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The Impact of Retranslation on Museum Interaction. Results from the Brera Art Gallery.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to develop inclusive language theories retranslating into easy-to-read language museum family labels to observe their impact on visitors. The current theory has neglected to test easy-to-read guidelines and account for the effect on children, a shortcoming this thesis addresses. We ask to what extent and in what ways easy-to-read language could impact parent-child interaction in museums. We do so to shed light on easy-to-read language use in various contexts and for different audiences, enabling museum Educational Services to understand the nuances of inclusive language and its role in promoting participation and guaranteeing inclusivity for all visitors. Through a case study of the Brera Art Gallery in Milan, using pedagogical documentation, we show that easy-to-read language can foster family interaction. We also highlight how the dialogical and relational dimensions shape children's museum experience. The significance of this study is that it informs our theoretical understanding of inclusive language by introducing a focus on children with its pedagogical implications hitherto lacking. It also contributes to our empirical understanding of applying easy-to-read guidelines in the museum context - conceived as an institution of informal learning - and evaluating its impact on families.

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INTRODUCTION

Abbiamo una responsabilità, finché viviamo:
dobbiamo rispondere di quanto scriviamo,
parola per parola,
e far sì che ogni parola vada a segno.

We have a responsibility as long as we live:
we must answer for what we write,
word for word,
and make every word count.

Primo Levi[1]

This work discusses UNCRPD and SRPD in the context of COSP and UNGA and the topic of ID, studying ETR, EL, PL, and E2U in relation to NYCC, SCOPE, IFLA, ODI, SCIE and others. Is not that clear enough? This is precisely what happens to a large part of the world's population in everyday interaction. They do not understand what is communicated to them[2]. Language accessibility is a topic of growing attention and is the subject of this research. Many people, whether adults or children, struggle to decode information in their daily lives, in family and school environments, and, by extension, in society. This has a negative impact on their lives, in building relationships, in their learning and growth, in their exploration of the world.

[1] From the essay *Dello scrivere oscuro* published in the Italian journal *La Stampa* in 1976. Retrieved from http://www.sagarana.it/rivista/numero5/saggio7.html (last accessed April 2024) and cited in Carofiglio (2017).
[2] This introduction is inspired by President Kőrösi's speech on the occasion of the UN Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023, which was held on the theme of Easy-to-Understand Communication on 12 June 2023 (see *Chapter I*).

For years, there has been talk of breaking down architectural barriers to promote inclusion, and several successful implementations have been made in this direction. However, only recently has the need to break down all kinds of barriers, including cognitive barriers, grown. The communication obstacle is present in everyday life and jeopardises the conduct of a normal life for many people, especially those with language difficulties. In an age where we are overwhelmed by communication - in what the philosopher Byung-Chul Han would define as an *infocracy* grappling with 'non-things' (Han, 2022, 2023) - the right to understand words becomes unavoidable for anyone who is part of a society that professes to be democratic.

In this context, the need for a clear, linear language emerges which is easy to understand for everyone so as not to leave anyone behind: thus, forms of linguistic simplification are developed, such as Easy-to-Read Language (also known as Easy Language), which was born from the desire to guarantee linguistic accessibility to an audience with intellectual disabilities, to be then presented as an opportunity for everyone, considering its communicative effectiveness. Easy-to-Read Language is a language that shuns frills and the empty and self-referential speaking that governs our era. It is a variety of language that aims to be direct and listen to the receiver's needs, with a familiar lexicon, a linear syntax, a logical approach to content and clean graphics, often supported by clarifying images.

Easy Language (EL) puts the sender in the recipient's shoes, thus leading to rethinking the use of words, pondering them, and choosing them carefully. It embodies a process of *linguistic empowerment* (Mimosa Ravasio, 2023) that arises from a collective need to make language public – following Wittgenstein's perspective, which emphasises how language is deeply entwined with society (Wittgenstein, 1953/2017) - and not just the prerogative of those who can rapidly decode it independently. EL represents reaching out to a population segment to help emancipate itself, bringing disability - or anyone who needs more transparent words - out of social invisibility. Reclaiming the word means reclaiming one's own spaces, co-constructing community with the Other.

In its performative dimension, language enables people to "do things with words" (Austin, 1975), allowing individuals to exercise citizenship. The speech represents action, taking a position, dialogue, and encounters between different opinions in a culture where everything is built on and a matter of language. Easy Language thus strengthens the intersubjectivity of being in the world, the value of dialectics, and confrontation with the Other. In a society where the representation of disability must grow, a step further can also be implemented by correctly using the right words to portray the pluralism of today's society.

Easy Language is currently a burgeoning area of growth nationally and internationally in academia. For instance, many European research projects aim to explore the topic in all its facets -

from spoken to written language to audio-visual format to the training of professionals - focusing on collaboration between countries, whose mutual exchanges lead to enriching findings. Over the years, more theoretical academic studies have developed on the gnoseology and history of Easy Language. In terms of application, research often divulges good practices that lack an in-depth testing component on the target audiences; therefore, there is room for improvement in studying not only the guidelines on Easy Language but also the impact of Easy Language on receptors. Another area of research to further explore is the application and testing of language simplification in fields and contexts that deviate from institutional instructive communications, such as exploring the realms of culture and education. Few reception studies exist on end-users, and even fewer in educational and cultural contexts. The pragmatic field of evaluating the possible impact of Easy-to-Read Language and its experimentation in new contexts is the central theme around which this research revolves.

This research aims (1) to explore the linguistic and translational challenges of the application of Easy-to-Read Language texts in the museum setting, conceived as an avenue for informal learning, and, at the same time, (2) to investigate in terms of reception studies on families as possible target audiences by studying the impact of Easy-to-Read Language on their museum fruition. The research, therefore, combines the theme of linguistic inclusion with Museum Studies (particularly Museum Education) in a multidisciplinary case study at the *Pinacoteca di Brera* ('Brera Art Gallery') in Milan. This research perspective, which combines translational and pedagogical viewpoints, is defined by a set of research questions that shaped and characterised the work. We will illustrate the research questions starting from the thesis title, which condenses the research through keywords. The title is:

The Impact of **Retranslation** on **Museum Interaction**. Results from the Brera Art Gallery.

In addition to introducing the *Pinacoteca di Brera* case study, the title in the first part presents the three keywords of the work: (I) Retranslation: With the term retranslation, we refer to the translator's work in an inclusive perspective, transforming texts into Easy Language. This process is carried out on a particular type of exhibit label for families available in the museum - *pannelli per grandi e piccoli* ('panels for young and old') - and is undertaken in Italian and English Easy Languages. (II) Museum: the context to be investigated in relation to Easy Language. (III) Interaction: the above-mentioned family labels are designed to foster interaction among visitors. Therefore, the interactional research lens is chosen to evaluate in pedagogical terms the impact of texts – before and after retranslation - on the museum visitors' co-creation of significance - in our case, of families. Observing families' spoken and bodily conduct in the museum becomes the tool for assessing textual accessibility.

The first main research question is, therefore, the one that answers the title, which plays the role of the 'umbrella' Research Question (RQ1), embodying the focal point around which the work revolves. It is as follows: (RQ1) *From an interactional perspective, what impact do Easy Language texts have on families visiting the museum?* From this central research question (RQ1), additional research questions branch into two main blocks: before and after the retranslations into Easy-to-Read Language. For ex-ante retranslations, it is first necessary to observe what happens with families and the existing family labels from an interactional pedagogical perspective so that the impact of the labels in Easy-to-Read Language after inclusive rewritings can then be assessed. This first part of the work answers the question: *Do panels for young and old improve families' interaction at the museum?* (RQ2), by studying the museum experience before the inclusive intervention, and is divided into sub-questions:

(RQ2.1) *What happens 'at the exhibit face'? How does families' pedagogical relationship unfold in the museum? How do families co-create meaning with their performances?*

(RQ2.2) *Is Brera Art Gallery's inclusive mission accomplished?*

(RQ2.3) *From a linguistically inclusive perspective, can labels be improved?*

RQ2 is divided into three sub-questions aiming at investigating what happens in front of works of art between parent and child, reading the interaction from a sociological and pedagogical perspective, in a process in which the museum 'listens' to the visitors, observing them 'at the exhibit face' (vom Lehn & Heath, 2016). The questions then study how the relationship develops and can be broken down and analysed following the co-creation of meaning that parent and child carry out through the texts and works of art in facing them. Their performance is conveyed through an orchestra of movements, words, thoughts and glances that realise their aesthetic experience. This is followed by an understanding of whether the museum's educational and inclusive mission is fulfilled, in particular by assessing, based on the observations made, whether the linguistic inclusion of the panels could be improved to favour the interaction of families in the museum.

In the ex-post translation phase, the second question that arises from the principal one and leads to the second research phase is: (RQ3) *Does the Easy-to-Read Language impact families' interaction?* To answer the query, it is broken down into three parts:

(RQ3.1) *What happens 'at the exhibit face'? Can language simplification ease families' interaction? In what ways do Easy-to-Read labels influence interaction?*

(RQ3.2) *Is Brera Art Gallery's inclusive mission accomplished?*

(RQ3.3) *Is Easy-to-Read Language suitable for children?*

Following the Easy Languages translations and their display at the museum, the second part of the research aims to understand whether changes are noticed in the physical and spoken interaction of parents and children during their discovery of the exhibits. The study delves into how and whether inclusive rewritings fostered families' interaction in the museum and what kind of influence they had on their negotiation of significance. This thus decrees whether the inclusive mission of the museum is fulfilled, and therefore, whether Easy-to-Read Language proves to be a suitable tool for children during their visit to the museum, an audience and context which has not been much investigated so far, particularly in terms of Reception Studies and, more specifically, museum's Visitor Studies.

In doing so, the translator's "theoretical" work is completed with a "practical" pedagogical study of the effects of Easy Language on families, on their collective fruition and learning at the museum. Investigating new developments in linguistic inclusion is made possible by actively building a pedagogical documentation that allows the researcher to reflect and reason on the results, going beyond its subjective vision. Inspired by the educational philosophy of the Reggio Emilia Approach, documenting is the process that ties all the material together. In methodological terms, this part answers a new question: (RQ4) *How can Reggio Emilia Approach's pedagogical documentation be translated into an informal learning context such as the museum?* What comes to fruition is the phenomenon of "translating Reggio" in the museum context, where the material analysed (collected through qualitative video observation) is enriched through a communal reflection (via focus group) with the museum's Educational Services staff. Therefore, the final segment of this research question is (RQ4.1) *What shared reflections on Easy Language emerged from the final encounter with the museum's staff?* The resulting meta-reflection on the findings, built on the encounter and exchanges of different visions and sensibilities, pulls the research's threads together collaboratively with the museum's personnel, intending to reflect on the role of inclusive language within museums.

This last research question embodies the design of this research according to the "pedagogy of listening", actualising "visible listening" through collecting different materials (Rinaldi, 2001, 2021). In its inquiry, the researcher learns to listen to the language, the museum, the children, the adults and, last but not least, the staff in a documentation process that works towards inclusivity. The translation work on Easy Language is grafted into the pedagogical documentation, leading to a more comprehensive view of the topic, an interdisciplinary view deeply encouraged by the world of research but which often struggles to come to fruition. Translation and Pedagogy meet and intertwine, creating a rich dialogue on the theme of inclusion, the overarching theme of this research, understood as active participation, co-construction of meaning, and democracy, giving a snapshot of how cultural institutions are opening the door to guaranteeing the right to cultural heritage for all.

In order to answer the research questions, the thesis is divided into five chapters, a summary of which we will outline below. In Chapter I, we will reconstruct the history of Easy Language, starting with the concept of linguistic simplification, Plain Language, and then to Easy Language. We will illustrate the reasons that led to its conception, recounting its history with a look at Europe and then focusing on Italy and its possible application contexts, particularly museums. Recent best practice cases within Italian museums will be recounted. After the international and national historical and applicative excursus, the chapter illustrates the international, English and Italian guidelines on Easy Language. From a more specific linguistic perspective, the guidelines will first present Easy Language with its general linguistic and graphical characteristics. Then, guidance related to English and Italian languages provides a theoretical framework of reference for the realisation of translations.

Chapter II is a methodology chapter that details the two blocks of work encountered in this research, the translational and pedagogical facets. It illustrates how the case study was organised within the Milanese museum of *Pinacoteca di Brera*. Firstly, it illustrates how the retranslation of existing texts was implemented – the specific textual typology of the family labels - from standard Italian to Easy Italian and Easy English. Secondly, it explains the construction of the pedagogical documentation, starting from the collection of data at the museum - through qualitative video observation – to evaluate the impact that Easy Language retranslations had on a group of volunteer families, in particular by observing their interaction with the text and with each other, with and without the Easy Language labels to observe their pragmatic effect on their museum experience. The chapter proceeds to illustrate the methodology of the final focus group with the museum staff to raise awareness of the possible implementations of Easy Language within museums by reflecting on the experimentation results.

Chapter III is the first chapter introducing the museum context of the *Pinacoteca di Brera*, where our case study takes place. It recounts it from a museum education perspective, highlighting its profoundly inclusive intentions under the guidance of Director Bradburne in recent years, illustrating the 'Brera Approach' and reflecting on the influence that the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia Approach had on its conception. It contextualises the place and its enlightening mission by presenting the textual typology examined in this research, that of the family panels, with their characteristics and objectives. Then, the chapter proceeds with the illustration of the results of the first data collection phase, aimed at observing what happens in the museum before inclusive intervention on texts, if any linguistic features of the panels emerge that hinder visitors' comprehension - and consequently interaction. Through the analysis of recurring interactional patterns among the volunteer families in their intergenerational exchange, the intention is to assess whether the labels could be improved regarding language inclusion and whether it would benefit

families – especially the ones with children with language difficulties - and everyone in their museum experience. The result, therefore, constitutes the first part of the pedagogical documentation.

Chapter IV illustrates translating the source texts in standard language into Easy Italian and Easy English. The qualitative translation discussion considers the selection of contents, syntax, vocabulary, and graphics. A quantitative analysis accompanies it to determine the readability and comprehensibility of the texts before and after the inclusive translation intervention. The chapter reconstructs the translator's thinking step by step in making the texts more accessible, motivating his choices. Solid observations emerge from the translation work, but also perplexities and challenges related to the scope of application - the historical-artistic one – and the following of theoretical guidelines rather than suggestions based on data-driven findings.

Chapter V recounts the data collected following the display of the panels retranslated into Easy Language at the museum, observing the recurring interactional patterns among the families and studying whether the more inclusive panels facilitate interaction for all volunteers, especially families with children with language difficulties. In the second part, the data are compared with those collected in the previous phase in Chapter III to observe correspondences and differences in detail, constructing a general discussion of the results. The report is illustrated through a focus group with the museum staff, resulting in a final shared reflection on Easy Language. In discussing the results, the chapter also highlights possible weaknesses of the research, particularly from a pedagogical perspective.

Finally, the Conclusions (Chapter VI) will culminate the discourse, reflecting on the work done and unravelling the results. It will delineate possible future development horizons for research on Easy Language.

CHAPTER I

Language simplification and linguistic inclusion

Perché è solo la lingua che fa eguali.

Eguale è chi sa esprimersi e intende l'espressione altrui.

For it is only language that makes equals.

Equal is he who knows how to express himself and understands the expression of others.

School of Barbiana[3]

This first chapter outlines the historical journey of language simplification, connotated regarding inclusivity. Specifically, it will present what led to the conception of Easy Language (EL), describe its development in detail, and illustrate the European scenery. It will then depict the Italian context, focusing on Easy Italian and its innovative implementation in museums. Subsequently, the international guidelines for EL will be presented, as well as those specifically targeted for English and Italian, the two languages on which the translation work within this research hinges. This chapter aims to give a theoretical overview of the language simplification theme, opening the door to the thesis work.

[3] From *Lettera a una professoressa* ('Letter to a professor') (1967, p. 96).

1.1 From language simplification to easy-to-read language

Over the centuries, greater awareness has developed and grown of the power and value of language, not only educational but also political. From Aristotle to Don Milani, from Wittgenstein to De Mauro, between philosophers, educators and linguists, thoughts have intertwined, and principles of democracy have come to be strongly linked to language and to the possibility of each citizen being able to express themselves through the right words and understand those of others. This framework has been reinforced in the last century, with a desire to co-create community and society through the word that belongs to everyone, as in the uses professed by Gianni Rodari (1973/2013). These reflections still resonate and impact current society: 'All possible uses of words for all people' recognises the pivotal role of language in shaping our lives. In this perspective, society is gradually making more space for people with communicative impairments, and their engagement and right to information are currently at the heart of every institutional agenda.

This chapter introduces the central theme of the research, linguistic simplification for inclusion, tracing the history of linguistic inclusion from its beginnings to its most recent developments, recounting the European context and, precisely, the Italian context. It emphasises how it is still a journey in the making, with boundaries sketched out yet to be expanded.

1.1.1 Language simplification

Studies on linguistic simplification arise from scholars' direct observation - particularly in the field of sociolinguistics - of conversations that occur in everyday life. The origin of studies on language simplification is the examination of simplified forms of oral language registers in our everyday use. Tweissi (2007; 1998) relates how scholars initially focused on forms of language modifications, referred to as "simplified registers" (2007, p. 144). These linguistic phenomena are:

- *Foreigner talk* (FT): FT is a speech modification mechanism that takes place in the interaction between a native speaker (NS) and a non-native speaker (NNS), thus enacted in both directions by talkers (Hu, 2022);
- *Baby talk* (or *motherese*): when a parent interacts with an infant or young child, there is varying language with, for instance, overstressed pitch modifications alongside a simplified lexicon. On a more general level, it can be defined as *Infant-directed Speech* (IDS) and can include the speech of caretakers to children (Ma et al., 2011);
- *Teacher talk*: is a comprehensive term for all language strategies educators implement to favour comprehension when co-creating learning with their pupils. It can also include the

speech of a native speaker teacher to second language (L2) learners (Tweissi, 2007, p. 144);

- *Child speech*: refers to all speaking modifications children implement in their everyday interactions with peers and adults (Suppes, 2006).

Investigating these registers served to gain awareness of strategies naturally implemented by humans when using oral language, reflecting on their communicative sociolinguistic value and pragmatic effectiveness. From the direct observation of conversations in modified registers, linguists successively studied the dimension of written language, leading to the development of a more demarcated concept of linguistic simplification, which is partly at a distance from the purposes of the registers examined thus far. In fact:

> The term 'linguistic simplification' refers to any process that reduces the structural complexity of a text while trying to preserve its meaning and information content. Simplification is intended to make the text more comprehensible and more suited to the needs, knowledge, and proficiency level of the reader (or listener) without rendering it childish or simplistic (Sigal, 2013).

As a common ground, the need to simplify stems from the desire to make a text (or a language more holistically) clearer. Nonetheless, unlike some linguistic registers listed above, the definition clarifies that the objective is not to create 'childish or simplistic' content but to increase a text's comprehensibility. From this point of view, easy never means 'banal' (Piemontese, 2023, p. 7), but simplicity becomes a tool to recount the complexity of our world (De Mauro, 2019, p. 147). Simplification is a linguistic process through which a text is made more understandable by breaking down the most challenging elements both in terms of language and content (Honeyfield, 1977, p. 413), replacing and reorganising them, heading towards what Piemontese describes as a "text optimisation" (2023)[4]. This process allows writing to be limpid at first reading. From a linguistic point of view, this textual intervention can operate on the four levels of language: from a phonological point of view, for instance, recurring to words with fewer consonant groups to be easier to read aloud; from a morphological/lexical point of view, for example with using more familiar terms; from a syntactic point of view, e.g. by reducing subordinations; from a semantic point of view, by avoiding the use of ambiguous and unclear terms (Tweissi, 2007, p. 144).

Although over time, the process of simplification has been opposed by the praise of prolixity and aulicisms - that prove to hinder communication (see subsequent paragraphs) – today, there is a greater awareness linked to the opening up of new possibilities that a more straightforward language

[4] From the 'Di Parola Festival' conference, Piemontese's speech entitled *Parlare chiaro, tra il dire e il fare…* ('Speak clearly, between saying and doing...') held online on 21/09/23.

can allow, especially in terms of inclusiveness. This theme is increasingly felt and participated in within society. Linguistic simplification is the starting point from which language varieties such as Plain Language and Easy Language[5], which we will discuss in the following paragraphs, arise and unfold.

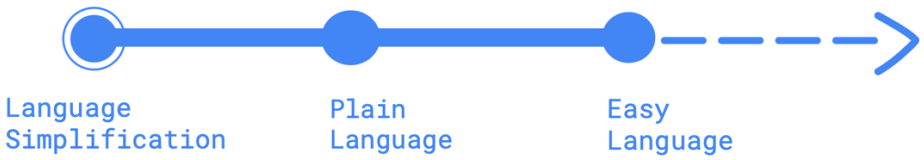


Figure 1.1 The spectrum of varieties of language that bud from language simplification[6] (Maaß, 2020).

1.1.2 Plain Language

Plain Language (in Italian: *Semplificazione linguistica*[7]) is a form of language simplification that strives to make texts more understandable and accessible. According to Eagleson et al. (1990, p. 15):

> Plain English is clear, straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary. It is language that avoids obscurity, inflated vocabulary and convoluted sentence construction. It is not baby talk, nor is it a simplified version of the English language. Writers of plain English let their audience concentrate on the message instead of being distracted by complicated language. They make sure that their audience understands the message easily.

Although the authors refer explicitly to plain English, this definition can be extended more comprehensively to Plain Language (PL). The adjective *plain* connotes its unambiguousness in terms of clarity of exposition and immediacy of language. Plain Language is thus the equivalent of clear communication, which should be required in every communicative act, whether spoken or written. Clear writing and speaking should reflect 'clear thinking' (Wright cited in PLAIN, 2020[8]) and facilitate the recipient in navigating information (Cutts, 2013, p. 165) in pursuing what Fortis defines as "la via più breve tra due punti" ('The shortest route between two points'), with the two ends

[5] These two language varieties are currently the most recognised, although there is a proliferation of varieties along the same spectrum, such as the emergent Easy Language Plus (Maaß, 2020). When referring to both, the expression can be Easy-to-Understand (E2U) (Matamala & Orero, 2019; IE, 2014; EASIT 2019A; Perego, 2020, 2021; Arfé et al., 2018).

[6] Graph made with *Google AutoDraw*. All rights reserved.

[7] As Perego (2020, p. 31; 2021, p. 281) highlighted, the Italian language typically adopts the English label for Plain Language and uses the broad-spectrum expression "linguistic simplification". Another retrieved expression is *Linguaggio chiaro e semplice* ('Clear and simple language').

[8] From the *Plain Language Action and Information Network* (PLAIN) of the US Government. Available at the following link: https://www.plainlanguage.gov/about/definitions/clear-writing-and-plain-language/ (last accessed March 2024).

representing respectively the message's conveyor and addressee (2003, p. 3).

From a communicative point of view, according to the recipient's stance, it is a question of "problem-solving" (Eagleson et al., 1990; Piemontese, 2002) that plain language seeks to unravel, making communication more effective. Conveying content effectively and linearly facilitates reading and enhances comprehension instead of creating bewilderment in the reader (Cheung, 2017; Kimble, 1992). From a cognitive perspective, research demonstrates that the mind can efficiently process plain language, consequently fostering the processing and retaining of contents (Cheung, 2017). Encompassing all forms of language, in an era in which we are inundated with multimodal and multimedia information daily, clarity of exposition becomes necessary to allow all users to understand the content and select and use pertinent information according to individual needs.

From a historical stance, the need for clarity of exposition has been a much-felt linguistic issue since classical antiquity. Both Aristotle in *Ῥητορική* ('The Rhetoric') and Cicero in *De Oratore* ('On the Orator') advocated for the use of clear and comprehensible language, recurring to qualities that the Latin author defines *brevitas* (brevity, not to dwell by getting straight to the point) and *concinnitas* (harmony obtained through the combination of elegance and simplicity) (Narducci, 1994; Schermerhorn, 1933). Geoffrey Chaucer, in the 14th century, had one of his protagonists of the *Canterbury Tales* demand to "Speketh so pleyne at this time, I yow preye that we may understonde what ye seye" (Cutts, 2013, p. xxvii). Throughout history, prominent figures such as the politician Winston Churchill demanded straightforward language from his collaborators for their communication because it was more immediate during the Second World War[9] (Kimble, 1995, p. 53; Cutts, 2013, p. xxix).

Over the centuries, it has been recognised that plain words are 'capable of great power and dignity' (Kimble, 1995, p. 54). That of expository clarity is an ancient legacy that has been passed down over time and has flourished throughout international literature: figures like George Orwell in the United Kingdom, Italo Calvino in Italy, Chinua Achebe in Nigeria, Raymond Queneau in France shaped the literature landscape whilst narrating in a clear style, refusing to weigh down their writing with pompous words and verbose syntax.

The significant systematic development of plain language occurred in the 20th century and is

[9] "To do our work, we all have to read a mass of papers. Nearly all of them are far too long. This wastes time, while energy has to be spent looking for the essential points…The aim should be reports which set out the main points in a series of short, crisp paragraphs…Let us not shrink from the short expressive phrase, even if it is conversational…The saving in time will be great, while the discipline of setting out the real points concisely will prove an aid to clearer thinking" (Churchill, 1940 cited in Cutts, 2013, p. xxix).
For more on the history of Plain Language from a historical and historiographical perspective, see Bennett (2019).

mainly related to legal[10] and administrative language. At that point, this need for clarity was extended from artistic purposes to the everyday life of all citizens. Indeed, the ideological and ethical background that originates this variety of language is letting every citizen understand essential information within society. The intervention started from institutional information and its often opaque institutional language and the desire to enable citizens to understand it to be able to practise their rights and duties. Initially designed in the 1960s United Kingdom to explain specialised content such as medical and legal documents to a more significant portion of society - hence expanding their fruition (Maaß, 2020), it then became a "plain language movement" in the 1970s United States (Balmford, 2005).

In the 21st century, a growing number of nations have created targeted legislation to foster its use, recognising how plain language can have a significant impact on people's everyday lives; Sweden is among them, with Plain language (in Swedish: *klarspråk*) being promoted by the "Plain Swedish Group", a group of language experts that work within the Ministry of Justice (Ehrenberg-Sundin, 1999, 2004). Even in the countries where the movement began, over time, there has been a significant evolution in its usage: an example is the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom, whose digital content follows an exact internal style guide geared towards language effectiveness and clarity: for instance, there is no use of specialised medical language to allow patients and users to be autonomous in their online search (Chinn & Buell, 2022, p. 637).

The European Commission has subsequently also begun to dedicate projects to plain language; for instance, the *Fight the Fog* campaign in 2010 led to the diffusion of a guide entitled "Clear writing for Europe", available in 24 official languages of the European Union[11]. International institutions, too, are answering the inclusive call, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is currently promoting plain language[12].

From a social justice standpoint (Cheung, 2017), its potential with various population segments was subsequently recognised, particularly with people with slight language disorders or reduced language skills (for instance, related to modest literacy, language learning phases, and age) (Maaß, 2020b; Perego, 2021), representing a tool for fostering inclusive communication. Consequently, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* promoted by the United Nations, besides making available to consultation a plain language version of the document, has

[10] According to Lindsey (1990, p. 202): "Lawbooks are the largest body of poorly written literature ever created by the human race".

[11] Available at the following link: https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/translation/clear-writing-europe_en. An updated version of 2016 is available only in English; you can find it here: https://commission.europa.eu/document/a36587e4-7724-442e-aba4-5e23b5edf4d7_en?prefLang=it (last accessed March 2024).

[12] For further information, consult the link: https://www.who.int/about/communications/understandable/plain-language (last accessed March 2024).

encompassed the concept of plain language in the definition of communication (Art. 2) (CRPD, 2006, p. 4)[13]. Nonetheless, Plain language is also increasingly in demand among experts who recognise and appreciate its immediacy (Loranger, 2017; Oppenheimer, 2006).

The plain language movement currently extends to new and different realms, assuming that in every aspect of life—from institutional communications to entertainment communications—anyone should be able to comprehend a piece of information. Also, in the academic realm, especially in the medical field, there is an emerging trend of Plain Language Summaries (PLS), where research results, alongside traditional research papers, are conveyed in a more accessible language - usually concise texts without jargon and scientific terminology - to make them more understandable for non-academic end-users (Edgell & Rosenberg, 2022; Rosenberg et al., 2023).

As a type of writing that is reader-centred (Cutts, 2013, p. 165), it is conceived to keep the end users' reading skills in mind, thus having the possibility to change and adapt to a specific target audience according to contextual communicative needs. Because of this applicative ductility, Cutts emphasises how Plain Language cannot be a defined static concept (2013, p. xiii): its definition should remain relatively labile, given its various possibilities of adaptation and the intrinsic ever-evolving nature of language.

Plain Language rather than a language is a writing process (Kimble, 1995, p. 66) that revolves around the importance of clarity: the use of terms belonging to a more common lexicon and without nominalisations, a more linear syntax with short sentences and verbs in active form, and an emphasis on the organisation of information in the text are used (Cutts, 2013, p. xxxi). Convoluted writing is substituted by careful and considered choices of style and structure. Steinberg et al. (1991, p. 61) emphasise how clear language commences with the writer's awareness that he is perfectly capable of conveying content effectively and punctually without complicating his writing with unnecessary linguistic superstructures. *Table 1.1.* shows three examples of rewritings from Standard English to Plain English: the first condenses the essential information into a short sentence; the second reinterprets the source text through an efficient overview scheme; the third shows that information can also be conveyed effectively with accompanying images[14].

[13] Available on the United Nations official website at the following link: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Ch_IV_15.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

[14] All examples are retrieved from the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) official website. The service offers many examples to help writers become comfortable with plain writing. Here is the official website: https://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before-and-after/ (last accessed March 2024). In 2011, PLAIN also created *Federal Plain Language Guidelines* to foster more inclusive communication. They are available at the following link: https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/fdscontent/uscompanion/us/static/companion.websites/9780199379996/pdf/ch2/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

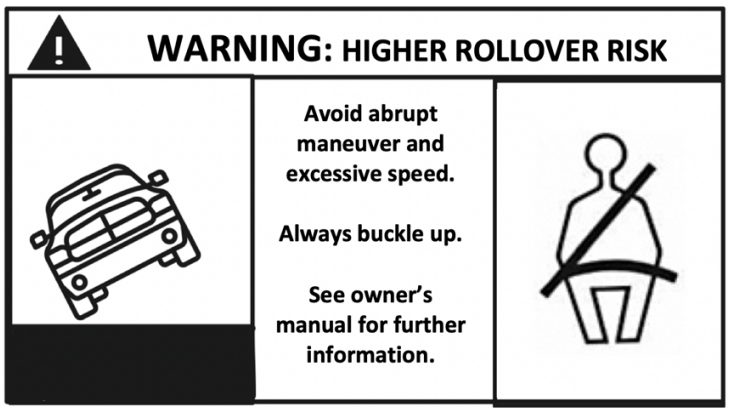
<table>
<tr><th>Standard English</th><th>Plain English</th></tr>
<tr><td>The application must be completed by the applicant and received by the financial office by June 1st.</td><td>We must receive your application by June 1st.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">We must receive your completed application form on or before the 15th day of the second month following the month you are reporting if you do not submit your application electronically or the 25th day of the second month following the month you are reporting if you submit your application electronically.</td><td>If you submit your form:</td><td>We must receive it by:</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Electronically</td><td>25th of the second month</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Not electronically</td><td>15th of the second month</td></tr>
<tr><td>This is a multipurpose passenger vehicle which will handle and maneuver differently from an ordinary passenger car, in driving conditions which may occur on streets and highways and off road. As with other vehicles of this type, if you make sharp turns or abrupt maneuvers, the vehicle may roll over or may go out of control and crash. You should read driving guidelines and instructions in the Owner's Manual, and WEAR YOUR SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES.</td><td colspan="2"> 
</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1.1 Examples of texts' rewritings from Standard English to Plain English.

From the point of view of how plain language was generally received by intellectuals and society as a whole, Kimble, one of the leading proponents and scholars of Plain Language in America - particularly in the legal sphere, in his crusade against *legalese*[15] - states that every change and innovation brings with it a movement of criticism against it (Kimble, 1995, p. 51). This has also been the case for the 'plain language movement', which has often been criticised for wanting to 'debase' and 'deteriorate' the everyday use of language, leading it to ever greater impoverishment (Benson, 1985; Kimble, 1992, 1995). There is, therefore, a current of scholars - coming from various fields, not only linguistics[16] – who, in the past - but still today – talk down and hinder plain language and its various declinations, seeing it as an attack on the purity and richness of a language, transforming language into an "unsophisticated baby talk" (Kimble, 1995, p. 52). Kimble defines this vision as a misconception and responds to the critics by clarifying how:

> Plain language is not anti-literary, anti-intellectual, unsophisticated, drab, ugly, babyish, or base.
> Plain language has to do with clear and effective communication – nothing more or less. (…) And for the notion that plain language is unsophisticated once again just the reverse is true. It is much harder to simplify that to complicate. Anybody can take the sludge from formbooks, thicken it with few more provisions, and leave it at that. Only the best minds and the best writers can cut through. In short, writing simply and directly only *looks* easy. It takes skill and work and fair time to compose - all part of the lawyer's craft (Kimble, 1995, pp. 52-53).

In Kimble's essay entitled "Answering the Critics of Plain Language" (1995), the scholar defends the democratic value of plain language, showing how it is more than a matter of "political correctness" (*ivi*, p. 61). The author counters that combining clarity of exposition and precision is possible and that achieving plain language goes far beyond the simple use of "plain words and short sentences" (*ivi*, p. 66). It is much more than that, allowing one to "lift the fog" (Kimble, 2006) in an often murky communication that hinders collective participation.

1.1.2.1 Plain Language in Italy

Policies on plain language in Italy were only developed in the 1990s, although it is possible to trace them back to the country's history. The difficulty for which plain language has struggled - and still struggles - to be implemented in Italy is due to the country's solid linguistic tradition centred on a very formal language. The "weight of tradition" (Cortelazzo, 2023[17]) is an ancient cultural

[15] For more on the history of "Plain Legal English" but from the perspective of the United Kingdom, see Williams (2023).
[16] For a more in-depth pedagogical discussion, see *Chapter V*'s section on the possible limits of the work.
[17] From the speech "Trent'anni dal Codice di stile di Cassese. Il futuro ci porterà novità?" ('Thirty years after Cassese's Code of Style. Will the future bring us novelty?') given by Cortelazzo at the *Diparola Festival*, 21 September 2023. The

problem; the writer Giovanni Pascoli already spoke of how Italy suffered from two pathologies: the poor circulation of culture and the cult of form (De Mauro, 2017; Piemontese, 2023)[18].

The Italian language has always been the victim of a considerable gap between the language used in everyday life and its written and erudite use. This stems from a 'language issue' that only came into focus after the late unification of the country in 1861. A language imposed from above, i.e. from the institutions, which reintroduced their pompous way of using the Italian language. In using complex language as an instrument of power, the institutions' political objective of not wanting to involve the citizens actively was evident from the outset, creating a language barrier between the laws and the population (Orioles, 2018).

With the increase in literacy and broader social participation, however, the language has remained the same, re-proposing a distance between the actors of communication (De Mauro, 2017, p. 117), with the 'cult of precedent' (Piemontese, 2023) leading to the repetition of the same communicative pattern, i.e. what was thought to have worked in the past. This language has increasingly become the enemy of ordinary people and has attracted the attention of linguists and intellectuals (Cortelazzo, 2023; Orioles, 2018; De Mauro, 2017).

Among intellectuals, the writer Italo Calvino denounced in the 1960s the tendency to resort to pretentious and ineffective language, which he called *antilingua* ('anti-language') (Calvino, 1965/2023). According to the author, anti-language tends to speak empty, ignoring the addressee (Mimosa Ravasio, 2023). Calvino thus denounces the use of a faux flamboyant language and an end in itself, enriched with periphrases and unknown terms due to a "terrore semantico" ('semantic terror') described as the shying away from the use of limpid words[19] (Calvino, 1965/2023, p. 125). He condemns, "Every day, by a now automatic process, hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens mentally translate, with the speed of electronic machines, the Italian language into a non-existent anti-language" (*Ibidem*[20]).

In terms of diaphasic variation, other convoluted forms of language burst into the Italian language similar to anti-language, such as *bureaucratese*, the bureaucratic language that deviates from everyday language use by resorting to technicalities and formulas that are often

professor addresses the Italian linguistic tradition in many of his writings; for further information, consult Cortelazzo (2015, 2021).

[18] Piemontese addresses this topic in his speech at the *Diparola Festival*, entitled "Parlare chiaro tra il dire e il fare" ('Talking clear between saying and doing'), held on 21 September 2023. For further information, consult Piemontese (1996, 2008).

[19] This language usage reminds the character of *Don Abbondio,* who recurs to Latin in Alessandro Manzoni's historical novel *Promessi Sposi* ('The Betrothed'), to generate confusion and intentionally exclude other characters from the conversation.

[20] Here is the Italian source text: "Ogni giorno per un processo ormai automatico, centinaia di migliaia di nostri concittadini traducono mentalmente con la velocità di macchine elettroniche la lingua italiana in un'antilingua inesistente" (Calvino, 1965).

incomprehensible to the ordinary person (Orioles, 2018); the 'distance between norm and usage' also occurs in the legislative language (*Ibidem*). Furthermore, there is *scholastichese* ('scholasticism') (De Mauro, 2014, pp. 155-156), which reflects this tendency of language in education. De Mauro (*Ibidem*) describes how the scholastic use of the language in the past with exaggeratedly courtly expressions has influenced its use, transiting, for instance, into administrative language, conditioning speakers' choices even outside the school world[21].

These ideological traces resulting from these different linguistic variations still impact today since there is talk of a 'cognitive bias' that those who write and speak the Italian language run into. Italy still has a strong preconception against simplicity, often confused with trivialisation (Di Michele et al., 2022; Fiacchi, 2023[22]; Piemontese, 2023). On the contrary, Orletti explains how language simplification is a process of clarification through expanding the text, which maintains the contents by explicating specific terms (Orletti, 2023[23]). Serianni tells of a fixation with pseudo-elevated language (Serianni, 2015), which leads us to forget that great classics such as the *Divina Commedia* ('Divine Comedy') were written with the first 2000 words of the *Vocabolario di Base* (VdB, 'Basic Italian Vocabulary') of the Italian language (De Mauro, 2019, p. 146, p. 223).

The issue of public communication, 'which is slow to free itself from heavy and convoluted stylistic features' (Orioles, 2018), is still an unresolved problem. However, many attempts have been made to curb the difficulty. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, an Italian social-political movement was born on the issue of language clarity, with linguists commencing to study textual readability and with the first legislation simplification initiative. It was Law 241 of 1990, entitled *Nuove norme in materia di procedimento amministrativo e di diritto di accesso ai documenti amministrativi* ('New rules on administrative procedure and the right of access to administrative documents'), which is followed by the volume *Il diritto all'informazione in Italia* ('The right to information in Italy'), which emphasises the right of comprehension of every citizen. In the following years, another pivotal moment was marked by the first legislative decree (No. 29 of 1993) that created public relations offices and codes of conduct for public employees (Piemontese, 2008), gradually expanding awareness of the importance of clear communication. However, the most significant moment in the

[21] Piemontese (2023) denounces the lack of training of students, from primary school to university, in writing texts for a specific recipient with a particular topic and objective. She also clarifies how plain language reflection refers to informative texts about citizens' public and social lives and not other creative forms of writing, which have other educational goals and addressees in mind.

[22] From the speech "Il bias della banalizzazione: perché è così difficile scrivere chiaro" ('The trivialisation bias: why it is so difficult to write clearly') given by Fiacchi at the *Diparola Festival*, 22 September 2023.

[23] From the talk "Il parlar chiaro nella comunicazione medica: la ricerca di buone pratiche" ('Plain speaking in medical communication: the search for good practice') given by Orletti at the *Diparola Festival*, 21 September 2023. Professor Orletti directed the *Chiare parole* ('Plain words') project, a workshop on communicative accessibility, and specifically explored the field of plain speaking in the medical field. For more information, see Orletti (2018) and https://www.chiareparole.it (last accessed March 2024).

history of plain language in Italy was the creation of the *Codice di Stile* ('Code of Style') in 1993. The Minister of the Civil Service, Sabino Cassese, promoted it to encourage institutions to use less convoluted language toward citizens. Alfredo Fioretto's 1997 *Manuale di Stile* ('Manual of Style') followed (Piemontese, 2008).

In the 21st century, we see increased awareness of the importance of communicating with citizens in institutions in a clear and easily understandable language. An example of this is the 2002 *Chiaro!* ('Clear!') project on simplified administrative language (Williams, 2005), the result of the 14th February 2002 *Direttiva sulle attività di comunicazione delle pubbliche amministrazioni* ('Directive on communication activities of public administrations') and another targeted directive of 8th May of the same year. Despite its legislative limitations, with this project, the Italian Government shows a sign of continuity with previous works, recognising the necessity of clear communication and marking a positive advancement of plain language in Italy (Cortelazzo, 2002; Perego, 2022).

Today, thirty years after the Code of Style, researchers who studied it or contributed to its creation have analysed its impact and resulted in a publication celebrating its 30th anniversary (Piemontese, 2023; Cortelazzo, 2023; Cassese, 2023). Despite the numerous initiatives and projects over the years, the emerging picture is 'less than expected' (Cortelazzo, 2015; Piemontese, 2023). As stated by De Mauro:

> Much work of analysis, elaboration and proposal has been done since Cassese was Minister of the Civil Service in the early 1990s. Much has been done for Administrations to learn to communicate in a comprehensible way. Work has been done by local administrations, in Padua, in Tuscany, in Rome. But the balance is more modest than our hopes of years ago led us to think (De Mauro, 2008, p. 25)[24].

Cortelazzo (2015, 2021) denounces how many steps backwards have been taken in the last decade, for example, with the *Codice di comportamento dei dipendenti pubblici* ('Code of Conduct for Public Employees') of 2013 that does not mention plain language; another example is the ineffective communication implemented by the national railway service[25]. Additionally, former Public Administration Minister Sabino Cassese (2022, 2023) reflects on how legislative and administrative language still needs to be more intelligible today, causing errors in decoding and misunderstandings. He cites a recent example from June 2023, when the Constitutional Court ruled against a law's 'radical obscurity', emphasising the legislation's lack of clarity. This episode

[24] Translated from the Italian original version: "Molto lavoro di analisi, elaborazione e proposta è stato fatto a partire da quando Cassese era Ministro della Funzione Pubblica, all'inizio degli anni Novanta. Molto è stato fatto perché le Amministrazioni imparino a comunicare in modo comprensibile. Lavoro è stato fatto da amministrazioni locali, a Padova, in Toscana, a Roma. Ma il bilancio è più modesto di come le nostre speranze di anni fa ci facevano pensare" (De Mauro, 2008, p. 25).

[25] On this subject, see also the work of Sciumbata (2017).

demonstrates how the issue of linguistic obscurity is yet to be unravelled, although its consequences for people's lives are not unknown.

Scholars aim to encourage those with public responsibilities to respect the 'constitutional duty to make themselves understood' (De Mauro, 2019; Piemontese, 2023), improving text efficacy to be aligned with international standards (Piemontese, 2023). The emphasis is on the close relationship between language and citizenship, where language is a tool for exercising citizenship (Mimosa Ravasio, 2023). Over the years, plain language use has been investigated in different fields, with best practice cases emerging and its value gradually recognised. Nonetheless, the widespread use of plain language in Italy still needs to be improved (Perego, 2022, p. 297).

1.1.3 Easy-to-Read Language

Lindholm & Vanhatalo (2021, p. 12) state that no approved official definition exists. However, with 'Easy-to-Read Language' [26] (EtR or E2R) (in Italian*: lingua facile da leggere e da capire*) - or more generally 'Easy Language' (EL) (in Italian: *lingua facile*) the latter being a more updated label that is conceptually broader and encompasses not only forms of written language but multimodal communication in all its facets (Perego, 2020, p. 30; Maaß, 2020, p. 56)[27] - another form of linguistic simplification is defined. In the spectrum of linguistic accessibility (see *Figure 1.1*), Easy Language is positioned after Plain Language, representing a more specific variety of linguistic simplification created for a particular target audience, i.e. the public with intellectual disabilities - but not only (see para. *1.1.3.1 Target Audience*).

Although *easy to read and understand* is present in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006), a terminological note is due to avoid any confusion: Maaß (2020, p. 52) points out how the widespread English terminology of 'Easy-to-Read' often does not specify a concrete variety of language - as is the case with the 'Easy-to-Read Language' terminology. The missing noun 'language' in the former terminology thus leads to the former term representing a textual quality rather than a variety of language. It would, therefore, be more correct to speak of 'Easy-to-Read Language'. At this point, however, another consideration arises: the purpose of reading presented in the terminology - the '-to-Read' - excludes all types of communication that take

[26] The label refers to the English language. However, with the role of the English language as a lingua franca, the label is internationally used and known (Perego, 2020, p. 30).

[27] Perego (2020, p. 31) points out that in reality, very few of the people to whom Easy Language is addressed are concretely able to "read and understand" texts on their own and that very often, as suggested by IFLA's guidelines (2010, see subsequent paragraph *1.2.1 International Guidelines*) group experiences, such as reading aloud, are used to enjoy them. The *EL* label is more consistent based on the practical experiences of the end users and the types of communication to which it applies. However, in our case, since this is a study of written texts, we will also use the more traditional label *EtR* in the course of the work.

place in everyday life other than in textual written form, as well as the fact that the primary end users may have great difficulty reading[28]. Maaß (*Ibidem*), therefore, denounces a terminological incongruence that does not reflect the communicative spectrum in all its forms of media representation, stating that:

> 'Easy-to-Read' is not an adequate term for this language variety as it blocks the view of the different forms of realisation that are necessary to achieve communicative inclusion of the target audience. The term Easy Language is open to broader conceptualisations of enhancing comprehensibility through language (*ibid*., p. 56).

To make the terminology effective, it is necessary to speak of 'Easy Language' to encompass every aspect of communication and a variety of media, few of which necessarily involve reading, as in the case of audiovisual material. 'Easy Language' becomes a term that can be contrasted on the language spectrum with 'Plain Language', presenting them as two fully-fledged language variants with the same unit of measurement. Maaß (2020. p. 52) distinguishes these two language varieties according to the level of comprehensibility: Plain Language is characterised by 'enhanced comprehensibility', and Easy Language by 'maximally enhanced comprehensibility'.

In this case, linguistic simplification is specifically addressed to an audience with specific needs for which Plain Language is not an understandable form of simplification (Perego, 2020, p. 32; Maaß, 2020), thus requiring a further simplification process. The fact that it is a more targeted language than PL - usually aimed at a wider audience - thus entails even more precise language choices. The Easy Language shows a growing awareness of the universal right to information. It actively participates in the battle - started by the Plain Language - towards even more accessible communication. Language clarity should reflect the intentions of those who apply it, from institutions to citizens. It should gradually become part of our living and communicating, becoming necessary to ensure an active, participatory, democratic society (Perego, 2020; IFLA, 2010; Department of Health, 2009; UNCRPD, 2006).

Intending to create accessible communication, the Easy Language aims at more excellent readability and comprehensibility of content to facilitate decoding for an audience with more difficulty processing information. The contents revolve around clear language, linear syntax, and logical and punctual choice of information, all features mirroring spoken language's communicative effectiveness. In the case of texts (in paper or digital format), simplicity is also reflected in the use of clean graphics and images to clarify content and avoid confusion (see par. *1.2 Guidelines on Easy Language*) (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020; Madina et al., 2023; Nitzke et al., 2022; Nomura et al.,

[28] Only a small part of Easy Language's primary target audience can read texts independently. Data show that only 30% of people with cognitive disabilities can read texts (Günthner 1999; Ratz 2013, Maaß 2020).

2010). The result is, from an author's stance, an elaborate process far from simple that requires specific training[29].

Perego (2020, p. 28), in translating Bathia's theoretical framework related to language acquisition to linguistic inclusion (Bathia 1983 cited in Perego 2020), describes two approaches to texts: (1) The first is *simplification*, a process of intralinguistic translation that intervenes in form and content, aligning with the Plain Language concept; (2) the second is *easification*, that implies the addition of tools to guide readers known as "easification devices" (Bhatia, 1983, p. 46, cited in Perego 2020, p. 28), such as layout or images. From a usability[30] perspective, Easy Language is a linguistic variety that combines easification and simplification, as it intervenes on a language and paralanguage level, also providing additional non-linguistic instruments to aid comprehension (Perego 2020a, p. 21; 2021, pp. 279-280).

Unlike Plain Language, Easy Language does not arise from a specific need—e.g., to simplify specific content, such as bureaucratic language—but from a more general need to make content holistically more accessible, thus including all forms of information, from entertainment to official communications. Therefore, in terms of fields of application, EL is extended to very different realms through media variability that also enhances the possibility of diffusion in different contexts and fields, emphasising the right to access information in every context. This leads to the development and use of Easy Langue in contexts such as audiovisual translation (e.g. Bernabé & Orero, 2019) or conference interpreting (Schulz et al., 2020). Regarding new contexts, the museum setting[31] (see *par. 1.1.3.3.1 Easy Language and Italian Cultural Heritage* for the analysis of the Italian context) is a field with innovative and significant research growing related to Easy Language (e.g. Carlucci & Seibel, 2020), with tools like audioguides available in EL (e.g. Al Masri-Gutternig & Reitstätter, 2017; Scheele, 2017). Cultural settings like museums and theatres[32] disclose new and engaging possibilities for people who have suffered from being ostracised. Easy Language allows different coding systems to be conveyed, thus granting the right of inclusion within cultural heritage (Maaß,

[29] According to Perego (2020, p. 35), there are four principal types of experts: writers, translators, trainers and validators. However, researchers (Maaß, 2020;García Munoz, 2014, Perego, 2020) emphasise how the role of the expert in this field is often downplayed, given the widespread public opinion that linguistic simplification is an easy task conferred by the very connotation of the terms 'easy' and 'plain' being 'terminologically misleading' (Perego, 2020, p. 34). The experience recounted in this research illustrates how far from easy the task of simplification is and how many aspects of linguistic complexity and reality must be considered when working on a text with a view to linguistic inclusion.

[30] According to Perego (2020a; 2020b), *usability* "is the extent to which something is user-oriented, cognitively effective and satisfactory. In communication, usability depends greatly on the extent of simplification of a text – intended as anything that conveys a set of meanings" (Perego, 2020a, p.21). Specifically, "text usability depends on the degree of text complexity, readability and ambiguity" (Perego, 2020b, p. 279).

[31] Several studies face the theme of museum communication and accessibility despite not analysing Easy Language in depth. For an example, see Eardley et al. (2016).

[32] Regarding Easy Language and theatre, consult Mälzer & Wünsche (2019).

2020, p. 176). There are countless contexts and communicative formats to experiment with - textual, spoken, multimodal formats – and innumerable contents to disclose, marking EL not just as a language variety for indispensable information but also for entertainment, education and culture (*Ibidem*).

In fact, despite current efforts, there is an underlying difficulty in implementation due to the complexity of the task to be accomplished, the tools needed to implement it, the high cost in economic and time terms, and not least, the stigma around content simplification (Perego, 2020, p. 28; Maaß, 2020; Sciumbata, 2017; Cutts, 2013). Indeed, when presenting the concept of Easy Language, one question that should not be underestimated is acceptability (Perego, 2020, p. 37; Maaß, 2020, p. 209). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the element of *acceptability* - which Maaß (2020, p. 193) considers indispensable in addition to *perceptibility* and *comprehensibility* when dealing with communicative accessibility - mainly affects Easy Language, which represents a further simplification of language. If compared to Plain Language - which is a variety of language more similar to standard language that the general public is more inclined to accept and embrace - EL risks having an opposite effect on inclusion, creating a stigmatisation of end-users with disabilities (Maaß, 2020a; Perego, 2020a; Scior et al., 2015). Stigmatisation is not a side effect to be underestimated since it can cause people with disabilities psychological problems, thus having severe consequences for their social life (Niedbalski, 2021; Perego, 2020a; Scior et al., 2020). This paramount issue needs to be discussed and considered when working on linguistic simplification. Improving existent guidelines with data-driven findings from reception studies will help investigate the EL impact on society and ways to promote it critically and knowledgeably (Perego, 2020, p. 39; Maaß, 2020)[33].

1.1.3.1 Target Audience

The Easy-to-Read Language was created for a specific target audience: people with intellectual disabilities[34]. Nevertheless, besides being the target, this category of end users often becomes an active part of the text creation and revision phase, thus underlining the social intent of involving them actively in the process (see *par. 1.2 Guidelines on Easy Language*).

[33] Perego (2020, p. 38) illustrates the example of EL in audiovisual translation and how important it is to announce and explain its use to avoid adverse feedback from the target audience. In this context, especially in the case of inclusive subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, "accessibility is often associated with patronisation". However, it "applies to several scenarios where people with communication impairments, or other forms of disabilities, feel they are being addressed asymmetrically or in a condescending way when they are offered alternative accessible texts" (*Ibidem*).

[34] Perego (2020, p. 32) recounts how Easy Language was initially addressed to people with reading difficulties, referred to as 'struggling readers'; with the evolution of studies across different media, the end user category expanded, including, besides only readers, all people with intellectual disabilities.

As the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) strongly emphasises, "Disability is part of being human. Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life". The term refers to all people who have difficulties in daily interactions with their environment. Mainly, intellectual disabilities—also known as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) (Sulu et al., 2023)—are defined as a neurodevelopmental condition "characterised by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour" (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - AAIDD, 2020; Ilyas et al., 2019). Brain malformations often cause it, along with genetic conditions, Down and Fragile X syndromes and Huntington's disease (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC, 2022). People who suffer from it struggle with "conceptual, social and practical skills" (American Psychiatric Association - APA, 2021; Special Olympics, 2019), and language is heavily impacted when speaking, writing, reading and processing information. People may also struggle to process auditive information or with motor abilities. Difficulties occur at different spectrum levels ranging from mild to profound intellectual disabilities (Gluck, 2022; AAIDD, 2020; Alfredsson Ågren et al., 2019; Boat et al., 2015).

Figure 1.2 illustrates an example of text in Easy-to-Read Language that explicitly presents the concept of intellectual disabilities. The latest report, "Inclusion Indicators 2023", by the non-profit organisation Inclusion Europe (IE, 2023), details that there are 20 million people with intellectual disabilities in Europe. As for children, there are 1.1 million in European schools[35]. The impact of disability on the lives of these people is notable, and so is the risk of excluding them from society. The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* – also acknowledged as CRPD - (United Nations, 2006) intervenes highlighting the need for communication accessible to all. In particular, article 9, entitled "Accessibility", declares how the promotion and access to information for all is a fundamental right to guarantee their autonomy:

> To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems (…) (UNCRPD, 2006).

[35] From this updated report emerges a negative and alarming picture regarding the school inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities. In this area, Italy is an excellence (receiving the highest score of 10/10), with all children with intellectual disabilities perfectly integrated and active participants in the Italian school community. However, children in many other European countries are in special schools (over 700,000). Another part (20,000) receives no education (IE, 2023). The report is available at: https://str.inclusion.eu/4fbaa7b98fcf6c493d7f54e03.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

The CRPD underlines the importance of adopting support measures to remove obstacles to inclusion, including physical and communication obstacles. From a universal design perspective[36], Easy language has become a powerful tool for promoting the right to information in often excluded population categories.

Furthermore, Easy-to-Read Language is also suitable for people who may need simplified content for various reasons: (1) end users with reading difficulties related to pathologies such as autism, aphasia, dyslexia, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), auditory disabilities and dementia (Freyhoff, 1998; Nomura et al., 2010; Barrow et al., 2011; Maaß, 2020; Sciumbata, 2022); (2) target users with reading difficulties related to age and literacy, such as immigrants, L2 learners, individuals who have functional illiteracy, children and older adults (Inclusion Europe, 2009; IFLA, 2010; Bernabé & Orero, 2019; Perego, 2020a; Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021; Sciumbata, 2022).

Besides the principal categories of end users with intellectual disabilities and the two mentioned above, Easy-to-Read Language suits all individuals with higher competencies who can benefit from processing EtR more rapidly. As stated by Lindholm & Vanhatalo (2022):

> One answer to the question of who the Easy Language target groups are is: everyone. Each individual should have the right to choose whether they want information in Easy Language or in standard language. It is important to ensure that Easy Language is a publicly available, neutral and non-stigmatized option for all public communication in society (ivi, p.15).

For instance, Sciumbata (2022, p. 18) exemplifies the case of exhibit labels and how their inclusive retranslation could potentially benefit all visitors in their museum experience. Nonetheless, studies on easy-to-read language reception are still lacking (Fajardo et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2006), even more so with its inclusive potential – in the perspective that it becomes useful for everyone - on non-disabled end users[37].

A composite mosaic of different needs and requirements emerges when presenting various audiences that can use the Easy-to-Read language, and the different pathology previously illustrated can overlap in an end user with compound disabilities and, consequently, composite necessities (Perego, 2020, p. 33). This poses the first limitation of EtR: a single language variety, although versatile and extendable to a broader audience, cannot satisfy the needs of very different end users. For instance, within the same primary category of end-users with intellectual disabilities, the different varieties and severities of the illness show how it is anything but an easy task to make a text (or

[36] See further discussion on Universal Design in *Chapter V.*

[37] This research aims to fill that gap by studying easy-to-read language in museums and observing families (children and adults, a group of volunteers that comprehend children with and without language difficulties) and how they receive simplified content in that specific context.

another form of mediality[38] (Maaß, 2020, p. 34) more comprehensible and practical for everyone. The participatory process of texts co-construction or revision itself is influenced by the level of linguistic and metalinguistic competence[39] of the participating test readers, perhaps creating texts that work for some but that others cannot understand (Browder et al., 2006; Abedi et al., 2011; van Wingerden et al., 2017; Di Blasi et al., 2018; Sciumbata, 2021). The best solution would be to create a language suitable for a specific target audience in a well-defined context, thus creating different types of EtR according to different needs. Nonetheless, although the overall objective is always to create a communication that is as comprehensible as possible, it is critical to be aware that even within a specific target with similar characteristics, every end user would need a tailored text, which is utopic to accomplish. This terrain has been approached recently and is still to be explored (Nomura et al., 2010, p. 9; Sciumbata, 2020, p. 19; Maaß, 2020, p. 277). Nevertheless, the EtR proposed today is still a significant step towards social participation in our society. It contributes to reducing communicative barriers and makes it possible to reach more people than before to convey information more clearly.

[38] The term "mediality" refers to the various types of media used in communication. Maaß (2020, p. 34) points out that extending Easy Language to different audiences requires adopting different media types, such as subtitling, sign language or audio description (AD).

[39] An essential component in the reflection on language. For more, see Andorno (2020) and Cacia (2017).

Intellectual disability

If you have an intellectual disability,
that means it is more difficult for you
to understand information
and learn new skills than it is for other people.

This makes some parts of life harder.

People with intellectual disabilities
often need support in learning or at work.

Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult.

It affects you for your whole life.

There are things that can make life easier
for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in **easy-to-read** language.

Some people say learning disabilities
instead of intellectual disabilities.

Figure 1.2 Example of text written in Easy-to-Read Language (Inclusion Europe, 2022, p. 32).

1.1.3.1.2 A European perspective on the history of Easy Language

In order to conceive Easy Language both as a linguistic variant and as a sociocultural phenomenon (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2022, p. 11), it is necessary to reconstruct its history. We will outline and intersect the first European developments with EL international developments.

