already ‘industrious’.

The corpus does not present a significant quantity of comparative adjectives probably because audio description is reluctant to accept statements that clearly trigger a certain degree of evaluation. This is somehow confirmed in the following statement by Biber *et alii* 1999: 524:

> It is noticeable that most commonly inflected adjectives all either have an evaluative meaning, or a descriptor meaning that can be used with evaluative overtones (e.g. *cheaper, older*).

However, in line with the LSWE fiction corpus (Biber *et alii* 1999: 524), the most recurrent comparative adjectives in the AD corpus are also 'younger' and 'older'.

The corpus also contains a low quantity of superlative adjectives, be they inflectional or phrasal ('JJS'). They are represented in Table 23 below and ordered by frequency:

Adjective	Frequency
Best	7
Most	6
Tallest	3
Nearest	3
Highest	3

Table 23. Superlatives (JJS) in the AD corpus

The very nature of superlative adjectives does not allow for an extensive use in audio description. The use of superlatives implies a judgment on the objects under investigation, whether they be human or not, while audio description in films more often triggers the comparison between one or more objects onto a space. The objective is not to explain or describe the 'most' qualified object of a given group but to offer synthetic though precise indications of the relation between the objects, which the use of superlative allows in a much more limited way than the comparative adjectives do. For example, the phrasal comparison with 'most' includes the following strings (boldface not in the original):

(90) Carl is left alone at the curbside, stunned that **the most important man** in his life wouldn't even speak to him. ('The Daytrippers')

(91) Now, Liz is preparing for her dinner at Reggies by applying lipstick, then practising **her most charming smile** for the mirror. (A rather English Marriage')

(92) Home to England's **most famous actor** Richard Burbage. ('Shakespeare in Love')

(93) As soon as she's gone, Joe jams his sax into its case and rushes after her, wobbling down the steps from the bandstand in his high heels, and teetering, bent at the waist and bow-legged, in **a most unfeminine way**, up the stairs from the ballroom. ('Some Like it

Hot').

Curiously, examples (91) and (93) are clear examples of non-objectivity of audio description, in that they implicitly hold an evaluative meaning. Differently from the LSWE fiction corpus, which lists 'most beautiful' as the phrasal degree adjective occurring over ten times per million words, the AD corpus includes a few superlatives. Indeed, while expressing a judgment or an opinion, the 'fiction' corpus makes use of superlative adjectives because the point of view of the writer/novelist/poet/narrator is predominant, while in audio description it is not. The use of 'the very' (that Biber *et alii* 1999 list as an adjective with superlative or absolute meaning) is also rare and limited to a few cases, where it collocates with a noun (expressing a location) on the right, as shown in the following examples (boldface not in the original):

(94) He chases after them, scrambling higher and higher up a rocky mountainside, then stops at **the very edge** of a cliff. ('Atlantis: the lost Empire')

(95) Supported by the pillar of light, her white-blonde hair flowing around her, she is gently lifted higher and higher, up into **the very centre** of the powerful energy source. ('Atlantis: the lost Empire')

(96) Aladar struggles to his feet and desperately pushes the carnotaur towards **the very edge** of the precipice. ('Dinosaur')

(97) Hendley and Colin step on to the small platform at **the very back**

of the train. ('The Great Escape')

(98) Suddenly Miss Bentley sits up then, stands at **the very edge** of the platform and dives back into the lake. ('A Month by the Lake')

(99) He retreats to **the very edge**. ('The Emperor's new Groove')

(100) Kuzco perches at **the very tip** of the outcrop, then sees a bulky figure swinging on a long vine towards them. ('The Emperor's new Groove')

According to Biber *et alii* (1999: 27), there are additional comparative clauses and constructions to take into account for a full analysis of degree adjectives. In particular:

1. 'So+Adjective+That-clause'. The AD corpus only presents a few examples, and namely (boldface not in the original):

(101) Puck blows some of his magical dust on the tree stump, transforming its surface into a golden pool, **so clear that Bottom can admire his reflection in it**. ('A Midsummer Night's Dream')

(102) The car's now **so full that clothes are poking out of the sun roof**. ('Waiting to Exhale')

2. 'So+Adjective+As to-clause'. No entries in the AD corpus.

3. 'Too+Adjective+To-clause'. Only one example in the AD corpus:

(103) Farquaad moves to stand over him but is **too short to see over the table**. ('Shrek')

4. ‘Adjective+Enough+To-clause’. The AD corpus presents only two examples:

(104) In the darkened room, light from the hallway spills as a widening strip of blue on the floor, eventually **wide enough to hold Cole's shadow.** (‘The Sixth Sense’)

(105) Elijah hobbles around the arched colonnade that encircles the stadium, through alternate pools of light and shadow cast by the arches, but the man walks **fast enough to disappear from sight around the curve of the building**. (‘Unbreakable’)

5. ‘As+Adjective+As+phrase/clause’. The AD corpus presents only one example:

(106) Each stair is **as high as she is**, but she struggles slowly upwards. (‘Lady and the Tramp’)

The low incidence of other comparative constructs in the AD corpus confirms that their use is often associated to an opinion or an evaluative judgment, which audio description tends to avoid. However, as Biber *et alii* (1999: 529) point out:

> The wide range of comparative constructions frequently used in fiction reminds us that comparison is not only an explanatory device but a device of the imaginative construction of reality. One notable use of comparative constructions, especially in fiction and in conversation, is to present an extreme or exaggerated comparison which appeals to the imagination rather

than to the reason […]

Nevertheless, audio description is not meant to construct a reality but rather to re-construct it by means of linguistic devices. These are meant to reproduce a reality that exists for the normally sighted on the screen or on stage. This could be one of the reasons why comparative devices are so scarce in the AD corpus.

5.5.3.2 Comparing through similes

The investigation of figurative language in audio description is still an unexplored issue from an academic perspective. Not only its use is still controversial in practice but it also seems to constitute a theoretical challenge in between objective and imaginative language. How can figurative language be objective if objectivity means reproducing reality through words? At the same time, if words are meant to convey a visual experience to the public and are conceptually limited themselves, why cannot figurative language be used to evocate properties rather than to describe? Interestingly, the guidelines elaborated by the LARSS[248] explicitly prescribe not to use metaphors and similes:

Audio description is not an opportunity to show off your education or

[248] The document is available at http://www.larrs.org/guidelines.html (last accessed 19/02/2011).

vocabulary. Avoid metaphors, similes and similar literary devices.

However, according to Snyder (2006), such "literary devices" of figurative language can be dramatically important for improving the literacy of both blind children and sighted viewers. The word 'figurative' refers by definition to something that is "used in some way other than the main or usual meaning, to suggest a picture in the mind or make a comparison" (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture 1992: 475). From this definition, it is clear that figurative language plays the role of 'suggesting' and 'stimulating' the mind by establishing a comparison between one or more properties of a person/object with one of more properties of another person/object. Thus, figurative language bypasses the literal meaning as it deepens and broadens the description with more 'abstract terms' used in place of concrete language. Figurative language creates mental images to display the impact of what is read or heard. In this sense, paradoxically it replaces the reality and introduces a higher semantic ambiguity. A figurative statement is often "involving two unlike things" (Miller 1993: 373 cited in Partington 2006), "a word or phrase that make explicit comparison between two unconnected items using 'as' or 'like'" (Horberry 2010: 28) or a "figure of speech whereby two concepts are imaginatively and descriptively compared" (Wales 2001: 358 cited in Wikberg 2008). Cognitive linguists recognize that meaning is not fixed but can vary in accordance with the context and the interlocutors (Talmy 1988;

Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). From a neurophysiologic perspective, many studies seem to indicate that non-literal meanings are processed by the right hemisphere of the brain, which could sound strange since language tasks are normally carried out by the left hemisphere. Cognitive linguistics and neurophysiology therefore suggest that the issue of figurative language should be investigated even further for a better understanding of the mechanisms underpinning the human comprehension.

There are a number of tropes and figures of speech, of which metaphors, similes, allegories, personifications and metonymies are maybe the most renowned. However in this section we will stick to the analysis of similes in the audio description corpus because they seem to be the most fitting for a corpus-based analysis. Similes express an idea by comparing two persons/objects that are not similar but are alike in a certain way. From a syntactic perspective, similes present a simple structure with repetitive patterns and are therefore more suitable than other tropes to be partially retrieved through corpus analysis. When approaching figurative language and when attempting a combination with corpus analysis, it is very important to bear in mind that contextual and relational factors are key components and this is the reason why quantitative data should be always combined with qualitative observations and manual information retrieval. In this research, we will use corpus linguistic tools for a preliminary observation of similes

which are figures of speech easier to recognize because of the explicit markers used and the kind of comparison they make. In addition, since we have drawn on specific categories of adjectives so far and the syntactical/semantic structure of similes often contains one or more adjective(s), we claim that this type of insight could also contribute to a better understanding of how adjectives are used in audio description. Wikberg (2008) has identified four simile patterns that it is possible to extract: 'As+Adjective/Adverb+as', 'Is+like+(a)Noun', 'Is+like+Verb-ing +(a)(Noun)' and 'Verb+like+(a)Noun'. We have adopted this approach to explore the use of similes in the corpus of audio description scripts[249]. Table 24 below illustrates the first structure ('As+Adjective/Adverb+as'), for which only a few examples were found in the AD corpus (boldface not in the original):

Simile	Film Title
She sees two green legs **as thick as great tree trunks.**	Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone
His mask is **as flat as a pancake.**	Mrs. Doubtfire
The church is large, **as grand as a cathedral** and the pews are full.	Schindler's List

Table 24. Occurrences of the structure 'as adjective/adverb as' in the AD corpus

[249] Tables 24 to 29 are ordered alphabetically by film title.

All the examples listed in Table 24 above refer to extreme or exaggerated physical features that the audio describer has decided to make more impressive through the use of similes instead of merely reinforcing the adjectives by means of 'very' or other intensifiers. Table 25 below illustrates the second type of structure ('Is+like+(a) Noun'). However, since no hit contains the original structure suggested by Wikberg (2008), we have decided to include in this section all similes which express a physical feature with verbs other than 'to be' but that can be considered as synonyms in the context. The structure type has been slightly changed as to include verbal forms like 'to look like' or 'to be shaped like'. In addition, we have listed the occurrences in which the verb 'to be' is elliptical (marked with '*'), as shown in Table 25 below[250]:

Subject	Simile	Film Title
(…) Titania's bower	shaped like a bird's nest*	A Midsummer Night's Dream
A dressing table	made to look like a puppet theatre	A Murder of Crows
She uncovers something	shaped like a fish*	Atlantis: the lost Empire

[250] Examples are listed by 'Film Title' alphabetical order.

Subject	Simile	Film Title
An oviraptor	with short front legs and a head like a chicken*	Dinosaur
Its terrible head	which looks like a squashed green potato (…)	Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone
It	looks like a spare book jacket	Insomnia
The car	looks like a toy	Insomnia
A puppy	looking exactly like Tramp	Lady and the Tramp
(…) The other puppies	which look exactly like her	Lady and the Tramp
The two of them (…)	looking like just any other couple	Leaving Las Vegas
A gaggle of ducklings	like the ones from the storybook*	Lilo and Stitch
a pointed red shape	like the dorsal fin of a shack*	Lilo and Stitch
A litter-strewn room	which looks like it`s been trashed.	Losing Isaiah
A jelly monster	like a slug*	Monsters, Inc.
A hood	who looks like Clint Eastwood	Robin Hood: Men in Tights

Subject	Simile	Film Title
Wally	looks like a rabbit that's been caught in the glare of oncoming headlights	See no Evil, Hear no Evil
(…) Floops chair	which is shaped like a giant hand	Stealing Beauty
A red smokey tunnel	like the inside of an artery*	Spiderman
A sharp featured head	more like a mask with long pointed ears*	Spiderman
A sharp featured head	like a goblin*	Spiderman
A huge submarine	shaped like a giant whale	Spy Kids
Barred cells	(…) all different like exaggerated cartoon characters*	Spy Kids
(…) lump of clay	shaped like Felix head*	Spy Kids
It	(…) shaped like a human brain	Spy Kids
A silver trophy	shaped like a boat	Stuart Little
A curious sight	looking like a standard be-plane	The Amazing Howard Hughes

Subject	Simile	Film Title
(..) the air pump	like long tubular bellows*	The Great Escape
The blade	(…) looks a little like a submarine periscope	The Great Escape
(…) what	looks like a trophy	The Horse Whisperer
The horsebox	looks like a white beetle	The Horse Whisperer
A streak of pale light	almost like a stare*	The Sixth Sense
Scarecrow	who looks a lot like Hunk	The Wizard of Oz
The bright eyed face	which looks a lot like Hickory	The Wizard of Oz
The guard with a big moustache	looks very like the coachman, the doorman and Professor Marvel	The Wizard of Oz
The Wizard	who looks like Professor Marvel embraces Lion	The Wizard of Oz

Table 25 Occurrences of 'is like/look(s) like/is shaped like (a) Noun' in the AD corpus

Interestingly, the vast majority of similes in this group are to be found in films for children or animation/family/adventure films, that is, audiovisual products for the youngest. The characters are compared against other characters or the physical features of objects are depicted as exaggerated and

therefore compared, for example, to a 'giant whale' or a 'giant head'. The use of similes in these cases is instrumental to the enjoyment of the audiovisual experience by blind children. The fulfilment of this purpose goes beyond objectivity and neutrality and tends to privilege the filmic experience as a totalizing, multi-sensorial experience. In addition, the use of similes conjures the risk of getting children bored by vocabulary resources that are too common, or even too rich, extravagant and peculiar. Using similes in this case means bridging the communication gap with the final audience; in this case, we would argue that they should be used more and more in audio description for children because they help developing connections and stimulate visual imagery. From a semantic perspective, similes listed in Table 24 and Table 25 above mostly aim at evoking forms and dimensions, that is, at stimulating tactile impressions and we have seen in Chapter 2 to which extent the touch is linked to the image-building process in the brain of blind people.

No hits have been found in the corpus for the third type of structure suggested by Wikberg (2008), that is, 'Is+like+Verb-ing +(a)(Noun)'. The most populated category for the AD corpus is the fourth ('Verb+like+(a)Noun') in Wikberg's classification, as shown in Table 26 below[251]:

[251] Examples are listed by 'Film Title' alphabetical order.

Subject	Simile	Film Title
Kida stands upright glowing with energy	which starts spreading like a blue light	Atlantis: the lost Empire
Hundreds of meteors	pour down onto the mainland like shooting stars (...)	Dinosaur
Zini	rides the huge wave like a surfer	Dinosaur
He	slings the case (…) like a haversack	Green for Danger
The envelopes	like a snowstorm cover the carpet (...)	Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone
Harry's body	whirls away like a tornado	Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone
The flying keys	go mad and chase after Harry like a swarm of bees	Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone
Barry	is dancing like a lunatic	High Fidelity

Subject	Simile	Film Title
Gerry and the girl	are getting on like a house on fire	In the Name of the Father
He	clings to his head like a baby	In the Name of the Father
Carol's busy	making a face like a pig	In the Name of the Father
Iris	puts her hands together and bows like a geisha	Iris
The heavily padded players	charge at each others like rhino	Jarry Maguire
The dachshund	starts digging like mad	Lady and the Tramp
He sets	about destroying his creation like the big spider he saw in the old movie	Lilo and Stitch
A tree branch	scratching eerily on a window like fingers trying to find a way in.	Losing Isaiah
The woman	operates the rudder like a tail	Love is a Many Splendored Thing

Subject	Simile	Film Title
(…) Her colleague	uses her pole like a traditional oar	Love is a Many Splendored Thing
Sulley	flexes his arms and fingers, and shakes them out like an athlete	Monsters, Inc.
He	waggles his chopsticks like a pair of funny ears	Mrs. Doubtfire
She	(…) splashes it on like aftershave.	Mrs. Doubtfire
She	is throwing him round like a rag doll.	Mrs. Doubtfire
He	starts riding them like a bucking bronco	Nine Months
They	tumble to the ground like puppets with their strings cut	Road to Perdition
He	holds his staff like a joust	Robin Hood: Men in Tights
(…) The crowd	who roll their fists like modern sports fans.	Robin Hood: Men in Tights

Subject	Simile	Film Title
They	continue fighting, swinging the remaining halves of their staffs like swords	Robin Hood: Men in Tights
The knights	fall into each other and topple over like dominoes	Robin Hood: Men in Tights
The wind	blows dust through the camp like a foggy shroud.	Schindler's List
Dave	rides the car like a surfer on a board	See no Evil, Hear no Evil
She	pirouettes like a ballerina	Shakespeare in Love
It	floats like a balloon	Shrek
He	gargles the thick brown sludge like a mouthwash	Shrek
He	(…) lights it like a candle	Shrek
A chain	which brings a chandelier down over the Dragon's head and around her neck like a collar	Shrek
He	flies through the air like a gymnast	Spiderman

Subject	Simile	Film Title
He	swings through the air like Tarzan on a creeper	Spiderman
He	(…) and like a gymnast swings round and round	Spiderman
He	pulls himself along again like Tarzan swinging from vine to vine	Spiderman
She	shoots up like a rocket	Spy Kids
Juni	has his tube which he holds like a light sabre	Spy Kids
A curven golden light	rises like a sunset	Tea with Mussolini
The setting sun	casts a warm pick glow over the glass like water	Tea with Mussolini
A canvas	(…) drifts to the ground like a piece of paper.	Tea with Mussolini
He	is playing it like a guitar.	The Buddy Holly Story
He	(…) slides down the banister using the turtle like a skateboard	The Emperor's new Groove

Subject	Simile	Film Title
Almasy	(…) holds it up like a trophy	The English Patient
Hardy	(…) waddles like a penguin down the corridor	The English Patient
The moonlight	glinting on the river behind like a mist	The Horse Whisperer
Johnny's mouth	gapes like a fish	The Indian Fighter
Quoyle	jerks violently as she clutches the headboard and rides him like a horse	The Shipping News
It	supports him like a life-raft	The Shipping News
Toto see Miss Gulch on her bike	peddling like fury	The Wizard of Oz
The farmhouse	spinning through the centre of the cyclone like a top	The Wizard of Oz
Thousands of pieces of paper	flutter out from the object, filling the air like confetti	To End all Wars
She	puts on a pot of coffee in the kitchen like an automaton	Waiting to Exhale

Table 26. Occurrences of 'Verb like (a) (Noun)' similes in the AD corpus

Table 26 above shows that there seems to be a general higher trend of

animation and children films towards the use of figurative language. Also, if we consider that they are a minor part of the whole corpus, their representativeness in is even more outstanding. In addition to Wikberg's classification (2008), various adjectives have been found in which the structure is formed by a 'Noun+Like' structure, as represented in Table 27 below[252]:

'Noun-Like' structure	Film title
Medusa-like figure	A Midsummer Night's Dream
Mist-like haze	Chocolat
Lizard-like animal	Dinosaur
Tadpole-like creature	Dinosaur
Rhino-like dinosaur	Dinosaur
Thermometer-like guage	Green for Danger
Dream-like trance	Leaving Las Vegas
Dog-like	Lilo and Stitch
Mouse-like ear	Lilo and Stitch
Octopus-like monster	Monsters, Inc.
Dream-like sequence	Out of Sight

[252] Examples are listed by 'Film Title' alphabetical order.

