

École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication*
Avignon et Pays de Vaucluse, Foggia, Potsdam, Paris X, Roma Tre



Museums, New Technologies, Language

Edited by Pierpaolo Limone & Emma Nardi

Cahiers de l'EDI - 1



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Introduction

A partir de 2005, l'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication* organise chaque année un séminaire pour permettre aux doctorants des universités réunies en consortium de s'engager dans des activités fondamentales pour la formation de leur profil de chercheurs: préparer des résumés et des présentations pour proposer efficacement leur travail, faire face à des procédures de *peer review*, parler de façon convaincante et dans un temps établi devant professeurs et collègues, soutenir publiquement une thèse et répondre aux objections éventuelles, s'exprimer avec aisance dans une langue étrangère.

Les activités décrites se sont révélées précieuses, mais dans une perspective d'amélioration continue, le Conseil de l'École a décidé de procéder avec le lancement d'une collection éditoriale afin de consentir aux doctorants de s'exercer dans la rédaction d'essais de recherche avant de conclure le travail de rédaction de la thèse.

Le volume *Museum, language, new technologies*, qui représente le premier de la collection *Cahiers de l'EDI*, recueille les contributions du colloque qui a eu lieu à Vieste en 2008, précédés par un essai présentant l'École et l'activité développée dans les quatre ans 2004-2009.

L'image sur la couverture représente une femme, enroulée dans un manteau drapé, qui arrose de sa main droite les plantes cultivées dans des vases placés sur une table. Dans sa main gauche, la femme tient un cartouche sur lequel on lit : «Vox litterata et articulata, debito modo pronunciata». Derrière elle, deux colonnes majestueuses délimitent un porche au-delà duquel on aperçoit des arbres robustes au feuillage touffu. La composition est si rythmée pour suggérer l'idée du rapport dialectique entre nature et culture qui caractérise l'action éducative à n'importe quel niveau. En particulier, le message exposé dans le cartouche permet d'identifier la femme comme la Grammaire, c'est-à-dire la discipline qui enseigne à s'exprimer avec propriété, clarté, élégance. Le choix de cette image pour une collection d'essais doctoraux veut exprimer symboliquement les aspects transversaux que l'École se propose de rejoindre: acquérir les règles du langage scientifique, affirmer la nécessité de la propriété d'expression, garantir le juste équilibre entre la créativité personnelle (nature) et la rigueur méthodologique (culture).

Au delà des aspects du contenu l'image a, par rapport aux finalités de l'École, un second motif d'intérêt. Peinte en 1650 par un artiste français - Laurent de la Hyre - et maintenant conservée dans la National Gallery de Londres, l'*Allégorie de la grammaire* représente des thèmes bien enracinés dans la culture littéraire et iconographique européenne, en se proposant comme une synthèse efficace de la vocation européenne de l'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, Communication*.

Pierpaolo Limone et Emma Nardi



Un projet européen innovatif: L'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication*

Emma Nardi

LA FORMATION DOCTORALE ET L'EUROPE

Suivant les décisions connues sous la dénomination de Processus de Bologne, l'Union Européenne a créé une équipe de travail (Bologna Follow up Group) qui, à l'occasion de la conférence de Dublin en 2004, a formulé une série d'indicateurs pour définir précisément les résultats attendus à la fin de chacun des trois niveaux qui caractérisent les études universitaires en Europe (licence, master, doctorat, c'est-à-dire 3+2+3). Les critères concernant les études doctorales prévoient que le titre de docteur soit assigné aux étudiants qui:

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society¹.

Les descripteurs de Dublin montrent que l'Union attend de futurs docteurs de recherche capables d'appliquer leurs connaissances à des contextes) différents de ceux de leur spécialité et de participer à une communauté scientifique internationale très large. Dans ce contexte, les équipes de recherche nationales sont invitées à nouer des partenariats et à construire des projets scientifiques communs avec les autres pays de l'Union, en favorisant les conditions d'une mobilité des professeurs et des doctorants.

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¹ www.jointquality.nl. Vu le 22 juillet 2009.

L'ÉCOLE DOCTORALE INTERNATIONALE *CULTURE, ÉDUCATION, COMMUNICATION*

L'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication* (EDI) a été fondée en 2005 pour répondre à ces exigences. Les universités qui font partie de l'École sont Roma Tre (siège légal de l'École), Paris X Nanterre, Potsdam, Avignon et Pays de Vaucluse, Foggia, et la Faculté de Lettres de l'Université de Lisbonne. C'est de ces mêmes critères que les professeurs promoteurs de l'École se sont inspirés pour définir un cadre de référence à l'intérieur duquel ils pouvaient opérer. Les objectifs essentiels de l'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication* sont en effet l'*interdisciplinarité* (c'est-à-dire l'apport de points de vue différents à la résolution des problèmes) et l'*internationalisation* (c'est-à-dire la participation à des expériences internationales et la création de réseaux de chercheurs européens dès la préparation du doctorat). Il faut considérer encore que la formation doctorale, qui est à l'articulation de l'enseignement et de la recherche, est aussi le niveau d'étude où l'intégration européenne est la plus faible. Si pour la licence et le master les États de l'Union ont fait un grand effort pour harmoniser leurs cursus, les règlements du niveau doctoral sont encore très différents d'un État à l'autre. On peut à ce propos prendre l'exemple de l'Italie où les candidats au doctorat doivent passer un concours avec un nombre limité de postes et peuvent jouir d'une bourse; en France et en Allemagne on s'inscrit au doctorat comme aux autres niveaux des études universitaires et seuls un très petit nombre de doctorants sont retenus pour une allocation de recherche qui ne peut dépasser trois années.

Les écoles doctorales internationales ne sont pas encore une réalité diffusée ou consolidée à l'échelle européenne. Il n'existe même pas une réglementation générale de référence. Un des défis de l'École a été celui de définir des outils de gouvernement qui permettent le déroulement des activités institutionnelles, tout en respectant la législation de chaque pays. On a donc produit deux documents:

- la convention constitutive, qui définit les organismes de l'École et les règles de son fonctionnement;
- la convention pour les co-tutelles, qui régit l'aspect légal des thèses suivies par des professeurs d'institutions différentes.

La convention constitutive établit que l'École est gouvernée par un Conseil composé de deux représentants par université, nommés par les recteurs ou présidents des universités concernées. Le Conseil, qui se réunit au moins deux fois par an, élit en son sein un directeur qui est en charge pour quatre ans et peut être confirmé pour un deuxième mandat. Le *Comité d'orientation*, formé du Conseil et des représentants des institutions avec lesquelles les universités intéressées ont des rapports de collaboration, est chargé d'exprimer son opinion sur les activités de l'École. Le Comité doit se réunir au moins une fois par an.

La convention pour les co-tutelles établit que les doctorants passent au moins six mois dans l'université du professeur qui accepte la co-tutelle. La commission d'examen doit comprendre le même nombre de membres pour chacune des deux universités. La discussion a lieu dans les deux langues; le doctorant doit non seulement présenter la thèse dans sa propre langue, mais aussi écrire un résumé dans la langue de l'université qui a assumé la co-tutelle. Pour que le titre obtenu ait une valeur légale dans les deux pays, il est nécessaire que chaque co-tutelle soit approuvée à travers une convention spécifique, par le Sénat Académique ou Conseil scientifique des deux universités et signée par les deux recteurs ou présidents.

Dans la phase d'exploration qui a précédé la constitution de l'École, les professeurs qui en ont promu la constitution ont exploré la situation européenne pour essayer de s'inspirer d'expériences précédentes. Même si, faute d'une banque de données centralisée, il n'était pas possible d'avoir un cadre complètement défini, il apparaît que les seules écoles doctorales internationales existantes concernaient, en 2004, le secteur de l'Économie et de l'Ingénierie. Il ne semble donc pas qu'il y ait des réalités analogues à l'École dans le secteur des sciences humaines. Le Conseil considère que c'est l'un des points de force de l'École que de s'être constituée dans un domaine complètement nouveau.

Les professeurs promoteurs de l'École partagent une forte motivation à mettre en place l'intégration des connaissances et le développement d'une politique de la recherche pleinement en accord avec les choix européens. Bien qu'elle reconnaisse l'importance de la culture des pays anglophones en Europe, l'École a choisi le français comme langue véhiculaire du Conseil pour assumer explicitement le principe que la richesse de l'Europe se base aussi sur son multilinguisme et que la solution à l'intercompréhension doit nécessairement passer par le plurilinguisme.

Pendant la phase constitutive, on a aussi réfléchi au moyen de mettre en œuvre la pluridisciplinarité et l'intégration des compétences. Le Conseil croit non seulement que l'interdisciplinarité correspond aux directives européennes, mais qu'elle est aussi une exigence de la recherche pour la réalisation de projets d'innovation où l'intersection des compétences contribue à délinéer des perspectives nouvelles. De fait, les universités fondatrices présentaient des situations très différentes. L'Université Roma Tre est partie prenante à travers une Formation doctorale dédiée à *l'Innovazione e valutazione dei sistemi d'istruzione*, qui développe des recherches axées sur les sujets suivants:

- didactique curriculaire;
- technologies de l'instruction;
- évaluation;
- recherches comparatives internationales;
- médiation culturelle dans les musées;
- pédagogie spéciale;

- études sur la pédagogie Montessori;
- modèles d'analyse des langages naturels et artificiels et éducation linguistique;
- différences de genre dans l'éducation.

L'Université Paris X est représentée par l'École Doctorale 139, intitulée *Connaissances, langage, modélisation*, qui rassemble huit formations doctorales (Éthologie, Mathématiques, Information & Communication, Sciences de l'Éducation, Sciences du langage, Philosophie, Psychologie, Sciences physiques et de l'ingénieur). Certaines de ces équipes ont des thématiques de recherche communes avec la Formation doctorale de Roma Tre: didactique, technologies, évaluation et évaluation comparée, langues naturelles et langages artificiels, genres, ce qui a permis que:

- des doctorants relevant de disciplines différentes aient participé aux séminaires et colloques proposés au sein de l'EDI (Sciences de l'Éducation, Information & Communication, Sciences du langage, Philosophie);
- aient pu s'établir des co-tutelles d'une part dans le domaine des Sciences de l'Éducation, d'autre part entre Sciences de l'Éducation (Roma Tre) et Sciences du langage (Paris X), enfin dans le domaine des Sciences du langage (Paris X et Potsdam).

Le doctorat à la Faculté de Philosophie de l'Université de Potsdam développe, dans le domaine des langues modernes, des axes de recherche orientés aux sujets suivants:

- histoire des sciences du langage;
- enseignement des langues modernes;
- linguistique textuelle et compréhension de textes;
- linguistique comparée des langues romanes, germaniques et slaves;
- linguistique fonctionnelle et étude de catégories fonctionnelles (temporalité, aspectualité, modalité, évidentialité);
- linguistique et nouveaux médias;
- linguistique de corpus, utilisation de méthodes de la linguistique fonctionnelle;
- analyse de locutions figées et semi-figées;
- grammaticalisation dans les langues modernes.

L'Université d'Avignon et pays de Vaucluse participe avec la formation doctorale de *Sciences de la communication* assurée par le Laboratoire Culture & Communication et relevant de l'École doctorale 483 Sciences sociales. Ce doctorat reprend les axes de recherche du Laboratoire sur l'approche communicationnelle des faits culturels:

- production du statut patrimonial des objets culturels;
- dispositifs de médiation des savoirs et de la culture (exposition, festival, écrits informatisés);
- réception des œuvres (publics de la forme festivalière, des salles de cinéma).

Grâce à Avignon, l'École profite aussi du Programme International de Doctorat *Muséologie, Médiation, Patrimoine* qui est conjoint à l'Université d'Avignon et à l'Université du

Québec à Montréal. L'École Doctorale en *Sciences Humaines* de l'Université de Foggia étudie les thèmes suivants:

- didactique des biens culturels et naturels;
- technologies de l'enseignement;
- *game studies*;
- éducation des adultes;
- différences de genre en éducation;
- méthodologie de la recherche philologique et littéraire;
- tradition classique et littérature moderne;
- formes de la communication antique/moderne;
- informatique pour les sciences humaines.

Les lignes de convergence des équipes de recherche des différentes universités concernent l'attention, à partir de plusieurs points de vue, au rôle social et éducatif du chercheur ce qui a conduit à la dénomination *Culture, éducation, communication* pour l'École. Les croisements intéressent généralement la philosophie et les retombées sociales des savoirs, entre autres dans l'éducation, la didactique et la langue maternelle ou les langues étrangères, les processus de communication et la transmission des connaissances. Entre les sciences de l'éducation et les sciences du langage on a encore des intersections importantes au moins dans deux secteurs: les grandes recherches comparatives internationales sur la compréhension de la lecture et, dans le secteur de la médiation culturelle dans les musées, le problème de la compréhension des messages de la part du public. Les nombreuses thèses réalisées en co-tutelle tiennent compte de l'orientation suivie.

Les universités engagées dans la constitution de l'École ont décidé, en harmonie avec les indicateurs de Dublin, de poursuivre les objectifs suivants:

- assurer une formation de haute qualité à la recherche, qui inclue l'expérience scientifique et didactique offerte par d'autres établissements européens que celui dans lequel les doctorants sont inscrits;
- proposer l'occasion de se familiariser avec les diverses tâches qui incombent au chercheur, permettant aux doctorants d'acquérir des compétences techniques transversales aux disciplines;
- développer la connaissance de langues et cultures diverses de l'Union Européenne, à travers les nombreuses rencontres qui montrent pragmatiquement que l'on ne peut communiquer sans maîtriser plusieurs langues;
- créer la préfiguration d'un réseau international de jeunes chercheurs pour encourager la constitution de partenariats y compris à travers des projets européens.

ACTIVITÉS DE L'ÉCOLE DOCTORALE INTERNATIONALE *CULTURE, ÉDUCATION, COMMUNICATION*

RÉUNIONS DU CONSEIL

Comme établi dans la convention, le Conseil a été formé de deux membres pour chaque université. On considère comme membre de droit le coordinateur du doctorat ou de l'école doctorale de l'université nationale partenaire, tandis que un second membre est élu par le Conseil du doctorat ou de l'école doctorale nationale.

Au cours du premier mandat quadriennal, le Conseil a été composé des professeurs suivants:

- pour l'Université Roma Tre, Benedetto Vertecchi, coordinateur du doctorat en *Innovazione e valutazione dei sistemi d'istruzione* (membre de droit) et Emma Nardi (membre élu);
- pour l'Université Paris X, Danielle Leeman, directrice de l'École Doctorale 139 (membre de droit) et Didier Franck (membre élu 2005-2006) puis Bruno Lefebvre (membre élu 2007-2008);
- pour l'Université de Potsdam, Gerda Haßler, directrice de l'École doctorale en *Linguistique théorique et appliquée* et Heidemarie Sarter (depuis 2008), directrice de l'École doctorale en *Didactique des langues étrangères*;
- pour la Faculté de Lettres de l'Université de Lisbonne Ernesto D'Andrade (membre de droit);
- pour l'Université d'Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse, Jean Davallon (membre de droit), Hana Gottesdiener (membre élu);
- pour l'Université de Foggia Franca Pinto Minerva (membre de droit) e Pierpaolo Limone (membre élu).

Les réunions du Conseil ont eu lieu régulièrement tous les six mois, comme l'établit la convention.

ORGANISATION D'ACTIVITÉS POUR LES DOCTORANTS

Un des premiers soucis du Conseil a été d'organiser des activités pour les doctorants afin de leur offrir des opportunités ultérieures de formation et de connaissance réciproque. Dans un premier moment, les réunions du Conseil ont ainsi été l'occasion de séminaires adressés aux doctorants de l'université où se déroulait le Conseil. L'idée était de «faire mutuellement connaissance» en exploitant les compétences des professeurs qui se déplaçaient, sur des thèmes de réflexion interdisciplinaire. Un premier séminaire à Rome (décembre 2006) fut dédié au *Statuto della modellizzazione in Linguistica, Etologia, Pedagogia sperimentale. Per uno statuto interdisciplinare nelle scienze umane*, et un second séminaire, à Lisbonne (décembre 2007), à *Écriture, lecture, langage*.

Mais le plus important était de faire se rencontrer les doctorants des universités représentées dans l'École. En 2006 et en 2007 ont ainsi été organisées à Paris X deux universités européennes d'été. Par la suite, aux colloques de Veroli et de Vieste, les doctorants ont été invités à présenter leur activité de recherche et à en discuter avec leurs pairs et les professeurs. Les volontaires ont soumis un résumé à un Comité scientifique, composé des membres du Conseil. Deux professeurs, appartenant à des universités différentes de celle de l'auteur, ont lu le résumé et exprimé un jugement selon trois catégories: à accepter, à réviser, à refuser.

Afin de donner plus d'ampleur aux initiatives, l'appel à propositions a été ouvert à des universités externes à l'École. Au colloque de Veroli ont ainsi participé des doctorants des universités de Bari, Ferrara, Foggia, Lecce (ISUFI), Modena e Reggio Emilia, Padova, Torino, Udine (38 participants); à celui de Vieste des doctorants des universités de Foggia, Lecce (ISUFI), Modena e Reggio Emilia, Torino, Udine et de l'École du Louvre (36 participants).

Dans l'année académique 2008-2009, le Conseil a commencé à réfléchir à la possibilité d'offrir un calendrier complet des activités de formation à échelle européenne pour les doctorants. L'Université Roma Tre a pris la responsabilité de l'initiative en préparant le programme des rencontres destinées aux doctorants, distribué dans toutes les universités de l'École dès le début de l'année académique. Pour 2009-2010, le Conseil espère pouvoir élargir l'offre.

ARCHIVE DES THÈSES DOCTORALES

Dans l'ensemble des universités qui font partie de l'École, le nombre total des étudiants inscrits aux différents doctorats est de plusieurs centaines. Il est donc impossible d'organiser des séminaires pour tous. Afin d'encourager la diffusion des connaissances et la conscience du travail qu'on fait à l'intérieur de l'École, on a réalisé un recensement des thèses en cours. Les doctorants ont rempli un formulaire avec le titre de la thèse, un bref résumé, des mots-clé et une bibliographie de base. On peut consulter l'archive à la page <http://scuoladottorale.diima.unisa.it/>.

DÉVELOPPEMENT DE COMPÉTENCES TRANSVERSALES

Dans une École pluridisciplinaire, les doctorants ne peuvent pas être tous engagés dans les mêmes initiatives du point de vue des contenus. C'est pour cette raison que le Conseil a décidé d'organiser des activités pour permettre aux futurs chercheurs d'apprendre à maîtriser certains des outils les plus importants de la communication scientifique.

Les propositions présentées à Veroli ont mis en évidence que les doctorants ne sont pas toujours conscients des caractéristiques qu'un bon résumé doit respecter. Du fait que la participation aux conférences internationales passe par l'acceptation d'une proposition résu-

mée examinée par un comité scientifique, on a consacré deux sessions du colloque de Vieste à un séminaire de formation pour enseigner comment écrire un résumé.

L'idée d'une formation active aidant à construire la pensée théorique et à la valoriser a été acceptée très favorablement par les doctorants. Pour cela, en prévision du colloque qui aura lieu à Bressanone en septembre 2009, le Conseil a décidé de confier aux doctorants les tâches qui sont généralement entreprises par le comité scientifique de la conférence:

- trouver un thème pour le colloque à partir des résumés contenus dans l'archive des thèses doctorales;
- écrire l'appel à propositions, précisant en outre les règles et les échéances à respecter par les contributeurs;
- composer un comité qui relise et évalue les résumés;
- s'occuper de la communication avec les candidats à contribution pour s'assurer qu'ils fassent les modifications nécessaires.

Le travail des doctorants et leurs choix seront évidemment contrôlés par le Conseil.

Une autre compétence transversale considérée très importante par le Conseil est la capacité de présenter publiquement son propre travail, de produire des présentations digitales de façon intelligente, de trouver un style propre qui puisse susciter l'intérêt du public et en maintenir l'attention sans renoncer à la rigueur scientifique. Dans le cas de l'École, cet aspect s'avère complexe à cause de la langue. En effet, on demande aux doctorants de s'exprimer en français, en italien ou en anglais à condition que personne n'utilise sa langue maternelle. Il s'agit d'une décision qui impose à chaque doctorant de prendre conscience de sa capacité à s'exprimer dans une langue étrangère, du fait qu'on ne peut pas travailler à l'échelle internationale sans maîtriser au moins une langue étrangère et par conséquent de s'engager dans l'étude des langues européennes.

COMMUNICATION

Bien qu'on puisse assurer des rencontres régulières entre les doctorants, la diffusion des informations a besoin évidemment d'autres canaux d'information. Chaque partenaire de l'École a son propre site sur lequel figurent les activités internationales aussi. Le Tab. 1 fournit la liste des sites et les adresses. Le site propre de l'EDI est accueilli par celui de Roma Tre à l'adresse <http://lps2.uniroma3.it/edi/>.

La visibilité externe de l'École est aussi assurée par la présence sur les moteurs de recherche (par exemple Google).

Université	Adresse du site
Roma Tre	http://lps2.uniroma3.it/dottorato/
Paris X	http://www.ed-139.com

Potsdam	http://www.uni-potsdam.de/romanistik/studium/edi/index.html
Lisbona	http://www.fl.ul.pt/
Avignon et Pays de Vaucluse	http://www.univ-avignon.fr/fr/international/doctorat-international.html
Foggia	http://www.design.unifg.it/

Tab. 1 - Sites de l'École Doctorale Internationale *Culture, éducation, communication*

INTELLIGENT WEB TEACHER

Bien qu'ils soient très utiles, les sites ne permettent pas d'interagir. IWT (*Intelligent Web Teacher*) est une plateforme créée précisément pour l'École, sur laquelle les doctorants des universités concernées peuvent communiquer entre eux entre un colloque et l'autre. Selon le projet de la plateforme, les doctorants doivent apprendre en particulier à :

- rédiger leur *curriculum vitae* selon le standard européen;
- comparer les règlements doctoraux des pays représentés dans l'École;
- écrire collectivement des propositions de projets à présenter en réponse aux appels d'offre européens.