Historically, it is difficult to draw a clear dividing line between Plain Language and when Easy Language originated (Perego, 2020b; Sciumbata, 2020). EL as a concept and necessity developed as early as the 1960s but only began to spread and be applied from the 1990s onwards (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 18). It is challenging to trace the first use of Easy Language. However, it is possible to reconstruct Sweden as one of its first promoters in the 1960s - where EL is called *lättläst* – and it is still today a nation at the forefront of language inclusion (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 13; Bohman, 2021). It has been reconstructed that the first publication of Easy Language occurred in this nation in 1968. The text was a popular novel entitled *Sommaren med Monika* ('Summer with Monika') by Per Anders Fogelström, whose Easy Language edition was edited by the Swedish National Board of Education (Bohman, 2021, p. 548). In 1984, the periodical *8 Sidor*[40] ('Eight pages') was born, composed of eight pages of news and information sustained financially for 50% by the Ministry of Culture and Education (Rabbi, 2017; 2020).

Probably influenced by the geographical proximity of Swedish best practices, Finland started developing documents and material in Easy Language in the late 1980s. A successful example is the bi-weekly *Selkosanomat*[41], partly financed by the government and diffused in both Easy Finnish and Easy Swedish, reporting on the latest news and insights (Leskelä, 2021; Rabbi, 2017, 2020).

Also in the 1980s, and more precisely in 1985, the periodical *Wablieft*[42] was founded in Belgium**,** from the needs of some teachers who could not find the right accessible material to use in the classroom, later discovering that it could be extended and useful to a wider audience (Rabbi, 2017, 2020; Vandeghinste et al., 2021).

In the following years, Norway (Bovim Bugge et al., 2021) and Latvia (Anča & Melnika, 2021) successfully responded to the inclusive call, creating informative content in Easy Language and proposing a widespread diffusion of Easy Language (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 13; Sciumbata, 2022, p. 22).

At this stage, precise stylistic features regarding Easy Language have not yet been developed, and Easy Language tends to have characteristics very close to Plain Language (Sciumbata, 2020; Tronbacke, 1997). The history of Easy Language, although challenging to reconstruct, is intertwined

[40] Official website: https://8sidor.se (last accessed April 2024).
[41] Official website: https://selkosanomat.fi (last accessed April 2024).
[42] Official website: https://www.wablieft.be/nl (last accessed April 2024).

with the history of developing its guidelines. In 1997, IFLA, the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*, contributed to its elaboration and definition, subsequently editing the guidelines in a more updated version in 2010 (see the *1.2.1 International Guidelines* section below), promoting the importance of reading for all, embodying libraries and the universal diffusion of culture. Two other critical guidelines are those that Inclusion Europe developed, with the support of the European Commission and a project divided into two phases called *Pathways I* and *II*[43]. First, in 1998 and then in 2014, it significantly contributed to the European recognition of linguistic simplification and created official standards for Easy Language (see below par. *1.2.1 International Guidelines*).

Previous initiatives like *Pathways* and other more recent projects, such as *EASIT*, *Train2validate* and *SELSI*[44], are part of a journey that is not only European but international, representing a continuous pursuit for promoting human rights and eliminating all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities (Rabbi, 2017). In fact, the history of Easy Language also goes hand in hand with the growing awareness at an international institutional level of the importance of accessible communication. Among the most significant contributions, the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD, 2006) marks a significant and accelerating moment, positively impacting the creation and development of accessible content in many countries (Perego, 2022; Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 13)

An example is the *Leitura Fácil*, later formalised in Portugal in 2009 (Marques, 2021, p. 420). Similarly, in Germany**,** the systematic development of the *Leichte Sprache* climaxed at the beginning of the 2010s, including EL as a facet of institutional communication (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 13; Maaß, 2020; Maaß et al., 2021). Furthermore, since 2010, Denmark has provided an online news service called *Ligetil*[45], part of a public radio broadcaster with funding from the government; in the United Kingdom, *Easy-Read-Online*[46] contributes to grant information for people with intellectual disabilities disseminating helpful information (Rabbi, 2017; 2020).

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[43] *Pathways I* ran from 2007 to 2009 and *Pathways II* from 2011 to 2013. The official website is https://www.pathwaysproject.eu/ (last accessed April 2024). For further information on *Pathways II*, consult https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/pathways-2/ (last accessed April 2024).

[44] Three recent European projects:
- the first is *EASIT* (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training), which worked on Easy-to-Understand Languages in the Audio-visual Translation (AVT) field from 2018 to 2021. For more information: https://webs.uab.cat/easit/en/ (last accessed April 2024);
- the second is *Train2validate*, which worked on producing EL training materials from 2020 to 2023. For more information: https://plenainclusionmadrid.org/train2validate/?lang=it (last accessed April 2024).
- the third is *SELSI* (Spoken Easy Language for Social Inclusion). The ongoing project aims to develop guidelines for spoken communication in Easy Language. For more information, https://selsi.eu/en/homepage-eng/project/ (last accessed April 2024).

[45] Official website: https://www.dr.dk/ligetil (last accessed April 2024).

[46] Official website: https://www.easy-read-online.co.uk (last accessed April 2024).

On the whole, the most active contributors and leading promoters of EL in the European panorama are Sweden (Bohman, 2021; Ehrenberg-Sundin, 1999; Tronbacke, 1997), Germany and Spain - with the first Easy Spanish *Lectura fácil* standards in 2018 (Bernabé & Orero, 2019; Ó. García Munoz & Matamala, 2021). Nonetheless, other nations are joining the cause at a fast pace, for instance, Slovenia with its *Lahko Branje* (Perego, 2020, p. 111; Knapp & Haramija, 2021).

The growth of the attention on Easy Language occurs thanks to international cooperation (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 14; Bohman, 2021, p. 585) and the resulting initiatives and projects. The initiative entitled *My Opinion My Vote* (2018) is an example of collaboration. In this project, the European Commission, alongside EDSA (European Down Syndrome Association) in partnership with Associations from Italy, Malta, Spain, Denmark, Ireland, and Hungary, have contributed to raising awareness of the voting rights of people with intellectual disabilities, creating informative documents in Easy Language[47]. In addition, cross-country exchange and growth are also due to progress in academic research (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 14).

Through cooperation, the members of the European Union have unanimously agreed to the development of specific implementations within the European context, the most recent being the *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2021-2030)[48] - in line with the UN 2030 Agenda and its *Disability Inclusion Strategy*[49] (2022) - which will guide initiatives also to enhance language inclusion. Available in Easy Language, the document aims to improve current achievements to tackle today's obstacles for persons with disabilities in a ten-year perspective, in a path towards equality in terms of participation in society and contribution to the economy (SRPD, 2021). Work inclusion becomes a heartfelt topic, and language accessibility represents a vehicle for involvement in job opportunities, as the new *European Pillar of Social Rights* (EU, 2021)[50] aims for 2030. To put theory into practice, the document underscores the importance of guaranteeing rights to people with disabilities. Among its twenty principles, there is one specifically targeted at the inclusion of people with disabilities:

> **17. Inclusion of people with disabilities**
>
> People with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society, and a work environment adapted to their needs.

[47] For further information, consult the website https://www.edsa.eu/my-opinion-my-vote/ (last accessed April 2024).
[48] The booklet can be downloaded at the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes (last accessed April 2024).
[49] The document is also available in Easy Language. For more information, consult https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/ (last accessed April 2024).
[50] The report can be consulted at the following link: https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/ (last accessed April 2024).

Additionally, following *The Act on the Provision of Digital Services* (2019), the European Union has begun to curate digital content from a more accessible perspective. Although the above-mentioned acts, principles and strategies do not explicitly mention EL, their inclusive social intervention is also targeted from a language perspective (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 13).

The development of linguistic simplification has positively influenced society today. There are thought-provoking cases in which Easy Language has been socially welcomed and accepted as equal to standard language: for instance, in Finland, EL was first proposed in a hospital establishment (the Satakunta Hospital District, in Finnish: *Satasairaala*) to communicate with patients as a possible option, and it has now become the reference standard language (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 14; Leskelä, 2021, p. 157).

The Easy Language history proceeds apace, culminating in the recent milestone by the United Nations, which in December 2022 adopted the resolution "Promoting and Mainstreaming Easy to Understand Communication for Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities" (document A/77/L.37) (United Nations, 2022[51]) proposed by Brazil to promote Easy-to-Understand Communication - therefore encompassing both Plain and Easy Language – in order to tackle the issue of communicative barriers for persons with disabilities. On the occasion of the *Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* 2023, the UN General Assembly has called for a meeting in New York on 12 June 2023 (*Figure 1.3*) to enshrine the importance of language accessibility for all (United Nations, 2023[52]), thus marking a critical moment in the history of Easy Language internationally.

Growing international awareness has also led to the setting of an international day, *International Easy Language Day*, on 28th May, the date celebrating the signing of the agreements for the creation of Inclusion Europe in 1988 (EU, 2021[53]), also testimony to how European history converges and has influenced the international resonance of Easy Language.

[51] From the United Nations official press releases, available at the following link: https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12484.doc.htm (last accessed March 2024).
[52] Here is the programme of the meeting, with the topics addressed: https://www.un.org/pga/77/2023/06/07/letter-from-the-president-of-the-general-assembly-easy-to-understand-communication-meeting-programme/ (last accessed March 2024).
[53] From the European Union's official website: https://knowledge-centre-interpretation.education.ec.europa.eu/en/events/1st-international-easy-language-day-conference-ield#event-description (last accessed April 2024).

Figure 1.3 President Kőrösi and the sign language interpreter at the UN General Assembly meeting held in New York.

1.1.3.1.3 Easy Language in Italy

In the Italian context, the Easy Language has an even shorter tradition than the Plain Language, and the histories of these two language varieties flow into one another. In particular, from the history of Plain Language stems a more specific branch focused on the *lingua facile da leggere e da capire* (the Italian equivalent of the terminology Easy-to-Read Language, literally 'Easy-to-Read and Easy-To-Understand') or simply *lingua facile* (Easy Language[54]) intended for an audience with intellectual disabilities.

From a historical perspective, on the timeline, a significant moment is the publication in 1989 of the easy-to-read monthly journal *Due parole* ('Two words. An Easy-to-Read monthly journal')[55] directed by Prof. Emanuela Piemontese in the research context of the Department of Language Sciences of the University 'La Sapienza' of Rome (De Mauro, 2019, p. 160). It was the first newspaper in Easy-to-Read Language in Italy, but unfortunately, although it subsequently switched to online in 2001, it closed in 2006 due to unsustainable costs and low funding (Perego, 2021; Rabbi,

[54] Perego (2021, p. 280) delves into the terminology used in Italy and emphasises how the distinction between Plain Language and Easy Language is not well defined since the terms are often used as synonyms. Various expressions are used: *Linguaggio facile da leggere* ('Easy-to-Read Language') is widespread, although reading is not the only way of receiving texts, as we pointed out in the initial introductory discourse on Easy Language - which is valid for all languages, thus also for Italian. Therefore, *Lingua facile* ('Easy Language') is more appropriate, but other variants are currently in use. Interestingly, another aspect of terminology discussed by Perego is the difference in Italian between *lingua* and *linguaggio*, whose equivalent in English is always 'language'. Both are used in the terminologies presented here, although each term carries particular nuances: *Linguaggio* has a more extended meaning, relating to the generic ability to communicate; *Lingua*, on the other hand, refers to a specific communication system used in a community. For more, see Perego (2021, pp. 281-282).

[55] Here is the link for the official website of *Due parole*: http://www.dueparole.it/default_.asp (last accessed March 2024).

2017; Piemontese, 1996). For the dissemination of current news, the *Informazione Facile* (IF) ('Easy Information') project has been active since 2003. Directed by Mauro Marras, the website provides news updates in Easy Language[56]. Initially created for an audience with text comprehension deficits, it now encompasses a larger audience and is currently the only weekly newspaper active in Italy (Rabbi, 2019; IF, 2024).

Another significant moment on the Italian timeline is the ratification in 2009 of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which explains the need for simplified forms of language - including Easy Language - to ensure everyone's right to information. Also in the same year, the Inclusion Europe guidelines were translated into Italian, a work conducted by *Anffas Nazionale* (the 'National Association of Families of Persons with Intellectual and/or Relational Disabilities') involving end users co-creating retranslations, thus giving prominence to the topic for the first time in Italy and starting disseminating a specific training offer relating to Easy Language in the territory (Perego, 2021, p. 292).

In 2017, the GIS Association (*Genitori per l'Inclusione Sociale,* 'Parents for Social Inclusion'), together with the Municipal Administration of Sant'Ilario d'Enza (Reggio Emilia), with the patronage of the Chamber of Deputies and the Legislative Assembly of the Emilia Romagna Region, created an Easy Language and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) edition of the twelve fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution, designing the volume *La Costituzione italiana facile da leggere e da capire* (The Italian Constitution easy to read and understand')[57] (GIS, 2017; Rabbi, 2020).

In 2023, Minister for Disability Locatelli presented at the 16th conference of the states parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP16), an updated edition of the book *Le Parole Giuste* ('The Right Words')[58], in cooperation with Anffas. The book, available in both Italian and English, with the CRPD in Easy Language and AAC enclosed, aims to raise awareness of the need for change in disability-related terminology, an invitation to see disability from a new perspective. It thus marks a declaration of intent by the Ministry on the importance of linguistic accessibility in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Indeed, as Perego (2021, p. 279) points out, the European and international comparisons have undeniably fostered awareness of the issue and its implementation in the territory.

[56] Here is the link for *Informazione facile*: https://informazionefacile.it/lattualita-spiegata-semplice/ (last accessed March 2024).
[57] Here is possible to consult the project's material: https://www.gis-genitoriperinclusionesociale.it/la-costituzione-italiana-facile-leggere-comprendere/ (last accessed March 2024).
[58] The book, available in Italian and English, can be found at the link: http://www.anffas.net/it/le-parole-giuste/ (last accessed March 2024).

However, from a legislative point of view, there is a strong need to introduce forward-looking laws to foster Easy Language use. Easy Language is not mentioned in existing institutional documents, although they often emphasise a necessity for clarity - but more about Plain Language (Perego, 2021, p. 282). In fact, on a national scale, although the CRPD has been ratified, there are no Italian laws to support its ratification, spread its importance and implement its use. There is an exception, however, on a regional level, in the case of an autonomous region with greater legislative freedom: Trentino Alto Adige, whose efforts towards language inclusion are noteworthy[59]. In the autonomous province of Bolzano, Law 7/2015 *Partecipazione e inclusione delle persone con disabilità* ('Participation and Inclusion of People with Disability') has been enacted. The law, also available in Easy Language, encourages facilitated communication, primarily advocating for decrees and documents concerning persons with disabilities to be written in Easy Language (Perego, 2021, p. 283).

As seen from this brief excursus, it is not easy to draw a clear picture of the situation of Easy Language in Italy, which appears to be an area in complete evolution. There is a lack of an overall vision on how to intervene and implement its use, just as there is an absence of widespread recognition of its importance. In a country where disability diagnoses are growing, particularly intellectual (ISTAT, 2024, p. 2[60]), the inclusive value of Easy Language cannot be overlooked as it represents a tool for all citizens' social, scholastic, and work inclusion. Nonetheless, many initiatives have flourished in recent years at both national and local levels[61] (Perego, 2021, p. 279). We will outline some of them and their stakeholders in the following pages.

Regarding stakeholders, the main ones include the following:

- *Associazione Nazionale Famiglie di Persone con Disabilità Intellettiva e/o Relazionale - Anffas Nazionale* ('National Association of Families of Persons with Intellectual and/or Relational Disabilities'). In its aim to protect the rights of people with disabilities, the association is one of the most active promoters of Easy-to-Read Language in Italy. It has branches throughout the peninsula, thus operating both nationally and provincially. Most of

[59] The Region has a bilingual website in Easy Italian: *Amministrazione Provincia Bolzano in lingua facile* ('Easy Language Province Administration'), https://lingua-facile.provincia.bz.it/ (last accessed March 2024).
[60] The ISTAT statistics report of 2 February 2024 gives us an up-to-date picture of Italian school inclusion, which shows an increase in disability and a high frequency of intellectual disabilities. For further information, see the link: https://www.istat.it/it/files/2024/02/Statistica-report-alunni-con-disabilità-as.-22-23.pdf (last accessed March 2024).
[61] It is interesting how the global pandemic, with the urgent need to disseminate essential information to protect everyone's health, has acted as a stimulus in the growth of Easy Language. An example of the material produced is *Coronavirus: 10 consigli in facile da leggere per non ammalarsi!* ('Coronavirus: 10 easy-to-read tips to avoid getting sick!'), available at the following link: https://www.superando.it/files/2020/03/coronavirus-consigli-easy-to-read.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

the material currently produced in Easy Italian is the work of this association and is available on its official website. Among its collaborations, there is the participation in the *Pathways II* European project and the retranslation of the CRPD manual (UNGA, 2006; Perego, 2021, p. 289);

- *Associazione Pro Retinopatici ed Ipovedenti - APRI* ('The Association of People with Retinopathy and Low Vision') and *Lega del filo d'oro* ('Golden Thread League'), advocating rights for adults and children who are visually and dual sensory impaired (*Ibidem*);
- *Okay – l'ufficio per un linguaggio facile*[62] (The Easy Language Office) is an office that deals with Easy Language in the province of Bolzano, in Trentino Alto Adige. This region, already mentioned above, borders Austria and Switzerland and is positively influenced by good German practices. The office is a branch of the non-profit *Lebenshilfe ONLUS Association*[63] that defends the right of inclusion for disabled persons (*Ibidem*);
- *Associazione Italiana Persone Down* (AIPD) ('Italian Association of People with Down Syndrome') has collaborated with European projects for the creation of Easy Italian tourist guides produced as part of the European projects *Smart Tourism* and *Turisti non per caso* ('Tourists not by chance'), and a guide for helping to vote at the European elections in 2019[64] (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 31). It has also collaborated with the Erickson publishing house to create a series of books in Easy-to-Read Language (see subsequent pages);
- *L'abilità Onlus* Association, founded in 1998 in Milan by a group of operators and parents of children with disabilities, develops and manages innovative projects not only for children with disabilities but for people with disabilities in general to protect accessibility and inclusion[65];
- *Area Onlus*, in Turin, since 1982, has been an association dedicated to people with disabilities and their families that aims to support them by actively promoting inclusivity. In terms of linguistic inclusion, their *Vietato non sfogliare* ('Forbidden not to browse') project is dedicated to the creation of accessible books – including Easy Language ones - developed together with their *Centro di Documentazione e Ricerca sul Libro Accessibile*[66] ('Documentation and Research Center on Accessible Books').

[62] Here, you can find the official website: https://www.lebenshilfe.it/163d1749.html (last accessed March 2024).
[63] For consulting the official website, see this link: https://www.lebenshilfe.it/ (last accessed March 2024).
[64] https://www.aipd.it/site/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/GUIDAelezioni26maggio2019.pdf (last accessed March 2024).
[65] https://labilita.org/chi-siamo/ (last accessed March 2024).
[66] https://www.areato.org/centro-documentazione-ricerca-libro-accessibile/ ; https://www.areato.org/vietato-non-sfogliare/ (last accessed March 2024). The project creates various accessible books in addition to Easy Language texts, ranging from tactile to silent books, recognising their pedagogical potential for children of all abilities (AO, 2023).

Easy Language use within different application fields is still limited and mostly unbalanced in Italy (Perego, 2021; EASIT, 2019[67]). Academic research is still predominantly restricted to the theoretical level, lacking in-depth analysis and experimentation[68]. Rabbi (2020, p. 47) highlights that the scarce diffusion of Easy Language information is due to the solid Italian literary journalistic tradition still greatly influencing the field.

The pedagogical field is the branch in which there is the most remarkable creation and dissemination of content, a fact also confirmed by the EASIT survey (EASIT, 2019, p. 30; Perego, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). The pipeline of publishing houses that have distributed and continue to publish educational material for children and adults with disabilities is in complete evolution, testifying to the liveliness of the sector[69]. Although a literary criticism on the pedagogical trend of accessible books has yet to be born, on a terminological level, pedagogues prefer to refer to inclusive books with the expression *libri senza aggettivi* ('books without adjectives') (Corniglia, 2023; Grasso, 2023). A book of this sort:

> (…) becomes without adjectives when the book is no longer seen as a mediator capable of reaching "also" readers with particular needs, but rather as a valuable and intrinsically interesting narrative expression (...) Above all, when the stories are shared with other people, not only in the logic of the mediator-user but also in the much freer and more creative one that develops in a group of peers who, appreciating one, builds games, sayings, gestures and postures around it (Corniglia, 2023, p. 10)[70].

A book, and by extension, any educational material, is genuinely inclusive when it does not need labels and encourages anyone who uses it to embrace a different but enriching stance, cultivating the education of differences (Felini & Di Bari, 2019). The value also lies in sharing the accessible material, giving rise to knowledge built on relationships and surprise. However, Grasso (2023, p. 13) denounces how the broad circulation of inclusive materials is still challenging to implement in all educational settings due to cultural preconceptions and hindrances related to productive costs (Grasso, 2023, p. 13). According to Corniglia (2023, p. 89), the panorama of accessible books for

[67] The survey conducted within the EASIT project provides an updated picture of the Italian situation (EASIT 2019, Perego, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). It denounces insufficient training opportunities and a general lack of systematic training. At present, training is more theoretical and mainly targeted at Easy Language.

[68] Studies have focused more on plain language and linguistic simplification, for instance, investigating textual readability in quantitative terms.

[69] For instance, the Erickson publishing house publishes simplified books suitable for various learning styles, as in *Narrativa facile* ('Easy Fiction'), and with simplified work units at multiple levels, as in *Storia facile* ('Easy Story'). From Erickson's official website: https://www.erickson.it/it/ (last accessed March 2024).

[70] Here is the original Italian extract: "(…) diventa senza aggettivi quando non si vede più nel libro un mediatore capace di raggiungere "anche" lettori con esigenze particolari, quanto piuttosto un'espressione narrativa di pregio e intrinsicamente interessante" (…) Soprattutto, quando le storie sono condivise con altre persone, non solo nella logica del mediatore-fruitore ma anche in quella, ben più libera e creativa, che si sviluppa in un gruppo di pari che apprezzandone una, vi costruisce intorno giochi, modi di dire, gesti e posture".

children and young people in Italy can be summarised in three keywords: "change, contradiction and innovation". Although fragmented throughout the country, new pedagogical initiatives are taking shape.

In addition to the didactic materials created and distributed by Anffas[71], one of the most significant initiatives is the project of the Erickson publishing house together with the AIPD (Italian Association of People with Down Syndrome), the creation of a series called *Laboratori per le autonomie* ('Workshops for Autonomy')[72]. The series of volumes, written in Easy-to-Read Language, was initially conceived for an audience with intellectual disabilities - but later extended to a broader public - and is aimed at making them autonomous in everyday life experiences, illustrating through specific materials and proposed activities how to behave in life's daily tasks, but also discovering socio-affective education (Erickson, 2023; Rebbi, 2017). *Table 1.2* shows the list of volumes published to date. From the titles, it is possible to get an overview of the topics covered, from the world of work to the right to vote, from learning to cook to knowing how to get around the city on one's own:

[71] The materials are available at the following link: http://www.anffas.net/it/linguaggio-facile-da-leggere/didattica-a-distanza-risorse-e-materiali-per-alunni-e-studenti-con-disabilita/ (last accessed March 2024).
[72] https://www.erickson.it/it/approfondimento/laboratori-per-le-autonomie (last accessed March 2024).

Authors	Year of publication	Title
Contardi A., Castignani D.	2008	*Coltelli e fornelli* (Knives and cookers)
Contardi A., Castignani D.	2009	*Da soli in città senza mamma e papà* (Alone in the city without mum and dad)
Berarducci M., Cadelano F.	2011	*Valigia e biglietto, un viaggio perfetto* (Suitcase and ticket, a perfect trip)
Contardi A., Castignani D., Berarducci M.	2012	*Fare spese senza sorprese* (Shopping without surprises)
Berarducci, M., Cotardi, A.	2013	*Amicizia, amore, sesso: parliamone adesso. Conoscere se stessi, gli altri, le proprie emozioni* (Friendship, love, sex: let's talk about it now. Getting to know yourself, others, your emotions)
Coontardi, A., Berarducci, M.	2015	*Musica, film e pizzeria: divertirsi in compagnia. Idee e consigli per imparare a gestire il tempo libero* (Music, film and pizza: having fun with friends. Ideas and tips for learning to manage free time)
Berarducci, M., Cotardi, M.	2017	*Chi trova un lavoro trova un tesoro. Consigli e strumenti per affrontare il mondo del lavoro* (He who finds a job finds a treasure. Tips and tools for dealing with the world of work)
Leonori, C., Cadelano, F.,	2019	*Informarsi, capire e votare: l'importante è partecipare. Informazioni e strumenti per essere un cittadino attivo* (Getting information, understanding and voting: the important thing is to participate. Information and tools to be an active citizen)
Berarducci, M., Cadelano F., Maulà R.,	2021	*Se i social vuoi usare, impariamo a navigare. Informazioni e consigli per connettersi in sicurezza.* (If you want to use social media, learn to surf. Information and tips to connect safely)
Contardi, A., Scivola, G.,	2023	*Sicurezza in casa e fuori, e non farai più errori! Consigli e strumenti per riconoscere i pericoli in casa, in strada e sul lavoro* (Safety at home and away, and you'll never make a mistake again! Tips and tools to recognise dangers at home, in the street and at work)

Table 1.2 List of volumes published in the Erickson *Laboratori per le autonomie's* series.

A successful project in a school context is the one carried out with the children's book *L'avventura di Oliver tra I Ricordi* ('Oliver's Adventure among Memories') by Gabriella Freddusellli (2016)[73]. The book, available in Easy Italian, resulted from a workshop experiment conducted in a class at the *Ariosto primary school* in Genoa. The project firstly involved a child with disabilities as a test reader of the story; secondly, the same child read the story in Easy Italian to his class. The teachers then submitted a satisfaction questionnaire to the pupils, from which positive feedback was obtained: for all the children, the story in Easy Language was clear and accessible, and the teachers noted active participation in the activities they led (Freddusellli, 2016, p. 100).

Easy language is also offered as teaching material for Italian language learners. This is the case with the book *Che Storia! La storia italiana raccontata in modo semplice e chiaro* ('What History! Italian history told simply and clearly') by linguist Gabriele Pallotti[74] and historian Giorgio Cavadi (2012), which tells history clearly and straightforwardly. Initially intended for readers with Italian as L2, the text was later successful with a broader audience. However, Pallotti himself (Rebbi, 2017) specifies how his writing does not represent a faithful adherence to the Easy Language guidelines, but that he has intervened on the text by enriching it in some points to make it more pleasant to read - more appropriately, therefore, a kind of Easy Language Plus (Maaß, 2020b) - which nonetheless gives the text great expository clarity by removing the "gratuitous difficulties" (such as convoluted sentences, unknown lexicon, implicit referents – an intrinsic feature of pro-drop languages like Italian - challenging to identify). The text preserves its narrative originality, departing from traditional history books by providing a historical perspective that emphasises the social dynamics of past societies compared to the present.

1.1.3.1.3.1 Easy Language and Italian Cultural Heritage

There is a growing focus on Easy Language in inclusive tourism[75]. Inclusion in cultural heritage[76] is a theme gaining popularity and increasing attention in cultural institutions and the world of research. More generally, accessibility and comprehensibility of information have become

[73] Here you can find the book: http://www.anffas.net/dld/files/Lavventura-di-Oliver-tra-i-ricordi.pdf (last accessed March 2024).
[74] For more on Pallotti's studies, see Pallotti (2000; 2001).
[75] The terminology of *inclusive tourism* refers to a new perspective on tourism that involves all visitors in the same experiences, aiming to "create dialogue, peace and human development" in a community (Pirogova et al., 2023).
[76] The terminology of *cultural heritage* includes "artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, and museums that have a diversity of values, including symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments." From UNESCO official glossary, available at the following link: https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/cultural-heritage (last accessed April 2024).

fundamental elements for today's museums in their communication with the public and a constant reason to revise and reformulate a museum's information offerings, including multimedia (see *Figure 1.4*).

On 27 June 2023, Minister of Culture Sangiuliano and Minister for Disabilities Locatelli convened a round table on *Accessibilità e Inclusione nei luoghi della Cultura*[77] ('Accessibility and Inclusion in Places of Culture'). The round table, which devoted ample space to the target audience of intellectually disabled people, underlined the importance of guaranteeing a broadened fruition of cultural heritage for all. To accomplish this goal, the discussion group stated that efforts should be redoubled to implement inclusivity by customising cultural initiatives that are concretely accessible to all.

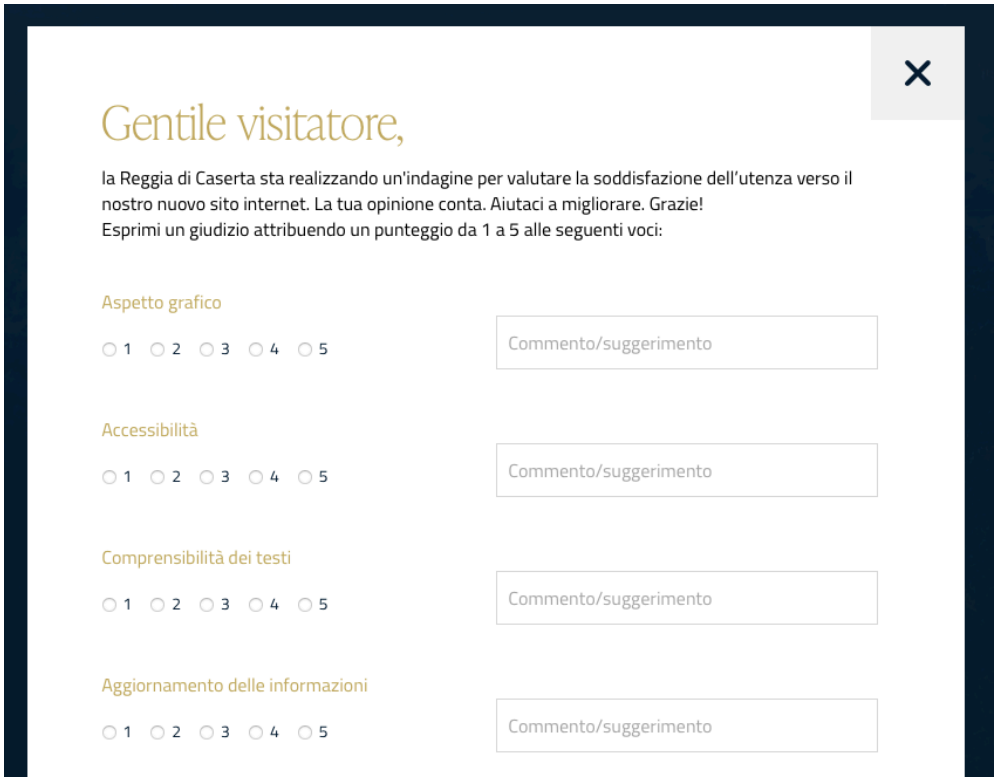

Figure 1.4 The Royal Palace of Caserta (*Reggia di Caserta*) and the survey conducted on its website users. In addition to graphics (*Aspetto grafico*) and accessibility (*Accessibilità*), the parameters include the comprehensibility of the texts (*Comprensibilità dei testi*), which serves as a thermometer for the museum to assess the quality of its content and improve its communication offer[78].

[77] Here is the full programme of the event: https://museonazionaleromano.beniculturali.it/sito/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/locandina-convegno-27-giugno-accessib-luoghi-cultura_def-1.pdf (last accessed March 2024).
[78] From the official website of the Royal Palace of Caserta: https://reggiadicaserta.cultura.gov.it (last accessed March 2024).

In particular, as far as Easy Language in museums is concerned, we will present below some good practices in the Italian art-historical and museum panorama, the realm in which our research work will be placed. With the term accessibility, we refer not only to the physical barriers but also to the cognitive barriers present in a museum (Koustriava & Koutsmani, 2023, p. 3; Miglietta, 2017). Besides sensory access, the issue of intellectual obstacles remains an unresolved matter in Italian museology (Museo per Tutti - MpT, 2024). However, new funds and measures are being financed to support accessibility within cultural heritage to remove "architectural, cultural and cognitive sense-perceptual barriers" (PNRR, 2024) to convert into a barrier-free Italian cultural landscape by 2026[79]. From this stance, Easy Language becomes a "tool and aid to foster a new field of experience for people with intellectual disabilities who demand more relationships in the community in which they live" (Riva, 2022, p. 12) in the museum seen as the centre of the community as well as its "great home" (Bradburne, 2022, p. 13).

Among the first museums in Italy to propose Easy Language in 2016 is the *Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile* ('National Automobile Museum') in Turin, which has an EL guide co-created with the Association called *Bottega di Brugliasco* (Borgato, 2016). In the same year, the Trieste Museum of Natural History, in collaboration with Anffas[80], produced materials in Easy Language and AAC for its visitors (Span et al., 2016)[81].

The *Ci sei nei musei* ('You are in museums') project of the Anffas of Cremona, in cooperation with the Municipality of Cremona, involved people with intellectual disabilities in the drafting and dissemination of artistic content (thus also acting as cultural mediators) in Easy Language relating to two exhibitions held at the Cremona Civic Museum[82] in 2018. Since 2021, Anffas Cremona has collaborated on the same project with the *Museo del Violino* ('Violin Museum')[83]. Over the years, other museums have joined the project, such as the Archaeological Museum of Cremona, the PIME

[79] Among new investments, the 300-million-euro project entitled "Making the country's cultural heritage fully accessible" stands out. It will invest in the "removal of physical and cognitive barriers in museums, libraries and archives to allow wider access and participation in culture" within the Italian cultural heritage. The project is part of "Italia Domani – Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza" (Italy Tomorrow - National Recovery and Resilience Plan) - also known as PNRR - of the Italian Government in collaboration with the European Union. For further information , visit https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/en/Interventi/investimenti/rimozione-delle-barriere-fisiche-e-cognitive-in-musei-biblioteche-e-archivi-per-consentire-un-piu-ampio-accesso-e-partecipazione-alla-cultura.html (last accessed April 2024).

[80] It should be noted that confirming what was illustrated during the presentation of stakeholders in Italy, the *Anffas* National Association, with its various branch offices throughout the country, is the leading promoter of Easy Language in Italy and is involved in numerous projects in cultural accessibility.

[81] Here is the official website: https://museostorianaturaletrieste.it/museo-accessibile/ (last accessed March 2024).

[82] One of the guides in Easy-to-read Language is available at the following link: https://anffascremona.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/guida-cartacea-mostra-il-regime-dellarte.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

[83] http://www.anffas.net/dld/files/Guida%20in%20easy%20to%20read%20-%20Reunion%20in%20Cremona.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

Museum (also known as *Museo Popoli e Culture*, 'Museums of People and Cultures') in Milan, and the Diocesan Museum in Trento (Anffas, 2021).

A significant project is the Interreg project GATE (Granting Accessible Tourism for Everyone)[84] commenced in 2018. It is a collaboration between Italian and Austrian partners in the Alpine regions to promote inclusive tourism in mountain areas, fostering the fruition of territories' natural and cultural aspects. Among the tools diffused are easy-to-read handbooks and materials, creating a welcoming environment for all tourists (GATE, 2020; Perego, 2021, p. 293).

Since 2022, one of the most noteworthy project operations in Italy has been that of the Association l'*Abilità Onlus* entitled *Museo per tutti - Accessibile alle persone con disabilità intellettiva* ('Museums for All - Accessible to people with intellectual disabilities'), which over the years has involved more than 38 museums and places of historical, cultural and natural interest throughout Italy, from the north to the south of the peninsula[85]. The project testifies how the world of art is gradually opening up to the public with intellectual disabilities (but also, as previously reiterated, to anyone who needs a more linear language to access it; for instance, the Association involved often refers to children as other possible recipients of the guides (MpT, 2022)).

With its Educational Services staff, the *Pinacoteca di Brera* ('Brera Picture Gallery') in Milan is among the first cultural institutions to have collaborated. The Picture Gallery, in its desire to open the doors of the museum to everyone, 'to the city and the world' (Pinacoteca di Brera, 2023)[86], breaking down all forms of barriers, has co-created with the association the guide *Museo per tutti alla Pinacoteca di Brera* ('Museum for All at the Pinacoteca di Brera'). The booklet, which resulted from the project, is available in print and digital format and narrates eleven museum artworks in Easy-to-Read Language and Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC)[87].

The guide is enriched with in-depth information such as the history of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* and the palace in which it is located, *Palazzo Brera* ('Brera Palace') (see *Figure 1.5*), as well as a "social guide" that illustrates each step of the visit, from how to get a ticket, what are the rules to follow, where can be found services – a helpful tool to display the correct behaviour to follow at the museum. A more traditional map and a sensory map are also included. The latter is based on lights,

[84] The project's official website is https://gateproject.dolomitiunesco.info. You can find an example of the Easy Language material at the link: https://gateproject.dolomitiunesco.info/linguaggio-facile.pdf (last accessed April 2024).
[85] The list of museums and places that have joined the project is available at https://www.museopertutti.org/elenco-musei/ (last accessed March 2024).
[86] From Brera's official website: https://pinacotecabrera.org/news-pinacoteca/pinacoteca-di-brera-museo-per-tutti/ (last accessed April 2024).
[87] You can consult the guide at the following link: https://www.museopertutti.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Guida-Brera-ETR_MIN.pdf (last accessed March 2024).

scents, and noises, all elements that the visitor can encounter during his exploration of the rooms, in order to make him aware of them and be self-sufficient[88] (see *Figure 1.6*) (MpT, 2022).

The project also included a period of training for museum staff on Easy Language, thus increasing the staff's inclusive sensitivity as well as their preparation to ensure that visitors with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers can enjoy full museum fruition autonomously and at their own pace, "per imparare con calma" ('to take time to learn') also feeling the emotions arising from the aesthetic experience, as stated by the guide *Museo per tutti* (2022, p. 9; 2024[89]).

A training process comprising the creation of materials that lasted more than two years (the collaboration started in 2020, and the presentation of the materials at the official press conference took place in 2022), which the museum's Director, Dr James M. Bradburne (2022) comments as follows:

> "Museum for All" is part of our project to make the *Pinacoteca* more accessible to people with disabilities and more inclusive because it allows us to recognise the enormous diversity of our public, whose disabilities should not be seen as deficiencies but as abilities and other possibilities, thus recognising the strength of diversity to include everyone. "Museum for All" is the idea of a museum dedicated precisely to inclusion (Museo per Tutti, 2022[90]).

[88] Especially in cases where the disability also affects the behavioural sphere.
[89] From the project's official website: https://www.museopertutti.org/introduzione/ (last accessed April 2024).
[90] Translated from the Italian source text: "Museo per tutti si inserisce nel nostro progetto di rendere la Pinacoteca più accessibile alle persone con disabilità e più inclusiva, perché ci permette di riconoscere l'enorme diversità del nostro pubblico, le cui disabilità non vanno viste come carenze, ma come abilità e altre possibilità riconoscendo così la forza della diversità per includere tutti. Museo per tutti è l'idea di un museo dedicato proprio all'inclusione". Information about *Museo per tutti*'s official press conference retrieved from https://www.museopertutti.org/museo-per-tutti-allla-pinacoteca-di-brera-milano/ (last accessed April 2024).

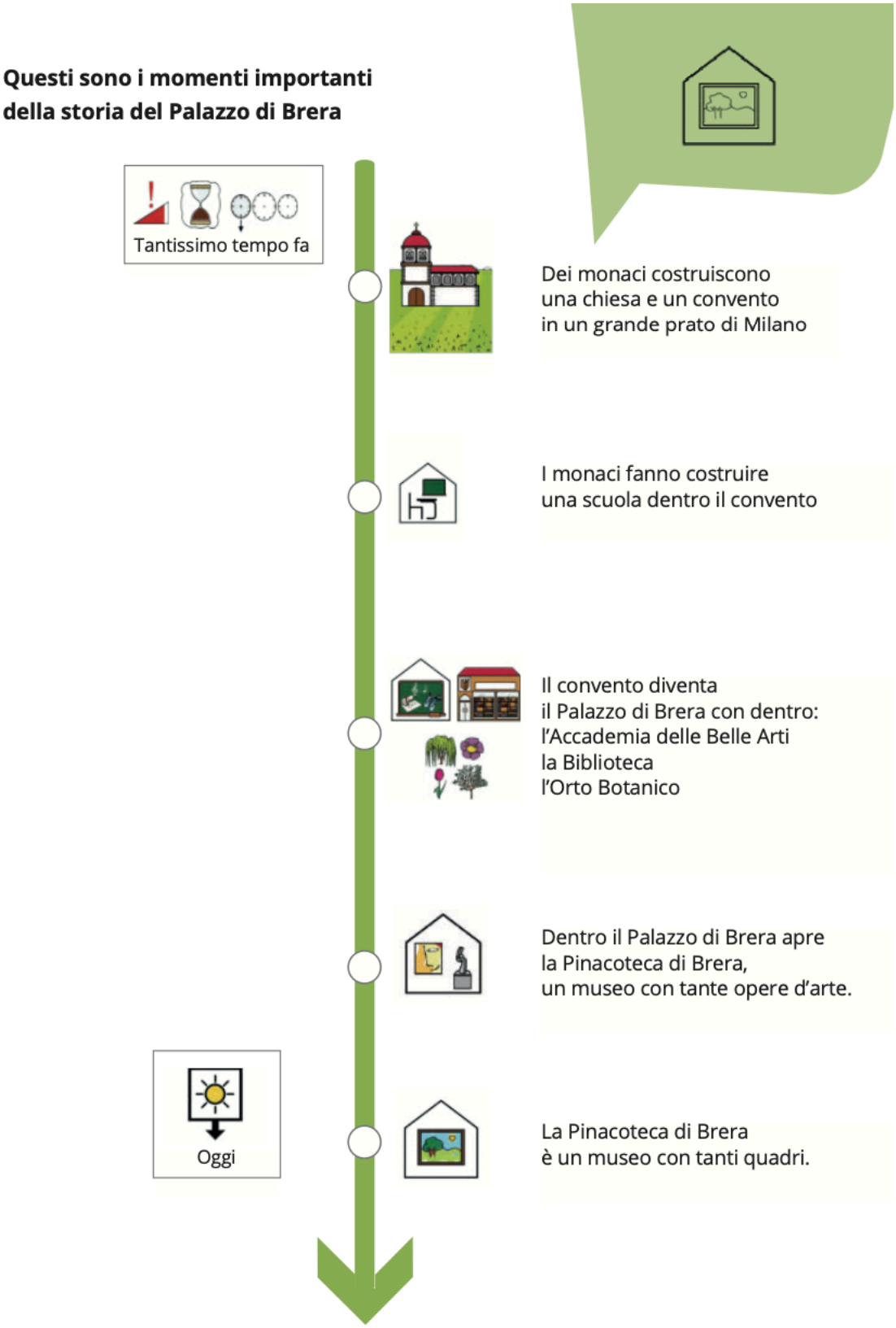

Figure 1.5 The history of the Brera Palace is reconstructed in the 'Museum for All' guide (MpT, 2022, p. 51).

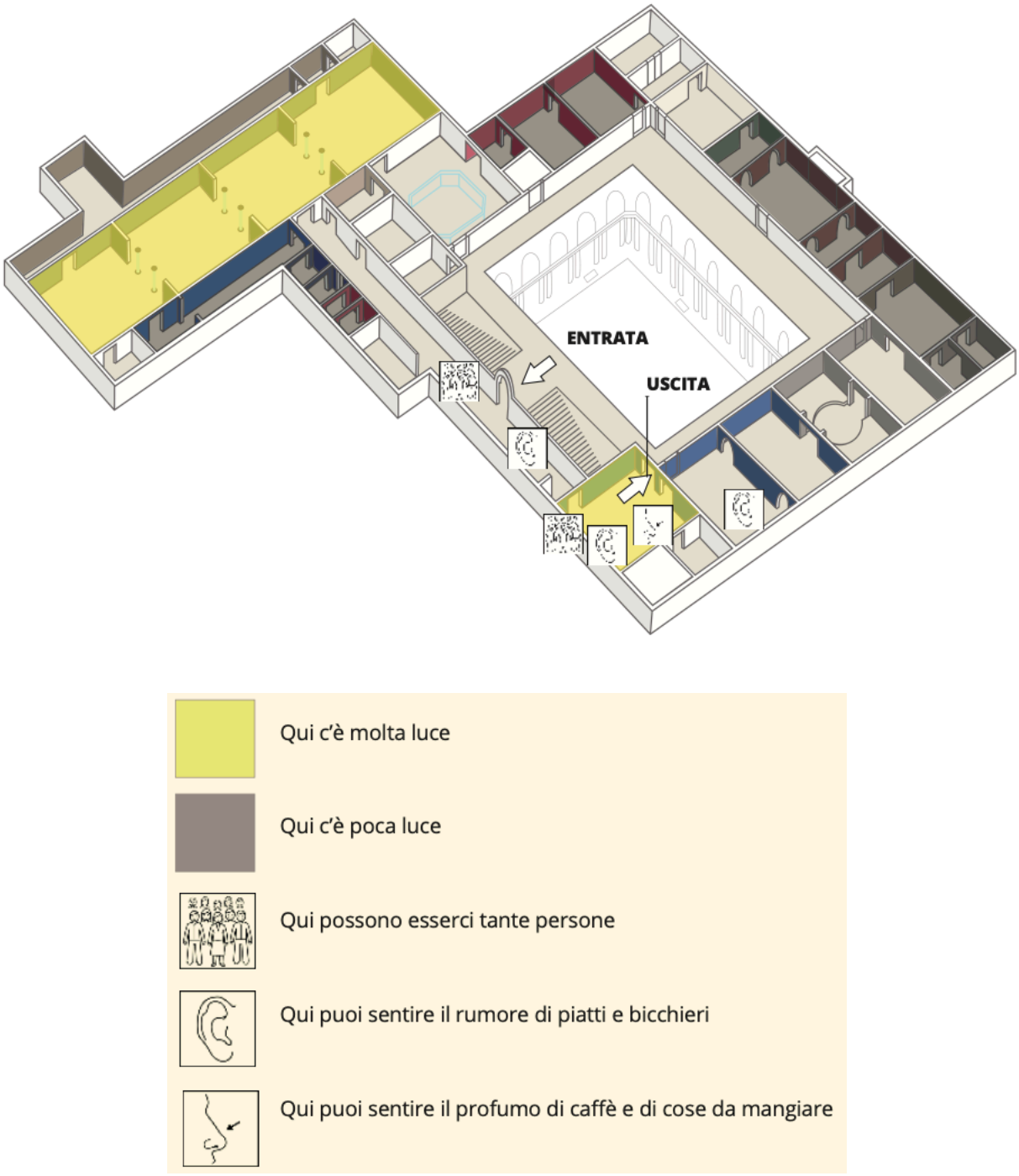

Figure 1.6 Sensory map of the Brera Art Gallery within the 'Museum for All' guide (MpT, 2022, pp. 40-41).

In 2023, the Science Museum of Trento (in Italian: *Museo delle Scienze*, also known as MUSE) created an Easy-to-Read Language museum guide available in print at the institution's arrival or directly on smartphones. The guide is available in six languages (Italian, Spanish, French, English, German, and Russian). It resulted from a collaboration between the museum, Anffas Trento, and two

local high schools, one responsible for the translations (specifically, a Language High School) and one for the graphics and layout (a Graphic Institute) (MUSE, 2023)[91]. In addition to the inclusive mission, the schools involved in the project - but not exclusively, since the proposal was then extended to any school that wanted to use them - subsequently adopted the Easy Language guides of the different foreign languages as a didactic resource to learn a second language (L2) in the classroom, creating an educational path with the Easy Language guides as a valuable teaching tool[92]. The guide, available in different languages, becomes a didactic tool for language teaching at the museum and in the classroom.

With a view to museum education, interesting are the latest developments in which Easy Language is proposed to children in museums or, more generally, families. On the National Day of Families at the Museum, 8 October 2023 (F@Mu, 2023), with the theme *Diversi ma uguali* ('Different but equal'), the use of Easy Language among families was significantly encouraged: the National Association of Families at the Museum in collaboration with the Association l'*abilità Onlus*, distributed free notebooks - specifically created for the event - in Easy-to-Read Language and with the EasyReading®[93] font to all participating museums and families. For the first time this year, the *Taccuino F@Mu* (the educational activities notebook for families) was written in Easy Language (*Figure 1.7*). The cultural event, which aims to promote the encounter between children, families, and Italian cultural venues, had as its theme this year, *Apriti Museo* ('Open Museum'), a clear invitation to cultivate inclusion and acceptance, clearly stated by the National Association itself (F@Mu, 2023)[94]. Among the participating museums, there is also the *Pinacoteca di Brera*, which took the opportunity to distribute the 'Museum for All' Easy Language guidebook to all participating families, considering its diffusion among families an opportunity to make art more comprehensible and accessible for all[95].

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[91] https://www.muse.it/muse-facile-da-leggere/ (last accessed March 2024).

[92] This part of the project is called "Museo per la scuola" ('Museum for the school'): https://ilmuseperlascuola.muse.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MUSE-facile-da-leggere_A4.pdf ; https://ilmuseperlascuola.muse.it/muse-facile-da-leggere/ (last accessed March 2024). Here are suggested proposals for schools to use the material in Easy Language in the classroom before and after the museum visit as part of language teaching and learning.

[93] The EasyReading® font is the result of the work of a group of Italian designers. It is a highly readable font approved by the *Associazione Italiana Dislessia* (AID) ('Italian Dyslexia Association') that has received incentives from the Ministry of Economic Development. Numerous scientific studies confirm its potential to promote readability for everyone. For more information, please visit https://www.easyreading.it/it/ricerche-scientifiche/ (last accessed March 2024). It has also been used to experiment with the previously mentioned Easy Language guide "Museums for All" by the Association l'Abilità Onlus.

[94] For further information, please consult the following link:https://famigliealmuseo.com/lettera-ai-musei-il-taccuino-2023-e-per-tutti-i-bambini (last accessed March 2024).

[95] The museum states that the guide, "written in special languages, Easy to read or AAC, designed to be intended for different types of disabilities, is understandable to everyone: from people with cognitive difficulties to school-age children; from foreigners to people new to a museum" (*Pinacoteca di Brera*, 2023). Available at the following link:

Figure 1.7 The cover of the "F@Mu" notebook in Easy Language distributed during the National Family Day at the Museum.

Easy Language in Italy is a booming field of research in which new application contexts and end users are being experimented with. In the museum context, although theoretically perceived as a cultural place for exchange where active involvement based on relationships cements inclusion (cf. *Chapter III*), there are very few studies that promote pragmatically the culture of inclusion and social participation through Easy Language, both from a linguistic-translational point of view and from the perspective of Visitor Studies, to assess its impact on visitors of all abilities. From the standpoint of museum textual types, many operations and investigations are related to "guides", and there is not much on other textual forms (such as exhibit labels[96]) or multimedia (such as audio guides/audio descriptions).

This research aims to fit into this framework to shed light on the topic, aware of the unexplored terrain and how much there is to do to guarantee cultural heritage accessibility to all. It is a question of rights as well as duties: the "right to participate in cultural life" strongly emphasised by Article 30 of the CRPD (UN, 2006); and the duty that "Everyone has the right to participate in and enjoy culture, art and science"[97] stressed by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948). On a national level, this is a right echoed by Article 9 of the Italian Constitution, which

https://pinacotecabrera.org/attivita/fmu-giornata-delle-famiglie-al-museodiversi-ma-uguali/ (last accessed March 2024).

[96] See Sciumbata (2022a) and Span et al. (2016). Nevertheless, these research examples are only case studies and not actual implementations.

[97] Retrieved from Amnesty International official website: http://surl.li/seigu (last accessed April 2024).

encourages the development of culture and the safeguarding of our cultural heritage, advocating for active citizenship to foster our artistic legacy[98]; regarding specifically museums, the decree of the Ministry of Culture (also known by the acronym MIC) *Livelli uniformi di qualità per i musei* ('Uniform quality levels for museums') (MIC, 2018)[99] seals inclusion as an inalienable right to guarantee welcoming environments, by fostering the creation of "facilitators", which represents any tools that can extend museum fruition to all visitors, therefore declaring the official embarkment of Italian museums in a defined journey towards inclusivity, "creating new value" of existing art collections (Bradburne, 2020, p.13; MpT, 2024).

1.2 Guidelines on Easy Language

Reconstructing the history of Easy Language, we mentioned the development of guidelines that contributed to the history and definition of this variety of linguistic simplification. Below, we will illustrate the main international guidelines (in particular referring to the European context), the standards of Easy English and the new developments in the national context with Easy Italian. Retracing and analysing the international standards and those specific to the two languages we will work within our research (Italian and English) will allow us to apply them and reason about them in the inclusive retranslations of bilingual museum labels.

1.2.1 International guidelines

In this paragraph, we will outline the principal international contribution to developing guidelines for Easy Language. Although tracing all national and international contributions is impossible, we will illustrate three seminal documents contributing to the widespread call for linguistic inclusion through Easy Language. The first (1) acts as an international echo, while the second and the third (2)(3) demonstrate a solid European contribution towards the cause, representing two principal standards that converge and complement each other.

(1) The first guidance is from IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) (2010) and is entitled *Guidelines for easy-to-read Materials* - they are the reviewed version of the first edition published in 1997. The revision process was undertaken by members of IFLA's *Library Services to People with Special Needs* (LSN), a dedicated section of the Association

[98] Here you can consult the Italian Constitution: https://www.governo.it/it/costituzione-italiana/principi-fondamentali/2839#:~:text=9,nell'interesse%20delle%20future%20generazioni (last accessed April 2024). For more details on cultural rights related to the Italian legal system, see Carcione (2015).
[99] The decree can be consulted here: http://musei.beniculturali.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/D.M.-21-FEBBRAIO-2018-REP.-113.pdf (last accessed April 2024).

that advocates for the needs of persons with disabilities within the library context. Reviewing members were from Japan, Denmark and Sweden (IFLA, 2010, p. 2), giving the improved guidance an international scope.

In chronological order, this booklet is the first to have had a significant international impact. Initially designed with a specific context (that of libraries) and textual typology in mind (books), it successfully resonated, positively impacting other settings, aiming to produce accessible communication for persons affected by reading difficulties, both individuals with disabilities and those with limited language skills.

The booklet first identifies its aim and target audience (those who temporarily need an Easy-to-Read document and those who need it permanently as a life necessity) – and the guide specifies all ages, children included (IFLA, 2010, p. 5-6; p. 9). Nevertheless, the target audience extends to all since "simplicity does not have to be patronising. A well-made book in simple language can actually be a positive experience for anyone to read", accentuating how "the circle of readers is often wider than expected" (IFLA, 2010, p. 11). The focus of libraries is on the universal right to read in an attempt to meet the audience's needs - an 'attempt' because the authors know how complex it is to meet the specific needs of everyone. Indeed, the document highlights the need to create different types of Easy Languages calibrated to different reading difficulties. It also illustrates how Easy Language could still be complex to decipher for some end users, whereas reading aloud can equally represent an empowering cultural experience for them (*ibid*., p. 10; p. 14).

The IFLA guidelines mention *The Charter for the Reader* of 1992 by the International Publisher's Association and the International Book Committee (*ivi*, p. 3), emphasising that reading is a powerful tool to ensure the development of culture, but also a democratic tool, which should enable everyone to understand information and thus be free to choose, also having a positive impact on their quality of life. It is thought-provoking when it denounces that this would allow people with intellectual disabilities "to grow as human beings" and not otherwise (IFLA, 2010, p. 5). The guide also cites two manifestos: the UNESCO *Public Library Manifesto* of 1994 and the *School Library Manifesto* of 1999, which emphasise libraries' decisive educational and social role in weaving our society's relational and cultural networks through making reading accessible to all (*ibid*., p. 20).

In terms of content, the aim is to emphasise the need for accessible information beyond everyday essential information. The guidelines also elaborate on other communication formats, such as audio-visual material (*ibid*., p. 15). However, in dealing with libraries, the aim is to shed light on "Easy-to-Read Literature". The document proposes an example of Easy English taken from Alexandre Dumas' classic novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* (IFLA, 2010, pp. 28-29), aware of the difficulty of the mission, especially in texts where creativity is the driving force, where "atmosphere

and emotions" must be preserved (*ibid*., p. 14), but considering it a necessary step forward towards inclusion. The guidelines specify how:

> Easy-to-read literature should include both fiction and non-fiction, including original easy-to read creations, as well as adaptations of classics. All genres should be available, such as novels, short-stories, mysteries and suspense, poetry, travel books, etc. Some people may object to the adaptation and simplification of a classical novel into an easy-to-read text. They may see the easy-to-read product as a "watered down" product. Without the availability of an easy-to-read version, however, many people with reading problems would be excluded from a large part of their cultural heritage. For others who are unused to reading, easy-to-read books can open doors, create interest, and provide an opportunity to improve reading skills (IFLA, 2010, p. 14).

The guidelines also emphasise the need for research on the topic, denouncing the lack of a "solid scientific foundation" to refer to and on which to build new research findings. They also call for multidisciplinary research exchange between "linguistics and education, physical and intellectual/cognitive disabilities, and graphic design" (*ibid*., p. 20). Our research work will be framed precisely within this framework of encounter.

The document concludes by referring to publishing, advertising and marketing elements, emphasising that these are essential components in creating texts and their dissemination, especially in getting them to the right audience[100] (*Ibidem*).

The guidelines are presented below[101]. They are deliberately generic, as the creators emphasise that writing should be based on practical experience of trial and error and should not be too dogmatic by following rules to the letter. Ample space is left to the writer's sensitivity, inventiveness and practicality (*ivi*, p.10).

- Language and content

- Write concretely. Avoid abstract language.
- Be logical. The action should follow a single thread with logical continuity.
- Action should be direct and simple without a long introduction and involvement of too many characters.
- Use symbolic language (metaphors) sparingly. Such language may be misunderstood by some readers.
- Be concise. Avoid several actions in a single sentence. Arrange words in a single phrase on one line, if possible.

[100] This is an issue that, as we shall see, will also return within our research. See *Chapter V.*
[101] All guidelines' quotations are extracted from IFLA standards (2010).

- Avoid difficult words but use language that is adult and dignified. Unusual words should be explained through context clues.
- Explain or describe complicated relationships in a concrete and logical manner, where events take place in a logical chronological framework.
- Encourage writers and illustrators to get to know their target audience and be informed about what it means to have reading difficulties. Let them meet their readers and hear about their experiences and daily life.
- Test the material with actual target groups before it goes to press.

▪ Graphics

- Easy-to-read products should be clearly labelled, for example, with a logotype that stands for easy-to-read.
- The typeface should be clear and fairly large. A clear serif type (like Times and Garamond) or a clear non-serif type (like Helvetica and Verdana) are good choices. A type size of 11-12 points is recommended.
- The paper should be of substantial quality.
- There should be sufficient contrast between the background and illustrations. Coloured backgrounds and typefaces should be used carefully.
- An easy-to-read book should look like a "real" book. It should have an attractive appearance and, if aimed at adults, should avoid a childish impression.
- The text should be in blocks with limited lines per page. Words of a single phrase should fit on a single line, i.e. each sentence should be broken off at a natural speech break.
- Wide margins and generous spacing make the text more accessible.
- The cover design should relate to the content.
- A picture which concretely depicts what is described in the text improves understanding and clarifies the message.

(2) The second significant contribution dates back to June 1998. It is entitled *Make it Simple: European Guidelines for the Production of Easy-to-read Information for People with Learning disability for authors, editors, information providers, translators and other interested persons*, and is the fruit of the work of Freyhoff, Hess, et al., members of the ILSMH-EA. The acronym stands for "International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped – European Association", founded

in 1988 and known since 2000 with the name "Inclusion Europe" (IE, 2020[102]). Alongside the European Association, contributors came from national non-profits from Germany (*Lebenshilfe*), Scotland (*ENABLE*), Sweden (*Easy-to-Read Foundation*) and Belgium (*ANAHM*) (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 4).