‘Noun-Like’ structure	Film title
Castle-like building	Robin Hood: Men in Tights
Mask-like face	Shrek
Trumpet-like ear	Shrek
Web-like threads	Spiderman
Brain-like cap	Spy Kids
(looking almost) Ghost-like	Stealing Beauty
Boat-like section	The Amazing Howard Hughes
Dark and tomb-like	The English Patient
Christ-like figure	The English Patient
Daisy-like flowers	The Horse Whisperer
Very business-like Joe	The Horse Whisperer
Honey-like substance	The Silence of the Lambs

Table 27. Occurrences of the ‘Noun-like’ structure in the corpus

Table 27 above also suggests that the construct ‘Noun-like’ is used in animation and children films, where it includes entities and objects that should be already known to the youngest: ‘ghost’, ‘octopus’, ‘rhyno’, ‘Tadpole’ are generally known from previous readings and tales (ITC 2000; Palomo 2008; Snyder 2006).

Finally, we have found that the structure ‘As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ is also recurrent and is used to establish a simile relation between

actions/thoughts with other actions they share a behavioural attitude with. Table 28 below lists examples of this category[253]:

'As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)' structure	Film Title
As if he is about to say something	A Month by the Lake
As if Rickey is giving oral sex	American Beauty
As if he has forgotten he's there	American Beauty
As if Leister might be gaining sexual pleasure	American Beauty
As if hypnotized	Atlantis: the lost Empire
As if to begin a tango	Chocolat
As if they were on a racetrack	Hard Rain
As if it's in the middle of decoration	Hard Rain
As if sensing that something is not quite right	High Fidelity
As if trying to speak	In the Name of the Father
As if he is about to speak but no answer comes	In the Name of the Father
As if supporting something under his black leather jacket	Insomnia
As if he can't understand	Insomnia
As if looking for someone	Iris

[253] Examples are listed by 'Film Title' alphabetical order.

‘As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ structure	Film Title
As if to mend the dress	Jarry Maguire
As if reading his face	Jarry Maguire
As if it were water	Leaving Las Vegas
As if she is about to burst into tears	Leaving Las Vegas
As if she had gone out	Lilo and Stitch
As if she want to say something	Losing Isaiah
As if willing him to appear	Love is a Many Splendored Thing
As if it were made of clay	Mrs. Doubtfire
As if unable to believe what he can see	Nine Months
As if to speak but no words come	Out of Sight
As if she’s worried she’s being watched	Red Corner
As if attempting a furtive signal	Road to Perdition
As if balking at this suggestion	Road to Perdition
As if waiting for something	Schindler’s List
As if anointing his mirror image	Schindler’s List
As if deeply troubled	Slingblade
As if waiting expectantly	Slingblade
As if he’s waiting to be asked first	Slingblade

‘As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ structure	Film Title
As if missing something	Slingblade
As if dancing from memory	Some Like it Hot
As if one is plunging through a red smokey tunnel	Spiderman
As if struck by memory	Spiderman
As if flying	Spy Kids
As if he’s in pain	Stealing Beauty
As if it were music	The Amazing Howard Hughes
As if assessing it	The Great Escape
As if looking at the thing on the floor	The Great Escape
As if to get his bearings	The Great Escape
As if to put his paper in his case	The Great Escape
As if trying to spy out the lands	The Great Escape
As if to pull each other even closer	The Horse Whisperer
As if in pain	The Horse Whisperer
As if cold	The Horse Whisperer
As if she understood	The Horse Whisperer
As if making a decision	The Horse Whisperer

‘As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ structure	Film Title
As if expecting another attack	The Royal Tenenbaums
As if sensing his presence	The Silence of the Lambs
As if satisfied	The Sixth Sense
As if to wipe it away	The Sixth Sense
As if thinking	The Sixth Sense
As if seeing everything fresh	The Truth about Cats and Dogs
As if remembering something painful	Waiting to Exhale
As if looking for someone	Waiting to Exhale

Table 28. Occurrences of the ‘as if Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ structure in the AD corpus

Table 28 above shows that the structure ‘As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)’ is very rarely used in animated/children films and is preferred in romance/drama films. Indeed, this type of structure plays the role of suggesting and representing more than describing and naming. Using this structure type, the audio describer can describe an attitude, a behaviour or a state of mind without stating it with extreme precision but rather comparing it to similar experiences than the adult audience is already familiar with. In contrast to ‘conventional’ similes, here we find a comparison not between two different objects sharing a property but between two different situations. For example, in the expression ‘as if she understood’, the audio describer intends to

suggest that the character has understood something because he/she interprets the expression on the face of the character. However, stating that the character has understood means - to a certain extent - expressing a personal judgment or a personal consideration about the facts. For this reason the audio describer chooses suggesting an expression of physical or psychological nature that is well known to the audience because it belongs to the experiential richness of every man and woman in the audience.

5.6 Conclusions

The application of corpus-based techniques to the study of adjectival patterns in audio description has proven to be useful for the identification of relevant collocations whose distribution and structural variants have been compared againts two subsets of the BNC corpus (spoken and fiction). The AD corpus investigated in this chapter is a collection of filmic audio description scripts, with a balanced representativeness of different film *genres*. Through the use of AntConc and CQP in particular, we have discovered that the language of audio description is a highly specific language, whose adjectival patterns are characterized by a number of features that we are briefly to summarize:

1. The first 100 most frequent adjectives in the corpus belong to specific semantic categories, in particular:

a. Colour.

b. Position/Direction/Order.

c. Dimension.

d. Age.

e. Quantity.

f. Material/Fabric.

g. Container-contained.

h. Quietness/Movement.

i. Weather-related conditions.

j. Physical appearance and physical conditions.

2. The adjectives preferred by audio description are gradable adjectives, to be mostly included in the category of descriptors rather than classifiers.

3. Audio description uses both attributive and predicative adjectives. In this second category, subject predicative adjectives are far more frequent than object predicative adjectives, in that the latter often introduce a judgment or an evaluation expressed by a third person, which audio description seeks to avoid.

4. Adjectives in audio description collocate with nouns that we have grouped in the following semantic categories:

a. Human body parts and appearance.

b. Non-human:

    i. Parts of the day/time.

    ii. Natural elements.

    iii. Space coordinates.

    iv. Animals;

    v. Materials.

5. The process of adjectivation in audio description constantly runs the risk of being subject to interpretation and evaluative meanings. However, while the description of physical characteristics - for which the most frequent adjectives are used - remains neutral, the description of states of mind, attitudes and psychological aspects cannot help having a certain degree of subjectivity and interpretation, which needs nevertheless to be counter-checked against the original video.

6. Compared to two subsets of the BNC corpus (spoken and fiction) and with the LSWE corpus, the language of audio description shares far more features with the fiction corpus than with other registers. This constitutes a possible pathway for future investigation into the language of fiction and description.

7. From the point of view of figurative language, even though some guidelines expressly discourage the use of similes and metaphors, a first corpus-based insight has demonstrated that similes are used by audio describers in films for both adults and children, even though the grammatical patterns (in adult films, the pattern 'as if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)' is preferred, while in animated/children movies the structures 'Noun-Like' and 'Verb+like+(a)Noun') and the semantic associations (mostly fantasy creatures and tactile metaphors for children and comparison of actions and attitudes with more familiar actions and behaviours for adults) are *genre*-related.

8. A corpus-based analysis of the language of audio description proves to be beneficial for the identification of strong grammatical, lexical and semantic associations, as well as, of 'prefabs', in other words, pre-fabricated structures. This is extremely important for a vision of audio description within ESP and for its possible future use in academic contexts and settings.

Conclusions

Audio description is a recent technique that allows primarily blind and low-sighted people to gain adequate access to audiovisual products such as movies, theatre performances, sport matches, museums, archives, web resources and sculpture works. An additional audio track describes the visual elements that would otherwise remain inaccessible to the visually impaired, such as settings, costumes, atmospheres and written titles. In this sense, audio description is not only aimed at people with sight impairment but more generally at those who - temporarily or permanently - cannot see. According to most literature in the field (Hernàndez and Mendiluce 2004; Orero 2005; Piety 2004; Snyder 2006), audio description was born in the late '70s in the USA thanks to Margaret Pfanstiehl, a theatre artist that became blind and 'invented' the art of describing images through words. According to other researchers, the technique would have been used for the first time in Spain and broadcast through radio (Orero 2007). Though very recent, audio description has rapidly expanded worldwide and is widely used in English-speaking countries, where it is applied to most audiovisual fields and in particular to cinema, theatre and television. At the same time, audio description has attracted more and more attention from an academic perspective, for its being a technique that 'translates' the visual into verbal and 'manipulates' the original product in such a way as to carefully select

only those elements that are pertinent to the comprehension and might be described in the relatively short pauses within dialogues. For this reason, various researchers from Linguistics, Translation Studies and Audiovisual Translation in particular, are focusing on audio description as a form of intersemiotic translation and are investigating the criteria for establishing the relevance of visual clues to audio describe (Braun 2007; Gutt 2000; Martinez-Sierra 2005; Sperber and Wilson 1986; Vercauteren 2007a, 2007b). However, audio description can be considered at the cutting edge between various disciplines, in particular psychology, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics (for the mechanisms that generally regulate the comprehension of an audiovisual content by the visually impaired and the brain reorganization due to the sight loss), Narratology and Film Studies (for the comprehension of the way in which audio description is integrated into the original product and contributes to meaning-making process but also for the way in which the human eye perceives, selects and categorizes information from films), sound engineering (for the investigation of possible ways to improve the quality of sounds and track mixing techniques) and computational linguistics (for the opportunity of using audio description as a tool for indexing images and retrieving information about an audiovisual content). From a linguistic perspective, so far most researchers have focused on more qualitative than quantitative investigations (Udo and Fels 2009; Orero and Wharton 2007) and have therefore analyzed case studies to apply,

verify and discuss the existing guidelines (ADP 2009; ITC 2000; AENOR 2005). Only a few exceptions (Piety 2004; Salway 2007; Vassiliou 2006) have considered corpus-based analyses of filmic audio description. From the point of view of the other mentioned disciplines, it appears that except for the last two (sounds engineering and computational linguistics), none of them has addressed audio description in particular. Only the initiative of researchers in linguistics or translation (Vercauteren 2007a and 2007b; Kruger 2010a and 2010b) has allowed reaching out for other fields such as Narratology or Film Studies. Therefore, from the very beginning, audio description is configured as a comprehensive discipline that requires a holistic approach but has been dealt with so far mostly by specialists in translation or linguistics. At the same time, Braun (2008) argues that not only contributions from other disciplines are urged, but linguistic and translation themselves have not yet afforded all uncovered aspects of audio description.

This research work is therefore conceived as an original attempt to bridge the gap between the various disciplines and to suggest how they can contribute to the comprehension of the language of audio description through a corpus-oriented approach. Since audio description is scarcely developed in Italy both from a practical and an academic perspective, this work also aims at raising awareness about the importance of AD as a tool for audiovisual accessibility and as a topic of academic interest and relevance. So far, only a few corpus-based investigations have dealt with the characteristics of the

language of audio description. In particular Piety (2004) and Salway (2007) have discussed the *facta* or actions selected by audio description and identified the linguistic means used to 'translate' the visual into verbal. However, none of these researches has specifically concentrated on the incidence of grammatical categories on the language of AD. Since adjectives play an important role in descriptive language and in AD in particular, this research work focuses on the use of the adjectival function from both a grammatical and a semantic perspective. The corpus-based analysis has been conducted on a corpus of 69 English AD scripts (from 66 movies audio described in the framework of the TIWO project by the BBC, the RNIB and the ITFC) by means of corpus analysis tools (AntConc and CQP in particular) and has combined both quantitative and qualitative information, based on the convergence of the above mentioned approaches.

In Chapter 1 we have seen that the very notion of 'audio description' is not only controversial from a content perspective, but also from a purely terminological standpoint. We have seen the reasons for preferring 'audio description' to 'audio narration', 'descriptive video', 'video description' 'commentary' or 'descriptive narration'; secondly, we have seen which are the ideal characteristics that make an audiovisual product suitable for audiodescription. If not all products can be audio described, some specific guidelines appear to be *genre*- and content-related (such in soap-operas, nature documentaries, animation and children movies, sport events,

documentaries). We have also seen that among the visual clues to audio describe, costumes, settings and actions play a vital role. Operating an objective selection of the visual clues on the basis of relevance is not simple. First of all, relevance is strictly anchored to narrative and is subject to a number of time-related constraints, firstly the length of dialogues and pauses. Secondly, objectivity seems to be purely chimerical for at least two reasons. The first is that movies are far from being objective (camera movements and angles in particular constitute the semantics of the expressive material of films and therefore already represent a subjective interpretation of reality); the second is that the language of audio description oscillates between the principle of non-obtrusivity, the need of being precise and denotative and the necessity of avoiding personal judgments or interpretation. However, the intermodal and intersemiotic shift from visual to verbal makes it very difficult to comply with pretended objectivity. Describing objectively a subjectively-built audiovisual product challenges the very principle of faithfulness and adherence to the original, which is at the heart of all translation processes.

Finally, Chapter 1 draws on the story of audio description in Europe and describes the current state of art of academic research in the field (Braun 2008). The technical aspects of audio description have also been highlighted with specific reference to the recording and the delivery phase. Indeed, adjusting and mixing the sound volumes plays an important role in audio

description, since it is usually delivered live or as a pre-recorded track through headphones in one or both ears. A good sound quality is crucial to help the visually impaired understand and enjoy an audiovisual product. Chapter 1 ends on legislative aspects of audio description in Europe and worldwide and on the normative framework in which audio description fits best. It emerges that most countries are not legally bound to provide audio description at television (or they are, but substantially less than subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing) and that the UN Conventions and the European Framework in the field of disability policies are not fully complied with.

Chapter 2 focuses on the target audience of audio description and therefore defines blindness and visual impairment more generally as the (temporarily or permanent) inability to see. In this sense, the major causes for sight loss are also described; in particular, the phenomenon of population aging in Western countries and of age-related pathologies (macular degeneration at first) will increase the number of people with sight impairment while reducing the number of the totally or congenitally blind. From a slightly neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspective, we have seen that the brain of people with sight loss undergoes a cerebral reorganization that makes touch and hearing more acute and developed. Indeed, the brain areas traditionally devoted to sight are occupied by tactile or acoustic *stimuli*, and this is the reason why it is often stressed that visually

impaired people can hear better or even recognize the world from the very first touch. This is a very important issue for audio description, because the use of a language that recalls, evocates or reproduces tactile or acoustic information could improve the comprehension and the enjoyment of an audiovisual product, which is finally the ultimate goal of audio description itself. In addition, some crucial points about the education of blind and low-sighted people are introduced at this stage. Indeed, according to most pedagogy and psychology literature, the use of clear and straightforward voices and sounds, along with the ability of 'presenting' and 'describing' objects, plays a vital role. 'Presenting' means choosing the right words to help the person with visual impairment build a mental map of the object structure and the space organization. This is very much in line with the principle of audio description meant to show rather than to narrate or comment. For this reason we conclude that further contributions from the field of psychology and pedagogy would be extremely useful for a better understanding of the way in which people with sight impairment perceive reality through ears and body as a whole.

In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, we have positioned audio description against a research background. To this purpose, we have discussed how it can fit within translation studies and audiovisual translation in particular (Gambier 2004; Gottlieb 2005). Audio description appears to be a form of intermodal and intersemiotic translation, by which a polysemiotic product (a

film, in our case, made up of both visual and verbal elements) is translated into a monosemiotic entity (audio only). In this regard, we suggest considering the whole film as a 'text' and not only the audio description track, which would not exist without the original product and would therefore be incomprehensible without its *ancrage*. In addition, Gottlieb (2005) categorizes audio description as a form of inspirational and hyposemiotic translation, that is, a form of translation in which the target text contains fewer channels than the source and the shift is operated in a way that is less conventional or coded than traditional translation. Based on Lambert and Delabastita (1996) we have also defined audio description as a form of 'selective' translation, in that only a part of the original product is translated (selected visual information), while the rest is kept untouched (dialogues and sounds). In this sense, while applying the taxonomy drawn from the ancient Greek rhetoric (Lambert and Delabastita 1996), we have identified *repetitio*, *adjectio*, *detractio*, *transmutatio* and *substitutio* in audio description, and discussed how they can be found in films and the extent to which they are more or less codified. Audio description can be also analyzed from a functional perspective, because it is a strictly target-oriented activity and can therefore be seen as a culturally-sensitive form of translation. In this sense, we have purposed audio description against the background of the so-called Skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Schäffner 1998; Snell Hornby 2006; Trosborg 1997; Vermeer 1998) that has allowed interpreting

the very notion of faithfulness and objectivity in this form of translation. Always from a functional perspective, we have considered the three pragmatic concepts of coherence, presupposition and implicatures in audio description. In addition, in Chapter 3 we have positioned audio description against the background of English for Special Purposes (ESP). In this sense, we have highlighted that is it not the specificity of language that makes a language 'special', but more a number of factors, among which the (inter)relation between the participants to the communicative exchange, the presence of a 'codified' language and the specific frequency of occurrence of classes of words. For the first category, we have seen who the participants in the 'audio description' conversation are, which are their expectations and their contributions in terms of production, delivery and feedback exchange. On the presence of a codified language, we have seen how frequent formulaic expressions are in audio description and to which extent a specialized and stratified communication may occur between the various participants. Finally, based on the features highlighted by Gotti (1991) we have analyzed audio description from the point of view of special languages and applying Gotti's framework, we have explained how this discipline can really fit within this research field. Chapter 3 also explains why audio description is both the subject and the object of the so-called 'visual literacy', that is the ability to 'read' and interpret images actively. In this regard, we have seen that audio description can be considered as a tool for improving

the literacy of both young and adult people, because it associates the verbal to the visual and therefore widen the range of linguistic tools used to describe an image. At the same time, it can be made the object of visual literacy itself, because it can be considered as the ultimate objective of a visual education that is of an educational pathway in which people are led to describe images through words. The issue of visual literacy is intimately linked to film literacy that we have partly addressed in Chapter 3 (film as 'images') and partly in Chapter 4 (film as a 'moving' product with its narrative expression). In film literacy, images are built according to a specific syntax and semantics. Syntax constitutes what is usually rendered by audiodescription: dimension, motion, light, colour, movement, relative size, line, shape, direction, tone, scale; semantics refers to those aspects that are scarcely included in audio description, partly because of the higher degree of subjectivity they trigger, partly because of the low awareness of their true sense-in-context. In particular, semantics covers the way in which meaning is disclosed through form and structure, culturally constructed ideas shaping the interpretation of icons and symbols and the social interaction with images. Finally, we have drawn on the difference between narration and description, and we have seen how both approaches modify the linguistic 'attitude' in audio description; based on Genette (1982) we have concluded that description is not completely other from narration but more a part of it, and that a subordination relation between the two is not only prejudicial but also

renders an inaccurate picture of the relations between narration and description to the detriment of the latter. Chapter 3 ends on the analysis of audio description as an academic matter and focuses on the following aspects: audio description as a literacy tool for both blind and normally sighted children, audio description as a didactic tool for learning a foreign language (from an adult perspective) or as a subject in translation and audio description courses in academic contexts. We have demonstrated that the use of audio description can be beneficial not only for the blind target audience, but for all those who wish to improve their language skills, because some linguistic features (especially the use of clear and straightforward syntax and unambiguous words) make it the ideal candidate for a strategic use in language and translation courses.