L'archive des thèses doctorales est lui-aussi géré à l'aide de l'IWT.

Au cours du séminaire de Spoleto (11-12 avril 2008), la plateforme IWT, précédemment expérimentée seulement par les doctorants de Roma Tre, a été présentée à toutes les composantes de l'École au cours d'un séminaire théorique et pratique.

PUBLICATIONS

La dernière phase de toute recherche concerne sa diffusion afin de la rendre disponible à l'ensemble de la communauté scientifique. A ce propos, l'École a assuré aux doctorants qui ont participé aux colloques des canaux pour la publication de leur contribution. Les actes de la première université européenne d'été (Paris, juin-juillet 2006) ont été publiés dans les Cahiers de l'ED 139.

Les actes du colloque de Veroli (septembre 2007) ont été publiés dans deux numéros successifs de *Cadmo. Giornale italiano di Pedagogia sperimentale (La creatività. Percorsi di invenzione)*, coordonné par Marco Svolacchia, XV, 2, 2007; *Educazione e linguaggi. Temi di intersezione*, coordonné par Emma Nardi, XVI, 1, 2008). *Cadmo* est une revue internationale certifiée dans le Social Sciences Citation Index. La publication des essais a donc été soumise aux règles de révision de la International Scientific Information.

Les actes du colloque de Potsdam (mai 2008) seront publiés en 2009 à Münster par Nodius Publikationen. Ce volume est formée par les présentations des doctorants à Vieste.

CO-TUTELLES

Le Conseil a encouragé la réalisation des thèses en co-tutelle afin de respecter les recommandations de l'Union Européenne sur l'internationalisation des études doctorales. Le 17 avril 2009 est la date de soutenance des deux premières thèses en co-tutelle, devant un jury italo-français. Actuellement les doctorants qui travaillent en cotutelle sont 14.

PRÉSENTATION DE PROJETS

Pour faire face au manque d'argent, le Conseil s'est engagé à présenter un projet Marie Curie. Même si on a passé la première phase de la sélection et obtenu un jugement positif sur le profil des postulants, le projet n'a pas été financé. Réfléchir sur les raisons de l'insuccès nous a aidés à comprendre que pour présenter des propositions de financement à l'Union Européenne, il faut renoncer à impliquer toute l'École et se concentrer sur des aspects plus circonscrits.

Un deuxième projet, présenté au Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca italiana, est encore en phase d'évaluation.

ÉVALUATION

Après quatre ans d'activité le Conseil a décidé de soumettre son activité à une procédure d'évaluation. Comme l'European Universities Association n'organise pas d'évaluation au niveau doctoral, le Conseil a adopté une démarche largement suivies pour l'évaluation des structures de recherche et qui se déroule en plusieurs phases:

- rédaction d'un rapport d'autoévaluation;
- désignation d'une commission internationale formée par cinq membres;
- organisation à Rome d'une réunion entre le Conseil et la Commission.

Les évaluateurs ont d'abord rédigé un rapport individuel et, après la réunion, un rapport collectif à la suite duquel le Conseil a pris, pour le mandat successif, les engagements suivants:

- définir les doctorants de l'EDI en exigeant un engagement personnel des inscrits;
- encourager l'élection de représentants des doctorants de l'EDI;
- produire un calendrier au moins partiel des leçons de l'EDI;
- commencer à assurer, en voie expérimentale, quelques cours à distance sur la plateforme IWT;
- commencer à réfléchir sur l'attribution de crédits pour les activités de l'EDI;
- définir des indicateurs quantitatifs (nombre de thèse en cotutelle, organisation d'un séminaire par an, deux réunions par an du Conseil, pourcentage de participation des doctorants de l'EDI aux initiatives);

- publier les Cahiers de l'EDI (une publication par an);
- constituer un comité scientifique auquel adresser un rapport annuel rédigé par le directeur et approuvé par le conseil et par les représentants des doctorants.

BILAN DES ACTIVITÉS RÉALISÉES PAR L'ÉCOLE DOCTORALE INTERNATIONALE *CULTURE, ÉDUCATION, COMMUNICATION*

POINTS DE FORCE

Après quatre années d'activité, l'École commence à s'affirmer comme une réalité internationale stable. En Italie, cela se concrétise par la participation croissante de doctorants d'autres universités aux manifestations organisées par l'École. Ainsi le Conseil a malgré de nombreuses difficultés réussi à réaliser un projet extrêmement significatif au niveau européen, du fait que les écoles doctorales internationales dans le secteur des sciences humaines sont encore une réalité pratiquement inconnue.

Ce caractère pionnier présente l'avantage de permettre d'inventer, mais aussi le désavantage de ne pas pouvoir s'inspirer d'expériences déjà éprouvées.

L'attractivité de l'École à l'égard des universités externes est elle aussi un point de force. Au colloque de Veroli, on a eu la participation des doctorants des universités de Bari, Ferrara, Foggia, Lecce, Modena e Reggio Emilia, Padova, Udine, Torino; à celui de Vieste, des doctorants de Foggia, Lecce, Modena e Reggio Emilia, Torino, Udine, de l'École du Louvre et de Potsdam.

La régularité des actions réalisées est sans doute un point de force, vu qu'une école internationale n'existe que si les membres qui la composent se rencontrent pour travailler ensemble. Les conseils ont eu lieu régulièrement. Les doctorants ont eu de nombreuses occasions pour se rencontrer, se connaître, présenter leurs travaux, apprendre à travers l'expérience.

Un élément de succès de l'École est représenté par la capacité d'attirer des financements externes.

L'Université franco-allemande a très favorablement accueilli la constitution de l'École et a donc assuré aux universités de Paris X et Potsdam des financements qui ont permis la mobilité de doctorants et professeurs pendant trois ans, par le biais de quatre collèges doctoraux binationaux (Mathématiques, Philosophie, Sciences du langage, Sciences physiques).

De la même façon, les universités d'été et les colloques ont été possibles grâce aux financements accordés par diverses institutions, lesquels ont non seulement permis d'organiser les activités, mais aussi de payer les frais d'hébergement et séjour pour tous les doctorants de l'École, et d'assurer des prix très étudiés pour ceux des autres universités.

En ce qui concerne les financements, il faut rappeler que la plateforme IWT a été mise à la disposition de l'École par le Centro di Eccellenza *Learning & Knowledge* de l'Université de Salerno, dirigé par Saverio Salerno.

POINTS DE FAIBLESSE

Un point de faiblesse est le degré d'engagement variable des membres de l'École dans les activités.

Aucun étudiant portugais n'a jamais participé aux initiatives internationales. L'Université d'Uppsala, initialement intéressée à entrer dans l'École, y a renoncé par manque de financements: il n'est de fait pas acceptable que, en plus de la vie professionnelle normale et des tâches institutionnelles habituelles, on s'investisse dans un travail absorbant supplémentaire sans que la structure créée soit dotée de ressources spécifiques.

Voilà donc un des points de faiblesse à signaler: le manque de fonds structuraux. L'École ne dispose de ressources ni humaines, ni matérielles. Le développement de cette instance ne peut pas non plus compter sur une structure administrative. C'est aussi pour cette raison qu'il n'a pas été possible de convoquer le comité d'orientation prévu par la convention.

Le Conseil de l'École a décidé de se soumettre à la procédure d'évaluation non seulement pour être conseillé sur l'amélioration à apporter à la qualité de sa propre activité, mais aussi pour donner une visibilité institutionnelle au projet qui est en train de se développer et ainsi bénéficier d'une véritable reconnaissance, à la hauteur des recommandations de l'Union pour la construction d'une politique scientifique européenne.



Women and Technology: Gender Differences in Museums

*Cinzia Angelini, Alessandro Rizzo**

Abstract

As a social construction constantly adapting to cultural environments, the ICT is penetrating every field and changing the approach to work as well as to leisure. This is the case of museums, where traditional exhibitions are turning into digital ones.

However, the 2007 ISTAT Report points on the persistence of gender differences in the use of technology.

Since research shows that adult people, mostly women, are the most frequent museum visitors, are gender differences detectable in the relationship between women/men and technology in museums?

This case study developed at the Scuderie del Quirinale in June 2008 tries to find an answer to this question by focusing on the introduction of technology in museums and gender differences.

Keywords

Gender differences, museum, women and technology, museum visitors, information and communication technology.

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1. TECHNOLOGY, MUSEUMS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Technology is a social construction constantly changing in the process of finding its social environment. If we look at some of the first and commonest technological tools invented, we see, for example, that the telephone had little success when marketed as a substitute for telegrams, but when it was installed in private homes, prestige and network effects rapidly made it popular until its recent challenge by mobile phones; the fax machine, invented in 1843, found its first practical applications in the early 20th century when it was used to transmit photographs to daily newspapers, but it did not really find its place until it entered offices in the '70s and '80s.

Similarly, in the past 15 years, the Internet - initially designed as a network for connecting computers - has become nearly synonymous with the web, which once meant applications using the http protocol and which is turning always more into an environment for social communications (Trant & Bearman, 2008).

The pervasive diffusion of technology in every field makes obsolete and outdated any context which is not "technologised" and this is true for museums as well, that now have to meet new issues and challenges.

When museums first 'opened' their new Web branches in the mid-1990s, they measured success by the number of visitors that came through their doors, much as they had in the brick and mortar museum. [...] there wasn't much question that success was measured in quantity (Trant & Bearman, 2008, p. 4).

Since then, many studies have been conducted on how technology can improve the cultural offer provided by museums. Gaia *et al.* (2005) wonder if museums and the web have come near to a real integration during these years. Though acknowledging that today web sites are very important for museum promotion, it is not easy to find a whole museum or even a temporary exhibition structurally designed to be integrated with the web. Usually it is the web that adapts itself to the museum by describing and supporting the real event, but the real event could live without the web.

An interesting position is the one held by Giaccardi (2004) who introduces the definition of *virtual museum* indicating the process of duplication of a physical museum and its objects made possible by information technology. Therefore, *virtual museum* is used as a synonym for multimedia products or web sites capable of providing new experiences of a specific museum and its heritage. Through technology, cultural artefacts can be digitally reproduced so that any kind of information becomes readily available and easily consulted, whereas remote visitors in a virtual museum are free to look for, combine and re-contextualize the information they need according to their interests.

This leads to investigating the role of museums today, inventing new models by exploiting the diverse possibilities provided by technology and re-inventing the role of visitors.

In fact, the interaction with visitors has always been one of the main concerns for the personnel working with museums (Satta, 2005). Since participation in museum events cannot be imposed, it is necessary to speak the language of would-be visitors to find new ways of attracting people by meeting their expressed or unexpressed requests. This is also suggested by Bollo (2003) who describes two different kinds of visitors: if on the one hand there is the image of a “socially-situated” person (in terms of educational qualification, profession, age and gender), on the other a new attention is given to the emotional reaction in approaching a work of art which is not simply considered as a symbol of social status, but also as a cultural experience in itself. This research, as many others before, confirms the data on the socio-demographic characteristics of museum visitors: younger than 65, with a secondary or tertiary educational qualification and a constant attention to cultural events in general (museums, new books, shows etc.).

A description of the actual visitor profile is also given by Solima (2008) who refers to the Italian contemporary scenario after rapidly sketching how research on museum audience developed throughout the 20th century. In particular, it is in the ‘80s and ‘90s that research begins to focus on specific issues such as how to design tours inside the museum or how to make the museum attractive by satisfying people’s motivations. This very aspect seems to be linked to the competitive pressure exerted in the ‘90s by the Internet, thus causing the penetration of technology in museums and a new concept of the visitor who is no longer considered as the recipient of a product, but becomes a client whose expectations have to be caught and met.

In recent years, research has tried to isolate clusters of visitors who share similar needs and require a similar offer. But the popularity of the Internet and of more general web-based devices draws the attention on those visitors whose interaction with museums is addressed both to their physical and digital collections in order to better understand their profile and their approach with the online experience (Solima, 2008).

However, even within the borders of the technologically advanced world, there are areas in which technological illiteracy can be easily detected: research and data show that in the industrialised world men and women have different approaches to technology and the diverse level of ability has given rise to the Gender Digital Divide, a complex and articulated phenomenon based on cultural, cognitive and economic aspects (Kennedy, Wellman & Clement, 2003) and that becomes larger or narrower depending on age and other factors, such as the socio-demographic ones.

If we consider the Italian situation as it appears in the 2007 Report of the Italian National Institute for Statistics (Istat), the existing contradictions are immediately visible: if there is no gender gap for people aged below 34, a steady increase starts with those older than 35

and widens with age so that a significant gender difference characterizes the 55-to-59 age group. But also among those admitting their use of computers, and of the Internet in particular, differences between sexes emerge: while women mostly search the web for information on health and food, for booking trips or for purchasing tickets, men prefer to download videogames, pictures, music, to buy software and hardware for computers, to use the web for online services (e.g. banking operations) etc.

Suggestions for the present case study mainly came from these Istat data, from the existing literature on the introduction of technology in museums and from the results of research showing that women are likely to visit museums more often than men (Nardi, 2004; Solima, 2001).

In fact, if the preceding considerations about the gender gap in the use of the ICT are true, and if a difference also exists in the gender distribution of visitors in museums, would women and men behave differently if traditional exhibitions were integrated with various kinds of ICT? And would there be a gender difference in the use of the ICT in museums related to familiarity with technology in general?

2. THE SCUDERIE DEL QUIRINALE: DESCRIPTION OF A CASE STUDY

2.1 HYPOTHESES FORMULATION

These two questions were the starting point for formulating the following research hypotheses:

- *women and men have a different relationship with the introduction of technology in traditional exhibitions.*
- *the different relationship women and men have with the introduction of technology in traditional exhibitions depends on their familiarity with technology in general.*

Once the hypotheses had been set, the research was designed in all its phases.

2.2 SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

The first step was to decide about the museum: among the variety of museums in Rome attended by any kind of people - young and old, tourists and Romans, learned and less learned and using more or less sophisticated technology, the choice fell on the Scuderie del Quirinale for two main reasons:

- it is always complicated to select a sample among the visitors of a museum because they are generally heterogeneous so that the results are difficult to be compared and generalized to a whole population (Nardi, 2004). In order to reduce this supposed heterogeneity, the research was limited to this important exhibition centre where during the period of the research activity (June 2008) there was a temporary

exhibition on the Italian 19th Century, *Ottocento*. Due to the cultural theme of the exhibition, a very specific public was likely to attend this museum: mostly Italian, mostly highly qualified, mostly adult. These expectations were confirmed by the socio-demographic data collected and this made the comparison easier;

- *Ottocento* was a traditional exhibition and visitors were supposed to know that they wouldn't find much technology during the visit. Our intention was to understand if the visit would have been more appreciated if integrated with technological tools and if this appreciation would vary according to gender.

A probability sample was finally selected, drawn randomly from the wider population of the visitors attending the museum in the days of the research.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following step concerned the methodology of investigation. The choice was between observation and administration of questionnaires. As Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2005) say:

in observation studies, investigators are able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features (p. 188).

This means that if the person under observation is not aware of it, investigators can record a spontaneous non-verbal behaviour. But the same authors also add that:

because case study observations take place over an extended period of time, researchers can develop more intimate and informal relationships with those they are observing (p. 188).

Unfortunately, this is not the case of a museum, where researchers are supposed to meet the representatives of their sample only once. Furthermore, the complete participant can observe a restricted number of people at the same time, so a prolonged period of observation or a large number of observers would be necessary to gather data in a museum full of visitors.

On the other hand,

the questionnaire will always be an intrusion into the life of the respondent, be it in terms of time taken to complete the questionnaire, the level of threat or sensitivity of the questions, or the possible invasion of privacy. Questionnaire respondents are not passive data providers for researchers; they are subjects not objects of research (p. 245);

but it also allows to get into touch with a great amount of possible respondents in a very short time.

In this specific case study, the questionnaire seemed to be the proper tool for reaching a high number of visitors and collect as much information as possible in a few days. Therefore, an easy-to-use questionnaire was designed. It was divided into four sections:

1. *use of the audio-guide*: this was asked separately because of a specific request on behalf of the organisers of the exhibition who had prepared an audio-guide whose contents were adjusted to the supposed cultural expectations of the visitors. Therefore, in the audio-guide the explanation of the main works of the Italian Ottocento presented in the exhibition was integrated with other cultural products of the same historical period, such as operatic music. The audio-guide was the only technological tool available for visitors;
2. *possible use of other technology during the visit*: visitors were asked if the visit would have been more pleasant if integrated with technology such as 3D installations, virtual tours, Internet connections and why;
3. *everyday use of technology*: this section aimed at detecting visitors' familiarity with technology in general and the possible link between the everyday use of technology and a preference for finding it inside museums as well (cross analysis between section 2 and 3 of the questionnaire);
4. *socio-demographic data*.

2.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

In the space of a few days, 158 questionnaires were collected, 92 from women and 66 from men. Though not enough for generalising the results (which was not the purpose of this case study), due to the homogeneity of the sample, the number of questionnaires was considered appropriate to answer the research questions.

In fact, the socio-demographic data collected in Section 4 showed similar characteristics in terms of educational qualification and age, thus confirming the initial expectations: among the visitors involved in the study, the majority were women, whereas nearly the whole sample was composed of adults with a high educational title:

- 58.2% of women, 41.8% of men;
- 79.8% is older than 26 and younger than 65 (81.6% of women, 79.6% of men);
- 32.3% have a high school diploma (31.5% of women, 33.3% of men) while 58.2% have a university degree (60.8% of women, 54.6% of men);
- 90.5% of all respondents have a secondary or a tertiary educational qualification (92.3% of women, 87.9% of men).

The visitors and the audio-guide

In Section 1 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked about the audio-guide: after ticking if they had used it or not, they could express their opinion on it or the reasons for not using it by selecting among a list of given items.

The results show that there are more women (+7.2%) in the group of those who used the audio-guide and more men (+8.2%) in the group of those who didn't use it (Fig. 1). Women more often than men describe the audio-guide as user-friendly, useful and rich in information, whereas men often refer to it as pleasant.

Among the respondents who did not use it, women more often than men say that they prefer paper guides, while men more often than women say that they prefer guided tours and find the audio-guide boring.

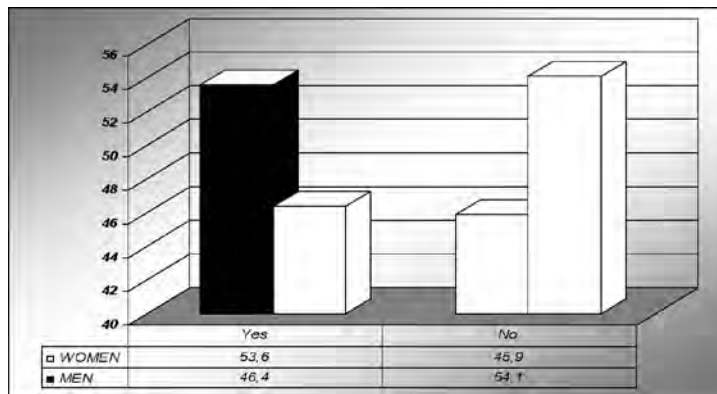


Fig. 1 - Percentages of respondents using or not using the audio-guide. Gender distribution

The visitors and the ICT

In Section 2, respondents were asked to express their opinions about the introduction, during the visit, of more sophisticated technology than the audio-guide (3D installations, virtual tours, Internet connections etc.). After choosing among Yes, No and Don't Know, they had to motivate their answer among two lists of given items (one referring to Yes, the other to No).

Within the *Yes* group, there are more women (+8.8%); men are more numerous (+6.4%) in the *No* group:

- in the *Yes* group, women more often than men say that the integration with more sophisticated technology would make the visit richer and more interesting; men more than women appreciate the innovative aspect of technology and point on their familiarity with technological tools;
- in the *No* group, women more often than men say that they are not familiar with technology or that they prefer traditional visits because those integrated with technology are boring; men more often than women find technology distracting from the visit.

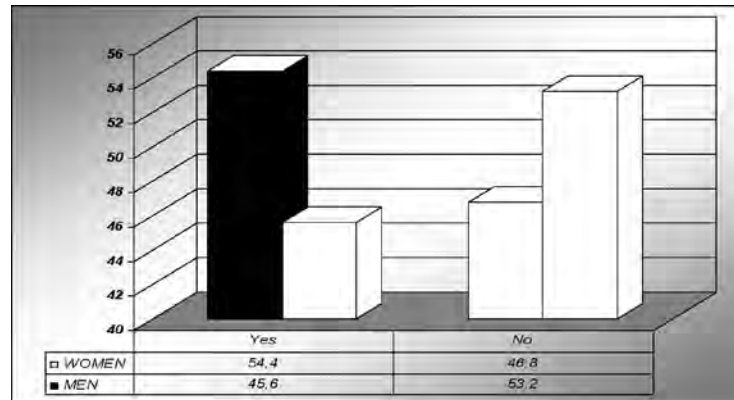


Fig. 2 - Percentages of women and men who would prefer the introduction of more sophisticated technology during the visit (3D installations, virtual tours, Internet connections)

The data show that women would have appreciated technology during the visit more than men and this result seems to be against the more general stereotype about men having a greater disposition to the use of technology.

Everyday use of technology

In Section 3, respondents were to select the hours spent on technology every day (desktops, palmtops, CD/DVD readers etc.) and to choose among four reasons for using technology: work, services (online banking, booking etc.), e-commerce, leisure time (videogames, music etc.).

In this case, the results on men's appreciation of innovations and of their familiarity with technology are consistent with the data concerning the reasons for using it every day. Men reach higher values than women in all categories but work, where women have the highest value. However, work remains the primary reason for using technology both for men and women (Fig. 3).