This guide traces the beginning of a path on the European front to define the EtR and guide practitioners - both at a public institutional level and in the private sector - towards a common aligned path of communicating correctly in Easy Language. These guidelines are conceived as a resource for those who write or provide information for people with language difficulties (Freyhoff et al.,1998, p. 5), highlighting how producing accessible content can be helpful for more significant population segments (*ivi*, p. 7).

The guidelines are structured with a first introduction to Easy-to-Read for the reader, identifying its democratic importance and highlighting how comprehension of information is an indispensable ability for all individuals in the ever-growing "information society" we live in (Freyhoff et al.,1998, p. 5). A clear decision of intent emerges from the preface to the guide, in which the desire is to contribute to the annulment of the exclusion of many European citizens who are struggling to comprehend essential information to lead their everyday lives. The guidelines detail the addressee of this inclusive mission, clarifying that their standards could represent a useful tool even though every target audience would need a custom communication modality according to their necessities (*ivi*, p. 9). The pioneering guidelines that guarantee the right to information to all hope to be a starting point for production and development in the various European languages (*ivi*, p. 5).

After a general introduction to the topic that culminates in defining an Easy-to-Read text as "one that contains only the most important information written and presented in the most direct way so that the largest possible audience can understand it" (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 8), the document proceeds with a list of specific recommendations for writing, combining language suggestions with others regarding the use of images and the layout of the pages. Guidelines are considered language-neutral in order to be applied and adapted to different languages (*ivi*, p. 7). As a final phase, it emphasises the importance of involving people with intellectual disabilities in the amendment process, verifying if they can understand the text smoothly; if not, the guidelines suggest modifying the text and checking again with the audience in a revision process made of open discussions on difficulties encountered by the readers, followed by suggested improvements on the text (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 14). Besides texts, in the end, it also considers other possible formats of Easy Language, such as audiovisual content (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 18).

[102] From *Inclusion Europe*'s official website: https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-standards-guidelines/ (Last accessed April 2024).

The principal instructions, divided into stages, are listed below (Freyhoff et al., 1998, pp. 11-17) (*Table 1.3*). The guide, however, suggests not to follow them literally and to give space to one's creativity as an integral part of the writing process (*ivi*, p. 11).

STEP 1	Decide the aim of your publication.	What do you want to say, and why is it important for people with a learning disability?
STEP 2	Decide the contents.	Prepare a list of the key points of your publication.
STEP 3	Draft the text.	Write the accessible text based on the list of key points.

Table 1.3 The guidelines suggest dividing the writing process into three principal stages (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 10).

STEP 1 aims to clarify the writer's ideas, especially the purpose of his writing, and to be aware of the specific audience. If the author is rewriting a text, the guidance suggests in STEP 2 selecting the key information in the texts, summarising them, and ensuring the summary follows a clear and logical order (Freyhoff et al., 1998, p. 11). In writing (STEP 3), guidelines recommend refraining from assuming previous knowledge about the topic the author is dealing with (*ivi*, p. 13). In detail, they suggest to:

- From a syntactical perspective:

- Use short sentences.
- Cover only one main idea per sentence.
- Avoid negative language and negations.
- Use active verbs.
- Keep the punctuation simple.
- Do not use the subjunctive tense.
- Try to put one sentence on one line. If this is not possible, try to have separate clauses on separate lines or break the sentence into separate lines at the points where people would naturally pause.

- From a lexical viewpoint:

- Use simple, straightforward language.
- Avoid abstract concepts.
- Use short words of everyday spoken language.
- Use practical examples.
- Address readers with direct and respectful language.
- Use words consistently. Use the same word for one thing, even if repeating it affects the writing style.
- Be careful with figures of speech and metaphors if they are uncommon.
- Be careful with numbers.
- Do not use words from other languages.
- Avoid cross-references.
- Avoid jargon, abbreviations and initials.
- Use the full format "Saturday, 26 September 1998" for dates.
- With numbers, always use the numeral and not the equivalent word. Never use Roman numerals.

- In terms of graphics:

- Use clear typefaces like Arial, Helvetica or Times New Roman[103].
- Use a large type-size. The size of the letters should not be too small. 14 points is the recommended minimum.
- Use bold text or underlining[104] for emphasis.
- Do not hyphenate long words at the right margin of text. Keep words together.
- Do not justify the text on the right-hand side. A ragged right edge makes a column of text easier to read.
- Do not fill your page with too much information. The layout should support the structure of the text.
- Use headings and other "navigational aids".
- Dark print on light paper is easiest to read. The paper should be matt and of good quality.
- Never use a picture as a background.

[103] Here, the *Times New Roman* font is considered easy to read. However, Inclusion Europe 2014's guidelines explicitly mention it as an example of a serif font that is harder to read (IE, 2014, p. 13).
[104] The *Inclusion Europe* guidelines (IE, 2014, p. 15) show how underlining can be problematic for people with intellectual disabilities and should be implemented cautiously.

- Make sure the illustrations have a sharp focus and are of high quality.

(3) The third contribution is more recent, comes from the same Inclusion Europe association, and is known as *Information for All. European standards for making information easy to read and understand* (2014). The European Union officially recognises these standards, representing a unique reference in the European panorama. Available in 16 languages, these guidelines result from *Pathways*, a European project that, from 2015 to 2018, worked to promote adult education for people with disabilities in society (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 73). Always from a lifelong learning perspective, besides the guidelines, the project developed different materials[105].

Compared to the first attempt in 1998, these guidelines are written in Easy Language. It is a booklet that first introduces the language simplification variety and the target audience, illustrating the reason behind the creation of the guidelines emphasising their democratic value. Subsequently, the booklet presents the "general standards for easy to understand communication", declining them in standards for four principal formats: written, electronic, video and audio information (IE, 2014, pp. 7, 12, 14, 32), representing, therefore, an evolution compared to the previous outcome from the Association in 1998.

These guidelines also emphasise the versatility of the Easy Language and how the specific need to create a language variety that persons with intellectual disabilities can understand can prove to be a valuable tool for everyone (IE, 2014, p. 6). The guidelines emphasise how persons with intellectual disabilities "are just like everyone else. They can do a lot in life if they get the right support" (*Ibidem*). Clear and straightforward communication also enables them to act and make decisions to increase their autonomy.

The *Pathways* project and these resulting guidelines deal with informative content. However, in the foreword, the booklet denounces the need to extend linguistic simplification to fiction, poetry and the most diverse forms of artistic communication, though this entails revisiting the guidelines (IE, 2014, p. 8). Indeed, the guidelines should also be reviewed for their informative purpose: although the goal is to create materials suitable for different languages - therefore intentionally more generic - they sometimes risk being too general. As observed by Sciumbata (2020, p. 43), the content

[105] Three other booklets in Easy Language were developed during the project: (1) *Training lifelong learning staff. Guidelines on training people to write documents that are easy to read and understand*, a guide for teachers and trainers; (2) *Teaching can be easy. Recommendations for lifelong learning staff to make their courses accessible*, a booklet for teachers working towards a more inclusive pedagogy; (3) *Do not write for us without us. Involving people with intellectual disabilities in the writing of texts that are easy to read and understand is* related to the theme of involving people with intellectual disabilities in the writing and revision process (IE, 2014, p. 2).

is partially sufficient (a small forty-page booklet in Easy Language with more blank space to facilitate comprehension) and not exhaustive from a linguistic point of view, with often imprecise and vague indications and unnecessary repetitions. The various indications, translated into several languages, are not studied in terms of the specific characteristics of a language: on the one hand, they are an indispensable resource; on the other, they are broad when adapted to a specific language (Perego, 2020, p. 42). However, a small section of the booklet in the different Easy Languages suggests language-specific features (see the subsequent paragraphs on Easy English and Easy Italian guidelines). Below, we will present the principal indications[106].

In the initial section, entitled *Before you start producing your information,* the guidelines stress the need to collect information on future audiences, a research process from which springs the selection of the suitable format and the correct register. It successively recalls to writers that people with intellectual disabilities – whose involvement is deeply encouraged in the process since the planning phase - may not know anything about the discussed subject, so any concept should not be taken for granted (IE, 2014, p. 9).

- From a syntactical perspective:

- Always keep your sentence short.
- Speak to people directly.
- Use positive sentences.
- Use active language.
- Keep punctuation simple.
- Always start a new sentence on a new line.
- Never split 1 word over 2 lines.
- Use headings that are clear and easy to understand.
- Be careful when you use pronouns. Make sure it is always clear who or what the pronoun is talking about. If it is not clear, use the proper name instead.
- Writing only 1 idea per sentence.
- Where possible, 1 sentence should fit on 1 line. If you have to write 1 sentence on 2 lines, cut the sentence where people would pause when reading aloud.
- Where possible, use the present tense rather than the past tense.

- In terms of ordering information:

[106] All guidelines' quotations are extracted from IE (Inclusion Europe, 2009).

- Put your information in an order that is easy to understand and follow.
- You can repeat important information and difficult words more than once.
- Group all information about the same topic together.
- Always make sure you give people all the information they need.
- Only give important information.
- Make sure the important information is easy to find. You can put this information at the beginning of the document, highlight the important information in bold or put the important information in a box.

  - From a lexical perspective:

- Use words that people will know well and that are easy to understand.
- Do not use difficult words.
- Use examples to explain things.
- Use the same word to describe the same thing throughout your document.
- Do not use difficult ideas such as metaphors.
- Do not use words from other languages.
- Avoid using initials.
- Try not to use percentages and big numbers.
- Avoid all abbreviations.
- Never use Roman numerals.
- Write dates out in full.

  - Regarding graphics:

- Use a format that is easy to read, follow and photocopy—for example, A4 or A5.
- Do not write very long documents (a book of 100 pages is too long; it would be better to write 3 smaller booklets).
- Never use a complicated design or layout.
- Do not use a picture or a pattern as a background.
- Always use a font that is clear and easy to read, like Arial or Tahoma.
- Always use large writing, at least the size of 14.
- Do not write whole words in capitals.
- Avoid italics.
- Underlining can make the text harder. Use underlining with caution.
- Avoid writing in colour.

- When you use graphs or tables, make them simple and explain them well.
- Use bullet points to list things.
- Try not to use too many subtitles or bullet points.
- Do not write in columns.
- Align your text to the left of the page.
- Never justify your text (it creates gaps between the words that hinder readability).
- Do not put too much text on your page.
- Leave space between paragraphs.
- Do not indent your text.
- Try to avoid narrow margins.
- Avoid all special characters where possible, like /, &, #.
- Never use footnotes.
- Number the pages of your document.
- To illustrate your text, you can use photographs, drawings, or symbols.
- Where possible, try to use the same style of image throughout your document.
- Always use images that are good and right for the people you are writing for.
- Always choose images that are clear, easy to understand, and go well with the piece of text they are helping to explain.
- Use the same image to explain the same thing throughout the document.
- Add the easy-to-read logo on the cover page of your document.

1.2.2 English Language

We will present English guidelines to offer a more comprehensive view of the official standards since Easy English is one of the most developed due to its disseminated informative use as a Lingua Franca. Furthermore, in this thesis, we are producing museum exhibit label translations in Easy English and Easy Italian to guarantee an expanded fruition in the museum. The following pages will give an overview of the Easy English guidelines, starting with a Table (*Table 1.4*) summarising the most critical interventions.

Guidelines	Year	Organisation / Authors	City / Country
Parallel Text: Making Research Accessible to People with Intellectual Disabilities	1995	Bashford et al.	UK
Am I making myself clear? Mencap's guidelines for accessible writing	2000[107]	Mencap – The voice of learning disability	London, UK
How to Use Easy Words and Pictures	2003	Disability Rights Commission; Easy Right Commission.	London, UK
How to produce information in an accessible way	2005	Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)	London, UK
Guidelines for Clear and Effective Communication	2007	Easy-to-Read NYC; Mayor's Office of Adult Education; Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.	New York, USA
A Guide to Producing Easy Read Information	2009	The Clear Communication People Ltd (Leat, M.)	London, UK
Making written information easier to understand for people with learning disabilities. Guidance for people who commission or produce Easy Read information	2010	ODI (Office for Disability Issues) and COI (Conflict of Interest) for the Department of Health	London, UK
Make It Easy. A guide to prepare easy-to-read information		Accessible Information Working Group (Barrow R. et al.)	Dublin, Ireland

[107] There is also an updated version of 2008 (Mencap, 2000).

A guide to produce written information in easy-read.	2011	North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC)	North Yorkshire, UK
A Brief Guide to Easy to Read.		Scottish Accessible Information Forum	Glasgow, Scotland, UK
Guidelines for Making Information Easy to Read and Understand for People with Learning Disabilities	2012	Learning Disability Wales	Wales, UK
Make it clear. A guide to make Easy Read information	2014	People First - New Zealand	New Zealand
Clear Written Communications. The Easy English style guide	2015	SCOPE Communication & Inclusion Resource Centre	Victoria, Australia
How to make information accessible. A guide to easy-read documents.		Change[108]	Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK
A guide to producing Easy Read documents. Guidance from UKAAF	2022	UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF)	UK

Table 1.4 Overview of the Easy English guidelines.

This chronological excursus shows us how intricate and diffused the implementation and development of Easy English is. Since one of the European milestones is Inclusion Europe's guidelines of 2014, we can compare and observe how the plethora of Easy English guidelines originate between the mid-90s and the beginning of the 2000s, with Mencap's – a non-profit that

[108] Change is an Association that works to guarantee rights for people with disabilities. Here is the official website: https://www.changepeople.org/ (last accessed April 2024).

advocates for the rights of people with disabilities - first significant contribution in 2000 (see *Table 1.4*). The development span will find a recent trace in 2022 with the UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) guide for producing Easy-to-Read documents. In the process, the third parties involved are Associations, organisations, charities, research centres and national and local political administrations. One of the significant moments was in 2010 (the first version dates from a year earlier) when the ODI (Office for Disability Issues) and COI (Conflict of Interest) for the Department of Health created a set of Easy Language principles to foster a more systematic and even application of EL in the governmental offices, providing a detailed overview of how to write texts also focusing on graphics and layout. In 2012, besides guidelines, *Learning Disability Wales* created a resource kit to evaluate the effectiveness and improve Easy English texts (Learning Disability Wales, 2012; Chinn & Buell, 2022, pp. 638-639).

Although we are concentrating on a European scale, on a geographical level, besides the United Kingdom, a substantial and felt contribution comes from Australia and New Zealand: one of the most significant guidance documents is the SCOPE[109]'s *Clear Written Communications—The Easy English style guide* (2015). This guidance aligns and integrates the UK's work on the issue, with the only difference being the recommendation to "Use standard Australian spelling" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 9) regarding orthography. The two Australasia nations constantly support the cause of language simplification. A recent example is the *New Zealand Disability Strategy* (2016-2026) from the ODI (Office for Disability Issues) by New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development, also available in Easy English. Its aim of improving inclusion within society stresses the importance of Easy Language and how it should be implemented by 2026 in a broader variety of settings across the country (ODI, 2016[110]).

The chronological and geographical span led to the creation of accurate guidelines for Easy English that, compared to other Easy Languages – such as Easy Italian, see subsequent paragraph – create a detailed corpus of indications and suggestions to follow that are implemented on a larger scale and perceived by people working with Easy Language as official references. Nonetheless, Chinn and Buell point out how research on readability is not mentioned in the same way as professional contributions (2022, p. 639). This exchange could implement guidelines, making them more complete.

Returning briefly to Inclusion Europe's guidelines (IE, 2014, p. 23), they dedicate a small

[109] Also known as "Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre" (SCOPE, 2015).
[110] Here you can consult the Easy Language document on the New Zealand Disability Strategy: https://www.odi.govt.nz/assets/New-Zealand-Disability-Strategy-files/pdf-easy-read-nzds-2016.pdf (last accessed April 2024).

section to specific guidelines for writing in Easy English. The standards are listed below[111]. However, they are not exhaustive and principally refer to the numbering, dates, abbreviations, and verb tenses:

- Be careful with numbers:
    - Be careful with numbers like "7th" meeting.
      It might be hard for some people to understand.
      You could write something like "The meeting we have had 6 times before".
    - Write numbers as digits, not as words.
      This means you should write numbers as 1, 2, not one, two.
    - Never use Roman numerals like V, X or XVI.
- Where possible, write dates out in full.
  For example: Tuesday 13 October 2008.
  Do not write 13/10/2008 or 13th October.
- Avoid words like doesn't, wasn't, couldn't.
  Write the words out in full instead.
  For example, does not, was not, could not.
- Where possible, use the present tense rather than the past tense.

Since international guidelines are mainly diffused in English, the Easy English guidelines do not reveal several definite linguistic specificities. However, the differences can be traced more from the content point of view, with some common themes emerging compared to other international guidance. Among the consistent subjects, there is a strong emphasis on the potentialities of using images to support texts, making them "less intimidating" (UKAAF, 2022, p. 14). Pictures are considered an intrinsic component of Easy English (Barrow et al., 2011, p. 7; NYCC, 2011, p. 17). The choice of images, however, is an operation that should not be underestimated and can outcome rather complex: images, photos, and logos can be difficult to understand, and it is, therefore, essential to choose them carefully so that they contribute to understanding and not hindering comprehension; the wrong choice, for example selecting images perceived as "childish" in a text intended for an adult audience may contribute to the stigmatisation of persons with intellectual disabilities; Indeed, images must be "culturally and age-appropriate" and shared "within the life experience" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 14; NYCC, 2011, p. 12). The quantity can also create confusion: pictures should summarise the text's central themes but not be used next to every sentence, cluttering the text (NYCC, 2011, p. 17).

[111] The guidelines are a citation from the booklet (IE, 2014).

Correspondingly, text density – the characters per line – should be inversely proportional to the number of images (SCOPE, 2015, pp. 11-17).

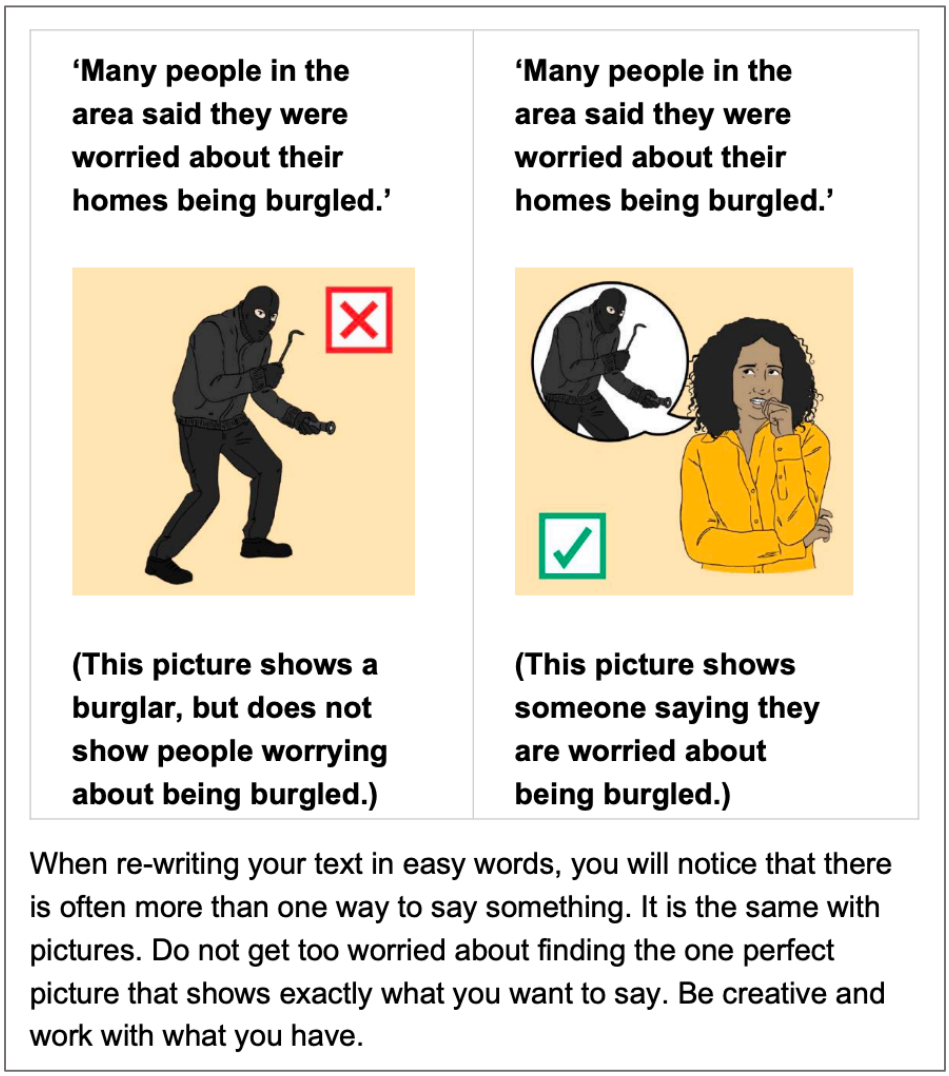

Figure 1.8 Extract from the UKKAF standards (2022, p. 17).

A clean layout is also stressed regarding “format quality” (UKAAF, 2022, p. 1), as simplifying language means also simplifying the design (*ivi*, p. 46). Space becomes a helpful resource to avoid page cramming (NYYC, 2011, p. 15). In fact, spacing facilitates reading and information processing: “White space is thinking space”, as SCOPE’s guidelines (2015, p. 10) critically highlight.

In the guidance, the target audience is thoughtfully considered before starting to write in order to convey information correctly and actualise inclusive communication in a well-thought-out organisation stage (Department of Health, 2010, p. 17). On this matter, SCOPE (2015) guidelines state:

Inclusive communication

> Who is your audience? Remember that readers will have different life situations, experiences and cultures. Some readers may have a vision impairment. Some readers may have limited fine motor skills, making turning pages difficult (*ivi*, p. 3).

Generally, great attention towards the audience is what stands out and influences also the correct use of terminology: for instance, when interacting, guidance sensitively suggests to "Name the person first, e.g., a 'person with a disability', not a 'disabled person'" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7). Nonetheless, inclusively speaking, as stated in Mencap's guidelines (2000, 2008), "Easy read information works for everyone" (2000, p. 7).

The guidelines also add the realisation that by acknowledging a specific audience's needs, the Easy-to-Read may not be the most suitable format, suggesting the use of other, non-textual formats after careful analysis of one's end-users:

2.6 Easy read is not always the answer

> Easy Read is not the only way to communicate with people with learning disabilities. Other methods include video, talks, presentations, drama, murals, role-play or posters (Department for Health, 2010, p. 13).

In terms of interaction, directness is an essential requisite, actualised by addressing the reader with the second-person singular pronoun "you" while using the first-person plural pronoun "we" when referring to the writer of the material. For instance, the sentence "Our organisation can help people with a disability" becomes "We can help you" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7; Barrow R. et al., 2011, p. 16). Interestingly, the NYCC (2011) and SCOPE (2015) guidelines both underline how the dimension of interaction[112] is essential for the use of texts by people with intellectual disabilities. Whether it is a trained person or a family member, reading involves interaction and support from other people. Thus, the interactional dimension becomes a key element in evaluating texts' impact on the public.

> It's important to remember, though, that producing written information in easy read is not enough by itself to make information accessible. Easy read should be used to support communication with an individual as part of an interactive process. By producing information in easy read, we make it easier for the person themselves, their friends, family, support worker or advocate to work together to understand the information (NYCC, 2011, p. 5).

> Ideally, reading an Easy English document is a shared activity between the reader and another person, such as a friend, a family member or support person. Through discussion, the meaning of the document can be clarified,

[112] In this thesis, we will investigate the interactional dimension in pedagogical terms between the Easy Language exhibit labels, children, and parents.

> understood and further details can be provided. Once the document has been explained it can be a useful reminder for the person later (SCOPE, 2015, p. 2).

From a content selection stance, standards suggest selecting information carefully without sacrificing accuracy: precision is fundamental and is emphasised in Easy English directives (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7; UKAAF, 2022, p. 8).

Furthermore, another significant emerging theme is co-creating Easy Language material with people with intellectual disabilities, involving them from the initial concept to the revision phase, emphasising the inclusive power of their contribution in a co-research and participative process that affects them personally (UKAAF, 2022, p. 11; Department of Health, 2010, p. 20; Chinn & Buell, 2022, p. 639; Tuffrey-Wijne & Butler, 2010). Although, in some instances, it is challenging to implement[113], most guidelines suggest, at least in the final revision stage, reviewing the draft with a group of people with intellectual disabilities. The aim is to verify if the text is accessible "to make sure it is as easy to read and understand as you think it is" (NYCC, 2011, p. 17) – a process that, in SCOPE guidance, is called "consumer testing" (*ivi*, p. 19). The "checking with the audience" phase starts with reading aloud texts to ensure they sound as natural as possible:

> **11. Checking with the audience**
>
> Once you have completed the documents in draft, read what you have written aloud. This will help you test whether it sounds natural. It is good practice to ask people with learning disabilities (experts by experience) what they think and if they understand the document before it is published. This will help you to make sure that you've got it right. Ideally, work with a group of people with learning disabilities to produce your document. If people are involved from the beginning, your end product is much more likely to work for them (NYCC, 2011, p. 16).

[113] This practical demonstration of inclusivity sometimes becomes problematic, and the guidelines consider the complexity of implementing this aspect in specific settings (ODI, 2010).

The words you use

Good easy read tells you what you really need to know.

- Use words that we use all the time.
- Use numerals for numbers not words.

  23 instead of twenty three.

- Write in short, clear sentences. Just have 1 idea in every sentence.
- Use active verbs. Verbs are doing words. They describe what someone does.

  For example John **loves** Mary not Mary **is loved by** John

- Use full stops. Try not to use other punctuation.
- Use bullet points for examples and instructions.
- Do not use abbreviations.

  Use **for example** and **do not**, not **e.g.** and **don't.**

Choosing the type of writing and the paper

- Use a typeface that is clear like Arial.
- Text should be at least 16 point or bigger.
- Make sure headings are clear.
- Make sure the writing stands out against the colour of the paper.

Figure 1.9 A set of principles extracted from Mencap's guidance (Mencap, 2000, pp. 3-4).

1.2.3 Italian Language

What has been previously illustrated about the Italian landscape, i.e. the fact that Easy Italian is still being developed and has yet to be defined, also has consequences for the creation process of the guidelines for the Italian language. There are few theoretical developments and none in practical applications compared to other languages. There is a lack of guidelines specifically tailored to the Italian language; if they exist, they are not widespread and implemented on a large scale. What is

currently missing is a "unique reference" that both trainees and experts can follow (Perego, 2021, p. 296). However, we can count some notable efforts in recent years, which we will present below.

- 2014's Inclusion Europe official guidelines translated into Italian by *Anffas Nazionale* in *Informazione per tutti. Linee guida europee per rendere l'informazione facile da leggere e da capire per tutti* ('Information for all. European guidelines for making information easy to read and understand') (IE, 2009/2014). The translation of the guidelines represented a significant first awareness and advancement on the subject for Italy. They are currently the only official standards, although they do not contain indications specifically related to the Italian language. Despite an attempt relegated to one page of addressing Easy Italian specificities (IE, 2014, p. 23) entitled *Linee guida per la lingua italiana* ('Guidelines for the Italian language), divided into four suggestions[114]: (1) Be careful with numbers, avoid roman numerals; (2) Use present tense, if you have to use the past tense, use the present perfect instead of the past perfect; (3) Use the indicative and imperative mood instead of the conditional and subjunctive mood; (4) Write the dates in full (*ibidem*). It can be inferred that these four suggestions for the Italian language are scant and generic. Therefore, overall, the use of Easy Language in Italy lacks a more targeted profiling (Perego, 2021, p. 287);
- Gargiulo and Arezzo (2017) co-wrote *Come rendere comprensibile un testo: Guida per educatori e insegnanti alle prese con persone con bisogni speciali* ('How to make a text understandable: Guide for educators and teachers dealing with people with special needs'). The book, designed with teachers and educators in mind, gives an overview of different types of disabilities and proposes recommendations to help them convey precise, straightforward information. The suggested simplification strategies do not explicitly refer to Easy Language —which is often the case in Italy, where Plain Language guidelines are mixed with Easy Language (Perego, 2021, p. 287). However, from a pedagogical point of view, the volume presents operational indications on how to use clear and straightforward language in a school context with Special Educational Needs persons. The related examples and exercises are also valuable for Easy Language implementation not only in pedagogical settings but also in the training of future professionals;
- Sciumbata (2022) wrote *Manuale dell'italiano facile da leggere e da capire. Come scrivere testi semplice per persone con disabilità intellettive e difficoltà di lettura* ('Italian Easy to Read and Understand Manual. How to write simple texts for people with intellectual disabilities and reading difficulties'). Sciumbata's work is the first actual specific contribution

[114] The four guidelines are cited from Inclusion Europe's booklet (2014, p. 23).

to Easy Italian. Drawing inspiration from international guidelines, it punctually reconstructs a path to follow when writing from scratch or rewriting a text in Easy Italian. However, the guidelines are still theoretical since they have not been pragmatically tested with the target audience, and consequently, they are missing due revisions and improvements. Nonetheless, these guidelines represent a positive novelty on the Easy Italian scene. They could significantly contribute to developing officially recognised standards for Easy Language in Italy to spread and implement systematically throughout the country.

Overall, the theoretical approach of the Italian guidelines remains an issue that needs to be addressed. Perego (2021) states:

> This lack of empirical testing of each recommendation is a general problem. If we wish to duly label what is complex and what is simple (or usable), we need established linguistic measures of complexity and reception research that involves the end users rather than recommendations based on intuition (*ivi*, p. 288).

The works illustrated above align with international guidelines while also highlighting some of the principal characteristics of Easy Italian. On the one hand, the rules suggest intervening right from the programming of the texts, carefully selecting the contents in a reasoning process that evaluates textual clarity also by the disposition of information; the guidelines, therefore, encompass the selection of contents, the syntax, the lexicon and the layout (IE, 2009/2014; Sciumbata, 2022; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017). Therefore, many suggestions from these various levels of analysis faithfully reflect the European guidelines. On the other hand, there is an attempt to tailor them to the Italian Easy Language. We will discuss some examples of the language-specific suggestions below.

At a syntactic level, the Italian guidelines similarly suggest writing short sentences (maximum 10-15 words), maintaining the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) unmarked order of Italian, with each sentence providing no more than one piece of information. Impersonal forms, typical of a pro-drop language like Italian, should be avoided: the subject should always be specified in each sentence, even at the cost of repetitions, likewise always making the pronouns explicit. Typically, the Italian language is verbosely built on subordinates, so the guidelines suggest creating short sentences and, if necessary, using coordinates clauses, favouring parataxis instead of weighing sentences down with hypotaxis. The guidelines reiterate avoiding sentences in brackets and adding periphrases, and they encourage the use of lists and suggest avoiding the nominalisation widely used in the Italian language (Sciumbata, 2022; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017). Readers should be addressed explicitly by eliminating forms of address such as the third-person singular *Lei + verb* typical of formal Italian (a variable unusual in the English language that can find a correspondence in the more formal use of ‘you’),

substituted by the more informal second-person singular *tu* + *verb* perceived as more direct[115] (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 76). Another element frequently used in Italian is the double negative, inherited from Latin that has made Italian a language with negative concordance (Accademia della Crusca, 2007[116]; Treccani, 2017[117]) (e.g., *non puoi non saperlo*, 'you can not know it'). Instead, it is necessary to use affirmative sentences (*devi sapere questa cosa*, 'you must know this thing'), which are more easily understandable and facilitate the decoding process for an audience with intellectual disabilities. At a verbal level, simple verbal forms such as present and indicative are preferred instead of the subjunctive. Although often used in Italian, implicit forms should be avoided, such as the gerund or the participle, as well as the passive form (Perego, 2021; Sciumbata, 2022; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017).

On a lexical level, the language is based on the *Vocabolario di Base* (VdB, 2016), containing the lexemes most commonly used by the speaking population and thus most comprehensible to all[118]. This lexical choice implies, for instance, avoiding Latin words from the classical tradition or foreign words currently part of the Italian language. If it is necessary to use technical terms, they can be combined with an explanatory sentence containing high-frequency vocabulary in the elucidation. The key is to imitate spoken language, which is considered a more straightforward and immediate communicative variety. Furthermore, not using rhetorical figures, idiomatic expressions and, in general, too abstract vocabulary is pivotal, besides being even more indispensable to simplify a language with a solid literary tradition such as Italian (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2022b; Serianni, 1991).

In terms of graphics, the above-mentioned Easy Language Office of Bolzano suggests a way to facilitate the reading of compound terms: that is, dividing complex words recurring to dots to separate morphemes, such as with the verb *perseguitare* (to persecute) presented as *per·seguitare* (Perego, 2021, p. 289).

[115] For more on the possible negative nuances of informal forms of address in readers' perception, see *Chapter IV*.
[116] From *Accademia della Crusca* official website: https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/sulla-costruzione-della-frase-negativa-in-italiano/169 (last accessed April 2024).
[117] From *Treccani* Encyclopedia official website: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/negazione_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/# ; https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/domande_e_risposte/grammatica/grammatica_1314.html (last accessed April 2024).
[118] For more, see the *Methodology* chapter.

(35) **Non scriviamo così:**
Pablo Picasso terminò il quadro Guernica nel giugno 1937.
Meglio scrivere così:
Pablo Picasso finisce il quadro Guernica
nel giugno 1937.

(47) **Non scriviamo così:**
Il cittadino deve rivolgersi all'ufficio anagrafe.
Meglio scrivere così:
Vai all'ufficio anagrafe.

Figure 1.10 Recommendations extracted from Sciumbata's Easy Italian manual (2022, pp. 46-49)[119].

1.3 Conclusions

This introductory chapter to Easy Language - a variety of languages at the centre of this research work - traces the history of linguistic simplification, illustrating its intentions and the ethical-social value at its origin. It depicts the international and European panorama and then focuses on the Italian context. Specifically, it outlines the setting in which our research takes place, that of cultural institutions, illustrating a living environment eager for experimentation.

What emerges is how, over time, the need to write and use clear and comprehensible texts is increasingly felt, reflecting the desire of everyone - including experts - in wanting to make accessible "the luxury of understanding" (Perego, 2020, p. 22) to a broader segment of the population, despite the fact that criticisms emerge from scholars who consider making a text clearer a loss, not an asset.

Given their recent evolution, the various forms of linguistic simplification are still an area to be explored. From the reconstruction of fragmented literature and history on the topic, the chapter finally retraces, from a linguistic perspective, the primary international, English and Italian guidelines, given their application in the work of retranslation within the research. From the section surfaces a strong need for evidence-based results in order to improve existing standards and tailor them to the specific needs of each language.

[119] English back-translation:
(35) **We do not write like this:**
Pablo Picasso finished the painting Guernica in June 1937.
Better to write like this:
Pablo Picasso finished the painting Guernica
in June 1937.
(47) **We do not write like this:**
The citizen must go to the registry office.
Better to write like this:
Go to the registry office.

CHAPTER II

Methodology

One can say that we are all constantly engaged in some form of a translation process.
Our speech, our perceptions, our ideas, and our interpretations
are all products of a complex translation dynamic.

Rainer Schulte[120]

Chapter II delves into the research methodology used in the case study. Specifically, for the translation part, we will present an amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative methods employed to examine the source texts and propose inclusive retranslations while evaluating their effectiveness. From the pedagogical perspective, the chapter also outlines the methods used to design and collect pedagogical documentation in a museum, offering a step-by-step methodological analysis that includes qualitative video observations and a final focus group to investigate the impact of retranslations on families. The final aim is to provide a detailed description of the various stages of the study so that a future researcher can reproduce the experimentation.

[120] From the essay "What is translation?" (Schulte, 2012).

2.1 Translation Studies meets Pedagogy

The research implements the metaphorical sense of translating, that of "building bridges" (Schulte, 2012), connecting the world of translation to a distinct but communicating field, pedagogy. The multidisciplinary nature of this work, encouraged by the interdisciplinary doctoral context in which it has flourished, proposes an encounter between the domain of Translation Studies with an inclusive translation work in the easy-to-read language of a particular textual typology - that of exhibit labels, more specifically, a case study of family panels from the *Pinacoteca di Brera* in Milan - with the world of Pedagogy, and particularly of Museum Education, focusing on the learning experiences of children and parents within the museum. The key to understanding the work as a whole is inclusion, which acts as a common thread that links the two fields of research, giving them a shared objective: through translations into easy-to-read languages, the aim is to guarantee a more engaging museum experience for families in the Informal Learning Environment (ILE) of the museum. In the paragraphs that follow, we will illustrate the methodology implemented for the realisation of the project, starting from the translation work (*par. 2.1.1 The type of retranslation work*) and then proceeding to illustrate the more comprehensive work of a pedagogical nature (*par. 2.1.2 Building a Pedagogical Documentation*).

2.1.1 The type of retranslation work

2.1.1.1 Defining retranslation

The term *retranslation* refers to the process of translating again a text already translated into the same target language, as well as the text resulting from this operation (Deane-Cox, 2016; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010; Gürçağlar, 2009). For this study, this literal definition reflects what happened with the English translations: we translated the panels from English into Easy English. But the labels in English were, in turn, the result of a translation from the original Italian texts; therefore, we retranslated an existing translation (Standard Italian Language > Standard English Language > Easy English Language). However, *retranslation* can also be interpreted as an umbrella term encompassing different types of rewritings, which share the common idea of "change" starting from a given text (Desmidt, 2009). In this study, the genesis for the texts in the English language is the intervention on the original panels in the Italian language. The translation process of moving from the Standard Italian Language to the Easy Italian Language is defined as *intralingual translation* or *rewording* (Jakobson, 1959; Perego & Rocco, 2022), a sort of "retranslation" but within the same language, a rewriting which takes on inclusive tones, breaking down a more complex language and making it more understandable, that is "easy to read". Rewriting can, in fact, also include forms of

linguistic simplification within varieties of the same language, such as Easy Language (EL) and Plain Language (PL) (Perego, 2021; Perego & Rocco, 2022). As a result, this work, in its entirety, can be interpreted as an act of retranslation.

2.1.1.2 Insights on retranslation and its different applications

Retranslation is a complex process influenced by various historical, cultural, and ideological factors, which initially only became widely embraced in the literary field. First considered only as an epiphenomenon of Translation Studies, in recent decades, research in retranslation has also gained attention in non-literary and scientific fields (Gürçağlar, 2009, p. 233), with the 21st century defined by scholars as the "Age of Retranslation" (Collombat, 2004), due to the blossoming of new theories and sensitivities among translators. From a multimodal perspective, retranslation can also occur in different media, such as in Audiovisual Translation with subtitles (Albachten & Gürçağlar, 2020; Raffi, 2020).

In the literary realm, the French linguist Antoine Berman is among the first advocates of retranslation, who, in his much-quoted article *La retraduction comme espace de la traduction* ('Retranslation as the space of translation') (Berman, 1990) sees in retranslating the possibility of completing what he considers as often "incomplete" translations. Retranslation allows us to understand the source text better, re-examining it with the target audience in mind, thus closely linking the translator's agency with a greater awareness of the literary work, with the result of a text more faithful to the original. Berman (1990, p. 2) denounces a missing in-depth look at original texts in most first translations, risking compromising source texts' authenticity and otherness. The result is a foreign work's naturalisation process in order to insert and "adapt" it within a different culture[121] (Gürçağlar, 2009, p. 234). Gambier (1994) contributes to the positive vision of retranslation by seeing it as an enhancement of the original, a possibility of revising the text so as to improve its rendering.

According to Gürçağlar (2009, p. 235), the purposes behind retranslation can comprise the following:

(1) The changing society and the evolution of translation norms in relation to the evolution of language (*Ibidem*). As emphasised by Berman (1990, p. 2), translations often "age" because the language changes: compared to the original texts, some translations may suffer from the passing of time. This aspect highlights how much the work of a translator is essential to the broader social context in which he lives, and that is reflected in his work:

[121] However, there are conflicting opinions on *domestication* and *foreignisation* in translating a literary work. Scholars such as Brisset (2004) argue that it is not always true that the first retranslations cause the loss of some peculiar aspects of the translations. See Gambier (1994) and Gürçağlar (2009) for further information.

retranslation often arises from needs that originate from the outside and not from the text itself (Gürçağlar, 2009, p. 234). For instance, Gürçağlar (*Ibid*., p. 235) describes the growing importance that readability has acquired, which often leads to retranslating a text;

(2) Ideological and political factors, such as feminist retranslations (Venuti, 2003, p. 23) as in the case of the first English retranslation of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, which was highly criticised for misogyny (Moi, 2002), or texts censored in the past, as *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, now re-proposed in the English language in the complete original version, with macabre details considered unacceptable in the past for a children's reading (Zipes, 2015);

(3) The mere discovery of errors in the previous version: an example is the recent Italian retranslation of the *Harry Potter* series of books: initially quickly translated one after the other due to the great success and demand among young readers, the translators did not know the work in its entirety. The unity and correlation of the seven-book series emerged only at the end, with the release of the last book by J.K. Rowling. This brought out the need for the Italian publisher to retranslate the texts, correcting oversights and clarifying some aspects that were later revealed to be essential for the plot (Bartezzaghi, 2022, p. 6);

(4) Economic-editorial issues, when a publishing house decides to retranslate a text because it is aware of the potential profit (Gürçağlar, 2009; Venuti, 2003);

(5) Provide a new interpretation of the texts, often in a "reorientation" aimed at a new audience. Gürçağlar (2009, p. 235) exemplifies the phenomenon of texts translated for adults as target readers subsequently retranslated to release a children's version of the same book;

(6) A creative rewriting of the original. It often happens in theatre, where it is seen as a necessary process to re-adapt a play for a new audience (Lanselle, 2020; Vidal, 2023);

(7) Even the impact of a text influences retranslation: texts such as the Bible or the *Divina Commedia* ('Divine Comedy') are still retranslated today for their historical-cultural contribution to society (Oyali, 2018; Venuti, 2003).

In this theoretical framework, our retranslation work fits into the first (1) and fifth (5) motives for retranslating: society changes, and with it, its languages (1), its multiple facets have their roots in a complex social structure where, thanks to increasingly widespread welfare, each branch of the population is identified and recognised in its role and significance. The increased sensitivity to linguistic simplification reflects an increased sensitivity towards citizens with disabilities who make up our society and an awareness of their rights (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 64). Nevertheless, language

simplification embraces a much larger segment of the population, that are those who struggle to read and understand texts, either due to language difficulties or because they perceive a text as too complex, as in the case of *bureaucratese*, a formal, pompous language challenging for many ordinary people to decipher (Halpern & Dunn, 2022, p. 141).

Therefore, retranslation and intralingual translation become powerful tools for affirming citizens' right to information (De Mauro, 2019, p. 218). Growing attention towards different types of audiences leads to an inclusive "reorientation" (5) of texts to guarantee an increasingly felt and growing social mission in society across various fields and contexts. In our case, in the museum setting, retranslating allows us to ensure accessibility to art education offerings to anyone willing to discover them.

2.1.1.3 The study

From a linguistic-translation point of view, the study's centre is the rewriting proposal of five panels for families currently displayed inside the *Pinacoteca di Brera* into easy-to-read language, proposing them in both Easy Italian and Easy English. The retranslation, therefore, takes place following the international guidelines on easy-to-read language (IE, 2009; IFLA, 2010) and the specific guidelines for the English language (SCOPE, 2015; ODI, 2010; Barrow et al., 2011; NYCC, 2011; UKAAF, 2022; and others, cf. also *Chapter I*) and Italian language (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2022). Currently, these guidelines are a point of reference for the work of the editors and translators of texts in Easy Languages (EL).

As regards the translation intervention, it is right to specify its possible limitations: (1) the translations proposed here are the result of work that combines the guidelines - often formulated theoretically, untested and primarily the result of intuition (Perego, 2021, p. 288), as in the case of the guidelines for the Italian language of Sciumbata (2022) - with the practical experience of the translator who has studied and familiarised himself with the reference context (the museum and its visitors). Translation proposals are, therefore, positioned halfway between following "faithfully" the theoretical guidelines and the desire to instead take into consideration and not betray the *social mission* of the museum, the educational context of reference in which the translator operates[122]. Consequently, we worked by merging the principles of museum didactics held dear by the *Pinacoteca di Brera* with the new values of language inclusion - that the museum also heartily shares. (2) As

[122]An example is that, although the guidelines for the EtR suggest avoiding questions in the texts (IE, 2009) - even more so in the titles - we have instead decided to leave interrogative propositions in the labels because they constitute one of the stylistic features of the family panels of the *Pinacoteca of Brera*. Thanks to this distinctive trait, the *questioning* and *answering* interactional phases between parent and child become the starting point of co-creating a moment of discovery and shared emotion.

Perego & Rocco (2022, p. 81) emphasise, an emerging issue is the thin line between translation and adaptation of texts into easy language. Texts are often abridged and considerably adapted, resulting in an altered version that misses pivotal information compared to its original (*Ibidem*). In this study, although texts had to be rethought entirely from a content selection viewpoint to recount artwork's stories with more clarity, notwithstanding the strict word limit of the textual typology - both original labels and their retranslations are all under 500 characters (title included) - the work could still be defined as a faithful rendering of the source texts in Italian. (3) It is also necessary to clarify how the translation proposals are indeed "proposals" and how other translators could interpret the museum's inclusive mission differently by suggesting different but equally valid possibilities for translating the texts. Exhibit labels are, in fact, a text type that has only recently been examined and translated from the point of view of an inclusive language[123]. Therefore, there is still no well-defined methodology for translating it, as it represents an emerging field of analysis that needs further investigation.

The study combines quantitative and qualitative analysis in a mixed-method research design (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Specifically, an "explanatory sequential design" where the research begins with quantitative analysis, and the resulting data are integrated and also interpreted through qualitative analysis (Harvard, 2024)[124]. In this framework, quantitative and qualitative analysis complement each other, providing a richer and more complete overview of the translation work, where Translation Studies and Museum Education meet in a joint reflection.

Analysis and retranslation were performed on specific textual typologies for families displayed at Brera Art Gallery in Milan (see par. *2.1.1.4 The corpus*). The first phase of the work begins with presenting the original family panels. Text function is also discussed, as it is considered a pivotal element at the outset of the translator's work (Perego & Rocco, 2022). The presentation of the *source texts* opens the doors to an initial quantitative and qualitative textual analysis of the Italian original labels aimed at highlighting the weak points of the latter with a view to linguistic inclusion in order to motivate the subsequent translation work. In the second phase of the work, the retranslations are proposed in Italian and English. They are introduced by tables that frame the texts in an initial quantitative key, i.e. comparing the data that emerged before and after the intervention

[123] To date, no research explicitly investigates the translation perspective of exhibit labels. However, certain studies analyse the use of inclusive language in museum panels from a broader linguistic stance. For instance, Rantamo & Schum (2019) and Al Masri-Gutternig & Reitstätter (2017) are examples of German research, while Carlucci & Seibel (2020) represent Spanish research.

[124] From "Harvard Catalyst", a research group from Harvard College. Here is the official link: https://catalyst.harvard.edu/community-engagement/mmr/hcat_mmr_sm-6090567e0f943-60905896c80af-60e5fdbc2399e-60e5fdd8057fc-610bf777da6a0-610bf7808de24-610bf792228a4-610bf8685d8f5-610bf871cbea9/#:~:text=Explanatory%20sequential%20design%20starts%20with,quantitative%20results%20need%20further%20explanation (last accessed February 2024).

on the texts to evaluate their effectiveness and readability with linguistic tools calibrated respectively on the Italian and English languages (see par. *2.1.1.5.1 The measures*), and in a qualitative key, describing in detail the choices made in translating the family panels of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* first into Easy Italian and subsequently into the Easy English language (motivating the translation choices made in the texts).

The rewriting process has involved intervention in texts on different levels, from creating an organic and linear presentation of contents to revising syntax, lexicon and graphics, starting from the aspects that emerged in the first analysis stage. After retranslation, texts should be read aloud to ensure they sound as natural[125] as possible. If not, texts should be revised and enhanced (ODI, 2010, p. 30)[126]. Conclusively, it emerges a commentary on rewriting for Easy Italian and Easy English, which compares originals and rewritings accompanied by data tables that support the description of whether the intervention on the texts was effective by evaluating the translator's rewritings and their impact on linguistic accessibility. What also comes to light is a reflection on the different translation choices implemented for the different Target Texts (TTs), two Easy Languages for two distinct audiences who visit the museum and may have different needs. Notably, when translating in Easy English commencing from the original version in Italian, text intervention dealt with linguistic-translational elements between the two languages and also with socio-linguistics issues, actualising an adaptation of the content to a foreign audience and not a real re-semanticization[127] of the discourse contents since the process had already taken place during the rewriting in Italian EL.

The following paragraphs will detail the corpus and how quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted.

[125] Within the concept of naturalness is *performativity*, linked to the performance experience of communication between two or more interlocutors - in this case, concerning reading a text - and the communicative impact it aims to achieve. The concept, read in a multidisciplinary key, originates from the 'performance theory' of Schechner (1988) and Carlson (1996) (Randaccio, 2016, p. 52). Naturalness, therefore, also means communicative effectiveness, inherent in the actor's dialogic performance on stage, to be recreated and sought after in everyday communication. For more on this topic, see Randaccio (2022).

[126] In reality, the final and most crucial step is to 'check with the audience' (ODI, 2010, p. 30): before publication, texts should be validated by people with intellectual disabilities. The validation process pragmatically represents inclusivity by including the real protagonists in the work. On the other hand, it is also fundamental to let the translator know of any textual deficit and improve his work. Unfortunately, it was not possible in this case, and we tested the texts directly with the families at the museum. The experimentation would have required the involvement of at least two test reader groups (one for Easy Italian and the other for Easy English, implying collaborating and involving both an Italian institution and an Anglo-Saxon institution in the process), therefore requiring longer times for its realisation. Although not present in this thesis, a collaboration is underway with a group of Italian test readers and the social cooperative *Trieste Integrazione* (part of *ANFFAS*, the National Association of Families of People with Intellectual and Relational Disabilities) in order to improve the five proposals in Italian EL. The desire is to extend the research with an English social cooperative and illustrate the results in a future scientific contribution.

[127] In the sense of conferring novel and distinct significance.

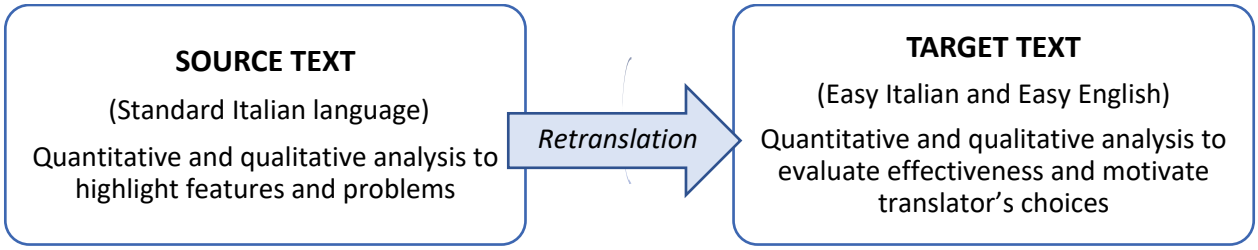

Figure 2.1 Stages of the study.

2.1.1.4 The corpus

The corpus consists of five Italian *didascalie per grandi e piccoli* ('panels for young and old') with their respective translations in the English language (for an overall total of ten texts) from the *Pinacoteca di Brera* ('Brera Art Gallery') in Milan, an Italian cultural institution considered a best practice case to study engaging exhibit labels[128] (see *Chapter III*).

Our corpus was collected and selected by physically visiting the museum and rereading labels online on the *IZI Travel* website[129]. A list was generated with the details of each panel: the label's heading, the artwork's title with the artist's name, and the museum room in which it is exhibited, accompanied by the total number of words used in every text. Before proceeding with the analysis, the ten texts were formatted in a *Microsoft Word* document and reviewed to exclude any textual inaccuracies.

2.1.1.5 Quantitative analysis

The quantitative research implemented in this work draws on corpus linguistics (Cheng, 2012; Dash, 2008; Freddi, 2014; Hédiard, 2007; McEnery & Hardie, 2012) and the field of descriptive statistics (Johnson, 2013; Oakes, 1998). Initially, computer-based linguistics detects peculiarities in the data that can define supplementary investigations. From an inclusive stance, computational tools enable linguists to analyse texts in an all-encompassing way, distinguishing the various language components that may be obstacles for perusers (Amancio et al., 2012; Montemagni, 2013). Subsequently, descriptive statistics intervene in what Johnson (2013) defines as a "distillation of the complexities of the data" with the result of inferring "the basic overall properties of the data" (*Ibid*. p. 288). Combining corpus linguistics with descriptive statistics results in a process that can contribute significantly to answering a research question or pose new interrogatives (*Ibidem*). In this study, the

[128] The former museum Director, Dr. James M. Bradburne, is known for his attention to creating diverse genres of textualities in the museum, which made him nicknamed "the label guy" by the international press (Christie's, 2016).
[129] The platform collaborates with the museum, making educational content available online. Here is the link to the official website: https://izi.travel/it/19b9-tour-didascalie-per-grandi-e-piccoli/it#6cc0-e-tempo-di-vestirsi/it (last access February 2024).

purpose is to understand the degree of the texts' intricacy and implement comparison and analysis from a perspective that observes the data having as underpinning framework the national and international easy-to-read guidelines (IE, 2009; ODI, 2010; NYCC, 2011; SCOPE 2015). The results help researchers deduce their evaluations of texts in terms of language accessibility, comprehension and communicative impact.

The quantitative analysis was divided into two phases: in the first place - before retranslations - the objective of the quantitative study was to measure the effectiveness of the texts of the original panels in Italian and evaluate their degree of readability and comprehensibility, obtaining both an overall vision of these aspects in the texts and a more specific examination of the linguistic features (from lexicon to syntax) that contribute to or hinder language clarity - thus also highlighting elements that could be improved.

In the second phase, we performed the same quantitative analysis, this time comparing the results obtained before the translations with those obtained subsequently - highlighting similarities and differences in data through calculating averages - observing the readability and the effectiveness of the intervention on the texts from a linguistic inclusion perspective. Since the translation work dealt with the panels both in Italian and English language, this second phase of analysis and comparison was carried out both on the texts in Italian (between source texts and target texts) and on those in English (*ut supra*) to ascertain whether the texts proposed in easy-to-read language are more straightforward. We used summary tables and graphs to address these questions, provide an overall vision, and facilitate data comparison (see *Chapter IV*).

On the other hand, although quantitative data can help improve language comprehensibility, no computational tools are explicitly targeted for Easy-to-Read Language (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 93). Furthermore, performing quantitative analysis with automatic readability calculators presents limitations since errors may occur[130] (Rahman, 2016). However, it represents a useful rough indicator for an overall view of any differences between the museum labels.

In addition, it is essential to underline that it is not an easy task to gauge the complexity of a text: as Perego (2018, p. 6) points out, there are multiple and different factors that come into play, which impact a reader's understanding: besides the intrinsic difficulties of a text given by its linguistic properties, subjectivity factors take effect, in a spectrum that oscillates from the reader's cultural background to his mastery of the language. The result is an intricacy of complex variables that are difficult to identify and evaluate.

The following paragraph describes the measures and methods adopted in this investigation.

[130] To learn more about the value of the "linguistic error", see Luelsdorff (1987).

2.1.1.5.1 The measures

The measures adopted to study the corpus are enlisted in this paragraph. They aim to evaluate texts' readability and expositional clarity before and after the inclusive rewritings. In the cases where the measures adopted are targeted explicitly for Italian or English language, we present the analytical tools specifying the language to which they refer.

Firstly, as the primary goal when writing in easy-to-read language is to enhance readability, we ask ourselves: When do we say a text is easy to read? How do we establish that one text is easier to read than another? Readability formulas help answer these questions, breaking down the texts and identifying properties that favour or obstruct comprehension (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016, p. 1). For this study, we measured the readability indices of the exhibit labels before and after retranslation.

- Italian language

Gulpease Index. It takes its name from the "GULP" (*Gruppo Universitario Linguistico Pedagogico*, 'University Linguistic Pedagogical Group', led by Tullio De Mauro at the University of Rome "La Sapienza"), which defined it in 1982 (Vena, 2022, p. 478). It is a formula calibrated precisely for the Italian language and aims to calculate a text's readability. The formula was born from studying the comprehensibility of a large corpus of texts related to different levels of reading competence (Lucisano & Piemontese, 1988). The formula[131] is as follows:

$$\text{Gulpease Index} = 89 - \left(\frac{\text{LP}}{10}\right) + (3 \cdot \text{FR})$$

Where about the sample in question, *LP* and *FR* are calculated as follows:

$$\text{LP} = \frac{\text{total letters} \cdot 100}{\text{total words}}$$

$$\text{FR} = \frac{\text{total sentences} \cdot 100}{\text{total words}}$$

The formula shows that the calculation is based on the average length of the words and sentences present in a text. Piemontese (1996, p. 94) emphasises how longer words and sentences can compromise language accessibility. Specifically, to retranslate labels into easy-to-read language,

[131] Extracted from Piemontese (1996, p. 101) and https://pro.corrige.it/ortografia/lindice-gulpease/ (last accessed February 2024).

international guidelines suggest using shorter words and sentences (SCOPE, 2015, p. 8) to ease reading for people with intellectual disabilities.

In reading results, there is a legibility scale (*Figure 2.2*) ranging from 0 (the minimum or null level of readability) to 100 (the maximum level of readability) (Piemontese, 1996, p. 102). A text is considered "easy to read" when it reaches at least 65-70 points (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 93). Since the values of the scale are divided into readability ranges depending on the level of education of the readers (primary school certificate, middle school certificate, school-leaving certificate), it was interesting for us, as experimenting with children, to compare the exhibit family labels' data obtained relating them to the "primary school certificate" readability level.

We used *Dylan Textools (v.2.1.9)*[132] for the calculation. Nonetheless, punctuation can be problematic since the software warns that newlines are read as sentence breaks (*Dylan Textools*, 2023). Hence, we removed any newlines when inserting the texts into the analysis tool. The index was calculated for each source text in the first phase and compared with the other five original texts. In the second phase, the comparison took place between the indices of each text before and after the rewritings.

[132] It is a free tool released by the *DYLAN-Dynamics of Language. Italian Natural Language Processing Lab* at the CNR Institute for Computational Linguistics (ILC) located in Pisa, Italy. The software is available at this link: http://www.ilc.cnr.it/dylanlab/apps/texttools/?tt_user=guest (last accessed February 2024).

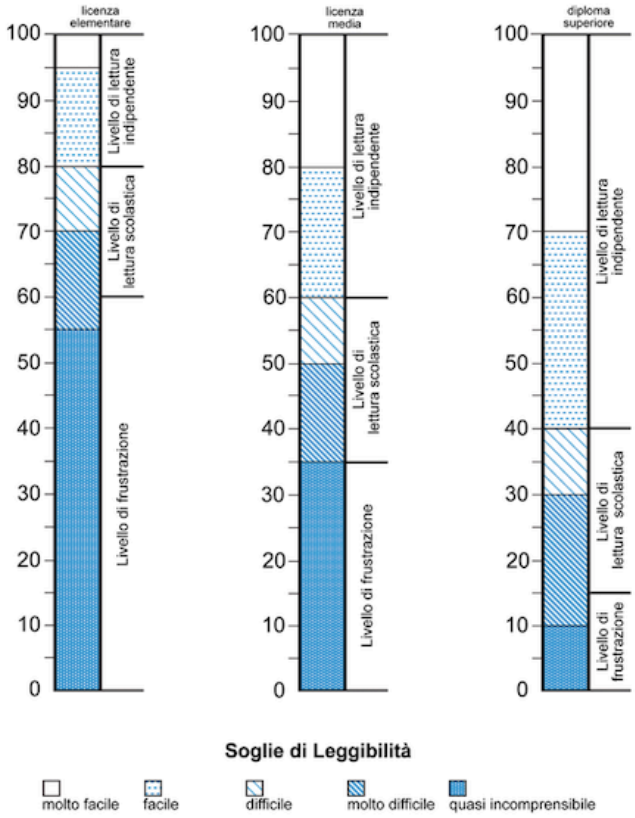

Figure 2.2 Legibility scale of the Gulpease index by Piemontese (1996, p. 102).