Chapter 4 addresses audio description from a filmic perspective, that is, it repurposes AD within the original product and discusses the existence of a film, how this grammar is rendered in audio description and how AD integrates within the original narrative or is called to re-narrativize the product. In particular, we have found that a film grammar generally consists in technological, visual, graphical and acoustic codes and that not all of them are duly rendered in audio description. In particular, technological and visual codes pertain to the artistic 'signature' of the director or to the way a film is shot, that is the camera movements, angles, inclination and lighting. We have concluded that this information, that is dramatically important in film,

unfortunately gets lost in audio description most of the time. However, these codes do also form a specific part of the so-called filmic narrativisation, for they already make meaning and are supposed to complement or supplement the semantics of visual and verbal signs. For this reason, Kruger (2010a, 2010b) suggests that audio description should adopt a 're-narrativisation' attitude, that is, it should select relevant clues not on the basis of their 'objective' relevance, but as if they were seen through the 'lenses' of the camera, that is interpreted at the light of filmic literacy and the director's intentions.

Chapter 5 draws on the corpus-based analysis of the adjectival function in audiodescription. First of all, the language of audio description is defined against the background of spoken and written language. It is written to be read, that is realized aurally. At the same time, it cannot be considered as spoken language, because it keeps most features of written language. Therefore, it can be considered as an intermediate language on the *continuum* between spoken and written language (Bazzanella 1994). The study of the language of audio description is still at an emerging phase; so far it has been extensively investigated only by Salway (2007) who has taken the move of computational linguistics. However - as anticipated - no research work so far has approached adjectives in audio description specifically. Salway (2007) states that when a character appears on the scene, his/her physical appearance is often described through an adjective following verbs 'to be'/'to look'.

However, adjectives themselves are not investigated in detail. Drawing on these considerations and given the high importance attached to the descriptive language in general and to the language of audio description in particular, we have analyzed a corpus of 69 film AD scripts (for a total of 66 films) and examined the most recurrent adjectives, as well as their collocations and semantic preferences against two sub-corpora (spoken and fiction) of the BNC corpus. The hypothesis on which this investigation relies is that among the unusually frequent class of words found by Salway (2007) adjectives play a vital role, because they are meant to convey carefully selected features of a visual content to people that cannot see. For this reason, they will probably belong to specific semantic categories. In order to carry out the research, we have used AntConc in combination with Corpus Query Processor (CQP). The corpus-based analysis has led to the following conclusions:

1. The most frequent adjectives are distributed in specific semantic categories, that we have organized as follows: colour, position/direction, dimension, age, quantity, material/fabric, container-contained relation, quietness/movement, weather-related conditions, physical appearance and physical conditions.

2. The categories of adjectives tagged ‘unknown’ are a first evidence of creativity and linguistic inventiveness in audio description language.

Indeed, most adjectives in this category are, both from a lexical and a semantic perspective, compound adjectives: ‘grey-haired’, ‘glass-paned’, ‘stony-faced’, ‘tear-filled’, ‘open-topped’, ‘stern-looking’, ‘orange-overalled’, ‘short-handled’, ‘white-painted’, ‘multi-colored’, ‘glass-fronted’, ‘curly-headed’, ‘beaten-up’, ‘emerald-shaped’, ‘metal-barred’, ‘side-parted’, ‘cream-colored’, ‘semi-circular’, ‘half-buried’, ‘brightly-lit’, ‘dual-winged’, ‘blue-painted’, ‘gold-rimmed’, ‘thin-lipped’, ‘wide-mouthed’, ‘bullet-riddled’, ‘snow-laden’, ‘blood-spattered’, ‘half-open’, ‘sun-dappled’, ‘flesh-colored’, ‘ivy-clad’, ‘dream-like’, ‘rhino-like’, ‘blood-streaked’, ‘dark-suited’. In particular, modifiers mostly refer to forms, colours and materials; from the point of view of the adjectival bases, they mostly express a physical appearance, a form/dimension or a position. As to comparative adjectives, the most represented semantic categories are age (‘younger’, ‘older’, ‘elder’), position (‘closer’, ‘nearer’) and dimension, which is characterized by the highest number of modified of comparative adjectives within this corpus (‘shorter’, ‘greater’, ‘bigger’, ‘taller’, ‘wider’, ‘smaller’, ‘higher’, ‘lower’, ‘tighter’, ‘deeper’, ‘larger’). Colours are also present with adjectives such as ‘brighter’, ‘darker’, ‘lighter’.

3. The collocation ‘Adjective+Adjective’ includes the same semantic categories as in 1. and 2. The collocational range of ‘Adjective+Noun’ includes human and non-human referents, in particular:

a. Human and body-related referents.

b. Body parts and non-human.

Within the 'non-human' category, it is possible to subdivide the results into the following categories:

a. Physical appearance.

b. Body-related actions and body parts.

c. Dressing.

d. Parts of the day/time.

e. Natural elements.

f. Space coordinates.

g. Animals.

h. Materials.

i. Other objects.

4. The comparison with two sub-corpora of the BNC corpus provides with the following results:

a. Most adjectives represented in the two sub-corpora but completely absent from the top 100 most frequent adjectives of our corpus, seem to express a judgment or attitude/behaviour/state of mind referred to a person or an object. The reason why these adjectives are not representative of the corpus of audio description language should be explained by the fact that audio describers should not express value

judgments or personal considerations and show more than narrate or interpret the characters' behaviour or attitude. In addition, some adjectives such as 'lovely', 'brilliant', 'okay', 'interesting' and 'alright' are very frequent in the spoken language and have a particularly low frequency in the AD samples analyzed.

b. The relative frequency of the most representative adjectives in our corpus (e.g. 'haired') is much higher than in the two sub-corpora of the BNC. However, the same adjectives are also more recurrent in the 'fiction' sub-corpus than in the 'spoken' one. This makes the 'fiction' sub-corpus closer to the audio description corpus from a linguistic perspective.

5. Finally, we have investigated the use of similes in audio description and have looked for the following structures through a corpus-based approach:

a. 'As+Adjective/Adverb+as'.

b. 'Is like/looks like/is shaped+like+(a)Noun'.

c. 'Is+like+Verb-ing +(a)(Noun)'.

d. 'Verb+like+(a)Noun'.

The most populated category is the last one. Evidence suggests that similes are more frequent in adventure/children/animated movies. Most end users of these products are children and audio description for children should take

into account their different needs and expectations (ITC 2000; Palomo 2008; Snyder 2006). Finally, we have found that the structure 'As if+Adjective/Verb(-ing)' is also recurrent and is used to establish a 'simile relation' between actions and thoughts with other actions they share a behavioural attitude with. Evidence shows that this structure is very seldom used in animated/children films (that prefer a 'Noun-like' structure) and is preferred in romance/drama films. This type of structure plays the role of suggesting more than describing and representing more than naming. Using this structure type, the audio describer can describe an attitude, a behaviour or a state of mind without stating it with extreme precision but rather comparing it to similar experiences than adult people already know.

This research work has focused on the adjectival function in audio description and has highlighted the most recurrent semantic categories they belong to, as well as their collocational range and semantic environment. We have stressed that most adjectives (except for those listed in the category tagged 'unknown') are however generic and this seemed to a first glance in contradiction with the principles of precision, straightforwardness and vividness claimed by most audio description specialists. However, at a closer look, the reason for this sort of 'vagueness' seems to reside not only in the fact that audio description intends to leave adequate room for imagination, but also on the 'precision' of nouns they are associated with. In other words, the relative vagueness of adjectives would be counterbalanced by the

specificity of nouns. A higher specificity of 'quality' adjectives would express a certain degree of subjectivity, which audio description generally seeks to avoid. The issue of (intended or non-intended) vagueness in audio description language, nevertheless, deserves more attention than we could pay to in this research work, so it constitutes a potential field of investigation through corpus-based analysis.

In addition, this research work has focused specifically on adjectives and has addressed nouns only for their being elements of the adjectival collocational range. However, the same type of analysis could be applied to other grammatical categories and we expect this application to give important results that would contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms regulating the linguistic selection in audio description. A corpus-based analysis of the syntax has not been approached in this research work, but we are confident it will be soon applied for a more extensive investigation on the length of sentences and their inner structure, that would have much to say about the cognitive process of understanding films.

The study of figurative language in audio description proposed in this research work is only at the beginning. We have demonstrated that the use of similes is more recurrent in children and animated movies, and that they are generally built in such a way as to recall tactile or hearing impressions, or to stimulate the imagination. Possible future research pathways could include the investigation of corpus-based metaphors in audio description aimed at

adult spectators as well as the use of figurative language in different audio description applications, firstly and foremost the audio description of art exhibitions and museums.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that audio described films are monosemiotic but are always based on a polysemiotic product and that for people without sight impairment, they are even a hyper-semiotic entity. In this regard, not only audio description is dramatically important for indexing and retrieving information about a multimedia content, but could easily make the object of multimodal transcriptions. In this regard, we hope to have a future opportunity to work further in this field and to be able to contribute to building a multimodal corpus of audio described films. The scope of applications of this project could be extremely wide, but would include firstly and foremost academic developments. The availability of a multimodal corpus, indeed, would allow associating tagged visual clues with corresponding verbal strings, and this would help audio describers in their job. In addition, this would contribute to the research in audio description translation, because it would make scripts available to all researchers on an international scale.

Bibliography[254]

Abercrombie, Nicholas 1996. *Television and Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Adams, Jon-K. 1996. *Narrative Explanation: A Pragmatic Theory of Discourse*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Adler, Ronald / Rodman, George 1985. *Understanding Human Communication (Second edition)*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Al-Joulan, Nayef-A. 2010. Ekphrasis revisited: the Mental Underpinnings of Literary Pictorialism. *Studies in Literature and Language* 1/7, 39-54.

Allen, Robert 1989. Bursting bubbles: "Soap opera" audiences and the limits of genre. In Seiter, Ellen / Borchers, Hans / Kreutzner, Gabriele / Warth Eva-Maria (eds) *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*. London: Routledge, 44-55.

Anderson, Joseph / Richie, Donald 1982. *The Japanese Film. Art and Industry*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Angelelli, Claudia / Jacobson, Holly (eds) 2009. *Testing and Assessment in Translation and Interpreting Studies. Amsterdam/Philadelphia*: John Benjamins.

[254] Books and articles available on line: last accessed 19/02/2011.

Antifona, Cinzia 2002. *L'audiodescrizione. Uno strumento per l'integrazione sociale del non vedente*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Rome La Sapienza.

Arma, Saveria (forthcoming). Why can't you wear black shoes like the other mothers? Preliminary investigation on the Italian Language of Audiodescription. In Perego, Elisa (ed.) *Emerging topics in translation: Audiodescription*. Trieste: EUT.

Arma, Saveria 2007. *La resocontazione parlamentare tra stenotipia e riconoscimento del parlato*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. Bologna: SSLMIT.

Arnheim, Rudolf 1957. *Film as an Art.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación (AENOR) 2005. *Audiodescripción para personas con discapacidad visual. Requisitos para la audiodescripción y la elaboración de audioguías*, UNE 153020.

Audetel 1992. The European AUDETEL Newsletter: bringing television to life for visually impaired audiences. *Audetel Newsletter* 1/1992, 1-5.

Audio Description Coalition 2009. *Audio Description Standards 2009*. <http://www.audiodescriptioncoalition.org/adc_standards_090615.pdf>

Audio Description Project ADP 2009. *Guidelines for Audio Description*. <http://www.acb.org/adp/ad.html>

Austin, John L. 1962. *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Baaring, Inge 2006. Respeaking-based online subtitling in Denmark. In Eugeni, Carlo / Mack, Gabi (eds) *Proceedings of the first international seminar on real-time intralingual subtitling*. InTRAlinea special issue: Respeaking. <www.intralinea.it>

Bache, Carl / Davidsen-Nielsen, Niels 1997. *Mastering English: an advanced grammar for non-native and native speakers*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Bachman, Lyle 1990. *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baillargeon, Renee / DeVos, Julie 1991. Object permanence in young infants: Further evidence. *Child Development* 62, 1227-1246.

Baker, Mona / Saldanha, Gabriela 2009. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies.* London: Routledge.

Baker, Mona 1992. *In Other Words*. New York: Routledge.

Ballester Casado, Anna (forthcoming). La audiodescripcion: apuntes sobre el estado de la cuestisn y las perspectivas de investigaciòn. *Cadernos de Traducao*.

Bamford, Anne. *The Visual Literacy White Paper*. <http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf>

Barber, Charles L. 1962. Some Measurable Characteristics of Modern Scientific Prose. *Contributions to English Syntax and Philology*. *Gothenburg Studies in English* 14, 21-43.

Barley, Steven D. 1971. *A new Look at the loom of Visual Literacy*. New York: Eastman Kodak Company.

Barthes, Roland 1964. *Eléments de sémiologie*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil.

Barthes, Roland 1970. L'ancienne rhétorique: aide mémoire. *Communications* 16, 172-229.

Barthes, Roland 1975. *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*. Paris: Seuil.

Bazin, André 1958. *Qu'est ce que le cinema?* Paris : Editions du Cerf.

Bazzanella, Carla 1994. *Le facce del parlare. Un approccio pragmatico all'italiano parlato*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia.

Beekman, John / Callow, John 1974. *Translating the Word of God*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan.

Benecke, Bernd / Dosch, Elmar 2004. *Wenn aus Bildern Worte werden*. Munich: Bayerischer Rundfunk.

Benecke, Bernd 2007. Audio Description: Phenomena of Information Sequencing. *Mutra 2007 – LSP Scenarios: Conference Proceedings*, 1-13. http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2007_Proceedings/2007_Benecke_Bernd.pdf

Benjamin, Walter 1936. Das Kunstwerk in Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierarbeit. *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5.

Berruto, Gaetano 1980. *La variabilità sociale della lingua.* Torino: Loescher.

Berruto, Gaetano 1993. Varietà diamesiche, diastratiche, di afasiche. In Sobrero, Antonio (ed.) *Introduzione all'italiano contemporaneo II. La variazione e gli usi*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.

Bettetini, Gianfranco 1975. *Produzione del senso e messa in scena*. Milano: Bompiani.

Bettetini, Gianfranco 1985. *L'occhio in vendita*. Venezia: Marsilio.

Bettetini, Gianfranco 2009. *Il timpano dell'occhio*. Milano: Bompiani.

Biber, Douglas / Johannson, Stig / Leech, Geoffrey / Conrad, Susan / Finegan, Edawrd 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Language*. London: Pearson Longman.

Biber, Douglas / Conrad, Susan / Reppen, Randi 1998. *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, Douglas 1988. *Variation across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bierwisch, Manfred 1989. The Semantics of Gradation. In Bierwisch, Manfred / Lang, Ewals (eds) *Dimensional Adjectives: Grammatical Structure and Conceptual Interpretation*. Berlin, New York: Springer Verlag, 71-262.

Bollettieri Bosinelli, Rosa M. 2002. Tradurre il cinema. In Zacchi, Romana / Morini, Massimiliano (eds) *Manuale di traduzioni dall'inglese*. Milano: Paravia - Bruno Mondadori, 76-88.

Bollinger, Dwight 1975. *Aspects of Language*. Second edition. New York: Harcourt Brace Yovanovich.

Bonheim, Helmut 1982. *The Narrative Modes. Techniques of the Short Story.* Brewer: Cambridge.

Bordwell, David 1989. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourne, Julian / Jiménez Hurtado, Catalina 2007. From the visual to the verbal in two languages: a contrastive analysis of the audio description of The Hours in English and Spanish. In Díaz Cintas, Jorge / Orero, Pilar / Remael, Aline (eds) *Media for All. Accessibility in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 175-188.

Brainard, Louis 1976. Piaget and Visual Literacy. *AECT Research and Theory Newsletter* 5/3, 17-18.

Braun, Sabine / Orero, Pilar 2010. Audio Description with Audio Subtitling – an emergent modality of audiovisual localisation. *Perspectives Studies In Translatology* 18/3, 173-188.

Braun, Sabine 2007. Audio Description from a discourse perspective: a socially relevant framework for research and training. In Neves, Joselia / Remael, Aline (eds) *Linguistica Antverpiensia 6. Audiovisual*

Translation: A Tool for Social Integration, 357-369. <http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/1290/>

Braun, Sabine 2008. Audio Description research: state of the art and beyond. *Translation Studies in the New Millennium* 6/2008, 14-30.

Brocket, Oscar G. / Ball, Robert J. 2004. *The essential theatre*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Brueggeman, Brenda 1999. *Lend me your ear: rhetorical construction of deafness*. Washington: Gallaudet University Press.

Buckingham, David 1993. *Children Talking Television: The Making of Television Literacy*. London: Falmer Press, 135-155.

Byrne, John 2006. The Multidimensional Challenges of Technical Translation. Paper presented at *Mutra 2007 – LSP Scenarios: Conference Proceedings* and currently in press for publication as Gerzymisch-Arbogast, Heidrun / Budin, Gerhard / Carroll, Mary (eds) *The Multidimensional Challenges of Technical Translation. MuTra: Aspects of Multidimensional Translation.*

Cabeza, Cristobal / Matamala, Anna 2008. La audiodescripciòn de opera: una nueva propuesta. Article prepared for the project *La SPS y la AD: primeras aproximaciones científicas y su aplicación (HUM2006-03653FILO)*.

<http://gent.uab.cat/cristobalcabeza/sites/gent.uab.cat.cristobalcabeza/files/CabezaMatamalaADdeOpera.pdf>

Cabré, Maria Teresa 1998. *Terminology: Theory, methods and applications*. Philadelphia. PA: John Benjamins.

Cabré, Maria Teresa. 2000. Elements for a theory of terminology: Towards an alternative paradigm. *Terminology* 6/ 1, 35-57.

Caldin, Roberta 2006. Con occhi nuovi, disabilità visiva e identità tra rischi e certezze. In Caldin, Roberta (ed.) *Percorsi educativi nella disabilità visiva. Identità, famiglia e integrazione scolastica e sociale*. Lavis: Erickson.

Cano, Cristina / Cremonini, Giorgio 1990. *Cinema e musica. Il racconto per sovrapposizioni*. Bologna: Thema.

Casabianca, Lucia 2010. *L'audiodescrizione in Italia.* Unpublished MA dissertation. Bologna: University of Bologna.