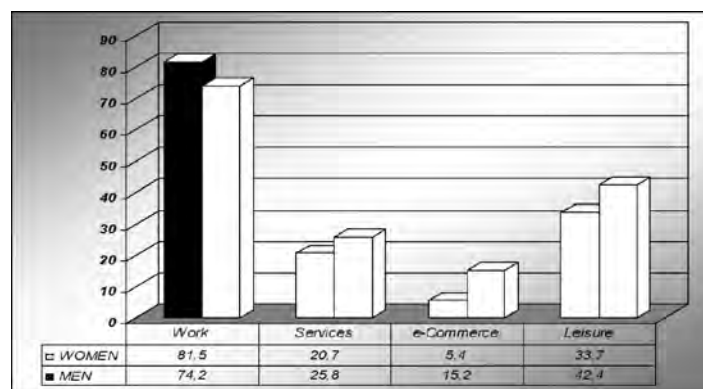


Fig. 3 - Reasons for Using Technology

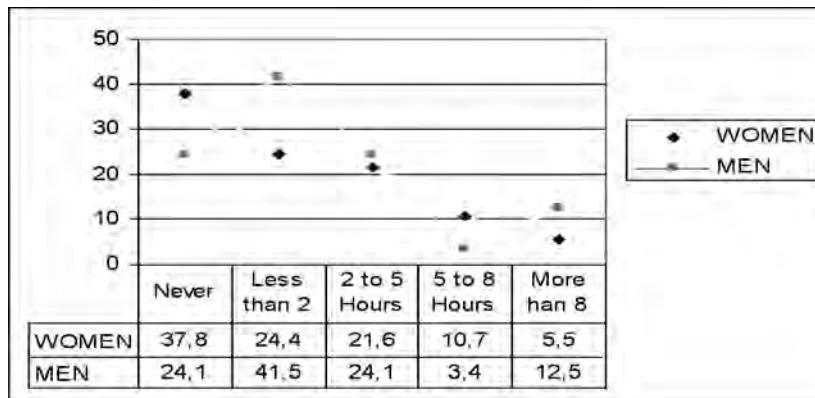


Fig. 4 - Percentages of women and men who would not prefer the introduction of more sophisticated technology during the visit (3D installations, virtual tours, Internet connections)

In the case of those visitors who would not prefer the introduction of more sophisticated technology during the visit (women: 46.6% of the whole female sample; men: 63.2% of the whole male sample), there is a significant correlation with the everyday use of technology (Fig. 4):

- regarding women, those who spend less time with technology every day are more likely to prefer exhibitions which are not integrated with sophisticated technology;
- regarding men, there is a similar regular distribution in the central items (less than 2 hours; from 2 to 5 hours; from 5 to 8 hours) which, if grouped, represent the biggest part of the whole sample (69%).

3. HYPOTHESES CONFIRMATION

Considering the two hypotheses from which the present case study took its origins, the data showed different trends.

First hypothesis: *Women and men have a different relationship with the introduction of technology in traditional exhibitions.*

Although men are generally supposed to be more inclined than women to use technology, the female respondents interviewed in the Scuderie del Quirinale seem to go in the opposite direction at least for what concerns the integration of traditional exhibitions with technological tools, since most of them would have appreciated technology during the visit more than men.

This confirms the hypothesis that women and men have a different relationship with the introduction of sophisticated technology in traditional exhibitions.

Second hypothesis: *The different relationship women and men have with the introduction*

of technology in traditional exhibitions depends on their familiarity with technology in general.

In the case of the Scuderie del Quirinale, this hypothesis is partially confirmed by the data commented in Fig. 4 which illustrate a positive correlation between the hours of use of technology in general and the interest for the introduction of technological tools during the visit, even if there is no apparent gender difference: both women and men who have little or no familiarity with technology in general, would not like to find sophisticated tools in the museum.

Though not intended for a generalisation of the results, the present case could be a suggestion for further and wider studies on the gender approach to technology in museums in general.

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Scena *versus* museo: ripensare il museo attraverso la *performance*

Géraldine Sfez*

Abstract

Performance, as live art that may be performed in gallery or in streets, defies precise definition and localization. *Performance* modifies both the notion of “work of art” and the museum’s limits. Yet, whereas the performers try to escape from the museum, to “leave” it, they cannot help using museum tools, such as documentation, recording, and archive. The performances of the American artist Vito Acconci are relevant to point out this ambiguity: each of his gesture is captured and memorized by a camera. Recording is not secondary anymore but rather constitutes the principal part of the work. Through an analysis of Acconci’s works, I emphasize a double paradox: performances including museum paradigms and museums absorbing “immaterial” and ephemeral practices.

Keywords

Performance, museum, stage, documentation, traces.

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“Come un elefante in un negozio di porcellane”, tale è l'immagine che l'artista Vito Acconci usa per pensare il rapporto della *performance* al museo. Attraverso quest'immagine, vediamo immediatamente la dimensione sovversiva, se non addirittura distruttrice implicata dalla *performance*. Secondo l'artista, questa pratica ha immesso tre elementi nel museo: l'azione, il corpo fisico e l'effimero¹.

La nozione di *performance* o di evento sorge nel campo artistico negli anni cinquanta con gli esperimenti del Black College Mountain condotti da John Cage, Allan Kaprow, Merce Cunningham e ancora Robert Rauschenberg. La *performance* si definiva allora anzitutto, per questi artisti, per la sua autenticità (cioè in rapporto diretto con il pubblico), per la sua interdisciplinarietà (rifiuto delle categorie estetiche e della gerarchia tra le arti) e per la sua unicità (rifiuto della conservazione). Gli artisti considerano dunque la *performance* come una forma artistica al tempo stesso autentica, ibrida e unica.

In quanto evento, la *performance* costruisce il suo proprio spazio, che non dipende né dal museo né dalla scena teatrale, ma si costituisce invece in opposizione a questi spazi. Infatti, la *performance* chiama in causa tanto il museo o la galleria, quanto il teatro, prendendo partito per la vita quotidiana o per un' "altra scena" al fine di dispiegarsi. Ma per questo, la *performance* non si stacca totalmente dal paradigma museale e questo costituisce il paradosso di questa pratica che oscilla tra autenticità e registrazione. Osserveremo, attraverso il lavoro di Vito Acconci in particolare, questa tensione all'interno della *performance*, ma anche tra la *performance* e il museo. Ci sforzeremo di capire perché queste produzioni, volendo rifuggire dal museo, finiscono proprio al suo interno. Cercheremo infine di vedere in quale misura la *performance* permette di ripensare e di ridefinire la funzione del museo.

1. LA *PERFORMANCE*: RIFUGGIRE DAL MUSEO?

1.1 DEFINIRE LA *PERFORMANCE*

Non è facile definire questa pratica: dagli eventi minimalisti di George Brecht (ad esempio, sedersi successivamente su tre sedie di diversi colori) alle messe in scena spettacolari di Marina Abramovi (ad esempio, stare per quattro giorni consecutivi, in mezzo a un cumulo di ossa di animali, cantare e lavare le ossa in un rituale di purificazione), la *performance* si declina in una serie articolata di manifestazioni. La definizione proposta da Rose

¹ "Into the art space, into a world of objects and things, performance let the body loose, like a bull in a china shop: into a world of representation, performance introduced fact - into a world of mind, performance introduced flesh - into a world of universals, performance introduced the vulnerability of universals, performance introduced transience." (Acconci, 1989, pp. 353-357)

Lee Goldberg (2001), storica dell'arte e autrice di una storia della *performance* del futuro ai nostri giorni, indica l'incapacità di circoscrivere chiaramente quest'oggetto:

The work may be presented solo or with a group, (...) and performed in places ranging from an art gallery or museum to an 'alternative space', a theater, café, bar or street corner. Unlike theater, the performer is the artist, seldom a character like an actor, and the content rarely follows a traditional plot or narrative. The performance might be a series of intimate gestures or large-scale visual theater, lasting from a few minutes to many hours... (p. 8).

Osserviamo dunque che la *performance* non risponde a criteri precisi, ma al contrario si caratterizza per la sua capacità ad andare al di là di questi criteri. Goldberg prosegue:

By its very nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists. Any stricter definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself (p. 8).

Perlomeno, possiamo tenere una definizione elementare della *performance* in quanto "live art by artists". Questa pratica artistica consiste quindi nel compimento di un'azione. La *performance* risulta dalla combinazione di un'idea e di un atto, cioè di un discorso e di una presenza fisica². Acconci descrive questo processo nel modo seguente:

Performance was the literal embodiment of an idea; it was a way of denying mind-body separation; it was as if the performer were saying: look, I have this idea, but talk is cheap, so don't believe me, don't trust me - instead, step right up and touch me, my body is providing my idea by going through the motions. (Ward, Taylor & Bloomer, 2002, p. 125).

Nell'arte performativa, il corpo fisico è utilizzato sia come soggetto che come mezzo. Il corpo dell'artista esprime le sue idee. La *performance* sviluppa, in questo senso, un linguaggio specifico, un linguaggio del corpo.

1.2 *PERFORMANCE VERSUS MUSEO, PERFORMANCE VERSUS TEATRO*

Questo spazio specifico disegnato dalla *performance* è ovviamente uno spazio negativo nel senso che si coglie in reazione agli altri luoghi dell'arte. In realtà, la *performance* si de-

² La parola "*performance*" viene dall'inglese "to perform" che significa "compiere, eseguire".

finisce attraverso un doppio rifiuto, del museo ma anche del teatro. Rifiuto dell'esposizione museale da una parte e della rappresentazione dall'altra.

All'ordine del museo, alla continuità del suo discorso, la *performance* oppone il caso e l'evento. In effetti, la *performance* si basa sulla pratica del montaggio o del collage di diversi media. Quindi, alla coerenza e alla leggibilità del discorso museale, l'evento sostituisce la ripetizione, la confusione e l'assenza di narrazione.

La *performance* si definisce dall'altra parte in reazione al teatro. Questa pratica rifiuta nettamente la distinzione tradizionale tra il pubblico e la scena. (Dobbiamo quindi intendere la "scena" evocata nel titolo non come la scena teatrale, ma come un' "altra scena", cioè uno spazio in cui si svolge un evento). Infatti la *performance* dà forma a un tipo di anti-teatro, dove la scena si confonde con la sala, dove il pubblico partecipa completamente all'azione. Attraverso questa pratica si afferma quindi un teatro della vita, del gesto e dell'improvvisazione, ispirato da Antonin Artaud e dal suo "teatro della crudeltà". In questo senso, la *performance* mette in pratica la parola d'ordine dell'arte moderna: quella di confondere l'arte con la vita (Kaprow, 1993).

La *performance* si può insomma definire attraverso due principi: un principio di spostamento e un principio di combinazione. Realizzare una *performance* equivale a costruire degli spostamenti (uscire dal museo o dal teatro e scendere per la strada); ma anche ad escludere ogni idea di separazione e di limite tra il pubblico e la scena, nonché tra i diversi media. Né teatro, né danza, né pittura, la *performance* costruisce il proprio spazio che si trova, quasi sempre, fuori dai limiti³.

2. TOCCARE ED ESSERE TOCCATO DALLO SPETTATORE

2.1 GLI SPOSTAMENTI OPERATI DA VITO ACCONCI

Il lavoro dell'artista americano Vito Acconci, nato a Brooklyn nel 1940 e uno dei fondatori del movimento della *performance* e della *body art*, è particolarmente perspicuo perché si fonda per l'appunto su questo principio di spostamento.

Acconci ha cominciato la sua carriera come poeta; in seguito, verso la fine degli anni sessanta ha cercato di "uscire dallo spazio" della pagina che gli sembrava limitato, senza per questo entrare nel museo. In occasione di una delle sue prime *performance*, Acconci ha quindi deciso di scendere in strada e di seguire la gente, fino a vederla scomparire in un luogo privato. *Following Piece* (3 - 25 ottobre 1969) è un'opera importante in quanto de-

³ «*Hors-limites*», per riprendere il nome di una celebre mostra dedicata al fenomeno della *performance* al Centre Georges Pompidou negli anni novanta. (*Hors-Limites, l'art et la vie* 1952-1994, 1994, Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou).

finisce un tipo di protocollo: inanzitutto Acconci elabora un'idea, poi la mette in pratica. Abbiamo già, in questa *performance*, tutti gli elementi che caratterizzano il suo lavoro: la sua figura scarmigliata, l'idea di movimento e il rapporto tra pubblico e privato.



Fig. 1 - Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*, 1969

Questo rapporto tra pubblico e privato si trova in particolare al centro di due *performance* che si chiamano *Room Piece* e *Service Area*. In *Room Piece* (gennaio 1970), Acconci trasloca tutti i propri mobili all'intorno di una galleria che si trova dalla parte opposta di Manhattan. Per un mese, quando ha bisogno di qualcosa, come ad esempio un mobile, un oggetto, torna nella galleria per riportarli a casa.

Service Area (giugno - settembre 1970) si fonda su un principio simile. In quest'opera, Acconci si fa recapitare la sua posta al MoMA per tre mesi. Assegnando al museo una funzione di utilità piuttosto che di esposizione, Acconci cerca di integrare lo spazio del museo nella sua vita quotidiana. Così l'artista inverte le nozioni di pubblico e privato, lo spazio del museo e il suo esterno, il campo dell'arte e quello della vita. Qualsiasi elemento privato e intimo può trasformarsi in una cosa pubblica.

Il medium del video è essenziale in un tale inversione. Secondo Acconci, il video è un mezzo profondamente 'intimo', che permette appunto di tenersi faccia a faccia con lo spettatore e di parlare con lui⁴. Il video è un medium che appare insieme intimo e immediato.

⁴ "I was thinking of video as close-up, video as a place where my face on-screen faces a viewer's off-screen a place for talk, for me talking to you, the viewer." (Acconci, 1976, pp. 8-9)

2.2 PROSSIMITÀ VERSUS “NON TOCCARE”

Questo rapporto intimo alle cose è decisivo per comprendere la concezione artistica di Acconci. Se Acconci rifiuta il museo, è innanzitutto perché il museo non permette, a suo avviso, una vera intimità con le opere. Il suo lavoro consiste per l'appunto in una reazione agli avvisi “do not touch” (“si prega di non toccare”) che vediamo nei musei⁵. Acconci si spiega:

Museum-goers are automatically victimized: they're in a building with no windows, as if in a prison; they're ordered 'Do not touch'. The art is for the eyes only, and they're in a position of constant desire, hence constant frustration.” (Ward, Taylor & Bloomer, 2002, p. 11).

Acconci, invece, cerca di stabilire una prossimità con lo spettatore. Nei suoi video o nelle sue *performance*, l'artista invita quasi sempre il pubblico ad avvicinarsi, a toccarlo, o a prendere il suo posto. Ad esempio in *Theme Song* (novembre 1973), Acconci, steso per terra, si rivolge così alla camera, cioè allo spettatore : “I know you have a beautiful face... Come close to my body...”. C'è ovviamente qualcosa di paradossale, se non di perverso in quest'invito, nel senso che questa prossimità è del tutto impossibile e può soltanto essere vagheggiata.

Come vediamo in *Theme Song*, lo spettatore non è mai escluso dall'opera, ma si trova, al contrario, al centro della *performance*. In *12 pictures* (28 maggio 1969), Acconci fa del



Fig. 2 - Vito Acconci, *12 Pictures*, 1969

⁵ “I probably entered an art context for two reasons. I entered it out of a resentment of the art context. I entered it, I think, as a reaction against the ‘do not touch’ signs in a museum. Because it seemed that in every other context of life, in every other field of life, when you come upon something for the first time, you pick it up, you turn it upside down, you touch it, you smell it, you possibly taste it. But in art traditionally the viewer is here and the art is there. So the viewer is always in the position of desire. And a desire that’s frustrated because of those ‘do not touch’ signs.” Intervista ad Acconci in Boomgaard (2005).

pubblico un attore del suo lavoro. In tale occasione, Acconci si trova su un palco e scatta delle foto del pubblico. Su queste foto, possiamo vedere le espressioni di attenzione o di distrazione del pubblico. Secondo un principio di inversione, il fuori campo della sala da teatro diviene allora lo spazio dove la *performance* si svolge. Insomma, l'artista non lavora di fronte, ma piuttosto in mezzo al pubblico. Procedendo così, Acconci capovolge i codici della ricezione nel senso che lo spettatore si trova coinvolto nell'opera.

3. USCIRE DAL MUSEO O INFILTRARSI NEL MUSEO?

3.1 IMPOSSIBILITÀ DI USCIRE DAL MUSEO

Acconci rifiuta assieme la galleria, il museo e il teatro⁶. In un modo provocatorio, l'artista paragona il museo a una sorta di carcere.

La mia generazione esprimeva varie perplessità sulle istituzioni con cui lavoravamo. Avevamo tantissimi dubbi sul museo. Ci chiedevamo perché il museo non aveva finestre, o comunque pochissime, perché il museo fosse a tal punto tagliato fuori dal mondo esterno. Ci chiedevamo se quell'assenza di finestre nel museo significasse che l'arte avesse bisogno di nascondersi... L'arte è vulnerabile al punto da doversi proteggere così tanto dalla vita di tutti i giorni? [...] La mia generazione aveva questo desiderio di abbattere i muri del museo. (Cassagnau, Goudinoux & Masséra, 1999, p. 78).

Acconci, in contrapposizione alla "chiusura" del museo, cerca di introdurre apertura e movimento nell'arte. Per questo l'artista elabora diverse strategie per modificare il rapporto dell'arte alle istituzioni: uscire veramente, cioè andare in strada come in *Following Piece* o sovvertire il museo dall'interno, ovvero importare il mondo nel museo.

Ma, secondo Acconci, l'errore è stato appunto di aver tenuto assieme il mondo e il museo.

Il lavoro della mia generazione ha fatto l'esatto contrario di quanto aveva l'ambizione di fare. Non ha rotto con il sistema dell'arte. Uno dei nostri 'errori' è stato di importare

⁶ "We hated the word 'performance', we couldn't, wouldn't, call what we did 'performance'. Because 'performance' didn't appear in the middle of nowhere; 'performance' had a place, and that place by tradition was a theater, and that theater was a target, a point you went towards and an enclosure you immersed yourself in. [...] The problem with 'point' and 'enclosure' - whether it took the form of 'museum' or it took the form of 'theater' - was that it was a separate entity, set off from the world around it." (Acconci, in Ward, Taylor & Bloomer, 2002, p.124).

il mondo nel sistema dell'arte invece di smantellare il sistema dell'arte e portarlo nel mondo. (Cassagnau, Goudinoux & Masséra, 1999, p. 78).

Acconci, come gli altri *performers* degli anni Settanta, ha cercato di uscire dal museo o più radicalmente di far esplodere il sistema della galleria, di “abbattere i muri del museo”. Ma, in questa intervista, Acconci constata che, pur volendo cambiarlo, questi sono rimasti all'interno di questo stesso sistema e delle sue regole.

3.2 PARADOSSO DELLA PERFORMANCE

Vi è infatti una specie di paradosso nell'idea di *performance*. La *performance* sembra da una parte rifiutare tutti i codici dell'esposizione (ordine, classificazione ad esempio) e dall'altra non fa altro che interiorizzare il modello museale attraverso l'uso della documentazione, dell'archivio o della registrazione.

Le *performance* di Vito Acconci sono un esempio di questo paradosso: l'artista favorisce le *performance* che si realizzano a casa, in solitudine, davanti a una telecamera e i suoi gesti ripetitivi, insignificanti e quasi assurdi salire e scendere da una sedia (*Step Piece*, febbraio - novembre 1970); infilarsi una mano in bocca (*Hand & Mouth*, giugno 1970), seguire uno sconosciuto per le strade (*Following Piece*, ottobre 1969), ecc. fanno senso soltanto perché sono memorizzati da uno strumento di registrazione. La registrazione costituisce allora non solo una tecnica di conservazione, un corollario della *performance*, ma il suo principio. L'azione può essere simultaneamente registrata, riprodotta e trasmessa, sotto forma di foto, video o film.

Il paradosso attiene al fatto che questa forma artistica che all'inizio rivendicava la sua 'autenticità' e la sua 'unicità' ha generato, attorno ai suoi gesti, una serie di documenti su diversi supporti quali l'archivio, la registrazione, gli appunti, le carte geografiche. Vi è quindi una tensione tra l'immaterialità e la dimensione transitoria delle pratiche e la loro documentazione, basata sulle nuove tecnologie come il video in particolare, nel caso di Vito Acconci.

3.3 SPOSTARE I LIMITI DEL MUSEO

Se la *performance* non è quindi stata in grado di staccarsi totalmente dal museo e specificamente dai suoi modi di esposizione e di conservazione; la *performance* ha senza dubbio spostato i limiti del museo, che non è più un luogo 'chiuso' ma un luogo in cui si svolge un evento, un'esperienza.

Lo spostamento operato dalla *performance* sul museo consiste nel fare del museo una 'scena', cioè uno spazio dove un corpo in movimento e un'idea si intrecciano. Se Acconci non è riuscito a rifuggire dal museo, opere come *Room Piece* o *Service Area* ne hanno sicuramente modificato la funzione. Trasformando il museo o la galleria in ripostiglio o casella postale, l'artista ha fatto del museo uno spazio di transizione, uno spazio vivo e aperto alla vita quotidiana.

Agli avvisi “Si prega di non toccare”, Acconci e gli artisti della sua generazione hanno sostituito, in un certo modo, avvisi del tipo “Si prega di toccare: l’arte non è un mondo diverso, si può toccare, anzi si può attraversare”. In questo senso, la *performance* ha definito un nuovo rapporto con l’arte e ha fatto del museo uno spazio di sperimentazione.

4. CONCLUSIONE

La vita, l’esperienza e l’azione hanno fatto simultaneamente irruzione nel campo dell’arte con la *performance*, appunto alla maniera di “un elefante in un negozio di porcellane”. L’arte performativa, senza necessariamente “uscire” dal museo, amplia senz’altro il suo territorio e respinge i suoi limiti. È una maniera di estendere la cornice del quadro, di aprire il museo al pubblico, alle nuove tecnologie e alle nuove pratiche artistiche, cioè di aprire le sue finestre. La *performance* permette di mettere in movimento i limiti del museo, di trasgredire questi limiti e infine di ripensare la sua funzione.

Insomma, la *performance* ha permesso di concepire il museo non più come uno luogo immutabile, ma come uno spazio di sperimentazioni. In questo senso, possiamo dire che non andiamo più al museo soltanto per visitarlo, ma per partecipare, mettere in pratica e condividere delle esperienze. Delle esperienze che permettono di toccare, di cogliere, di modificare o di entrare propriamente nelle produzioni artistiche.