READ-IT. We could delve into text readability through the READ-IT software using the same analytical tool previously used called *Dylan Textools (v.2.1.9).* READ-IT is specifically born to detect readability in order to ease text simplification for people who struggle with reading depending on various factors (Dell'Orletta et al., 2011, p. 73). The approach recurs to compare the text under consideration to two corpora of reference: one helps in defining text simplicity because it is a corpus composed of texts from the *Due Parole* Easy-to-Read Italian magazine, the historic accessible magazine (see *Chapter I*); the other contributes to defining textual complexity because is a corpus based on texts from the Italian newspaper *Repubblica*, representing a more complex but still everyday use of Italian language (Dell'Orletta et al., 2014). The text under investigation, being compared to the two corpora of reference, is analysed by making different types of data communicate (lexical, morphosyntactic and syntactic)[133]. Consequently, this data matching connotates the software's readings as innovative, obtaining an overall vision of language intricacy. Emerging data are expressed through probability and with a readability scale that, unlike the *Gulpease* index, considers a text

[133] For further information, see the online guide at the link: http://www.italianlp.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Documentazione-READ-IT.pdf (last accessed February 2024).

marked with 0 as simple and one marked with 100 as complex. The software illustrates data recurring to four parameters[134]:

- *READ-IT Base* ('Basic READ-IT') is defined by "raw text features" such as mean sentence length and mean word length (Dell'Orletta et al., 2011, p. 76);
- *READ-IT Lessicale* ('Lexical READ-IT') is defined by combining the previous more general text features with lexical characteristics, such as comparing lemmas to the Basic Italian Vocabulary (De Mauro, 2019) and calculating the Type/Token Ratio (TTR) to detect lexical diversity[135] (Dell'Orletta et al., 2011, p. 76);
- *READ-IT Sintattico* ('Syntactical READ-IT') is defined by combining the previous two factors with morpho-syntactical analysis, calculating features such as lexical density and verbal moods (*Ibid.*, p. 77);
- *READ-IT Globale* ('Total READ-IT') combines all previous factors with syntactical aspects, such as calculating main and subordinate clauses (*Ibidem*).

This data is presented within the thesis in summary graphs. Each family label was processed separately to test its readability before and after the retranslations. As a final stage, all collected data were compared to create comprehensive results averages.

- English language

To have the same overview for the readability of the exhibit labels in English, we recurred to different readability indexes specifically targeted for the English language. All readability data was analysed with the online software *Analyze My Writing*[136]. The indexes are the following:

Gunning Fog Index. Invented by the American scholar Robert Gunning in 1952, it is a tool that compares the complexity of a text with the years of formal schooling (initially designed with the American educational context in mind and then extended) necessary to understand it (Dubay, 2007, p. 53), taking into account "complex words" - that is, polysyllabic words - considered difficult (Vena, 2022, p. 477). The formula[137] to calculate it is as follows:

[134] For further information, see Dell'Orletta et al. (2011) and Dell'Orletta et al. (2014).
[135] For further information on TTR, refer to Johansson (2008) and Berg (2014). For a perspective on children's language and TTR, see Richards (1987).
[136] *Analyze My Writing* (AMW) is an online readability and text content software for analysis of the English language. The analyser is available at this link: https://www.analyzemywriting.com/index.html (last accessed February 2024).
[137] Extracted from Worrall et al. (2020).

$$\text{GFI} = 0.4 \cdot [(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}}) + 100 \cdot (\frac{\text{complex words}}{\text{total words}})]$$

The result is then evaluated based on a readability scale, where the lower the number, the easier the text is to read. According to the software creators, a widely accessible text should score less than 8 (AMW, 2023). As highlighted by the software programmers, "good writing is not necessarily more complex" (AMW, 2023): a low readability index can indicate a clear and concise text, as shown by developers through testing texts by famous writers such as Hemingway and Steinbeck, who surprisingly obtained scores around 8, meaning that their works fall under the category of highly readable texts. This demonstrates how a text written in clear language and with a linear syntax does not lose its novelistic lyricism and is not reduced to mere linguistic simplisms debasing its narrative. On the contrary, significant textual complexity risks being synonymous with "bloated, overwrought prose" (AMW, 2023), where a novel can instead be compelling while maintaining its expository clarity. *Table 2.1* summarises the readability interpreting indicators[138]:

Readability Index	**Target Reader**	**Textual Typologies**
3 and below	Emergent and Early Readers	Picture and early reader books.
3-5	Children	Children's chapters books.
5-8	Young Adult	Advertising copy, Young Adult literature, some news articles.
8-12	General Adult	Novels, news articles, blog posts, political speeches.
12-16	Undergraduate	College textbooks.
16 and above	Graduate, Post-Graduate, Professional	Scholarly Journal and Technical articles.

Table 2.1 Readability indicators from *Analyze My Writing* software[139].

[138] From the software's official website: https://www.analyzemywriting.com/readability_indices.html (last accessed February 2024).

Similarly, the subsequent indexes, frequently used in educational and informative settings, suggest the years of formal education necessary to understand a text. In the perspective of text simplification (Aluísio et al., 2010), the same reading applies to all values: a text is easier to read if its score is low. These additional tools for monitoring readability were used to support the results of the descriptive statistics analysis carried out with the *Gunning Fog* Index and are:

(1) *Flesch-Kincaid* analyses a text's readability based on proportions comparing sentence and word length to syllables. The result is the grade level of instruction considered necessary to understand it. Textual accessibility is guaranteed if the result is under the eighth grade (Readable, 2023; Dubay, 2007, p. 92);

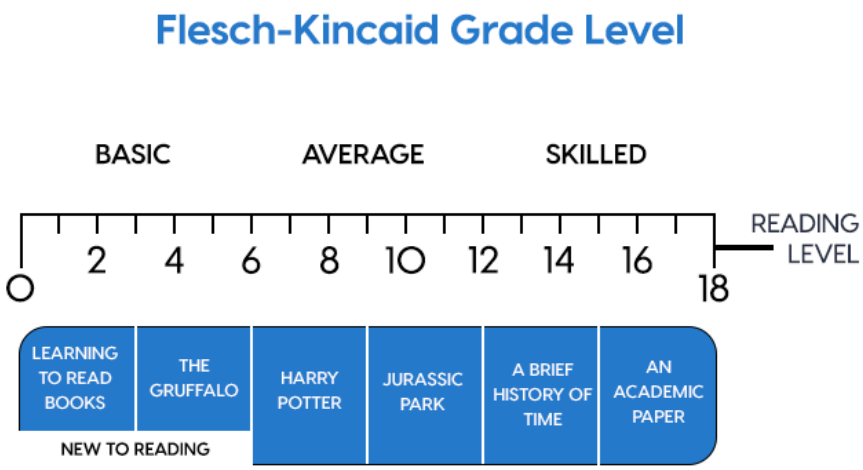

Figure 2.3 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level from *Readable*[140].

(2) *SMOG (Simple Measure of Gobbledygook)* concentrates on the impact of words and sentence length, especially counting polysyllabic words. Usually used for analysing longer texts, it is the readable index most diffused in healthcare and considered the most precise with results. Scores range from 0-100, with the latter indicating a significant text complexity (Dubay, 2007; Fitzsimmons et al., 2010; Mc Laughlin, 1969);

(3) *Coleman-liau* studies sentences and words in relation to letters and not syllables. It recurs to close testing sentences (Dubay, 2007, p. 80). Although it is not exclusively designed for English, the results are more accurate than other languages. It applies to the Flesch-Kincaid scheme; therefore, accessible texts should result in a score lower than 8,

[140] https://readable.com/readability/flesch-reading-ease-flesch-kincaid-grade-level/ (last accessed February 2024).

representing the ability to read a text of someone who attended 8th grade (or lower) in American schools (Lee & Lee, 2023; Readable, 2023);

(4) *Automated,* also known as *Automated Readability Index* (ARI), observes the characters per word proportions (Dubay, 2007, p. 90). The score ranges from 1 to 14, with the latter indicating the most textual complexity that only a "Professor" (that is the name of the final target reader) can understand (Readable, 2023; Smith & Senter, 1967)[141].

In addition to an overall numerical vision of readability provided by the tools listed supra, we have evaluated and illustrated in summary tables the linguistic-syntactic factors that affect the readability indexes of a text. The four textual features were observed equally for both languages. As formerly noted, the following parameters are all critical indicators of the complexity of a text, which can hinder comprehension for people with reading difficulties:

(1) *Number of words (token).* The complete count of words (called "token") for each museum label;

(2) *Average word length.* The average is obtained from the number of characters present in the words of a text. In the Italian language, taking the *GRADIT* (*GRAnde Dizionario ITaliano dell'uso*, the 'Great Italian Dictionary of use' by Tullio De Mauro) list of entry words as a corpus of analysis, the mean word length is 4.3 syllables and approximately 10 letters (Casadei, 2016, p. 69). The most common terms are, therefore, polysyllabic. On the contrary, in the English language, monosyllabic terms are prevalent (Gramley & Pätzold, 1992, cited in Perego, 2018, p. 6), with a vocabulary made up of 80% of lexemes ranging between 2-7 letters. Nonetheless, the average is 4.79 letters per word (Norvig, 2013), less than half the Italian mean. For easy-to-read language, the goal is to use the shortest and most immediate words possible (SCOPE, 2015).

(3) *Number of sentences.* The total number of running sentences in each exhibit label.

(4) *Average sentence length.* The mean is obtained from the number of words present in a text. For the Italian language, the average sentence length is 16 words. Readability tables show that a sentence is considered "very easy" with 9 words or less (Scuratti, 2016). For the English language, the average sentence length is 14 words. Readability indicators evaluate a sentence with fewer than 8 words as "very easy" perusal (Nimarldasan, 2008; Perego, 2018, p. 7). Easy-

[141] For further information on the history and methodology of English language readability indicators, see Dubay (2007).

to-read guidelines suggest writing sentences "as short as possible" (ODI, 2010, p. 29), with a maximum of 10-15 words per sentence (IE, 2009; NYCC, 2011; ODI, 2010).

From a lexical point of view, the quantitative analysis calculates the high-frequency vocabulary for both languages before and after retranslation. Specifically, the graphs presented in the subsequent research work include computing the vocabulary percentages that are part and not part of the corpora of reference. The lexical dimension is pivotal when studying easy-to-read language, as the international guidelines suggest using easy words anyone knows and can understand (IE, 2009, p. 10). The corpora of reference are the following:

- Italian language

Vocabolario di Base (VdB). The *Vocabolario di Base* (VdB, 'Basic Italian Vocabulary') was born in the late Seventies from an intuition of the linguist Tullio De Mauro, who wanted to collect, studying speakers of the Italian language, a single corpus of the best-known words "o per il loro grandissimo uso rispetto al restante vocabolario o perché sentite di pari grandissimo uso dai parlanti" ('either for their great use compared to the remaining vocabulary or because they are felt to be of equally great use by speakers') (De Mauro, 2019). The statistical analysis of texts of various genres combined with a survey of speakers has made it possible to identify approximately 7.300 lemmas, divided into three categories:

- The "**vocabolario fondamentale**" (FO) ('fundamental vocabulary'), made up of 2.000 words (e.g., **acqua** 'water', **adulto** 'adult', **aereo** 'plane'), includes the most used words in the Italian language. It represents 90% of the occurrences of words in texts and speeches (De Mauro, 2019, p. 159);

- The "vocabolario di alto uso" (AU) ('highly used vocabulary'), made up of 3.000 words (such as bacheca 'board', baffo 'whisker', bagnare 'wet'), encompasses less frequent words compared to the previous category, representing 4% of occurrences. However, it still represents a slice of much more frequent lemmas compared to *parole comuni* ('common words', around 50.000) and the "restante sterminata massa del lessico" ('remaining immense mass of the lexicon') (De Mauro, 2019, p. 159);

- The *"vocabolario di alta disponibilità*" (AD) ('high availability vocabulary'), made up of 2.300 words (e.g., *cacao* 'cocoa', *cacciavite* 'screwdriver', *calamita* 'magnet') is present in a very minor percentage because it represents a group of words that are not usually said or

written but are known to all speakers because related to our life experiences: "Sono le parole che diciamo o scriviamo raramente, ma che pensiamo con grande frequenza" ('They are the words that we rarely say or write, but that we think with great frequency') (De Mauro, 2000, p. xvii).

From a perspective of language inclusion, if a text is written with words that are not part of the VdB, it becomes difficult to read and understand for people with reading difficulties, whether due to cognitive challenges or illiteracy. The elaborated data that compare text results with the high-usage vocabulary corpus aim to verify to what extent a text is comprehensible to a broader range of readers. In the case of Easy-to-Read Language, the invitation to use these lexemes instead of others (Sciumbata, 2022) is indicated as an essential vehicle for more inclusive and widespread dissemination of content since people with intellectual disabilities have a limited lexicon from which to draw (Fajardo et al. 2014). As in the case of the highly readable monthly magazine called *Due parole*[142] ('Two words'), lexemes that are not part of the VdB can still be used but accompanied by a clear explanation recurring to words from the VdB (Piemontese, 1996; Gargiulo & Arezzo 2017).

The percentages were extrapolated with *Dylan Textools (v.2.1.9)*, allowing comparisons of the lexemes with the *Nuovo Vocabolario di Base della Lingua Italiana* (NVdB) ('New Basic Vocabulary of the Italian Language') (De Mauro, 2019, p. 157), i.e., the most updated corpus, closer to the usage of the spoken Italian language today.

- English language

For the English language, there is no precise counterpart for the *Vocabolario di Base* (VdB), a frequency list that divides the English language's lexemes in such a detailed manner, so it was not possible to compare precisely the two versions of the English texts according to the same parameters. However, there is a *Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary American English*[143] (2010), which De Mauro himself (Chiari & De Mauro, 2014, p. 113) compares to his New Basic Vocabulary of Italian Language (NVdB) as the most similar dictionary to his creation. High-frequency Words (HFW) (e.g., *painting, hat*, *simple,* etc.) - listed in the Frequency Dictionary are around 5.000 and cover approximately 80% of the words written and spoken in everyday life by people with English as their mother tongue (Coxhead, 2000; Nation, 2006; Dang et al., 2022). Rather than writing using low-frequency words, resorting to more common words conveys clarity to a text, making it more easily

[142] http://www.dueparole.it/ (last accessed February 2024).
[143] Routledge's Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary British English entitled *A Frequency Dictionary of British English. Core Vocabulary and Exercises for Learners* (Brezina & Gablasovais, 2024) is being published as a first edition, so the work refers to the US version.

understandable for people struggling with language difficulties.

We calculated a general percentage of the High-Frequency Vocabulary used in the texts before and after retranslation. The result is a less detailed lexical investigation than the one undertaken for the Italian language - due to the aforementioned breadth and different distinction of lexemes observed in the Italian VdB compared to English HFW. Nonetheless, data can contribute to having an overview of text difficulty from a lexical stance. Percentages are calculated manually.

2.1.1.6 Qualitative analysis

The quantitative analysis of texts undoubtedly supports the translator in his work. However, the possibilities that a qualitative analysis provides for the reading of data and translations equally support the translator, allowing a broader and, at the same time, targeted look at aspects of translations and texts that a purely numerical reading could miss. Qualitative analysis enriches the translation study by allowing the analysis of nuances that did not emerge in an initial observation phase with automatic methods (Calvo & Cova, 2024; Sciumbata, 2020).

The qualitative analysis places the translator, his "human" intervention and his choices at the centre: the methodology implemented here is inspired by *Descriptive Translation Studies* (DTS), an applied branch of Translation Studies[144] (Lambert & Van Gorp, 2014; Toury, 2012), and in particular to the *translation commentary* framework (Venuti, 2018), applying them from a perspective of linguistic simplification, which lays the foundation for the retranslation work into easy-to-read language. Starting from the analysis of the five original panels in standard Italian language - that is, our source texts (STs) - the analysis will then move on to break down the ten retranslations (five in Easy Italian and five in Easy English) - that is, our target texts (TTs). Following the perspective of Venuti (2018), which exposes the role of the translator, the analysis consists of an articulated commentary on the choices made, bringing to light the processes implemented by the translator in studying the original texts first and proposing his interpretation afterwards. The qualitative description, based on national and international easy-to-read guidelines (see *Chapter I*), aims to highlight the meaning-making of the translator in relation to the textual typology (the exhibit label), the cultural context of reference (the museum), as well as the target audience of arrival (families), which led him to carry out his own translation choices.

Therefore, that of the translator is "an interpretive act" (Venuti, 2018, p. 9), considering various factors that come to light in the translation observations. The translator's comments take the reader by the hand in a process of "inference" (Venuti, 2018, p. 10) between theory and praxis of translation, which allows one to follow the interpretative path undertaken by the translator and its

[144] DTS is commonly used, especially in the field of literary translation. For further information, refer to Toury (2012).

ethical implications (*Ibidem*) and to understand the choices made to make the text more accessible to all. We reiterate here how the simplification strategies implemented can benefit all readers, not just the public with intellectual disabilities. The methodological design of the translations, therefore, takes on a more significant social value, as stated by Venuti (2018), in underlining the importance of making the processes explicit and making it understandable for the reader: "The hierarchy of cultural resources and ideologies and the origin of the translator's interpretants must be reconstructed so as to understand how verbal choices constitute interpretive moves that can carry ethical force" (*ibid*., p. 11).

The qualitative analysis follows the order and intentions of the quantitative analysis, inspecting the texts before and after the retranslations. In the first phase, ex-ante the retranslation into Easy-to-Read Language, the analysis delves deeper than the quantitative analysis into the source texts to have "a tough sense of the specific terrain of the original" (Spivak, 2000, p. 23). Since the work deals with retranslating existing texts, accurately scanning the source texts becomes a necessary step in carrying on the rewriting intervention (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 311). The process elucidates the characteristics and problems of the texts with a view to linguistic accessibility, primarily referring to the comprehensibility and readability of the texts. Following the international guidelines on linguistic inclusion (IE, 2009), the intent is to comment on the texts from the point of view of the organisation of information[145], syntax, lexicon, and graphics, emphasising features and deficiencies that could hinder the reading experience of visitors with disabilities.

In the second phase, following the retranslations, a descriptive and comparative analysis occurs between STs and TTs to identify the changes, or as Munday et al. (2022) define them, the "translation shifts" (2022, p. 104) on the different language levels, considering the implications of the narrative-educational function of family labels. In an inclusive key, the objective is to bring to light what Toury (2000) defines as "operational and extratextual norms". Toury (2000, pp. 202-207) describes translation as a combination of "operational norms", which guide the translator step by step in his work - an independent variable - and "extratextual norms", which are instead culture-specific and constitute a dependent variable to be taken into consideration linked explicitly to the context. Combining the two standards, the scrutiny offers a broader perspective on the work while reaching a granular level of analysis, encompassing the reflections on the work conducted in Easy Italian and Easy English. With the consequent interlingual and intralingual considerations, the descriptive

[145] In particular, qualitative discussion allows, unlike quantitative analysis, to study the selection of contents and the organisation of texts (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 392).

process aims to motivate the translator's choices by following his "reasoning" process, working with the texts and highlighting any patterns of translation strategies[146].

2.1.2 Building a Pedagogical Documentation

Documentation was built around this retranslation work to observe the impact of the easy-to-read language on visitors, specifically on the families who visit the museum. The pedagogical documentation is understood following the Reggio Emilia Approach (REA) conceptual framework. This educational philosophy was born and developed in Italy in the city of Reggio Emilia and reached its ακμέ and international resonance at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s of the twentieth century[147]. In a peculiar educational context where, according to the psychologist Jerome Bruner, there are "possible worlds of the imagination" (1998 in Rinaldi, 2021, p. xxiv), the innovative vision of Loris Malaguzzi - whose role is the impetus to the birth of this approach - and the studies of his collaborators and successors are still today considered relevant and a source of inspiration in the international pedagogical panorama[148] (Edwards & Gandini, 2018; Pramling & Samuelsson, 2018). The Reggio Emilia Approach proposes an image of a competent child who plays an active role in his learning path (Edwards et al., 1998), which blossoms from his relationship with others. In a participatory pedagogy, the dimensions of dialogue and listening become fundamental: individuals take part in what is defined as "listening pedagogy" (Rinaldi, 2021a; Edwards et al., 1998), one of the main characteristics of Reggio Emilia's educational philosophy.

The creation of pedagogical documentation takes shape from emphasising the participatory and listening dimensions that constitute the foundations of the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards et al., 1998). The documentation consists of collecting material (photos, videos, writings, drawings and more) that attests to the dialogic discovery processes implemented by the child and those who co-create with him. It is essential to underline that the objective is not just to display fragmented results (like, for instance, showing a single picture) but to thoroughly explain and describe the processes in which children and adults come into play (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 241), leaving space for their learning expressions (which can occur both with their peers and teachers). With the information and material collected, teachers, *pedagogistas*, *atelieristas*, parents and educators[149] are interlocutors in a

[146] Translation strategies in the broader sense connotated by Mona Baker (2018).
[147] 1991 is the year that marked the increase of international media attention on the schools of Reggio Emilia, following the publication in the famous American magazine *Newsweek* of the ten best schools in the world, a list that included Reggio Emilia preschools (Edwards et al., 1998, p. xviii).
[148] Particularly in the field of Early Childhood Education.
[149] In reality, the sharing process can occur with the adults involved and the children, who actively participate in creating the right learning path for them (Malaguzzi, 2021). It can also occur by involving policymakers and the city's

listening practice that observes what happens when children learn, a process that, if analysed in depth, involves a passage "from listening to hearing" as highlighted by Forman & Fyfe (1998):

> We can transcribe the children's conversations and affirm the importance of their words. We may listen, but what do we hear? To foster negotiated learning it is essential for teachers to listen with the third ear, to hear the implied meanings of children's words (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 249).

Sharing their activities and possible interpretations gives rise to a moment of collective meta-reflection, of "negotiated learning" (*Ibidem*), in which the infinite hidden languages of children are brought to light, finding new ways to enhance them (Malaguzzi, 1994)[150]. Within the framework of "research-action", learning is read as an ongoing process, impossible to photograph, elusive to any attempt to make it definitive and open to indefinite rereadings welcoming different points of view (Rinaldi, 2021). The dynamism of learning is underlined in the documentation's attempt to stimulate the pedagogical conversation to find ever-new tools to implement it.

Commonly, pedagogical documentation is freely declined within contexts of pedagogical action and is characterised by a hybrid nature that can combine different fields (Giudici & Cagliari, 2018). The purpose is to respect its open nature of the invitation to dialogue, listen to others, ask questions, and enhance the group bond in a dynamic learning context shaped by participation since "o l'educazione si fa insieme, o l'educazione non c'è" ('either education is done together, or there is no education') (Malaguzzi, 2021). Therefore, methodologically, there is not an accurate, standardised method of implementation that accompanies it, but a thousand interpretations and methods that are constantly improved and updated. In a holistic view that draws from socio-constructivism but also interactionism (Filippini & Bonilauri, 1998, p. 130), the common thread is the strong desire to learn more about the processes implemented by children, their interactions with space and others and to try to provide them with an educational-relational environment that is increasingly rich in stimuli to enhance their "doing experience". The intent of this work heads towards providing new analytical lenses to a pedagogical theory which, although it is a successful educational praxis in numerous and various contexts, does not follow a specific method of data collection and analysis - and perhaps this is where its richness lies, in its constant renewal while being free from constraints, open to infinite interpretations and ever-evolving questions. Here, it is interpreted in a qualitative research key, proposed through the combination and use of video observation and focus groups.

The primary phase of video observation investigates the behaviour of families before and after

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municipality in an educational program that becomes part of its political intervention agenda (Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2018). Here, we will focus on the pedagogical documentation shared between professionals - in this case, the staff who deal with art education at the *Pinacoteca di Brera* - to increase their awareness and skills.

[150] The famous Malaguzzi poem entitled *Invece il cento c'è* ('No way. The hundred is there') is available at the following link: https://www.reggiochildren.it/reggio-emilia-approach/100-linguaggi/ (last accessed February 2024).

the inclusive retranslations, collecting data in a corpus, which is scrutinised by taking inspiration from sociology, giving value to their interaction (as well as to their relationship in a pedagogical sense[151]). Given that the documentation process - in this case, constituted by videos, a tool that can contribute to vividly explain family learning developments - always implies a subjective interpretation of the data (see paragraph *2.1.2.1*), the subsequent phase of the focus group presents the collected documentation to the professionals who work at the museum. By listening to multiple interpretations and learning from them, documenting becomes genuinely pedagogical, giving rise to an exchange between new and different gazes that meet in a "conclusive"[152] reflection on the data, enriching the overall vision with more perspectives and sealing the work in this research. Involving the Educational Services staff aims to build a museum community aware of the tools available to make the museum a public forum (see *Chapter III*) that is more accessible and inclusive. Only at the end does the entire work [*retranslations + video observations + focus group*] acquire the true meaning of Reggio Emilia's pedagogical documentation, translating it into a museum context while faithfully maintaining its significance and objectives. In the "listening museum", the final aim could be defined as a "documenting to include" process, through which pedagogical documentation becomes a tool to foster active participation in the museum. As a cultural institution, the museum is part of a democratic fabric that communally shares a project for education with the entire society. To interlink and strengthen "cultures of accessibility" (Neves, 2018), the museum recognises its civil and political value - the same power that Malaguzzi (Malaguzzi, 1995) recognises within schools and all public organisations.

The following paragraphs describe the procedures and methods used in this study for collecting and analysing the data first (*2.1.2.1 Video Observation*) and for sharing the data and drawing final general reflections afterwards (*2.1.2.2 Final Focus Group*).

2.1.2.1 Video Observation

To study the impact of exhibit labels on the interaction of families, we decided to use video to conduct qualitative research. Video observation is a well-acclaimed research methodology in the social sciences academic fields such as Education (Goldman et al., 2007) and Sociology (Heath et al., 2010). However, it is not as diffused in the museum's Visitor Studies field. Studies on visitors still

[151] For an in-depth analysis of the relationship in the Reggio Emilia Approach, particularly related to the aesthetic experience, see Farinacci et al. (2022).

[152] In the Reggio Emilia Approach, the processes of encounter and learning are seen as constantly evolving. Therefore, the term "conclusion" gives a finite connotation to what, in reality, always remains undefined and ready to be reread from a new perspective. In this stance, uncertainty becomes value (Rinaldi, 2021a). See the reflection in the final chapter (*Conclusions*).

tend to return to traditional ways of assessing if an exhibition engages or arouses curiosity (such as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and the like). The issue raised by Heath et al. (2010, p. 5) is that these types of research are not sufficient to analyse the natural conduct of visitors "at the exhibit face" (*Ibidem*), neglecting to study the audience's collaboration and its essential role in people's attempt to decode the meaning of an exhibit. Video observation fulfils the need for more qualitative studies in the field, allowing researchers to detect the visitors' dynamics of interrelation and critically dissect every aspect of the interaction during its actual intercourse, rather than asking visitors particular questions at the exit from the museum. The video directly examines the "live" use of talk and the bodily conduct of visitors coordinating their actions with others in a concerto of practical aesthetic experience[153], offering researchers, artists, designers and museum personnel an invaluable opportunity to study and improve museum communication and its tools.

Over the years, video observation has increasingly become a promising "lively field" that has built solid foundations (Jordan & Henderson, 1995, p. 80), making it possible to satisfy the needs of the research world, especially when collaborating with institutions and companies. The strength of video observation lies in the possibility of collecting material in an easy and non-invasive way, material that can be viewed several times - thus guaranteeing greater reliability to the research (Vom Lehn et al., 2002, p. 16) - and which can be reread in a multidisciplinary key (Nassauer & Legewie, 2022, p. 71), depending on the specific needs of the individual researcher. The video mode also allows us to observe the protagonists "in the thick of things" (Gilgun, 2013, p. 118). This immersive mode allows the researcher to understand "why" certain things happen, a question that embodies the value of qualitative research (Hancock, 2002, p. 1).

It is fair to underline that the world resulting from video observation, although reliable, can never be an objective representation of reality: the positioning of the camera by the researcher implies a subjectivity and a specific directing of the gaze, implementing a selection of the point of view beforehand[154] (Christidou, 2012, p. 113; Hancock, 2002, p. 13). However, despite its objectivity limitations, video observation can reveal much about the co-present interaction of visitors, which is considered an essential and foundational element of the visit to the museum worth inspecting (Davies & Heath, 2013; Heath et al., 2010; Vom Lehn et al., 2002). Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective, video data can reveal a lot about the relational dimension of learning in the informal setting of the museum and its "transformative power" (Borun et al., 1996; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Falk & Dierking, 2016; Leinhardt, 2014; Garner et al., 2016; Goldman et al., 2007) and emphasise

[153] The need to examine the practical field of aesthetic experience studies derives from the latter's theoretical limits, which focus more on the individual than the group dimension (Dewey, 2020).
[154] As qualitative research, this fieldwork acknowledges the plurality of interpretations of data (Gilgun et al., 2013)

that the multimodal exchange between parents and children is not ephemeral and can enrich their aesthetic experience[155].

Given the recognition of the value of the social component when experiencing museums[156] (see *Chapter III*), although in previous investigations space was only given to the analysis of conversations in the galleries (Allen, 2002; Feinberg & Leinhardt, 2003; Leinhardt et al., 2015), current pedagogical and sociological studies in museums settings recognise the multimodality of communication (Christidou, 2016, p. 89) concentrating on examining visitors' interaction with museum objects through a combination of talk and bodily conduct in order to generate insightful conversation. The entire choreography of meaning-making helps visitors develop their interpretation of museum objects (understood as paintings but also exhibit labels) (Hindmarsh & Heath, 2003, p. 43). With video as the medium, the aim is to discover thoroughly what happens at the exhibit face to find ways to foster the desired dialogical encounters in museums, improve visitors' relationships to generate a memorable experience and make them discover art more intensively. This fieldwork is headed in this direction: the pedagogical documentation aims firstly to unveil what happens with families in front of the works of art, observing families' interaction with the exhibits, expressed between parent and child in their co-construction of meaning, between family and labels for families, between family and the surrounding space. The following pages will describe an interaction read on a pedagogical level (with the aesthetic experience and learning occurring collectively) with the contribution of sociological analysis (and, by extension, an anthropological reflection, contemplating the dynamism and influence of natural connections and relationships between human beings). Secondly, concentrating on their interaction with the interpretive texts, the aim is to observe how they interpret and understand the panels for families before and after retranslation into easy-to-read language to see if learning collaboration is encouraged with the help of a more understandable language. The analysis could bring to the fore the differences in the interaction of families with the original text and with the text retranslated into inclusive language to underline the importance and possible effectiveness of linguistic inclusion at the museum. More specifically, this analysis will lead to a discussion on how museum "objects" such as interpretive texts, when provided in a more accessible language, can become an unprecedented tool for improving visitors' manifold modes of interaction (Bradburne, 2000, p. 29), guaranteeing the museum's inclusivity. Therefore, studying visitors' behaviours through video observation can play a pivotal role in creating or rewriting educational resources for all museum audiences.

[155] The perspective draws on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach, which emphasises the social dimension of learning and impacts studying the interactional dimension of learning in the museum context (Christidou, 2012, p. 22).
[156] This is also evident from the fact that the visitors show up in groups or pairs at the museum and rarely alone (Vom Lehn et al., 2001).

Regarding study design, Video Data Analysis (VDA) (Nassauer & Legewie, 2022) examines the interaction between parents and children in front of selected artworks. In particular, the focus will be on the impact of family exhibit labels on their spontaneous dialogical performance. VDA contribute to scrutinising families' interactional exchanges in their natural sequential order, highlighting the significance of social connections in an informal learning environment like the museum.

The first phase was to study the museum and its visitors through a field observation (April 2021) (Gilgun, 2013, p. 18; Heath et al., 2010, p. 33; McKinney, 1966, p. 71). This initial phase was fundamental for getting acquainted with the museum space and studying its collections and educational offerings. Observation in the museum's galleries leads to carefully selecting the labels and artworks on which to focus the study. Additionally, it allowed us to observe and take notes of visitors' spontaneous behaviours during their museum explorations. The first-hand observation was subsequently intertwined with a pilot study (Heath et al., 2010, p. 19) to test the filming kit and solve any emerging technical issues. Through video-checking and sound-checking, this prior inspection helped improve factors such as lighting, audio quality, and camera positioning to not hinder families' freedom of movement in the museum[157] (Christidou, 2012, p. 101).

Regarding the main field study of the research, the video observation was divided into two main phases: before and after the inclusive retranslations. The first part involves a primary observation of families and how they behave in front of selected works of art and their respective panels. The three chosen panels where cameras were held are one "classical" panel (an example of the more traditional labels displayed in the museum) and two *panels for young and old*, the textual typology at the centre of this research. This first ex-ante analysis aims to illustrate how fundamental is the interaction between children and parents for shaping their learning experience when it comes to observing an artwork and how the *panels for young and old* contribute to easing their dialogue, comparing them to an example of interaction in front of a traditional one. Therefore, the first step is to demonstrate the hypothesis that family panels encourage more significant interaction at the museum than other more standard educational offerings in the galleries. The second step is then to analyse families' interaction with the textual typology designed for them and evaluate, from a linguistic inclusion point of view, the difficulties encountered in reading and understanding the texts. The final consideration will briefly touch upon some additional communicative and linguistic

[157] Many examples discussed in this thesis will illustrate how children tend to occupy all the space surrounding artworks. This requires putting the camcorder in locations that do not hinder their dynamic experience of the paintings. This behaviour is impacted by the *panels for young and old* characteristics, which foster playful responses by the audience. The Brera Art Gallery encourages visitors' interaction in all facets, including the physical dimension (see *Brera Approach* insights in Chapter *III*).

reflections that will generate the basis for the translation work of the panels into the easy-to-read language.

The second part comprises video observations after the retranslations, in which the participants were observed in front of the two works of art with the family panels examined in the ex-ante, now proposed with new family panels[158] retranslated into easy-to-read language. The behaviour of the families in front of the exhibits was observed, particularly their dialogic exchange of points of view and the various modes they performed with the new inclusive labels, focusing on the contribution a more accessible language could give to their co-construction of significance. Beyond the pedagogical-relational and sociological-anthropological viewpoints, the inclusive stance seals the reading of the occurring interactions to evaluate the impact of the easy-to-read language.

Regarding the recruitment of the participants[159], with the help of the museum's Educational Services, families were recruited through two main direct channels which the museum had previously collaborated with: the first, the *Comitato Strapisa*[160] ('Strapisa Parents' Committee'), a group of parents from *Scuola Pisa* primary school, a school located in *Ugo Pisa* Street in Milan. The association was born to raise funds for the school but also deals with building relationships with nearby cultural contexts for the benefit of its pupils; the second, the *Istituto Comprensivo di Viale Libertà*[161] ('Libertà Street K-14 school') and its teachers, located in Vigevano, in the province of Pavia, a city near Milan.

Through an official email directly sent from the *Pinacoteca di Brera* (an example in *Figure 2.4*), we presented the researcher together with his research project with a short abstract, explaining the need to find volunteers to carry out the study, specifically pairs of parents and children, with the pupils aged between 7-10 years old. The email specifies the research methods through video and microphones and the consequent request to sign a consent form to join the field study (*Figure 2.5*). Participation was voluntary, but all contributing families were allowed to visit the museum for free - something already offered at the *Pinacoteca di Brera* to children, but not to adults - and in the case of large families with older children, every member was granted free admission. In the case of the primary school committee, we were put in direct contact with the families; in the case of the K-14 school, we contacted a group of primary school teachers. The largest group of volunteers came from the Vigevano school, thanks to the support of the teachers who promoted it as an educational trip to

[158] For the second phase of video observation, new label supports were introduced in the museum to display the new easy-to-read panels for families (see *Chapter V*).
[159] As far as participants are concerned, the research focuses primarily on children and families. Nevertheless, conducting a more specific study on adult visitors could provide significant insights.
[160] Here is the committee's official website: http://genitoripisa.it/strapisa/comitato/ (last accessed January 2024).
[161] The school's official website: https://www.icvialelibertavigevano.edu.it (last accessed January 2024).

their classes. From a logistical point of view, following an exchange of e-mails and an online meeting to present the project, we were able to organise the filming days during weekends, given the understandable greater willingness of parents to participate on non-weekdays. The last email exchange presents the order of arrival of the groups of volunteers on set days, with the names and quantity of family couples[162] who have signed up, along with the names and telephone numbers of the accompanying teachers.

The possibility of involving more children as volunteers - with their respective families - from different classrooms guaranteed a faithful representation of the contemporary Italian school landscape, characterising the study with multiculturalism and a richness in diversity embodied by the participants, strengthening the sense of inclusion that is the backbone of this research project. The participation of children with the Italian language as their L2 or with special educational needs also contributes to assessing if Brera Art Gallery has been concretely accessible since the commencement or if its inclusive mission is improved after the retranslations in easy-to-read language.

The families (30 participating couples) were divided into two sub-groups: one to be observed before retranslations and the other afterwards to avoid the same parent-child pairs repeating a similar experience with the same labels twice, as having experienced the content before could have influenced the reading of the retranslations[163]. In total, 90 people were welcomed into the galleries during the research days, which signals positive participation and an active desire to participate in the museum's life. The total count comprises all the family members who availed the opportunity to visit the museum, along with the teachers and their children (mostly teenagers, who were also keen to take advantage of a museum visit[164]).

Regarding data collection, the observations took place in two phases, dividing the volunteers into two groups: before the retranslations (May 2022) and after the retranslations (May 2023)[165]. In both

[162] For example, where possible, in the case of four members in a family unit made up of two adults and two children, given that the research interest is on intergenerational couples, the volunteer family was divided into two adult-child pairs. We take advantage here to declare that the study of couples instead of larger groups of visitors was chosen due to technological limitations and lack of collaborators.

[163] Nonetheless, the study acknowledges the possible limitations related to comparing results among different subgroups, as individual differences among volunteers can also interfere with their reactions to texts before and after the inclusive rewritings. These personal differences - framed not only by the specific situation but also by an intricate background composed of visitors' individual socio-cultural experiences, habitus, and multiple intelligences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bordieau, 1977; Gardner, 1983/2013) - could impact their interactions within the specific relational ecology surrounding them. Exploring this issue further in a complementary research study would be interesting.

[164] It should be noted that for most of the volunteers it was their first visit to the Milanese *Pinacoteca di Brera*.

[165] Organisational slippages arose due to the global pandemic, which unfortunately overwhelmed us. The entire implementation of the field study was delayed due to the impossibility of experiencing the museum in total freedom and safety. You will notice how, in some cases, the footage shows the mandatory use of masks, which prevented us from observing facial expressions and led us to focus on conversation and more general analysis of body language, such as the use of arms (see for example the "*telling and tagging*" presented in *Chapter III*).

phases, the technical equipment for data collection comprises a video camera, a tripod to support it, two Bluetooth microphones, and a Bluetooth remote control connected to both the video camera and microphones. After mounting the video equipment, connecting it to the camcorder, and testing the audio with microphones in the selected museum rooms, we started the recordings using a Bluetooth connector and moved away from the performing scene[166]. However, the researcher always wore a name badge and was available for any requests while staying in proximity to her recording apparatus.

Initially, the two groups of voluntary families were welcomed and informed of their valuable support for the research project and their rights. This first act is fundamental to establishing participant trust (Heath et al., 2010, p. 17). Even more so in the case of recording children, who have the same right as adults to be informed about the ongoing research. Parents who participated in the research signed the waiver for the images *in situ*. According to Heath et al. (2010, p. 21), who recall the most recent guidelines, such as the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, despite the consensus obtained from parents, it is essential to explicate in an accessible language what the research is about to children and what they are going to be part of, also ensuring that they agree to be videotaped. In this case, we warmly presented the research to all children, telling them they would become "researchers for a day" and contributing to the data collection.

On the days of video observation, all the other visitors at the museum were informed through an A4 sign on the reception desk (*Figure 2.6*), the first "port of call" for visitors' inquiries (Flynn, 2016, p. 69), and the locus where the families met to begin the experimentation. Everyone involved, from the museum staff to the families, was fully aware of the video camera placements and their aim exclusively for research purposes. For every session, the video camera was positioned on the left side of the artwork to have a comprehensive picture of the interaction between the labels and the exhibits (see *Chapters III* and *V*). All the pairs of participants wore the small wireless microphones and had the chance to become familiar with them before recording[167].

Data has been collected for all participants during selected weekends, totalling over 30 hours of filming[168]. The data collected in the first and second phases were stored and archived on an external

[166] The aim is to be as least obtrusive as possible since the omnipresence of the researcher can affect the spontaneity of interaction (Heath et al., 2010, p. 17). The possible impact of the presence of the researcher and the cameras on the participants' behaviour is contested as one of the limitations of using video observation in research (Nassauer & Legewie, 2022). For further information, see studies on the *Hawthorne effect* (Chiesa & Hobbs, 2008; Paradis & Sutkin, 2017).

[167] In most cases, people positively forget to have them on. According to video observation studies (Heath et al., 2010), spontaneous glances at the camera or the microphone, especially by children, have been noted down. However, due to their rare frequency, they are not considered relevant to invalidate the research work. Vom Lehm et al. (2001) highlight how people are more used to cameras in everyday life, such as security cameras in our cities, so they tend to forget being recorded.

[168] We know that most prominent studies on the subject, such as the ones presented in this thesis section, create much larger data corpora. However, since it is pedagogical documentation, we reiterate that the intent is to take inspiration and partly the methodology from these studies to translate it into our small case study of museum

drive. Videos were then scrutinised and divided into segments according to the different interactions' lengths. We proceeded with incident analysis and data transcription verbatim.

Regarding transcriptions, Christidou (2012, p. 111) recalls the debate among scholars about the reliability of this data representation mode. Especially when dealing with audio-visual material, transcripts can miss out on representing every facet of the meaning-making process, particularly the choreographical and visual components. The multimodality of audio-video material may be represented incompletely through transcription, with the result of risking losing essential elements of the ongoing intergenerational exchange by changing the medium "from action to words" (Christidou, 2012, p. 112).

These methodological challenges led to a distinctive way of representing performances recurring to a "narrative approach". Developed by Barron (2000, 2003), the approach could include a non-verbal component[169] to strengthen data. For the purpose of depicting children and adults' intricacy of actions in their co-construction of knowledge around the works of art and the exhibit labels, the transcripts in this thesis are therefore combined with two other types of representations: *behavioural descriptions*, which convey visual aspects of visitors' bodily interaction, and *still frames*, which concretely show pivotal moments of the discussed interactions (Derry et al., 2010, p. 23).

Transcripts in *Chapters III* and *V* illustrate visitors' discourse pivotal dialogical moments in bold lettering to highlight moments where pairs' aesthetic experience is moulded, such as the exchanges that highlight a fostered interaction thanks to the *panels for young and old*, or on the contrary, a problem of comprehension related to the labels. Within the transcripts, in italics, families' behaviour is described. Additionally, all transcripts come with their more representative screenshots. All references to the people involved have been anonymised to safeguard privacy (Heath, 2010, p. 30). For instance, contributors' names are changed, and the visages of the subjects are pixelated, both in the thesis and when showcasing data in academic contexts.

In terms of data analysis, qualitative video analysis has been conducted through the lenses of social sciences, particularly following Heath et al.'s (2010) and Christidou's (2012) methodological framework, skimming through the recorded videos and identifying patterns of interaction among the volunteers. The sociological contribution provides a new look at the pedagogy of relationships (Pignataro, 2014) and allows us to read the data from a new sociocultural perspective (Christidou,

education. The part of the study presented here frames the central theme of linguistic inclusion in the museum, addressed from a translation perspective, as it is a thesis halfway between Translation Studies and Pedagogy. In this case, the objective was to obtain recordings from all the children and adults who volunteered in the research as if we were presenting the results of a sample group of parents and children.

[169] Christidou (2012, p. 117) emphasises the lack of a research tradition dealing with non-verbal interactions, although many divergent proposals have been put forward over the years to address this methodological conundrum.

2012). Besides examining the social interfaces within families in real-time, in our experience, the reading of the performances is from a pedagogical perspective aligned with Borun et al. studies (1996, 1997) evaluating the impact that family labels can have on family interaction, understood as a process of co-construction of meaning within an informal learning context. By observing how families process and reason through their multimodal dialogue, it is possible to understand their learning progression[170]. Their gradual understanding of the text ultimately leads to an inclusive linguistics reflection aimed at identifying the linguistic elements of the text that may present difficulties for readers' families.

Following reiterated screening of the video data divided into segments[171] supported by transcriptions - the strength of the utilisation of video in qualitative research is precisely in the possibility of reviewing the data multiple times - the initial identification of the interactional patterns was carried out through *coding*, following the schema created by Christidou (*Table 2.2*) based on studies analysing conversations and behaviours of visitors to the museum, combining Conversation Analysis (CA) with Ethnomethodology (2012)[172]. Coding helped identify visitors' sociocultural modes of talk and bodily conduct while recognising their pedagogical functions.

The methodical examination of the gathered audio-visual material revealed recurrent visitor performances amongst all children and their family members at the face of the paintings. As suggested by Christidou (2016, p. 377), it is "the combination of systemic analysis and microanalysis" that provides the possibility of "zooming in and zooming out" from the data, thus having an overview of visitors' behaviour. Intending to observe the impact of the labels before and after the retranslation in the families' visit, the division into more recurrent patterns facilitates the illustration of the performances in their co-construction of meaning (for instance, when negotiating labels' interpretation or when sharing their focus of attention on a painting). Coding allows a more detailed analysis of the emerging differences, particularly before and after the inclusive rewriting. Critically

[170] It is important to emphasise how this research revolves around studying visitor interaction recurring to sociological lenses while considering essential pedagogical factors. The video critical analysis is based on a sociocultural interactionism framework, aligning with the perspective of the *Brera Approach* (refer to *Chapter III*). A limitation of the research is that it focuses primarily on *illocutionary performance* (Searle et al., 1980) and the pragmatics of the learning experience rather than assessing the entire comprehension process of the texts implemented by the families. A different methodological approach would have been required to investigate this aspect further. A new study could explore the collected data from a different perspective, focusing on the cognitive aspects of reading and comprehension of the labels and their impact on family interaction.

[171] By segment, we mean the complete interaction of a parent-child couple in front of a work of art, from their arrival to their shift towards another exhibit or room (Christidou, 2012, p. 119).

[172] Christidou (2012, p. 118) noticed a need for a structured coding methodology of analysis for transcribing and studying social interactions in museums that use audio-visual data. To solve this problem, starting from existing research such as Borun et al. (1996) and Feinberg & Leinhardt (2002), she developed a coding method combining theory and practice to illustrate multimodal interactions (*Ivi*, p. 119). For further information on CA, consult Ten Have (2007); for Ethnomethodology, see vom Lehn (2016).

observing the strips of interaction and comparing their peculiarities to the broader data prompted us to consider if easy-to-read language was appropriate for families visiting the museum. The data analysis becomes a documentation presented in a descriptive form in *Chapters III* and *V*.

Iconic gestures (McNeill 1992)	They are in close formal relationship to the semantic content of speech (McNeill 1992, 12). These gestures imitate, mime and are similar to an image of the signified part.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Tag questions</td><td colspan="5">A declarative statement or an imperative is turned into a question by adding an interrogative fragment (the "tag"). Used to address the next speaker, opening up the conversation, functioning as invitations for the next turn-taking.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Person reference</td><td colspan="5">Person reference may be performed through personal pronouns, calling someone by name or surname, and/or referring to the audience's relation to the performer (e.g. "mum", "dad") (Schegloff 2007).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Repairs</td><td colspan="5">Repairs refer to an organized set of practices through which participants are able to address and potentially resolve troubles or problems of speaking, hearing or understanding in talk (Sidnell 2011, 110).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Nodding</td><td colspan="5">is a gesture in which the head is tilted in alternating up and down arcs along the sagittal plane. It functions as a non-verbal acknowledgement to the previous performance.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Telling</td><td rowspan="4">Perceptual talk (Allen 2002)</td><td>Identification</td><td>Tagging</td><td rowspan="3">Pointing out something to attend to, verbally and non-verbally.</td><td colspan="2">Pointing gestures</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Spatial deixis</td><td>Spatial adverbs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Verbs of motion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Demonstratives</td></tr>
<tr><td>Naming</td><td colspan="4">Stating the name of the exhibit.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feature</td><td colspan="4">Referring to a specific feature of the exhibit.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Text-echo</td><td colspan="4">Reading aloud part of the interpretive text.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Storytelling</td><td colspan="4">When visitors detail their telling with personal information.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Questioning</td><td colspan="5">Asking a question to another person or even talking to oneself by using a question ("oh, what's that all about?").</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Reading Labels silently</td><td colspan="5">Reading a label or the supporting materials provided by the museum silently.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Answering</td><td colspan="5">Orally replying to a question.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Arguing</td><td colspan="5">Giving one's opinion and reasons, justifying a point of view.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Interpreting/ Explaining</td><td colspan="5">Orally replying on the content, meaning and/or intention of the object. Explaining requires questioning and answering.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">Affective Talk/Comments (Allen 2002)</td><td>Pleasure</td><td colspan="4">Positive expressions of feelings of an exhibit, or one of its aspects.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Displeasure</td><td colspan="4">Negative expressions of feelings about an exhibit, or one of its aspects.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intrigue</td><td colspan="4">Fascination or surprise about an exhibit, or one of its aspects.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Attracting someone as an audience</td><td rowspan="2">All the sociocultural means that visitors use to</td><td>Pulling someone physically over</td><td>Beckon to someone</td><td colspan="2">Person-reference</td></tr>
<tr><td>Deictic verbs</td><td>Shifts in posture</td><td colspan="2">Shifts in gaze</td></tr>
</table>

	invite others to join them in their personal encounters with the exhibit (Gammon 2003; Meisner *et al.* 2007).	(verbs of motion)		
		Pointing gestures		
Animating	Includes those performances which bring to life aspects of the exhibit. Performances that fall under this category have been embodied, adding a sense of motion to the exhibit.			

Table 2.2 Coding schema from Christidou's studies (2012, p. 119).

Brera

PINACOTECA DI BRERA
BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE BRAIDENSE

Istituto Comprensivo di Viale Libertà
Vigevano Pavia

OGGETTO: Richiesta reclutamento famiglie per sperimentazione

I Servizi Educativi della Pinacoteca di Brera stanno cercando una decina di famiglie che vogliano partecipare alla sperimentazione tenuta dalla dottoranda Valeria Farinacci per il suo progetto di ricerca sulle famiglie al museo che concentra l'attenzione sulle didascalie *Grandi e piccoli a Brera* normalmente presenti nel percorso museale.

Nello specifico il progetto di ricerca è uno studio di caso volto ad analizzare l'interazione intergenerazionale (rapporto genitore-figlio) di fronte alle *"Didascalie per grandi e piccoli"* della Pinacoteca di Brera, prima e dopo la ritraduzione nel linguaggio *"Easy to Read"* seguendo le linee guida europee sull'inclusione. Lo scopo è studiare l'impatto della semplificazione linguistica sull'esperienza museale dei bambini.

La sperimentazione sarà registrata tramite video e la famiglia sarà microfonata, è necessario, quindi, firmare una liberatoria. Le registrazioni sono esclusivamente ad uso scientifico e non saranno divulgate. Il tempo stimato per la sperimentazione è di mezz'ora circa, più il tempo di preparazione (tempo di microfonaggio e spiegazioni).

Ai genitori che vorranno partecipare con i loro figli **che frequentano la classe quarta e la classe quinta della scuola elementare** (sono benvenuti anche fratelli o sorelle di altre età) saranno erogati i biglietti gratuiti di ingresso al museo ritirabili presso la biglietteria, mentre i bambini hanno sempre ingresso gratuito.

La sperimentazione avrà luogo sabato 13 e domenica 2023 a partire dalle ore 10.00. La preghiamo di raccogliere le adesioni e farle pervenire all'indirizzo pin-br.atm.didattica@cultura.gov.it entro il 6 maggio 2023.

Milano, 7 aprile 2023

La responsabile dei Servizi Educativi

Sofia Incarbone

MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA

Figure 2.4 Example of email sent for families' recruitment.

LIBERATORIA PER LA PUBBLICAZIONE DELLE IMMAGINI

Milano, ...

La sottoscritta / Il sottoscritto .....(*nome e cognome del soggetto*)
via..... Città ..... Prov. .....
nata / nato a ..... il .....
con la presente AUTORIZZA il personale della Pinacoteca di Brera
alla realizzazione e pubblicazione di fotografie e riprese video che contengano la sua immagine effettuate nel giorno ..... all'interno delle sale della pinacoteca di Brera per progetto di ricerca di dottorato.
Ne vieta altresì l'uso in contesti che ne pregiudichino la dignità personale ed il decoro.
La posa e l'utilizzo delle immagini sono da considerarsi effettuate in forma gratuita.

(firma leggibile)

.....

INFORMATIVA SULLA PRIVACY
Ai sensi dell'art. 13 del D.Lgs 196/2003, i dati personali che la riguardano saranno trattati dallo staff dei Servizi Educativi della Pinacoteca di Brera e non saranno comunicati a terzi.
In relazione ai dati conferiti Lei potrà esercitare i diritti di cui all'art. 7 del D.Lgs. 196/2003: conferma dell'esistenza dei dati, origine, finalità, aggiornamento, cancellazione, diritto di opposizione. Per esercitare tali diritti dovrà rivolgersi al Responsabile del trattamento dei Dati personali, presso dallo staff dei Servizi Educativi della Pinacoteca di Brera di Milano.

(firma leggibile)

.....

Figure 2.5 Release for the publication of images signed by the families.

Figure 2.6 A sign was displayed at the front desk of the Brera Art Gallery to notify visitors of the ongoing recordings.

2.1.2.2 Final Focus Group

The theoretical framework of pedagogical documentation also serves as the basis for this final segment of the study design. According to the Reggio Emilia Approach (REA), as stated previously, documentation becomes pedagogical in the Reggio sense only when shared with others - be they teachers, *atelieristas*, parents, policymakers and sometimes even the children themselves - to be able to give rise to a shared reflection, listen and bring together different opinions and sensitivities, discovering new perspectives on a specific theme (Edwards et al., 1998; Rinaldi, 2021). The aim is also to prevent the research from stopping at the single subjective vision of the researcher who carried it out, given that the risk is that the researcher hides himself in the ivory tower of his own beliefs, often avoiding confrontation to admit the possible limitations of the work. The educational philosophy of the Reggio Emilia Approach emphasises the cognitive power of comparison and encourages us to listen to the Other. Through data discussion, the debate aims to build a community of researchers, as advocated by Malaguzzi (1998, p. 86). The museum staff become researchers,

analogous to what occurs in the Reggio Emilia context with teachers, *atelieristas* and all those involved. We could define the process undertaken in this research as that of *translating Reggio* into the museum context, where the institution becomes a 'listening museum' - with its staff, the researchers who collaborate with it, and the director himself - as an organisation that auscultate its public to improve its dissemination of culture (Turnbull, 2018) as well as visitors' wellbeing.

In terms of study design, a Focus Group (referred to as FG) with the Educational Services of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* was chosen to gather data. This qualitative approach sought to support attendees during their co-construction of knowledge (Rodriguez et al., 2011; Wilkinson, 1998) (Rodriguez et al., 2011), thus translating to a methodological level the conceptual pedagogical framework which considers knowledge "a process of construction by the individual in relation with others, a true act of co-construction" (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 89).

The FG methodology allows a dynamic debate between participants in which different interpretations can emerge thanks to the group dimension. According to Corrao (2002, p. 1): "The discussion between "peers" recovers the relational dimension in the detection of opinions, allowing participants to use a form of communication and expression that is usual for them"[173]. As a result, the subjective points of view - which read the theme discussed in their own way - can then meet in communal reflection, enriching those who participate. The theoretical background perspective used is social constructivism, which acknowledges the contribution of each individual's reading of the world to the collective construction of knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Vygotsky, 1978). The "desire to listen and to learn from the participants" (Morgan, 1998, p. 10) is the pivotal element that depicts the FG as an active process that starts from the researcher's interest in inspecting other perceptions of the studied phenomenon.

From an inclusive leadership perspective (Ryan, 2006), the Brera Art Gallery Educational Services staff were selected as the FG's participants. The team works on designing educational tools - as the group created the current panels for families present inside the picture gallery - while implementing a vision of a dynamic, welcoming and inclusive museum. According to their recent works (*Chapter V*), they have become aware of the potential of easy-to-read language for improving accessibility. The museum staff supported the creation of the field study illustrated in this thesis, following its evolution. Their selection as participants for the FG aligns with its purpose: to increase their awareness of the value of a more transparent language at the museum, thus strengthening their educational offering and extending it to diverse audiences of all ages and social strata.

[173] It follows the original Italian version: "La discussione tra "pari" recupera la dimensione relazionale nella rilevazione delle opinioni, permettendo ai partecipanti di utilizzare una forma per loro consueta di comunicazione e di espressione".

In this case, following the perspective that learning, if significant, has an impact on those involved (Fink, 2003), the discussion can be seen as a process of "dialogical learning" (Manalo, 2020) between professionals that takes place to build a collaborative vision of linguistic inclusion. Respondents may acquire a new consciousness of using easy-to-read language in the museum - conceived as an inclusive educational setting - by actively contributing to museum documentation and being part of what Rinaldi defines as 'pedagogical research' (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 66).

The objective of this concluding segment of the research is to read the data through the eyes of the museum's staff, going beyond our subjective conclusions drawn from the work. Nonetheless, objectivity is complex to implement, and it is correct to underline that our experiences and biases could influence our data reading (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 201). However, the general intent is to directly report and underscore the thoughts and reflections of the staff of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* on the topic of inclusion in the museum.

The FG, therefore, took place after the field study, with the intention of sealing a final reflection on the data collected before and after the retranslations within the museum. The invitation to participate as volunteers in the FG was sent via e-mail, to which the staff responded collectively, proposing a meeting date suitable for all. From an ethical standpoint, authorisation for recording was necessary, and volunteers were also informed about their data anonymisation throughout their participation (Mohd Arifin, 2018; Morgan, 1998, p. 85; Orb et al., 2001). The FG occurred online with five[174] people from the Educational Services of Brera Art Gallery in December 2023, all connected from their museum's office.

Regarding data collection, the FG's purpose is to depict the museum staff's reflection on the broader theme of inclusion, starting from recounting their personal experiences with easy-to-read language. Firstly, the moderator introduced the objective of the encounter and the critical research findings (*paragraph 5.2.1, Chapter V*). The FG then proceeded with a reflection on the illustrated

[174] The number of participants required for a focus group ranges between 4 people to a maximum of 12 (Corrao, 2002, p. 17). The Educational Services staff at *Brera* is comprised of a few individuals, and all of them participated in the discussion, except for the head of educational services at the museum. Most of these individuals contributed to the actualisation of the field project alongside a group of security officers who helped while recording in the museum. Furthermore, FG methodology usually involves more than one session to discuss a phenomenon (Morgan, 1998, p. 5). However, in this research, the FG aims to represent pragmatically pedagogical documentation, and it is just the final reflection that presents the individual fieldwork to the interested community, establishing relationships with people working in the museum.