Casetti, Francesco / di Chio, Federico 2007. *Analisi del Film*. Milano: Bompiani.

Chafe, Wallace L. 1982. Integration and involvement in speaking, writing and oral literature. In Tannen, Deborah (ed.) *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse.* Norwood: NJ, 35-53.

Chandler, Daniel 1997. Children's understanding of what is "real" on television: a review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Media* 23/1, 65-80.

Charoenchari, Chayanin 2007. *Genre Analysis of Newgroup Movie Reviews on www.imdb.com.* Master of Art Thesis in English for Specific Purposes, Kasetsart University.

Chatman, Seymour B. 1990. *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative on Fiction and Films.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Chaume, Frederik 2004. Film Studies and Translation Studies: Two Disciplines at Stake in Audiovisual Translation. *Meta* 49/ 1, 12-24.

Cheeke, Stephen 2008. *Writing for the Art. The Aesthetic of Ekphrasis*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Chion, Michel 1983. *Guide des Objets Sonores.* Paris : INA-Buchet-Chastel.

Chion, Michel 1985. *Le Son au cinéma*. Paris: Editions de l'Etoile.

Chion, Michel 2009. *L'audiovisione. Suono e immagine nel cinema*. Torino: Lindau.

Colina, Sonia 2003. *Translation teaching: from Research to the Classroom. A Handbook for Teachers*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Cortelazzo, Michele 1985. Dal parlato al (tra)scritto: i resoconti stenografici dei discorsi parlamentari. In Holtus, Günter / Radtke, Edgar (eds) *Gesprochenes Italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Tubingen: Narr, 87-118.

Cortelazzo, Michele 1990. *Lingue speciali. La dimensione verticale*. Padova: Unipress.

Costa, Antonio 1985. *Saper vedere il cinema.* Milano: Bompiani.

Cresswell, Max 1975. The Semantics of Degree. In Partee, Barbara (ed.) *Montague Grammar*. New York: Academic Press, 261-292.

Dadone, Valter / Gargiulo, Maria L. 2009. *Crescere Toccando. Aiutare il bambino con deficit visivo attraverso il gioco sonoro. Uno strumento per educatori e terapisti.* Milano: Franco Angeli.

Daniels, Marylin 2001. *Dancing with words: signing for hearing children's literacy.* Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

Darken, Rudolph P. / Peterson, Barry 2002. Spatial orientation, wayfinding, and representation. In Stanney, Kay M. (ed.*) Handbook of virtual environments: Design, implementation, and applications*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. Publishers, 493-518.

Dell'Osbel, Gianmario / Veglia, Fabio 2001. Handicap e attaccamento. *Tiflologia per l'Integrazione* 11/4.

Diaz Cintas, Jorge 2007. Por una preparación de calidad en accesibilidad audiovisual. *TRANS: Revista de Traductología* 11, 45-59.

Doloughan, Fiona / Rogers, Margaret 2005. To see things and texts: audiovisual translation, audiodescription and multimodality. Paper delivered at *Multimodal Texts: Engageing Sign Systems Conference*, University of Portsmouth, UK.

Duerr Hans. P. / Raddatz Gunter / Eichner Martin 2008. Diagnostic value of nodule palpation in onchocerciasis. *Trans Roy Soc Trop Med Hyg* 102, 148-54.

Dusi, Nicola 2003. *Il cinema come traduzione. Da un medium all'altro: letteratura, cinema, pittura*. Torino: Utet.

Eco, Umberto 2003. *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione.* Milano: Bompiani.

Eichner, Martin / Renz, Alfons 1990. Differential length of Onchocerca volvulusinfective larvae from the Cameroon rain forest and savanna. *Tropical Medicine and Parasitology* 41, 29-32.

Elkins, John (ed.) 2008. *Visual Literacy*. London: Routledge.

Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Ethical Strategies Ltd. 2003. *The Costs of Blindness. An Analysis of the Costs of the Visual Impairment and Blindness in the United Kingdom*. < http://www.healthyeyes.org.uk/index.php?id=25>

Even-Zohar, Itamar 1990. The Textemic Status of Signs in Translation. *Poetics Today* 11/1, 247-251.

Fauconnier, Gilles / Turner, Mark 2002. *The Way we Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.

Feldman, Edmund 1976. Visual Literacy. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 10/3-4, 195-200.

Ferrell, Kay A. / Siller, Mary A. *Background of the Description Key*. <http://www.descriptionkey.org/background.html>

Ferris, Connor 1993. *The Meaning of Syntax. A Study in the Adjectives of English*. New York: Longman Publishing.

Fields, Douglas 2010. *Why Can Some Blind People Process Speech far Faster Than Sighted Persons?* <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=why-can-some-blind-people-process&WT.mc_id=SA_CAT_MB_20101215>

Flory, Joyce 1978. Visual Literacy: a vital skill in the process of rhetorical criticism. Paper presented at the *Meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association.* Atlanta, GA.

Fowler, Alastair 1989. Genre. In Barnouw, Erik (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Communications 2nd vol*. New York: Oxford University Press, 215-7.

Fransecky Roger B. / Debes, James 1972. *Visual Literacy: a way to learn – a way to teach.* Washington DC: Association for Educational Communications and Technologies.

Freedman, Aviva / Medway, Peter (eds) 1994. *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Fries, Charles Carpenter 1952. *The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Fryer, Louise 2010. Being There: Live Versus Recorded Audio Description – What is the difference? Interview at *Media for All Conference 2010*. <http://www.languages-media.com/press_interviews_2010_fryer.php>

Galane, Sello (ed.) 2008. *Beyond Memory. Recording the History, the Moments and Memories of South African Music*. *From the Diary of Max Mojapelo*. South Africa: African Minds.

Galati, Dario (ed.) 1992. *Vedere con la mente*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Gambier, Yves 2004. La traduction audiovisuelle: un genre en expansion. *Meta* 49/1, 1-11.

Gargiulo, Maria Luisa 2005. *Il bambino con deficit visivo*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Genette, Gérard 1982. Frontiers of Narrative. In Genette, Gérard. *Figures of Literary Discourse*. New York: Columbia UP, 127-44.

Genette, Gérard 1988. *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gerber, Elaine 2007. Seeing isn't believing: Blindness, race and cultural literacy. *Sense and Society* 2/1, 27–40.

Givón, Talmy 1984. *Syntax: A functional-typological Introduction, Vol. 1*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Goffman, Erving 1981. *Forms of talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gottlieb, Henrik 2005. Multidimensional Translation: Semantics turned Semiotics. In *MuTra 2005 Conference Proceedings.* < http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2005_Proceedings/2005_proceedings.html>

Greening, Joan 2006. Development of audio description in the UK. In *Sociedad, integracion y television en Espana*. Madrid: Laberinto, 345-349.

Grice, Paul 1975. Logic and conversation. In Cole, Peter / Morgan, Jerry (eds) *Syntax and Semantics, 3: Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press, 41-58.

Gutt, Ernst-August 2000. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Manchester & Boston: St. Jerome Publishing.

Halliday, Michael A. K. / Hasan, Ruqaiya 1985. *Language, context, and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Halliday, Michael A. K / McIntosh, Angus / Strevens, Peter 1964. *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. *Longmans Linguistic Library*. London: Longmans.

Halliday, Michael A. K. 1978. *Language as Social Semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning.* London: Edward Arnold.

Harpole, Charles / Hanhardt, John 1973. Linguistics, Structuralism and Semiology Approaches to the Cinema with a Biblipography. *Film Comment* 9/3, 52-59.

Hayward, Susan 1996. *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies*. London: Routledge.

Heiss, Cristine 1996. Il testo in un contesto multimediale. In Heiss, Cristine / Bollettieri Bosinelli, Rosa M (eds) *Traduzione multimediale per il cinema, la televisione e la scena*. Bologna: Clueb, 13-26.

Hellan, Lars 1981. *Towards and Integrated Analysis of Comparatives*. Tübingen: Narr.

Hernàndez-Bartolomé, Ana I. / Mendiluce Cabrera, Gustavo 2004. Audesc: Translating Images into Words for Spanish Visually Impaired People. *Meta* 49/2, 264-277.

Hernàndez- Bartolomé, Ana I. / Mendiluce Cabrera, Gustavo 2009. How can images be translated? Audio description, a challenging audiovisual and social gap filler. *Hermeneus* 11, 161-186.

Hoffher, Patricia C. / Matushansky, Ora (eds) 2010. *Adjectives: formal analyses in syntax and semantics*. Amsterdam/Philadephia: John Benjamins BV.

Hoffman, Lothar 1984. Seven Roads to LSP. *Fachsprache: International journal of LSP* 6/1-2, 28-38.

Hofmann, Gert 1995. *The film explainer*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Holt, Michele / Jordan, James 2008. *The school choral program: philosophy, planning organizing and teaching*. University of Michigan: GIA Publications.

Holz-Mänttäri, Justa 1984. *Translatorisches Handeln : Theorie und Methode*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.

Horberry, Roger 2010. *Sounds Good on Paper. How to Bring Business Language to Life.* London: A & C Black Publishers.

Hortin, John 1994. *Theoretical Foundations of Visual Learning*. In Moore, David / Dwyer, Francis (eds) *Visual Literacy: A Spectrum of Visual Learning*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Educational Technology Publications, 5-29.

Hunston, Susan 2011. *Corpus approaches to evaluation: phraseology and evaluative language*. New York: Routledge.

Hyks, Veronika 2005. Audio Description and Translation. Two related but different skills. *Translating Today* 4, 6-8.

Inigo Ros, M. 2004. *Cultural Terms in King Alfred's translation of the "Consolatio Philisophiae"*. Valencia: Universitat de Valencia.

ITC 2000. *Standard Guidance for Audiodescription*. <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/itc/itc_publications/codes_guidance/audio_description/index.asp.html>

Jacobson William H. 1993. *The art and science of teaching orientation and mobility to persons with visual impairments*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Jakobson, Roman 1966. *Saggi di linguistica generale*. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Jewitt, Carey 2006. *Technology, Literacy and Learning: a multimodal approach.* USA/Canada: Routledge.

Jiménez Hurtado, Catalina 2005. *Apuntes didacticòs del curso « Perspectivas de estudio en la Traducciòn Audiovisual » en el Doctorado de Traducciòn y Interpretaciòn*. Universidad de Granada.

Jiménez Hurtado, Catalina 2007. De imágenes a palabras: la audiodescripción como una nueva modalidad de traducción y de representación del conocimiento. In Wotjak, Gerd (ed.) *Quo vadis Translatologie?* Leipzig: Frank und Timme, 143-160.

Jordan, James / O'Regan, Tarik 2008. *Evoking sound - the choral rehearsal: techniques and procedures. A comprehensive rehearsal technique coursebook.* Chicago: GIA Publications.

Jost, François 1987. *L'oeil camera. Entre film et roman.* Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

Kalat, James W. 2008. *Biological Psychology* 10th Edition. Belmont CA: Wadswort CENGAGE Learning.

Kennedy, Christopher 1999. *Projecting the Adjective. The Syntax and Semantics of Gradability and Comparison*. New York: Garland.

Kerr, Hugh 1991. *The Simpe Gospel*. *Reflections of Christian Faith.* Louisville/Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press.

Klein, Ewan 1980. A semantics for positive and comparative adjectives. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 4: 1-45.

Knight, Deborah 1994. Making sense of genre. *Film and Philosophy* 2. <http://www.hanover.edu/philos/film/vol_02/knight.htm>

Kress, Günter 1988. *Communication and Culture: An Introduction*. Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press.

Kress, Günter R. / van Leuwen, Theo 1996. *The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

Kruger, Jean L. 2010a. Audio narration: re-narrativising films. *Perspectives* 18/3, 231- 249.

Kruger, Jean L. 2010b. *Making meaning in AVT: eye tracking and viewer construction of narrative*. Unpublished article.

Kussmaul, Paul 2004. Entwicklung miterlebt. In Pöckl, Wolfgang (ed.) *Ubersetzungswissenschaft Dolmetschwissenschaft. Wege in eine neue Disziplin*. Wien: Praesens, 221-226.

Lahav, Orly / Mioduser, David 2004. Construction of cognitive maps of unknown spaces using a multi-sensory virtual environment for people who are blind. *Computers in Human Behavior* 24/3. <http://muse.tau.ac.il/publications/93.pdf>

Lakoff, George / Johnson Mark 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lakritz, Lames / Salway, Andrew 2006. *The Semi-Automatic Generation of Audio Description from Screenplays*. *Report CS-06-05*. Dept. of Computing: Technical University of Surrey.

Lambert, Josè / Delabastita, Dirk 1996. La traduction de textes audiovisuels: modes et enjeu culturel. In Gambier, Yves (ed.) *Les transferts linguistiques dans les médias audiovisuals*. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 33-58.

Langer, Jonas / Killen, Melanie (eds) 1998. *Piaget, evolution and development*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Psychology Press.

Leech, Geoffrey 1992. Corpus Linguistics and Theories of Linguistic Performance. In Svartvik, Jan (ed.) *Directions in Corpus Linguistics: Proceedings of Nobel Symposium* 82, 79–97.

Lehmann, Christian 1988. Towards a typology of clause linkage. In Haiman, John / Thompson, Sandra. *Clause combining in grammar and discourse*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 181-225.

López Vera, Juan Francisco 2006. Translating Audio description Scripts: The Way Forward? Paper presented at *MuTra 2006 – Audiovisual Translation Scenario.*

Lukács, Georg 1970. Narrate or Describe? In Kahn, Arthur (ed.) *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*. London: Merlin Press, 110-48.

Mandelker, Amy 1991. A painted Lady: ekphrasis in Anna Karenina. *Comparative Literature* 43/1, 1-19.

Marcato, Gianna 1985. Italiano parlato, comunicazione di base e oralità. In Holtus, Günter / Radtke, Edgar (eds) *Gesprochenes Italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Tubingen: Narr, 24-41.

Martínez-Sierra, Juan J. 2005. La relevancia como herramienta para el análisis de la traducción del humor audiovisual: su aplicación al caso de Los Simpson. *Interlingüística* 15/2, 927-936.

Matamala, Anna / Rami, Naila 2009. Analisis comparativo de la audiodescripcion espanola y alemana de "Good-bye, Lenin". *Hermeneus* 11, 249-266.

Matamala, Anna 2005. Live Audio Description in Catalonia. *Translating Today* 4, 9-11.

Matamala, Anna 2006. La accessibilidad en los medios: aspectos linguisticos y retos de formaciòn. In Pérez-Amat, Ricardo / Pérez-Ugena, Alvaro (eds) *Sociedad, integración y televisión en España*, Madrid: Laberinto, 293-306.

Matamala, Anna 2007. Audiodescription in Catalonia. *Translation Watch Quarterly* 3/2, 37-48

Mazzara, Federica. 2007. Il dibattito anglo-americano del Novecento sull'ekphrasis. In *Intermedialità ed Ekphrasis nel Prerffaellitismo: Il caso Rossetti*. Naples, Italy: University of Naples, 1–70. <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/4712/>

Mazzeo, Mario 1988. *Il bambino cieco. Introduzione allo sviluppo cognitivo*. Roma: Anica.

Metz, Christian 1968. *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*. Paris: Klinksieck.

Metz, Christian 1972. *Essais sur la signification au cinéma II*. Paris : Klinksieck.

Miles, Barbara 2003. *Overview on deaf-blindness*. Monmouth, OR: DB-LINK.

Mitchell William J.T. 2008. Visual Literacy or Literary Visualcy? In Elkins, James (ed.) 2008. *Visual Literacy*. London: Routledge.

Moore, David M. / Dwyer, Francis (eds) 1994. *Visual Literacy*. Englewood Cliffs: Educational Technology Publications.

Mulder, Arjen 2004. *Understanding Media Theory: Language, Image, Sound, Behavior*. Rotterdam: V2 Publishing/Nai Publishers.

Munday, Jeremy 2008. *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications.* Usa and Canada: Routledge.

Navarrete, Javier 1999. La atención al espectador ciego: la audiodescripción aplicada al teatro. *ADE Teatro: Revista de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España* 76, 105-107.

Neale, Stephen 1980. Genre. In Bennett, Tony / Boyd-Bowman, Susan / Mercer, Colin / Woollacott, Janet (eds) *Popular Television and Film*. London: British Film Institute/Open University Press.

Nencioni, Giovanni 1976. Parlato-parlato, parlato-scritto, parlato recitato. *Strumenti critici* 29. *Di scritto e di parlato*, 1-56.

Neves, Joselia 2005. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. London: University of Surrey Roehampton.

Nord, Christiane 1997. *Translation as a Purposeful Activity*. Manchester: St Jerome.

Ochs, Elinor 1979. Transcription as theory. In: Ochs, Elinor / Schieffelin, Bambi (eds) *Developmental pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press, 43-72.

Official Journal of the European Union 2007. *Directive 2007/65/EC*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:332:0027:0045:EN:PDF>

Official Journal of the European Union 2008. *Consolidated Version of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union*.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0047:0199:EN:PDF>

Ong, Walter 1986. *Oralità e scrittura. Le tecnologie della parola.* Bologna: Il Mulino.

Oostdijk, Nelleke 2008. Improving the lexical coverage of English compound Adjectives. In Verberne, Susan / van Halteren, Hans / Coppen, Peter-Arno (eds) *Proceedings of the 18th Meeting of Computational Linguistics in the Netherlands*, 117–130.

Orero, Pilar / Maria Pereira, Ana M. / Utray, Francisco 2007. Visión histórica de la accesibilidad en los medios en España. *TRANS* 11, 31-44.

Orero, Pilar / Vercauteren, Gert (forthcoming). The Audiodescription of Facial Expressions: Knick-Knack. *Linguistica Antverpiensa 7.*

Orero, Pilar / Wharton, Steve 2007. The Audio Description of a Spanish Phenomenon: Torrente. *JosTrans* 7, 164-178.

Orero, Pilar 2005. Audio Description: Professional Recognition, Practice and Standards in Spain. *Translation Watch Quaterly* 1, 7-18.

Orero, Pilar 2007. Audiosubtitling: a possible solution for opera accessibility in Catalonia. In Franco, Eliana / Santiago Araùjo, Vera (eds) *TradTerm* 13, 135-149.

Palomo, Alicia 2008. Audio Description as a Language Development and Language Learning for Blind and Visually Impaired Children. In Hyde Parker, Rebecca / Guadarrama Garcìa, Karla (eds) *Thinking Translation: Perspectives from Within and Without. Conference Proceedings. Third UEA Postgraduate Translation Symposium*. University of East Anglia: Brown Walker Press.

Parisi, Domenico / Castelfranchi, Cristiano 1979. Scritto e parlato. In Parisi, Domenico (ed.) *Per una educazione linguistica razionale*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 319-346.

Partington, Alan 1998. *Patterns and meanings: using corpora for English language research and teaching*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Partington, Alan 2006. *The linguistics of laughter: a corpus-assisted study of laughter-talk.* New York: Routledge.