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An analysis of the discourse produced in reaction to works of art: the museum as a possible space for familiarization with contemporary art

*Céline Bonniol**

Abstract

This article presents a part of the results of a study on the reception of contemporary art works. Our hypothesis argues that repeated exposures to artworks can create new modes of reception.

To study the effects of familiarization, we led an experimental survey by asking 15 visitors to visit the same rooms of the National Museum of Modern Art in the Georges Pompidou Center three times, and to speak about the works during each visit.

A linguistic approach to our corpus, through a study of the context of enunciation, shows the presence of “micro-narratives” in the “spoken commentaries” of the visitors. These micro-narratives can be a sign of familiarization with the “situation of visit”; they also allow an access mode which makes an interpretation possible.

Keywords

Speech, art work, museum visitors, narrative, familiarization.

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1. MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH AND HYPOTHESES

The survey, from which we wish to present a part of the results, is interested in the construction of the relationship with the art work and in the construction of the visitor's museum experience over a period of time. This work is based on the study of the evolution both of the speeches and the behavior in a situation of visit.

Our hypothesis proposes the idea that dealing with works and the museum context on regular bases influences the visitor's experience. The relationship with the work of art builds itself in time and can be led to evolve when a familiarization is established with the museum environment and with the works.

According to the open work theory by Umberto Eco (1965), the work of art is polysemous, that is to say it induces multiple interpretations, it lends itself to several readings.

Using this idea, we think that the artwork can be the object of diverse discursive registers, showing that the visitor can experience the work in different ways.

2. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Phd study tries to examine the way in which a certain kind of familiarization takes place and what it produces on the behavior of the visitors and their interpretations of the works.

For this purpose, a survey was led in 2002 in rooms 8 to 15 of the National Museum of Modern Art. We decided to use itinerant conversation because we thought that was the better method in order to work on the specific moment when a visitor is interacting with an artwork. The area of the survey presented works ranging from paintings from the sixties to more recent installations like *Plight* by Joseph Beuys. Thus what allowed us to study the evolving of the behavior and the speech (comment) of the subjects when faced with varying types of contemporary art.

The characteristic of our study comes from the repetition of the exercise it proposes. To test our hypothesis, and to work on the effects of familiarization on the construction of a relationship between works and spectators, we gave the same instructions on the same subjects three times; so that the effect of repetition produces a situation of familiarization.

So, 15 visitors came three times to the museum to speak about the same works with an interval of about ten days between each visit. Their only instruction was to give, orally, their impressions on the works during each visit. They remained free to choose their own pathway in the museum each time. This made an experimental visit situation. Indeed, in a classic visit situation, visitors do not speak in front of the works and they do not normally come

back to see the same works of art again. Finally, our corpus consists of 45 fully retranscribed conversations.

Then, we carried out a linguistic analysis, especially centered on the variations of comments between the first and the third visit. This stage of the study was long and complex because we needed to find the elements which could evolve from visit to visit.

We would now like to present a part of our results: those concerning a linguistic approach to the conversations.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS: CHANGES IN THE SPEECHES ABOUT THE WORKS AND APPEARANCE OF MICRO-NARRATIVES

Our analyses reveal that the behavior varies from one subject/visitor to another and from one visit to another. For example, the visitors do not take the same pathway during the three visits. Their speeches evolved too: for example, during the course of the visits, speeches referring only to independent works could become speeches on the spaces therefore taking into consideration the logic of the museum scenography.

In a general way, we noticed that, with the repetitive character of the visiting process, the subjects deviated little by little from comments centered on only the works to speaking about something other than the works. From a linguistic point of view, this phenomenon is visible through the integration of sequences that we shall qualify as “micro-narratives”. When the subjects speak about the works, the context of enunciation changes for certain utterances, introducing a “private conversation” within the speech. That is to say, sometimes visitors make a pause in their speeches to move into a narrative form.

Since Émile Benveniste (1966), a distinction is made between the “narrative” and the “speech”. In the speech situation, somebody is addressing somebody else, expresses himself as a speaker and organizes what he says in relation to the category of the person, while in narrative the events speak for themselves.

The opposition of speech/narrative can also define itself in relation to the situation of enunciation. The speech gives markers of the enunciation situation, whereas the narrative does not.

In our corpus, we consider that “micro-narratives” concern sequences that refer to a “situation of enunciation” that is not the “situation of visit”. So, to study these “micro-narratives”, we analysed the links between the speeches of the subjects and their situation of enunciation.

For Oswald Ducrot, enunciation is “the event constituted by an utterance” (Ducrot, 1984). The notion of enunciation situation refers to the context in which an utterance is produced; it “refers to all the conditions which preside over the emission of an act of language” (Charaudeau & Maingueneau, 2002). Utterances supply clues which send us back to the situation of enunciation.

The analysis of these enunciative clues indicate to us that the speeches of the subjects do not always refer to the context in which they are produced. Certain parts of the comment escape the context of the visit and evolve in a different space and time.

To distinguish the utterances which propose references to the situation of enunciation from those which do not, Dominique Maingueneau suggests using the notion of “shifters”. “Shifters”, also called “deictics”, are linguistic units which give indications of place, time and person and which refer back to the situation of enunciation. These can be personal pronouns, demonstrative, adverbs and temporal or spatial adverbial locution... We shall use these linguistic tools, particularly the demonstrative locution, very present in the speeches, to list the sequences which do not make reference to the situation of enunciation. In that way, we can see at which moment the “micro-narratives” appear.

3.1 PRESENCE OF SEQUENCES NOT MAKING REFERENCE TO THE SITUATION OF ENUNCIATION

We notice comments which do not refer to the situation of visit. Sometimes, in the middle of the speech on the works, we find sequences in which the subject talks about something which happened to him/her.

During his first two visits, subject 6 stopped in front of the installation *Salon Agam* (Fig. 1) to comment on it. He had a descriptive approach to it, investigating the work. On the third visit, the comment becomes more evaluative as this extract shows: “(...) *Well I don't know, this is not what I would consider as art, in fact (...)*”. **Subject 6, visit 3, work 18 (Agam, *Salon Agam*).**

Then, still in front of the same work, he goes on a sequence in which he talks about a memory that the work reminds him of: “(...) *It was, I don't remember what it was called, it was in the Bastille. It was an exhibition with the, you know, like, Harlequin's costume. And we entered a room, there was the temple, that was called the temple, and it was Harlequin's stuff with big rhombuses like that but everywhere. Oof it was horrible you felt sick! You felt sick. And then there was lot of stuff, outside there were sculptures, there were sculptures in movement like on a fairground attraction, in fact it was turning in circle*”. **Subject 6, visit 3, work 18 (Agam, *Salon Agam*).**

This last part of the comment proposes a modification in the enunciation. The deictics we find in the part beginning with the sentence: “*It was, I don't remember what it was called, it was in Bastille*” does not make reference to the situation of enunciation. In this utterance, the word **it** has a function of deictic. Further in this comment we find another demonstra-

tive: in the sentence “*this is not what I would consider as art*”, **this**, is also a spatial deictic, but it does not have the same referent, it brings us back to the work the subject is looking at: In that case, it is the *Salon Agam* which the subject does not consider as art. Whereas in the sentence “*I don’t remember what it was called*”, the subject is not speaking about the work any more, but about the exhibition he saw in Bastille.

We find in the speeches sequences which deviate from the initial enunciation context. Subjects leave the reference of the work itself to propose a different narrative sequence that is initiated by the work in question but which does not directly concern it.

In another extract, the subject 1 is in the Supports/Surfaces room. During a long comment on the room, he suddenly breaks to talk about a former experience, in another museum: “(...) *Just like last time, still in the Tate, it may be the museum of contemporary art that I most recently saw, there was, what do we call that, an installation by, I do not know any more which artist, apparently the artist had wanted that, there was a neonlight and one had to press on it to turn the light on. And **this** work was well highlighted and well protected from the public, and there was a little girl there who jumped over the protection barrier, the father did not see her in time and she ran towards the work and pressed the button and switched off the neon. I found that brilliant because I said to myself, well yes she has understood everything, that’s it, that is what the artist expects! (...)*”. **Subject 1, visit 1, room 11 (Supports/Surfaces).**

The sequence begins by introducing an indication of time just like “*as last time*”. Then, the subject, becomes, in a sense, a narrator, he tells his “story” by using the narrative past. Again we find demonstrative deictics as **this** of “*this work*”. However, the work in question of is not the work in the room 11 in order to say the room that the subject is in as he speaks-but it is the installation of the Tate Modern which is the main object of the story he is telling. In the same way, when the subject says “*I found that brilliant*”, the deictic **that** refers to the situation of the story and not to the museum situation which activated the story.

A little later during his first visit, the subject 1 comments on the installation *Container zero* by Jean Pierre Raynaud (Fig. 2). He formulates a sentence very similar to the one that we have just mentioned: “(...) *well that is brilliant! I love it (...)*”. **Subject 1, visits 1, work 45 (Raynaud, *Container zero*).** However, in this last case the deictic **that** clearly refers to *Container zero* by Jean Pierre Raynaud in front of which the subject is standing during his act of enunciation.

Therefore, we find cases where the subjects escape from the exercise by no longer focusing their verbalization on the works in front of them and by preferring the narration of a memory from previous visit.



Fig. 1 - Salon Agam



Fig. 2 - Container zero

3.2 WAYS OF USING MICRO-NARRATIVES

The fact that the shifters do not refer to the museum situation is not a common phenomenon. Most of the time, deictics refer back to the works or to groups of works in front of which the subjects are speaking. However, when they appear, “micro-narratives”, can enlighten us about the way the subjects build and live their museum experience.

We propose two hypotheses to explain the integration of narrative sequences into the speeches of the subjects: micro-narratives can be used, in some cases, to help the appropriation of the works. The narrative can also be used for its moralizing dimension.

We find in the speeches of every subject sequences of micro-narratives. But certain subjects, like subject 6, are more representative of this mode of “construction of visit”. So, we shall use examples of his speeches to illustrate our hypotheses about the ways of using micro-narratives.

3.2.1 NARRATIVE, A WAY OF APPROPRIATING AN ARTWORK

We can suppose that some subjects use the story mode in order to answer the exercise of verbalization, that the experiment demand of them, at a moment when they do not know what to say about the work in front of which they have just stopped. The fact that the work is suggestive of a memory that the subject takes the time to tell, seems then to act as a tool allowing him to continue to comment about the work in front of him.

“Decomposing garbage... I had seen stuff like that in an exhibition on the Champs Élysées. A big square full of waste... I liked that exhibition... There were several works in fact, all in the Louvre, especially at the bottom the Champs Élysées where there are the gardens”. **Subject 6, visit 1, work 44 (Roth, *Big Island*)**. In this comment of the work *Big Island* (Fig. 3), subject 6 begins with a short descriptive sentence, and then he goes directly to the narrative of another exhibition he has already seen.

In the major part of the comment, the description and the evaluation do not concern the work itself but the other previous exhibition. The exploration of the work does not go very

far during this first visit. No attempt at evaluation, nor any interpretation is advanced.

However during the following visits, the comment on the same work concentrates more on its visual composition as this extract shows:

"Everything is dead. There is still some water, still... It's like a desert oof! It is the end of the world ... It is our Earth in a near future". **Subject 6, visit 3, work 44 (Roth, *Big Island*)**. Then, during the third visit, the subject gains self-confidence to elaborate a speech on the works and no longer hesitate to propose his interpretations. *Big Island* then becomes a metaphor of an ecological reflexion.

In the first visit, the speech was not as developed, the short narrative was introduced, in a sense, to divert attention from that fact. Nevertheless it is this narrative aside which made possible the creation of a link between the subject and the work, opening the door to other modes of reception during the later visits.

The behavior consisting of introducing narrative sequences into the speeches can occur when the subject is not yet familiarized neither with the situation of visit, nor with the works he is to discover.

During his first visit subject 6 stops in front of most of the works of Supports/Surfaces room. His comments are generally very short, restricted to mentioning simply the titles. This shy attitude towards the works can indicate a certain degree of perplexity in front of the hermetic work, the subject does not know what to say about it.

During the second visit, the subject is a little more talkative concerning the same works. This renewed interest can be explained partially by the fact that a reading of the scenography begins to take place. By building thematic links between the works, new meanings appear. But in certain cases, it is the verbalization of memories which brings more consequential comments than those of the first visit.

In front of the work, *Couple toiles/ échelles* by Christian Jaccard (Fig. 4), subject 6 pronounces only a few words during the first visit: *"There, in fact, it is the painting of that or... (...)"*. **Subject 1, visit 1, work 21 (Jaccard, *Couple toile/ Echelle*)**. He doesn't know what to say about this work, not even knowing how to identify it. By using the demonstrative that, the subject designates the work without proposing a name.

During the second visit the comment on the same work is longer: *"So you see, in Senegal, there were quantities of fabrics, there were people making "batik", actually drawings on fabrics and they made beautiful stuff with fabrics and I feel like I am in front of a down-market shop selling "batik" in Senegal... That, I don't know if it is an object which has a use or if it was really designed for as a work of art maybe, that is elastic... Maybe it is an instrument for body-building... No it is not elastic it is a rope... that reminds me of my grandmother's knitting"*. **Subject 1, visit 2, work 21 (Jaccard, *Couple toile / Échelle*)**.

The new exploration of the work activates the evocation of a memory. Telling this memory, the work becomes more familiar to the subject. The fact of approaching the work by evoking a personal memory through a scrap of narrative makes its appropriation possible. Then, the subject can build a more developed speech. He begins a description of the work and no longer hesitates to interpret it.



Fig. 3 - Big Island

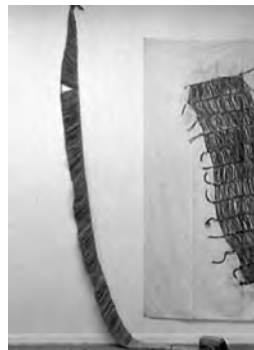


Fig. 4 - Couple toile/Échelle

3.2.2 THE MORALIZING FUNCTION OF THE NARRATIVE

We find in the speeches of subject 6 a unique use of the narrative for its moralizing dimension. During our analyses, we saw that the subjects, in order to build their museum experience, were influenced by events which took place outside the museum. This sometimes led them away from the works themselves developing a speech on society or politics for example.

This “forum” function of the museum is particularly present in the third visit of subject 6: during this visit, he reacts to the political context connected to the presidential elections of year 2002 which took place as he participated in our survey. So, some of his comments are almost militant reflexions to encourage a vote against Jean Marie Le Pen.

In front of *Dix assemblages bout à bout* by Bernard Pagès (Fig. 5), he makes a visual reading. His analysis ends in an interpretation which extends beyond the plastic contents of the work, and talks about the morality of an African tale that the subject heard the day before: *“It is all wood fragments which are cut in two, and try to connect them by various methods. But we may invent lot of techniques when the wood is cut, we cannot put them back together again. We may try to stick both fragments together again it is too late eh... And that reminds me, yesterday I was listening to some African tales... It was tremendous really, and so the storyteller told us about, lianas, ten lianas which were tangled together and were turning, and thus he separated them and he gave a branch of liana to each of his sons. And he asked to sons to break the lianas that was easy, every son was able to break his liana. And then he took the first piece of liana as from each son, there were ten*

fragments which he entangled again and he gave it to the holdest of his sons and said to him "Try to break that", so he tried to break it, he gave it to his brothers, and they all tried to break it but it was impossible to break it when all ten were tangled together. And that the morality of the story is, as he explains to his sons that they have to remain united and will be unbreakable like that, if they remain united with each others, they can never be broken. And he added a second moral "show solidarity, you will see that it is going to work for the second ballot"... In fact it is tremendously sad, that speaks about the *irrémediabilité* of things. When you do something you cannot go back in time and the piece of wood cut in two will never again become a single piece of wood whatever you do... When you have voted for Le Pen once you have voted for him for ever!". **Subject 6, visit 3, work 41 (Pagès, *Dix assemblages mis bout à bout*).**



Fig. 5 - *Dix assemblages mis bout à bout*

The tale speaks about solidarity and about the need to be together to be stronger. The subject takes the time to tell the story he was told. He does not only mention the African tale and its morality, allowing himself to develop a new interpretation of the work, but he makes a break in the construction of his speech to repeat the various phases of the tale still fresh in his mind.

The comment on the work becomes a narrative pretext. The relationship with the work allows the subject to lean on the moralizing dimension of the narrative to elaborate an interpretation of his sociopolitical experience. In this elaboration, the narrative sequence operates as a testimony; its aim is to support the opinion of the subject.

So, it is through the telling of a narrative that morality speaks about solidarity and that the raw mater of the work of Pagès is transformed into a citizen speech.

4. CONCLUSION

The narrative sequences introduced by the subjects into their speeches about the works can be, in a way, considered as tools which help them to build the visits. The subjects use the evasion process proposed by the narrative to appropriate the works better or to escape from the pressure of the verbalization. Micro-narratives are a sign of familiarization with the works because using the narrative form, visitors place the works in their own history

The presence of micro-narratives is also a sign of familiarization with the situation of visit. Over time, the subjects take certain liberties with the exercise proposed in order to build a more and more personal reception of the works.

So, although the introduction of small narratives constitutes taking a certain distance from the works, we consider that the fact of calling on to a narrative sequence is a mode of reception which makes possible the access to works which at first seemed remote from the receiver.

By widening our proposal, we could envisage that the usage of the narrative (or the tale) would be a tool of mediation which would use the establishment of connections between the visual analysis of the work and its narrative transformation by the viewer.

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The Dissemination and Reception of Media Art A case study: the New Media Art Collection of the Centre Pompidou-National Museum of Modern Art in France

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Abstract

Media art is often difficult for the public to comprehend, although it is widely present in the contemporary art scene. This observation leads us to the following questions: How are these intangible works exhibited, and how does the public perceive them? This case study, based on the Centre Pompidou's New Media Art Collection, began with the hypotheses such as; the majority will not watch time-based works in exhibitions from beginning to end; the more educated the public is, the better their reception will be. Regarding the public's reception of media art, I conducted a survey of 150 museum visitors classified into 3 groups: general, specialized and mixed. In conclusion, access to and understanding of media art is still considered to be quite problematic, even when addressing an informed and educated public.

Keywords

Media art, video art, digital art, reception of contemporary art, museum education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a process that started with Marcel Duchamp, art has changed from what it was in the past, not only in its physical forms, but also in its uses, contents and goals. As a result, almost a century after the famous urinal, the reception of contemporary art is still often difficult. Certain aspects of contemporary art, such as its complexity in subject, medium, form, or context, contribute to make its reception problematic for a part of the public. In this art which often escapes from what many people expect, certain works are even more inaccessible, for example media art.

It is certain that media art does not have the same nature and does not address the public in the same way that traditional works like paintings and sculptures do. Apart from its physical characteristics, media art engages different concepts in terms of its collection and presentation. Nevertheless, these works are omnipresent in the contemporary art scene. Today, they are not only presented in numerous art exhibitions, biennales and fairs, but also feature in museum collections, and increasingly even in private collections.

In spite of this wide presence in contemporary art, a part of the public still finds it difficult to accept media art as true works of art, even though they voluntarily accept other art forms that are as contemporary and innovative. We should therefore examine the specific conditions for the dissemination¹ of media art and its reception by the public, as well as determine the education that is needed for its optimal reception.

Since this is too complex a subject to be dealt with globally, we conduct a case study on the Centre Pompidou-National Museum of Modern Art's² new media collection, one of the most important video and digital art collections in the world both in terms of its quality and its quantity, which is also famous for its active dissemination policy. A study of this collection's dissemination methods³ and its reception by the public should therefore yield representative results.

¹ Because of its own characteristics of media art, I use the term 'dissemination' or 'diffusion' rather than 'exhibition', because it implicates not only the exhibition but also presentation ways beyond those which exhibitions offer in general.

² For the rest, Centre Pompidou or MNAM or MNAM/CCI (*Musée national d'art moderne/centre de créations industrielles*)

³ In the field of contemporary art today, 'Media art' is commonly used in Anglo-Saxon countries. In France, the term 'New media art' is used, since the French expression "l'art des médias" tends to evoke the functional media. For this case study regarding the Centre Pompidou's collection, we chose the term "new media", which could also include works that will be created with "new" technologies in the future, even though the relative sense of the word "new" may cause confusion for the public.

2. CORPUS OF THE RESEARCH: CONCEPTS OF MEDIA ART

2.1 DEFINITION AND TERMS

What exactly do we mean by the term 'media art'? Used in the context of art or museums, it may evoke media as an educational tool or as information on the arts. Media was in fact invented for informational and communicational purposes. Yet, in our research, we use it in a slightly different sense, to refer to media as art work, in other words media created by artists for artistic purposes.

More precisely, what is it about? Many museum visitors will immediately think of a video projection on the wall of an exhibition, something which is increasingly present in art museums, galleries, and even in public spaces. However, there are also other forms of media art that require specific devices in order to be shown. These can be classified in several categories such as videotape, CD or DVD-ROM, website, sound or multimedia installation. These categories keep evolving with the development of new technology; today, certain artists create works with everyday digital devices such as cell phones or PDA (Personal Digital Assistant).

Different terms have been used to describe these artistic creations: electronic art, information art, computer art, digital art, net art, web art, (new) media art, and so on. However, none of these are inclusive enough to describe all the different kinds of media art works at once. Museum institutions that have such works in their collection, therefore each tends to use a different term⁴.

2.2 WHAT MAKES THE DISSEMINATION AND RECEPTION DIFFERENT? CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIA ART

Regardless of the term we use, these works have one characteristic in common: they are, either entirely or partially, time-based. This aspect could influence the public's reception behaviour in a way that is different from other types of work. No matter how long it takes, the public is supposed to spend more time looking at a video than at a painting.