On defining FG, Morgan (1998, p. 29) declares:

> Focus groups come in all shapes and sizes. On the one hand, this variety is a considerable strength, because it gives you many options. On the other hand, it is a source of confusion, because it can be difficult to tell what is a focus group and what is not. (…) Three basic defining features all focus group projects have in common: they are a research method for collecting qualitative data, they are focused efforts at data gathering, and they generate data through group discussions."

data. The moderator commenced the debate by proposing an "ice-breaking" general query, asking personnel to express their overall impression of the research's results. Following recent studies (Kalu et al., 2023; Lechner et al., 2023), to encourage a more engaging conversation, semi-structured open-ended questions were used as a prompt to start the discussion and potentially redirect it as it progressed in line with the study queries. The debate allowed participants to co-create understanding with their colleagues spontaneously, sharing their know-how and constructing awareness chorally while still elaborating on their personal evaluations. Throughout the discussion, the author assumed the facilitator (F) role, taking notes and listening to the personnel share their opinions and impressions regarding the museum. As they work with visitors daily and deeply understand the museum's educational philosophy, documenting their exchange on the project is considered highly valuable. The session was recorded in agreement with the participants, who were made clear from the beginning their freedom to interrupt and withdraw from the discussion at any time, as well as the methods of recording and storing data. To ensure anonymity, all data was pseudonymised before the examination (Lechner et al., 2023, p. 3; Morgan, 1998, p. 88): all participants were renamed *N1, N2, N3, N4* and *N5*. The FG was subsequently transcribed verbatim.

In terms of data analysis, an initial screening was carried out in the text to identify the most critical and recurring themes, with notes on preliminary impressions. In the subsequent phase, we used *In Vivo coding,* utilising respondent's own words as codes (Manning, 2017; Saldaña, 2021; Yudhistir S M F Jugessur, 2022). In the final segment, we identified the labels that represented the primary themes of discussion.

During the study, respondents shared their views on easy-to-read language and its impact on visitors. The debate was open-ended, and the members discussed the broader theme of inclusion in addition to language simplification. They described the strengths and weaknesses of the museum, demonstrating how it is a deeply felt topic at the heart of the museum's agenda. After different re-readings of the data collected, it was decided to illustrate the findings in narrative form (Krueger, 1998, p. 109), quoting parts of conversations valuable to demonstrate the different theses introduced by the participants. According to Kalu et al. (2023), providing a detailed narrative with members exemplars can enhance the scientific reliability of the FG[175].

The narration and the numerous quotations thus create a *unicum,* which is then defined in the summary table of the results (*Table 5.1, Chapter V*), where an overall vision of the themes is obtained - the attendees verified the debate summary (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 39). The results taxonomy includes three categories subdivided into thematic alignment: *Emerging themes during the discussion*

[175] Following Kalu et al.'s study (2023), we saved all documented records to improve trustworthiness.

(1), *Difficulties encountered and insights* (2), *Desiderata* (3) and *Conclusions* (4) that contribute to giving a panoramic view of the contents of the debate, also showing the practical impact the discussion of results had on the personnel.

2.2 Conclusions

The chapter presents the methodology implemented to conduct a case study within the *Pinacoteca di Brera* in Milan to investigate the impact of easy-to-read language on families at the museum[176]. To address the research question, the worlds of translation and pedagogy are interwoven theoretically, and this twine is also reflected in the methods adopted.

From a linguistic translation point of view, this chapter describes the retranslation work carried out on the museum's family panels, highlighting its limitations and potential. The retranslation includes quantitative and qualitative work on the texts, with the chapter presenting methods and measures in detail to first examine the original texts and then propose more accessible and inclusive versions.

From a pedagogical point of view, the behaviour of visitors in front of selected works and panels before and after the retranslations was studied through qualitative video research - illustrating its strengths and limitations - to observe families' interactional dimension, studying when language becomes an obstacle or a potential increaser of engagement. The planning of the various phases of the fieldwork is illustrated in detail, from data collection to analysis. The emerging elements were shared through a Focus Group with the museum's Educational Services to create a shared reflection on the impact of linguistic simplification on visitors. All the material collected, narrated and shared (*retranslations + video observations + focus group*) becomes pedagogical documentation that pragmatically emphasises the critical role that inclusion - declined here as linguistic inclusion - can play today in cultural institutions.

[176] As a final consideration, one may argue that a limitation of conducting a case study is that the results are not generalisable. This is a common misunderstanding related to this research strategy, often conceived as an "intensive analysis of an individual unit" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 557). On the contrary, authors such as Flyvbjerg (2011) and Stake (2005) demonstrate how valuable it is for research to resort to this strategy. Indeed:

> Concrete case knowledge is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals. It is possible to generalise from a single case (Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein), and it is useful for generating and testing hypotheses. It contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than any other method of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 557).

CHAPTER III

Identifying interactional patterns within the families

Art is perhaps one of the highest forms of human defence.

Fernanda Wittgens [177]

Museums are an essential part of our moral map.
I'm not doing this for tourism or to pass a Sunday afternoon.
This is the backstop against bestiality, a fight against the inhumanity of man.

James M. Bradburne [178]

This chapter presents the initial part of the field study, firstly introducing the museum context and educational vocation. Secondly, through pedagogical documentation, the chapter illustrates how intricate the connections are when interactions occur in a museum, exploring families' performances at the Brera Art Gallery. In particular, the unfolding interactions in front of the "panels for young and old" displayed in the museum will be analysed. Besides recognising the intrinsic pedagogical value of intergenerational relations in the museum context, the final aim is to pragmatically observe if texts could be improved from an inclusive perspective.

[177] From a collection of her private letters (1957).
[178] Excerpt from the interview with Chan (2019).

3.1 The case of the Brera Art Gallery: introducing the context

The context around which an interaction is built becomes a vital determinant of the type of action developed. In our case study, it is significant to consider the museum as both a physical and an institutional context (Christidou, 2012) and how it can influence the museum experience, specifically the aesthetic drawing of human connections. The resulting museum ecology differs for each museum, as each cultural institution has its peculiarities regarding artworks and collections, halls, architecture and displays, educational events and activities, and "user-language" (Bradburne, 2000, p. 26). User-language is a "collection of constraints that helps shape the variation generated by an actor into patterned behaviour" (De Zeeuw 1990 cited in Bradburne 2000, p. 26) that, in our specific case, translates into how the panel influences - and restricts - the boundless array of potential interactions (Bradburne, 2000, p. 26). Hence, the context is "ecological": spaces, times, connections, languages and the proposed initiatives are interwoven and reciprocally impact one another.

Nevertheless, the value of the context is also pedagogical: in its communal planning, the warp and weft of the *cum textus* (Falaschi, 2023) become an opportunity for discovery. The museum becomes a space for learning in an educational research dialogue through play (Fondazione Reggio Children, 2023[179]). With renewed gazes, the visitor - whether child or adult - can again observe the reality surrounding him in all its different facets. The museum context becomes a quality educational context, read as an intricate web of possibilities in terms of time, space and relationships (Ceppi et al., 2011), and becomes a place where it is possible to take care of the different warping by co-constructing an aesthetic experience which is the discovery of the Self and the Other (Farinacci et al., 2022). As Malaguzzi (1984, p. 26) claimed:

> Education is a matter of complex interactions, many occurring only if the environment also participates. Someone wrote that the environment must be a kind of aquarium where the ideas, morality, attitudes and cultures of the people who live there are reflected. We have tried to go in this direction.

It is the same direction as in the encounter with the museum space, understood as a "living organism" (FRC, 2023). It becomes a stage for dialogue, discovery and emotions reflecting the world outside.

The educational value gives a renewed freedom of expression to boys and girls, families, and all visitors in a journey of discovery that intertwines with the museum staff and generates well-being (Falaschi, 2023). New research conducted on psycho-physiological well-being at the museum (Ishizu

[179] From *Lo spazio dell'apprendimento* ('The learning space'), thesis project (AY 2022/2023) of the IED (European Institute of Design) of Rome in collaboration with the Reggio Children Foundation (FRC).

& Zeki, 2011; Grossi et al., 2019; Sherman et al., 2020; Tay & Pawelski, 2022) confirms the museum's recognition as an increasingly beneficial place in the lives of people and society. The goal is to strengthen the relationship dimension with a closer look at the "local" one, in other words, the bond with the citizens who live and experience the city where the museum is located (in our case study, the city of Milan).

Even the museum typology (Silverman, 1990) has an impact on visitors: the *Pinacoteca di Brera* is an art gallery; this implies that in addition to the interactional dimension of the museum as a social space, the discovery for visitors is intertwined with a strong individual aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1934/2020) with the artwork.

The *Pinacoteca di Brera* (in English, the *Brera Picture Gallery* or *Brera Art Gallery*) is a national gallery of ancient and modern art. It is the leading museum in Milan and one of the best-known nationwide.

The institution was established in 1776 but only formalised in 1809 by Napoleon Bonaparte, who desired to create the "Louvre of Italy." It worked alongside the Academy of Fine Arts[180]—founded by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria—to provide exemplary artworks for academy students. During a time when religious orders were being dissolved and artworks were being requisitioned from churches and convents, the institution's collection grew significantly, gathering paintings from across the Italian Kingdom[181].

In Italy, Brera Art Gallery houses a well-known assortment of paintings, focusing on Venetian and Lombard works and displaying notable works from other art schools. Its famous collection includes masterpieces by Italian and foreign artists from the 14th century through the 19th century (*Ibidem*). Among the most famous, presented by the Pinacoteca itself as the *Brera's Masterpieces*[182] are: *The Dead Christ and Three Mourners* by Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Mark Preaching in a Square of Alexandria in Egypt* by Gentile Bellini e Giovanni Bellini, *Pietà* by Giovanni Bellini, *The Marriage of the Virgin* by Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael), *The Virgin with Child, Angels and Saints (Pala Montefeltro)* by Piero della Francesca, *The Finding of the Body of Saint Mark* by Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti), *The Kiss* by Francesco Hayez, *Supper at Emmaus* by Caravaggio

[180] The *Pinacoteca di Brera* is in Milan's Brera Palace, which also houses the Academy of Fine Arts, the Braidense National Library, the Lombard Institute of Science and Letters, the Astronomical Observatory, the Botanical Gardens, and the Ricordi Archive. From the Ministry of Culture official website, available at this link: https://www.beniculturali.it/luogo/pinacoteca-di-brera-1 (last accessed September 2023).
[181] Therefore, the museum's creation does not stem from private noble collections and it is primarily known for its sacred artworks. From the Ministry of Culture official website, available at this link: https://www.beniculturali.it/luogo/pinacoteca-di-brera-1 (last accessed September 2023).
[182] From the *Pinacoteca*'s official website: https://pinacotecabrera.org/en/collezioni/brera-s-masterpieces/ (last accessed September 2023).

(Michelangelo Merisi). Two donations are added to the primary collection, Jesi (donated in 1976) and Vitali (donated in 1984), which enrich the museum's heritage with works of art from the 20th century, with works such as *Enfant gras* by Amedeo Modigliani and *Riot in the Gallery* by Umberto Boccioni[183].

Regarding museum communication and visitors' experience, Brera Art Gallery in Milan is an Italian museum excellence. Guided by Dr James Michael Bradburne (also Director of the National Braidense Library and Media Library) since 2015, the director has contributed with his multifaceted cultural and international perspective to defend and expand the Enlightenment's founding ideals of accessibility and education for all and the institution's civil value. A return to the original vision of the first public museums in the world[184] (Valacchi, 2023), highlighting how the museum is, according to Bradburne, "the community's 'big house', where its collective memories are stored to fuel a reflection about the future and to prevent citizens from being reduced to mere voters, and their rich collective identity reduced to that of their consumer choices" (Lundquist, 2022).

This concept of museum, which was fully expressed by well-known 20th-century *Brera*'s directors such as Ettore Modigliani, Fernanda Wittgens, and Franco Russoli, envisions it as an essential instrument for promoting public education, stimulating democratic partaking, and initiating social change (Wang, 2020).

Fernanda Wittgens, Italy's inaugural female director, condenses the museum thought that shapes the *Pinacoteca,* claiming that "Brera is not the collector's *hortus conclusus*, the museum of "treasures": Brera is a national gallery with a broad historical background, created by Napoleon for the "education of the people" according to a profound Enlightenment thought that we, heirs, cannot betray"[185] (Wittgens, 1957 cited in Valacchi, 2023).

In his research, Director Bradburne (1999) finds an echo of the same vision of the great directors in the American philosopher Nelson Goodman[186], whom he quotes in one of his writings:

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[183] From the Ministry of Culture official website, available at this link: https://www.beniculturali.it/luogo/pinacoteca-di-brera-1 (last accessed September 2023).

[184] In the late 18th century, European private collections began to open to the public due to increased donations. This led to the birth of modern museums, recognising art's instructive significance. The first National Museum opened in Paris in 1793 at the Louvre, but it gathered artworks that Napoleon requisitioned during his military campaigns. From a historiographical perspective, the establishment of the museum symbolised the conquest of art by politics, which recognises its political power (Christillian & Greco, 2021, p. 40).

[185] Translated from the original Italian text: "Perché Brera non è l'*hortus conclusus* del collezionista, il museo delle "preziosità": Brera è una galleria nazionale di ampio tessuto storico, creata da Napoleone ad "educazione del popolo" secondo un profondo pensiero illuministico che noi, eredi, non possiamo tradire" (Wittgens, 1957 cit. in Valacchi, 2023).

[186] From a pedagogical perspective, Nelson Goodman, the founder of *Project Zero*, plays a fundamental role in Art Education, and his studies still impact the field today. For further information, refer to Contini (2019). Furthermore, the collaboration between Project Zero and Reggio Children is also significant; for more details, see Rinaldi et al. (2001).

> The museum has to function as an institution for the prevention of blindness in order to make works work. And making works work is the museum's major mission. Works work when, by stimulating inquisitive looking, sharpening perception, raising visual intelligence, widening perspectives, and marking off neglected significant kinds, they participate in the organization and reorganization of experience, in the making and remaking of our worlds (Goodman 1980 cited in Bradburne 1999, p. 19).

It is precisely this famous speech by Goodman that inspired the Brera motto *Ad occhi aperti* ('With open eyes'), according to which, to prevent the blindness of society, it is necessary to observe works of art carefully so that they can reveal the own hidden truths[187].

The museum thinking that emerges is that of an accessible museum where public use and education intertwine. The museum becomes a place for discourse and dialogue between experts and visitors spanning all age groups and different social strata (Wang, 2020). For the *Pinacoteca di Brera,* a museum is "a place for cultural growth, discovery, debate, integration and social inclusion, (…) a place that is open to the city and the world"[188]. The institution's mission is to create a 'valuable experience' that makes emotions blossom, taking care of the visitor's experience to secure a future shared memory (Marshall, 2016)[189].

It is, therefore, a vision of the museum that recognises its moral entity ("Museums and morals"[190]): aesthetics and ethics intersect in an increasingly "political" museum, which recognises its enlightening role as a guide for a community. Far from mass tourism, the museum is an institution necessary for the survival of society, occupying a role akin to that of schools, hospitals, and libraries (Valacchi, 2023). In this light, the profile of the museum can be outlined with the thought of another director, Franco Russoli:

> Every effort should be therefore made to involve the museum in all the cultural activities of the environment in which it operates: not as a place for contemplation or the study of tradition, but as a place where the development of contemporary reality is built and experienced. Not as something to do in one's 'free time' but for 'committed time' (Russoli, 1976 cited in Valacchi, 2023)[191].

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[187] From the museum's official book "Brera a occhi aperti. Trenta capolavori imperdibili. Edizione Illustrata" by Marsilio Arte (2021).

[188] From the Brera Art Gallery official website: https://pinacotecabrera.org/en/learn/the-education-department/ (last accessed October 2023).

[189] Extract from an interview at this link: https://www.macleans.ca/culture/arts/melee-in-milan-the-fight-to-keep-museums-alive-in-art-rich-italy/ (last accessed October 2023).

[190] "Museums and morals" is one of the central themes guiding the initiatives of *Circles Squared*, an association of international museum professionals. James M. Bradburne is co-founder of *Circles Squared*, alongside museum expert and consultant Dr. Devorah Block. More information is available at this link: http://167.172.138.199/museums-and-morals (last accessed September 2023).

[191] Translated from the original Italian text: "Si cerchi dunque in ogni modo di far intervenire il museo in tutte le attività culturali dell'ambiente in cui funziona: non come sede di contemplazione o studio della tradizione, ma come luogo in cui si costruisce e si vive lo sviluppo della realtà contemporanea. Non occupazione per il "tempo libero", bensì per il "tempo impegnato" (Russoli, 1976 cit. in Pinacoteca di Brera, 2021).

The "committed time" to which Director Russoli refers highlights the influential role museums should have in transforming people's lives, of the visitors who stop to reflect throughout the galleries in a quest for meaning-making of who they are and their role in society. Bradburne describes the transformative power as providing opportunities for museum visitors to create moments that could change their lives (Wang, 2020), fostering interaction and actively involving the public. Nonetheless, all types of communication strategies must, in any case, allow the museum to "remain true to itself and communicate its uniqueness" (*Ibidem*). From the museum Director's reflections, the museum's intrinsic value and primary mission become strongly evident: to transform and excite the visitor, repositioning her at the heart of the experience[192]. This transformative emotion is the focal point around which the vision of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* revolves, reflected in its educational planning. The "high emotional power" (Scammell, 2016) is the transformative element in the visitor experience, the centre of the "Brera Approach" (see the following paragraph *3.1.1*), always remembering the political and civic duty that museums must bear, acknowledging their active role in an increasingly complex society.

In the "committed time", sharing a communal place is also the vocation. Brera's mission reinvents the museum and places it "at the service and in the heart of the city" (Ballatore, 2023). The changes in the museum's role in recent decades require that the museum be an integral part of the community. It increasingly involves adult citizens and children, the citizens of tomorrow. However, the institution promotes tourism with ecological awareness and civic consciousness to reduce its environmental impact (Ballatore, 2023). In doing so, the museum creates strong connections with the city[193]. Dr Bradburne's goal is to make citizens proud of the museum by gaining awareness, feeling part of the city, and re-appropriating its cultural heritage[194] (Scammell, 2016). The purpose is to return art to the city and its residents, making it accessible to new population segments via novel means (Wang, 2020; Valacchi, 2023). This strategy aims to reweave the cultural and social bonds encompassing the museum, beginning with the *Brera* district - hence the institution's name - where the Picture Gallery is situated (Pinacoteca di Brera, 2023)[195].

[192] In an interview with *The Guardian*, the Director condenses his thoughts on the true purpose of a museum with the sentence: "People who come to a museum, especially those who are not regular museum-goers, need to be transformed. They need to have an emotion" (Scammell, 2016).
[193] The museum director invites taxi drivers, concierges, and tourist guides to preview the museum for free, showing his commitment to engaging visitors and prioritising service to the local community. This exemplifies a bottom-up management strategy (Wang, 2020).
[194] Director Bradburne emphasises this mission, believing that everyone should be able to proudly say: "This is our Brera" (Scammell, 2016).
[195] From the *Pinacoteca di Brera* official website. Available at this link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/news-pinacoteca/la-cultura-lascia-il-timbroil-passaporto-la-grande-brera/ (last accessed September 2023).

The direction of the architect and museologist Bradburne also encompasses the *Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense* ('Braidense National Library'). The library acquires new value and, along with the museum, is recognised as a city resource accessible to all. According to the Director's philosophy, museums should consider a change in perspective, shifting from treating people as visitors to engaging them as users (Bradburne, 1998). Museums should, therefore, evolve to resemble libraries: with their library cards and related responsibilities and obligations to borrow books, readers are users and part of a community. This approach fosters a stronger and more mutually beneficial connection between the museum as an institution and its audience. It creates opportunities for more frequent and unrestricted visits to the museum, forging a stronger and more enduring bond for both parties (Lundquist, 2022).

The transition from visitors to users has also already occurred in the virtual museum and its digital offerings. In the post-pandemic era, the museum, always conceived as a readable text in its entirety (Ravelli, 2007), has evolved rapidly and has enhanced its communication through digital[196]. For instance, the innovative online multimedia platform *BreraPlus* offers original content beyond the museum's collection, such as documentaries and films[197]. The contents provide novel possibilities for experiencing the museum, redefining what is a museum visit: visitors need the *BreraCard* instead of a traditional ticket to access these services. With the *BreraCard*, besides having access to the multimedia platform, visitors are welcome at the museum for three months while becoming active stakeholders[198]. This endeavour proposes redefining museums' former business model (Wang, 2020). It is the result of the Director's research throughout his fieldwork career to translate into action the "participatory museum" (Simon, 2010).

The core foundation of this vision rests upon recognising that the overall museum experience is rooted in the freedom of exploration and the visitor's complete autonomy. It thrives on creating a personal narrative and independently experimenting with untried paths in a place that welcomes and listens to different subjectivities. Visitors select their routes freely, set their own pace, and pursue their unique interests. They can revisit a particular artwork, bypass others, depart, and return at leisure

[196] Interestingly, Director Bradburne's intervention aims to demarcate the online experience from the physical one. The goal is to create two separate entities with different objectives that complement each other instead of digitally contaminating the physical experience at the museum. The digital offer completes but never overcomes the physical experience. In fact, inside the museum, the digital dimension is almost absent. In a recent interview, he stated: "Whereas prior to the pandemic, museums were under pressure to contaminate the experience in the museum with digital media – virtual reality, augmented reality and video tours – and the online presence used only to illustrate the pleasures that would be had once the visitor had entered the hallowed spaces of the museum, the lockdown obliged the museum to develop a coherent, valid, powerful and above all autonomous online offer" (Lundquist et al., 2022).
[197] There are also *BreraMusica* concerts, "stories of Brera" narrated fairy tales, and 70 high-definition masterpieces from the museum's collection, creating an interactive museum experience with other visitors online (Masoero, 2023).
[198] By becoming a stakeholder, the visitor participates in the museum's governance. An innovative experiment involved 60 visitors in a board meeting, welcoming their views on the museum's current issues (Masoero, 2023).

(Lundquist, 2022). The autonomy makes an experience at the museum distinctive, inherent in the physical experience, and now evolved into the digital. The museum has no content without accessibility: the experience must resemble a walk in a park where visitors can walk carefree, encounter others and make discoveries (Bradburne, 1999, p. 19).

The vision that encompasses the museum thought that guides the *Pinacoteca di Brera* - both physical and digital - is that of a living museum, which from a noun becomes a predicate, which from a predicate evolves into a dialogue. A museum that becomes "verb and dialogue", which in its being predicated acts by giving value to its works of art (Pinacoteca di Brera, 2023). It acts and lives thanks to the activities it carries out, cultivating memory, thanks to which its collections come to life, each time in different forms. Acting also means making spaces - considered a physical place but also a meeting place and stimulus for growth - accessible. In all its activities, through all the media and languages, the museum offers a renovated significance of the collections, improving their understandability and emotional resonance for everyone strolling through the galleries.

The museum is dialogue, and its identity is linked to its action. Its dynamism is expressed in its new forms of narration in an environment that is a place of encounter with people and works of art, where the visitor can look, discover, be moved and talk with others about her impressions. Dialogue means inclusion. Inclusion is the direction where the compass of museum management points, which integrates and goes beyond accessibility. Dialogue is the ability to listen to others, their differences and needs, with the museum becoming their public spokesperson (Lundquist, 2022).

The museum establishes a dialogic relationship with diversity through a series of tools. One illustration is the wide variety of labels for visitors available in the museum's galleries: besides the traditional ones with historical art details, some panels talk about the women portrayed in the museum, "authored" panels created by famous international writers and personalities of culture, tactile panels, olfactory panels, scientific panels and family panels (such as the *panels for young and old*, see following paragraph *3.1.2*)[199]. Some panels are written with an audience in mind, but the underlying idea is that they can be for everyone who wishes to read them and discover more about the works of art kept in the museum. Then there are numerous other activities, such as those involving those suffering from diseases like Alzheimer's, children at the hospital and older adults in hospices. The museum thus has a significant role in people's lives, to inspire and educate, yet also to give solace (Crippa, 2023). All the declension of the "museum verb" are activities that are expressions of the cultural institution's inclusive mission.

[199] There are, for instance, labels written in rhymes called *Breraviglie* and several additional instances. More information can be found at this link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/educazione/tutte-le-proposte/ (Last accessed September 2023).

The museum grows synchronously with its different publics, intertwining with new forms of communication but always remaining active, dialogical, accessible and inclusive. According to Bradburne, the museum as an institution must remind us that cultivating memory is essential since "our institutions of memory are increasingly important as a means of moving back to the future, of anchoring our growth in our experience of the past" (Lundquist, 2022).

3.1.1 The Brera Picture Gallery and the "Brera Approach"

The previously presented physical, institutional, historical-cultural and urban context has shaped a peculiar museum approach to the Pinacoteca di Brera, defined by the Director as the "Brera Approach[200]" (Bradburne, 2019). The Brera Approach combines approaches to museum studies mainly with pedagogy but also with aesthetics, anthropology, social sciences and architecture. The blend of scientific fields that contributes to the creation of the approach embodies the life and study experiences of Director Bradburne, which all come together in this living research of art education. The approach, more inherent to museum education but still conceived as a real vision of what a museum should be like, can be summarised with the term "respect", conceived as a feeling and behaviour of deference towards the visitor but also towards the museum staff (Bradburne, 2019). In a respectful dialogue between staff and visitors, attention is paid to the living being that sets foot inside the museum. With a particular sensitivity for children[201] introducing innovations in the Museum Education field, the Brera Approach interweaves a rich dialogue with Reggio Emilia's pedagogy, transposing and reinterpreting its values, tuning them to the museum's ecology. In presenting the museum's educational constructivist approach, we will underline the strong influences that Reggio Emilia's educational philosophy had on its conception.

The Brera Approach is an audience-focused approach that takes into account all facets of the visit, remarkably "the learning and reflective processes each visitor goes through, the interaction with others and the feeling of recognition and inclusion in coded stories museum create" (Lang et al., 2016, p. 70). By attentively considering every aspect of the visit, the museum recognises the power of all museum characteristics in shaping a significant experience for visitors. These facets are even more impactful than the artworks themselves on the meaning-making of the experience. The museum, therefore, harmonises the necessities and narratives of the general public with the narratives of the

[200] As can be seen, already in the name coined by the museum management, there is an inherent reference to the *Reggio Emilia Approach*. Their connections are even more evident since the official guidelines of the museum's Educational Services begin with a personal quote from Carla Rinaldi: "Si impara appassionandosi insieme alle cose" ('You learn by becoming passionate about things together'). From internal documents of the museum.

[201] The Brera Approach recognises all visitors, including children, as active and competent people who can contribute significantly to the social life of the museum (Drawn from the museum's internal documents).

objects it houses.

It follows a vision for audience engagement that is "democratic (…) a natural response by people to objects which is mediated through the museum space, the museum staff and the audience" (Lang et al., 2016, p. 70). The microcosm of the person is respected and placed at the centre of their museum experience, with its peculiarities that make their visit to the museum unique. An example could be that of a public with intellectual disabilities who needs texts whose readability and understanding should be clearer and more linear not to make them feel overwhelmed and disoriented. To respond to this request, the museum creates tailor-made tools for them that consequently change the perspective of the way to propose art to people for the museum itself, leading museum's staff and visitors to reflect on linguistic-cultural aspects that they had not previously focused on - which perhaps they had taken for granted. It is not solely a possibility for the museum to enrich its vision since a proposal designed for a specific type of public can also prove to be an opportunity for others to discover art differently. The same happens, for instance, with the museum's olfactory labels or bas-reliefs, created with a blind or partially sighted public as a reference target. Although created with an audience in mind, the beauty of the involvement of all the senses in the discovery of the work - in particular, the sense of smell and touch, with multi-sensoriality being a reference to the *Reggio Emilia Approach* and the infinite languages of a child - enriches the experience of anyone who wants to get involved in observing the works with different tools and points of view[202].

It is interesting to underline how Lang (2016, p. 71) emerges with the issue of the excessive categorisation of the Other, understood as a specific target of visitors to the museum. Nevertheless, the objective - this theme also returns in the REA - is to offer multiple routes through tools that are not excessively departmentalised but more generic that everyone can use in their way to participate and create relationships, following research fields that adopt broader perspectives as, for example, the one of "community development" (Kenny & Connors, 2017).

The initial attention to the personalisation of the experience consequently enriches everyone's experience at the museum by redefining the role of the tools prepared by the museum's personnel. The respect for the visitor's uniqueness embodies an idea of inclusion described by Bradburne as "genuine" (Lundquist et al., 2022), understood as a lively participation in the life of the museum and,

[202] During our fieldwork, we accompanied the families to discover the rooms where we conducted the research and explored the other museum galleries. It was a way to let them discover how many types of instruments the *Pinacoteca di Brera* makes available to visitors. All the children reacted positively and curiously to the presentation of the olfactory labels - smelling the perfumes and being entranced - and the bas-reliefs - touching a work of art with their hands for the first time. The theme of multisensory learning, dear to Reggio Emilia's educational philosophy, moves from the atelier to the museum room and becomes a winning choice to enrich the museum experience of children and adults. It would be engaging to investigate the child's learning and how discovering works of art with all five senses can enrich his aesthetic experience. In Museum Studies, refer to Davidson et al. (1991) for an in-depth analysis of how involving more senses effectively increases accessibility.

consequently, of the community. A museum-visitor relationship that the public contributes to keeping alive, reviving the depiction of the evolution of customs and needs, in which the individual's experience constantly evolves and becomes the experience of all. Respect for the visitor occurs thanks to pedagogical listening (there is a strong echo of the "visible listening" of the Reggio Emilia Approach) and anthropological, in careful observation of the public without judgment to understand their anticipations and requests - just like the anthropologist does (Bradburne, 2019) - which becomes an enrichment of everyone's museum experience, especially for future visitors.

From an anthropological perspective, the museum is conceived as an ecosystem that carefully listens to its visitors. By creating "visible listening" through pedagogical documentation, the listening process becomes a central element in improving and expanding the possibilities for informal learning in the museum (Carnevale, 2019[203]). The museum's ultimate goal is to create conditions where informal learning can prosper, with feelings of joy for learning and discovery without conditioning. A step forward in this museum approach is to give value to those who experience the museum differently, whether for physical or intellectual disability or any condition that prevents them from experiencing the museum in the "canonical" way that has been considered as such over the years. The inclusion of different audiences underlines the concept that disability should not be seen as a deficiency but rather as a broadening of the perspective of points of view, a natural enrichment - again, another connection with the REA. The change of perspective of the museum staff is on asking "how to be helped and not how to help so that diversity will prove an asset for everyone" (Bradburne, 2019). Although he states that acknowledging the variety of its guests is an essential prerogative and starting point for the museum (Carnevale, 2019), in the director, there is also an awareness and realisation of how the contemporary museum struggles to express itself with new audiences who may encounter difficulties. Accessibility should also be expressed in terms of greater clarity of exposition. He strongly emphasises, "Most museums make you feel stupid. No expert was born an expert; I'm all about education" (Chan, 2019).

In underlining how the Brera Approach is also linked to the thoughts of the great directors of the past, Bradburne (2019) recalls the previously mentioned Wittgens and Russoli and how their vision of the museum as "an essential part of our shared identity" for the first and of art as "integral to our shared humanity" for the latter are the cornerstones around which educational planning also revolves. The museum becomes a laboratory (Lawrence, 2009) to experiment with a better society.

[203] The interview with the museum's Director carried out by Carnevale is available at this link: https://www.conceptualfinearts.com/cfa/2019/12/29/james-bradburne-and-the-anthropology-interview/ (last accessed October 2023).

To give value to what has been built, documentation[204] comes into play - another element strongly linked to the Reggio Emilia Approach - a tool which in the museum keeps recollection alive and cultivates memory, but also serves to keep track of the work carried out by the museum and to improve its educational proposals. Documentation allows people - from museum personnel to casual visitors - to participate in an experimental process that is constantly revised based on their opinions, creating an opportunity to put democracy into practice. In the museum context, pedagogical documentation also acquires an even more marked social value, a quest "to permeate the present with an awareness of the past, as a basis for constructing the future" (Carnevale, 2019). A pedagogical approach is thus defined, which embodies all the museum values (accessibility, memory, inclusion, dialogue, interaction, etc.), which translates the Reggio Emilia pedagogical perspective - in what we could properly define as "translating Reggio" - into the museum context. It is not a question of "adaptation" - as we could connotate the term in Translation Studies - in Reggio Emilia's pedagogy, but rather the vision of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* represents building a unique learning space of its kind, with its geographical, historical and cultural coordinates, based on ideals common with the REA - including political ones. Therefore, a non-replicable model is that of the Brera Approach, tailored by listening to the needs of the people who live and inhabit the unique space of the *Brera*'s Milanese district, located in the city's centre. However, the approach, like in the REA, can be replicated, and the listening and documenting methodology can be used in any educational context (*Ibidem*).

A "gentle revolution" (Crippa, 2023) led by Director Bradburne with his "listening museum", in eight years has transformed the museum entity from a "noun museum" to a "verb museum" (Masoero, 2023), going beyond the foreseeable rearrangement of the collections[205]. The picture gallery, envisioned as a gathering place, encourages a metamorphic procedure centred on dialogue. The Educational Services guidelines[206] emphasise dialogue as a defining aspect of the museum's philosophy. In an action that aims to create matrices of dialogue to build connections and knowledge in the community, the museum is part of the city's social fabric and strives to increase its role of action. In a world where education cannot remain neutral, the museum becomes "political" - another

[204] In an interview with Carnevale (2019), Dr Bradburne talks about his meeting in 2003 with Professor Carla Rinaldi, the most significant contemporary expert on the Reggio Emilia Approach and how their meeting led him to recognise the process of educational documentation. Since then, a fruitful scientific collaboration was born between the two intellectuals.

[205] In the reorganisation of the collections wanted by the new Director - who is an architect as well as a museologist - in addition to the decision to reduce the number of artworks to make their fruition more accessible, the new use of colours in the rooms is striking: colours such as cobalt, dark grey, bordeaux, entice visitors (Scammell, 2016). Even light, albeit artificial given the very closed spaces, gives an evocative aura to the museum environment. The strength of the play of light and colour recalls their educational power advocated by Loris Malaguzzi in the Reggio atelier, in a continuous exploration of their movement that leads to unexpected discoveries for children (Catini, 1988).

[206] From an internal document of the Brera Art Gallery.

reference to Reggio Emilia's pedagogy - in its desire to place inclusion at the centre of its art education. A change of perception from the stasis of dusty display cases to the dynamism of an increasingly lively place, conceived as a "cultural piazza[207]" (Bradburne, 1999), leads to growing together by creating interactions with artworks, galleries, visitors, and staff. Among the challenges that the museum finds itself facing is that of maintaining a firm endurance for the social fabric. Therefore, the museum's life becomes open to all invited to participate.

In the *Brera Approach*, which is constantly developing and has a solid inclusive vocation, the *Pinacoteca di Brera* communication and didactics work hand in hand towards this "social mission" (Carnevale, 2019). It identifies the value and power of interaction in impacting visitors, making them feel listened to and part of a community that positively enriches society (Christillian & Greco, 2021). Textual communication, specifically family panels, allows interaction and dialogue between people moving inside the museum's galleries. The unique labels are just one of the revolutions implemented by the Director and his team and are defined by himself as "examples of visible listening" (Masoero, 2023). The "panels for young and old" will be presented in the following paragraph.

3.1.2 The "panels for young and old"

All the labels of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* have been completely rethought, embodying the values of the museum conceived as a person (Lawrence, 2009). The resulting humanity embodies qualities such as affability, politeness and benevolence so that the visitor - whether child or adult - feels "at home" (Ravelli's *feeling at home*, 2007). In adopting this stance, language, as a constituent element of the museum, becomes an opportunity to convey content in a welcoming and friendly way. The penning of these family labels is the work of a close collaboration between the Director and the museum's Educational Services, aiming to define new scenarios of exploration of works of art for everyone. In this instance, the need to involve young people arises from an inclusive perspective. The implemented family panel is an example of textuality created for families, children and their caregivers, which becomes an opportunity for all visitors[208].

With its *Brera Approach*, the Milanese Picture Gallery is considered an international best practice case in the field for its breadth and "complexity" of perspectives of Morinean memory (Morin, 2017). The *didascalie per grandi e piccoli* ('panels for young and old') are one of the museum's suggested explorative possibilities, perfectly representing the museum's innovative didactic approach. The so-called 'labels for young and old' are panels displayed inside the Brera Art

[207] Corresponding with the Reggio Emilia Approach's concept of "piazza" (Edwards et al., 1998).
[208] During field research, it was interesting to note how the "panels for young and old", both in the original and in the easy-to-read version, captured the attention of visitors of all ages.

Gallery that, compared to other kinds of labels available in the museum, are specially conceived for families to foster their interaction and, by extension, their museum experience.

In its museum didactics, the *Brera Approach* conceives the child as competent (Lawrence, 2009) - echoing a connection with the *Reggio Emilia Approach*[209] - but the Director recognises that children may lack background knowledge and need the museum to provide it (*Ibidem*). Bradburne emphasises that the museum aims to cultivate children's curiosity and nurture their interest in becoming engaged global citizens. The focus is on the experience itself, underlining that visitors "do not go to the museum to look at paintings but to talk about looking at paintings" (Lawrence, 2009; Baxandall, 1995). Consequently, the objective of the family panels is to create a dialogical experience for children, too.

From a Museum Studies point of view, labels usually provide essential information on the work of art (title, date, medium and acquisition information, which experts define as the *tombstone* (Harvard Art Museums, 2015)). In addition, it could feature a narrative "chat" that delves into various aspects of the exhibit, including its preservation, technique and historical background (Harvard Art Museums, 2015; Hoffman, 2020). On the other hand, the family panel offers an entirely original and unprecedented narrative of the works of art, as confirmed by their official presentation to visitors. This is how the labels are presented on the museums' official website:

> Le didascalie per grandi e piccoli aiutano chiunque voglia condividere l'osservazione di un dipinto con gli altri. Suggeriscono spunti diversi per osservare particolari, nuove chiavi di lettura delle opere, nuovi modi per emozionarsi insieme e giocare con l'arte, perché i momenti che ci rimangono impressi sono quelli che condividiamo con gli altri. In ogni didascalia è proposta un'attività legata al dipinto che stimola l'immaginazione ed il confronto tra i vari componenti del gruppo.[210]

[209] The child's representation as competent echoes Loris Malaguzzi's perspective, and it is one of the founding principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach. Rinaldi (2021) illustrates this image: "A child who is fully able to create personal maps for his own social, cognitive, affective and symbolic orientation. A competent, active, critical child (…). A producer of culture, values and rights, competent in living and learning" (*Ivi*. p. 54).

[210] From the museum's official website: https://pinacotecabrera.org/proposte-educazione/didascalie-per-grandi-e-piccoli/ (Last accessed September 2023).
Here is the English translation:

> Labels for young and old help anyone who wants to share the observation of a painting with others. They suggest different ideas for observing details, new keys to understanding the works, and new ways to get excited together and play with art because the moments that remain in our memory are the ones we share with others. Each caption proposes an activity linked to the painting that stimulates the imagination and discussion between the various members of the group.

Additionally, at the museum entrance, a bilingual label presents the textual typology to the incoming public:

> **Talking about art**
> Often the moments we share with others are those we remember longest. Discovering a giraffe hidden in the corner of a painting, discussing the meaning of the smile on the face of a courtesan; wondering about the symbolism of a woman turning into a tree. Special labels indicated by the family symbol encourage families to look at the art together - and discuss the ways they look at it[211].

In their presentation, the common thread highlighted in the text is the value of sharing. The background to their creation is the concept of an "extended museum" (Folga-Januszewska et al., 2019), focusing on sharing and aggregation as predominant themes. The aim is to promote a dialogue between children and their caregivers, offering them a tool to explore and interpret an exhibit together. There is a desire to play with an artwork through shared activities and original points of view, going beyond the traditional objective of merely describing it.

As Alderoqui Pinus (2000, p. 22) states, when planning an exhibition: "We should ask ourselves not only what the visitor's place is in the exhibition, but how we can create the social connection that will encourage the group or family members to communicate, work together, and share experience with one another". In the context of Museum Education Studies, the importance of the communal dimension of museum exploration has emerged over the years (Alderoqui Pinus, 2000, p. 21). A rich scientific literature describes how learning at the museum passes through the social dimension of the museum experience (Borun et al., 1996; McManus, 1996; Bradburne, 1999; Leinhardt et al., 2002; Falk & Dierking, 2016) and how, over the years, greater attention has been paid to design museums tools to foster social interaction (*Ibidem*). In her studies, Minda Borun (Borun et al., 1996) underlines how a significant interaction between families at the museum can transform their museum experience, making it more accessible and meaningful. Even in the studies of Director James Bradburne (1999), it is stated that the museum must be a public space and a social place for meeting and discussion, creating spaces that are increasingly suitable for this purpose, "A space where the full richness of human interaction can be recognised and celebrated" (Bradburne, 1999). Bradburne proceeds to affirm:

> A museum is a public space, a social space, and its effectiveness and that of its architecture must be understood in social terms. While a museum's architecture serves other masters, it must first and foremost contribute to and support the social interaction that is the foundation of the skills of appropriating culture (1999, p. 19).

[211] "(…) All labels can be downloaded online at wwww.pinacotecadibrera.org."

Inside the Brera Picture Gallery, together with his staff, the Director puts the principle into practice: in the museum architecture and the design of its spaces and objects, the family panels promote the comprehension of art by fostering inquiry activities (Bradburne, 1999, p. 19). They actively promote talk and collaboration, building the foundations of the community.

Therefore, the primary objective of these labels is to encourage dialogue among people. This emphasis arises from the recognition that conversation is disappearing from our society, as the anthropologist Le Breton (2023[212]) reported. Conversation[213] is understood as an interaction that involves contact, face-to-face, listening and attention towards the interlocutor, a sense of "being together", intrinsic to the etymology of the word (from the Latin *conversatio -onis,* signifying 'being together') (Treccani, 2023[214]). In a conversation that increasingly loses meaning, the phatic function[215] disappears (Jakobson, 1963/2002), which insists on contact, and the physical connection is missing - a game of glances and gestures - which leads to greater emotional involvement. Emotion is the other essential element of the conversation. In particular, the uncertainty that arises from it (interpreted as in Rinaldi (2021, p. xx) as a philosophical and pedagogical category of values) in the face of an "Other" presence that is physical and not virtual - as it is in the hyperconnected world we live in, which continually distances us from the "Other".

The loss of conversation also leads to the crisis of the concept of the "Other". It is as if this absence of direct discussion, as well as public spaces to be able to undertake it, has led us to the belief that there is no real need for it, causing hyper-individualism to triumph in our time - the modern *società dell'io* ('society of the ego'), in which there is "too much communication and little community" (Riccardi, 2023[216]). In the fragmentation of relationships, what Jean Baudrillard defines as a "simulacrum society" grows (Baudrillard, 2008) in which there is no comparison, and the social bond deteriorates. In a conversation with another, there is a feeling of "tension towards" an individual,

[212] We reference the *lectio magistralis* entitled *La scomparsa della conversazione. Un paradosso dell'epoca della comunicazione* ('The disappearance of the conversation. A paradox of the Communication Age') delivered by David Le Breton at the *festivaldifilosofia* conference in Carpi on 16/09/23.

[213] Interesting how Le Breton distinguishes between the concepts of communication and conversation. In the contemporary world, communication takes precedence. However, with the term communication, we refer to a formal, objective way of communicating that is often adopted by the world of technology, which has only a utilitarian purpose and in which the dimension of reciprocity, physical contact, emotions and the sense of responsibility towards others are absent (Le Breton, 2023).

[214] Etymology of "conversation" from the *Treccani* Encyclopedia, available at the following link: https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/conversazione/ (last accessed September 2023).

[215] In linguistics, the predominance of contact over all other factors characterises what Jakobson, inspired by Malinowski's "phatic communication" (1966), defines as "phatic function". By phatic function, we describe the typical characteristic of the conversation in which we seek contact with the person we are talking to, through communication stratagems that serve to establish a bond with the interlocutor. Examples are: "Is everything clear? Are you following me?" (Duranti, 2021, p. 342).

[216] We cite the lesson *Rigenerare il futuro: dall'io al noi* ('Regenerating the future: from I to we') delivered by Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, at the "Lettura Scholé 2023", a conference held in Brescia at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart on 16/09/2023.

which leads to establishing a bond and rediscovering the presence of the other. In the ritual of facial expressions, gestures, presence, and voice, the whole person puts himself out there in his richness to meet the other. Meaning must be found in silence - as Le Breton states, "there is no word without silence" (Le Breton, 2019) - which acquires value again: in silence, one stops to think, to reason, to listen to what the other has to say, to observe a landscape together or a work of art.

As Benedetta Craveri defines it (Craveri, 2006), if we consider our society a "civilisation of conversation", restoring this founding element of our humanity becomes imperative. Institutions such as museums can contribute to strengthening the social bond in the community by creating physical spaces of dialogue. Here, the person - whether child or adult - can grow and have a conversation being part of an "us". An opportunity to rediscover dialogue and learn public interaction with others - in this case, starting from families and extending it to everyone - is a skill that is being lost but remains crucial for building a cohesive society (Bradburne, 1999, p. 17).

As Bradburne (1999, p. 17) states, the social and urban transformations of recent decades within the Western culture have led to the loss of public spaces in cities, places of discussion and dialogue that once constituted the sense of civilisation to end up living now in what Augé (2009) defines *non-lieux* ('non-places'). As an "agent of social change" (Murawski, 2021), a museum must contribute to not losing this essence of humanity by becoming a bastion of conversation, a meeting space, and a forum for knowledge. The social mission of cultural institutions is accomplished through the power of the word. Starting from the future citizens, the children, it is necessary to rediscover a capacity for a broader vision, which arises from the awareness of being a human community, to recreate the "us" (Riccardi, 2023[217]).

The pedagogical implications of this vision are significant. From a pedagogical stance[218], through panels[219], the cultural institution fosters learning by promoting social interaction (Pinus, 2000, p. 21). Numerous studies (Kelly et al., 2022; Kwon, 2019; Sadiq, 2018) highlight child-parent interaction's benefits for children and adults in front of an exhibit. A museum is a public space to build community and citizenship through discussion. Children become more aware of their inner self and the concept of the "Other" through interaction, consolidating their family bonds while strengthening their ability to reason and reflect. Social inclusion goes through learning owing to the productive exchange of ideas in front of an exhibit.

[217] Refer to Note 216.
[218] With a view to inclusion, conceived as visitors' active participation in the cultural institution, the theoretical framework born upon these panels intertwines museum studies mainly with pedagogy but also with aesthetics, anthropology and the social sciences.
[219] We will present other tools subsequently.

The panels and the *Pinacoteca di Brera*'s museum ecology are a declination of the pedagogical vision of the environment understood as a "relational space" (FRC, 2023[220]). In this perspective, the museum is defined through relationships, becoming "a metaphor of knowledge which is defined as a true ecological space" (*Ibidem*). The learning space could be compared to a multi-faceted ecosystem where the choral dimension becomes a quality that must be aligned with the museum's aesthetics and becomes as paramount as the latter (*Ibidem*).

The museum, therefore, following the *Brera Approach* (and consequently the *Reggio Emilia Approach*), embodies a communal space beyond its physical walls, encompassing emotions, experiences and interactions with people and objects (in our case, works of art). When designing panels for families, the aim is to create a significant moment for those who approach them. The moment is also about inhabiting a space with others while stopping to observe a work of art together. In the dialogue, one leaves a trace of oneself (FRC, 2023; Segre, 2021[221]). The established relationship is complex, intertwining doubts and opinions that enrich the cognitive and emotional path, thereby reinterpreting the museum's spaces[222].

On the dimension of play designed in family panels, we refer to Rinaldi (2005):

> It is not easy to create an environment capable of supporting the "good play". It is a permanent and sensitive research that looks for quality in the interdisciplinary dialogue between pedagogy, psychology, design and architecture. A dialogue about living, because play is life. Objects[223] offered in their flexible identities, open to receiving the actions, thoughts, desires, and learning of children and adults who know how to "stay in the game". But at the same time, objects that (…) are able to suggest possibilities, ideas and emotions that enrich the projects of play, learning, and life of children and adults alike.

The encouraged collaboration between adults and children - an encounter that in sociological terms is defined as *intergenerational interaction* (Vishkaie et al., 2021) - takes place in a welcoming environment where play turns out to be "a framework for action" (Bateson, 1988, p. 185) and acquires both pedagogical and anthropological value. In the dialogic process implemented following the game-like activities proposed by the panels, the adult playing the game attributes significance to "playful

[220] Refer to Note 179.

[221] We cite the meeting with Senator Liliana Segre (27/10/21) held for her awarding with the honorary citizenship of Reggio Emilia and the honorary research doctorate in *Reggio Childhood Studies* from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. On this occasion, Senator Segre cited the poem *Agli amici* by Primo Levi (1985), in particular the phrase "in ognuno vi è la traccia di ognuno" ('in everyone there is the trace of everyone') (Farinacci & Prestianni, 2022, p. 114).

[222] The museum space evolves into a continuous "research project", a dynamic nature inherent in education that is improved by visible listening to people's interactions (FRC, 2023).

[223] In our case, the object or instrument can be understood as both the label and the work of art.

thinking" (Rinaldi & Vecchi, 2005), defined by Rinaldi (2005, p. 11) as a way of living life "getting involved" every day embracing freedom, imagination, and irony.

In *learning through play* (Kanhadilok & Watts, 2014), meanings are co-constructed through active participation and reflective thought, constituting an aesthetic experience that grows through comparison. Following Dewey's thought (Dewey 1934/2020), the aesthetic experience has to be conceived not on an individualistic level but in relation to other people who are next to the visitor during its exploration, which - in sociology - is defined as both the people they are with and any bystander in the area (Vom Lehn et al., 2001). As Rinaldi (2009, p. 53) states, the aesthetic component is a qualitative pedagogical element in a context of growth, which thus acquires a profound meaning. Aesthetics intertwines play with pleasure, defining the three pivotal components for a learning process that should be, as Rinaldi highlights, "pleasurable, appealing and fun" (*Ibidem*).

The panels emphasise the significance of relationships in a child's development from a learning perspective. The museum, seeing education as a collaborative endeavour, offers the possibility of stopping and reflecting, thus embodying the opportunities of the *Informal Learning Environment* (ILE) (Gong, 2022). In the meeting with others, curiosity is reignited, prompting us to view the world through fresh and amazed eyes, gradually unveiling its rich ecology of correlations. Connections constitute the vital space for human growth for children and adults participating in the process (Reverberi, 2021, p. 4, cited in Farinacci & Prestianni, 2022, p. 122[224]). Creativity blooms in the synaesthesia of languages[225]**,** and art is a conduit for thoughts and sensations. As children explore their emotions and those of others through dialogues, they appreciate the value of listening and construct their identities within a social context (Malaguzzi, 1996, cited in Farinacci et al., 2022, p. 122). This process promotes critical thinking, empathy, tolerance and appreciation for art through lifelong learning (Green et al., 2014, cited in Farinacci et al., 2022, p. 122).

Furthermore, from a content perspective, the "panels for young and old" select engaging stories and attractively present them to children. Dallari (2012) states that these features are crucial for developing and sharing narrative competence. This competence refers to the ability to comprehend and narrate stories. When children decode a tale, their mental processes and cognitive models help them construct knowledge and representations. By incorporating narrative potential in learning, communicative relationships are strengthened. Therefore, the content of the museum's family labels

[224] This publication is entitled *Art as experience di John Dewey ed il Reggio Emilia Approach. Prospettive filosofico-pedagogiche a confronto* ('Art as experience by John Dewey and the Reggio Emilia Approach. Philosophical and pedagogical perspectives in comparison') constitutes a part of the pedagogical research findings disseminated by my colleague Cristiana Prestianni and me during our doctoral studies.

[225] Listening to the child, we are powerfully reminded of Malaguzzi's belief of returning the "hundred languages" inherently theirs to them (Malaguzzi, 2017, p. 27, cited in Farinacci et al., 2022).

recognises the significance of narrative competence for a child's learning by proposing narratives about paintings that intrigue families.

The labels for families are part of a wide range of tools and activities designed for visitors from 0-99 years of age, such as drawing kits, treasure hunts, a suitcase named *Piera* with educational tools such as monocles and shapes - that aim to foster cognitive processing through playful creativity - drawing benches and foldable seats[226]. The learning activities extend possibilities for dialogue and interaction for all visitors, prolonging the duration of visits and enhancing engagement with exhibits. For instance, positioning the portable stools results from a thought that the Director has structured over the years, drawn from his experiences leading other informal learning institutions, such as the *MAK* (Museum Angewandte Kunst) in Frankfurt am Main. About this experience, he writes the following statements, which also apply to the *Brera*'s museum context:

> Throughout the museum there are chairs - lightweight and elegant portable stools that can be picked up, carried, and left. The configurations in which they are left tell a story of how people stop to chat, to talk with one another, to discuss what they have seen … What if we believe that the museum is a privileged site for informal learning, not the cognitive learning of the classroom, but the realisation that, as Jonathan Miller says 'the life of the mind is a pleasure'? If we believe that these moments tend to be sustained, social, marked by discussion and exchange - in short, take time - then the chairless museum suddenly begins to look slightly misguided … The experiment is as much about sitting on chairs as it is about displaying chairs (Bradburne, 2005).

The chair becomes a metaphor for a slow museum fruition, which follows the flow of a conversation, during which one stops to observe and tell stories about fantasy and real life. It is another declination of the idea of stimulating dialogue proposed by the family panels, if not its inherent extension. The chair, the panels, and the drawing benches are tangible elements that contribute to constructing *Brera*'s ability to encourage community, placing conversation at the heart of the museum's experience. Lang's perspective (2016, p. 71) is thought-provoking and aligned with this approach, as she reports a compelling necessity for the term *museum* to change its connotation, moving from the *museum* as an architectural building to the *museum* as a community. For instance, she draws attention to how this transition occurred naturally for the term *church*.

[226] There is a guide for families entitled *La Pinacoteca di Brera come la vedo io* ('The Pinacoteca di Brera as I see it') written by Devorah Block, including educational and playful resources. Another guide is *Musei per tutti* ('Museums for all'), written in collaboration with the *Abilità Associazione Onlus* in Easy-to-Read Language and Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) (see *Chapter I*). From the *Pinacoteca di Brera* official website, available at this link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/educazione/tutte-le-proposte/ (last accessed October 2023).

Conclusively, the overall educational purpose is to foster children's curiosity and exploration of the museum, undertaking an autonomous path and not following a prearranged itinerary. Recognising everyone's active role and competence, the aesthetic experience starts with carefully observing the artworks. The museum offers conditions that could nurture dialogue. However, regardless of age, it is up to the observer to interpret the work of art, tuning to their feelings and creating meaning through negotiations of personal impressions and questions with others. When experiencing the museum, autonomy is crucial for every visitor so that she can live the museum according to her rhythm. This results in a tailored museum path that interacts with the provided tools. The educational activities are part of a project called *Occorre tutta una città* ('We need a whole city'), which highlights the importance that the entire community has, cultural institutions included, when forming a citizen (Bradburne, 2019) and bringing up a child. "Besides targeting every single visitor and catering to his or her specific needs, they aim to support the entire social group to which he belongs" (*Ibidem*). This perspective aligns with our case study at the museum. Suppose the aim is to support the entire social group. Why not bring all the children - in our case, the class group with their respective parents/caregivers - to the museum and provide information in Easy-to-Read language if someone among them needs it? It could become an opportunity for everyone, given that there is a different point of view in their small social fabric that can enrich their collective experience. It is an opportunity to be educated about the world's complexity through inclusion, with tools to read the intricacies. In the following pages, we will delve into the impact of family panels on the interaction between parent-child pairs.

3.2 The order of the field study phases

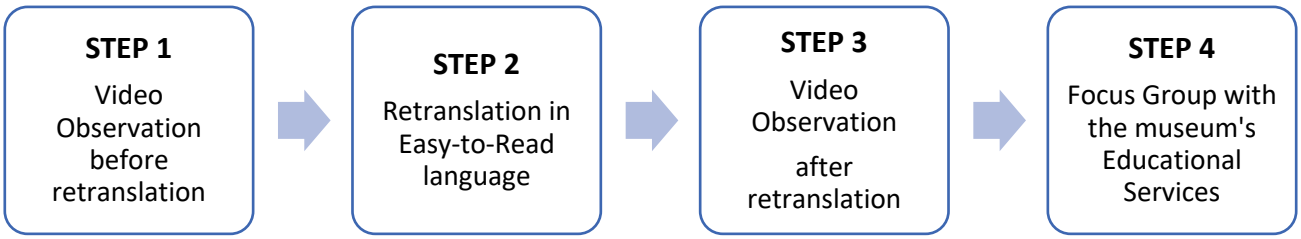


Figure 3.1 Order of the field study phases.

Figure 3.1 above depicts the sequence of the field study phases in this research. The video observation presented in this chapter, focused on highlighting the interactional dimension of the

museum experience and the impact of the panels for young and old on families' interaction, constitutes the foundation of this research and marks its inception (*STEP 1*), whose aim is to improve these labels from a linguistic-inclusion perspective, translating them according to Easy to Read (EtR) guidelines. The translation work (*STEP 2*) will start with the analysis of video interactions and then continue with a new intralinguistic translation proposal for both English and Italian texts, according to the Easy Language guidelines and what has been noticed during the field and video observation. The final work consists of displaying the new families' texts in the museum and collecting new data with video observation (*STEP 3*) to study if the language simplification could ease families' interaction through the already effective panels for young and old. Every material collected will constitute pedagogical documentation that will be shared via a focus group with the Museum's Educational Services (*STEP 4*), building an inclusive leadership "meta-reflection" on the data with museum educators and the staff working with children daily. After the group discussion on the work conducted, conclusions will be drawn on the impact of retranslation on families' interaction.

In the following paragraph, we will illustrate some fragments of families' interactions during their visit to the Milanese cultural institution, aiming to highlight the most recurring interactional patterns before the retranslation intervention on the labels.

3.3 Video Observation before retranslation

Before delving into the video observation, field observation took place. The initial field observation phase aimed to get a first idea of the type of interactions unfolding at the museum by studying the behaviour of browsers. We observed visitors in general and, successively, families specifically as they explored the museum and its galleries. We then tried to converse with those willing to talk about their impression of the museum visit.

Subsequently, field observation was used to organise all the logistics of the video observation, from the choice of the rooms and the most suitable works and panels to the positioning of the cameras and equipment up to the tests with the Bluetooth microphones, choosing places where the equipment did not hinder the experience of all visitors, not just those who were part of the experimentation. Therefore, the field observation phase was fundamental to allow the following research work to be carried out.

This paragraph will present the results of the first part of the investigation inside the picture gallery. Video Observation becomes a vector to recount people's stories inside the museum, being a thermometer for visitors' live social experiences and activities. The video observation aligns with current museology - that Brera's Art Gallery follows - in which a museum today is no longer evaluated for what it contains and the number of visitors but for the activities it offers as a 'verb',

transforming visitors into active users (Bradburne, 1998).

Visitor Studies in cultural institutions, including those concerned with language accessibility, often neglect the video observation methodology and resort to more conventional qualitative research methods, such as interviews with visitors collected after their museum experience. Drawing on Heath's methodology and theoretical framework (2010), this first part of the study aims to demonstrate how videos are an invaluable tool for researchers in every field associated with museum studies and for museum designers and educators when creating pedagogical documentation to reflect on, improve or modify the instruments available for the audience.

Observing video interaction becomes an opportunity to study what happens in the aesthetic experience moulded by relationships. Although general museum data and estimates show that the highest percentage of visitors do not come alone but with families and friends (Heath & Vom Lehn, 2008, p. 67), most of the studies conducted in museums rely on examining a one-visitor experience, neglecting the pivotal role of the group dimension while experiencing an exhibit, interaction becomes a critical element for enjoying the museum. Through talk, visual and bodily conduct, people can understand artwork's meaning by trying to shape, for instance, a communal interpretation of an artefact. Through a lively negotiation, people engage more with the museum environment and its works of art, living a transformative experience: families, too, could benefit from enhancing dialogue.

3.3.1 Giambattista Tiepolo's *Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the Prophet Elijah and the souls in Purgatory*

The first *panel for young and old* that we will analyse is entitled *Una pagina mancante* ('A missing page'[227]) (*Text 1; Figure 3.2*) and is displayed under Giambattista Tiepolo's masterpiece named "Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the Prophet Elijah and the souls in Purgatory"[228] (*Figure 3.3*). *Figure 3.4* and *Figure 3.5* show Room 34, where the artwork is displayed, and the logistics related to the positioning of the camera.