Passini, Romedi / Proulx, Guyltne 1988. Wayfinding without vision: an experiment with congenitally totally blind people. *Environment and Behavior* 20/2, 227-252.

Pavesi, Maria 1994. Osservazioni sulla (socio)linguistica del doppiaggio. In Baccolini Roberta / Bollettieri Bosinelli, Rosa Maria / Gavioli, Laura (eds) *Il doppiaggio. Trasposizioni linguistiche e culturali.* Bologna: Clueb.

Peli, Eliezer / Fine, Elisabeth. M. / Labianca, Angela T. 1996. Evaluating visual information provided by audio description. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* 90, 378–385.

Peralta, Kora / Sotomayor, Ana / Lemus, Miguel. *Developing Audio Description Competences as part of a Translation Education Program*. <http://idiomas.tij.uabc.mx/plurilingua/volumen5eng/developing.pdf>

Pérez-Ugena y Coromina, Alvaro / Utray Delgado, Francisco (eds) 2007. *TV Digital e integración ¿TV para todos?* Madrid: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

Pierce, Charles S. 1958. *Values in a Universe of Chance*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Piety, Philip J. 2003. *Audio Description. A Visual Assistive Discourse.* Unpublished thesis. Washington DC: Georgetown University.

Piety, Philip J. 2004. The Language System of Audio Description: An investigation as a Discursive Process. *The Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* 98/8, 453-469.

Pini, Licia 2005. *L'audio-descrizione per disabili visivi*. Unpublished MA dissertation. Bologna: University of Bologna.

Pogrund, Rona / Strauss, Felice 1992. Approaches to Increasing Assertive Behaviour and Communication Skills in Blind and Visually Impaired Persons. In Sachs, Sharon / Kekelis, Linda (eds) *The development of*

social skills by blind and visually impaired students. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Pujol, Joaquim / Orero, Pilar 2007. Audiodescription Percursors: Ekphrasis and Narrators. *Translation Watch Quarterly* 3/2, 49-60.

Pujol, Joaquim 2007. Audio description or Audio narration? That is the Question. Paper delivered at *MuTra Conference 2007* in Vienna <http://www.euroconferences.info/2007_abstracts.php>

Rasheed, Zeeshan / Shah, Mubarak 2002. Movie Genre Classification By Exploiting Audio-Visual Features Of Previews. *Proceedings of the 5th Asian Conference on Computer Vision* 1. Asian Federation of Computer Vision Societies, 0-3.

Reiss, Katharina / Vermeer, Hans 1984. *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Reiss, Katharina 1971. *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik.* München: Hueber.

Revesz, Géza 1950. *Psychology and art of the blind*. London: Longmans Green.

Reynell, Josephine 1977. *Reynell Developmental Language Scales*. Windsor, England: National Foundation for Educational Research.

RNIB 2009. *Audio Description for Children Guidelines.* <http://www.rnib.org.uk/Search/Pages/results.aspx?k=children%20guidelines&s=All%20Sites>

RNIB 2010. *Comparative Study on International AD Guidelines.* <http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/solutionsforbusiness/tvradiofilm/pages/international_ad_guidelines.aspx>

Rochat, Philippe 1989. Object manipulation and exploration in 2-to-5-month-old infants. *Developmental Psychology* 25/6, 871-884.

Ronzitti, Giuseppina (ed.) 2011. *Vagueness: A Guide*. London, New York: Springer.

Sabatini, Francesco 1985. L'italiano dell'uso medio: una realtà tra le varietà linguistiche italiane. In Holtus, Günter / Radtke, Edgar (eds) *Gesprochenes Italienisch in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Tübingen: Narr, 154-184.

Sachs, Sharon / Kekelis, Linda (eds) 1992. *The development of social skills by blind and visually impaired students*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Sager Eidt, Laura 2008. *Writing and filming the painting: ekphrasis in literature and film.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Sager, Juan / Dungworth, David / McDonald Peter F. 1980. *English Special Languages: principles and practice in science and technology*. Wiesbaden: Aufl edition.

Salway, Andrew / Palmer, Alan (forthcoming). Describing Actions and Thoughts. To appear in a volume for the proceedings of the Conference

Audio Description for Visually Impaired People: towards an interdisciplinary research agenda. University of Surrey, June 2007.

Salway, Andrew / Vassiliou, Andrew / Ahmad, Khurshid 2005. What happens in films? Paper presented at *IEEE Conference on Multimedia and Expo 2005*. <http://www.bbrel.co.uk/pdfs/The%20Language%20of%20Audio%20Description.pdf>

Salway, Andrew 2007. A Corpus-based Analysis of Audio Description. In Díaz Cintas, Jorge / Orero, Pilar / Remael, Aline (eds) *Media for All: Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description and Sign Language*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 151-174.

Sandahl, Carrie 1999. Ahhh freak out! Metaphors of disability and femaleness in performance. *Theatre Topics* 9/1, 11–30.

Sarkowszka, Agnieszka 2009. The audiovisual landscape in Poland at the dawn of the 21st century. In Goldstein, Angelika / Golubovic, Biljana (eds) *Foreign Language Movies – Dubbing vs. Subtitling.* Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 185-201.

Schaeffer, Pierre 1966. *Traité des objets musicaux*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Schäffner, Christina 1998. Skopos Theory. In Baker, Mona / Malmkjær, Kirsten (eds) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge, 235-238.

Schmeidler, Emilie / Kirchner, Corinne 2001. Adding audio description: Does it make a difference? *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* 95, 198–212.

Schröder, Hartmut 1991. Linguistic and Text-theorical Research on Languages for Special Purposes. A thematic and bibliographical guide. In Schröder, Hartmut (ed.) *Subject-oriented Texts. Languages for Special Purposes and Text Theory*. Berlín-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1-48.

Selby, Stuart A. 1978. *The study of film as an art form in American secondary schools.* University of Windsor, Canada: Arno Press Inc.

Selden, Raman / Widdowson, Peter / Brooker, Peter 2005. *A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory* (5th edition). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Serianni, Luca 1988. *Grammatica italiana. Italiano comune e lingua letteraria*. Torino: UTET.

Seuren, Pieter A. M. 1978. The structure and selection of positive and negative gradable adjectives. In Farkas, Donka / Jacobsen, Wesley / Todris, Karol (eds) *Papers from the Parasession on the Lexicon. Chicago Linguistics Society.* Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society, 336-346.

Sinclair, John 1991. *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Kevin G. 2000. *Bible translation and relevance theory: the translation of Titus.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Stellenbosch.

Smith, Kevin G. 2002. *Translation as secondary communication. The relevance theory perspective of Ernst-August Gutt*. <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/viewFile/5456/29594>

Snell-Hornby, Mary 2006. *The Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins BV.

Snyder, Joel 2006. Audio Description: an aid to Literacy. Paper delivered at *Languages and the Media 2006* in Berlin. <http://www.audiodescribe.com/about/articles/ad_aid_to_literacy.doc>

Snyder, Joel 2008. Audio description: the visual made verbal. In Díaz Cintas, Jorge (ed.) *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 191-198.

Snyder, Joel. *Fundamentals of Audio Description*. <http://www.audiodescribe.com/about/articles/fundamentals_of_ad.pdf >

Sornicola, Rosanna 1981. *Sul parlato*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Sperber, Dan / Wilson, Deirdre 1995. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition.* Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell.

Stam, Robert 2000. *Film Theory. An Introduction*. Ofxord: Blackwell.

Stern, Richard / Robinson, Rhonda 1994. Perception and its Role in Communication and Learning. In Moore, David M. / Dwyer, Francis (eds) *Visual Literacy*. Englewood Cliffs: Educational Technology Publications.

Stilwell, Janet M. / Cermak, Sharon 1995. Perceptual functions of the hand. In Henderson, Anne / Pehoski, Charlane (eds) *The development of hand skills in children*. Mosby: New York, 55-80.

Summer, Della 1992. *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*. Harlow: Pearson.

Swales, John M. 1990. *Genre Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Talmy, Leonard 1988. The relation of grammar to cognition. In Rudzka / Ostyn (eds) *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam, 165-205.

Tanenbaum, Joshua 2008. *Issue in Decision Tree Classification of Film Genre using Plot Features*. <http://www.thegeekmovement.com/Tanenbaum_GenreTree_Paper.pdf >

Tannen, Deborah (ed.) 1982. *Spoken and written language: Exploring orality and literacy.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Tanton, Nick E. / Ware, Trevor / Armstrong, Mike 2000. *Access services for digital television: Matching the means to the requirement for audio*

description and signing. <downloads.bbc.co.uk/rd/papers/pdffiles/ibc00net.pdf>

Tomatis, Alfred 2000. *L'orecchio e la voce*. Milano: Baldini & Castoldi.

Trosborg, Anna 1997. *Rhetorical Strategies in Legal Language.* Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Turbayne, Colin Murray 1970. *The myth of metaphor.* New Haven CT: Yale University Press.

Turner, James 1998. Some Characteristics of Audio Description and the Corresponding Moving Image. In *Proceedings of 61st ASIS Annual Meeting* 35, 108-117. Medford, NJ: Information Today.

Turner, James 2007. *Using audio description text for shot-by-shot indexing of films.* <http://www.mapageweb.umontreal.ca/turner/english/texts/TurnerJTS2007.pdf>

Udo, John P. / Fels, Deborah I. 2009. Suit the Action to the Word, the Word to the Action: an Unconventional Approach to Describing Shakespeare's Hamlet. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 178-183.

UK Film Council *Statistical Yearbook* <http://sy10.ukfilmcouncil.ry.com/pdf/Chapter4-GenreAndClass.pdf>

van der Heijden, Mereijn 2007. *Making films and television accessible to the blind and visually impaired. Research into the function of sound in*

audio description. Unpublished PhD thesis. Utrecht: Utrecht School of Arts.

Van Rooij, Robert 2011. Vagueness and Linguistics. In Ronzitti, Giuseppina (ed.) 2011. *Vagueness: A Guide*. London, New York: Springer.

Vasconcelos, Nuno / Lippman, Andrew 1997. Towards Semantically Meaningful Feature Spaces for the Characterization of Video Content. *ICIP* 1: 25-28.

Vassiliou, Andrew 2006. *Analysing Film Content: A Text-Based Approach*. PhD Dissertation. University of Surrey: UNIS.

Vercauteren, Gert 2006. Practical guidelines for audio description. Paper delivered at *MuTra Conference 2006* in Copenhagen. <http://www.euroconferences.info/2006_abstracts.php>

Vercauteren, Gert 2007a. Towards a European Guideline for Audio Description. In: Orero, Pilar / Remael, Aline / Cintas, Jorge Diaz (eds) *Media for All. Accessibility in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Vercauteren, Gert 2007b. Can relevance-oriented insights in film editing techniques help audio describers prioritise information? Paper delivered at the *MuTra Conference 2007* in Vienna. <http://www.euroconferences.info/2007_abstracts.php>

Vermeer, Hans 1998. Starting to Unask What Translatology Is About. *Target* 10/1, 41-68.

Vermeer, Hans. J. 1978. Ein Rahem für eine Allgemeine Translationstherie. *Lebende Sprachen* 3, 99-102.

Vidal, Albert 2004. La audiodescripción: una herramienta de ayuda para los ciegos. *Integración. Revista de la Asociación de Implantados Cocleares* 32, 30-31.

Voghera, Miriam 1992. *Sintassi e intonazione dell'italiano parlato*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Wales, Katie 1989. *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. London: Longman.

Weaver, Sarah 2010. Opening doors to opera. The strategies, challenges and general role of the translator. *Intralinea* 12/2010. <http://www.intralinea.it/volumes/eng_more.php?id=872_0_2_0_M74%>

WHO World Heath Organization 2004. *Global data on visual impairment in 2002*. <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/bulletin/2004/Vol82No11/bulletin_2004_82(11)_844-851.pdf>

Widdowson Henry G. 1979. *Explorations in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wikberg, Kay 2008. Phrasal similes in the BNC. In Granger, Sylviane / Meunier, Fanny (eds) *Phraseology: an interdisciplinary Perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 127-142.

Wright Kenneth W. / Christensen Layne E. / Noguchi Barbara A. 1992. Results of late surgery for presumed congenital cataracts. *Am Ophthalmol* 15/114/4, 409–415.

Yeung, Jessica 2007. Audio description in the Chinese world. in Orero, Pilar / Remael, Aline / Cintas, Jorge Diaz (eds) *Media for All. Accessibility in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 231-244.

York, Greg 2007. Verdi made visible: audio introduction for opera and ballet in Díaz Cintas, Jorge / Orero, Pilar / Remael, Aline (eds) *Media for All: Subtitling for the Deaf, Audio Description and Sign Language*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 215-229.

Zhou, Herman / Hermans, Tucker / Karandikar, Asmita / Rehg, James 2010. Movie Genre Classification via Scene Categorization. In *Proceedings ACM Multimedia 2010*. Firenze, Italy.

Sitography[255]

All About Vision <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/diabetic.htm>

American Council of the Blind ACB Guidelines
<http://www.acb.org/adp/guidelines.html>

American Council of the Blind ACB. Audio Description Technology
<http://www.acb.org/adp/tech.html>

American Foundation of the Blind
<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=44&TopicID=338&DocumentID=4032>

Andrew Salway. List of Publications
<http://www.bbrel.co.uk/publications.html>

Andrew Salway. List of Publications and Invited Talks
<http://www.bbrel.co.uk/publications_and_invited_talks.html>

Andrew Salway. Preliminary Results of the TIWO Project
<http://www.bbrel.co.uk/pdfs/Pre-edited%20version%20Audio%20Description%20a%20Corpus-based%20Analysis.pdf >

AntConc Website
http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software/AntConc_Help_3.1.2/AntConc_Help.htm

Arts Access <http://www.artsaccessinc.org/definition.html>

Association Valentin Hauy <http://www.avh.asso.fr/>

Audio Description Associates LLC. Training Opportunities
<http://www.audiodescribe.com/training/schedule.php>

Audio Description Association Scotland
<http://adascotland.com/calendar.htm>

[255] All last accessed 19/02/2011.

Audio Description Project. 2010 Conference
<http://www.acb.org/adp/conf2010.html>

Audio Description Solutions. Training
<http://www.audiodescriptionsolutions.com/film-training.htm>

Audio Description Texas <http://www.vsatx.org/audio.html>

Audio Vision. Radio Reading Service for the Blind
<http://www.freewebz.com/audiovisionavtom/>

Audio Description Coalition ADC
<http://www.audiodescriptioncoalition.org/atoz.htm>

Audiodescrizione.it <http://www.audiodescrizione.it>

BBC <www.bbc.co.uk>

BNC online <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>

Cinema UK <http://www.cinemauk.org.uk/keyissues/disabilityandaccess/>

Communiqué Interactive Solutions <http://www.text2u.com/dn.html>

DelhionlineEducation. Adding audio narration to a PowerPoint
<http://www.slideshare.net/delhionlineeducation/adding-audio-narration-to-powerpoint>

Described and Captioned Media Programme
<http://www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh237.pdf>

Description Key
<http://www.dcmp.org/descriptionkey/description_key_meta_analysis.pdf>

Design for All <http://www.designforalleurope.org/Design-for-All/>

Developing Audiences
<http://www.developingaudiences.com/documents/ADApdf7.pdf>

Digital Television for All DTV4All Report
<http://dea.brunel.ac.uk/dtv4all/ICT-PSP-224994-D22.pdf>

Digital Television for All Project <http://www.psp-dtv4all.org/>

Direct Government UK
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Everydaylifeandaccess/Everydayaccess/DG_4018357>

Disability World <http://www.disabilityworld.org/09-11_04/access/audio.shtml>

E-Medicine <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/224309-overview>

E-Practice <http://www.epractice.eu/en/document/347488>

EU Audiovisual and Media Policies
<http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/access/index_en.htm>

Euroblind. Access to information
<http://www.euroblind.org/working-areas/access-to-information/nr/62>

European Blind Union EBU. EBU Policy Statement
on Low Vision
<http://euroblindstatic.eplica.is/fichiersGB/pspolicy.html#32>

European Disability Strategy 2003-2010
<http://www.epractice.eu/files/documents/workshops/13771-1224861230.pdf>

European Disability Strategy 2010-2020
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF>

Global Burden <http://www.globalburden.org/>

Global data on Visual Impairment 2002
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/bulletin/2004/Vol82-No11/bulletin_2004_82(11)_844-851.pdf>

Handicap in Cifre. Figures about Handicap
<http://www.handicapincifre.it/prehome/tipologie_disabilita.asp>

HandyLex <http://www.handylex.org/gun/importi_pensioni_2010.shtml>

Ikonos New Media. Audio Narration and Power Points
<http://masterview.ikonosnewmedia.com/2005/08/31/powerpoint_and_audio_narration_a.htm>

IMS Open Corpus Workbench
<http://cwb.sourceforge.net/documentation.php>

Infinitec <http://www.infinitec.org/totalresource/visual/motionpicture.htm>

International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness
<http://www.iapb.it/news3.php?id=1928&ia=43>

Internet Movie DataBase IMDb <http://www.imdb.com/stats >

Internet Movie DataBase IMDb. Film file
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0238112/>

Internet Movie DataBase IMDb. Genre classification
<http://www.imdb.com/help/search?domain=helpdesk_faq&index=2&file=genres>

ITFC <www.itfc.co.uk>

LARRS Los Angeles Radio Services <http://www.larrs.org/guidelines.html>

Laurence Anthony's website
<http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html>

League of Chicago Theaters
<http://www.leagueofchicagotheatres.org/component/industryaudition/industryauditiondetails/273.html>

Led On Line. Analisi Automatica dei Dati Testuali
<http://www.ledonline.it/ledonline/giuliano/giulianoanalisiautomatica1-2.pdf>

Legal News and Guidance <http://www.out-law.com/page-7319>

Live Describe <www.livedescribe.com>

Med Web. Primaty Opena Angle Trauchoma
<http://medweb.bham.ac.uk/easdec/eyetextbook/poag/poag.htm>

Media Access Group at WGBH
<http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/mag/services/description/>

National Eye Institute <http://www.nei.nih.gov/eyedata/>

Ofcom <www.ofcom.org.uk>

Ofcom. Access Services Audio Description. Research into awareness levels
<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/tv-research/access_services_audio/>

Ofcom. Code on Television Access
<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/broadcasting/broadcast-codes/code-tv-access-services/>

Ohio River Board Arts Network
http://orbiartsnetwork.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/audio-description-workshops-in-huntington-wv-and-wheeling-wv/

PACTE Research Group
<http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/pacte/sites/grupsderecerca.uab.cat.pacte/files/2011_PACTE_Continuum.pdf>

Pubblica Istruzione Italiana
<http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/reclutamento/allegati/grad_speciali2005.pdf>

Relevance Theory bibliography
<http://www.ua.es/personal/francisco.yus/rt.html>

RNIB <www.rnib.co.uk>

Royal National Institute of the Blind
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/tvradiofilm/television/adtv/Pages/audio_description_tv.aspx?printmode=true>