Media art works have to be activated; they exist only if someone starts a video player or a programme. In most cases, what the public perceives in exhibitions are already-activated art works, which means that the public only sees images and sounds; in other words, the public does not watch the CD or DVD as a physical object, but the projection of its contents. The original medium is almost never presented to the public, except in some cases

⁴ Centre Pompidou-MNAM: *Nouveaux Médias*; MoMA in New York: Media; Whitney Museum of American Art: Film, video, Net art (no inclusive term to describe media creations in general).

of installation. This gap between the work as technical object and its projection does not exist for painting or sculpture.

One such work can also exist in numerous editions. The reproduction of a digital work is exactly identical to the work at the beginning. In the case of paintings, for example, there is a clear difference between the original and its copy or reproduction, whereas the basic concept behind media art, although it is sometimes adapted and modified, is its unlimited reproducibility and even the absence of an original. This immaterial quality could disturb the public's reception of it, in the measure that it departs from their traditional notion of art.

Because of this aspect, collecting media art works does not mean the purchase of a simple object. When an institution purchases a work of media art, it acquires a right to its public diffusion. Normally, this distribution right is not exclusive and is defined by a contract between the artist and the institution. An individual purchaser does not obtain this right to public diffusion, except in exceptional cases.

Finally, such media works require various presentation methods and circulation formats that differ from the traditional way in which works are presented in museums and received by the public.

2.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STARTING HYPOTHESES

The two main questions in this study are the following: what methods and means do institutions use for the dissemination of media art, and how does the visiting public perceive them? In order to answer these, we ask some sub-questions: Is there a specific segment of the public that is more inclined to appreciate media works? Why do some visitors find it difficult to relate to media works? How many people know the definition or the notion of media art? What characteristics of these art works make people feel confused or hesitant in their reception of them?

In anticipation of the answers, we propose several hypotheses:

- since media art exists and circulates in a wide variety of forms and formats, museum institutions present it in different ways than traditional collections such as paintings or sculptures;
- media art makes use of various dissemination methods that could make its reception by the public more complicated than other kinds of art;
- the majority of the public finds it difficult to understand and/or appreciate media works.
- only a very specific segment of the public is inclined to enjoy this type of art;
- the majority will tend not to watch time-based works in exhibitions from beginning to end;
- the majority does not know the exact definition of media art;
- the more educated the public is, the better their reception of media art will be.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 DISSEMINATION

Looking at these hypotheses, we first examined the dissemination aspect. We collected information on the collection through various bibliographic and historic sources, the official Website of the institution and interviews with the museum staff.

The first step was to describe the collection in terms of its history, contents, dimension, and so forth. We then identified its dissemination methods and policy and examined the specificity, which was also important for locating different kinds of public for the institution's media art collection.

3.2 RECEPTION

To assess the public's reception of media art, a survey of 150 museum visitors divided into three groups: general, specialized and mixed, was conducted with a previously constructed questionnaire for each type of public⁵. These groups were chosen in relation to the 3 representative dissemination methods used by the museum for media art, besides exhibitions; *Espace Nouveaux Médias*⁶, *Vidéo et après*⁷ and *New Media Encyclopedia*⁸. Even though all three are theoretically open to everyone, we focused on certain particularities of each method in relation to the main type of visitors, which was a criterion for selecting the group.

1) Public I. "Espace Nouveaux Médias": Mixed public

Espace Nouveaux Médias is a place where one meets a variety of visitors, from the general public to specialized people such as artists, teachers and students in contemporary art,

⁵ The respondents were adults and mainly French-speaking. We did not choose visitors with a view to find a balance in age groups or gender, because the aim of this research is not to consider these criteria.

⁶ *Espace Nouveaux Médias* is an area where people can look up works in the new media art collection of the Centre Pompidou, which is specially designed for this purpose. It is in the form of a media library with seats attached to computers. There are currently 8 seats for single-channel video, 2 for sound works, 2 for CD-ROM and 2 for the *Encyclopédie Nouveaux Médias*. In recent years, the service conducted a digitalization project of all works in the collection, to facilitate its dissemination to the public. After its completion, this space was newly opened in April 2007, and now offers visitors the possibility to consult works autonomously.

⁷ *Vidéo et après* is a projection programme devoted to the works in the Centre Pompidou's new media collection. Artists are usually present to explain their works in person, and the public has the opportunity to talk with them and ask them questions about their work. However, since most of the time is devoted to projection, this could be considered as a way of dissemination of media art.

⁸ *Encyclopédie Nouveaux Médias* (www.newmedia-art.org) is the first online catalogue created jointly with other European media art collections. It is an information site and a research tool for studying media art. However, it offers only 1 or 2 minute extracts of each video, due to copyright issues. For media art, this is a form of dissemination that comes closer to the work than is the case with paintings and their reproduction.

since it is an open-space area in the museum where works can be watched free of charge.

60 visitors were interviewed in this area⁹. Even though they have different levels of interest and knowledge in media art, they can be classified in the same group due to certain shared characteristics: all of them visited this space voluntarily and spent more than 5 minutes watching one or more works¹⁰. Interviews were generally conducted after the visitor had viewed the works, with an audio recording done with the interviewee's permission.

2) Public II. "*Vidéo et après*": Specialized public

On the other hand, *Vidéo et après* is an occasion to meet a specific public of media art. This regular projection of media art requires not only an entrance fee, but also a certain effort from the public, because it takes place only once a month, for around 2 hours in the evening in an enclosed area that is separated from the other kinds of work. We can therefore say that most of the viewers are already informed about and interested in media art.

30 visitors were interviewed in this group. They had already attended at least 2 of these projections, which implies that they could express a real opinion on this dissemination method. Interviews were conducted either before or after the projection, and in the same manner as with PI: direct encounter with recording.

Since it is hard to find a group of visitors in a virtual space such as the Internet, and seeing that most of this group may already have experienced or at least know the Website "*New Media Encyclopedia*", the *New Media Encyclopedia*'s public was not interviewed directly, but was examined through questions put to users of *Video et après*, who also use the Website, or are at least aware of it.

3) Public III¹¹. MNAM/CCI in general: General media art public

This group included 60 French-speaking visitors to the Centre Pompidou who said (when questioned before the interview) that they had not experienced any of the museum's 3 diffusion methods mentioned above. This group was chosen to compare their reception with those of the other groups. Since it would be pointless to interview someone who has never seen an exhibition that included at least one media art work, I decided to find interviewees near exhibitions that showed one or several media art works, to avoid possible failures.

⁹ Very quickly I figured out the weak presence of French among these "serious" visitors. So I included English-speaking visitors in this group of public and in this case I conducted interviews in English with an English questionnaire.

¹⁰ Upon observation, it appears that many people focus on different works for 1 or 2 minutes and then walk away. They were not chosen as subjects for my research because they did not acquire enough knowledge in this area to answer my questions, which also include an assessment of the space. Finally, only "serious" visitors who spent at least 5 minutes viewing the works in this area were interviewed.

¹¹ Public I, II, III: for the rest PI, PII, PIII

The classification of this group simply as “general public”, therefore carries a nuance: they have a certain interest for the content of this museum, but do not have a particular interest in media art.

4. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 DISSEMINATION OF MEDIA ART

1) Identification of the new media art collection of MNAM/CCI

The collection consists of single-channel video, sound work, CD-ROM, Internet sites, audiovisual and multimedia installations created by artists. It includes historical and contemporary works by different artists, testifying to the history of media art¹². MNAM started the acquisition of art works in film or video medium in 1976: very few institutions at the time were interested in this type of work. This collection is one of the best media art collections in the world, compared to that of the MoMA in New York or the San Francisco MoMA, where all items of the collection are not directly accessible to the public.

2) Media art dissemination of MNAM/CCI

The three methods of media art dissemination mentioned above show the specific effort the institution invests in this subject, compared to other institutions. Regarding this dynamic dissemination policy for the media art collection, the MNAM has already organized numerous exhibitions devoted to media art. The collection is also exhibited abroad from time to time.

Separate pieces in the media art collection are often rented to other institutions in the form of digitized files. One of the advantages of lending in this form, is that the transportation of works is less cumbersome than that of other types of work. A contract is nevertheless written to specify certain points, such as the rights and responsibilities of two partners, copyright, potential damages, and so on.

The museum also publishes many media works edited in CD or DVD-Rom with artists or other audiovisual producers. In 2000, they began the acquisition of artists' Internet sites that are presented as electronic links on the museum's official Website.

¹² The collection includes 1.200 video and audio tapes and more than 85 media installations, which represents almost 22% of the total collection of CP-MNAM/CCI.

4.2 THE PUBLIC'S RECEPTION OF MEDIA ART: MAIN RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

1) Definition of media art (Q-1)¹³

The purpose of this question was to specify for the visitor what we would talk about during the interview. Since this is a field which is not always clearly perceived by the public, it was necessary to clarify the subject by asking interviewees to reflect upon the concept of media art. Five examples were proposed: single-channel video, video installations, artists' Internet sites, artists' CD-Rom or DVD-Rom, and sound works, with reference to types of works in the new media collection of the museum, and multiple choice and interviewees' liberal proposition concerning other possibility was allowed.

According to the statistic, the majority of the public was not familiar with the notion of media art, which corresponds to the hypothesis. In fact, many interviewees, especially in PI and PIII, were very hesitant to give or choose answers, while interviewees in PII were quite determined in explaining and justifying their answers.

As the statistic shows, the preferred choice was 'video installations', probably due to the strong presence of this kind of work in the contemporary art scene. On the other hand, 25% of PI eliminated 'artists' Internet sites' and 'sound works'; 20% of PII eliminated 'sound works'; 47% of PIII eliminated 'single-channel video'. Among this 25% of PI who eliminated Internet sites as media art, 4 (out of 15) people justified their answer by saying that they did not consider Internet sites to be 'works of art'¹⁴, and 2 people explained their choice by say-

(Q-1)	PI				PII				PIII			
	Chosen		Eliminated		Chosen		Eliminated		Chosen		Eliminated	
Single-channel video	48	80%	12	20%	28	93%	2	7%	32	53%	28	47%
Video installations	50	83%	10	17%	29	97%	1	3%	50	83%	10	17%
Artists' Internet sites	45	75%	15	25%	29	97%	1	3%	43	72%	17	28%
Artists' CD-Rom or DVD-Rom	49	82%	11	18%	27	90%	3	10%	37	62%	23	38%
Sound works	45	75%	15	25%	24	80%	6	20%	37	62%	23	38%
TOTAL	60	100%	60	100%	30	100%	30	100%	60	100%	60	100%

Tab. 1 - Definition of Media Art

¹³ "In your opinion, what is 'new media art'?" (multiple choice possible)

¹⁴ "They are not works of art, I don't know..." (PI-33), "It's... profane, I feel. Anyone could do it... so it's not really an artwork" (PI-52), "Actually everyone has access to it. I don't know if it's really an artwork." (PI-53)

ing that 'Internet sites are more for information'. As another reason, a person said that it was not a determined medium¹⁵.

67% of PIII who eliminated 'single-channel video' justified their answer by saying that "it is no longer 'new'", 11% said that "it is not a 'work of art'", and it was in fact clear from their answers that they had a quite rigid concept of art¹⁶. (Tab. 2)

(Q-1)	PIII	
It is not 'new'.	19	67%
It is not 'works of art'.	3	11%
Lack of Knowledge	3	11%
Other	1	4%
Don't know	2	7%
TOTAL	28	100%

Tab. 2 - Reasons to eliminate single-channel video, Public III

In these statistics and comments from the public, interesting points come to light concerning the ambiguity of terms used for naming media as works of art. Although specialists use the term 'new media art' for their justified reasons, some ambiguity persists in this area, especially in the public's perception. This is doubtlessly one of the reasons why media art remains a complicated concept for a part of the public. Besides, we also note that the informational use of media in daily life may disturb the reception of media as artistic creation.

2) Experience of media art (Q2-1¹⁷ for PI, PII; Q2-2¹⁸ for PIII)

The purpose of the question was to find out if the interviewee had already experienced media as actual works of art and not just seen educational or informational tools on art. According to the statistic, 85% of PI visited exhibitions which included media art works and 100 % of PII. As mentioned before, regarding the choice of PIII interviewees, I only interviewed people who had already experienced media works in exhibitions, so automatically 100% of PIII visited such kind of exhibitions.

¹⁵ "... in this Internet network where everyone gets lost, (...) people are dependent on a medium which already escapes you totally. In this case it's quite difficult since the artist cannot control or cannot have access to his medium in its globality, I find it hard to conceive..." (PI-25)

¹⁶ "Because you can take them home in a different frame, while these (video installations) are at least set up in a certain way (in museum). It could be worthwhile considering them as works of art." (PIII-12) "Videos are more a means of access to something... well, why not... but I would say moderately." (PIII-5)

¹⁷ "Have you ever gone to one or more exhibitions that presented new media artworks? (Centre Pompidou or other)"

¹⁸ "What kind of works did you see (in these exhibitions)?"

To specify their experience in media art, a question concerning the types of works they had seen, was added for PIII. The high proportion of video installations confirms its strong presence on the contemporary art scene, which is in keeping with the high prominence it gets in the definition of media art (Tab. 3). On the other hand, PIII's experience of Internet sites and CD/DVD-Rom as art is very low compared to video installation¹⁹.

(Q2-2) Types of watched works	Single-channel video	video installation	artists' Internet site	artists' CD-Rom or DVD-Rom	Sound work
PIII	46	59	15	15	41
	77%	98%	25%	25%	68%

Tab. 3 - Experience of Media Art, Public III

3) Visitors' viewing behaviour (Q2-2 for PI and PII, Q2-3 for PIII)²⁰

With this question, we wanted to determine interviewees' viewing behaviour regarding media art in exhibitions, taking 'time' into account as a specific characteristic of these works. According to the statistic, 96% of PI, 90% of PII, and 90% of PIII watch only part of the media art works in exhibitions, a proportion that is quite noteworthy, which confirms the hypothesis of the research²¹. Here we see a real problem regarding time-based works' presentation in exhibitions.

Why then do the visitors not watch the media art works in exhibitions till the end? In fact, a small number of the public explained that video works were not always created to be seen entirely²². But the parameters that visitors evoked more often, included the interest of the work and their own available time²³. For example, in PII, 3 people who said 'yes', 2 people who said 'no' and 15 people who said 'it depends', mentioned the interest of a work as a major parameter that determined whether they watched it till the end or not. 3 people from public II said that they would come back several times to complete the visit because of the amount of time available for one single visit²⁴.

¹⁹ In fact, it does not explain why these works receive such high recognition as art (Table 1), but it does at least accounts for visitors' uncertain attitude to the question of how to define media art, probably due to this lack of experience.

²⁰ "In such an exhibition, do you watch the new media works presented for their entire duration?" (yes/no/it depends)

²¹ Many visitors interpreted the meaning of the question differently. Some understood it as the entire duration of every single media work in an exhibition, while others saw it as the entire duration of only certain works in an exhibition. In any event, their interpretation and final answer were checked through a developed discussion.

²² "(...) I feel like it's a sort of... of projection art, they are not necessarily done to be watched entirely. So a little bit is ok. (...)" (PI-42)

²³ "It takes too much time. I try but... I normally spend two hours at most (in an exhibition) so..." (PI-5)

²⁴ "If it's short it's ok, but if it's about... 60 minutes, no. Above all, it is a matter of time. (...) If you could give yourself like... I don't know, 2 hours for an exhibition, it's already a lot, I find. (...) For example, for *Airs de Paris*, I said, hey you know what, I'd come back. Because I didn't watch all the videos. But it's true, it's problematic, it's not easy." (PII-21)

Since people's experience of media art in exhibitions varies a lot, interviewees answered this question in a heterogeneous and irregular way, sometimes without any logic. It would therefore be difficult to generalize from this result. However, it shows clearly that the time-based characteristic of media art is one of the crucial elements influencing the viewing behaviour of a certain public.

4) Global interest in media art (Q3)²⁵

In order to get a better understanding of PIII's behaviour towards media art, we specifically asked them if they were interested in this type of art. Contrary to the hypothesis that only a small segment of the public will be inclined to enjoy this art, 52% said 'yes', 25% 'no', and 23% 'moderately'.

They expressed interest in certain characteristics of media art: movement, life, interaction²⁶. As a reason for their interest, 6 people talked about the novelty of this type of art work²⁷. Also there were responses such as 'being surprised', 'easy exploitation', and 'contemporariness.'

On the other hand, visitors who said 'not interested' explained that they found it difficult to accept media as art²⁸. They also talked about their habits and their cultural field of reference, the complexity of contents and finally expressed their preference for other types of works. The reasons given for the answers 'moderately' and 'no' often coincide. They said that it was difficult to access the artistic interest of such works, and mentioned their own lack of knowledge on the field²⁹.

These responses show that some visitors have a more rigid notion of art, or one that is limited to certain forms of art. As a result, their reception of media art is disturbed by the extent to which its forms and approach differ from more "traditional" work.

5) Reception of media art compared to other kinds of works (Q4)³⁰

According to the statistic, more than half or almost half of the public does not consider that media art works are more difficult than other types of art in terms of comprehension and appreciation, which does not correspond to my hypothesis regarding the public's re-

²⁵ "Are you interested in this kind of art?" (yes/no/moderately) "Why?"

²⁶ "(...) often there is a development in time... it interests me more than a painting... it depends, these days there are interactive works, sometimes..." (PIII-29)

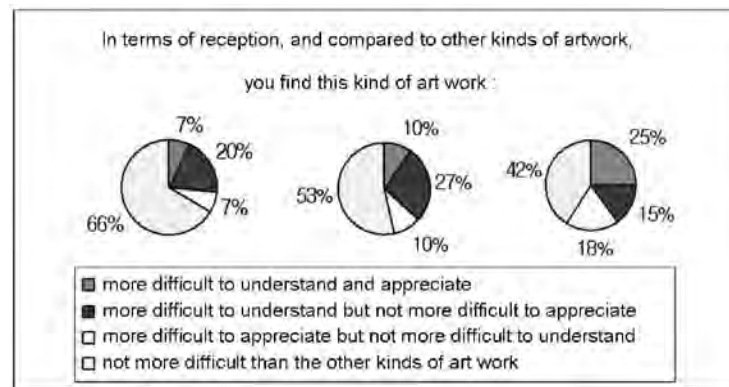
²⁷ "... it's a new creative medium, that's all, so I want to see what it is. I wouldn't say that I understand, but it's interesting." (PIII-35)

²⁸ "Because I do not consider it as art. Well, I just feel so." (PIII-24) "People don't feel like it's an artwork. People don't have the same perception of it than of an artwork." (PIII-22)

²⁹ "Because I just don't know it well. When you don't know something well, you can't go further." (PIII-41)

³⁰ "In terms of reception, and compared to other kinds of art, you find this kind of artwork."

ception of media art. For example, only 25% of PIII said they found it more difficult to understand and appreciate. However, the proportion of each public who has a difficulty with comprehension and appreciation differs considerably: 25% of PIII, compared to 7 and 10% of PI and PII (Tab. 4).



Tab. 4 - Reception of Media Art compared to other kinds of works, Public I, II, III

We subsequently wanted to find out why certain visitors have difficulties with the reception of media art. The reasons are varied but not always logical. For example, after saying that it was not more difficult to understand or to appreciate, the visitors would then sometimes go on to explain what it was that they found difficult about the comprehension and appreciation of these works! In analyzing the interviewees' comments, an interesting fact comes to light: the wide presence of media in our everyday life is a common reason for 4 different choices. It shows that this proximity between media art and everyday life could not only be an obstacle to the comprehension/appreciation of media art, but even the key factor³¹.

Finally, from interviewees' answers, I distinguished three factors as being responsible for the difficulty of reception; the spectator, the work itself, and the institution. Often people seem to think that it is because of their age, lack of habit and knowledge, or their different cultural background in art³². They often declare these works too hermetic, confusing, or

³¹ "I think it's the same. I think it's even easier to understand and appreciate. Because, it depends on the proposals of course, but the medium, I mean the new media is easier for me. We're constantly surrounded by computers and TV... cinema..." (PI-55, reason for the choice 'not more difficult than other kinds of work'); "because, today's new media, we can't help accepting it. People understand the presence and everything. But here as a work of art, it becomes difficult because there is a sort of omnipresence, in everyday life, already everyone lives actually in the new media. Where is art? I mean, where is the content of the work?" (PII-27, reason for the choice 'more difficult to appreciate but not more difficult to understand')

³² "For me, it's still something that puts me outside, more than paintings or sculptures... I would say this (3rd choice), but for me I mean. Because for me it's not a natural language. I don't have analytical or synthetical view that I could

banal³³. Interestingly, they rarely mention the role and responsibility of institutions as a reason for this difficulty³⁴. As a result, what emerges here might in fact be a comment on the way people are educated in the notion of media art.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research, through a case study of visitors to the Centre Pompidou's collection, was to determine and examine the problematic specificity of the dissemination of media art and the public's reception thereof.

The 150 interviews which I conducted with the previously defined publics confirmed the major role of the Centre Pompidou both in the collection and in the dissemination of media art. Interviewees' comments completed the rough statistic databases, even though they sometimes lacked clarity and logic. Finally, the statistic results of this research shows on the one hand how the profile and the behaviour of visitors – whose knowledge of media art is often lacking – influence its reception, and the extent to which its dissemination, which differs from the traditional presentation of art in museums, determines the public's access to this kind of art.

While fully appreciating the proposed dissemination methods, the public seems to wish for more information in various forms. For the larger part of public, excluding specialists, the notion of media art is still uncertain. With these works, they need an attentive accompaniment, whereas access to such art on the Internet, a virtual space that is in principle open to all, supposes a real educational intervention at least at the first step.