The label first concisely describes the artwork's content and then continues narrating its story, recounting, in particular, a long-gone and mysterious division in two parts of the canvas that the museum, in the end, reassembled. The activity proposed to families is to guess where the "seam" is and why someone would have cut it in two. Of course, the artwork's grandeur alone has a noticeable impact on visitors, particularly children. However, the suggested activities transform children into "detectives", and the response to the task is always very positive in every volunteer we have observed. In the next paragraph, we will discuss the findings in detail.

[227] Every label inside the *Pinacoteca di Brera* is written in Italian with English parallel text translation.
[228] In this case, the labels displayed underneath the exhibit are both the traditional and the ones for families.

Una pagina mancante

A volte i dipinti sono considerati dei testi, e come tali vanno letti. Tiepolo racconta, su questa enorme tela, momenti fondamentali della storia dell'Ordine religioso carmelitano. Non si sa bene quando e perché quest'opera venne divisa in due e, come in un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine, la storia non era più completa. Fu la Pinacoteca a ricucire insieme le parti. Riesci a individuare la cicatrice? Perché, secondo te, qualcuno decise di tagliare la tela?

Text 1. The "panel for young and old" [229] entitled 'A missing page'.

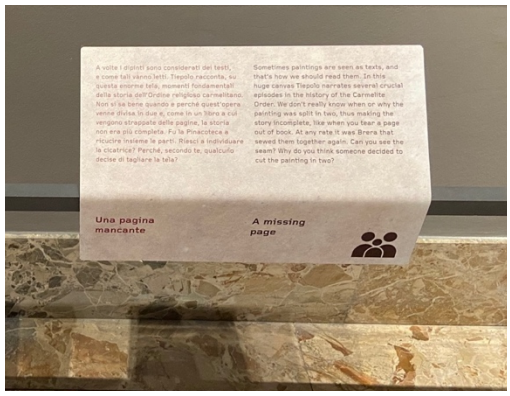


Figure 3.2 The "panel for young and old" entitled 'A missing page' displayed underneath the artwork.

[229] The labels presented are available at the link: https://izi.travel/it/5655-servizi-educativi-della-pinacoteca-di-brera/it (last accessed November 2023). All panels' translations in English are also available on the same webpage. Additionally, all the images of the paintings are available on the same online platform.
Below is the official English translation of the panel:

A missing page

Sometimes paintings are seen as texts, and that's how we should read them. In this vast canvas Tiepolo narrates several crucial episodes in the history of the Carmelite Order. We don't really know when or why the painting was split in two, thus making the story incomplete, like when you tear a page out of book. At any rate it was Brera that sewed together again. Can you see the seam? Why do you think someone decided to cut the painting in two?

Figure 3.3 Giambattista Tiepolo's *Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the prophet Elijah and the souls In Purgatory.*

Figure 3.4 Panoramic view of Room 34.

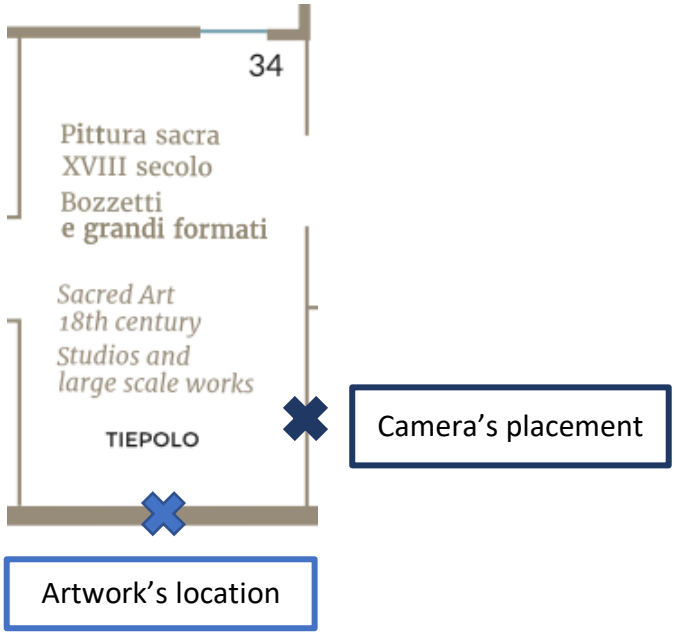


Figure 3.5 Map[230] of Room 34 with camera and painting positionings.

3.3.3.1 Findings

Following the scrutiny of the videos in order to identify the recurring interactional patterns, it emerged that there are two most frequent categories of performance: *Telling and tagging* (Christidou, 2012; Diamond, 1986) and *Animating through "display doing"* (Christidou, 2012). Besides demonstrating how an exhibit is a "social object" (Simon, 2010), these mapped interactions become pivotal between child-parent pairs during their negotiating experience. During a "visitor time" (Serrell, 1997), gestures, eye contact, embraces, words and thoughts transform the museum ecology into a space where people take action while enjoying themselves. Furthermore, physical closeness interweaves conversations, thus creating a meaningful learning experience. The playful activities reflect an idea of learning where all different children languages meet and interrelate in collaboration with their caregivers, resulting in concepts, depictions and communications related to life (Langer, 2002).

The examination of incidents results in a clear depiction of two major patterns of interaction: the first one is the *telling and tagging* and represents all the actions and conversations related to a pointing gesture towards the exhibit. The non-verbal mean of indicating - defined as *tagging*[231] - incorporates a process of identification and meaning-making with another person reflected through

[230] The museum's map is accessible on the official website at the following link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/proposte-educazione/mappa-interattiva/ (last accessed November 2023).
[231] *Tagging* is a word borrowed from the social media lexicon. The interactional pattern is also known as "social indexing", "social classification", and "folksonomy" (Voss, 2007).

words - defined as *telling*. The simple act of showing something to someone else is, in reality, a precious vehicle for communicating in our everyday lives that becomes denser of significance in the museum's galleries. While co-creating meaning with others, we mark and make noticeable an aspect to our co-visitors. *Telling and tagging* connect the social (in our case, visitors) and semantic context (in our case, the works of art), resulting in a much deeper engagement with the art piece (Christidou, 2012, p. 122). Secondly, while breaking the action into fragments, we highlighted another recurrent interactional pattern: *animating through "display doing"*. Families tend to express their thoughts by connecting with the artwork and the panel through their bodies. Their performance entails a corporeity that is part of the message they want to convey, directly linked to the words uttered. The 'display doing' integrates their interaction with the exhibit and the person beside them, 'animating' facets of the art object or the label. Both children and adults resort to bodily movements, combining gestures and words that create a theatricality imbued with meaning when relating to others (Christidou, 2012, p. 123).

In the following paragraphs, we will present some examples of these two types of interaction, showing how they could also happen during the same performance while interwoven with other interactional features. By describing what happens at the exhibit face, we will reflect on how the labels for families could impact them.

3.3.1.1.1 Telling and tagging

Transcript 1 - Mother (M) and daughter (F) (IMG_0636)

M: che cosa rappresenta? Eh l'unica soluzione è andare a leggere cosa c'è scritto, no?
F: mhm mhm. "A volte i dipinti sono considerati dei testi (*pause*) e come tali vanno letti. Diepolo racconta su questa enorme tela momenti fondamentali della storia… *she stops, the mother continues*
M: e dell'ordine religioso carmelitano. Non si sa bene quando" *she stops*…**carmelitano non so che cosa sia sinceramente eh, sarà una religione a sé.** "Non si sa bene quando e perché quest'opera venne divisa in due". Ah. *They look up.*
F: A me sembra una.
M: Sembra. Però probabilmente era…Va beh noi adesso con le pitture non riusciamo a vederlo però probabilmente era suddivisa. *Gesture* Vediamo perché. *They move apart and then come together again.*
F: *She continues reading the text*: "Come un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine la storia non era più completa".

M: eh sì, immaginati vedere solo metà quadro. *gesture* Ti saresti persa tutto il bello di quella parte lì. *hand*
F: e come continua? Perché è stato diviso?
M: esatto. "Fu…
F: la Pinacoteca a **riuscire** insieme"
M: A **ricucire**
F: insieme le parti. Riesci a individuare la cicatrice?"
M: perché secondo te qualcuno decise di tagliare la tela? Ahh. Andiamo a vedere, vediamo se la troviamo.
F: Secondo me si vede da vicino
M: Si vede da vicino? Andiamo a vedere, vediamo se la troviamo…
F: **Qua** *tagging*
M: Dov'è
F: Qua
M: Non toccare eh! Dici che è qua?
F: Sì secondo me è lì.
M: Può essere, non lo so. Perché secondo te ha deciso di tagliare la tela?
F: Mhm *They continue observing*
M: Per quale motivo? Cioè secondo te viene interrotta qui decide di tagliare quel pezzo o o di tagliare questo di pezzo *tagging*
F: Questo. *mimesis*
M: Questo pezzo decide di togliere? Può essere, anche se…è questo guarda, c'è qualcosa vedi. Qua c'è qualcosa…però…prova a guardarlo bene tutto, dappertutto…
F: **Perché secondo me voleva lasciare la parte più luminosa**
M: Ah ok. Quella che si vedeva di più? Quindi la parte più importante
F: **Sì. Hanno voluto tagliare a metà a questo qua l'ha tolto perché secondo lui magari era quella meno importante e**
M: un po' più cupa.
F: **ed era più buia.**
M: Ok, ci può stare. *They continue observing the painting.*

The first example shows the interactional pattern of *telling and tagging*, which recurs significantly in all the video material analysed. Generally, it is a recurring interaction in museum observations through which visitors interact, building meaning. In this case and the following

examples, it will be interesting to analyse both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the interaction to observe how the content of the conversation and the shared process of meaning-making are influenced by the labels displayed in the museum.

In this case, in the beginning, it is the mother who approaches and wants to involve her daughter with *tag questions*[232] aimed at involving the child, such as "Che cosa rappresenta? L'unica soluzione è andare a leggere cosa c'è scritto, no?" ('What does it represent? The only solution is to go and read what's written, right?') in which she invites her to read.

The little girl begins to read the panel aloud - the phenomenon is called *text-echo* and is part of the *telling* - but she stops when faced with the term *carmelitano* ('Carmelite'). Her mother picks up the reading where she left off. However, she also has difficulty with the term and ends up saying hesitantly, "Carmelitano, non so cosa sia sinceramente, sarà una religione a sé" ('Carmelite, I don't know what it is honestly, it will be a religion in itself').

The mother continues to read, and the story of the work that begins to be revealed intrigues them. She begins a dance in which they move away and closer to the painting, in a choreography aimed at identifying the exact point where *la cicatrice* ('the scar') is located. In moving in the space, with *iconic gestures*, the mother tries to give a first interpretation and begins to interact, as well as with her daughter, with the work of art in a process called *identification*. It follows the beginning of the *tagging*: "quella parte lì" ('that part there'), indicating the painting (*Fragment 1.1*). The mother involves her curious daughter, who claims, "e come continua? Perché è stato diviso?" ('and how does it continue? Why was it divided?') again in the reading aloud, in which the daughter confuses the term *ricucire* ('mending') with *riuscire* ('succeeding'), which the mother promptly corrects - a phenomenon defined as *repair*[233].

Once the reading is finished, the investigation begins, and the daughter suggests a solution to solve the mission "secondo me si vede da vicino" ('in my opinion you can see it up close') and the mother supports her. The daughter promptly finds a solution to the question - deliberately placed in the panel in an open question mode to encourage dialogue - and the little girl also begins *tagging* "Qua" ('Here') in choreography with her mother (*Fragment 1.2 and 1.3*). In *telling and tagging*, we refer to aspects of the painting verbally (with *pointing gestures*) but also non-verbally (with *spatial deixis* such as repetitions of *qua, lì, qui, questo,* etc. - 'here, there, this') (Allen, 2002) they intertwine the conversation and the continuous observation of the painting with extreme attention.

[232] All the terms in italics refer to the coding schema presented in *Chapter II* (Methodology) to analyse the sociocultural functions that occur during museum interaction (Christidou, 2012; Heath et al., 2010; Allen, 2002).
[233] *Repair* and *Sentence completion* are considered declinations of the interactional *telling* pattern. Resnick (Resnick et al., 1997) recognises their active role as social and pedagogical resources.

The mother repeats the panel questions to her daughter, adding new ones. They discuss their opinions, and the mother becomes a mediator between the work and the daughter "prova a guardarlo bene tutto" ('try to look at it all carefully'). The daughter, in the negotiation of meaning between *questioning* and *answering*, perceives the necessity for interpreting*/explaining* - a subsequent interactional phase that typically ensues - providing his lucid and creative interpretation of the mystery: "Perché secondo me voleva lasciare la parte più luminosa. (…) Hanno voluto tagliare a metà a questo qua l'ha tolto perché secondo lui magari era quella meno importante (…) ed era più buia" ('Because in my opinion he wanted to leave the brightest part. (…) They wanted to cut this one in half and take it away because, according to him, maybe it was the less important one (…) and it was darker'). The mother co-constructs the meaning with her, initially providing her with input but leaving the daughter the space to play and solve the enigma according to her vision. Both finally share this vision sealed by the mother's final intervention: "Ok, ci può stare" ('Ok, there can be').

This example shows how possibilities for interpreting aesthetic experience can flourish from *telling and tagging* thanks to the encounter with others. The interaction takes place and is the bearer of meaning and dialogue. However, it is worth noting that some linguistic aspects of the family panel displayed in the museum may cause difficulties in understanding the text. For example, from a syntactic point of view, there is no explanatory proposition to clarify the meaning of 'Carmelites'. Furthermore, from a lexical point of view, several terms present in the text are not part of the high-usage vocabulary of the Italian language, which can create small impasses in reading and understanding the text for children and adults.

Fragment 1.1

Fragment 1.2

Fragment 1.3

3.3.1.1.2 Animating through "display doing"

Transcript 2 - Mother (M) and son (F)(IMG_0597)

F: Che grande! Ma quanto ci è voluto?
M: **Ah…Gianbattista Tiepolo, Tiepolo a me piace un sacco**. **Pensa che ero andata a vedere anche un palazzo tutto affrescato da lui, da Tiepolo,** che vive nel…1745. *She approaches the label*
(…)
M: *Mother reads.* Mhmmm. *The child observes.*
F: La cicatrice?

M: **Ah quindi praticamente…quest'opera è stata tagliata**
F: e l'hanno ricucita.
M: **e l'hanno ricucita, cioè ricucita…non con ago e filo immagino.** *She mimics the act of sewing with her left hand*
F: Io l'ho vista
M: L'hai vista?
F: È lì. *tagging*
M: Dove?
F: **Sopra la testa del signore.**
M: mmmh.
F: **Un po' più in qua**. *Iconic gesture*
M: mhmm.
F**: Tipo qua.** *He touches his head.*
M: **Anche lì guarda sul mento della signora** vedi come sembra *tagging - She indicates a point in the painting*
F: Quale signora.
M: Questa qua, sul mento, vedi che c'è come una un segno, una cicatrice
F: Sì.
M: Potrebbe essere da lì che scende e…aspe che la luce inganna un po'. Aspetta eh…vediamo. Mhmmm, Aspetta. Sì secondo me sì, guarda anche qua nel…nel mantello della donna, guarda qua vedi a quell'altezza lì? *tagging*
F: Sì.
M: Quello secondo me lì guarda saaale anche qua anche qua secondo me. vedi proprio tutto il mantello poi sopra sopra sopra, il mento e poi guarda lì lì sopra, praticamente *tagging*
F: Eh, sii appunto.
M: Dove dicevi tu. *Mother hugs the child. They point together*
F: Fa così, fa così.
M: Esatto. Poi scende sul mento o forse anche là non si capisce. In realtà e molto…però è la luce che lo rende confuso. Però sicuramente è è
F: È tra questi *hands*
M: Anche secondo me, sicuro, poi ci sono delle parti più macchiate e delle parti meno. Anche se non si capisce beh si questa è la parte centrale dove lo hanno tagliato?
F: È stato fatto? Non si capisce. Quando è stato fatto?

M: È stata fatta nel 1745.
F: E finita?
M: Non lo so, probabilmente in tutto l'anno. Allora l'aggiudichiamo?
F: Sssì. *Indicates the point.*
M: Qua non si capisce dove finisce però
F: Qua non si vede *they come closer*
M: Allora Qua sicuramente guarda
F: Ah siì ho visto
M: Dove?
F: Là che c'è un pezzo di colore che si mischia. Qua qua proprio dritto a me *inconic gesture + tagging*
M: Mhmm.
F: Andiamo?
M: Basta?
F: Sì.
M: Sì. Dopo chiediamo a papa e Edi dov'è che l'han vista. *He reaches his brother and asks him: "Dove l'avete vista voi?".*

This second example shows the interactional pattern of *animating through "display doing"* but also presents the phenomenon of *telling and tagging* as a demonstration that, most of the time, these sociocultural phenomena intertwine and can happen within the same museum experience.

When they approach the painting, the child is immediately struck by it, uttering an *affective talk* (Allen, 2002), defined as of *intrigue*. The first observation of the large painting immediately arouses his curiosity, "Che grande! Ma quanto ci è voluto?" ('How big! But how long did it take?'). In the initial *perceptual talk* (Allen, 2002) with the mother, *naming* takes place. The mother searches in the label - in this case, the classic one, positioned next to the one for families - the author's name and information on the historical period in which he lived. Upon discovering that the work is by Tiepolo, the mother expresses an *affective comment* defined as *pleasure* in which she expresses an appreciation for the artist and which is intertwined with another typical interactional phenomenon, that of *storytelling*, with which the mother enriches the conversation by telling one of his experiences: "Tiepolo a me piace un sacco. Pensa che ero andata a vedere anche un palazzo tutto affrescato da lui" ('I like Tiepolo a lot. Just think that I also went to see a palace entirely frescoed by him').

In this case, the mother reads the panel's text aloud (*text-echo*) while the child observes the work. A particular phenomenon occurs, which we could define as an explanatory strategy

implemented directly by the mother, who, after reading the text, reworks it in a text reformulation, which becomes a sort of practical summary: "Ah quindi praticamente quest'opera è stata tagliata e l'hanno ricucita" ('Ah so basically this work has been cut and the they have mended it'). It is a strategy implemented to encourage the child's understanding, adding a verbal and physical clarification of the term *ricucire* ('mend') and the related metaphor as the child repeats the term *cicatrice* ('scar') with a surprised expression. The mother explains, "cioè ricucita…non con ago e filo" ('that is, sewn up…not with a needle and thread') while mimicking the act of sewing with her left hand in what is defined as an *iconic gesture* (McNeill, 1992) to convey meaning (*Fragment 2.1*). In the strategy implemented by the mother, a concretisation of the metaphor also takes place, a very peculiar example of *telling*[234].

After the mother has read the label out loud and then re-explained the game-like activity to her son, the child immediately replies saying, "Io l'ho vista. (…) è lì!" ('I saw it, it's there!') pointing his left hand and index finger towards a specific direction and part of the canvas fiercely, while physically approaching his mother towards her left arm with his right hand. His firm position wants to guide his mother as he is convinced of having found the presumed seam. While sharing his idea with his mother, who carefully tries to figure out the area he is referring to asking "L'hai vista? Dove?" ('Did you see it? Where?'), he continues vividly explaining his idea through his talk and bodily conduct. With the help of his left hand through upward and downward motions, he states that "è lì. Sopra la testa del signore…Un po' più in qua" ('there, over the gentleman's head…a little more this way') while moving his arm from side to side - here an example of *tagging (Fragment 2.2)*. While his mother murmurs a reiterated "mhmm", he explains the exact placement using his body, tapping with a finger on his head and saying, "Tipo qua" ('Like here'), simulating the precise position of the seam on the body of the painted figure (*Fragment 2.3*). Here is an example of *Animating through "display doing"*, particularly the phenomenon of *Transposing the object to the body* (Heath & vom Lehn 2004, p. 18).

Let us observe *Fragment 2.3* in detail. Through his body, the child animates the exhibit and impersonates a character on the canvas to explain his idea to his mother better, showing the exact position of the painting's seam according to him. The bodily conduct[235] becomes essential to convey and negotiate his belief with his mother. The object (in our case, the painting) is transposed to the body (*Ibidem*) as a representation of a practical aesthetic experience that interweaves the child's embodied performance with the work of art thanks to the dialogue with his mother. The child's bodily conduct mediates the message (in this case, its interpretation of the exhibit) to his parent, who

[234] On the topic of metaphor and figurative language in pedagogy, see a reflection in *Chapter V*.

[235] Most studies in the past focused exclusively on conversation analysis and the study of talk. Thanks to the social sciences, the field has broadened its horizons, focusing on studying visitors' conduct.

carefully pays attention to his speech while keeping her gaze on the painting. The intergenerational dialogue reflexively promotes the family's fruition of the piece of art.

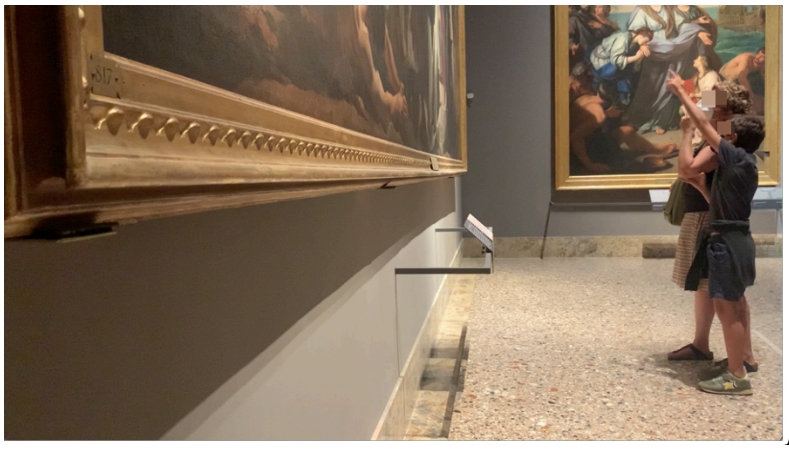
The mother shares her opinion, recurring in turn to *tagging* (*Fragment 2.4*) and *attracting someone as an audience,* inviting her son to see where the seam is according to her opinion. In the choreography of outstretched arms and exchange of opinions, the mother's physical presence approaches that of her son, and they continue the exploration, embracing each other and pointing together. Their negotiation goes on until they find a solution to the issue together, ending with the mother asking, "L'aggiudichiamo?" that in English could be translated into 'Is this our final answer?'.

This example illustrates the child's vivid engagement while interacting with his mother and the exhibit through the label. *Animating through "display doing"* is an interactional pattern demonstrating active engagement in the aesthetic experience. The *panel for young and old* provides tools for helping families to "look at the art together - and discuss the ways they look at it"[236], engendering inputs to create a discussion, with everyone sharing his perspective. This fruitful exchange lays the foundation for children to connect more deeply with art in their personal museum experience, co-creating their story narrative, leading to Shearman's idea of the active spectator that finally becomes complicit in the artist's creation (Heath et al., 2002, p. 10).

The relational dimension increases his informal learning experience while reasoning about the possible solutions for the questions; the interpretation of the proposed activities and the creation of meaning is built in and through interacting with others at that moment and is entirely up to the visitors. Panels offer a perspective to talk about art, and visitors reinterpret it freely according to their *hic et nunc*'s shared vision. Studying what happens in real-time through video recordings could contribute to illustrating how deeply interactional the museum experience is for visitors and how even more conventional tools like labels are still considered valuable instruments to ease the museum experience. Furthermore, it could help improve the panels' textuality. In this case, it was interesting to notice that the mother read the text aloud entirely to his child and its subsequent intervention with explication strategies to reformulate the text in its entirety and some complex terms to the child. This simplification strategy could be substituted directly by a linguistically more accessible text to make them dedicate their time to the game-like activity performance and let the child read easily independently.

[236] Cf. Footnote 210 (*Ibidem*).

Fragment 2.1



Fragment 2.2

Fragment 2.3

Fragment 2.4

3.3.2 Gentile da Fabriano's *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*

The second *panel for young and old* we will analyse is entitled *A piedi nudi* ('Barefoot') (*Text 2; Figure 3.6*) and is displayed under Gentile da Fabriano (Gentile di Niccolò di Giovanni)'s "Coronation of the Virgin with Saints[237]", a polyptych from Valle Romita (*Figure 3.7*). *Figure 3.8* and *Figure 3.9* provide a comprehensive depiction of Room 22, delineating the precise location of the artwork and indicating the camera's placement for the video observation.

The first part of the label describes the artwork, focusing on particular aspects such as the use of colours and materials and the actions of the figures portrayed. In the second part, the text adds information about where the polyptych was located in the past (in a church) and asks families how they would imagine that church, if "small or large, simple or magnificent?". Every family label offers different lenses to observe paintings and propose various activities. In this example, the panel aims to create a dialogue to "talk about art" by playing with children and their relatives' imaginations. The questions sow the seeds in the family to interact and play with their creativity. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the findings in detail.

A piedi nudi

Dov'è l'azzurro del cielo? Al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero. Il blu è nel manto di Maria in preziosa polvere di lapislazzuli. Di morbida pelliccia sono i mantelli di Maddalena e Gerolamo. Ma che contrasto con il ruvido saio dei francescani! C'è chi è a piedi nudi: chi prega, chi legge. Una volta questo dipinto si trovava in una chiesa: oro per stupire lo sguardo, piedi nudi per ricordare l'umiltà. Come ti immagini quella chiesa? Piccola o grande, umile o fastosa?

Text 2. "Panel for young and old" entitled *A piedi nudi*[238].

[237] The original title is "Incoronazione della Vergine, i santi Gerolamo, Francesco, Domenico, Maria Maddalena. I santi Pietro Martire, Giovanni Battista, Francesco e un santo francescano".

[238] Here is the museum's English version of the panel:

Barefoot

Where is the blue of the sky? In its place we find gold leaf. The blue we find in Mary's cloak painted in precious powdered lapislazuli. The cloaks of Mary Magdalen and St. Jerome are made of soft fur. What a contrast they make with the Franciscans rough habits! Some of the figures are barefoot: some pray, some read. This painting used to be in a church: with gold to dazzle the gaze and bare feet to recall humility. How do you imagine that church? Was it small or large, simple or magnificent?

Figure 3.6 The "label for young and old" displayed underneath the artwork.

Figure 3.7 *Coronation of the Virgin with St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Dominic and St. Mary Magdalen; St. Peter Martyr, St. John the Baptist, St. Francis and a Franciscan Saint (Valle Romita Polyptych) by* Gentile da Fabriano.

Figure 3.8 Panoramic view of Room 22.

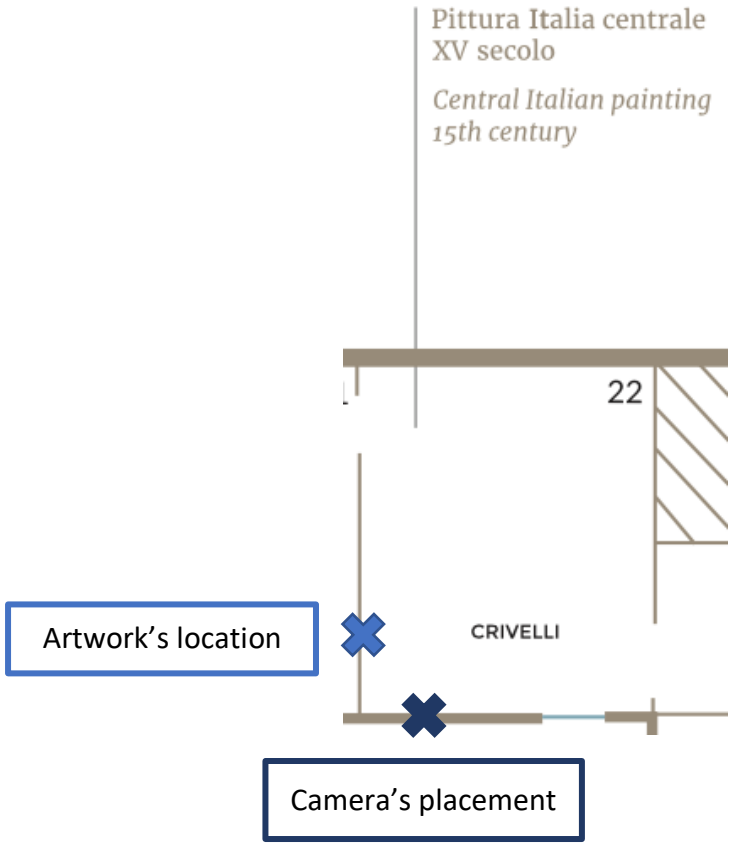


Figure 3.9 Map of Room 22 with the video camera and painting positionings.

3.3.2.1 Findings

The video observation of the interaction in front of Gentile da Fabriano's painting and the related family label align with the findings illustrated for the previous artwork. Family response in front of the exhibit is positive and active, and the most recurrent interactional patterns that prove it are the *telling and tagging* and the *animating through "display doing"* (Christidou, 2012). Consequently, these two categories of performances emerge as momentous in children's aesthetic experience at the museum.

In the ensuing paragraphs, we will substantiate the postulation by illustrating various interaction fragments in front of the piece of art where these two patterns are noticeably shown. Additionally, we will show how familial museum performances can be composed of more intertwined patterns. A reflection on the labels' influence on the pairs' interaction will be incorporated.

3.3.2.1.1 Telling and tagging

Transcript 3 - Mother (M) and daughter (F) (IMG_0606)

M: Andiamo a vedere questo di qua. Gentile da Fabriano. Gentile di Niccolò di Giovanni. Questo è ancora più vecchio. *They both observe the painting.*
F: Cos'è quello? Quello? Nella prima casell…*whispering + tagging*
M: Oh, mamma! *surprised* Cosa sta facendo sta…sta tagliando i capelli *the mother laughs* è andato un po'…giù.. *The little girl moves and observes the painting from another point.* Questo è un polittico. *She emphasises the word.*
F: Cos'è?
M: Il politico è un'opera composta da tante opere. *hands* Poli perchè sono tante, a volte c'è il trittico che sono tre. *iconic gesture* Una più grande di solito e credo le altre due più piccole. Viene dal piccolo eremo francescano di valle Romita nelle Marche. Al centro è raffigurata l'incoronazione di …. Con fiamme e penne di pavone *emphatically reads the traditional panel* Quante stelline! *tagging* A piedi nudi? Prova a leggere qua. Dov'è l'azzurro del cielo al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero. *Surprised tone* Eh sì. Il blu è il manto di Maria in preziosa polvere di lapislazzuli. *Text-echo, the other daughter (F2) approaches*
F2: A cosa servono i microfoni?
M: Per sentire quello che dico…che diciamo. *F2 moves away.*
F1: Mamma.
M: Dimmi.
F: I lapislazzuli sono delle *whispering*
M: Parla più forte che non ti sento.
F: Delle pietre preziose?
M: I lapislazzuli sì, sono delle pietre preziose. "Di morbida pelliccia sono i mantelli di Maria Maddalena e San Gerolamo. Ma che contrasto con il ruvido saio dei Francescani" (*Text-echo*) …eh sì. È vero hai letto qua? *Tagging: she indicates a point in the text.* **Quali sono i francescani? Il frate francescano come…come Fra' Alessandro, chi è che c'ha il saio di questi?**
F: *The young girl answers the question with a shrug.* **Il?**

M: **Il vestito da frate.**
M: **Fra' Alessandro com'è che è vestito di solito.** *The child points to a tunic in the painting.* **Eh così, brava!** *She smiles at her daughter.* "C'è chi è a piedi nudi, chi prega e chi legge". Vediamo…chi è che è a piedi nudi? Lui, l…ma no sembran scarpette quelle. *The little girl approaches another point of the painting.*
F: No. Qui. *tagging*
M: Ecco chi legge.
F: Chi prega *she observes and searches*
M: Chi preeega, chi è che sta pregando?
F: Lei, anche lei.
M: Anche lei *she repeats*
F: Anche lui, in alto *tagging*
M: Ah era in una chiesa. Secondo te?
F: Mmm…**grande e umile.** *She looks at her mother.*
M: Grande e umile. Beh grande sì perché è grande il quadro. **E perché umile?**
F: **Che vuol dire?**
M: *she laughs* **Umile vuol dire…semplice, che non vuole…**
F: Sì, semplice.
M: **…non vuole farsi vedere grande, mettersi in mostra.**
F: Second me nzi
M: Quindi grande però semplice.
F: No, **faz**
M: **Fastosa.** Bene. Perché? Perché c'è tutto l'oro?
F: Sì, guarda qui *tagging*, ci stanno anche i simbolini *iconic gesture*
M: Vedi queste son le piume di pavone che c'erano scritte qua. Si intravedo-
F: Andiamo a vedere quell'altro?
F: Vuoi vedere quell'altro?
F: Mhmm.

The first example we show in front of Gentile da Fabriano's artwork identifies the pedagogical and sociocultural aspects of *telling and tagging* to confirm the initial statement that this pattern was also recurrent in the second room where we conducted the video observation.

Transcript 3 presents the interaction of a mother with her daughter, which starts with the mother proposing the pattern of *attracting someone as an audience* by inviting her daughter to observe this specific painting, "Andiamo a vedere questo di qua" ('Let's go see this here') and

adopting in her *telling* the *naming* of the artist. They start to carefully observe the work of art, while the young girl bursts in with a question, "Cos'è quello?" ('What is that?') (*questioning*) starting the *tagging* choreography, pointing to the artwork. Her mother replies (*answering*) by figuring out what a character is represented doing in the painting and adding *affective talk/comments* (Allen, 2002), "Oh, mamma!" ('Oh, mother!').

The curious little girl continues to observe the work, moving back and forth almost as if to glean details from different angles. The mother takes over by presenting the work to her daughter, first reading the traditional panel, thus introducing *polittico* ('polyptych') - a term present in the traditional panel - to the child based on her previous knowledge. The mother then reads the family panel, always trying to involve her daughter (*attracting someone as an audience*), performing *tagging* "Quante stelline! A piedi nudi? Prova a leggere qua" "How many stars! Barefoot? Try reading here" (with *Barefoot* being the *text-echo* of the panel's title, she recurs to *tagging* using *demonstratives*). The little girl reads the label silently (*reading labels silently*), but the mother continues to read aloud and emphatically dramatize the story of the work while she reads it. The little girl, through what is defined as *person reference*, calls her mother to ask her for clarification on the term *lapislazzuli* ('lapis lazuli') "Mamma…i lapislazzuli sono delle pietre preziose?" ('Mom…are lapis lazuli precious stones?') - defined as *questioning* - a term which, although complex, the little girl shows she knows.

As the seconds pass, a central exchange occurs in their interaction and construction of meaning: the mother reads the label aloud until they encounter the word *francescani* ('Franciscans'). "Hai letto qua? Quali sono i francescani?" ('Did you read this? Who are the Franciscans?') she says while *tagging* the text in the panel (*Fragment 3.1*). The little girl does not respond, and this is why the mother implements a strategy of clarification in which *storytelling*[239] takes over, trying to explain the complex term by reconnecting it to the experiences lived by the little girl, recalling a friar that she had the opportunity to meet: *"Il frate francescano, come Fra' Alessandro, chi è che c'ha il saio di questi?"* ('The Franciscan friar, like friar Alessandro, which of these wears the habit?'). However, the word *saio* ('habit') presents another obstacle to the understanding of the little girl, who, not knowing how to respond, with an *iconic gesture*, shrouds her shoulders in the meaning of 'I do not know'. The mother takes over again, recalling her experiences with Friar Alessandro: "com'è che è vestito di solito?" ('How is he usually dressed?'). The little girl ends up indicating - again *tagging* - a friar's habit in the painting (*Fragment 3.2*). The mother congratulated her with a smile. The gesture of *tagging* becomes a communication vehicle in their conversation, as well as a demonstration on the little girl's part that she has understood the term previously unknown to her.

In this instance, the exchange between the mother and her daughter displays a significant

[239] *Storytelling* is a declination of the interactional pattern of *telling*.

telling and tagging that shapes their museum experience. The verbal and non-verbal dialogue continues with an accurate analysis of the panel's text, which leads to a precise reconstruction of its interpretation. Nevertheless, the artwork interpretation is shaped according to the couple's exchange of aesthetic, emotional and connection experiences at that exact moment. Based on their unique impressions, mother and daughter observe, search and find (recurring to *tagging*: "No, Qui"; "Lei, anche lei"; "Anche lui, in alto"'. 'No, Here'; 'She, her too'; 'Him too, above') the elements referred to in the text in the artwork. Finally, the mother proposes the final activity to her daughter, who expresses her opinion. At the same time, she seeks eye contact with the mother, shifting her posture (another form of *attracting someone as an audience*), replying: "Grande e umile" ('Great and humble'). But when her mother asks her for clarification to justify her answer - the *arguing* phase - "E perchè umile?" ('And why humble?'), it turns out that the little girl does not know the meaning of the term, which the mother promptly explains (therefore representing the entire process of *questioning - answering - arguing – explaining* through this interaction).

Continuing her response to the activities, the little girl cannot pronounce the term *fastoso* ('sumptuous'). However, the mother grasps the meaning and interacts with a *repair* formula by repeating the term. She also asks her to justify her answer, and the little girl promptly motivates her point of view with *tagging* and the help of *iconic gestures*. The interaction ends with the little girl who wants to go and see another work of art - perhaps tired and conditioned by "museum fatigue"[240] but intrigued by the infinite stimuli provided by the surrounding space - and her mother indulges her. Together, they walk away, tailoring their visit.

This example demonstrates how the dimension of *telling and tagging* proves pivotal in the exchange of opinions between visitors and how the family panel contributes to increasing the connection between individuals, their thoughts, their bodies, and the works of art. From a pedagogical point of view, the meaning-making process implemented by the mother in close collaboration with her daughter in a meaningful interaction demonstrates the museum's role and potential as an Informal Learning Environment (ILE) (Scoot, 2002,p. 33). From a linguistic inclusion perspective, the work done by the mother in simplifying some terms and making cultural references explicit in the text using her strategies is thought-provoking. Her intervention shows that some of these aspects may not be readily understandable to let a seven-year-old child read independently. We could, therefore, linguistically intervene in the text to ensure a higher readability.

[240] The concept of "museum fatigue" was introduced by psychologist and ethnomusicologist Benjamin Ives Gilman in 1916. The psychologist advocated simplifying museum fruition to create less "discomfort" for visitors (Rosa, 2021). The theme has been explored in depth over the years, with pedagogical declinations, underlining how, in the case of children at the museum, "cognitive fatigue" can manifest earlier than in older visitors (Maxwell & Evans, 2002).

Fragment 3.1

Fragment 3.2

Transcript 4 - Mother (M) and daughter (F) (IMG_0632)

M: Uh! Guarda che bello! Ti piace?
A: Sì.
M: Bellissimo! Vediamo un po' di leggere qualcosa…Allora: "Dov'è l'azzurro del cielo? *The mother looks up at the painting and consequently her daughter does too.* "Al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero" (*text-echo*) *they look up again* Hai visto? She whispers. *They stop to observe the painting for a few seconds*. "Il blu"…andiamo avanti a leggere…"è - *indicating the text + Text-echo*: Il blu è nel manto di Maria in preziosa polvere di lapislazzuli". **Guarda il manto di Maria, vedi, tutto blu?**
F: ***The little girl shakes her head.***
M: **Vedi, eccolo è questo il manto** *tagging the mantle line in the picture, holding the daughter's hand, guiding the daughter's hand (Fragment 4)*
F: Ah. She *sighs and opens her mouth.*
M: Dai Andiamo avanti, "di morbida pelliccia sono i mantelli di Maddalena e Gerolamo" …. Guarda *the little girl looks around*… I mantelli… guardi (…) Dai leggi un pochino anche tu.
F: Eehbhbdoe (…) **siou ca -- ni.**
M: **Fran-ces-ca-ni.** Eccoli qua, i frati.
F: ***She looks around.***
M: **Anna[241]!** *She tries to get the little girl's attention. "*C'è chi è a piedi nudi, chi le-le-g-g-e". *The mother continues to tag. She invites her to read, but the little girl cannot read. Her mother then reads to her.*
F: **Suardo**… (…) **Duni**. ***She skips a line in the text.***
M: No, aspetta! *The mother continues reading with her.*
F: Pic-co-lo, **gra-ne** umile o **fa-sto-**
M: **Fa-sto-so.** *Together with her daughter.*
F: **-sa!**
M: Come te la immagini secondo te? Umile o fastosa?
A: **Fazzosa!** ***She looks around.***

[241] To respect the family's privacy, we changed all the names of the volunteers involved in the project.

It was decided to include another example of interactional *telling and tagging* involving another mother and daughter couple. Specifically, this example represents a family with a special-needs child involved in the project as part of the group of volunteers. With special educational needs related to a language disorder, the little girl tries deciphering the text with her mother. In such a case, the mother's role becomes preponderant in her attempts to create contact between her daughter and the work of art. The little girl needs help to read the panel, even with her mother's guidance, and she often gets distracted while reading, looking elsewhere. The mother tries to involve her by implementing all the interactional strategies within her power, such as *attracting someone as the audience* with *affective talk/comments* "Guarda che bello!" ('Look how beautiful!') "Bellissimo! Vediamo un po' di leggere qualcosa" ('Beautiful! Let's see if we can read something'); *Identification* and *text-echo*, in observing the work and recognising some elements during the *telling*; *person reference* "Anna!"; *questioning* "Ti piace? (…) Come te la immagini secondo te?" ('Do you like it? (…) How do you imagine it?'). Nonetheless, the text is too complex for the child - for example, she cannot read terms such as *fastoso* ('sumptuous') and *francescani* ('Franciscans') - and understanding becomes a demanding challenge for her.

In this case, the label's text is an obstacle the mother tries to overcome, encouraging her daughter, talking to her, and guiding her physically. To the question "Guarda il manto di Maria, vedi, tutto blu?" ('Look at Mary's cloak, see, all blue?'), the little girl shakes her head. The mother replies, "Vedi è questo il manto" ('See, this is the cloak'), tracing a line with her arm and the index finger of her left hand, holding her daughter's hand (*Fragment 4*). Therefore, we present an example of different *tagging*, in which the mother takes her daughter's hand and guides her. In what we could define as 'shared *tagging*', the mother's arm guides her daughter to pragmatically recognise the meaning of the *manto* ('cloak') in the family panel directly referring to the exhibit. This creation of meaning conveyed through physical language becomes essential in the dialogic exchange between mother and daughter.

The example underlines, on the one hand, the growing pedagogical value of the interaction as the difficulties for the child increase. However, on the other hand, the interaction is unbalanced and mainly led by the mother, demonstrating that the text can be improved from a linguistic inclusion perspective.

Fragment 4

3.3.2.1.2 Animating through "displaying doing"

Transcript 5 - Father (P) and son (F) (IMG_0595)

They talk about another painting in the distance as they get closer. P: (…) però se noti amore, hai notato che questo artista qui fa tutti i-i capelli, i peli, tutti fatti…vedi come sono?
F: sì.
P: vedi come sono questo, anche quelli là, quello. Andiamo a vedere quello lì. *They come closer to the painting.*
P: Qua dice: *"Text-echo: the father reads the traditional panel and the family panel".* Tu come te la immagini?
F: Mhmm…grande. *He moves away to look at the painting.*
P: Grande?
F: **Sì, tu?** *He looks towards his father.*
P: Eh umile o fastosa? Cioè una chiesettina umile o…
F: **In che senso fastosa?**
P: **Eh fastosa è di quelle piene di…di opere d'arte, ricche di cose.** *Iconic gesture*
F: **E umile?**
P: **Umile con poche cose, con magari soltanto questo quadro qui eeeh…** *Tagging*

F: Boh…forse grande ma umile.
P: Grande ma umile.
F: **Tu?** *Shifts in gaze.*
P: Sì grande direi per…più che altro anche per le dimensioni del-del…
F: **E diresti umile o fastosa?** *Role play.*
P: Ma io dire cioè da dal…anch'io dire umile comunque. Ma più che altro per la rappresentazione dei dei frati e dei…dei piedi nudi. *Tagging*
F: Sì.
P: Però sì l'oro comunque…era molto utilizzato ai tempi per fare le decorazioni…dei quadri.
F: Quindi diciamo grande e umile. *He plays with the microphone.*
P: Anche lì, vedi, quelli lì dove sei all'aperto c'è il pezzo di roccia e tutto il cielo è in oro non èèè azzurro…è rappresentato con un altro colore, anche lì dove c'è la montagna. *Tagging*
F: Poi dice…*he approaches the label...* dov'è…"Il blu (*text-echo*)
P: **"Al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero"** *together - 'shared' text-echo*
F: **"Il blu è nel manto di Maria". Questo.** *Tagging - Animating through "display doing"*. **Sembra un castello.**
P: Mhmm. Quindi una chiesa grande ma umile.
F: Anche questo qui c'ha i capelli un po' con quello stile. *He goes back to the conversation they had while observing the other works in the room - Tagging*
P: Eh? Non ho capito.
F: Anche questo qui c'ha un po' i capelli di quello stile.
P: Sì ma l'altro molto di più, vedi come sono proprio, sono proprio marcati bene, ben delineati…i capelli. Cioè sono ciocche più grosse. *Tagging, they observe another nearby artwork.*
F: Vogliamo vedere quello là? *Tagging*
P: Sì. *The father continues to observe the work. The child looks around.*

The first part of the example illustrates how the father and son are already talking as they approach the painting. The father, recurring to *telling and tagging*[242], uses the *person reference* "però se noti amore…" ('but if you notice love...') while inviting him to observe the new artwork "Andiamo a vedere quello lì" ('Let's go to see that one') (*attracting someone as an audience*). Also in this case, the father reads the label for families aloud, proposing the first open question to the child. The child responds, moving away to observe the work of art better. After the father proposes the second panel's

[242] This example shows the most recurrent interactional patterns, the *telling and tagging* and the *animating through "display doing"*, demonstrating that patterns can intersect in an interactional exchange.

questions to the young boy, they share their opinions and visions of their ideal church. The child, always curious about his father's opinion, often proposes, in turn, the activity questions to his parent while shifting his gaze towards him in a pattern of *attracting someone as an audience*, mimicking his father's performance. The result is an exchange of *tag questions* that spark conversation, evidenced by the interrogative sentence condensed in the fragment "Tu?" ('And you?') that becomes the *leitmotiv* of their dialogue. At the same time, the couple interacts in a pattern of *questioning-answering-interpreting/explaining*. In the conversation, the child asks for clarification on the meaning of the terms *fastosa* ('sumptuous') and *umile* ('humble') and then proceeds to reformulate his answer, listening to his father's interpretations of the work of art. Initially concentrating on the second part of the panel that raises the question, they finally agree that the church is "grande e umile" ('big and humble') and move back to the first part of the panel. Therefore, the opening phase of the interaction aims to understand the meaning of the text and contextualise the work of art.

The fragments here successively presented (*Fragments 5.1, 5.2* and *5.3*) reflect the moment when father and son, after having replied to the questions together, start a new discussion about the colours of the painting. What strikes the child's attention is the particular use of colours and materials in the polyptych: as the first part of the text of the panel starts with the question, "Dov'è l'azzurro del cielo?" ('Where is the blue of the sky?') he finds out that the sky is gold-coloured by the use of a gold leaf as a colouring technique. The blue instead is only used for painting Mary's cloak using powdered lapis lazuli. While reasoning about the painter's use of colours with his father, he gets closer to the painting by rereading the panel to understand the colouring technique better. He approaches the panel, followed by his father, to find the exact sentence that describes the use of gold for the sky, moving his right arm towards the label and pointing at the sentence with his right index finger as soon as he finds it, in a *telling and tagging* process of *identification* (*Fragment 5.1*).

Involuntarily, they read the line out loud together (in what could be defined as a 'shared *text-echo'*): "Al suo posto, c'è una foglia d'oro vero" ('In its place, we find gold leaf'). Then the young boy continues reading aloud the following sentence, "Il blu è nel manto di Maria" ('The blue we find in Mary's cloak'), showing his father that the blue is only used on that figure in the painting. While his father replies to his reading with an "mhmm" as an affirmative response, the young boy guides his gaze, showing him the blue-coloured cloak mentioned in the panel, moving his arm upwards from the text to the painting (*Fragment 5.2*). He then dramatically turns towards his father (while keeping the finger pointed at the painting), looking at him straight into his eyes. At the same time, following his child's indications, the parent scrupulously observes the polyptych (*Fragment 5.3*).

The sequence shows the interactional macro-pattern of *animating through "displaying doing"*. In a sequentiality marked by the rhythm of movements and words, the couple's dialogical

performance brings the child to the conclusion of showing his father exactly where the blue colour is used. His prominent role in the dialogue is expressed through the pattern of *attracting someone as an audience* by the emphasised movement of turning toward his relative, changing position dramatically, opening his posture and seeking his visual reaction (*shift in posture* and *shift in gaze*), looking more like a museum cultural mediator than a visitor while *interpreting/ explaining* the artwork. By "transposing action to the object" (Heath & vom Lehn, 2004, p. 12) through the use of the panel, with his body language, the child renders visible a part of the painting, actively expressing his involvement and desire to share his vision with his father, who is carefully following the illustration. As a result, his parent is positively influenced by his vision and, through the child's actions, is encouraged to look at the artwork embracing the same viewpoint (Heath & vom Lehn, 2004, p. 17). Following this comparison, a new exchange is born between the two, linked to the artist's pictorial style in different works in the same room. The exchange ends with an invitation from the father through *tagging* "Vogliamo vedere quello là?" ('Do we want to see that one over there?') (verbal and non-verbal *tagging*, recurring to the use of demonstratives and spatial adverbs while indicating).

These fragments show how the child's talk, visual and bodily conduct express his engagement with the artwork thanks to the people around him. The coordination of actions with his father, for instance, when he approaches the panel to figure out the use of colours and his father mimics the movement by doing the same after a few seconds, culminates with their reading with one voice. The natural anthropological *mimesis* of performances (Apolito, 2014; Turner, 1985/2018) shapes the interactional pattern that constitutes the *fil rouge* of the museum experience fostered by the panels for families. Following the rhythm of their actions, the father and son's interactional dance moulds their significance and understanding of the polyptych.

The panel for young and old leaves an open question to visitors that sparks different possible concatenations of dialogue that can, as shown above, be easily turned into other directions and open new spaces for discussion, linking art to experience through an emotional channel[243]. While offering a perspective for analysis, families can interpret and find their explanation of the exhibit together by experimenting with different forms of participation. Nonetheless, from a linguistically inclusive stance, it is thought-provoking to report how the first part of the dialogue and the *answering* phase to the game-like activities is slowed down by the time spent by the father explaining the terms his son does not know. A precious time that, especially in the museum context, could grow weak the overall visitor experience. Once again, video observation has become an unprecedented tool of analysis.

[243] From the museum's guidelines, an internal document.

Fragment 5.1

Fragment 5.2

Fragment 5.3

3.3.3 Carlo Crivelli's *Crucifixion*

As a consecutive point of discussion about panels for families, the next label that will be analysed is one of the "traditional" panels displayed inside Brera's Art Gallery. The comparison with the two panels for young and old presented before is to address the interactional issue from another perspective. As illustrated in the chapter dedicated to Methodology (*Chapter II*), before being able to address the specificities of the family panel as well as its interactional dimension, a preliminary video observation of the families in front of the classic panels was conducted in what could be defined as a "pilot study". In fact, as a starting point for this investigation, besides fieldwork, video observation sessions conducted at the *Pinacoteca di Brera* involved the analysis of families' interaction in front of a traditional panel before carrying out the video observation in front of the labels for young and old. This work aimed to motivate the decision to study the panel for families and recognise their interactional value, demonstrating their impact on families compared to other classic panels displayed inside the cultural institution. A more significant interaction resulting from the family panels was provided as an initial assumption from which the research work developed - therefore, aimed at implementing an existing interaction. A preliminary "compare and contrast" work was a due first phase of research to tangibly justify why the case study considers the panels for families an international best practice to investigate deeper.

In the following pages, we will condense the pilot study's findings by observing an emblematic example of a parent-child pair performance in front of an artwork accompanied by a traditional label. These findings become eloquent compared to our previous observations in this chapter since the comparison confirms the hypothesis that the "panels for young and old" increase interaction.

The sixth fragment we will discuss is extracted from video observations collected next to Carlo Crivelli's "Il Crocefisso con la Vergine e San Giovanni Evangelista" ('Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist') - also just known as "Crocifissione" ('Crucifixion') - a painting from Camerino Cathedral (*Figure 3.11*). A traditional label accompanies the painting (*Text 3*; *Figure 3.10*). As previously mentioned (cf. paragraph *3.1.2*), the more conventional panels are the ones usually accessible to visitors when entering a museum: they generally display principal information such as the artist's name and date and place of birth and death, the painting's title, the techniques used, where it was located and when it was made. Subsequently, according to the artist's vision, they contextualise the exhibit by presenting a vivid description of the figures and the scene, their significance and the overall meaning of the artwork. In this case, the classical label is displayed beneath the picture, with the artist's name at its centre and his date and place of birth and death. Then,

it “illustrates the event while conveying its deeper message”[244], describing the scene, allegories, and Biblical references. At the bottom left, it presents the title, date and place of creation and its technique (tempera and oil on wood). *Figure 3.12* delineates the precise location of the artwork in Room 22 and indicates the camera’s placement for the video observation.

Carlo Crivelli
(Venezia, 1430 circa - Marche, 1495 circa)

Il Crocefisso con la Vergine e San Giovanni Evangelista

1488-1490
Tempera e olio su tavola
Dalla Cattedrale di Camerino, 1811

Il Crocefisso pianto da Maria e Giovanni è in questo caso una immagine che, insieme, racconta un fatto e ne spiega il valore profondo. Il pittore ha reso con attenzione il luogo, con il digradare dello spazio, scandito dalle nuvole e dal ricorrere dei tronchi spogli dritti come pali e la drammaticità del momento, evidente nell'espressione dei volti, nella tensione dei muscoli. Ma ha realizzato la parte superiore su un astratto fondo oro alludendo così alla natura divina di Cristo ed al ruolo salvifico delle sue sofferenze, chiarito dal sole e dalla luna che rammentano la fine dei giorni così come raccontata nella Bibbia.

Text 3. Traditional label about Crivelli’s painting[245].

[244] Extract taken from the panel.
[245] Here is the official English translation of the panel:

Carlo Crivelli
(Venezia, circa 1430 - Marche, circa 1495)
Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist
-
Tempera and oil on wood
From Camerino cathedral, 1811

The crucified Christ mourned by Mary and John is, in this instance, an image which illustrates the event while at the same time conveying its deeper message. The artist meticulously portrays the sloping setting with its garland of clouds and its bare tree trunks, straight as rods, conveying the drama of the moment in the expression on the figures' faces and in the tension of their muscles. The upper part, however, is set against an abstract gold background alluding to Christ's divine nature and to the redeeming role of his suffering, lit by the sun and moon which recall the end of time as it is described in the Bible.

Figure 3.10 The traditional label displayed underneath the artwork.

Figure 3.11 *Crucifixion* by Carlo Crivelli.

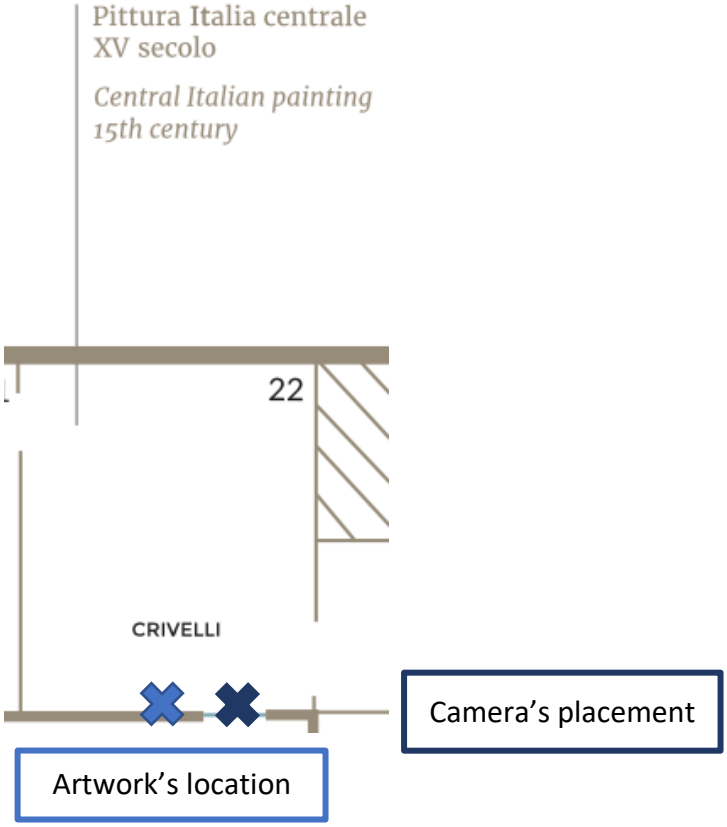


Figure 3.12 Map of Room 22 with the video camera and painting positionings.

3.3.3.1 Findings

Fragment 6.1 *Fragment 6.2*

We will analyse a fragment of interaction in front of the piece of art of Giulia (eleven years old) and her mother. The young girl and her mother read the panel individually (*Fragment 6.1*, representing a type of interaction of *reading labels silently*) and then begin observing the painting.

The silence falls immediately: in one minute and eighteen seconds of video[246], the only interaction between the two is led by the mother, who exclaims, "Bello però!" ('Nice though!') (an *affective talk/ comment* that falls under the category of *pleasure* (Allen, 2002)) referring to Crivelli's work of art and reads out loud how long it took to create the artwork stating "Lui inizia nel 1488…" ('He starts in 1488…') (a short interactional form of *telling* related to the label, that illustrates the pattern of *featuring* the text (Allen, 2002)). The young girl and the woman move their head from the panel to the painting without adding words (*Fragment 6.2*). Their bodies are positioned in parallel directly in front of the exhibit and do not come close to one another. The girl's gaze stays fixed on the painting and does not seek the mother's eyes. They carefully examine the artwork, fulfilling the museum's first mission: to bring people to look closely at artworks[247].

However, from an interactional stance (the second objective of the Picture Gallery, which is to stimulate multiple dialogues) (*Ibidem*), as two microcosms that struggle to meet in a shared experience and understanding of the exhibit, their interaction revolves around the mother's attempt to comment on the artwork without picking up a response from her daughter. The latter continues to observe the painting in silence. The two possible options could be that the mother struggles to create a dialogue with her daughter because she does not have the right tools at hand or that they are simply enjoying their experience separately, missing out on the opportunities for the child's emotional and relational growth (and not only for the child). After this first part of a missing interaction shown in the fragment, the mother tries to identify the characters presented in the label within the painting's scene in an attempt to offer input for discussion (in a short process of *identification*). In response, her daughter comments on some objects painted on the canvas, such as a skull, saying, "Il teschio è bellissimo" ('The skull is beautiful') (an additional instance of *affective talk/comments* of *pleasure*). The result is a shared smile between the two, who stroll toward another painting.

This fragment highlights that, from a pedagogical and interactional perspective, the traditional panel offers fewer dynamic inputs for families to interact and negotiate the artwork chorally. Evidently, the fragment has been presented as the most dramatic example that shows a lack of interaction. However, in most of our video observations, what happens with traditional panels is that if a dialogue sparkles, it is all in the parent's hands who tries to guide the conversation with his abilities[248], finding ideas to capture the child's attention. In contrast, the panels for young and old

[246] Usually, the length of the fragments studied in detail is around 5-10 seconds, even if part of a more extended interaction between volunteers (in our case, about 10 minutes for every pair). Therefore, one minute and eighteen seconds in video analysis is a considerable amount of time.