Royal National Institute of the Blind. Are you really Listening? Research Report
<http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/i2_RNIB_AreYouReallyListening.pdf>

Science Daily
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/10/101006131203.htm>

Segretariato Sociale RAI <http://www.segretariatosociale.rai.it>

Share2Learn – CABE 2010 Workshop
<http://www.share2learn.com/cabe2010workshop.pdf>

Softel Group. Software for Audio Description
<http://www.softelgroup.com/DAM/StreamHandler.ashx?SubscriptionID=28341>

SpringerLink. Ontology valuation through Text Classification
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/3h84751t3m221726/>

Technorati <http://technorati.com/entertainment/article/how-audio-description-gives-blind-viewers/>

TedMontgomery. Anatomy of the Eye
<http://www.tedmontgomery.com/the_eye/index.html>

Television Without Frontiers Directive
<http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/audiovisual_and_media/l24101_en.htm>

Television Without Frontiers Directive. National measures. Germany
<http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/tvwf/national_measures/de_impaired.pdf>

Television Without Frontiers Directive. National measures. Spain
<http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/tvwf/national_measures/es_impaired.pdf>

The Zebrafish Model Database <http://zfin.org/action/ontology/term-detail?termID=ZDB-TERM-091209-24458>

Trachoma <http://www.trachoma.org/trachoma-frequently-asked-questions#Q. What is trachoma?>

Treaty establishing the European Union
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11992M/htm/11992M.html#0001000001>

TVHelp <http://www.tvhelp.org.uk/audes/theatre.html>

UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2010
<http://sy10.ukfilmcouncil.ry.com/pdf/Chapter4-GenreAndClass.pdf>

UK Legislation. Communication Act 2003
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/contents/enacted>

UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disability
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

University of Stuttgart. TreeTagger <http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/>

University of Stuttgart. TreeTagger tagset
<http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/Penn-Treebank-Tagset.pdf>

University of the Surrey. Final TIWO Report
<http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWO%20Final%20Report%20web%20version.htm>

University of the Surrey. Overview of the TIWO Project
<http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWOcaseforsupport.htm>

University of the Surrey. Personal Page of Andrew Salway
<http://www.computing.surrey.ac.uk/personal/pg/A.Salway/tiwo/TIWO.htm>

Vision 2020
<http://www.vision2020.org/documents/publications/SotWS%20Report_wth_Stop_Press.pdf>

Vision 2020. Coverage of global visual diseases
<http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=WEF&itemid=2623#anchor_multi>

Vision 2020. Global facts about Blindness
<http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=FACTS>

Vision 2020. IAPB History
<http://www.vision2020.org/main.cfm?type=IAPBHISTORY>

Vision 2020. WHO Report 1997. Global Initiative for the Elimination of Avoidable Blindness <http://www.vision2020.org/documents/WHO%20Publications/WHO_PBL_97.61_Rev.1.pdf>

Vision 2020. World Sight Day Report 2009 <http://www.vision2020.org/documents/world_sight_day_2009/WD09_Downloads/WSD_Report_2009_FINAL_v2.pdf>

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>

Web Multimediale <http://www.webmultimediale.org>

Womens Eye Health <http://www.womenseyehealth.org/causes/ure.php>

Wordiq. Definition of Audio Commentary <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Audio_commentary_(DVD)>

World Blind Union <http://www.worldblindunion.org/en/publications/other-publications/Documents/A_UNIVERSAL_VOICE.pdf>

World Health Organization WHO. Blindness <http://www.who.int/topics/blindness/en/>

World Health Organization WHO. Bulletin <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/1/07-041210/en/>

World Health Organization WHO. Causes of Blindness <http://www.who.int/blindness/causes/priority/en/index10.html>

World Healt Organization WHO. Change in the Definition of Blindness <http://www.who.int/blindness/Change%20the%20Definition%20of%20Blindness.pdf>

World Health Organization WHO. Visual Disturbances and Blindness <http://apps.who.int/classifications/apps/icd/icd10online/>

Your Local Cinema <http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/index.2.html>

Filmography

A Ferreirinha, Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (RTP) 2004.

Amor idiota, Pons 2004.

Angst von der Dunkelheit, Peploe 1991.

De Kampioenen, Heylen / De Valck 1990.

De Zaak Alzheimer, Van Looy 2003.

Death and the Maiden, Polanski 1993.

Die Glücksjäger, Hiller 1989.

Driekoningenavond, van Zundert 1972.

Eine ungeheilige Liebe, Verhoeven 1993.

Fuga dal call center, Rizzo 2009.

Good Bye Lenin, Becker 2003.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Columbus 2001.

Karakter, Van Delden/Domburg 1971.

Kuck mal, wer da spricht, Heckerling 1990.

L'un per l'altre, L'Avern Produccions, 2003-2005.

Langs de kade, Lebon/Simons 1988.

Major Barbara, Pascal 1941.

Majoria Absoluta, Oristrell 2002-2004.

Mar adentro, Amenabar 2004.

Menina da Ràdio, Duarte 1944.

Nicolàs, Garcia 2001.

Plats Bruts, El Terrat, 1999-2002.

Sams in Gefahr, Verbong 2003.

Something to talk about, Hallström 1995.

Spartacus, Kubrick 1960.

The Majestic, Darabont 2001.

The Motorcycle Diaries, Smith 1993.

The Pledge, Penn 2001.

The Rules of Attraction, Avary 2002.

The Ten Commandements, DeMille 1956.

This is not a love song, Eltringham 2002.

Tootsie, Pollack 1982.

Tucker, Coppola 1988.

Annex 1

AntConc 3.2.1 Concordance Plots & Screenshots

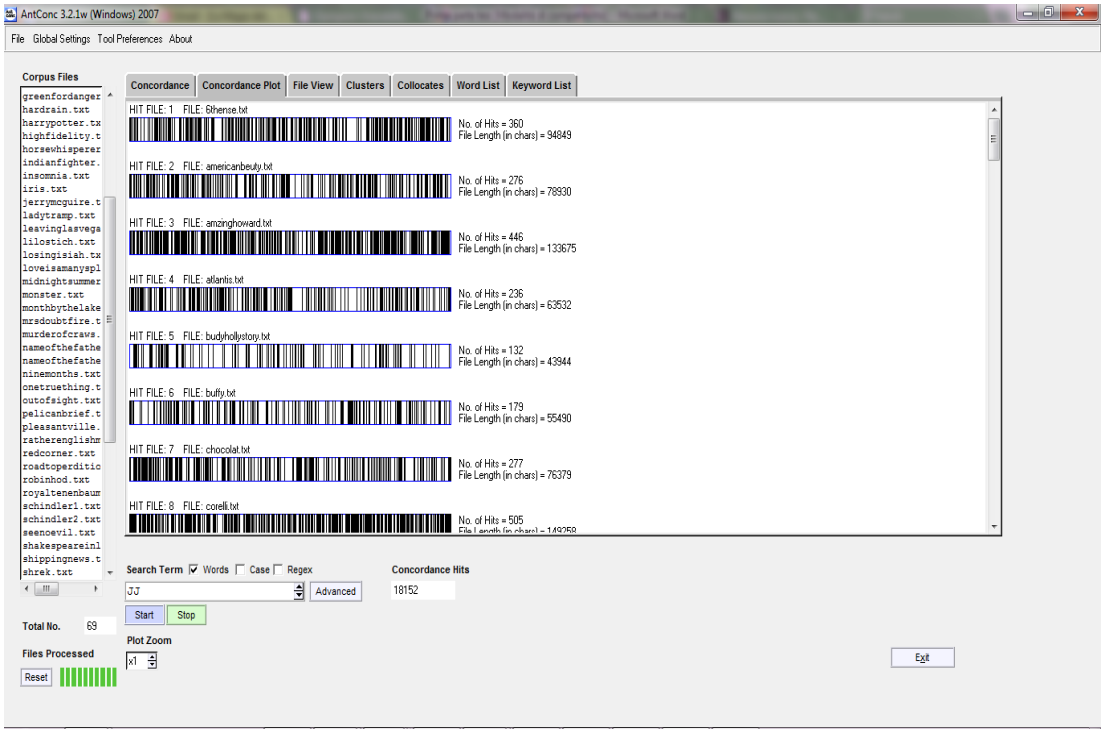


Fig. 1. Overview of the concordance plot window. Search term: 'JJ'.