If we consider that museum education should always develop and adapt with the evolution of art, this kind of survey could certainly play a valuable role. However, this would require more means in terms of analysis tools to make the results more exploitable, as well

have modestly but partly in front of a painting, for example." (PI-30), "Because I'm 58 and I've seen a lot of classical art (...) I should still feel a bit difficult... to understand... it blames me... For me it's not a matter of time. Maybe there are too many images comparing to paintings? I don't know." (PIII-56)

³³ "Besides, it's a concept... it's an idea that we try... to link with a sense... it's complicated to find. Because you are not simply here to say if it's beautiful or not. There is another meaning to look for. Of course it's more complicated than paintings, it hasn't got the same purpose, that's what we like." (PIII-10), "(...) It's also a part of the territory of everyday life. And that bothers me (...) it's too close to everyday life. When you're looking for art, it's not something everyday, in terms of dimension or colour, you don't do it in your living room, while watching TV... besides, art where people are filming themselves, you even see them eating, doing something, it bothers me... anyway, I don't see anything interesting about it." (PIII-26)

³⁴ "Because we just have fewer references in these artworks, we see them much less often, and anyways it's like all other art categories, it's based on a history, on something that went before, and when you don't have those references... since it's an art that you don't see very often... it's hard to form a judgment" (PI-60)

as different approaches. Such a survey could serve as an evaluation tool for the museum, helping it to exercise its educational role in the best possible way. In this context, I am currently working on a Ph.D. thesis that focuses on the ways in which education can be adapted for media art.

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Language and Online Learning Communities. Analysis of forum interactions of two online modules at the University Roma Tre

*Antonella Poce**

Abstract

The main purpose of this contribution is to analyse the role of language within online learning communities. As Wenger (1998, p. 52) states, there is a community of learners where a group of people share the same interests, and according to those common interests, engage in shared actions. The function of language is fundamental within the process of “negotiation of meaning” that happens within the community. If language, and situated use of language, in particular, is important in any community, it becomes essential in an on-line learning community, both to create a common repertoire and to produce knowledge. The problem to be investigated here is, therefore, to identify which are the special features of online language of communication, within online communities of learners. To this aim, forum interactions carried out at two online modules, supporting the face-to-face one of *Experimental Pedagogy and Museum Education* - course of *Primary Education* - University Roma Tre, will be analysed, taking into consideration typical aspects of asynchronous communication (Crystal, 2001).

Keywords

Language, technology, online community, interaction, learning.

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1. THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE WITHIN LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Internet allows the existence of communities made of subjects coming from all over the world, who share the same interest in learning and who can meet and grow together. Either online or not, any learning community can be referred to the one Wenger¹ and Lave, in 1991, for the first time, called “community of practice”.

According to Wenger (1998, p. 73), three are the essential conditions to be a community of practice:

- to share *mutual engagement*;
- to be engaged in a *joint enterprise*;
- to have a shared *repertoire* of facts and actions.

It is clear in Wenger’s work that language has an implicit importance in the process of meaning making. In fact, if one investigates Wenger’s idea of the creation of meaning, it can be realised that it is strictly linked to the experience of everyday life each of us is involved in (1998, p. 51).

Meaning is the product of a process, of an engagement we experience by living. When we talk, we act, we think, we try to solve problems, we produce meaning and the process we perform is defined by Wenger as the *negotiation of meaning* (1998, p. 53).

There are different elements involved in the process and *negotiation* implies interpretation and action, taking into account that these two constituents are not separate entities but they are part of an ongoing process. This process is made up of two ways of acting: *participation* and *reification*.

Participation refers to the establishment of relations with other subjects, while *reification* means “making into thing” (Tusting, 2005). As it can be argued, language plays a key role in particular when the *reification* of meaning is concerned.

When Wenger (1998, p. 83) speaks of the creation of a joint repertoire within the community, he thinks that it should include: “routines, words, tools, way of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, actions concepts”, most of these items are of linguistic nature.

Tusting (2005) reminds that one of the ways of recognising if a community has reified one element of its repertoire is to see if a name has been given to that particular situation, object, characteristic and this process of naming is one of the most revealing actions in the procedure of *reification*.

Within the community the exchange of experiences, the contribution that each member brings in, in one word the development of knowledge, happens thanks to the use of the language.

¹ Etienne Wenger is one of the main experts on communities of practice. He has been a pioneer of research on this field of interest. He is the author together with Lave of the book, issued in 1991 *Communities of Practice*, where for the first time the topic has been developed.

Analysing this language could help the understanding of the mechanisms through which the community is constituted, lives and grows up.

It must be underlined that to clarify the role of language within a community it is important to understand also its links with other social processes. Language is one of the principal semi-otic elements of social practice which is made of semiotic and non-semiotic components.

According to Fairclough² (1999) this means that all practices combine physical and symbolic resources. As Tusting (2005) underlines, “four are the significant different types of elements which are articulated in social practices and these are: semiosis, material activity, social relations and individual persons (minds, intentions, desires and bodies)”. Different sources (Harvey, 1996; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Fairclough, 2003) agree that language is the tool to understand certain social relations.

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

So far, we have been dealing with negotiation of meaning and with the role of language within the process. As we have seen there is a relation between language and the other elements of social practice. This relation may help revealing the main characteristics of the use of language within the community. According to Tusting (2005), language, in fact, is able to internalise the other elements. To show how this happens, Tusting refers again to Fairclough who identifies three key functions that language fulfils:

- *representation* (when language is used to represent the world in the same way);
- *identification* (when language is used to express personal and social identities);
- *action* (when language is itself part of what is going on, the action of the event).

According to the function of language, labels are given as:

- *discourses* (potential ways of representing things);
- *styles* (potential ways of expressing identity through language);
- *genres* (potential ways of using the language in the situation).

² Norman Fairclough is emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Lancaster University. He is one of the founders of critical discourse analysis, a branch of sociolinguistics or discourse analysis that looks at the influence of power relations on the content and structure of writings. Fairclough's line of study, also called textually oriented discourse analysis or TODA, to distinguish it from philosophical enquires not involving the use of linguistic methodology, is specially concerned with the mutual effects of formally linguistic textual properties, sociolinguistic speech genres, and formally sociological practices. The main thrust of his analysis is that, if - according to Foucaultian theory - practices are discursively shaped and enacted, the intrinsic properties of discourse, which are linguistically analysable, are to constitute a key element of their interpretation. He is thus interested in how social practices are discursively shaped, as well as the subsequent discursive effects of social practices (URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_Fairclough). Seen July 22nd, 2009.

If we analyse the texts produced within a community according to the categories conceived by Fairclough (2003), we may have a better understanding of the relationship between language and other social processes and between local interaction and broader social structures.

As regards the focus of the present contribution which is the analysis of the language used in online communities, the tool offered by Fairclough (2003) will be taken into consideration, especially to see which are the differences employed when students are engaged in collaborative assignment production or in peer to peer interaction.

3. PECULIARITIES OF ONLINE INTERACTIONS

As Crystal (2001, p. 25) states “the Internet is an electronic, global, interactive medium and each of these properties has consequences for the kind of language found there.”

The fact that interaction on the Net occurs through an electronic medium naturally constrains the parts involved in the interaction itself to be linguistically limited. Being connected online allows certain possibilities but forbids others and therefore not always the expectations of the users meet the nature of the medium.

Crystal (2001) finds out the problem:

The heart of the matter seems to be its relationship to spoken and written language. Several writers have called the Internet language “written speech” and Wired Style advises: “write the way people talk”. (p. 26)

The language of the Net is in fact a mixture spoken and written language and the result is a product which contains the influences of people coming from extremely different places and contexts. Nevertheless, the nature itself of the language makes it interesting to be analysed especially because, presenting characteristics belonging to both the speech and writing spheres, it affects also the evolution of traditional written and spoken language. Some of the written products that we find on the web share the same characteristics of any paper writing, while other functions of the medium bring it closer to speech interactions.

If we think of emails, we realise, in fact, that they are transient (they can be deleted anytime), they depend on the active participation of the sender and the receiver (they are written to expect or give a response), and they tend to be presented using the features of spoken language. Even on chat, where people are supposed to “speak” in a more direct way, one has to write not to speak.

Crystal (2001, pp. 32-33) highlights the mayor differences between face to face and online interaction:

- the lack of simultaneous feedback;
- the rhythm of a web interaction is very much slower than that found in the speech situation;
- the larger the number of participants involved in an interaction the worse the situation becomes.

What Crystal essentially underlines is the fact that interaction mediated by the presence of the computer forbids the effectiveness of face-to-face interaction, therefore some of its peculiar features must be reproduced somehow also on the Net, if we want to get closer to face-to-face situations.

Even if on the web one “writes as he talks” a lot of the prosody and paralinguistics of speech is missing.

Very often, the meaning of what we say is expressed by the way we say it, through the intonation, the stress, the speed, the rhythms, the pauses and the tone of the voice (Dery, 1993).

The need to reproduce these aspects of communication on the Net favoured the rise of what Crystal (2001, p. 37) calls “emphatic conventions” and he gives some examples for them:

All capitals for shouting:	I SAID NO
Letter spacing for loud and clear:	W H Y N O T
Word/phrase emphasis by asterisks:	The *real* answer

Anyway the above conventions are not always so effective, first of all because not everyone knows the rules of the game. Other tools of the sort are used to reproduce kinesic and proxemic aspects of conversations. There are for instance the so called smileys: combinations of keyboard characters designed to show emotional facial expressions. There are various sets of them but the best known worldwide are the following:

Pleasure or positive feeling	: -) or :)	☺
Sadness or negative feeling	: -(or : (	☹

Different authors (Dery, 1993; Witmer, 2000; Crystal, 2001) agree in considering that their use is more related to the establishment of a relationship between the subjects involved than that of clarifying meaning.

Another way of reproducing kinesic and proxemic features on the Net is that of putting abbreviated words in brackets to mean a certain reaction:

<g>	Grin, used to react to a funny message
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As already mentioned, the use of these devices to get closer to speech peculiarities, far from reaching its original objective, helps the creation of a bound group when a community is established.

What Wenger stated as regards the repertoire of facts and actions that need to be created in presence of a community of practice is performed on the Web also by the use of the above conventions.

From what has been highlighted above, one might argue that online interactions, though aiming at reproducing face-to-face situations, fail to reach successfully the aim.

What is interesting however is the fact that if online interactions are not close to speech interactions, they are not either comparable to conventional writing (Crystal, 2001).

Considering, therefore, that the language of the Net is neither speech nor writing, but it contains elements of the one and of the other, we might say together with different authors (Baron, 2000; Crystal, 2001) that it should be taken as a third medium, peculiar of the new era we are living today.

4. HYPOTHESES, METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTS OF ANALYSIS

In the previous paragraph, a description of the main peculiarities of online use of the language has been given in order to find out possible cues, studying the characteristics of the forum interactions carried out in the online modules of *Didattica e Progettazione delle Attività Educative* - DIPAE ("Teaching and Education Project") and of *Sviluppare la Capacità di Comprensione della Lettura* - SCCL ("Development of Reading Skills")³.

First of all it is necessary to spend a few words on the above modules, which support the face-to face course of *Experimental pedagogy and museum education* at the Faculty of Primary Education - University Roma Tre.

Each of the above module, worth 2 CFU (credits), started in November 2007 and ended with the final examination in February 2008. The modules were assimilated to the so called "Laboratories", compulsory activities in number of 2 for every subject area of study. The possibility to gain the above mentioned 2 CFU (credits) attending online favoured participation and in fact DIPAE registered 401 enrolments and 339 were the students of SCCL.

Activities for each module were organised in 3 teaching units and 9 formative tests (3 multiple choice, 3 filling the blanks and 3 matching). Students had to pass all the formative tests in order to be admitted to the face to face examination. The table below reports final results:

³ From now on the two modules will be referred to as DIPAE and SCCL.

DIPAE	
Enrolled	Successful students at the final exam
401	203

Tab. 1

SCCL	
Enrolled	Successful students at the final exam
339	196

Tab. 2

The electronic platform, designed for the teaching activities, provides also a space devoted to forum discussions. Participation in the forum is free and no extra credit is gained, taking part in any interaction.

Considering all the above, the hypotheses of research to be tested were conceived as follows:

Hp1= If a peculiar and finalised kind of language is developed within an online community, it is the consequence of the creation of a community of practice and the use of the same kind of language implies particular aspects of social interactions.

Hp2= If social activities on the web are developed through a peculiar use of the language, learning attainment is influenced.

From a first enquiry of the activity performed on the forum sessions, it might be realised that students gave rise in both the teaching environments to a place where to share the experience they were engaged in. There they could clarify doubt about content of teaching units, get extra information, gain cues to solve online tests.

I considered interesting to analyse the way interactions were conducted in the forum for a series of reasons:

1. to see if participants in the module had given rise to a real community of learners as Wenger conceived it;
2. to verify which could be the relation between the kind of language used in the forum and the social aspects of the interactions performed on the learning environment;
3. to understand if "getting closer", thanks also to the linguistic patterns used on the Net, could have any influence in learning attainment (improvement of learning).

To develop the above research issues I carried out mostly qualitative analyses.

First of all, driving back to the classification of the key functions of the language identified by Fairclough (2003), I studied the postings of the students of both modules to see which were the functions adopted. This operation allowed to focus on the aim of interactions and to understand better the relation between social context and use of the language.

Then, having pointed out some peculiarities of the tool of communication in use in the forum areas, I registered the frequencies of the above features. This procedure has been carried out taking into account the results of a previous work conducted by John Paolillo⁴ in 1999. The author, starting from the consideration that social network relations are recognised as the principal vehicle of language change, analysing the interactions occurred in a virtual community group, found out that communication on the Net can be more revealing than that offline because “a more detailed and fine-grained information about social contacts can be obtained” (Paolillo, 1999, p.1).

In my work of analysis, I considered the following language patterns:

- use of informal expressions, strengthening the ties among participants;
- use of thematic words related to the final examination (test, question, final exam, marks etc.);
- use of contracted words (nn=non=not);
- use of nicknames (ciully87 instead of name and surname);
- use of modified words and symbols (xké = Perché= Why; ... - ????=emphasis on doubts; etc.)

5. COLLECTION OF DATA AND MAJOR FINDINGS

The forum area of DIPAE registered, in the period November 28th 2007 - February 17 2008, fifty (50) postings and thirty-six (36) answers. Thirty-eight (38) people participated. The table below summarises the frequencies of the linguistic patterns mentioned in the previous paragraph.

DIPAE	
Informal expressions (e.g. “Hi guys”, “...me neither”, “...me too”, “good luck”, “kisses”etc.)	50
Words referring to the final exam	73
Contracted words (nn=non=not; sn=sono=are etc.)	16
Modified words and symbols (xké=perché=why; ke=che=that; ????= strong doubt; use of capital letters to emphasise)	81
Nicknames	29

Tab. 3

⁴ John Paolillo is a Associate Processor of Information Science and of Linguistics at the Indiana University in Bloomington (US). His research interests are the following: Sociolinguistics and language acquisition, computational linguistics, second language acquisition, and South Asian languages.

As regards the module SCCL, its forum area, active from November 11th 2007 to February 21st 2008, registered 30 participants, 30 postings and 27 answers. The summary of data is given in the table below:

SCCL	
Informal expressions (e.g. "Hi guys", "...me neither", "...me too", "good luck", "kisses"etc.)	22
Words referring to the final exam	52
Contracted words (nn=non=not; sn=sono=are etc.)	4
Modified words and symbols (xkè=perché=why; ke=che=that; ????= strong doubt; use of capital let-ters to emphasise)	23
Nicknames	15

Tab. 4

The first evidence, deriving from the reading of the postings on the forum area of both the modules, is related to the creation of a community of learners, as Wenger conceived it, i.e. a place where the group shares *a mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a repertoire of facts and actions*.

Participants, in fact,

- show that they are engaged to fulfil a common aim: the acquisition of the 2 CFU credits available;
- are carrying out a joint enterprise: taking and passing a final examination;
- have developed a repertoire using peculiar features of online language.

The following message posted on the DIPAE forum are representative of the above points:

Oggetto	no!!!
Autore	veronica
Data	28-12-2007, ore 19:08:41
Messaggio	aiuto la prova 3 e 4 non riesco proprio a superarle!!!! (<i>Help, I really can't pass tests 3 and 4!!!!</i>)

Risposte	
Autore	ciully87
Data	28-12-2007, ore 19:57:00
Messaggio	ciao...ti ho amndato le risposte della prova 3 sull'e-mail...la prova 4 nn so farla neanche io...infatti mi manca quella e anke la 2...nn è ke potersti

Messaggio	mandarmi le risposte di quest'ultima?grazie (<i>Hi... I sent you the answers of n.3 on your email...I can't find the solution of test 4 either... in fact I miss that and n.2 too... couldn't you send me the answers of this last one? Thank you.</i>)
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Tab. 5

Same evidence emerges from the postings on SCCL forum interactions and another example is given below.

Oggetto	le unità
Autore	alessiac
Data	2-12-2007, ore 14:52:32
Messaggio	ciao a tutte ragazze...io ho provato a svolgere solo due prove e le ho superate...però penso che sia più indicato terminarle tutte e poi cominciare a studiare le unità perchè la prova finale in presenza riguarda quelle e non le prove di verifica che invece sono solo esercitazioni...o no??? (<i>Hi girls...I tried to solve two tests and I passed them... but I think that it would be better to end everything and start studying the teaching units because the content of the final exam is concerned with them and the others are only formative... correct?</i>)

Risposte	
Autore	valevale
Data	2-12-2007, ore 18:42:47
Messaggio	Io ho finito oggi le prove di verifica... e sono d'accordo con te... inizio ora a studiare le unità per la prova in presenza di Febbraio! (<i>I took all the online tests and I agree with you ... Now I start studying the teaching units for the final exam in February.</i>)
Autore	alessiac
Data	3-12-2007, ore 23:50:44
Messaggio	Ok grazie mille!!!Allora continuerò su questa strada anche io... (<i>Ok, thank you!!! I'll keep on the same way too</i>)
Autore	tonale
Data	10-12-2007, ore 15:16:23
Messaggio	Scusate ma a me sembra che sia necessario prima capire le unità didattiche e poi fare i test di verifica. Per es. i test che trattano il punto di vista prevedono la conoscenza delle informazioni presenti nella unità didattica relativa. ciao!

Messaggio	<i>(Sorry, but to me it is necessary to understand teaching units first and then take the tests. Eg. Tests dealing with point of view imply contents present in the related teaching units.)</i>
Autore	alessiac
Data	10-12-2007, ore 19:47:09
Messaggio	boh vabbè io comunque le ho passate tutte quindi prima o dopo è uguale!!! CIAO CIAO <i>(Boh, ok, anyway I passed them all so before or after it's the same!!! BYE BYE)</i>

Tab. 6

As one can see from the examples of the postings, participants are eager to finish their tests to be admitted to the final face-to-face exam. They share the same purpose and are engaged in the same enterprise, searching for help and helping each other, trying to solve the most difficult tests. The creation of a repertoire is well described by the use of those linguistic patterns previously identified (contracted words, use of symbols and modified words, of nicknames and of field words related to the final exam).

If one takes into account Fairclough classification, it seems clear that the main function language serves here is that of *action*, where language becomes part of what is going on, performing the action of reaching the particular aim of passing the final exam of the module.

Social interaction, therefore, allows the creation of a real linguistic *genre* as Fairclough defines it.

Concerning contents of the teaching units, they have been treated differently. In the module of DIPAE, a thematic forum has been created spontaneously by the students and it registered the participation of 56 students, 46 postings and 110 answers. In the module of SCCL no thematic forum arose and just two of the postings on the forum area dealt with content issues.

In the DIPAE thematic forum, students proposed subjects related to the contents of the teaching units and asked for comments and opinions of the others. Reading through the various postings the main finding is connected to the change of the function of the language as described by Fairclough (2003).

Language patterns disappeared (slang expressions, contracted and modified words, etc.) and, if on the free section of the forum the identified function of the language was “action”, being here the purpose of interactions that of developing thematic issues raising the interests of colleagues, the function becomes “representation”, i.e. language used to represent the world (Fairclough, 2003) and the label assigned is that of discourse.

Here it is an instance extracted from the thematic forum under discussion:

Oggetto	Ma quale Valutazione? (What evaluation?)
Autore	paolab
Data	7-2-2008, ore 22:11:38
Messaggio	Oggi la programmazione e la valutazione sono contestuali, complementari e interconnessi secondo una visione sistemica dei processi di insegnamento/apprendimento, resi possibili dalle diverse fasi valutative. La valutazione puo' essere considerata esaustiva? Completa e/o oggettiva? Credo che anche i docenti devono verificare se il loro modo di programmare, progettare e insegnare (aggiungerei suscitare l'interesse!) e' oggettivamente efficiente ed efficace a seguito della verifica dei livelli raggiunti dagli alunni. <i>(Today design and evaluation occur at the same time, are complementary and strictly connected according to a systemic vision of the teaching and learning processes, made possible by the different evaluation phases. Can we consider evaluation a comprehensive process? Is it complete and objective? In my opinion also teachers should test if their way of planning, designing and teaching (I would add motivating!) is objectively efficient and effective, after the analysis of the results of their pupils.</i>

Risposte	
Autore	gabry1971
Data	7-2-2008, ore 22:41:12
Messaggio	Beh.. se la valutazione fosse esaustiva, completa e/o oggettiva, il sistema scolastico sarebbe perfetto. Se l'efficacia della valutazione fosse vissuta dai docenti come il complemento delle proprie competenze didattiche/educative e della capacità di suscitare interesse, il sistema valutativo funzionerebbe al meglio. <i>(Well... if evaluation would be comprehensive, complete and/or objective, the school system would be perfect. If teachers could understand the effectiveness of evaluation as part of their teaching and motivating competences, the evaluation system would improve.)</i>
Autore	zoetta
Data	8-2-2008, ore 22:08:43
Messaggio	Oggi non si fa altro che parlare di programmazione e valutazione ai fini di una buona didattica; mi chiedo quanti docenti facciano una programmazione individualizzata tenendone poi conto nella fase valutativa. Credo che all'interno di una classe eterogenea per provenienza culturale, sociale ed economica, un buon insegnante debba riuscire a comprendere

Messaggio	e prendere in considerazione una serie di fattori che prescindano dalla didattica. <i>(Today we do not do anything else than speaking of designing and evaluation to produce better teaching. I wonder how many teachers design individualised teaching taking it into account in the assessment phase. I think that within and heterogeneous class as regards cultural and economic background, a good teacher should include a series of factors that leaves aside teaching).</i>
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Tab. 7

6. FINAL REMARKS

The work that has been presented here refers to different aspects of human communication and tries to investigate also how communication influences learning in particular environments.