[247] Drawn from a museum's internal document, written by the Educational Services and entitled *Approccio della Pinacoteca di Brera e Linee guida dei Servizi Educativi* ('The Brera Art Gallery Approach and the Educational Services' guidelines) (2020).

[248] An example is a mother who tries to play a math game with her daughter, utilising the piece of art's creation date.

offer tools for families to look at art together with the result of consistently positive audience responses. The dialogical encounter, necessary for shaping the work of art's meaning, struggles to grow. The negotiation of the object, which takes form through assembling the sense and significance of an artefact with others (Heath & vom Lehn, 2004, p. 21) through vocal, visual and bodily conduct, constitutes a pivotal pattern when dealing with interactionism and is shown here as partially developed and not fully engaging for children[249], as it happens instead effectively with the "panels for young and old".

Although the notions of "dwell time" and "holding power" (Heath & Vom Lehn, 2004) as methods to evaluate a museum's performance in the past are considered outdated in contemporary museum studies and, therefore, do not play a significant role in this work, one cannot help but notice how, from a time perspective, the duration of the corpus of data collected in front of the classical panels is shorter compared to the family's panels. That demonstrates that families spend less time in front of traditional panels. In contrast, they invest more time enjoying themselves while engaging in the activities proposed by the families' labels.

3.3 Conclusions

The first part of the case study discussed here shows how essential it is to consider and study the interactional dimension of a museum experience. The *Pinacoteca di Brera,* fully aware of the potential of the dialogical dimension, has designed a specific type of panel that can effectively enhance interaction between people, particularly families. In this chapter, through the fragments shown, we have illustrated two typical patterns of interaction happening *in situ* that underscore how fundamental the relational dimension is when shaping a communal museum experience: *telling and tagging* and *animating through "display doing"*. Of the latter, we also presented two of its declinations, such as "transposing the object to the body" and "transposing action to the object" (Heath & Vom Lehn, 2004).

The labels displayed in the museum impact the performances in front of the artworks. The first five examples show how the *panels for young and old* increase interaction compared to other labels in the museums, such as the sixth example showing a partially fulfilled interaction through a classical label. The game-like activities proposed by the *panels for young and old* contribute to fostering that connection with both the artwork and the parent for the child. Vice versa, the same happens for the adult, who gets involved in the social context and thus contributes to enriching not only the experience of the child but also his own. From a pedagogical stance, the child's interaction

[249] Markedly, our pedagogical perspective sheds light on how to improve children's engagement in museums. It could be interesting to replicate the field study focusing on adults' and visitors' inclusion on a more general level.

with the parent through the label becomes an essential element in the child's learning process and aesthetic experience. It acts as a stimulus to a more in-depth discovery of the work of art by recurring to verbal and nonverbal languages for expressing ideas via creativity and imagination. The phase of reading the text becomes an essential moment of the museum experience, a starting point for creating new significance together, both for children and adults. An aesthetic experience that inspires creativity starts from the comprehension of the pragmatic language of a panel, showing how children gradually structure their performative ability by connecting the dots through talk, visual and bodily conduct.

As a storyteller, the museum shares multiple narratives to interpret contemporaneity by connecting society with education, with a vision of a museum that is "constructivist"[250] (Hein, 1998) and offers a laboratory for building a shared reflection on identity and humanity[251]. The *Pinacoteca di Brera* successfully interprets the mission, offering children the opportunity to play and learn through its halls, not simply exploring the collections but being involved with artwork, promoting a dynamic, significant and enriching connection between experience and education (Dewey 1938/2014), thereby confirming its role as a blueprint for other institutions.

Interlacing the pedagogical view with a linguistically inclusive perspective, one can notice in the interactions how the child's vaunted autonomy - for example, in reading the text - is absent. An emergent recurrent pattern of action is that parents read the text aloud to their children and explain it more straightforwardly afterwards. In the rare event of a child reading aloud (primarily asked by their parents), he struggles to read the more complex words and interrupts the reading. Children invest much time asking about the significance of difficult words in the text, which is an essential part of the learning process. However, this aspect becomes problematic if the understanding of the text is entirely dependent on the explanations and reformulations of the parents. What happens then is that the museum experience focuses only on the understanding of the text and not on the playful activities proposed at the end of the label, to which they should dedicate themselves giving vent to creativity by expressing themselves with their infinite languages, giving life to the illocutionary performance (Searle et al., 1980) and the pragmatics of the learning experience as demiurges of unpredictable scenarios. In the museum, every minute spent in front of the work is precious, so if the text were more transparent for a child, they could encourage inquiry. The child could concentrate more on connecting with the artwork and talking about his opinions and emotions, not spending his 'museum time'

[250] Besides George Hein, there are other strong references to constructivism, particularly to authors such as Lev S. Vygotskij and John Dewey. The constructivist stance echoes the Reggio Emilia Approach, which, among the major influences, includes, in addition to those just mentioned, Jerome Bruner, Loris Malaguzzi Gianni Rodari and others.
[251] A learning laboratory with a marked educational vocation, as emphasised by Hooper-Greenhill in her works (2004; 2007).

(Serrell, 1997) staring at the panel, trying to decode it or stepping away without trying.

Hence, the video observation of families' interactions has unveiled certain linguistic aspects that could be improved through Easy-to-Read retranslation. For instance, it has been observed that the titles of the *labels for young and old* are only sometimes clear to readers and that their direct reference to the central body of the text can be misunderstood. In the panels, several words could be more comprehensible by young visitors - and, as shown in *Transcript 1*, sometimes likewise by the parents. Technical terms, rhetorical figures and historical and cultural references create an impasse in children's interaction, and their explication could ease their shared museum experience. This applies to all the cases analysed. However, the inclusive issue acquires a more critical sense and significance when related to children with language difficulties or whose first language is not Italian, as observed in the group of volunteers that efficiently depicts the richness and multiculturality of today's classes - as shown in *Fragment 4*.

Easy-to-Read Language is born to guarantee language inclusion to people with intellectual disabilities. Still, it can be extended to every person who faces difficulties understanding a text, such as children, migrants in a transitional phase of language learning or older people (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 17). Studies on language inclusion are expanding their approach to cultural institutions and art, with the scope of guaranteeing an engaging museum experience for all types of visitors. The same goal is currently at the heart of museums' agendas. Easy-to-Read Language could, therefore, become an opportunity for all children to read the museum autonomously while experiencing it collectively. In doing so, the museum fulfils its "social mission", embodying the new definition of the museum coined by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) (2022) that is "open to the public, accessible and inclusive, that fosters diversity". A museum that "operates and communicates with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing". A reflection and a put into practice on those themes will constitute the next phase of research.

CHAPTER IV

Application of the retranslation guidelines on the Brera Art Gallery's *panels for young and old*

Semplificare è un lavoro difficile ed esige molta creatività.

Complicare è molto più facile, basta aggiungere tutto quello che ci viene in mente.

Simplifying is hard work and requires a lot of creativity.

Complicating is much easier, just add whatever comes to mind.

Bruno Munari[252]

In this chapter, five *panels for young and old* displayed at the Brera Art Gallery are retranslated into Easy-to-Read Language. The retranslation will be carried out in both Italian and English languages. Currently installed in the museum, the so-called *panels for young and old* are characterised by proposing game-like activities to visitors. They are specially conceived for families to foster their interaction and, by extension, enrich their museum experience (cf. *Chapter III*). The museum's Educational Services developed this discovery tool under the supervision of the Museum Director, Dr. Bradburne. While initially designed with families in mind, these labels are open to anyone who wishes to enjoy them, offering the delightful surprise of discovering something unexpected within works of art. From a linguistic-translational perspective, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis (cf. *Chapter II*), we will present the original texts, examine them and evaluate a possible intervention with different simplification strategies. Through the lenses of linguistic inclusion, we will subsequently offer a viable proposal in both Easy Italian and Easy English languages, according to the current Easy-to-Read national and international guidelines.

[252] From Munari's book entitled *Da cosa nasce cosa. Appunti per una metodologia progettuale* (1981, p. 132).

4.1 Texts of the *panels for young and old* of Brera Art Gallery

The texts analysed and translated in this chapter are a part of the *panels for young and old* currently on display inside the Brera Art Gallery of Milan. The panels for families are 44, although not all are presently placed in the institution's galleries. Nonetheless, the labels' texts are also available on the *IZI Travel* website[253]. In collaboration with the museum, the "IZI Travel. The storytelling platform" website offers diverse audio tours, including one where visitors, who participated in a project called *Voci per Brera Il Contest* ('Voices for Brera. The contest')[254], read families' labels. The platform provides visitors with a free App to download[255] on their mobile devices while walking through the galleries.

The texts are five and contain 436 words in total. Concerning the size of labels displayed at Brera Art Gallery, all captions are comparable to an A3 sheet (29, 7 cm x 42 cm), and the texts consist of 500 characters each (title excluded). Every label is displayed underneath a work of art in the museum:

1) The first panel for young and old that we will analyse is entitled *Una pagina mancante* ('A missing page'[256]) and is displayed in Room 34 under Giambattista Tiepolo's masterpiece named *Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the Prophet Elijah and the souls in Purgatory*[257] (Figure 4.1) (Text 1, 97 words);
2) The second label for families we will discuss is *A piedi nudi* ('Barefoot'). It is visible in Room 22 under Gentile da Fabriano[258]'s *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*[259], a polyptych from Valle Romita (Figure 4.2) (Text 2, 86 words);
3) The third panel is *È tempo di vestirsi* ('Time to get dressed'). It is displayed under the *Portrait of a Lady* by Tanzio da Varallo[260] (Figure 4.3) in Room 32 (Text 3, 86 words);

[253] Here is the link to the online official platform: https://izi.travel/it/19b9-tour-didascalie-per-grandi-e-piccoli/it#6cc0-e-tempo-di-vestirsi/it (last access June 2023).
[254] Here is the link to the project's page: https://pinacotecabrera.org/media/voci-per-brera-il-contest/ (last access June 2023).
[255] The App is called *izi.TRAVEL,* and it is available on Google Play and Apple Store. From the *Pinacoteca di Brera* official website: https://pinacotecabrera.org/proposte-educazione/audioguida-capolavori/ (last access August 2023).
[256] Every label inside the *Pinacoteca di Brera* is written in Italian with English parallel text translation. Therefore, the English titles presented here are the museum's official translation.
[257] In this case, the labels displayed underneath the exhibit are both the traditional and the ones for families.
[258] Also known as Gentile di Niccolò di Giovanni.
[259] 'Incoronazione della Vergine, i santi Gerolamo, Francesco, Domenico, Maria Maddalena. I santi Pietro Martire, Giovanni Battista, Francesco e un santo francescano'.
[260] Also known as Antonio d'Enrico.

4) The fourth label is entitled *In gran segreto* ('In the utmost secrecy'). It is displayed under Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Self-portrait as abbot of the Accademia della Val di Blenio* (Figure 4.4), and it is situated in Room 12 (Text 4, 77 words);
5) The fifth label, entitled *Di chi è questo cappello?* ('Who does this beret belong to?'), is displayed in Room 8 under Gentile and Giovanni Bellini's *Saint Mark preaching in Alexandria* (Figure 4.5) (Text 5, 90 words).

4.1.1 The five texts

1) Una pagina mancante[261]

A volte i dipinti sono considerati dei testi, e come tali vanno letti. Tiepolo racconta, su questa enorme tela, momenti fondamentali della storia dell'Ordine religioso carmelitano. Non si sa bene quando e perché quest'opera venne divisa in due e, come in un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine, la storia non era più completa. Fu la Pinacoteca a ricucire insieme le parti. Riesci a individuare la cicatrice? Perché, secondo te, qualcuno decise di tagliare la tela?

Figure 4.1 Giambattista Tiepolo's *Our Lady of mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the prophet Elijah and the souls In Purgatory.*

[261] All the presented labels are available at the previous link on the same webpage (see *Note 253*). All panels' translations in English are also available on the same website. Likewise, all the images of the artworks are available on the same online platform. Below is the museum's English version of the label:

A missing page

Sometimes paintings are seen as texts, and that's how we should read them. In this vast canvas Tiepolo narrates several crucial episodes in the history of the Carmelite Order. We don't really know when or why the painting was split in two, thus making the story incomplete, like when you tear a page out of book. At any rate it was Brera that sewed together again. Can you see the seam? Why do you think someone decided to cut the painting in two?

2) A piedi nudi[262]

Dov'è l'azzurro del cielo? Al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero. Il blu è nel manto di Maria in preziosa polvere di lapislazzuli. Di morbida pelliccia sono i mantelli di Maddalena e Gerolamo. Ma che contrasto con il ruvido saio dei francescani! C'è chi è a piedi nudi: chi prega, chi legge. Una volta questo dipinto si trovava in una chiesa: oro per stupire lo sguardo, piedi nudi per ricordare l'umiltà. Come ti immagini quella chiesa? Piccola o grande, umile o fastosa?

Figure 4.2 *Coronation of the Virgin with St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Dominic and St. Mary Magdalen; St. Peter Martyr, St. John the Baptist, St. Francis and a Franciscan Saint (Valle Romita Polyptych)* by Gentile da Fabriano.

[262] Here is the museum's translation of the panel in the English language:

Barefoot

Where is the blue of the sky? In its place we find gold leaf. The blue we find in Mary's cloak painted in precious powdered lapislazuli. The cloaks of Mary Magdalen and St. Jerome are made of soft fur. What a contrast they make with the Franciscans rough habits! Some of the figures are barefoot: some pray, some read. This painting used to be in a church: with gold to dazzle the gaze and bare feet to recall humility. How do you imagine that church? Was it small or large, simple or magnificent?

3) È tempo di vestirsi[263]

Infila le braccia nelle maniche dell'ampia veste gialla. Chiude i bottoni dal fondo fino al collo, uno, due, tre, venti, ventuno… è d'obbligo farsi aiutare. Indossa la lunga sopravveste nera. Vi sistema sopra la pesante collana a grandi maglie d'oro. Un tocco ai polsini che sbuffano dalle maniche. Chiude la gorgiera. Appoggia su di essa la collana di pietre dure nel castone dorato. Infila gli anelli. Si acconcia i capelli in su. È pronta per posare. Tu cosa indosseresti per farti ritrarre?

Figure 4.3 *Portrait of a Lady* by Tanzio da Varallo.

[263] Here is the museum's official English translation of the label:

Time to get dressed

Her arms are helped into the large yellow garment. The buttons are closed up to her neck: one, two, three, twenty, twenty-one… of course she must be helped. The long black vest goes on, and then the heavy gold necklace. A quick check of the white cuffs that puff out from the sleeves. The ruff around her neck is closed. She puts on the necklace of gems, and her rings. Her hair is pulled back. She is ready. What would you wear for your own portrait?

4) In gran segreto[264]

In tempi severi in cui a Milano si cercava di bandire anche le feste, alcuni artisti fondarono un'associazione segreta e bizzarra, l'Accademia dei Facchini, in omaggio ai facchini ticinesi di cui scimmiottavano il gergo, mescolandolo ad altre lingue. Erano amici che si incontravano in segreto, usavano una lingua inventata e si riconoscevano da alcune caratteristiche nell'abito, come Lomazzo, che qui si ritrae con il simbolo dell'annaffiatoio. Per il tuo club segreto, quale simbolo sceglieresti?

Figure 4.4 Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Self-portrait as Abbot of the Accademia della Val di Blenio.*

[264]Here is the museum's English version of the panel:

In the utmost secrecy

In the dark days when there was a move afoot to ban festivities in Milan, certain artists set up a weird secret association, the Accademia dei Facchini (Porters' Academy), 'named after the porters' tram Ticino whose slang they imitated, mixing it up with other languages. They were a band of friends who'd meet in secret, use their invented language and identify each other thanks to certain things about their clothing, like Lomazzo who shows himself here with the symbol of a watering can. What symbol would you choose for your secret club?

5) Di chi è questo cappello?[265]

Tra tondi turbanti, lunghi veli bianchi e alti colbacchi rossi, spuntano tanti berretti neri: sono i membri della confraternita di san Marco, che vollero abbellire la sede della loro associazione con episodi della vita del santo e che chiesero di essere qui ritratti, uno ad uno. C'è chi è biondo e chi è bruno, chi ha le guance scavate e chi il doppio mento, chi il naso lungo e chi gli occhi un po' strabici. Chissà se uno di loro assomiglia a qualcuno che conosci…

Figure 4.5 Gentile and Giovanni Bellini's *Saint Mark preaching in Alexandria*.

4.1.2 Function of texts

The texts presented here intertwine three communicative functions. The first function is the informative one, typical of a text that provides information to the reader. However, the informative aspect of these texts adopts a different perspective that differs from that of a traditional panel. As previously discussed (cf. *Chapter III*), the peculiarity of the *panels for young and old* extends beyond their instructive function, going further than any other type of label available in the museum. The

[265] Below is the museum's English version of the family label:

Who does this beret belong to?

There are a lot of black berets amid all the round turbans, long white veils and tall red hats. They belong to members of the Confraternity of San Marco who wished to beautify their headquarters with paintings of the saint's life and asked for their individual portraits to be included. Some are blond, others have dark hair; some have sunken features, others double chins; some have long noses, others are squinting. Do any of them look like people you know?

texts, although also available online as an audio guide, are designed to be read during a visit to the museum. They directly address the reader, offering unusual perspectives on the artworks and their authors. Family labels tell the story of artworks, encouraging visitors to see exhibits through new lenses and narrating tales by presenting unique information and less canonical illustrations. This strategy leads to children and adults playing, unleashing their creativity and imagination. The labels are food for thought and aim to engage the reader and those close to him in a dialogue, which becomes an opportunity to discover the works of art together.

Secondly, as a result, their pedagogical value becomes evident. The texts provide information but want to sow a seed of curiosity in the reader, which can take root and become knowledge over time, thus creating a bond with the cultural institution. Starting from the autonomous observation of the artwork, the exploration continues with the opportunities for discussion offered by reading the exhibit label. Within the panels are mysteries and games through which a child - or anyone who comes across the label - can reason, reflect, observe, analyse, talk, and express his genuine emotions. Moreover, through this combination, by the visitor's connection with the museum's ecology of spatiality and relationship, curiosity[266] grows and takes over: the plethora of options that a visitor can cross is an invaluable source of meaning-making, achieved through connection with oneself and others, all encouraged by the educational power of art.

Thirdly, the panels have a political function. The communion of ideas that results in this rich exchange lets the child understand the actual value of society. Answering the questions, playing games, solving mysteries, and reflecting on anecdotes with others could let him comprehend the importance of the social dimension in the growth process. As in Martin Buber's *Ich und Du* ('I and Thou') (Buber, 1923/2012), the architecture of the human being is rooted in the relationship with others. Within a community, *Ich* ('I') can only be defined in relation to the *Du* ('You'). The political function means that the reader becomes aware of the importance of discussion and recognises the museum as an *ἀγορά* ('agora' in ancient Greek), a public space made available to let people gather and encounter. The visitor puts inclusion - intended as active participation (Bradburne, 2019) - into practice. The debate that grows thanks to an exhibit helps people shape their thoughts in an aesthetic communion of intents that cements our society, our idea of beauty, and our idea of living together while respecting others' opinions. The influence of the Reggio Emilia Approach is evident in the museum's vision of visitors' - children included - experience. Therefore, the pedagogical stance is anchored with societal and political values and becomes correspondingly political (Rinaldi, 2021). It relies on multi-disciplinarity and gives value to the encounter of different and multiple perspectives.

[266] Certainly, the text also aims to intrigue the reader and invite him to read. However, this aspect was not considered an actual function of the text but instead a component of the pedagogical-playful approach of the texts.

The result is a flowering of connections that bloom around the foundation of children's autonomy. Learning is an enthusiastic and never-ending path of discovery for every person, a profound aesthetic experience - that is also ethical - that materialises when meeting the Other (Dewey, 1934/2020).

Detecting and recognising texts' multiple functions is fundamental to conveying their true essence in the Easy-to-Read translation. Perego and Rocco (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 68) emphasise that determining a text function is pivotal at the outset of the translator's work. In particular, this stage becomes especially relevant when working with Easy-to-Read retranslations, as Easy Language is created to fulfil inclusive needs but is generally not considered as legitimate as the original[267].

4.1.3 Readability

The panels are conceived to ease children's interaction with their caregivers, the museum's ecology and the painting. Still, it is generally addressed to everyone strolling in the galleries and wanting to know more about the exhibit. In this inclusive and pedagogical perspective, the label could be improved to create a text that is easy to read and understand for all potential visitors. Readability factors such as *Gulpease* and *READ-IT* indicate whether this mission is accomplished or if the text is too complex. They are textual readability indexes specifically customised for the Italian language (cf. *Chapter II*) calculated with *DyLan TextTools (v2.1.9)*[268]. In a note on the website, the software creators specify that "every start of a new paragraph is considered an interruption of a sentence" (DyLan TextTools, 2023); therefore, when uploading each text separately on the platform, we removed extra spaces, for instance, the area of the start of a new line between the title - after which we placed a full stop so that the software would consider it as a complete sentence - and the first sentence of the label. Unfortunately, no index can specify if a text suits people with intellectual disabilities (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 93). Nonetheless, results can help analyse and visibly improve a text. In the initial stage of analysis, we will study texts' readability levels using these two linguistic factors[269].

According to *Gulpease,* Text 1 may seem easy to read and understand, but the index reveals 62.2, inserting it in the average "Difficult" range of legibility. The panel is rated as *molto difficile* ('very difficult') for those who have completed primary school, *difficile* ('difficult') for those with a

[267] The United Nations foreword to the Easy Language (EL) versions of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is an illustrative example. In this case, the documents in Easy-to-Read Language are presented as unofficial versions for which the UN organisation declares it will not take any responsibility (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 69).

[268] Free tool released by the *DYLAN-Dynamics of Language. Italian Natural Language Processing Lab* at the CNR Institute for Computational Linguistics (ILC) located in Pisa, Italy. The software is available at this link: http://www.ilc.cnr.it/dylanlab/apps/texttools/?tt_user=guest (last access June 2023).

[269] This part of the work is influenced by Sciumbata's research (2020, 2022b).

lower secondary school diploma and *facile* ('easy') for those with a high school diploma. Similarly, Text 5 reveals 55.3, thus being ranked in the average "Difficult" range of legibility.

At first glance, Text 2 may seem easy to read and understand: the *Gulpease* index reveals 76.3, inserting it in the average "Easy to read" range of legibility. The label is rated as easy for those with a primary school certificate and *molto facile* ('very easy') for those with a lower secondary school diploma and those with a high school diploma. The same occurs with Text 3, whose *Gupease* index reveals 80.0, inserting it in the average "Easy to read" range of legibility, representing the highest index among the analysed texts. Even though the two texts might seem already clear to most Italian readers, some improvements could be made to implement their effectiveness.

Text 4 reveals 47.8, inserting it in the average "Difficult" range of legibility, representing the lowest result among the five texts. The panel is rated as *quasi incomprensibile (*'almost incomprehensible') for those who have completed primary school, very difficult for those with a lower secondary school diploma, and easy for those with a high school diploma.

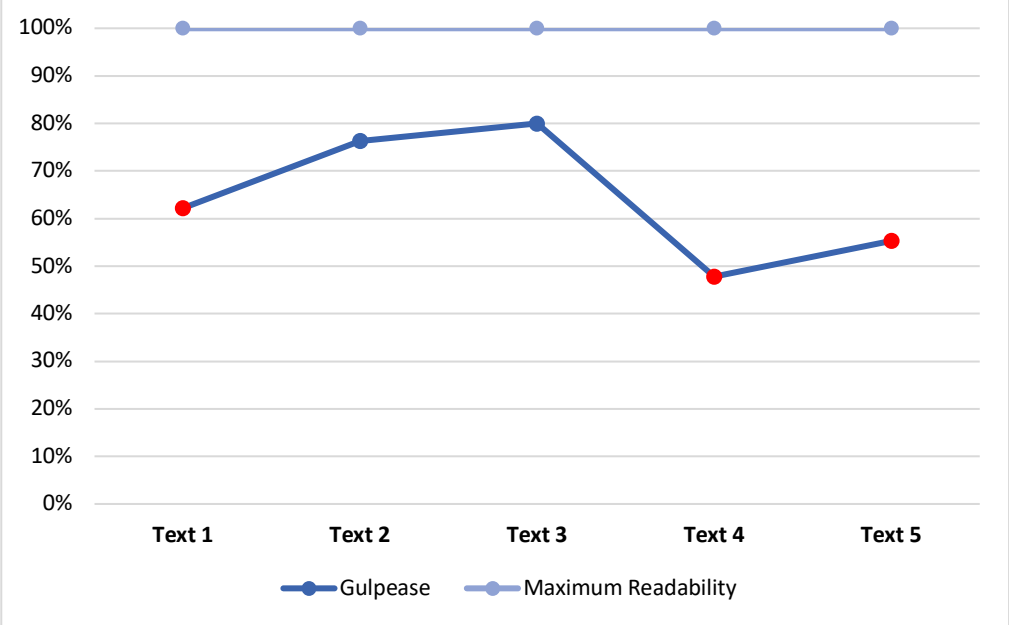


Table 4.1 Overview of *Gulpease* indexes, extracted with *Dylan TextTools (v2.1.9).*

Table 4.1 summarises data in a line graph, where the *Gulpease* indexes of all texts are displayed collectively. Following *Gulpease* reading indicators (Piemontese, 1996, p. 102), the legibility scale ranges from 0 to 100, the latter number representing the maximum level of readability, shown in the graph with the upper straight light blue line. The dark blue line shows how far from the objective set the legibility results are, considering a text "easy to read" when it reaches at least 65-70 points (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 93) in this graph shown as percentages. From an inclusive stance, three texts out of five (Text 1, Text 4, Text 5) are considered rather complex for people with intellectual

disabilities and are shown with a red indicator. The data confirm the need for intervention on the labels so that people who struggle with reading could have the opportunity to live a fulfilling museum experience.

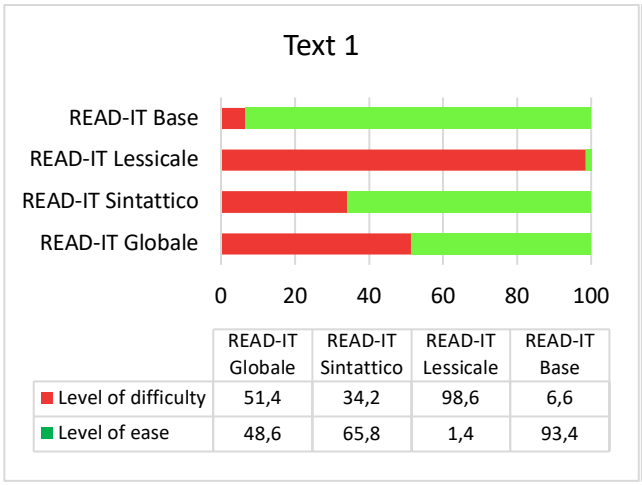
Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective, since the panels are texts created with families in mind and built around a pedagogical framework where children's autonomy is recognised as a crucial component in their learning path (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 58), it is striking to notice how, according to the *Gulpease* index referred to people with a primary school certificate, in three texts out of five these readers perceive the labels as very difficult and almost incomprehensible. We cannot help but relate this category to the children with whom we conducted the research. Since they are currently in primary school, the text is even more of a challenge for them to decode. The aim of the panels should be to guarantee everyone - children included - a personal and self-directed experience in the museum. In the case of families, caregivers should intervene after children have processed their decoding of a label, co-creating meaning on a performative comprehension level. Concurrently, they play game-like activities together and discover art. The initial stage of reading and comprehending a label should be encouraged autonomously. For this reason, texts do not fulfil their primary objective[270].

According to the *READ-IT* index, reaching the range of 100 represents the opposite of *Gulpease*, meaning that text legibility is the most challenging (Dell'Orletta et al., 2011; 2014) (cf. *Chapter II*). Table 4.2 shows an overview of the data collected on the five texts. Data confirm *Gulpease* results on Text 1, 4 and 5 as the most difficult because their *READ-IT Globale* ('Total READ-IT') exceeds 50% (Text 1: 51,4%; Text 4: 95,7%; Text 5: 94,5%). According to *READ-IT*, text 5 is the most difficult to read, particularly on a syntactic level.

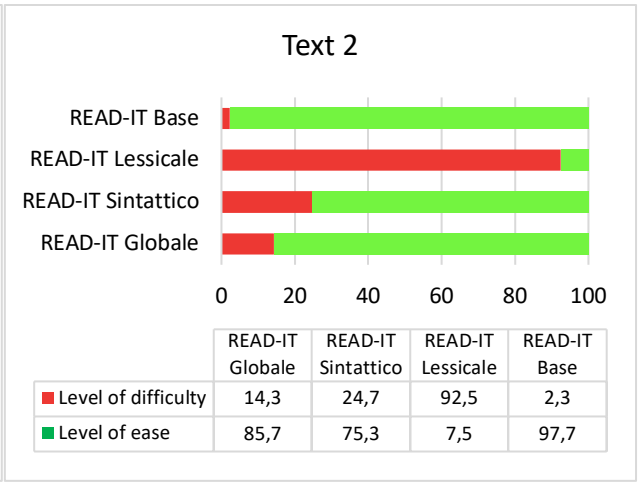
Nevertheless, the most remarkable result is the one that confirms the need for intervention in the other two texts as well. Observing the *READ-IT Lessicale* ('Lexical READ-IT'), we can note that in texts 2 and 3 is the most problematic feature - as well as both labels having among the highest values of all texts (Text 2: 92.5%, Text 3: 99.3%). The lexical dimension is the most complex component recurring in all five cases, consistently exceeding 80%. Using complex and unknown words not part of the *Vocabolario di Base* compromises the labels' readability (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2020).

Even if the labels have been written with families as the target audience, and although the texts may seem already "easy", some interventions are required to make the texts inclusive.

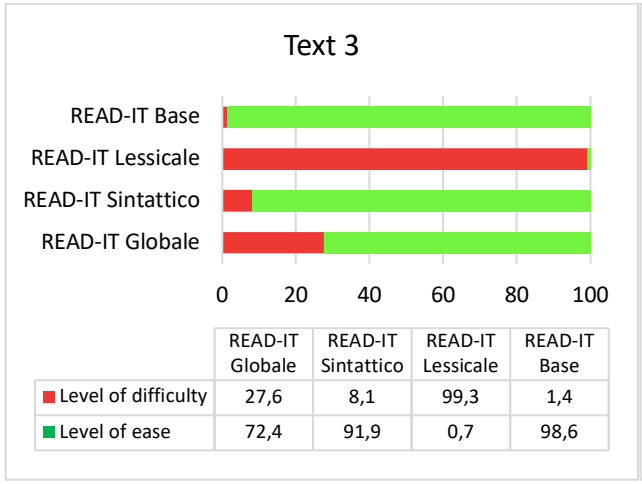
[270] The issue of autonomy is a theme that can also be extended to people with disabilities and deeply affects this population segment. However, the discourse shifts when, according to the international guidelines (SCOPE, 2015, p. 19), the support of reading and comprehension of people with reading difficulties is encouraged right from the first approach to the Easy-to-Read texts.



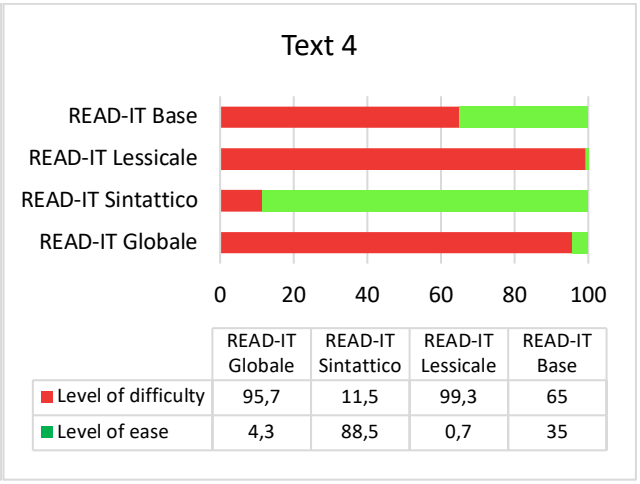
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	51,4	34,2	98,6	6,6
Level of ease	48,6	65,8	1,4	93,4



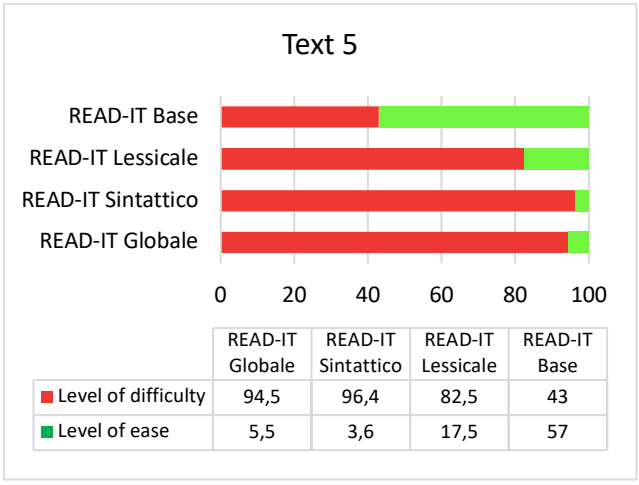
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	14,3	24,7	92,5	2,3
Level of ease	85,7	75,3	7,5	97,7



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	27,6	8,1	99,3	1,4
Level of ease	72,4	91,9	0,7	98,6



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	95,7	11,5	99,3	65
Level of ease	4,3	88,5	0,7	35



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	94,5	96,4	82,5	43
Level of ease	5,5	3,6	17,5	57

Table 4.2 Overview of READ-IT data extracted with *Dylan TextTools (v2.1.9).*

4.1.4 Features and problems

After analysing the texts' readability quantitatively, we will corroborate the emerging results with a qualitative observation of the panels in this paragraph. The aim is to highlight recurrent features and difficulties that could compromise the experience for readers with disabilities. When retranslating

into Easy-to-Read Language an existing text, scanning the text and analysing emerging issues is a pivotal stage in deciding how to structurally systematise the intervention on the source text (NYCC, 2011; Sciumbata, 2020).

4.1.4.1 Organisation of information

Suppose the aim is to engage the visitor in a playful activity that provides a unique point of view on the work of art. In that case, in the economy of language, the panels often risk losing the main focus by dwelling on digressions that only weigh down the reading and divert attention from the intended objective (Serrell, 2015, p. 119).

In Text 1, from the content selection point of view, the label first concisely describes the artwork's content. Then it continues narrating its story, recounting a long-gone and mysterious division in two parts of the canvas that the museum, in the end, reassembled. The activity proposed to families is to guess where the 'seam' is and why someone would have cut it in two.

From the point of view of the textual organisation, the narration is conveyed clearly and consequentially, except for some parenthetical elements that weigh the sentences down. The text is short for practical reasons of display. However, in some points, it indulges in linguistic embellishments for lyrical and poetical purposes, risking not focusing on the panel's aim to explain the game-like activities to families. For instance, the rhetorical device of the simile in the sentence *come in un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine* and the subsequent clause *la storia non era più completa* ('thus making the story incomplete, like when you tear a page out of a book'), add unnecessary additional information to the text in the economy of linguistic immediacy (Serrell, 2015, p. 124). The primary objective is to recount the division of the work and then involve the reader in the activity proposal, namely locating the seam in the painting.

Similarly, the title's choice would be debatable. The activity proposed to children should be clear from the beginning: the title, *Una pagina mancante* ('A missing page'), does not effectively summarise the text but entwines it to the previously mentioned simile of the torn pages. Still, it does not identify the main feature of the painting (the fact that it has been divided into two parts), constituting the essential narrative element from which the proposed activity unfolds.

In Text 2, as far as the form of the text is concerned, the sentences are short but should be better structured, as they need to be adequately connected by making their cause-effect associations explicit (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2022). The first part of the text describes the artwork focusing on particular aspects such as the use of colours and materials and the actions of the figures portrayed. In the second part, the text adds information about where the polyptych was located in the

past (in a church) and asks families how they would imagine that church, if "small or large, simple or magnificent?".

This exemplifies how every family label offers different lenses through which to observe paintings and propose various activities. In this case, two questions sow the seeds in the family to interact and play with their creativity: the panel becomes "interpretive" (Serrell, 2015, p. 19). It aims to create a dialogue to "talk about art" by playing with children and their relatives' imaginations.

From the point of view of content selection, the panel lingers on a multi-sensory description of the painting that engages children but risks creating an information overload, making them lose the logical thread of the narrative and the related proposed activity. Additionally, in an audience with intellectual disabilities, information overload risks becoming cognitive overload (Hurtado et al., 2014; Chinn & Buell, 2022). The text's main point is the message conveyed by the play of contrasts in the painting, expressed by the use of rich and sumptuous colours and the depiction of the bare feet of the religious, a reminder not to lose sight of the earthly element of simplicity as an essential value in life. The spiritual reflection constitutes the background that leads to the imaginative activity proposed to the families with the aid of the two interrogative clauses at the text's conclusion. It opens the work to their interpretations, intertwining their creative divergences through confrontation.

The title *A piedi nudi* ('Barefoot') is unclear and does not effectively summarise the sense of the activity proposed by the panel. The organisation of the information also follows an order that should be reversed, with the need to contextualise where the painting was found and its purpose from the start. These elements, which are only illustrated at the end of the text, are in their place preponderant in the content perspective.

The first sentence should be clarified based on the video observations conducted with the families (cf. *Chapter III*). In particular, the clause *Al suo posto c'è una foglia d'oro vero* ('In its place, we find gold leaf') leaves the readers perplexed, perhaps because it illustrates the material used (that is, gold) by referring to a leaf of real gold without clearly explaining its use on the canvas, thus creating some doubts and an impasse for the text's comprehension.

In Text 3, the particular point of view of the narration catapults the reader into the moment when the gentlewoman is meticulously prepared, presumably by her entourage, taking care of every detail given the portrait. As the reading proceeds, the descriptive narrative draws the reader's attention to the various details of the clothing and accessories typical of the 17th century worn by the woman in the portrait. The rich illustration allows readers to observe details that might otherwise be missed, even if it might be disorienting for people with intellectual disabilities. The panel follows a logical thread and, with a detailed description, recounts the step-by-step process up to the lady's complete dressing. In the end, it suddenly breaks the fourth wall, switching the narrative in a cinematic way,

transforming the visitor into the story's principal character by asking him what he would wear for his portrait. The interrogative proposition closes the label and sparks a dialogue within the family standing before it. The typical role of the family panel is thus confirmed, providing stimuli for discussion with unusual points of view to share the observation of the artwork.

In this case, the title *È tempo di vestirsi* ('Time to get dressed') refers directly to the panel and the proposed activity. However, it would not be readily understandable to an audience with intellectual disabilities, who need more explicit references.

On first reading, Text 4 appears to be dense with information. The information inputs also follow a logical-narrative thread that could confuse an audience with intellectual disabilities. For example, the author and the content of the work - in this case, both essential information for the development of the narrative - are only presented towards the end of the caption. Although this textual typology is a special panel compared to traditional panels and their more classical order of presentation of information, the text presents the information necessary for the development of the final playful activity in a non-linear manner. The text introduces the secret club, the *Accademia dei Facchini* ('Porters' Academy'), to introduce the painter Lomazzo only at the end. The panel ends with an appealing question to engage the group reading it, inviting children and adults to play with imagination and creativity by imagining their own secret symbol. The narrative's interpretation is captivating and original, confirming the role played by *panels for young and old* in creating points of view to be shared and expanded collectively. However, the text could be improved to enhance expository clarity.

A significant theme that will also be explored in the subsequent section concerning vocabulary analysis - given its intrinsic connection to the lexical dimension - is the matter of historical-cultural references and, in a broader sense, readers' knowledge of the world[271] (Chomsky, 2011). In the text, historical-cultural references are taken for granted, for example, in the case of *tempi severi* ('dark days') when festivals were banned in Milan, without specifying the historical period; or the reference to the *Facchini Ticinesi* ('the porters' tram Ticino') mentioned later in the sentence (a cultural reference possibly unknown to a large portion of the audience, a glossary or further explication would have been necessary). More related to the linguistic "knowledge of the world" is the action of *scimmiottare il gergo* ('to imitate slang'), which for children and an audience with disabilities might not be very clear. Moreover, it is also taken for granted what a self-portrait is: only at the end is the painter Lomazzo mentioned with a *che qui si ritrae*, ('who shows himself here', more literally, 'who portrays himself here'), without illustrating what a self-portrait is, a term that is also present in the title of the work (*Self-portrait as Abbot of the Accademia della Val di Blenio*), nor that Lomazzo is

[271] Based on our individual life experiences, this knowledge shapes our personal and distinct linguistic development.

the painter himself. The panel's title is linked to its content but not to the final game-like activity. As the primary objective, the latter should represent the principal element and be addressed from the title.

In terms of content selection, the perspective adopted in Text 5 presents the painting highlighting one of its principal features, namely the wealth of details, especially in the faces of the painted figures. The label illustrates the extraordinary richness of the painting's particulars by introducing an overview of the various headgear worn by the characters portrayed, focusing on the black berets of the confraternity of St. Mark. From here, it presents the reason for the creation of the painting: the confraternity desired to embellish their association's headquarters by celebrating their prior and founder, St. Mark. The logical thread of the narrative begins by focusing on an accessory worn by many characters in the painting; it subsequently narrows the field by focusing on a group of people portrayed - the confraternity - telling their story through that of the painting. The organisation of information clearly conveys why the confraternity commissioned the painting. In the final paragraph, a change of perspective emerges from the label. Celebrating diversity through the physiognomy of the confraternity members - that might be confusing for readers with difficulties - the label directly addresses the reader and asks him to try to recognise someone known in the painting. This identification mechanism allows the visitor to become more immersed in the aesthetic experience originated by the painting, providing him with another vision of art compared to traditional descriptions found in classical panels.

The label's title stimulates visitors' curiosity: *Di chi è questo cappello?* ('Who does this beret belong to?') highlights the different variants of hats, *turbanti, veli, colbacchi e berretti* ('the round turbans, long white veils and tall red hats') in the large painting. However, it can be unclear since the question does not refer specifically to the final activity proposed to the families. The variety of hats is a particular theme around which the artwork and the development of the panel revolve. Nonetheless, it does not align with the activity proposed in the label, which should be explicitly communicated right from the title.

4.1.4.2 Syntax

From the syntactical point of view, according to Easy-to-Read Language guidelines (Guidelines for Clear and Effective Communication, 2007; ODI, 2010; Sciumbata, 2022), sentences should be at most 10-15 words, not being able to encompass two or more clauses. Long sentences are generally discouraged, especially in short texts like museum panels, which should be even more immediate in their reading (Serrell, 2015, p. 118). On the contrary, a recurring issue among the labels is the exceeding length of the sentences, as shown in the following examples:

- Non si sa bene quando e perché quest'opera venne divisa in due e, come in un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine, la storia non era più completa. (Text 1; 30 words);
- Chiude i bottoni dal fondo fino al collo, uno, due, tre, venti, ventuno… è d'obbligo farsi aiutare. (Text 3; 18 words);
- In tempi severi in cui a Milano si cercava di bandire anche le feste, alcuni artisti fondarono un'associazione segreta e bizzarra, l'Accademia dei Facchini, in omaggio ai facchini ticinesi di cui scimmiottavano il gergo, mescolandolo ad altre lingue. (Text 4; 39 words);
- Erano amici che si incontravano in segreto, usavano una lingua inventata e si riconoscevano da alcune caratteristiche nell'abito, come Lomazzo, che qui si ritrae con il simbolo dell'annaffiatoio. (Text 4; 29 words);
- Tra tondi turbanti, lunghi veli bianchi e alti colbacchi rossi, spuntano tanti berretti neri: sono i membri della confraternita di san Marco, che vollero abbellire la sede della loro associazione con episodi della vita del santo e che chiesero di essere qui ritratti, uno ad uno. (Text 5; 47 words);
- C'è chi è biondo e chi è bruno, chi ha le guance scavate e chi il doppio mento, chi il naso lungo e chi gli occhi un po' strabici. (Text 5, 30 words).

Some texts consist entirely of long sentences, as in the case of texts 4 and 5. From the view of readability, the long sentence structure will likely make visitors with possible reading difficulties lose the thread of the discourse. Long sentences - which could include parenthetical propositions, as in Text 1[272] - weigh down the panel's reading and favour the disorientation of an audience with reading difficulties. Principal prepositions could also not be at the beginning of sentences but after a riot of subordinate and incidental clauses. The reading process gets slower (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 313; Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020, p. 18), which is the reason for losing interest in every diverse segment of receivers, including children[273]. Another element that emerges from the list of examples is the use of ellipsis (in Text 3 but also Text 5), which is usually not recommended (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2022) since a text should be as straightforward as possible, also with the use of simple punctuation.

[272] Besides the official guidelines, only this label analysis tested Sciumbata's free, open-source software "FLO - Facile da Leggere Online". The software could be a valuable resource for non-experts who want to take the first steps in Easy-to-Read Language (and Plain Language) retranslation in Italian. The tool is available at the following link: https://faciledaleggere.online/flo/media.html (last accessed January 2023).

[273] From the perspective of inclusive language, the aim is to reduce the 'cognitive processing costs' (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020, p. 18) during reading by intervening in texts at several levels, including the syntactic one, in order to promote text comprehension. The syntactic elements outlined in this paragraph are extrapolated from the texts and represent obstacles that could cause cognitive overload and thus slow down the reading and comprehension process for an intellectually disabled audience and everyone struggling to read the labels. A slowing down of reading also has a negative impact on the target user's motivation, possibly triggering a sense of frustration (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020; Gutermuth, 2020).

Syntactically, sentences can be shortened or broken up to provide only one piece of information at a time. A particular example is the descriptive list in Text 5, which can be transformed into an easier-to-understand list. The long sentence presenting the different physical characteristics of the confraternity men portrayed - to demonstrate the great attention to small details in the painting - can be structurally simplified with a list that is clearer both lexically and syntactically (and consequently also graphically). Guidance suggests using lists, which aid reading both graphically and syntactically (IE, 2014; Sciumbata, 2022).

The syntactical order is inverted compared to the Noun + Adjective (NAdj) sequence in standard Italian language; for example, in *enorme tela* ('gigantic canvas', albeit in Italian, the adjective should be after the respective noun) in Text 1**;** another instance is in text 5 with *tondi turbanti, lunghi veli, alti colbacchi* ('the round turbans, long white veils and tall red hats'), conceivably a stylistic choice to convey a more harmonious and lyrical flow of words. Their use in the text could be to recall poetic language (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 313). The poetic language echoes the use of rhetorical figures, which represent a difficulty for people with intellectual disabilities to decode. The same happens in Text 2: *Preziosa polvere*, *morbida pelliccia*, *ruvido saio* ('precious dust', 'soft fur', and 'rough cloak') are some examples. In this specific case, this lyrical element is also found in the effect of rhythmic reading flowing from the text - as in the initial section - generating a time punctuated by sounds akin to rhymes[274].

Another critical element to notice is the use of negators and negative clauses (e.g*., non si sa bene*; *non era più completa* in Text 1 translated into **'**We don't really know'; 'making the story incomplete') that is discouraged in Easy-to-Read texts, according to the international guidelines (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IE, 2009; Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 80).

Concerning verbs, the indicative mode is preferred to embrace a type of language more closely aligned with spoken discourse. Nonetheless, it is often not used in texts. In its place, we find the conditional mode, such as in the final questions of Text 3 *Tu cosa indosseresti per farti ritrarre?* ('What would you wear for your own portrait?') and Text 4 *Per il tuo club segreto, quale simbolo sceglieresti?* ('What symbol would you choose for your secret club?'). Implicit modes such as infinitive should also be avoided. Therefore, also the use of non-finite purpose clauses (to + infinitive), for instance, in Text 2 *oro per stupire lo sguardo*, *piedi nudi per ricordare l'umiltà (*'with

[274] In Museum Studies, writing recurring to literary tools such as alliterations is encouraged to engage visitors' reading (Serrel, 2015, p. 119). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that this rhythmic element is also found in the original English panels, particularly in Text 3. The playful rhymes present in the panels anticipate the project envisioned by the Director entitled *BRERAVIGLIE*, *Meraviglie di Brera dipinte in rima* ('Wonders of Brera painted in rhyme'), in which labels composed of nursery rhymes narrate unexplored aspects of seven works within the museum. Here is a link to discover them: https://izi.travel/en/9c60-pinacoteca-di-brera-breraviglie/it#/browse/8849e387-63b5-4712-88b9-c75b14e1c656/it (last accessed April 2024).

gold to dazzle the gaze and bare feet to recall humility') is not recommended for creating an Easy-to-Read text (IE/IT, 2014, p. 23).

On the other hand, the present tense is preferred for verbal tenses. The tense choice must be subsequently maintained throughout the text (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 109). On a general level, the texts analysed need simpler verb tenses. In Text 1, the use of the past simple forms like *fu* ('was') and *decise* ('decided') is not part of the Italian spoken in everyday life[275] (D'Achille, 2012, p. 193). Therefore, its use is not advisable if compared to more accessible forms like present perfect or the use of the historical present, which makes the story more vivid and engages readers to it. This is evident in Text 3, where the label focuses on the dressing process of a seventeenth-century gentlewoman before the execution of her portrayal: the vivid depiction is presented as a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the lady's preparations with her entourage. This narration perspective captures the reader's attention, aided further by using the present tense as the verbal tense. In contrast, in Text 5, verbal tenses such as the remote past tense of *vollero* ('wanted') and *chiesero* ('asked') confer complexity and should be replaced with simpler tenses (IE, 2014, p. 23).

Furthermore, passive verb forms such as *sono considerati* ('are seen') in Text 1 are adopted. Promoting understanding using active verb forms is preferable since passive constructs could confuse the reader, who can struggle to find the subject that performs the action (NYCC, 2011; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Leoncini Bartoli, 2020; Sciumbata, 2022). The same happens with impersonal structures, such as 'Non *si sa*' in Text 1, which in English changed into '*We* don't *know'*; in Text 3 with *è tempo di vestirsi*; *è d'obbligo farsi aiutare* 'Time to get dressed; she must be helped[276]', in Text 4 with *si cercava* ('there was a move to'); in Text 5 with *c'è chi*. ('some have'). The absence of an explicit subject will not convey a clear idea of who the agent is to the reader with learning disabilities.

Concerning the agency in the clauses, there are implied subjects in the panels - the most striking example is in Text 3 - and the use of pronouns to avoid subject repetition, such as in Text 5 with the repetition of the relative pronoun *chi*. Even though Italian is a pro-drop language, the subject should always be explicit to let people with reading difficulties follow the discourse easily, and it is even more important to stress this aspect in languages that are not obliged to include a subject in a sentence. The guidelines suggest repeating words at the cost of weighing down the text (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IE, 2014).

[275] Someone might argue that past simple is instead part of everyday spoken Italian in some areas of the country. However, it only refers to a variant of regional Italian spoken in some specific areas of Southern Italy (D'Achille, 2012, p. 206). We generally refer to the standard Italian language spoken throughout the peninsula.

[276] Impersonal structures are not used in the English language. Therefore, the subjects start the sentence in every example translated into English.

4.1.4.3 Lexicon

The family panel was created to intrigue and engage visitors of all ages, but this mission is only accomplished if the text is comprehensible from a lexicon perspective. As already emerged from the readability data - particularly with READ-IT - the lexical dimension is the most complex in all five texts. This implies that the choice of terms proves problematic in all labels on several fronts if considering a wider audience.

Most of the words in the texts do not fit into the *Vocabolario di Base*[277] (often referred to by the acronym *VdB*, the Italian dictionary composed of a group of words most crucial for communicating) (De Mauro, 2019, p. 157). In fact, for example in Text 2, several words are not included in the *Vocabolario di Base*, such as *manto*, *lapislazzuli*, *pelliccia*, *ruvido*, *saio*, *francescani*, *fastosa*. In Text 3, the vivid description of the dressing process loses clarity due to using terms such as *gorgiera* e *castone dorato*. Similarly, in Text 4, terms like *bandire*, *facchini, ticinesi, sciommiottare, gergo*, may also be challenging for the general public to understand. In Text 5, the long list of *nouns* + *adjectives* with which the text begins would already create a sense of bewilderment in a person with intellectual disabilities: lexicon such as *turbante, velo, colbacco, berretto* - all different hyponyms of the superordinate word *hat* - are terms that are not part of the Italian high-usage vocabulary; they are highly connoted words that might put in difficulty any visitor entering the room, especially children as we observed during the field study[278] (cf. *Chapter III*).

Another critical aspect is the relationship between the lexicon and its cultural references. For instance, Text 1 recounts the painting's story using complex words, such as *carmelitano*, which expresses a specific cultural and religious reference related to the artwork. The term is not indicated in the Italian *Vocabolario di Base* and, if not clarified, could create an impasse of comprehension while reading the texts. While it is expected that in order to present works of art in this context, it is necessary to refer to technical-artistic and cultural aspects - for example, the panels analysed refer to works of art whose religious connotation becomes an indispensable element for their analysis and understanding - on the other hand, cultural connotations could become an obstacle not just for people with intellectual disabilities but also for other population segments, such as children (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 116). Moreover, some of the information presented on the labels is technical and often encyclopaedic, e.g., in Text 2, the term *lapislazzuli* ("lapis lazuli"): the word is not part of the *Vocabolario di Base* and seldom used in everyday life. Additionally, the technical use of the precious

[277] Specifically, this work references the *NVdB2016* (*Nuovo Vocabolario di Base della lingua italiana*) (De Mauro, 2019, p. 157), the updated version of the 1980's *Vocabolario di Base*.

[278] As we observed during the field study, children got stuck and stopped reading the panels autonomously because they did not know some complex terms in the text.

powder as a colour in the painting may elude most of the audience unless further clarification (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 109). The identical phenomenon occurs within the same label with the cultural references to Mary Magdalene, Jerome, and the Franciscan priests. In particular, the biblical figures of Magdalene and Jerome might not be immediately recognisable to the public without more specific indications. In more practical terms, even identifying their precise position in the painting could become an issue. In Text 5, *I membri della confraternita di san Marco*, in addition to containing words that are not part of the *Vocabolario di Base,* such as *confraternita* ('confraternity'), it is also complex as an artistic-cultural reference and would need further clarification.

Another reason the text can be lexically complex is related to using metaphors and, more generally, figurative language (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 314; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017, p. 125). An example of this can be found in Text 1, where it talks about the canvas being stitched up and finding a scar (*cicatrice*) in the painting, and in Text 3*, i polsini che sbuffano dalle maniche* ('the white cuffs that puff out from the sleeves'). The Easy-to-Read guidelines advise against using metaphors, aiming to make the text as concrete as possible[279] (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IFLA, 2010; IE, 2014). The typical inference of figurative language (Bambini, 2017, p. 17) can put readers with intellectual disabilities at a disadvantage. Furthermore, Museum Studies align with this vision, with Serrell (2015) claiming that figures of speech, such as metaphors, should be avoided in exhibit labels since they can create confusion among all visitors:

> Metaphors are better for other forms of narrative, not labels. Labels readers must contend with far more distractions than do readers at home in the comfort and familiarity of their own easy chairs. Metaphors (…) add other visual ideas to the already complex environment of an exhibition (*Ivi*. p. 119).

4.1.4.4 Graphics

The design and layout respect the museum's panels' textual typology (Serrell, 2015), and all the panels respond to the same graphic style (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 122). Nonetheless, according to Easy-to-Read guidelines (IE, 2014; Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017; Sciumbata, 2022), their dimensions and what follows should be enlarged, all the more reason if they are texts to be read from afar. Every sentence should start a new paragraph; many words are condensed into a small space; therefore, more space for each sentence and a bigger font size are needed. Though not used in texts, the keywords should be highlighted in bold to recapitulate their key elements (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IE, 2014; Sciumbata, 2022). Capital letters are neither used in the text nor the title; this is perfect for easy-to-read, as the opposite would create reading difficulties in people with intellectual disabilities (IE,

[279] For an in-depth discussion on the issue of linguistic simplification and specifically figurative language from a pedagogical perspective, see *Chapter V*.

2014). The font used is *Helvetica Neue*, a sans-serif type suitable for people with reading difficulties. However, it is not among the recommended ones (such as Arial, Tahoma and Verdana) (IE, 2014; IFLA, 2010; Barrow R. et al., 2011; SCOPE, 2015). Although texts are not very long, and one may assume that bullet lists are unnecessary, they could have been used since they can guide the reading graphically (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 314). Suspension dots are used (Text 3, Text 5) even though they could confuse people with intellectual disabilities while reading the text. There are no images on the labels. However, the panels displayed under artworks represent a visual trace to be considered a significant supporting stimulus for visitors, compared to a classic text.

Furthermore, the original texts are placed on a beige and yellow background that recalls parchment hues and texture, while the colour of the font used is a deep shade of red/burgundy: the outcome is that the texts are not easy to read. Graphically speaking, Easy-to-Read (EtR) texts should be as clean as possible. This could imply the preferable use of black lettering on a white background because some readers could also have colour problems. The aim is for persons with intellectual impairments to refrain from attempting to decipher the information or become distracted while reading it (IE, 2014; Sciumbata, 2022, pp. 79-80).

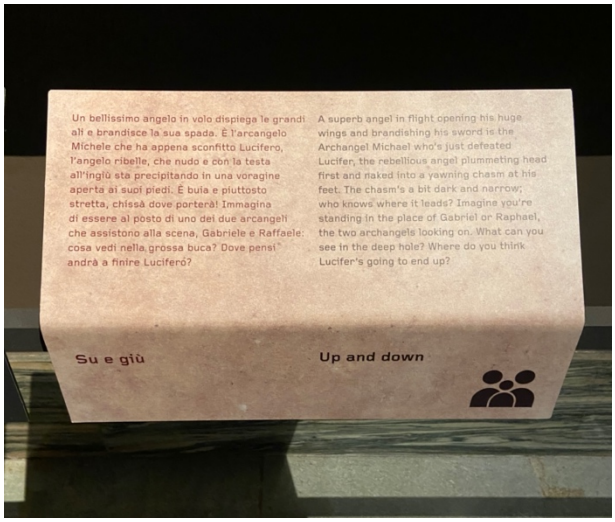


Figure 4.6 Picture of a *panel for young and old*.

4.2 Rewriting proposal

The rewriting proposals presented below are not a literal rendering of the original text of the panels. In some cases, more content has been sacrificed than in others, but the founding objectives of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* communication strategies have always been preserved. The principal purpose was, therefore, to maintain the didactic and dialogic function that revolves around the game questions but to transform it into a simplified key; all of that in a panel structure that, in terms of dimensions,

maintains the same size as all the panels inside the museum. Consequently, the challenge is to create a concise text that retains its ability to intrigue and make the public smile, safeguarding, after careful selection, the main contents and organising them logically and meaningfully. The textual typology of the panel is in itself traditionally concise and brief. However, recent studies show early experiments with long EtR museum panels positioned vertically beside the artwork (Sciumbata, 2022a; Span, 2023[280]). Although, on the one hand, these newly released research proposals can be considered a more faithful translation of the text as they can illustrate an artwork's history and narrative in its entirety, on the other hand, the length can have the opposite effect by intimidating the reader, a fortiori people with reading difficulties. It is an entirely separate issue dealing with Easy-to-Read Language when writing, for example, a museum guide, such as the one entitled *Museopertutti,* born from a project of Brera Art Gallery in collaboration with the Italian National Association *Onlus L'Abilità*. Thanks to a different spatiality of textuality similar to a book, a guide can afford to illustrate thoroughly a museum's exhibit[281]. The visual impact of seeing all the panels of the same size inside the museum - as previously mentioned, there are different types of panels inside Brera Art Gallery, but they all maintain the same size - in our opinion, makes the material practically inclusive, directly proposing it as an opportunity - distinct and recognisable to those who need it - but blending in with the many proposals offered to visitors by the museum. In doing so, field observation has shown how the Easy Language panels have captured the attention of many different visitors, not only those with intellectual disabilities, earning plaudit and appreciation for their clarity.