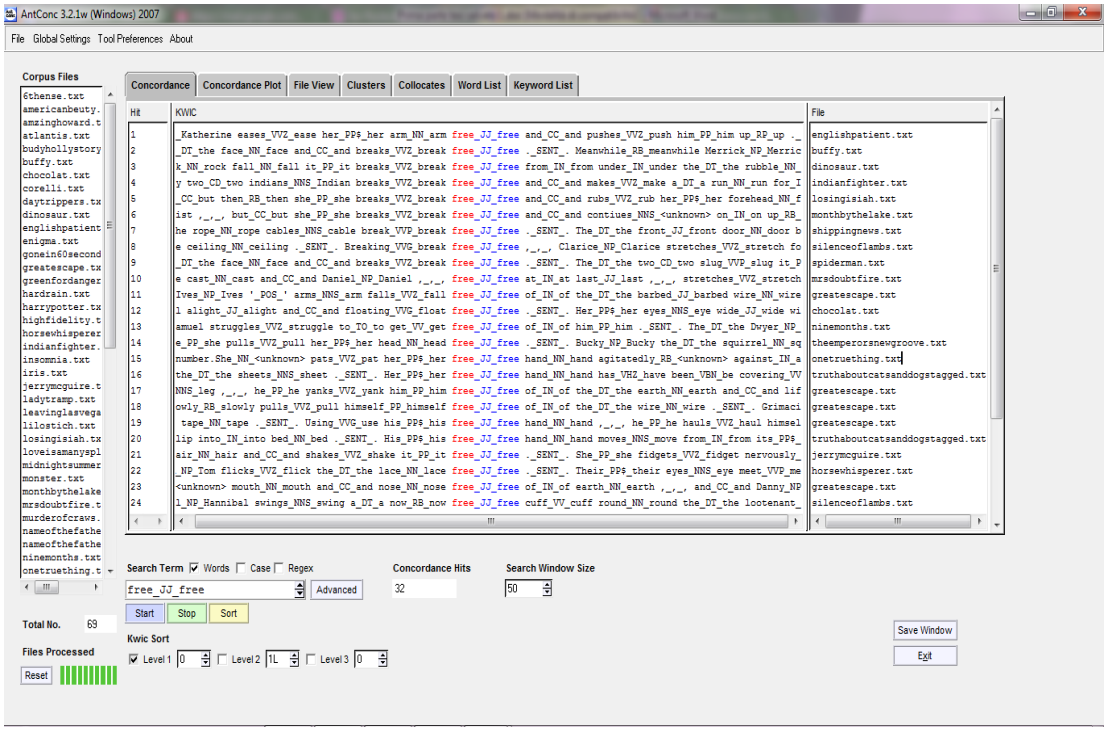


Fig. 2. Concordances of 'free' (JJ) in the corpus

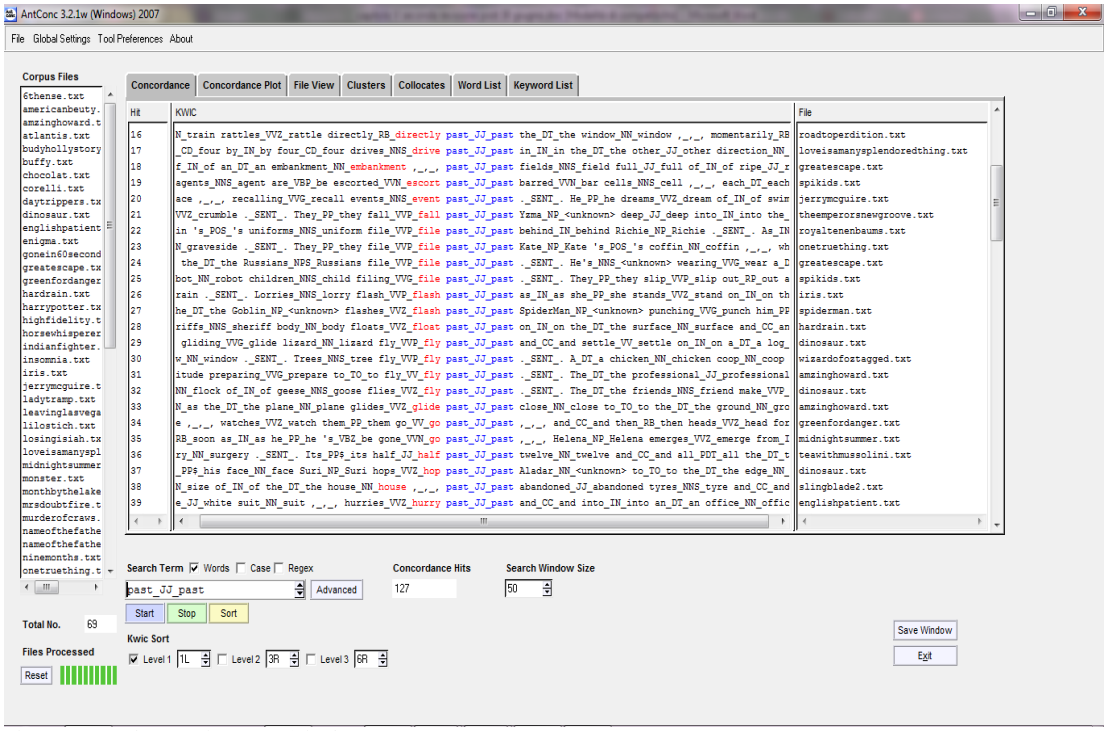


Fig. 3. Concordances of 'past' (JJ) in the corpus

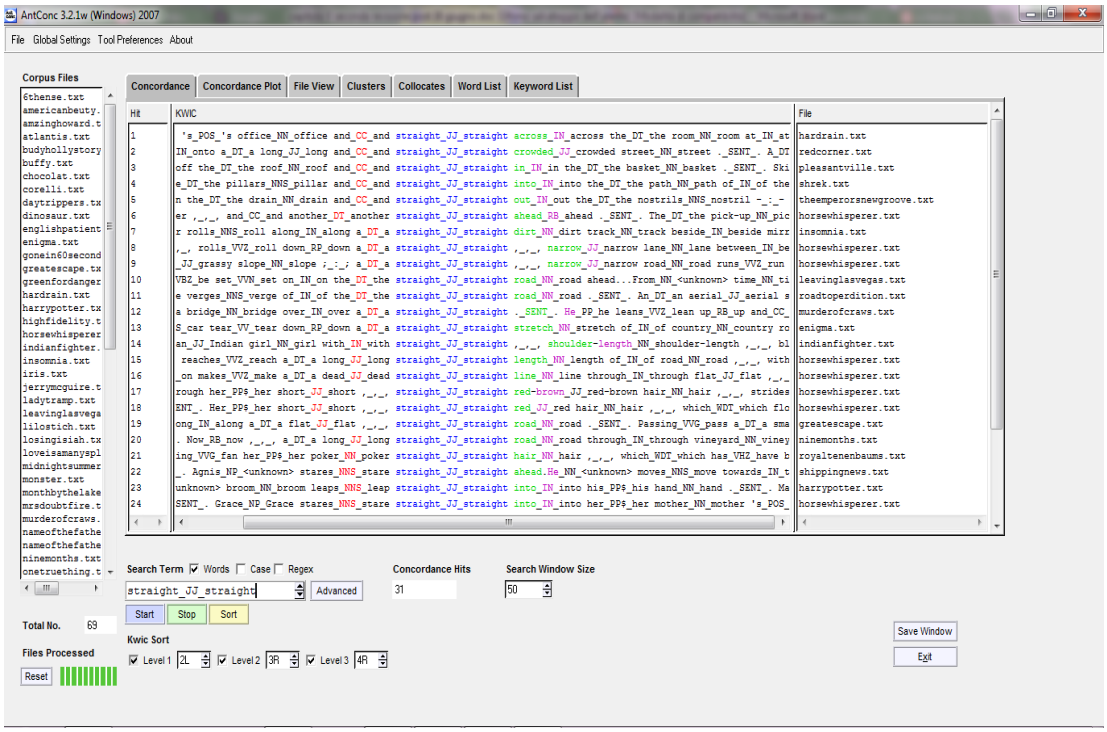


Fig. 4. Concordances of 'straight' (JJ) in the corpus

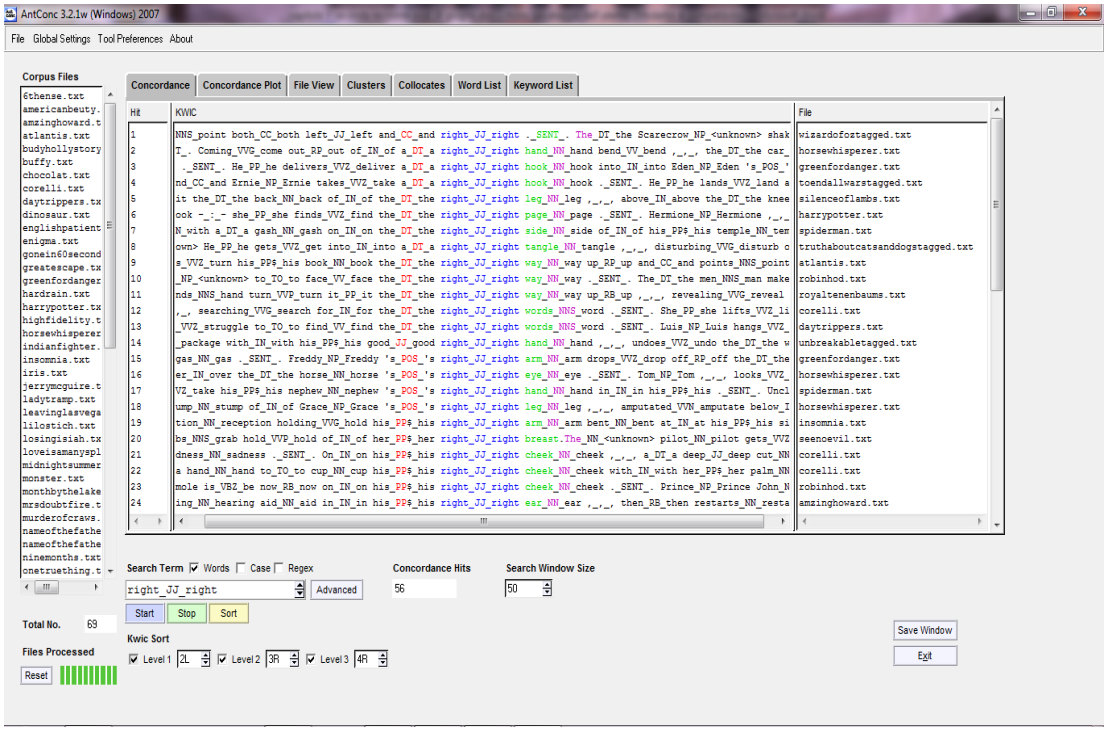


Fig. 5. Concordances of ‘right’ (JJ) in the corpus

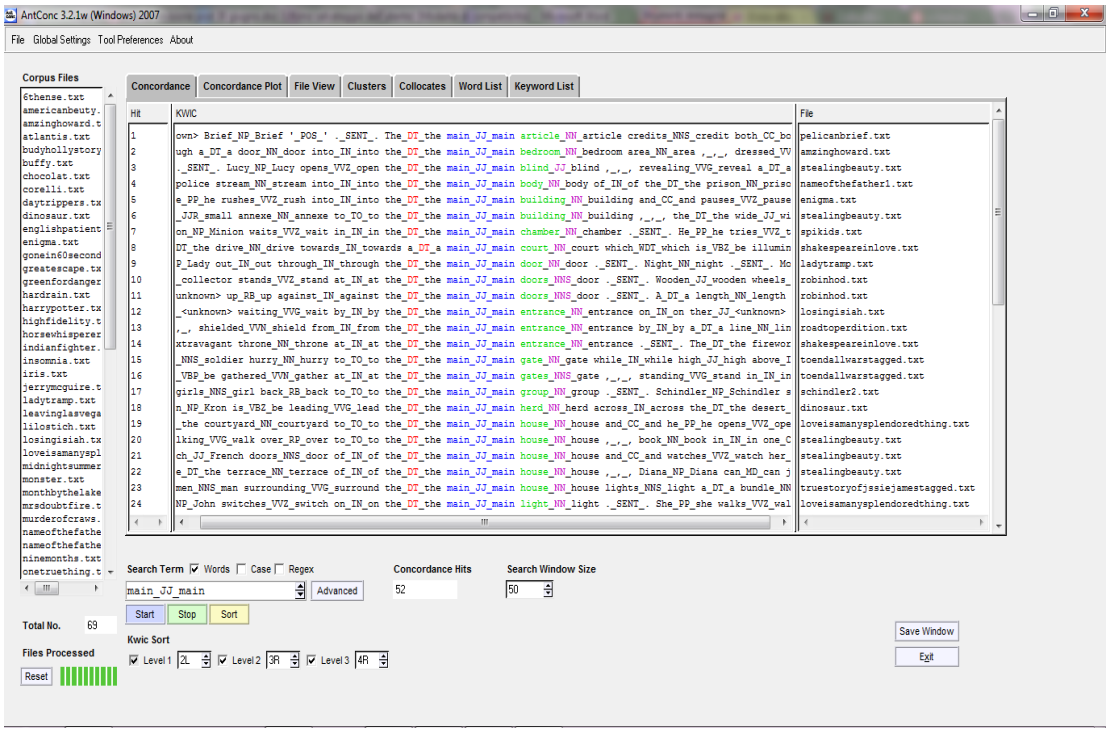


Fig. 6. Concordances of ‘main’ (JJ) in the corpus

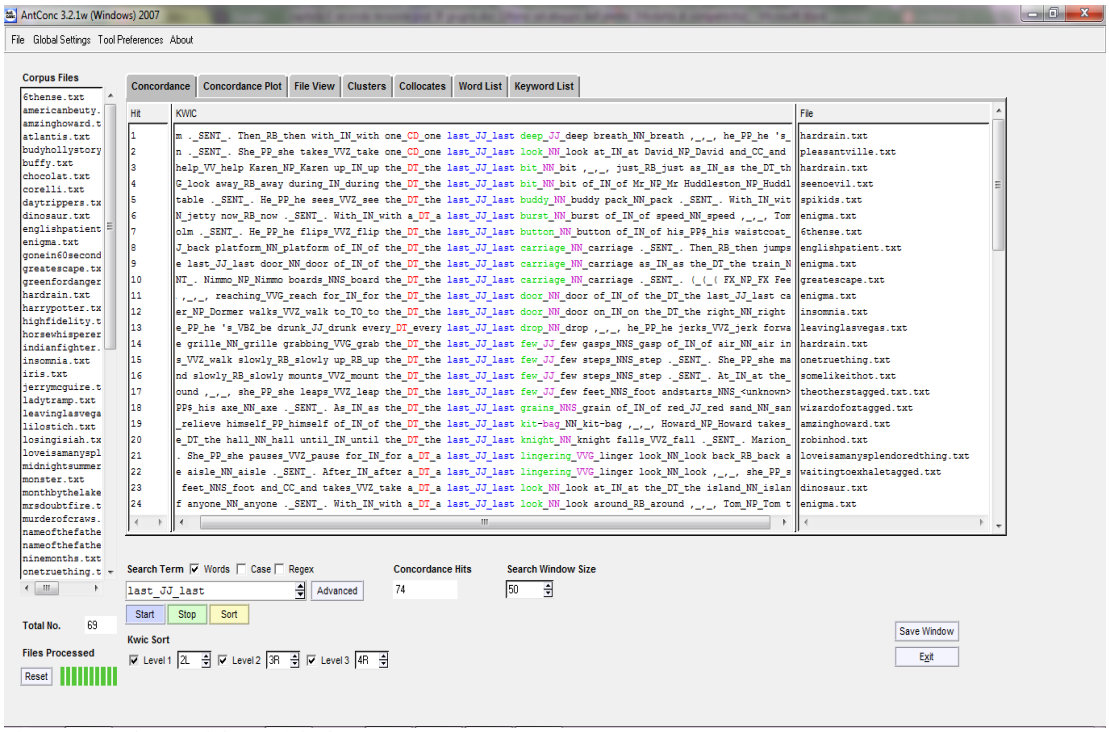


Fig. 7. Concordances of 'last' (JJ) in the corpus

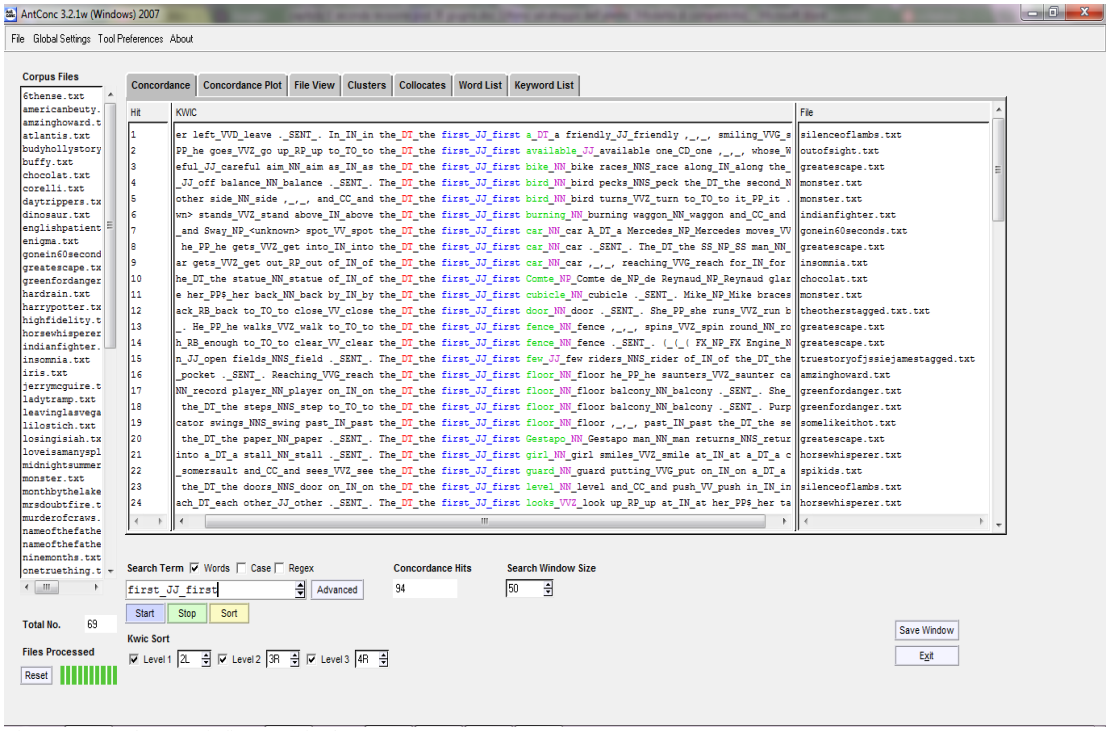


Fig. 8. Concordances of 'first' (JJ) in the corpus

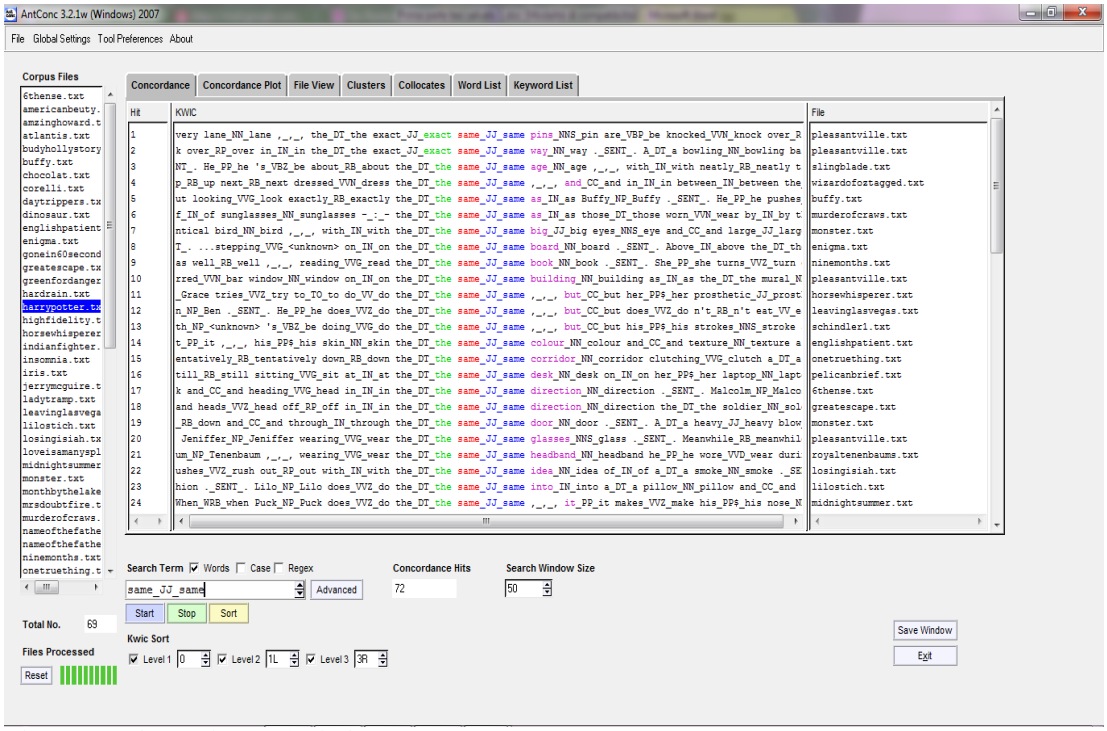


Fig. 9. Concordances of 'same' (JJ) in the corpus

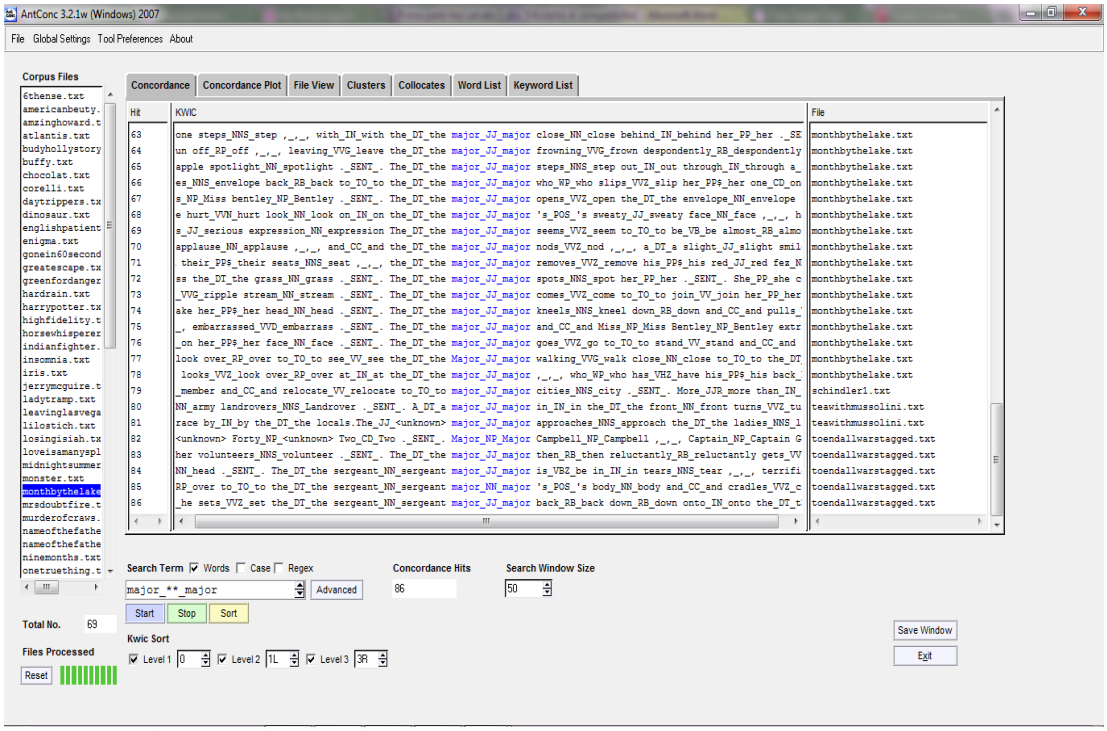


Fig. 10. Concordances of 'major' (JJ) in the corpus