I started mentioning Wenger's theory about communities of practice in order to explain what sort of learning community I referred to and which could be the role of language within the above sort of communities.

When Wenger (1998, p. 83) speaks of the creation of a joint repertoire within the community, he thinks that it should include: "routines, words, tools, way of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, actions concepts", most of these items are of linguistic nature. Moreover, language has strong links with other social processes. Language is one of the principal semi-otic elements of social practice which is made of semiotic and non-semiotic components.

According to Fairclough (1999) this means that all practices combine physical and symbolic resources.

This aspect is useful to clarify some of the peculiarities that language acquires in online learning environments, especially when we turn to the analysis carried out by Crystal, where meta-linguistic value of the symbols used on the Internet is essential to understand why Internet language is "written speech" (2001, p. 26) as he says.

The analysis that has been carried out on the two online modules mentioned above represents a preliminary study and there is space for development of further investigation, but, according to the findings, it emerges that a peculiar and finalised language has been performed within the students community and that social interactions exist because of a mutual engagement, whose strength justifies the community itself.

The use of the Internet language, moreover, seems to help students in learning, because, through it, they search and obtain responses to their doubts and difficulties.

In summary, considering the activity carried out on the modules observed:

- the main function the language serves in both the free sections of forums analysed is action (Fairclough, 2003), meaning that it is the tool to perform a peculiar social activity;
- participants are engaged to fulfil a common aim and have developed a peculiar repertoire creating a real community;
- social interactions made possible also by using peculiar features of online language helped clarifications on content issues and therefore influenced learning attainment.

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The television treatment of a heritage site: the case of Pompeii

*Céline Schall**

Abstract

The aim of this article is to question the status of the archaeological vestiges when they are used in television programs, when the archaeological site is “rewritten” for TV.

Our hypothesis is that each film shows the patrimonial dimension in a different way and this changes the status of the mediation established with the past.

To test it, we carried out a semiopragmatic analysis on two films about Pompeii.

We will see that the first film speaks about the past by using the site as a narrative element and the vestiges as icons. The other one is a metatext which presents the site by respecting its original coherence.

From that, we will describe three modalities which should to be respected to assure a patrimonial reading of the vestiges, and we will discuss the interest of this reading.

Keywords

Archaeological site, heritage, television, fact of language, rewriting.

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1. AIMS AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: THE REWRITING OF A PATRIMONIAL SITE

1.1 THE CONTEXT OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

The rare research studies about archaeology on television question the representations that television gives of archaeology or heritage (Aubert, 2008; Center of archaeological research, 1988; Alexandre-Bidon, 1984, 1986). The most recent research studies about documentaries often show a lack of adequacy between the pictures and the reality of events and tell the danger of mixing documentary with fiction.

The aim of this article is to understand *how* certain television programs which show patrimonial heritage *work*. We are interested in the status of the present archaeological heritage when it is used in television programs and its usage in the mediation with the past¹. To this purpose, we will study documentaries about Pompeii.

1.2 WHY POMPEII?

Pompeii is the object of strong representations: its excavations seem to have widely contributed to the archaeological imagination born in the XIXth century (Perrin-Saminday, 2001). The site is also strongly patrimonial: its heritage is authentic and therefore allows, thanks to scientific knowledge, the producing of the original world of these objects².

The site is not only presenting vestiges, but also staging this same vestiges with a communicational aim: we consider the archaeological site as a text, a fact of language. It does a link between the visitor and those who created the staging of the site and between the visitor and those who created this same vestiges - the men from the past (Davallon, 1999, 2006). Thus, the coherence of Pompeii is not only that of an Antique City: it is indeed a text, with an enunciative strategy.

This strategy is visible through the various forms of mediation: a visitor's path is marked on the site by numbers, an audioguide helps the reading of the site, a map points out the monuments that should not be missed, and lastly there are panels giving information about the monuments.

This mediation strategy on the site directs visitor towards a cognitive visit which only centres very slightly on the reconstitution, the experience or the entertainment. For example, the moulds of Pompeian bodies, which could have been utilised to create an emotional re-

¹ In this text, we use « mediation » as the capacity of the objects and knowledge to refer to a world they are supposed to represent (Davallon, 1999).

² The discovery of the authentic object and the certification of the past world of the object thanks to scientific knowledge are two essential steps of the patrimonialization schema of J.Davallon (2006).

action in the viewer, are in fact, simply kept in the granary excavations, on shelves or in some sort of aquariums in the Mysteries Villa (Fig. 1)³.

1.3 THE DOCUMENTARIES AS REWRITINGS OF THE SITE-TEXT

The studied documentaries are also considered as texts: texts using a very different language to that used on the site, and using the site and the vestiges themselves.

The documentary is therefore a rewriting of the patrimonial site, since it takes, as raw material, these same vestiges. According to the author's point of view, these texts can be more or less didactic, or spectacular, or... We are therefore facing a text *on another text*. But the link between the archaeological site, the text, and the different television texts is more complex than this. The original site might even be forgotten to the advantage of other aspects.

1.4 THE QUESTION: THE PATRIMONIAL DIMENSION IN THESE DIFFERENT TEXTS

Our question is therefore the following: how do the studied television textualities reflect the patrimonial dimension of the site? And how does this affect the mediation?

Our hypothesis is that these films introduce certain forms of textuality, which deal differently with the patrimonial dimension of the site. The way these films use the raw material (the patrimonial site), contributes to building different types of relationships with the past. In other words, different textualities reflect differently the patrimonial dimension of the site and give it a different position and status in the mediation with the past.

2. A SEMIOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF A REDUCED CORPUS

2.1 METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

What interests us here, is the "putting into text" of the site: its configuration and the relationship that is proposed with both the site and the patrimonial object, as well as the man from the past and the past itself.

The approach developed by J.-C. Soulages (2005) seems appropriate because this analysis takes into account particularities of television: notably the place of the viewer (the pragmatic effects on the viewer and the situation of communication) and of the referentiality of documentary pictures (they refer to the real world or to the supposed past).

We will therefore consider the documentary as an *enunciative device of mediation*. This notion can help us to bring to light "structural phenomena of mediation in any media dis-

³ Illustrations are collected in the end of the text.

course [...]. The television screen then proves itself, through its activity of showing the world, to be also as a relational terminal" (Soulages, 2005, p. 203).

Then, we think that it is also necessary to take into consideration particularities of the filmed object: the archaeology. Particular attention will be paid to the temporality in the films. In each one, the time presented is over a very long duration and presents crossroads between the past of objects and men on the one hand, and the present discourses of science on the other. We will also be interested in the way that scientific discourse (which functions as proof) and the tale of the past are mixed. Finally, the status of the patrimonial objects seems important since they broadly contribute to the symbolic mediation offered to the spectator (Davallon, 2006). The heritage is considered as a mediatization aid and as an operator of mediation.

The dialogs, the sounds and the pictures of the films were retranscribed and then we proceeded to:

- a) an analysis of the context of the enunciation (paratext, title, announcement of the film);
- b) an analysis of the enunciation (sources and markers) and of the narrativity of the film.

We also brought to light different possible textual configurations and possible enunciative problems which appeared. The practical tools given by this theoretical framework come therefore from theories of enunciation and narration in cinema (Metz, 1991; Jost, 1979) and television (Gaudreault & Jost, 2005; Hanot, 2002; Soulages, 2005; Chateau, 1983; Véron, 1983).

- c) finally, we analyzed the role of vestiges and the site in the films, their status and the link that they offer with the past world (the reference). For this part of the analysis, we principally borrowed the methodological tools from the semiotic of Peirce (1978). In his model of the sign, he differentiates indexes, icons and symbols according to the link that the sign maintains with its object⁴.

2.2 A REDUCED CORPUS TO DESCRIBE THE PROCESS

From 2000 to 2005, about fifteen authenticating documents (using Jost's criteria, 1997) were shown on French television. The forms of device vary: some take place both on a TV set and live on the site (*Des racines et des ailes spécial Pompéï*), others have a presenter speak on the site and approach the site using different topics (*C'est pas Sorcier, spécial Pompéï*), and most of the other documentaries show specialists on the site and specialists

⁴ The index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object by a causal relationship. Habitually, to be acknowledged as a proof of the past, and as an object of heritage, vestige must be acknowledged as an index. The icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own; by a relationship of similarity. The symbol is a sign which is constituted a sign merely or mainly by the fact that it is used and understood as such by a conventional relationship.

digging or analyzing objects (*Vivre et Construire à Pompéi, L'empire romain, grandeur et décadence etc.*).

In this article we will only present two films for a question of simplicity: *The Last Day of Pompeii* (Ailsa Orr et Peter Nicholson, 2003) and *The Mysteries of Pompeii* (Marie-Noëlle Himbert, 2003). Introducing all possible reconfigurations of Pompeii in a bigger corpus of relevant films could be interesting, but we prefer to introduce a single case in a more itemized way.

These two films are not representative of all the films we studied about Pompeii, but what is interesting here is that these two films often use the same images of the vestiges and the same fictional reconstitutions with actors. Then, they were programmed one following the other, on the same channel. They are seen as a coherent set: these two films supposedly function together and are sold in a same DVD.

Nevertheless, they give radically different status to the vestiges. The comparison of these two films also allows us to discuss the impact of mixing “reality” and “fiction” on the mediation implemented.

2.3 PRESENTATION OF THE TWO FILMS STUDIED

The Last Day of Pompeii is usually considered as a docudrama⁵. It is an English production of fifty-two minutes, which retraces the last hours of Pompeii and its surroundings during the eruption of Vesuvius, through the romanticized story of certain inhabitants (citizens and slaves).

The Mysteries of Pompeii is a French documentary showing how scientists succeeded in writing the story of the destruction of Pompeii during the eruption and how their discoveries allowed for the elaboration of the film *The Last Day of Pompeii*. The film is not a “making of” but nevertheless presents a metadiscourse about the first film.

3. CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF ANALYSIS ABOUT THE TWO TEXTUALITIES

3.1 THE SITE IN BOTH FILMS: THE SITE-TEXT IN THE FILM-TEXTS

As we will see here, the docudrama submits the site to the requirements of the story and denies it as a text, whereas the documentary shows it as a text and as a space of usage.

The entire docudrama is based on the viewer's attachment to four families of characters and an off-screen voice comments the action without any specialist intervention. The major

⁵ Even if this term could be to discuss, for a question of clarity of the discourse, this film will therefore be called always so.

part of the film is the reconstitution of the site by computer-generated images (Fig. 2) or reconstitutions with actors. During the scenes of reconstitution, only one place or street of Pompeii is quoted, we never know where the action is really taking place. The site of Pompeii does not appear as a text: it becomes the urban decor of the story. The reconstitution chooses only the certain parts of the site which are useful to the story; the site becomes a narrative element like any other.

However, to support the film's discourse, and for the reconstitution not to be interpreted as a pure fiction, the site and authentic vestiges appear in the film. The authentic site appears when the story imposes it, to give evidence of the likeness of the reconstitutions. When the site appears such as it is at present, traces of mediation on the site are erased (panels, texts, etc.). The appearance of the authentic site is, thus, also guided by the narration and what makes it a site-text is erased.

The site is thus reconfigured by the narration of the film. It is a whole new text and whole new enunciation strategy than on the site itself. In this case, the film-text substitutes itself to the site-text which presents the vestiges in their real form.

On the other hand, the documentary begins and ends on the site of Pompeii. The first scene shows aerial views of the site while the off-screen voice presents it as an archaeological site to discover. This scene restores the site as a coherent text existing outside the film.

The site and the museums which appear in the film and in which are placed the specialists, are presented as texts through a double operation: a) the spatial coherence is emphasized: places are used (we see the specialists visiting and looking at vestiges). They are meaningful, and demand to be read. b) the site exists in the present time: we can see the tourists, the different ways of mediation organized on the site, etc. The vestiges are always contextualised in the site-text they belong to.

3.2 THE HERITAGE IN BOTH FILMS

Does the representation of the site as a text notably change anything concerning the place occupied by the heritage in the mediation? As we are going to see: yes. In the docudrama, the vestiges function as icons and do not make the link between present and past, whereas in the documentary, this same vestiges are indexes, playing a mediation role to the past.

In the docudrama, two presentations of the site are interwoven: the reconstitutions with actors (the story) (Fig. 3) and the images of vestiges such as they appear at present time (Fig. 4).

The vestiges presented in the reconstitutions are vestiges which *look like* the authentic vestiges: in semiotic terms, they are icons (relationship of similarity with the object). They have no role in the mediation: they are a simple narrative element like any other. The direct contact established with the characters dominates.

The images of the authentic vestiges appear between the scenes of reconstitution. There are two types of images:

- firstly, day-shots of the vestiges (Fig. 4) appearing just after certain scenes of reconstitution (Fig. 3). These images show that the reconstitutions (the icons) are a good likeness to what exists in reality, in the present real vestiges;

- the other images of authentic vestiges are sorts of flashes: they appear in a blue flash of lighting and on a black background (Fig. 6). They appear at dramatic moments of the reconstitution: during the agony of the characters, we see them dying, and then in a flash their real skeletons appear. In fact, these flashes-forward function as prolepses (Gaudreault & Jost, 2005): this stylistic device consists of announcing what is going to take place in the future to “prevent any objections from the interlocutors on the present discourse” (Beth & Marpeau, 2005). Indeed, these flashes announce the continuation of the story; they also place the reconstitution earlier in time than the vestiges. It is, in fact, an inversion: the vestiges are used to reconstitute such a hypothesis.

So, in the docudrama, the vestiges, even if they are authentic, do not prove the discourse of the reconstitutions: no link (except the likeness) is made between the reconstitutions and real objects from the past.

In the documentary, vestiges are also of two types: the icons of the reconstitutions of the first film and the authentic vestiges. But the status of the reconstitutions changes in this second film. They no longer exist to reconstitute the story, but to illustrate the discourse of the scientists: the presence of the scientists gives to the reconstitutions a status of scientific hypothesis. Thus, they do not really belong to the fiction anymore but to a reconstitution, based on scientific facts. The authentic vestiges are also scientific documents, *indexes* from the past (causal relationship with the object). The indexical link of vestiges with the past is confirmed; a link which was not really present in the first film.

This film thus makes a parallel between two texts in order to compare them: the docudrama which reconstitutes the story of Pompeii and the site of Pompeii as a text itself. In this case, we are dealing with a real “mise-en-abyme”⁶ of two texts. In this documentary, the vestiges are seen principally as scientific objects and get back their indexical and patrimonial status. They help to create the mediation between us, the scientists and the vestiges, but not much with the man from the past (rather like on the site itself).

3.3 WHO IS SPEAKING?

Finally, the status of vestiges as icons or indexes seems mainly to depend on the discourse concerning it and especially on the identification of the real enunciator of the discourse.

In The Mysteries of Pompeii (the documentary), the enunciation authority, who is truly responsible for the scientific discourse, appears in the image: the specialists explain, give ev-

idence and discuss the reconstitutions. They appear in their offices, in laboratories or on the dig-sites. They are presented face on, looking at the camera. This device also restores the scientists as the origin of the discoveries and of the writing of the site's history, because they are present throughout the film. Generally, they are presented as modern investigators, but it is especially the values of science, rigour and pragmatism that are connected with them and which confirm them as a serious source of knowledge.

The Last Day of Pompeii (the docudrama) gives the feeling of a direct mediation to the man from the past and for that purpose, and contrary to what we can see in most documentaries, we do not see scientists establishing the knowledge. Furthermore, the status of the off-screen-voice is ambiguous. Indeed, it works more as a homodiegetised voice-over (Jost, 1997), as in a pure fiction: the voice comments on the action, as if he was in the story, with verbs in present and future tenses. The voice thus leaves the world of enunciation to join the story itself. This contributes to dramatize the action which is taking place before our eyes. It thus cannot give evidence of the enunciation at the same time.

The voice-over really comes back as an off-screen-voice at the end of the film and begins to speak in the past tense giving factual information. This passage corresponds to the moment when Pliny the Younger is writing his memories. He is effectively the written source who allowed the scientists to understand Pompeii. We understand at this moment that the voice-over could in fact be Pliny's voice during the film. So, he is the only certifying authority on the screen (he has the status of witness). The two different statuses of Pliny cannot make him a serious source of knowledge: he cannot be the witness of a fiction (Pliny did not really observe the characters as we can see them in the film) *and* the witness of the real history. In the end, the reconstituted vestiges in the docudrama have no authority of certification nor authentication: they are only pure icons.

⁶ In literary criticism, "mise-en-abyme" is a type of frame story, in which the main narrative can be used to encapsulate some aspect of the framing story. The term is used in deconstruction and deconstructive literary criticism as a paradigm of the intertextual nature of language that is, of the way language never quite reaches the foundation of reality because it refers in a frame-within-a-frame way to other language, which refers to other language, etc.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This rapid analysis shows several things about the status of the patrimonial vestiges in the films.

4.1 DIFFERENT TEXTUALITIES, DIFFERENT LINKS TO THE PAST

First, the rewriting of the archaeological site in the documentaries does not seem to be a simple *mise-en-abyme*, nor a simple rewriting of the first text (the Pompeii site). We can clearly see that we are dealing with two different textualities in these two examples: the docudrama speaks about the past world by using the site as a narrative element and the vestiges as icons. The documentary presents the site by respecting its original coherence and the indexical status of the vestiges and functions as a metatext which confronts the site-text and the docudrama-text.

If we compare the textuality of the site and the textualities of the two films, we can see that the links proposed to the past are not the same. The site of Pompeii proposes a very didactic link to the vestiges, centred only slightly on the visitor's emotion or on the man from the past. The docudrama proposes a direct link to the past based on our attachment to the characters, which differs entirely from the text offered by the site. It restricts the patrimonial dimension of the vestiges: the mediation does not make use of them. Finally, the documentary offers a link to the past through different strata of mediation (the archaeologist, then the vestiges, then the man from the past). The distance created by these strata changes the status of the man from the past and the past world, which then become simple scientific hypotheses.

Finally, these two television textualities work particularly well together: the first offers a direct link to the man from the past and the second, by using the patrimonial vestiges, completes this emotional link with a scientific discourse. This return to heritage seems necessary to restore a scientific connection with the past.

4.2 THE MODALITIES OF THE PATRIMONIAL READING AND THE FICTION USE

To conclude, this approach of the films' textuality has to be completed by the study of other films, and notably of other films about less patrimonial sites. But it seems that three conditions (at least) have to be respected to assure a patrimonial reading of vestiges (the affirmation of a clear authority of enunciation, the respect of the site as a text and the index status of the vestige).

We can also clearly see that the use of fictional pictures is not a problem in itself, if these three conditions are united and confer on these pictures a status of scientific examples. The docudrama has to be analysed not only in terms of mixing "docu" and "fiction/drama", reality and invention, but also in terms of enunciation and *mediation* of the site.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1 - A body mould in the Mysteries Villa



Fig. 2 - Pompeii's reconstitution



Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 - Polibius villa reconstitution and the actual vestiges



Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 - Polibius and his wife: the actors and the real vestiges

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L'Intercompréhension et l'Internet

Stefanie Wagner*

Abstract

In spite of the dominant role of English, websites in other languages become important for helping to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage.

But ignoring these languages, how can we still benefit from those sites?

Referring to Romance languages, this article demonstrates how to get a reading competence in an “unknown” Romance language, based on your knowledge of another one. Due to the same origin, the Vulgar Latin, Romance languages present a high potential of intercomprehension. Discovering similar linguistic structures and employing strategies like “inferencing”, an “unknown” Romance language will quickly be familiar to you. The cognitive background and a reading guide will be presented. But intercomprehension cannot produce miracles, so limits will also be shown.

Keywords

Romance languages, plurilinguism, reading competence, intercomprehension, internet.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vivant dans une société de plus en plus globalisée, on ne peut pratiquement plus se passer du monde virtuel de l'Internet et on y entre principalement par la lecture. Or, toutes les informations ne sont pas accessibles, par exemple en français ou en anglais, de telle sorte qu'on est obligé d'avoir recours aux textes en langues (romanes) moins répandues voire presque inconnues dont la présence sur Internet est en forte progression. Afin de pouvoir exploiter ces sites web, au lieu de se contenter d'une traduction souvent incomplète (et avec tous les inconvénients qu'«offre» une traduction), il est préférable de se familiariser avec une technique assez simple mais efficace: la lecture intercompréhensive.

2. «INTERCOMPRÉHENSION» ?

Par le terme «intercompréhension» on désigne la capacité de comprendre sur la base d'une autre langue une langue étrangère sans l'avoir apprise. En effet, le terme «étrangère» devrait s'écrire ici entre guillemets, parce qu'il s'agit d'une langue qui fait partie de la même famille que la langue maternelle ou autre langue déjà apprise et plus ou moins bien maîtrisée. Par rapport aux langues romanes, c'est la même racine linguistique, le latin vulgaire, qui se trouve à la base du fort potentiel intercompréhensif dont sont dotées les langues romanes modernes. Cela veut dire que, maîtrisant une langue romane, on est capable de comprendre un nombre non négligeable d'éléments d'une autre sous sa forme écrite, même si on ne l'a jamais apprise formellement¹.

3. LES LANGUES ROMANES ET L'INTERNET

Avant d'entrer dans les détails, nous aimerions esquisser la situation des langues romanes telle qu'elle se présente aujourd'hui sur Internet. On est, en effet, témoin d'un double développement: d'un côté, comme déjà brièvement mentionné, les «petites» langues (le catalan, l'occitan etc.) renforcent davantage leur présence sur Internet, majoritairement par des sites locaux et culturels, des cours de langue, des dictionnaires voire par la presse

¹ Les recherches de Castagne (2007, p. 3) portent même au-delà: écartant l'hypothèse que l'intercompréhension ne soit possible qu'entre langues apparentées, le chercheur considère l'intercompréhension comme un concept multidimensionnel qui serait capable de promouvoir la compréhension même entre langues voisines non apparentées.

ou la radio en ligne². L'Internet, pour eux, est le moyen par excellence de faire entendre leur voix dans le monde entier et peut-être, même si jusqu'ici il n'y en a pas de preuve, d'être une espèce d'ancre qui les empêche de glisser dans l'oubli.

De l'autre côté, on trouve les moteurs de recherche qui se révèlent souvent indispensables et les sites «populaires», voire un peu criards, de type «actualité people», qui témoignent d'une abondance d'anglicismes.

À titre d'exemple jetons un coup d'œil sur la «Une» de Yahoo en français, italien, espagnol et portugais:

<i>français</i>	<i>italien</i>	<i>espagnol</i>	<i>portugais (br.)</i>
mail	mail	correo	e-mail
données personnelles	la tua Privacy	propiedad intelectual	privacidade
mobile	mobile	móvil	celular
people (pipoles)	spettacoli	corazón (famosos)	celebridades
lien / link	link	link	link
shopping	shopping	compras	shopping

On constate que, malgré sa réputation un peu puriste vis-à-vis des mots anglais, le français est avec l'italien une des langues qui, sur Internet³, a intégré le plus d'anglicismes. Ceux-ci sont parfois sémantiquement réduits par rapport à l'original et d'un statut incertain sur le plan grammatical. Il se pourrait pourtant que l'intégration complète passe aussi par l'adaptation de l'orthographe. Arrêtons-nous donc un instant sur le mot «people».

Désignant en anglais «les gens», voire «le peuple», le nom a réduit cette polysémie lors de son passage au français pour désigner exclusivement des gens supposés célèbres. Par contre, il peut désormais se référer à une seule personne (1), chose impossible en anglais, et semble-t-il être utilisé comme adjectif invariable (2) comme le prouvent les énoncés suivants:

(1) *votre rencontre avec un people*

(2) *l'actualité people, toutes les infos people*

Même le nom reste, dans son orthographe étrangère, invariable «*les people*», fait qui change dès que l'orthographe est adaptée au français: «*les pipoles*».

Côté pragmatique, on aurait néanmoins tort de croire que l'abondance des mots anglais

² À titre d'exemple seront mentionnés ici le site web d'une chaîne radio occitane (<http://www.radio-occitania.com>), celui du journal occitan «La setmana» (<http://www.vistedit.com>), le site de la Generalitat de Catalunya (<http://www.gent.cat>) et celui d'un cours de langue corse (http://www.lexilogos.com/corse_langue_dictionnaires.htm).

³ Dans la langue parlée la situation est légèrement différente, on dit par exemple en français plutôt portable, en italien cellulare que mobile.

sur les sites français répondrait essentiellement au besoin de paraître hyper-moderne et jeune, voire de transporter la culture américaine. Le fait que, contrairement aux sites italiens et espagnols, l'usage du «*tu*» sur les sites mêmes est de très loin inférieur à l'usage du «*vous*» ou des formules impersonnelles, prouve plutôt un maintien des valeurs propres à la langue et le respect des usages linguistiques. Abondance d'anglicismes et adaptation à la culture anglophone ne vont donc pas forcément de pair:

français	Garder ma session ouverte	Êtes-vous protégé?
portugais	Mantenha-me conectado	Você está protegido?
italien	Tieni aperto l'accesso	Sei protetto?
espagnol	Seguir conectado	¿Estás protegido?

4. LINGUA FRANCA À TOUT PRIX?

Même s'il est évident que les mots anglais parsemés au sein d'un texte en langue «inconnue» soutiennent la compréhension, il faut néanmoins se méfier d'un usage exclusif de la «*lingua franca*» mondiale parce qu'elle court le risque d'écraser tout sur son passage. De plus, elle apparaît de moins en moins ancrée dans une culture spécifique, ressemblant à une espèce de passe-partout. On parle d'une «intersociété globale anglophone» (Meißner, Meissner, Klein & Stegmann, 2004, p. 8) qui compte plus de deux milliards de locuteurs tertiaires, donc ni natifs ni secondaires. Si on prend en considération que ces locuteurs appartiennent à des cultures diverses et pratiquent l'anglais avec des compétences assez différentes, on peut imaginer à quel point chacun y met ses propres caractéristiques et ses propres valeurs. La communication en lingua franca reste donc forcément limitée à des fins plutôt pragmatiques et source de malentendus permanents.

Nous ne nions pas que, dans le «global village», la connaissance de l'anglais est indispensable, mais nous sommes convaincus qu'il ne faut pas s'arrêter là si on a en vue l'intérêt de préserver les langues et les cultures. Comme le disait déjà Wilhelm von Humboldt au début du XIXe siècle, chaque langue donne une vue particulière sur le monde. Dans une société de plus en plus mondialisée, il est donc souhaitable de pouvoir avoir recours à différents points de vue voire à différentes langues au lieu de faire le choix de l'uniformité.

En ce qui concerne le défi linguistique de l'Europe, l'alternative n'est donc pas '*Lingua franca* ou communication polyglotte', mais '*Lingua franca* et communication polyglotte'. Cette dernière est caractérisée par Umberto Eco de la manière suivante:

Una Europa [sic] di poliglotti non è una Europa di persone che parlano correntemente molte lingue, ma nel migliore dei casi di persone che possono incontrarsi

parlando ciascuno la propria lingua, intendendo quella dell'altro, e intendendola... intendessero il 'genio', l'universo culturale che ciascuno esprime parlando la lingua dei propri avi e della propria tradizione. (Eco, 1993, p. 355)

5. COMMENT ABORDER LE PLURILINGUISME?

Une méthode prête à envisager le plurilinguisme pourrait être l'intercompréhension qui, dans un premier temps, sera limitée à l'acquisition des compétences réceptives, notamment à celle de la lecture⁴. N'oublions pas que

Limiter l'étude d'une langue à sa compréhension constitue déjà une puissante motivation pour aller plus loin. (Ploquin, 1991, p. 29-31; Meißner, Meissner, Klein & Stegmann, 2004, p. 15)

5.1 COMMENT POURRAIT-ON RELEVER CE DÉFI?

Il faut d'abord s'éloigner de la didactique dite traditionnelle des langues vivantes, donc des méthodes déductives. L'objet n'est pas d'acquérir toutes les quatre compétences langagières (lire, écrire, écouter, parler) à la fois ni d'être «parfait» ou d'avoir un degré de compétence proche de celle d'un locuteur natif. Il s'agit plutôt d'une didactique transférentielle qui, en misant sur la rentabilité de la parenté linguistique, vise à l'exploitation systématique des pré-acquis des apprenants et à leur sensibilisation aux langues et aux cultures.

Selon les théories cognitivistes, l'amélioration de l'apprentissage passe par la conscientisation des apprenants et le développement des stratégies métacognitives. Ceci vaut également pour les langues et leur acquisition, qu'elle soit guidée ou non. Il est donc indispensable que l'apprenant se rende compte de toute l'ampleur de ses connaissances et qu'il apprenne à en profiter le plus possible. Par rapport à la lecture intercompréhensive, cela implique qu'il est capable de reconnaître les éléments linguistiques transférables et qu'il compare sans cesse les différents schémas (linguistiques) fournis par les langues d'ores et déjà connues à ceux qu'il rencontre en lisant un texte dans une langue-cible nouvelle.

Ces schémas touchent tous les niveaux de langue. On se contente ici de présenter quelques exemples⁵.

⁴ Par rapport aux langues romanes, nous ne pouvons approuver que partiellement les idées de Castagne (2007, p. 3) d'après lesquelles "l'intercompréhension orale [est] considérée à tort comme plus difficile à pratiquer que l'intercompréhension écrite".

⁵ Pour plus d'informations voir <http://opus.kobv.de/ubp/volltexte/2008/1657/>. Vu le 22 juillet 2009.

1. Niveau phonétique						
Frç.	Esp.	Portg.	Catalan.	Lat. Vulg.	Ital.	Roumain
droit	derecho	direito	dret	directum	diritto	drept
[dʁwa]	[deretʃo]	[direjtu]	[λet]		[diritto]	[drept]
lait [lɛ]	leche	leite	llet	lac(te)	latte	lapte

Lors de son évolution au sein du territoire romanophone, le groupe latin <ct> a subi, à l'intérieur des mots, des changements différents: Palatalisation en espagnol, assimilation en italien, labialisation en roumain.

2. Niveau morphologique					
Frç.	Ital.	Catalan	Portg.	Roumain	Esp.
admettre	ammettere	admetre	admitir	a admite	admitir
découvrir	scoprire	descobrir	descobrir	a descoperi	descubrir
extravagant	stravagante	extravagant	extravagante	extravagant	extravagante
pass-age	pass-aggio	pass-atge	pass-agem	pas-aj	pas-aje
hum-ain	um-ano	hum-à	hum-ano	hum-an	hum-ano
déclinaï-son	declina-zione	declina-ció	declina-ção	declina-ție	declina-ción

Côté morphologie, on remarque la présence des préfixes et suffixes de base latine qui se retrouvent dans toutes les langues romanes. Les reconnaissant, on note aussi les changements phonologiques (et graphiques) qu'ils ont connus et qui sont, en général, répandus sur tout le lexique de la langue en question.

3. Par rapport au niveau lexical il faut souligner l'importance des internationalismes qui, en général, présentent un héritage gréco-latin, des anglicismes et des mots dit savants. Empruntés au latin à une époque très tardive, ces derniers se ressemblent beaucoup plus d'une langue romane à l'autre que leurs «équivalents» populaires, p.ex. frç. *cécité* - ital. *cecità* - esp. *ceguedad* vs. frç. *aveugle* - ital. *cieco* - esp. *ciego*.

4. Niveau morphosyntaxique	
masc. le livre intéressant	fem. la fenêtre ouverte
el libro interesante / rojo	la ventana abierta
il libro interessante / lo specchio pulito	la finestra aperta

Sur le plan morphosyntaxique on remarque la similarité des congruences au sein du groupe nominal au singulier. De plus, il est possible de reconnaître par analogie les dési-

nences des verbes réguliers au présent.

Exp. Désinences des verbes au présent		
Français	Espagnol	Italien
chant-e-r	cant-a-r	cant-a-re
<i>Sing.</i>		<i>Sing.</i>
je chant - e	yo cant - o	io cant - o
tu chant - e-s	tu cant - a-s	tu cant - i
il chant - e	él cant - a	lui cant - a
<i>Plural</i>		<i>Plural</i>
nous chant - ons	ns. cant - a-mos	noi cant - iamo
vous chant - e-z	vs. cant - áis	voi cant - a-te
ils chant - e-nt	ellos cant - a-n	essi cant - a-no

5. En ce qui concerne le niveau syntaxique, l'intercompréhension est soutenue par des structures similaires dans toutes les langues romanes. À titre d'exemple, prenons la structure NP+V+NP(Dat.)+PP qui se traduit de manière suivante:

Paul s'adresse à un collègue dans le bureau.

Paolo si dirige a un collega in ufficio.

Pablo si dirige a un colega en la oficina.

L'important est que l'apprenant se fasse une idée de l'architecture des langues, qu'il sache donc décomposer les lexèmes dans leurs morphèmes et qu'il se rende compte de la richesse de sa propre langue.

S'il tombe sur le signifiant italien *ringraziare* il devrait être capable de faire le processus sémasiologique, donc de le classer comme verbe et le décomposer en *rin-grazi-are*, fait qui lui permettrait d'en extraire *grazie* et ainsi de trouver la signification du mot.

De plus, il faut que l'apprenant prenne l'habitude de dénicher les bases de transfert, surtout au niveau lexical, qui ne sautent pas forcément aux yeux. Il s'agit là surtout des mots qui, dans leur version populaire, ont pris au fur et à mesure des évolutions phonétiques, des «apparences» diverses, mais qu'on peut néanmoins comprendre en ayant recours p.ex. à l'adjectif:

Signifiant italien «*canè*» - chien (canin)

«*lacrima*» - larme (lacrymogène)

Par rapport à la richesse de la propre langue, nous nous référons à la dichotomie déjà mentionnée entre mots savants et mots populaires.

6. LA LECTURE INTERCOMPRÉHENSIVE - L'ENJEU DU CERVEAU

Que se passe-t-il si, maintenant bien équipé de ce bagage interlinguistique qu'on vient d'expliquer, on se retrouve avec un texte ou un site en langue romane inconnue? Comment peut-on décrire le processus mental de la lecture intercompréhensive?

D'après l'hypothèse de la langue de l'apprenant (Interlangage), l'acquisition d'une langue passe par la formation, la vérification / falsification et la modification d'hypothèses émises à l'égard du fonctionnement et de la grammaticalité de la langue cible. Contrairement à l'enfant qui construit ses concepts de langue et de contenu selon la systématité qu'il découvre entre les éléments de sa langue maternelle, l'apprenant d'une deuxième, troisième etc. langue possède déjà un ou plusieurs systèmes: lexiques, grammaires, concepts et tout un savoir encyclopédique - à partir desquels il émet ses hypothèses.

En effet, la grammaire d'hypothèse commence à se construire dès le moment de la première réception d'un texte en langue cible. Elle est définie de manière suivante:

Il s'agit d'une construction spontanée de durée éphémère qui est corrigée, recomposée et complétée avec chaque acte intercompréhensif qui met en marche des activités mentales pro- et rétroactives entre la langue-cible et les langues de transfert. (Meißner, Meissner, Klein & Stegmann, 2004, p. 18)

Prenons comme exemple pour la grammaire d'hypothèse deux phrases du texte catalan qui nous servira plus tard pour le processus de la lecture.

Catalan:

L'origen de la celebració del Carnaval és incert; es relaciona amb ritus i festivitats pàganes.

Possiblement, amb els que té més relació és amb les festes saturnals que se celebraven a l'antiga Roma.

Français:

L'origine de la célébration du Carnaval est incertaine; (elle) se [relation] (verbe) avec (des) rites et festivités (adjectif) (païens).

[Possiblement], avec les que [lesquelles] (verbe; avoir) (?) relation est avec les fêtes saturniennes que se célébraient à l'[antique] Rome.

Niveau métacognitif (ce qu'on retient pendant l'analyse de ces deux phrases)

- formation des articles (l', la, els, les), du pluriel (-s), des prépositions (de la, del), de l'adverbe (-ment)

- régularités inter-morphématiques: -ció [-tion], -ga [-que (f.)]
- congruence (festivitats paganes)
- règles syntaxiques: groupe nominal (les festes saturnals), ordre des mots dans la phrase
- premières notions de la conjugaison des verbes, du verbe «être»
- divergence: l'usage du pronom personnel ne semble pas forcément nécessaire

La réception de structures interlinguistiquement transparentes déclenche immédiatement des procédures acquisitionnelles. C'est-à-dire que même si la grammaire d'hypothèse est éphémère et dans un état de recomposition permanente, les données qu'elle fournit, elles, sont mémorisées.

Ces données ne sont pas seulement de nature linguistique, mais elles concernent également les activités effectuées par la grammaire d'hypothèse voire les transferts réussis et échoués. C'est ainsi que se construit peu à peu l'«interlangage» qui, lui aussi, subit des changements permanents.

En effet, selon Meißner, Meissner, Klein & Stegmann (2004, p. 23), les résultats des recherches empiriques ne laissent pas de doute que, chez un apprenant germanophone d'une deuxième langue romane, la grammaire spontanée est plurilingue et largement basée sur des données linguistiques romanes.

Au fur et à mesure qu'une personne opère dans plusieurs idiomes, elle finit par internaliser un «intersystème plurilingue», «système» de régularités et d'irrégularités qu'elle a découvert «entre» ses langues. Elle n'acquiert donc pas seulement une compétence qui embrasse de manière additive et fortuite les connaissances pluri-langues, mais aussi un savoir déclaratif et procédural inter-langues.

7. INFERENCING

Malgré le fort degré de parenté entre les langues romanes et toutes les bases de transfert potentielles, il y a aussi des unités linguistiques qui échappent à l'intercompréhension, par exemple les arabismes en espagnol.

Dans ce cas, on n'a qu'une seule option: deviner... bien entendu, dans les limites du possible, ce qu'on appelle aussi «intellectual guessing» ou «inferencing». Cela veut dire qu'on essaie de délimiter les significations possibles d'un élément à l'aide du contexte et des données grammaticales.

Si le mot en question est p.ex. en rapport avec la syntaxe un verbe, et par rapport à sa désinence lié au nom «avion», les possibilités de significations sont assez restreintes: un avion ne peut que décoller, voler, atterrir ou s'écraser; cela dépend donc du contexte.

La lecture intercompréhensive est donc une activité qui demande l'interaction permanente des processus sémasiologiques (signifiant→signifié) et onomasiologiques (signifié [supposé] → signifiant).

8. GUIDE - TEXTE CATALAN

Passons maintenant à un texte en catalan qui nous servira à illustrer la lecture intercompréhensive.

Les primeres notícies del Carnaval a Barcelona

1. L'origen de la celebració del Carnaval és incert; es relaciona amb ritus i festivitats paganes.
Possiblement, amb els que té més relació és amb les festes saturnals que se celebraven a l'antiga Roma. D'aquestes festes ens arribaria el nom de Carnaval ja que era costum passejar per la ciutat una nau muntada dalt d'un carro, el carrus navalis.
2. Les primeres notícies de la festa de Carnaval a Barcelona daten de l'any 1333 i fan referència a una disposició que prohibeix alguns dels costums amb els que se celebrava la festa a la ciutat com ara cavalcar disfressats o llençar taronges.
3. Des d'aleshores la celebració ha canviat molt encara que ha mantingut algunes de les seves característiques: la festiva permissivitat, la llicència en els costums o la transgressió de l'ordre establert. El Carnaval és un temps en què tot és permès abans que la Quaresma arribi amb el seus dies d'abstenció i penitència.
4. Actualment, la Quaresma ha perdut el seu significat d'abstinència col·lectiva, però el rei Carnestoltes - nom que li arriba precisament de l'expressió llatina carnes tolendas o carnes tolendas, carns prohibides - continua arribant a ciutats i pobles.
5. Al llarg de la història el Carnaval ha patit molts alts i baixos. El de Barcelona va viure la seva màxima esplendor al segle XIX quan Sebastià Junyent i Comes, un home de comerç, alegre, expansiu i amant de la gresca, va crear l'any 1859, la Societat del Born, una entitat dedicada en exclusiva a l'organització de les festes de Carnaval.
6. Després del parèntesi que va representar la dictadura amb la prohibició de la festa, la història del Carnaval de Barcelona continua. Amb l'impuls de l'Àrea de Cultura

(Oficina de Festes i Tradicions) del primer Ajuntament democràtic, el Carnaval va tornar a ser patrimoni de tots els ciutadans: tindran lloc les primeres rues, gairebé espontànies, al passeig de Gràcia i després al Paral·lel. El Carnaval surt al carrer.
source: http://w3.bcn.es/V01/Home/V01HomeLinkPI/0,2460,7610_46601337_1,00.html

Comment pourrait-on aborder un texte comme celui-ci? Les questions suivantes peuvent servir de guide pour la lecture intercompréhensive en général.

1. De quelle sorte de texte s'agit-il? → *texte contemporain / informatif*

Quel sujet est abordé? → *le carnaval à Barcelone / Espagne (Catalogne)*

Qu'est-ce que j'en sais déjà? À quelles informations est-ce que je peux m'attendre?

→ *histoire, description de rites et de costumes*

2. Est-ce que je comprends le titre? Si non, est-ce qu'il contient des internationalismes ou des noms propres qui délimitent le sujet? Quels mots-clés est-ce que j'espère retrouver? → *masque, costume, carême*

3. Première lecture de l'ensemble du texte. Pas de lecture mot-à-mot car on risque de perdre de vue le contexte. Pour avoir une vue d'ensemble et pour mieux se motiver, on peut marquer tout ce qu'on a déjà compris: Internationalismes, mots propres, articles, prépositions, verbes, noms etc. ou bien de nouvelles corrélations phonème-graphème si on les a découvertes par analogies.

4. Deuxième lecture. Quels mots ou passages de textes m'échappent?

- passages de textes: De quoi s'agit-il? → *Phrase nominale, verbale etc.*

Quels mots semblent importants ou délimitent les significations des autres?

D'après le contexte, quelles significations seraient possibles?

- mot particulier: De quelle catégorie de mot s'agit-il? De quels mots est-il entouré?

→ *article, adjectif démonstratif = nom*

Est-ce que je «reconnais» le mot, si je remplace certains graphèmes par d'autres qui, dans ma langue de base, représentent à peu près le même son?

Y-a-t-il des préfixes ou suffixes qui délimitent la signification du mot en question?

Est-ce que je peux reconnaître (par analogie) la signification si je rajoute ou supprime des préfixes ou suffixes? D'après le contexte, quelle signification est la plus plausible?

5. Troisième lecture. Est-ce que je comprends grosso modo le texte?

Mes hypothèses semblent-elles plausibles?

Les lacunes restantes empêchent-elles une compréhension globale ou est-ce que ce ne sont que des questions de détails?

Pour mieux profiter du travail accompli, notez vos propres hypothèses et analogies (exemples) afin de pouvoir les vérifier ou les corriger lors de la prochaine lecture.

9. CONCLUSION

Prenant en considération les éléments linguistiques similaires et divergents dont témoignent les différentes langues romanes, nous pouvons constater les faits suivants:

1. une intercompréhension écrite immédiate est bien possible;
2. le résultat obtenu dépend de la langue de base parce que les langues romanes ne sont pas toutes intercompréhensives au même degré;
3. le résultat dépend non seulement de la quantité des bases de transfert, mais aussi de la nature voire de la diversité de ces bases de transfert.

Pour terminer, il faut souligner que la méthode intercompréhensive est un bon outil pour aborder le défi du plurilinguisme, mais qu'elle ne peut pas produire de miracles. À l'intercompréhension immédiate échappe par exemple le roumain à cause de sa structure parfois plus synthétique, sa déclinaison et son lexique partiellement slave. Y échappe aussi complètement l'écriture phonologique voire phonétique qu'on retrouve assez souvent dans les nouveaux médias, par exemple dans les blogs ou les commentaires sur Internet.

De plus, il faut se demander si, dans un futur proche, l'intercompréhension est vraiment un but à atteindre pour tout le monde ou si la tentation de l'anglais qui nous parvient de partout n'est pas trop grande.

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