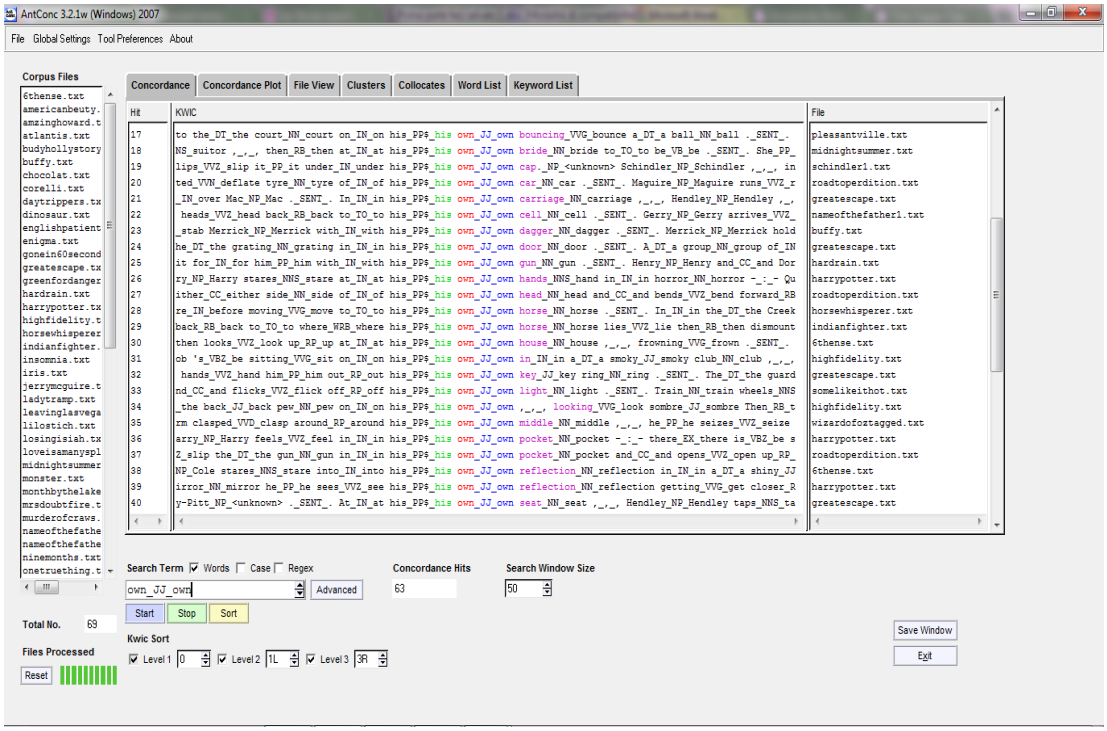


Fig. 11. Concordances of 'own' (JJ) in the corpus

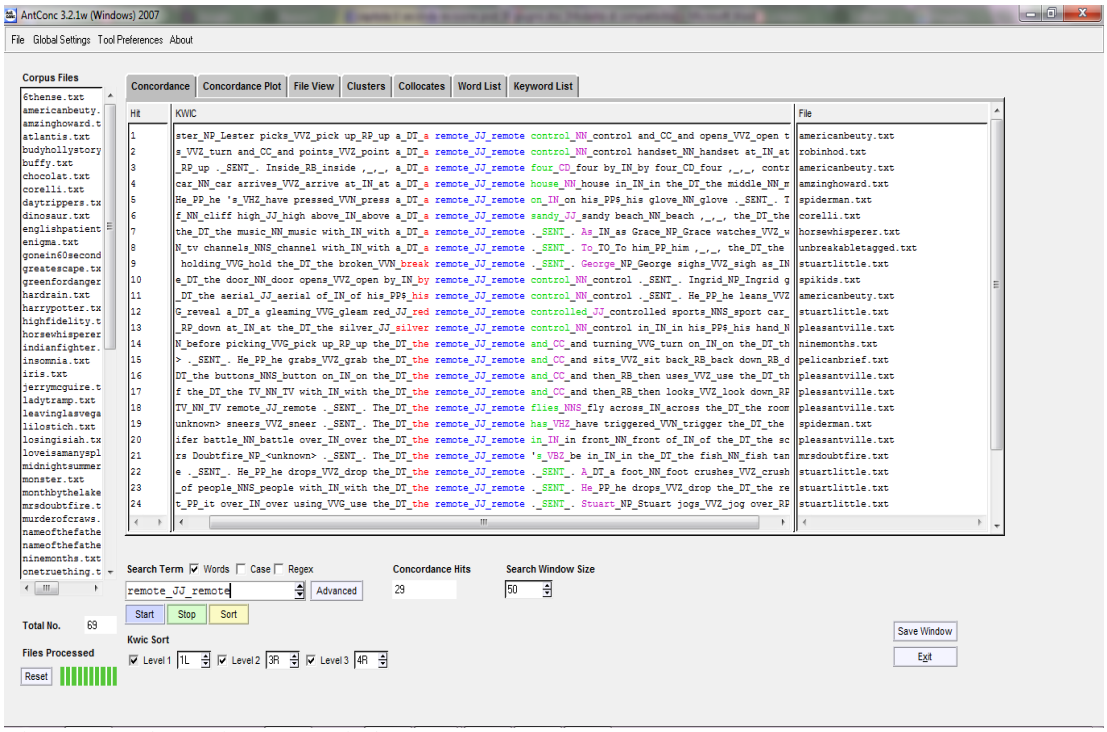


Fig. 12. Concordances of 'remote' (JJ) in the corpus

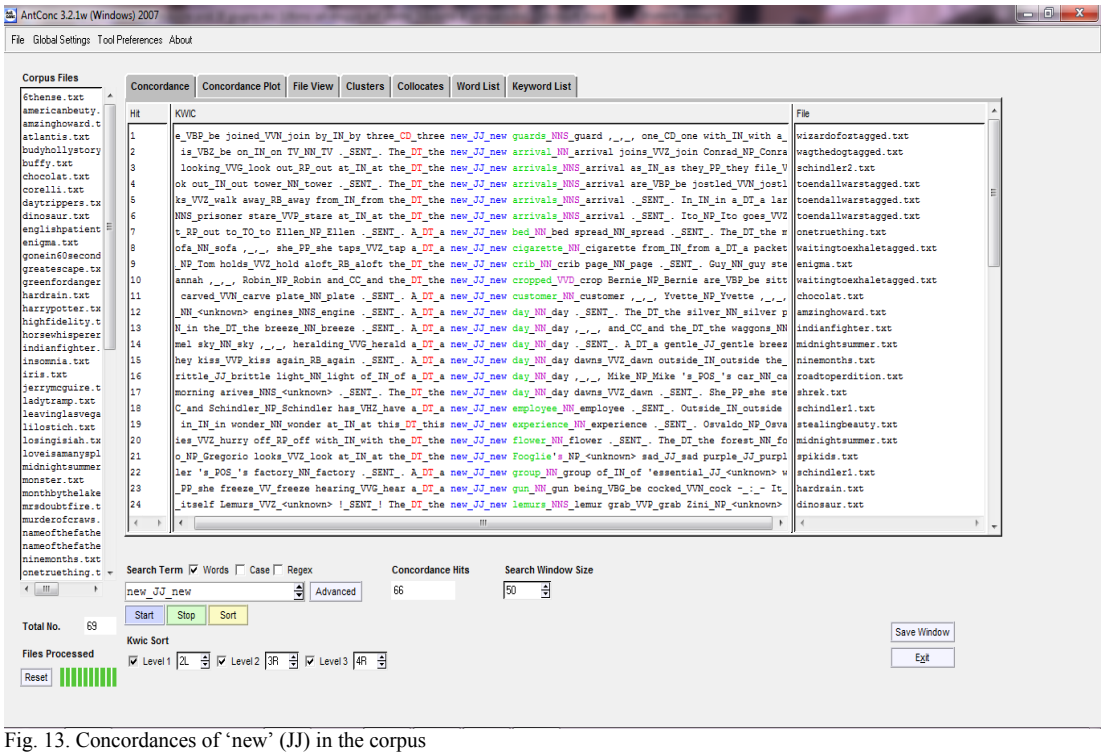


Fig. 13. Concordances of 'new' (JJ) in the corpus

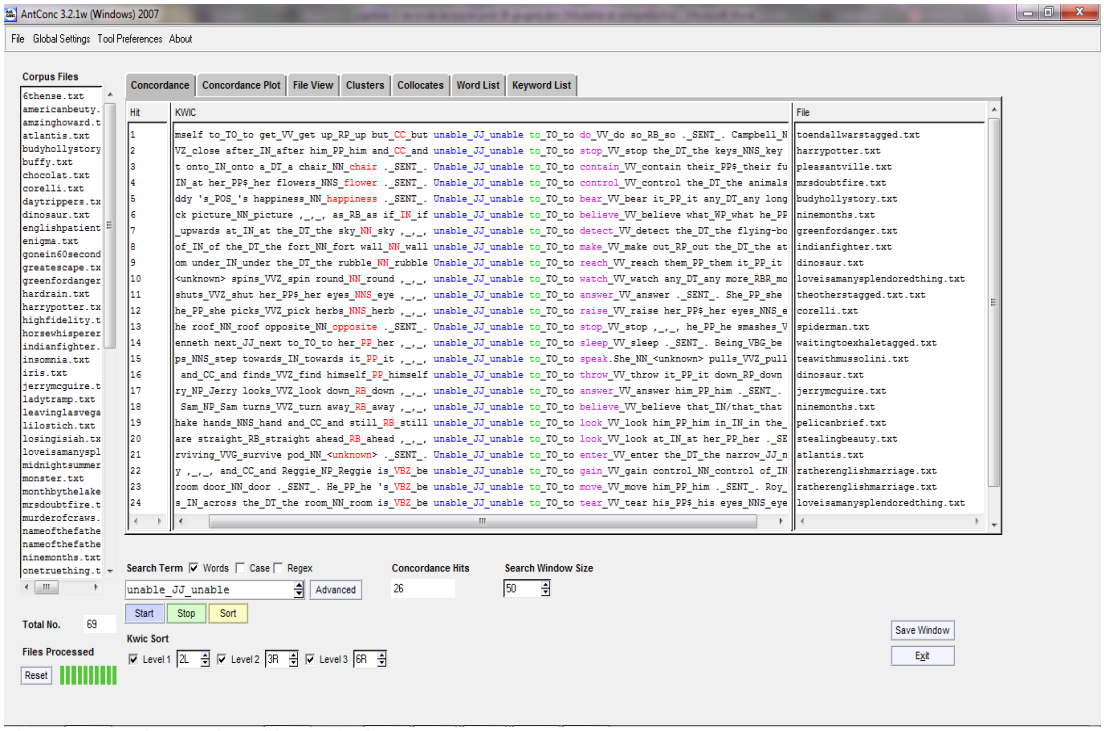


Fig. 14. Concordances of 'unable' (JJ) in the corpus

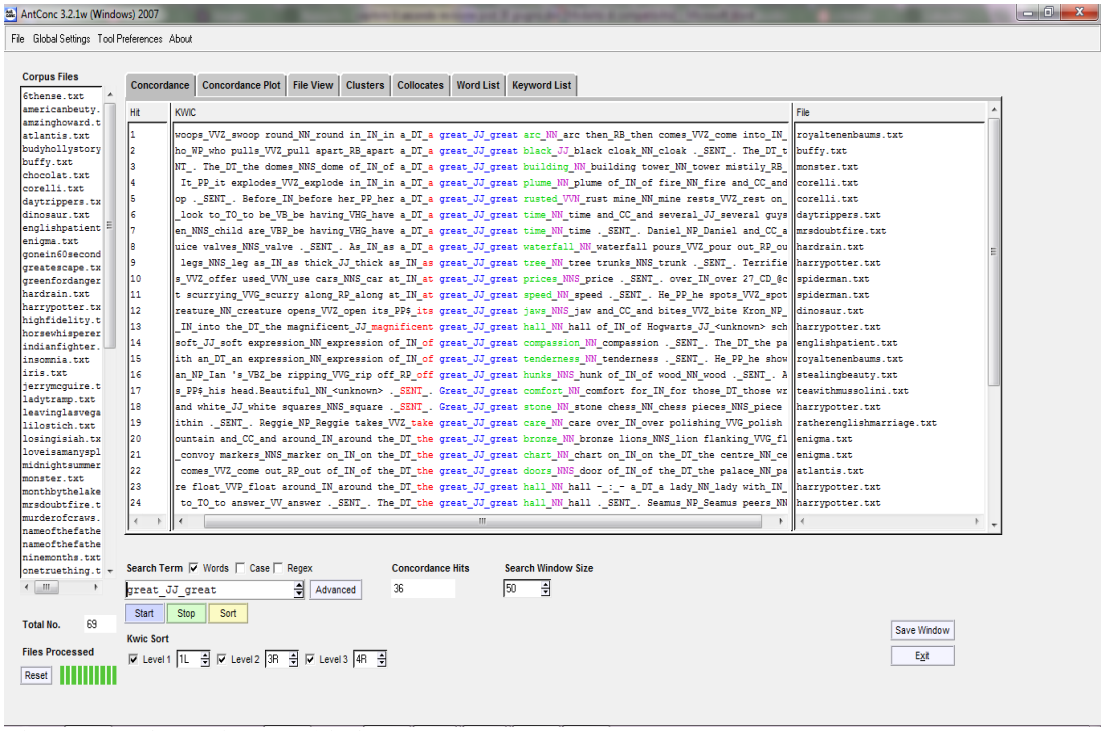


Fig. 15. Concordances of 'great' (JJ) in the corpus

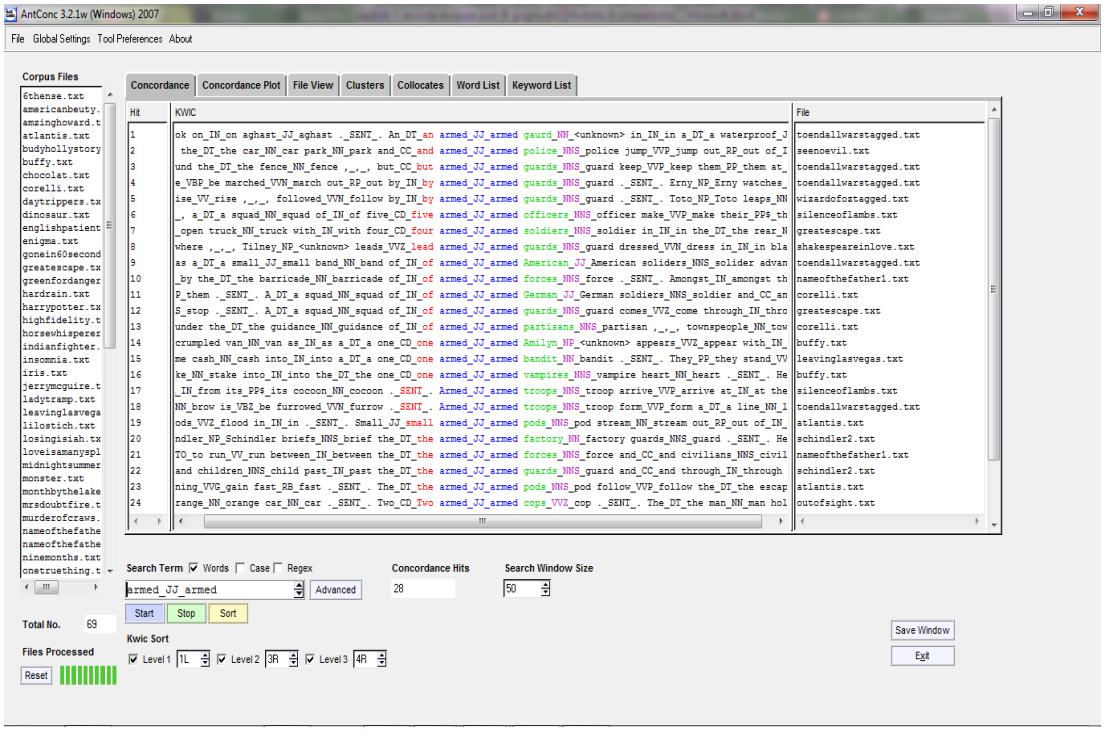


Fig. 16. Concordances of 'armed' (JJ) in the corpus

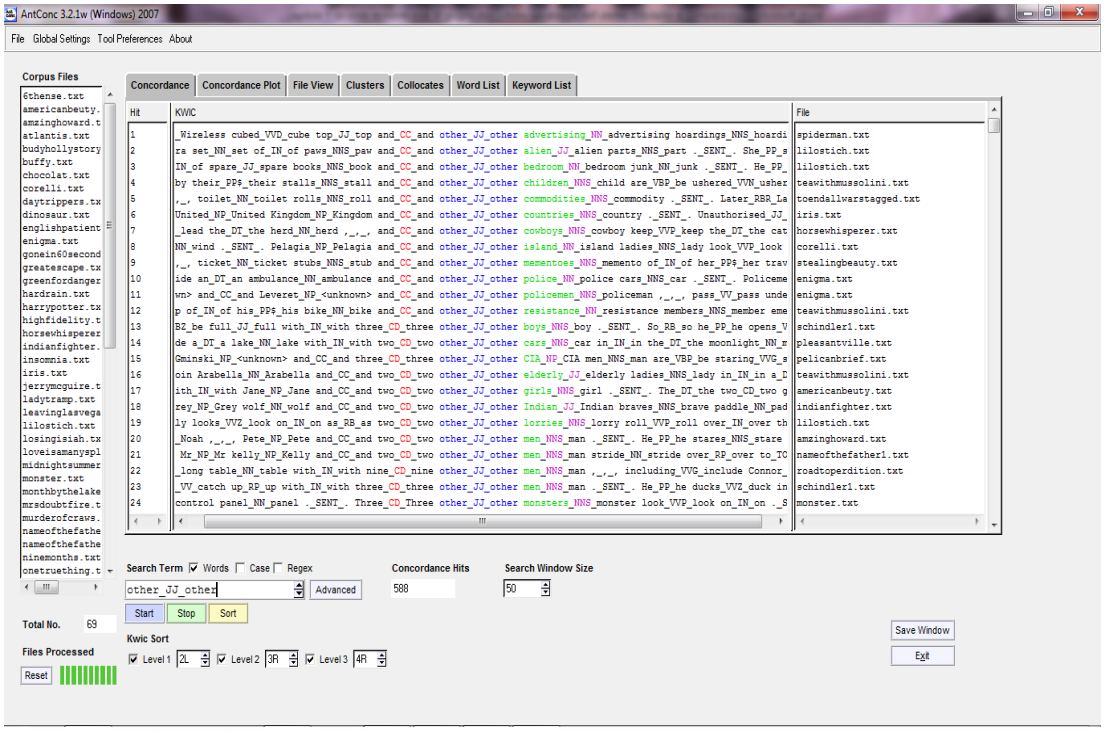


Fig. 17. Concordances of 'other' (JJ) in the corpus

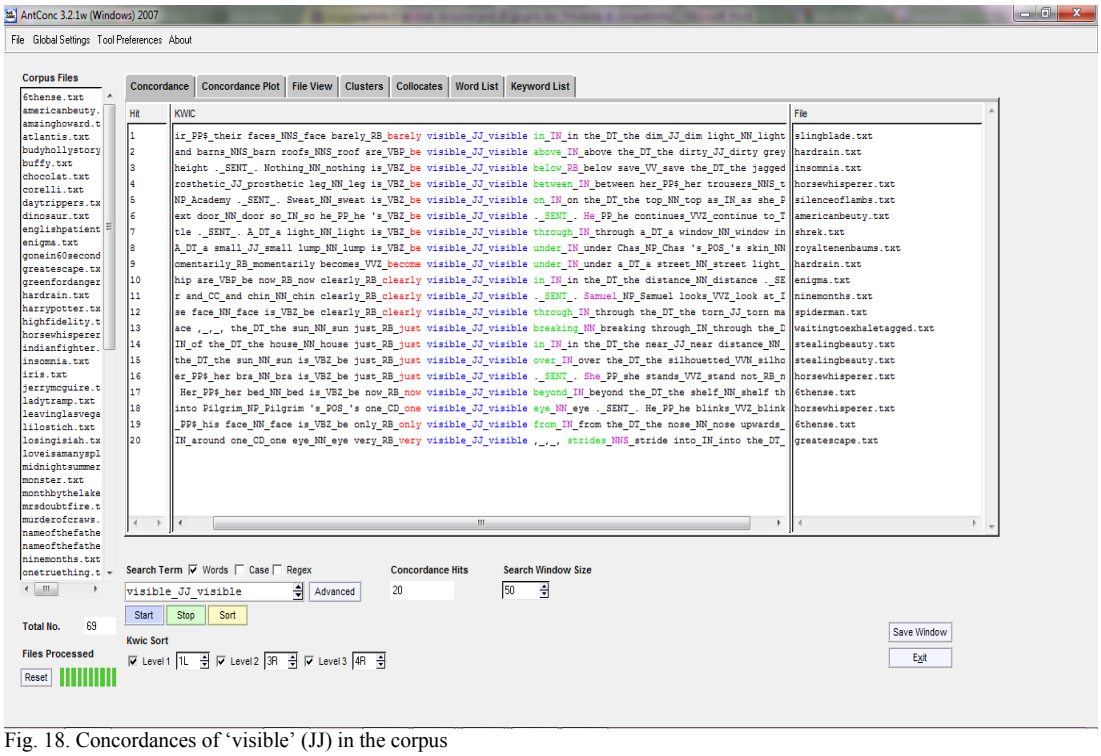


Fig. 18. Concordances of 'visible' (JJ) in the corpus

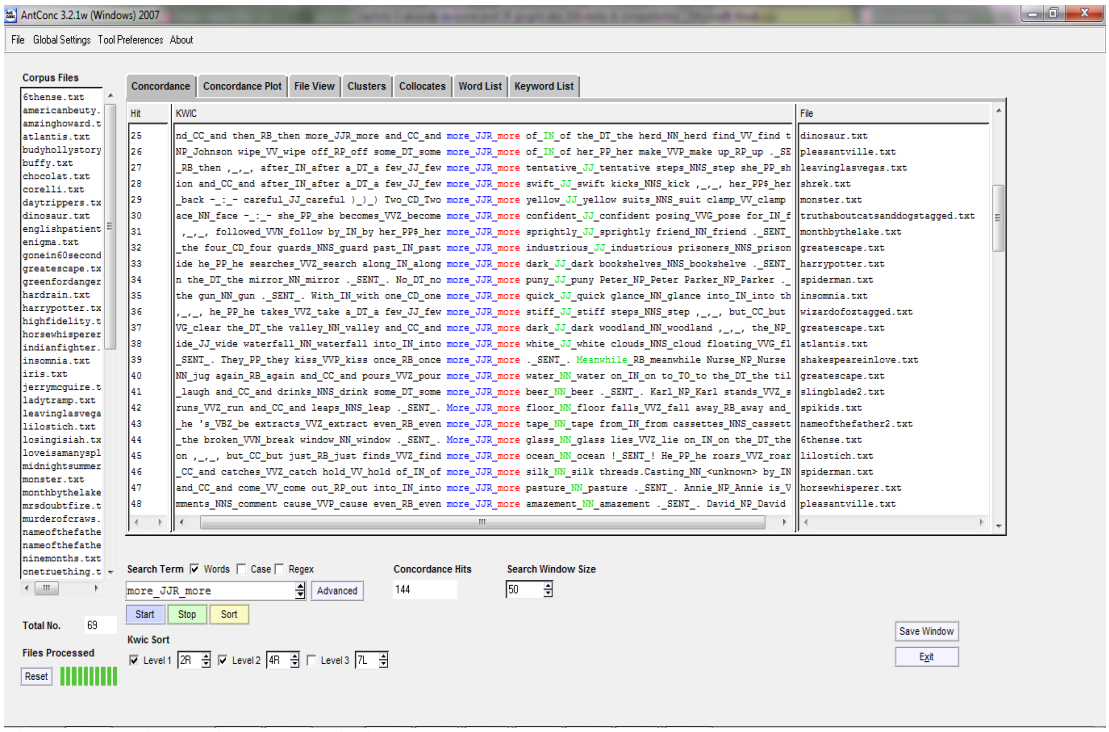


Fig. 19. Concordances of 'more' (JJR) in the corpus