Finally, as reiterated by Sciumbata (2020, p. 316), we would like to emphasise that every proposal presented here is improvable and that there is not just one translation since different possible versions of a text can maintain the same objective. We worked by merging the principles of museum didactics held dear by the *Pinacoteca di Brera* with the new values of language inclusion - that the museum also heartily shares. Between the colourful galleries, the aim is to provide food for thought, narrate a work of art in an original but clear manner, and allow an enriching dialogue between the people who observe it, whomever they may be.

[280] In the setting of the first SELSI Multiplier event held in Trieste (13/04/23), Span, educator and trainer for ANFFAS Trieste (the National Association of Families and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Neurodevelopmental Disorders), introduced the results of the project *Museo Accessibile* ('Accessible Museum') concerning the creation of Easy-to-Read labels for the Civic Museum of Natural History of Trieste. For further information, please consult this website:http://www.ipac.regione.fvg.it/userfiles/file/CORSI/corso%20accessibilita%27%20musei/Presentazione%20Villa%20Manin,%2019%20giugno%202018%20(A).pdf. (last accessed June 2023).

[281] For further information, see *Chapter I*. The guide can be downloaded free of charge on the Brera Art Gallery website at the following link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guida-Museo-per-tutti-.pdf (last accessed June 2023).

Text 1

Dov’è il taglio nel quadro?

Giambattista Tiepolo è un **pittore** italiano molto famoso.

Giambattista Tiepolo **ha dipinto questo quadro** tanti anni fa.

Tiepolo ha dipinto la storia dei **carmelitani**.

I carmelitani sono uomini religiosi.

Qualcuno ha **tagliato** il quadro in due parti.

Il museo ha riunito le due parti,

ma rimane un **segno** del taglio nel quadro.

Riesci a trovare il taglio nel quadro?

Perché qualcuno ha deciso di tagliare il quadro?

Where is the cut in the painting?

Tiepolo is a very famous Italian **painter**.

You can read Tiepolo as Teeapallo.

Tiepolo painted this painting in 1745.

Tiepolo painted the story of the **Carmelites**.

The Carmelites are religious men.

Someone **cut** the painting into two parts.

The museum has reunited the two parts,

but there is a **mark** of the cut in the painting.

Can you find the cut in the painting?

Why did someone decide to cut the painting?

Text 2

Da dove viene questo quadro?

Questo quadro proviene da una chiesa.

In chiesa, il quadro **dà un messaggio** alle persone.

Per esempio, l'**oro** serve a **stupire** le persone.

Nel quadro ci sono personaggi a **piedi nudi**.

I piedi nudi ricordano l'importanza della **semplicità**.

Come immagini la chiesa in cui si trovava il quadro:

- piccola o grande?

- Semplice o ricca?

Where does this painting come from?

This painting comes from a church.

In church, the painting **gives a message** to people.

For example, **gold** can **surprise** people.

There are figures in **bare feet** in the painting.

Bare feet remind people of the importance of **simple things**.

How do you imagine the church where the painting was?

- Small or big?

- Simple or rich?

Text 3

Il tuo ritratto

Questo quadro è del 1616.
Questo quadro è un **ritratto**.
Un ritratto è il quadro di una persona.
Questo quadro è il ritratto di una donna ricca.

La donna ha un vestito giallo e lungo
con molti bottoni.
La donna ha una collana lunga d'oro
e due anelli preziosi.

Immagina che qualcuno ti fa un ritratto.
Cosa vuoi indossare?

Your portrait

This painting is from 1616.
This painting is a **portrait**.
A portrait is a painting of a person.
This painting is a portrait of a rich woman.

The woman has a long and yellow dress
with many buttons.
The woman has a long gold necklace
and two precious rings.

Imagine someone drawing a portrait of you.
What do you want to wear?

Text 4

Un simbolo segreto

Questo quadro è un **autoritratto**.
In un autoritratto il pittore dipinge sé stesso.
L'uomo nel quadro è il pittore **Lomazzo**.

Lomazzo ha un cappello con un **simbolo** d'oro.
Il simbolo d'oro è un **annaffiatoio**.
L'annaffiatoio è il recipiente
per dare l'acqua alle piante.
Il simbolo d'oro serve per far parte di un **gruppo segreto**.
Nel gruppo segreto ci sono degli artisti di Milano.

Tu che simbolo scegli
per il tuo gruppo segreto?

A secret symbol

This painting is a **self-portrait**.
In a self-portrait, the painter paints himself.
The man in the painting is the painter **Lomazzo**.

Lomazzo wears a hat with a gold **symbol**.
The gold symbol is a **watering can**.
The watering can is the container
to give water to plants.
With the gold symbol, Lomazzo is part of a **secret group**.
In the secret group, there are artists from Milan.

What symbol do you pick for your secret group?

Text 5

Riconosci qualcuno?

In questo quadro gli uomini indossano cappelli strani e colorati.

Alcuni uomini indossano **cappelli neri**.

Gli uomini con i cappelli neri fanno parte di una **confraternita**.

Una confraternita è un gruppo di uomini religiosi.

Gli uomini religiosi hanno chiesto ai pittori

di dipingere il quadro.

Per questo gli uomini religiosi sono tutti nel quadro.

Alcuni di loro hanno:
- i capelli chiari
- i capelli scuri
- il naso lungo
- gli occhi grandi

Qualcuno assomiglia a un tuo amico?

Do you recognise anyone?

Men wear strange and colourful hats in this painting.

Some men wear **black hats**.

Men with black hats are part of a **confraternity**.

A confraternity is a group of religious men.

The religious men ask the artists to paint the painting.

All religious men want to be in the painting.

Some of them have:
- light hair
- dark hair
- a long nose
- big eyes

Does anyone look like one of your friends?

4.2.1 Commentary on the rewriting in Easy Italian

The rewriting process has involved intervention in texts from the organisation of information syntactically, lexically, and graphically, starting from all the aspects that emerged in this chapter's previous analysis (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 333).

The rewriting proposals have the original texts as a point of departure but evolve according to inclusive needs. This would mean, for instance, that in some cases, texts had to be rethought entirely from a content selection stance to convey the exhibit's message more clearly, explaining every novel concept introduced. Although the strict limit of words due to the structure of the panel - a challenge in itself, the retranslations are all under 500 characters (title included) - the work could still be defined as a faithful rendering of the source texts in Italian. The labels maintain their original perspective on artworks and interactive questions to discover more about the museums' engaging narrations.

TEXT 1

	Original	**Retranslation**
***Gulpease*'s Index**	62,2	72,7
Number of words (token)	96 words	84 words
Average word length	4,9 letters	4,9 letters
Number of sentences[282]	7	9
Average sentence length	13,7 words	9,3 words
Percentage of words from the *VdB*	86,4%	83,7%
VdB fondamentale	86,3%	83,3%
VdB alto uso	9,8%	8,3%
VdB alta disponibilità	3,9%	8,3%
Words not included in the *VdB*	13,6%	16,3%

[282] Titles included.

TEXT 2

	Original	**Retranslation**
***Gulpease*'s Index**	76,3	81,3
Number of words (token)	107 words	72 words
Average word length	4,2 letters	4,7 letters
Number of sentences	10	9
Average sentence length	10,7 words	8,2 words
Percentage of words from the *VdB*	78,1%	86,4%
VdB fondamentale	76%	81,6%
VdB alto uso	18%	13,2%
VdB alta disponibilità	6%	5,3%
Words not included in the *VdB*	21,9%	13,6%

TEXT 3

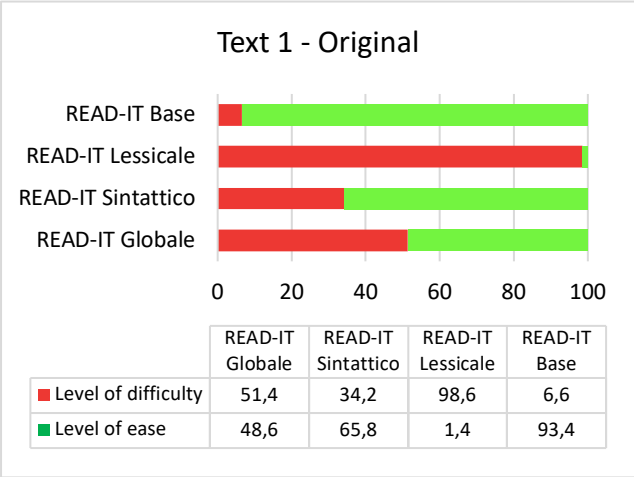
	Original	**Retranslation**
***Gulpease*'s Index**	80	81,4
Number of words (token)	110 words	72 words
Average word length	4,5 letters	4,6 letters
Number of sentences	12	9
Average sentence length	9,2 words	8 words
Percentage of words from the *VdB*	82,1%	88,6%
VdB fondamentale	78,2%	83,9%
VdB alto uso	14,5%	9,7%
VdB alta disponibilità	7,3%	6,5%
Words not included in the *VdB*	17,9%	11,4%

TEXT 4		
	Original	**Retranslation**
***Gulpease*'s Index**	47,8	78,1
Number of words (token)	94 words	91 words
Average word length	5,2 letters	4,4 letters
Number of sentences	4	10
Average sentence length	23,5 words	9,1 words
Percentage of words from the *VdB*	71,7%	82,5%
VdB fondamentale	79,1%	84,8%
VdB alto uso	18,6%	6,1%
VdB alta disponibilità	2,3%	9,1%
Words not included in the *VdB*	28,3%	17,5%

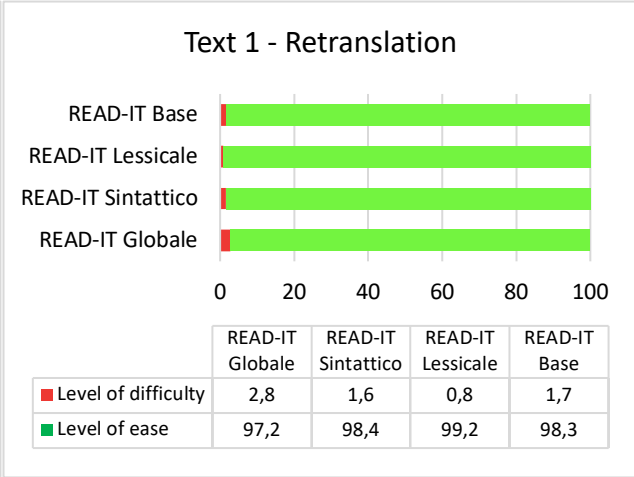
TEXT 5		
	Original	**Retranslation**
***Gulpease*'s Index**	55,3	81,4
Number of words (token)	102 words	89 words
Average word length	4,3 letters	5,2 letters
Number of sentences	4	12
Average sentence length	25,5 words	7,4 words
Percentage of words from the *VdB*	77,4%	83%
VdB fondamentale	72,9%	89,7%
VdB alto uso	20,8%	7,7%
VdB alta disponibilità	6,2%	2,6%
Words not included in the *VdB*	22,6%	17%

Table 4.4 Labels summary data extracted with *Dylan TextTools (v2.1.9)* [283].

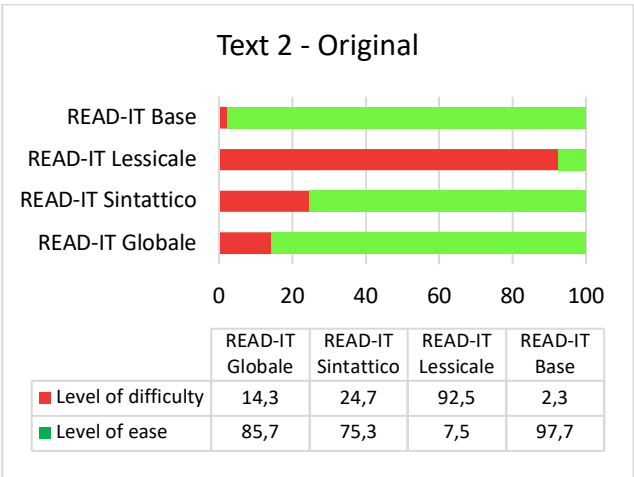
[283] As previously mentioned, the presented numbers may sometimes differ from the expected results. However, the software's data are a guide and should not be considered a prerequisite for proceeding with the retranslation.



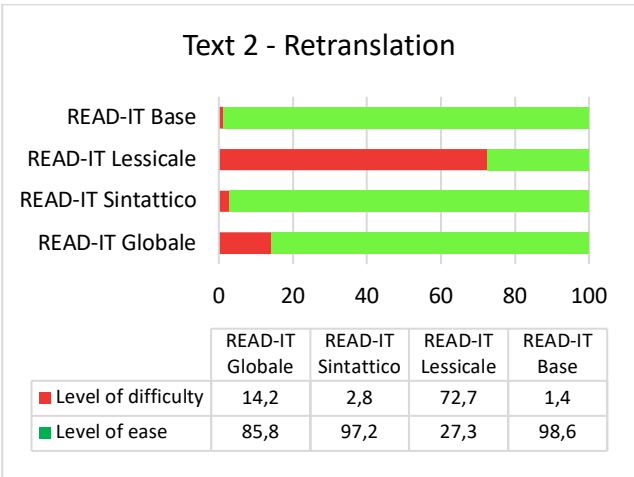
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	51,4	34,2	98,6	6,6
Level of ease	48,6	65,8	1,4	93,4



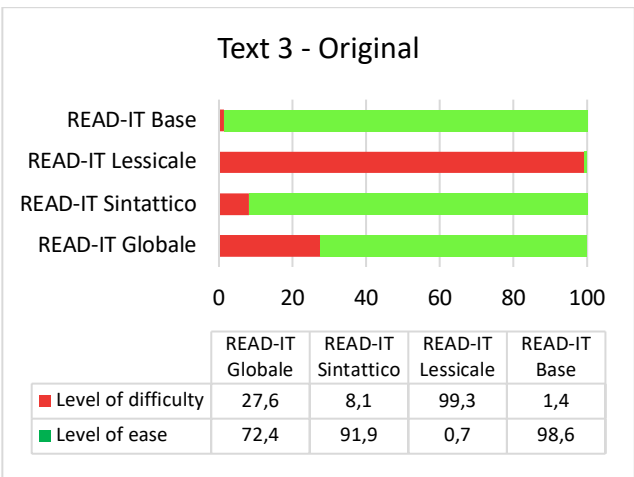
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	2,8	1,6	0,8	1,7
Level of ease	97,2	98,4	99,2	98,3



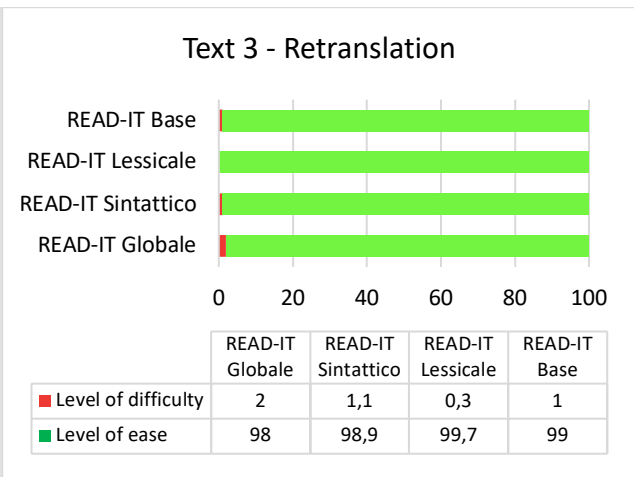
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	14,3	24,7	92,5	2,3
Level of ease	85,7	75,3	7,5	97,7



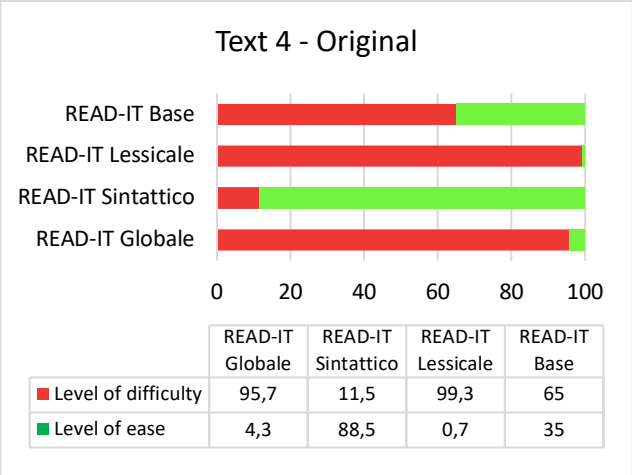
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	14,2	2,8	72,7	1,4
Level of ease	85,8	97,2	27,3	98,6



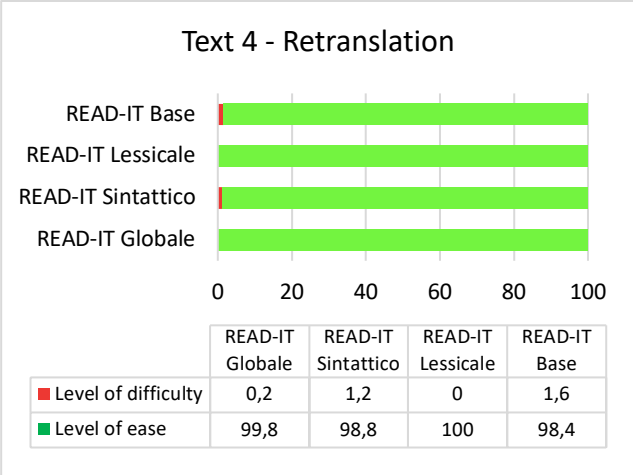
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	27,6	8,1	99,3	1,4
Level of ease	72,4	91,9	0,7	98,6



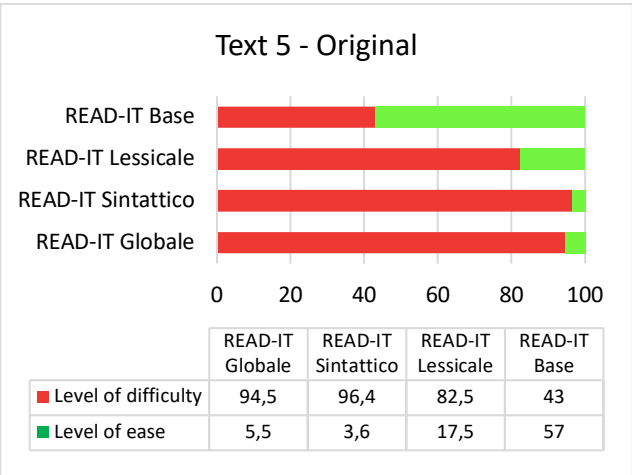
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	2	1,1	0,3	1
Level of ease	98	98,9	99,7	99



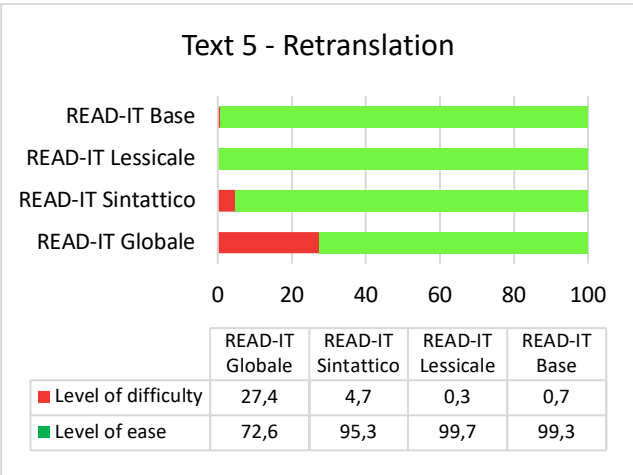
	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	95,7	11,5	99,3	65
Level of ease	4,3	88,5	0,7	35



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	0,2	1,2	0	1,6
Level of ease	99,8	98,8	100	98,4



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	94,5	96,4	82,5	43
Level of ease	5,5	3,6	17,5	57



	READ-IT Globale	READ-IT Sintattico	READ-IT Lessicale	READ-IT Base
Level of difficulty	27,4	4,7	0,3	0,7
Level of ease	72,6	95,3	99,7	99,3

Table 4.5 Labels READ-IT data overview extracted with *Dylan TextTools (v2.1.9).*

Overall, Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show how the retranslation has improved the panels' readability. To facilitate descriptive statistical comparison (Johnson, 2013; Oakes, 1998), we have included before and after retranslation data (Sciumbata, 2022). However, before proceeding with the analysis, it is essential to remark that the results shown in the data are not always considered reliable since some data may not represent the reality of the work (Rahman, 2016). As Sciumbata suggests (2022, p. 99), software analysis could be helpful when working on a text, but the results should not be considered an indispensable condition in the retranslation process. Nonetheless, instruments like *Dylan TexTools* are an invaluable source for linguists to keep track of the work done and to reflect on possible interventions on texts.

Observing Table 4.4, the deviation of the *Gulpease*'s readability index oscillates from 1.4 in Text 3 (the text that already had the highest readability level in the source text) to 30.3 in Text 4 (the text with the lower results beforehand), with the average mean of 14.66, as a demonstration of the significantly enhanced textuality in terms of ease of reading. All indexes exceed 72.7, confirming that each label is now, according to the readability threshold, in the average "Easy to read" range of

legibility. Three texts out of five (2, 3 and 5) exceed 80, meaning they are rated easy for those with a primary school certificate.

Texts tend to be made of fewer words but more sentences: striking are Texts 4 and 5, each previously constituted only four sentences that now are respectively 10 and 12. The average sentence length is substantially reduced in all labels, showing the effort of creating, from a syntactical point of view, an engaging but minimal description: Text 5, for instance, went from 25.5 words to 7.4 words per sentence, reducing to nearly one-fourth the total word count.

In Table 4.5, READ-IT data show how the retranslation improves text's readability, even looking in a bird's eye view at the high level of ease represented in green colour. All labels are significantly easier to read and understand on a syntactical, lexical (except for Text 2) and global level. The range is dramatically reduced, with impressive numbers on the lexical level that goes, for instance, in Text 4 from a level of ease of 0.7 to the maximum of 100. A lexical reflection on data makes us return to Table 4.4 and the percentages of words from the *Vocabolario di Base* in the panels. Except for Text 1, all percentages confirm a growth trend in using the *VdB2016,* with an average global increase of 7.8%, with Text 4 reaching 10.8 points of deviation. In particular, after the retranslation, the *VdB fondamentale* ('fundamental vocabulary') shows the highest percentage within the texts, demonstrating the attempt to use the most straightforward words when rewriting (Sciumbata, 2020, p. 338). Nonetheless, lexemes not part of the *VdB* had often been used - and explained - to describe the paintings from an artistic-historian perspective.

This quantitative analysis confirms the role of retranslation in creating an easier-to-read text. As of the previously illustrated qualitative analysis, the intervention has operated on texts' different levels. The following section gives a more detailed account of the retranslation process.

Firstly, regarding the organisation of information, the choice has fallen on enhancing the activity proposal since the title of the panels. The retranslations start with proposing titles that encourage the activity presented in the panels, which is the primary purpose for which the labels are displayed. The activity proposal must be clear from the title. For instance, in Text 1, the title is transformed into a question to engage the reader: *Dov'è il taglio nel quadro?* ('Where is the cut in the painting?'). The question highlights what the children are asked to investigate and summarises the activity proposed to families in the text, therefore foretelling the principal aim of the label. Although using an interrogative proposition may be discouraged by some international guidelines (IE, 2009; IFLA, 2010), in this case, it meets the function of texts, conveying an aura of mystery that may intrigue visitors to read and create a dialogue. The stylistic choice is adopted in Texts 1, 2 and

5. Texts 3 and 4 do not incorporate a question in their title; in any case, they summarise the activity proposed in the labels with their headings.

Examining Text 1 as an example with a thorough and detailed approach would be beneficial for understanding the process. The information in the source text already followed a logical order. Still, from a content selection stance, the choice fell on lightening the information load. Focusing on children's understanding of the text so they could engage more in the game-like activity, secondary information considered not fundamental from the perspective of the pragmatics of discourse was revised and rethought. For instance, the simile of comparing the painting to a text, subsequently connected to the narration of the divided artwork and the impossibility of reading it as a missing page, could be considered secondary information in writing. The extension could be more straightforward and more effective from the perspective of the immediacy of Easy-to-Read Language: the sentence provides accessory elements that enrich the storyline but do not contribute effectively to the main objective of illustrating the activity clearly.

The paragraphs divide the three main sections of the narrative up to the dialogue proposal, thus conveying the activity more effectively and directly. In the first paragraph, it was considered essential to contextualise the author of the painting and to make the exhibit content explicit. At the same time, the aim is to respect the source text and its desire to divulge new realities for children, such as the one contained in the term *carmelitano*, that has been intentionally left but anchored to a concise explanation. Explanation techniques, such as adding examples or paraphrasing the meaning of a word, are fundamental to explaining challenging words and topics in the source material (IE, 2009, p. 10; Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 80). For instance, in this case, the word is illustrated by a sentence: *I carmelitani sono uomini religiosi* ('The Carmelites are religious men'). This example also embodies the pedagogical connotation of the Easy Language acknowledged by Gargiulo and Arezzo (2017), that the text is not impoverished from the retranslation since it contains explications, additions, and clarifications that enrich the reading.

In the second paragraph, it was essential to safeguard the story's main junction and narrative thread, namely that the painting was divided and reassembled and that a mark, literally a 'scar', is what is left of the former division. The organisation of information is also maintained but adapted in EtR Language in the third paragraph, where the activity proposal is left. The task turns the children into detectives, creating a co-creation of meaning that is the discovery of the work of art and the development of the choral dimension of their aesthetic experience.

In Text 2, from the point of view of content selection, the results revolve around the will to enhance the narrative's pivotal moment, namely the reflection on the value of simplicity (through the representation of Franciscan poverty) in contrast to the splendour that blinds society. To emphasise

this key element from which the proposed activity subsequently unfolds, it was decided, unfortunately also for reasons of the panel's size, to sacrifice the first more descriptive part of the painting[284], keeping in mind the primary purpose of the *panel for young and old*, that is, to be placed side by side with the traditional descriptive panel beneath the paintings, proposing further food for thought for visitors. In the first part, the already mentioned technical-artistic elements and cultural-religious references are details that add vividness to language for a generic audience; however, in the case of a retranslation in Easy-to-Read, these elements would have loaded the text with meaning (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 107). They would have needed clarifications and in-depth analysis that would have excessively lengthened the panel, making it impractical to use and less inviting for the public (*Ibidem*). The view taken for the narrative emphasises the wealth-poverty contrast as a necessary element to develop the final questions posed to the readers, in which to play with the inventiveness and imagine whether the church is humble or opulent, continuing with the central theme of the narrative. A further specification made in this proposed retranslation[285] was to illustrate the communicative value that works of art played for the observant people inside the churches. Understanding the meaning of the following sentences passes through understanding this essential knowledge (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 121).

In addition to the selection of the contents, their organisation also changes in the retranslation. For instance, the EL version contextualises the artwork by inserting the origin of the painting (i.e., from a church) and its purpose at the outset of the text. The organisational choice follows with the decision to explicate the panel's content starting from the title, with a more explicit *Da dove viene questo quadro?* ('Where does this painting come from?'), a question that is directly answered in the first following sentence. The religious place is the theme around which the panel and the final activity revolve.

In Text 3, the choice was to contextualise the artwork historically, focusing on the meaning of the term *ritratto* ('portrait'), and then transition to a shorter description of the gentlewoman to connect the content to the final activity proposal. The question at the end of the text is facilitated through a contextualisation that simplifies it further without losing its primary goal - that is, to creatively play with the idea of what to wear for your portrait. Since the final question in the panel refers to a portrait, from an organisational point of view, it was considered essential to introduce the concept of portrait at the beginning of the label. The question in the Source Text (ST) pertains to an

[284] Although this part of the label is captivating, its retranslation would have compromised the length of the panel due to the need to further explicate its concepts by adding more sentences. Besides, it needed to be functional to the overall aim of the label (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 114).

[285] This case exemplifies how, at times, the source text must be precisely reconceived from scratch and that writing one entirely *ex novo* is often easier.

imaginary attire to be worn for a portrait, so the initial concept of the panel - with a focus on clothing - was respected, leaving a descriptive part of the woman's clothing and accessories in the EtR text, which acts as a lead-in to the final question as in the ST. The retranslation does not show the stages of dressing as in the scene imagined in the original panel but a more tangible description of the painting (i.e., there is no depiction of a woman gradually putting her clothes and accessories on in the painting. Instead, there is a lady ready to be portrayed. Consequently, the panel in Easy-to-Read Language illustrates what visitors can concretely see in the painting rather than depicting an antecedent story).

Therefore, the Easy Language panel is inspired by the original but is not a faithful transposition of it. With this choice of shifting the panel's focus, we do not wish to criticise the perspective of the museum's Educational Services. Adopting the same perspective in Easy Language would have caused several simplification problems. We opted for a more linear description that would also introduce the concept of portrait to the audience and then move on to a description of the clothing in the portrait. The panel size requires sacrificing specific text parts, yet it also allows the focus to be primarily on the family's activity.

In Text 4, the essential contents were selected, and their order was revised. It was decided to make the title more explicit: *Un simbolo segreto* ('A secret symbol') represents the theme around which the activity proposed to the families revolves. In contrast to the source text, it was decided to start by explaining what a self-portrait is, an essential element in analysing the artwork, specifying that the man in the painting is the painter himself. As opposed to the original text that vaguely introduced the information right before the text's conclusion, knowing from the start that Lomazzo painted himself in the picture will later clarify the other elements in the story's narrative. The narrative thread observes the hat and its mysterious symbol, so the term *annaffiatoio* ('watering can') is left while including an explanation. In the same paragraph, it is presented the artists' secret group and the reason behind the secret symbol. In the last paragraph, as in the original, the text concludes with the same question transformed into Easy-to-Read Language. The panel thus follows a logical thread from the notion of self-portrait to an in-depth examination of the secret symbol.

In Text 5, the title changed into *Riconosci qualcuno?* ('Do you recognise anyone?') makes the panel's objective explicit from the beginning presenting the activity proposed at the end of the text to draw readers' attention to it. The retranslation respects the logical-narrative order of the source text, starting with observing the scenery in the painting and specifying its characteristics. The EL version takes up the description of the hats in the original label, albeit summarising it more linearly with *Gli uomini indossano dei cappelli strani e colorati* ('Men wear strange and colourful hats'). The

observation focuses on people wearing black hats in the crowd, specifying that they are part of a confraternity, a new term explained in the subsequent sentence.

From the point of view of content selection, the part about the Confraternity of St. Mark has been summarised with the essential information: the religious group is in the painting because they commissioned it. The diversity of the painted figures and the care taken in representing them in detail with all their bizarre characteristics is the central axis upon which it is based the panel and its activity proposed to visitors. Emphasising how all the members of the confraternity want to be represented in the painting - *Gli uomini religiosi sono tutti nel quadro* ('All religious men want to be in the painting') - the retranslation is faithful to the original logical thread. It continues with a list of the figures' physical features, which are also made more transparent on a graphic level, before arriving at the concluding query that unlocks the chest for an unusual artwork exploration.

Secondly, as far as syntax is concerned, EL texts tend to be concise, with short sentences containing one piece of information at a time. The exceeding length of sentences is substantially reduced, the ellipsis is avoided, and every sentence goes to a new line. The sentences in the retranslations follow the "SVO" unmarked structure (Subject-Verb-Object), which is typical of the Italian language, more accurately than the source texts; thanks to the use of repetitions - when necessary, nouns and pronouns will constantly be clarified and reiterated (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017, p. 105) - clauses link up more easily with the preceding ones. Some sentences have been reformulated by adding short-bulleted lists, such as in Texts 2 and 5, making questions and descriptions more understandable, thus facilitating comprehension and dialogue between visitors.

The Noun + Adjective (NAdj) word order is adopted, like in Text 3 with *La donna ha una collana lunga d'oro e due anelli preziosi* ('The woman has a long gold necklace and two precious rings'), also an example of a coordinated proposition in the text, part of a syntactic style that favours a paratactic and not a hypotactic structure in the case of a longer sentence, as suggested by Gargiulo and Arezzo (2017), and to change subordinate clauses into independent ones (*Ivi*, p. 94). Explicit subordinate clauses are preferred to implicit ones (*Ibidem*): the final interrogative clauses present in the texts, whose aim is to propose the investigation activity to the children directly, are therefore left explicit. Furthermore, inserting connectives (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017, p. 110), such as *ma* ('but') in Text 1, help unravel logical inferences and connections between sentences.

Concerning verbs, the indicative mode is used in all texts. For instance, the conditional mode in the final questions of Text 4 was changed to the indicative mode: *Per il tuo club segreto, quale simbolo sceglieresti?* ('What symbol would you choose for your secret club?') becomes *Tu che simbolo scegli per il tuo gruppo segreto?* ('What symbol do you choose for your secret group?');

conjugated in the present tense, the question retains effectiveness. The same transformation happens with all verbs in the past tense. Past simple is avoided and substituted by the present perfect or present simple. The latter, used as a historical present, is the most diffused within all labels.

Compared to the source texts, the panels do not have negative clauses and those that were there have been transformed into positive ones. For instance, in the original Text 1, there were two negative formulations: "*Non si sa bene* quando e perché quest'opera venne divisa in due e, come in un libro a cui vengono strappate delle pagine, la storia *non era più completa"* ('We do not really know when or why the painting was split in two, thus making the story no longer complete, like when you tear a page out of a book'). In the retranslation process, they have been removed and reformulated in positive clauses: "Qualcuno ha tagliato il quadro in due parti" ('Someone cut the painting in two parts').

There are no passive verb forms, impersonal structures, or implied subjects. A variation of Italian that is more akin to spoken language (SCOPE 2015; NYCC, 2011[286]; ODI, 2010; Piemontese, 1996) is preferred in all labels: the effect is that every sentence is syntactically more linear than the original. A particular case is in Text 5, where in the clause *Riconosci qualcuno?* ('Do you recognise anyone?') the subject is implied; this is the only case in all the retranslations presented here. However, it refers to the orality of everyday spoken language, which is considered a fundamental element to be taken into account in Easy Language (EL). The effectiveness and pragmatism of orality are considered essential values from a communicative point of view. We would not insert the subject in the Italian spoken language but instead ask directly: *Riconosci qualcuno?* The panel ends by turning the indirect interrogative *chissà se uno di loro assomiglia a qualcuno che conosci…* ('wondering if one of them looks like someone you know...') into a direct question: *Qualcuno assomiglia a un tuo amico?* ('Does anyone look like one of your friends?'), a more straightforward way to engage readers in the activity.

Regarding interrogative clauses, most EL labels open and close with questions by repeating the first question at the end or adding a different one. The style conveyed by the multiple questions is informal and direct, also because they address the reader with a second-person singular *Tu* + verb rather than the more formal *Lei* + verb (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 76). This choice is typical of the inclusive Italian language, whose use of a more formal form of address coincides with the desire to engage the reader more with a marked familiar tone[287]. The use of more informal allocutives is

[286] The aim is to make language as fluid and natural as possible, as highlighted by the NYCC guidelines (2011): "Traditional rules of grammar need not necessarily apply. Use language that sounds natural when spoken" (*Ibid*, p. 14).

[287] It is interesting to notice, as highlighted by Perego and Rocco (2022) in their recent research, that in other contexts, the use of an informal form of address "could be interpreted to have a politically incorrect connotation as a form of disrespect, which could contribute to stigmatising a text" (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 76). Although it is not applicable

coherent with the inclusive perspective of the text and with the contemporary evolution of museum language, which is increasingly more informal and direct compared to previous times (Fina, 2018, p. 95). Furthermore, regardless of the inclusive purpose, a *panel for young and old* - primarily designed for engaging with children and connecting with families - addressing visitors with *Lei* would not be appropriate to the museum context (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 76).

Thirdly, in terms of lexicon, although most words in the texts are part of the *Vocabolario di Base* - it is evident from Table 4.4 how significant the intervention was - not all lemmas are part of the *VdB.* This depends on the desire to maintain the museum's cultural context within the labels. Since we are working in a museum setting containing works from the thirteenth century to the twentieth century, which are dense with biblical, religious and cultural references, keeping this substantial cultural dimension in the texts would be necessary. With the choice of leaving some technical terms, the museum gradually presents itself and reveals its themes to the children and their families. Still, each sentence presents to the audience only one piece of new information (Freyhoff et al., 1998; Sciumbata, 2022).

For example, in Text 1, the decision to contextualise the artist Giambattista Tiepolo and to repeat the artist's name several times in the text may have contributed to lowering the percentage of *VdB* in the quantitative analysis since the artist's proper name is not part of the *VdB*. Choosing to leave out terms such as *carmelitani* also contributed, although an explanation in the panels supports every problematic word.

To illustrate the type of linguistic intervention made on the panels, we will consider Text 2. Its new proposal complies more strictly with the *Vocabolario di Base* of the Italian language. In some cases, the choice of terms has been made for more widespread words within the same *VdB*: for example, the term *dipinto* (already part of the *VdB* but of the *vocabolario di alto uso*[288] group) used in the source text has been replaced by *quadro* (another synonym for 'painting'), which is instead part of the *VdB*'s *vocabolario fondamentale*[289] of the Italian language and thus even closer to everyday life (De Mauro, 2019). The result is an increase in the percentage of the *VdB fondamentale* to 86,4%, although doing so sacrifices synonyms and leads to repeating the term more often within the text. *Umile* and *fastosa* ('humble' and 'sumptuous'), the adjectives related to the final description of the church, are not part of the *VdB,* and they have been therefore transformed into the more common *semplice* and *ricca* ('simple' and 'rich').

in this case study, the tendency to simplism, such as using children's images in texts for adults with intellectual disabilities, is an issue to bear in mind and be aware of when working on Easy Language texts.

[288] That is the 'high-usage vocabulary' group.

[289] That is the 'fundamental vocabulary'.

This approach to words is consistent in all texts, with different deviations but a general increase in the use of a vocabulary that is more accessible to all. Text 3 lexically simplifies the lady's description using words that are all part of the *VdB*; in Text 4, all terms are part of the *VdB*. Words such as *club segreto* ('secret club'), highlighted in bold as they represent the central topic of the label, become *gruppo segreto* ('secret group'), avoiding anglicisms that may complicate text for visitors with reading difficulties. In this case, the exception pertains to three words: *autoritratto* ('self-portrait'), the painter's name Lomazzo and the *annaffiatoio* ('watering can'); all three terms are considered pivotal for the description, are highlighted in bold and accompanied by a brief explanation. In Text 5, the term *confraternita* was left but exemplified, while all other words have been changed into more transparent terms for people with intellectual disabilities; for example, the different types of headgear are all translated under the hypernym of *cappelli* ('hats').

A significant issue involves figurative language: the guidelines expressly demand eliminating any form of abstract language, such as metaphors (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IFLA, 2010; IE, 2014). Here, we have faithfully followed the guidelines in a linguistic-translational approach, thus eliminating any form of figurative language or explicating any abstract reference to the paintings. For example, in Text 1, the term *cicatrice* ('scar'), intended to indicate the cut in the painting that has then been *ricucito* ('sewn again'), was transformed into the more concrete *taglio* ('cut'), and the verb *ricucire* ('to sew again') in *riunire* ('to reunite'). The inference process presents problems from the perspective of inclusive language: readers with intellectual disabilities have difficulty implementing this imaginative process, which transcends the literal meaning of a word and links distant terms and concepts in a specific context (Bambini, 2017, p. 17). It is interesting to notice how the discourse on figurative language takes a different turn from a pedagogical perspective, which will be discussed in the next chapter (see *Chapter V*).

A notable instance is the list in Text 5, which intertwines content selection with lexical issues. The description, highlighting the peculiarities of the faces of the members of the confraternity of St. Mark's, may be interpreted by some as not entirely inclusive, not in terms of the text's comprehension, but according to contemporary sociolinguistics studies and their larger framework of the use of the term inclusive (Gheno, 2022, p.107). This is not a matter of political correctness, but it makes one wonder to what extent a term is pragmatically inclusive. The original depiction describes *guance scavate* ('hollow cheeks'), *doppio mento* ('double chin') and *occhi un po' strabici* ('slightly squinting eyes') and in EL would be translated into *magro*, *grasso* and *occhi storti* ('thin', 'fat' and 'crossed-eyed'). This conceptual exaggeration due to the simplification of language was not considered appropriate for the panel since it would betray its original meaning. The ironic narration style, with the description tending to caricature the physical characteristics of the figures, could offend

the sensibilities of the audience with intellectual disabilities. The broader topic at hand is sensitive and requires a delicate approach, and it is no coincidence that the debate in the cultural landscape is very heated today (Bordone et al., 2022). However, the choice of terms is intended to be faithful to the original work. It was therefore decided to leave the distinction of light and dark hair (*i capelli chiari, i capelli scuri)*, *il naso lungo* ('a long nose') and perhaps add *gli occhi grandi* ('big eyes') to respect at least in part the irony of the original text, which is a playful praise of diversity.

Conclusively, regarding graphics, the division into paragraphs and the use of bold type for highlighting the main concepts and the difficult words to guide the eye of the visitor (Freyhoff et al., 1998; IE, 2014; Sciumbata, 2022) promote reading by making the panel more appropriate for audiences with intellectual disabilities[290]. Adding supplementary images was considered not fundamental in the case of family panels that are usually displayed directly below the artwork. The rich context of museum ecology will provide the tools for families to interpret the painting, thus completing the text. Only the symbol (Figure 4.7) is kept, which is present in every family caption in the museum and conceived as an element of recognition and distinction from the other texts displayed in the galleries. A possible addition could be the Easy Language logo to make the text immediately recognisable; nevertheless, people with intellectual disabilities should first proofread and approve texts (IE, 2021[291]). Regarding the colours used, we opted for panels with a completely white background and texts printed in contrasting black characters to make the panel easier to read.

The font type was changed to *Verdana* (among the recommended ones, as reported by IFLA, 2010; Barrow R. et al., 2011; SCOPE, 2015; Sciumbata, 2022), maintaining a *sans serif* typeface. The font size presented in the retranslations is equal to 14[292]. The size is purely indicative and based on the general guidelines for written texts; the same applies to the space left between the sentences and the larger margins (IFLA, 2010; IE, 2014). Since the panels are to be displayed and read from afar, it was deemed necessary to increase the font size to 22 for the text and 32 for the title for the panels in Easy-to-Read displayed in the museum (texts 1 and 2 are the panels exposed in the museum for the field study's video observation, therefore are here represented to scale).

Additionally, to make the text more readable, the request for the copy shop involved in the

[290] Furthermore, during our field study on families, we noticed that labels in Easy-to-Read Language were also well-received by passersby casually strolling before the works of art (refer to *Chapter V*).
[291] A specific section of Inclusion Europe's website is dedicated to this matter. Specifically, the logo can be used if "One or several persons with intellectual disability whose native language is the language you are using in your publication should proofread your publication. The name of the proofreaders should appear in the brochure". For more information, visit "How to use the European Easy-to-Read Logo", available at the following link: https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/How-to-use-ETR-logo..pdf (last accessed April 2024).
[292] There is a slight dimension variation in the title, which is 15.5, even if Sciumbata (2022) generally proposes retranslation that shares the same font size in the title and the body of the text.

project was to print the label on mat paper, illustrating the importance of avoiding both coat paper and light paper, following what both national and international guidelines suggest (Sciumbata, 2022; SCOPE, 2015; NYCC, 2011). As a matter of fact, SCOPE guidelines (2015) recommend not selecting a transparent paper, which instead has to be "at least made of 100gsm", and confirm the need to utilise matte paper since a glossier option could hinder reading. Furthermore, North Yorkshire County Council's guidelines recommend also using yellow paper for people with eyesight issues or visual impairment (2011, p. 8).

Figure 4.7 *Panel for young and old* recognition symbol[293].

4.2.2 Commentary on the rewriting in Easy English

Since the source texts are in Italian, produced by the team of the *Pinacoteca di Brera*'s Educational Services under the guidance of Director Bradburne, it was decided to work first on the original texts in Italian, retranslating them in Easy Language. At this stage, the work being carried out is the translation of the labels from Easy Italian to Easy English. This seemingly simple process must be cautiously thought through from a linguistic-translational perspective. One will notice how, when translating from one Easy language to another, attention must be paid to the linguistic and meta-linguistic aspects of the Easy language that are peculiar to a specific target language. SCOPE's *Easy English Recommendations* (2015) remind us how important it is to 'consider readers who have different life situations, experiences and cultures' for accurate 'inclusive communication' (2015, p. 14). Therefore, including linguistic and cultural aspects: in this specific case, for instance, historical-artistic references known to the Italian audience might need further clarification to a non-native target audience[294]. It is also necessary to consider the textual typology examined, that is, the informative panel: one should imagine a large international audience (not only visitors whose mother tongue is English: the English-language panel addresses all foreign visitors who cross the threshold of the Art Gallery). Consequently, Easy English users also include foreign readers who rely on the English text even though they do not know the language well, trying to decipher it to discover new perspectives on the works of art[295]. The Easy English language becomes a valuable tool for everyone visiting the

[293] Image taken from the *Pinacoteca di Brera* official website, available at the following link: https://pinacotecabrera.org/proposte-educazione/didascalie-per-grandi-e-piccoli/ (last accessed July 2023).
[294] As addressed later in Note 366, there is also an issue of cultural specificity to consider.
[295] During the fieldwork, it was possible to notice how the *panels for young and old* supported the foreign public visiting the *Pinacoteca di Brera*.

museum, not only for whom it was intended but extending it to the community of visitors, including tourists. As demonstrated by recent visitor studies, international tourists still represent a significant segment of the museum's visitors today[296] (Consenti, 2022).

Easy English in the museum would also be an opportunity for English language learners such as children. Since there are nowadays new multidisciplinary studies on language learning intertwined with museum didactics (Buechel & Lichtenauer, 2022), it would be interesting to study Easy English's impact on children (who are non-native English speakers) in their learning path of English as a Second Language (ESL). The family panels in the *Pinacoteca di Brera* are bilingual - as indeed are most of the panels in the museum - offering the two Italian and English versions of the text to the public, specularly on the same panel. Hence, having previously worked with a retranslation into Easy Italian of the original Italian label, the following section will discuss the 'translation of the retranslation', transforming Easy Italian into Easy English[297].

[296] On the theme of museums and tourism, the recent interview with Director Bradburne (Masoero, 2023), released as an end-of-term commentary, provides interesting food for thought. The Director states that, from the point of view of environmental sustainability, museums can no longer support mass tourism. Instead, it is necessary to focus on a different, more aware type of museum experience based on something other than moving crowds of people with the plane. He states:

> Il turismo di massa (inseguito lungamente da tanti direttori dei musei, che realizzavano grandi mostre per «pompare» i numeri dei visitatori) è colpevole di un reato di cui io non voglio essere complice. Non nego certo l'accesso al museo ma offro altro in cambio. Lotto contro il turismo disimpegnato, per creare un turismo preparato e consapevole, che arrivi in museo già informato. Non è obbligatorio che tutti visitino i musei, l'importante è che, chi lo fa, lo faccia consapevolmente. Il museo che intendo io non è un contenitore, una scatola di oggetti, ma un produttore di cultura. Intendo passare da un «museo sostantivo» a un «museo verbo»: qualcosa che crei cultura e faccia attività differenziate» (Masoero, 2023).

[297] Interestingly, working on the version in Easy English was reflexively helpful in revising the translation in Easy Italian. Working on the retranslation of the English text made it possible to revise some of the weak points of Easy Italian and correct them; the text thus gains clarity due to the comparison of different Easy Languages.

TEXT 1		
	Original[298]	**Retranslation**
Gunning fog Index	8.64	7.72
Number of words (token)	86 words	80 words
Average word length	4,26 letters	4,42 letters
Number of sentences	7	10
Average sentence length	12,29 words	7,9 words
Percentage of words from the HFW[299]	90,8%	91,25%
Words not included in the HFW	9,2%	8,75%

TEXT 2		
	Original	**Retranslation**
Gunning fog Index	7.25	5.34
Number of words (token)	94 words	64 words
Average word length	4,23 letters	4,63 letters
Number of sentences	11	9
Average sentence length	8,55 words	7,11 words
Percentage of words from the HFW	85,10%	100%
Words not included in the HFW	14,9%	0%

[298] Original English version of the label.

[299] As discussed in *Chapter II*, for the English language, there is not a precise counterpart for the *Vocabolario di Base* (VdB), a frequency list that divides lexemes in such a detailed manner (that is: *VdB fondamentale, VdB alto uso, VdB alta disponibilità*), so it was not possible to compare precisely the two versions of the text according to these parameters. We opted for a general percentage of the High-Frequency Vocabulary used in the texts. The result is lexical work less precise than the one for the Italian language, given the breadth and different distinction of lexemes in the VdB compared to the High-Frequency Words (HFW). This applies to Table 4.6 as a whole.

TEXT 3

	Original	**Retranslation**
Gunning fog Index	4.04	4.72
Number of words (token)	90 words	64 words
Average word length	4,04 letters	4,38 letters
Number of sentences	10	9
Average sentence length	9 words	7,11 words
Percentage of words from the HFW	88,88%	96,87%
Words not included in the HFW	11,12%	3,13%

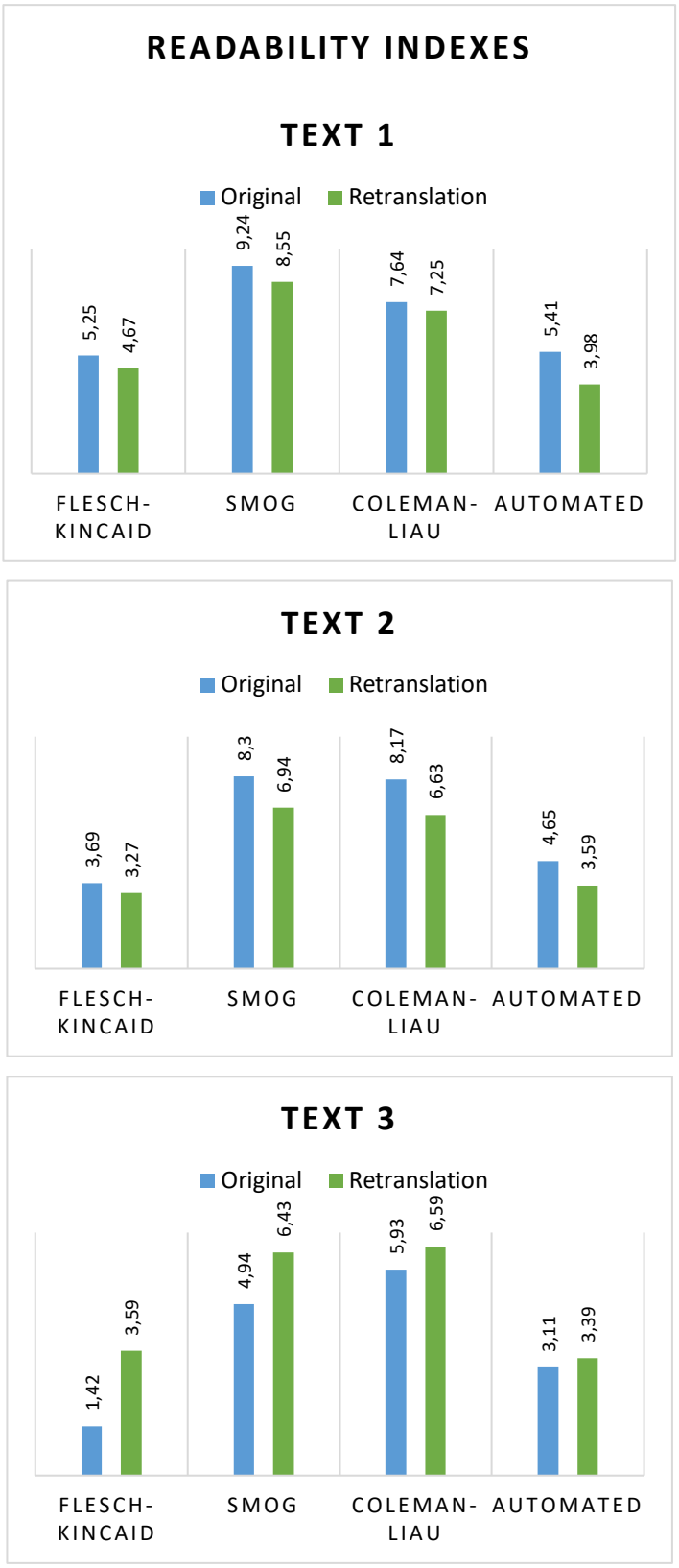
TEXT 4

	Original	**Retranslation**
Gunning fog Index	14.18	7.21
Number of words (token)	96 words	79 words
Average word length	4,73 letters	4,33 letters
Number of sentences	4	10
Average sentence length	24 words	7.9 words
Percentage of words from the HFW	83,33%	92,4%
Words not included in the HFW	16,67%	7,6%

TEXT 5		
	Original	**Retranslation**
Gunning fog Index	8.74	7,48
Number of words (token)	86 words	79 words
Average word length	4,57 letters	4,29 letters
Number of sentences	5	8
Average sentence length	17,2 words	9,88 words
Percentage of words from the HFW	86,04%	97,46%
Words not included in the HFW	13,96%	2,54%

Table 4.6 Labels summary data[300].

[300] Among the data shown, Gunning fog Index, the number of words, the average word length, the number of sentences and the average sentence length were extracted with "*Analyze my writing* (AMW)", whereas the HFW percentages were extracted autonomously. *Analyze My Writing* (AMW) is an online readability and text content software for analysis of the English language. The analyser is available at this link: https://www.analyzemywriting.com/ (last access June 2023).


READABILITY INDEXES
TEXT 1
Original
Retranslation
5,25
4,67
9,24
8,55
7,64
7,25
5,41
3,98
FLESCH-KINCAID
SMOG
COLEMAN-LIAU
AUTOMATED
TEXT 2
Original
Retranslation
3,69
3,27
8,3
6,94
8,17
6,63
4,65
3,59
FLESCH-KINCAID
SMOG
COLEMAN-LIAU
AUTOMATED
TEXT 3
Original
Retranslation
1,42
3,59
4,94
6,43
5,93
6,59
3,11
3,39
FLESCH-KINCAID
SMOG
COLEMAN-LIAU
AUTOMATED

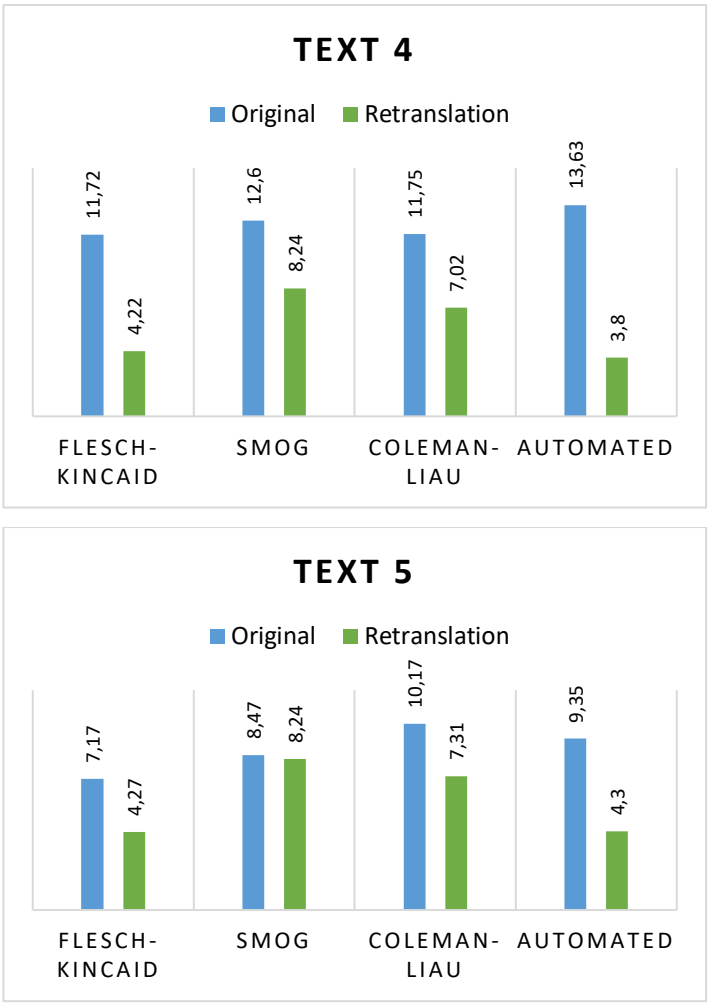


Table 4.7 Overview of labels' Readability indexes extracted with "*Analyze my writing* (AMW)".

In terms of structure and lexicometry, it is beneficial to understand the degree of the texts' intricacy considering some quantitative parameters (i.e., indexes like the *Gunning fog* and the *Flesch-Kincaid*)[301]. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 reveal that there has been a marked increase in panels' readability. In both tables, 'Original' refers to the original English translation of the panels, which is included to obtain an adequate comparison for the English language before and after retranslation, as we

[301] As for the Italian language, the numbers offer a general idea of a text's complexity even when they do not accurately define it. We decided to consider more reading indexes for the English language. There is an array of options to analyse text complexity - for instance, besides the one here listed and analysed, it would be interesting to explore the Fry Readability Graph and the Raygor Readability Graph, two indices that study graphical complexity - since every one of them gives a slightly different perspective on the readability of a text. The lexical online calculator used, which provides a guide to interpreting its data, states in an introduction:

> Every index does this slightly differently and emphasises particular aspects of text complexity. Some emphasise syllable counts, while others look only at the word and sentence lengths. This is why more than a few readability indices are available to us. However, the core idea of each is the same; readability is essentially a measure of text complexity (Analyze My Writing, 2023).

For further information, see *Chapter II*.

conducted for Italian[302]. The analysis was performed using the lexical calculator *Analyze My Writing*[303], which is available online. Only the lexical part of the data related to calculating the lexemes part of the High-Frequency Vocabulary has been extracted autonomously.

Observing Table 4.6, the general decrease of the *Gunning fog* index shows that all texts are improved in reading, except for Text 3. That occurs because, as previously mentioned, data might be outside the expected outcomes. When retranslating, software results should be considered a valuable tool but not indispensable (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 99). The deviation of the *Gunning fog* index variates in absolute value from 0.91 in Text 1 to 6.97 in Text 4, with an average mean of 6.49 compared to the original average of 8.57: the lower *Gunning fog* index shows improved legibility. What is striking in Table 4.6 is a general pattern of the *Gunning Fog* index. According to its parameters, the original Texts 1, 4, and 5 are aligned with the "General Adult" level of readability (index between 8-12), while all retranslations are in the "Young Adult" level (index between 5-8) (Dubay, 2007, p. 16). This is thought-provoking, particularly considering the source texts are created with children in mind. However, they are significantly far from meeting the standards.

As we observed in the Italian language, the number of words has been substantially reduced due to the need to fit the text in the size's label; the sentence length is lowered, and the number of sentences is augmented owing to giving only one piece of information at a time. The most relevant result is shown in Text 4, consisting of 4 sentences with an average sentence length of 24 words and, after retranslation, is composed of 10 sentences with an average sentence length of 7.9 words. The Easy English version fulfils the objective of creating a clear and more comprehensible text.

For a more exhaustive comparison, Table 4.7 shows different readability indexes calibrated to the English language and confirms the observed trend in the *Gunning Fog* index. The intervention has enhanced the linearity and clarity of the texts, as we identified the same pattern in all readability indexes exemplified in Table 4.7. Data equal the previous assumptions and confirm that the text ensures a fluent reading for visitors because of the lower index numbers in the retranslation compared to the original version of the panel in standard English. Indeed, we can observe that all the readability indicators for the retranslation are lower than the original. Except for Text 3, *Flesch-Kincaid*, *SMOG*, *Coleman-Liau* and *Automated* indexes present all lower values than their original number, like the significant deviation of 9.83 points of the Automated Readability Index (ARI) in Text 4, which observes the characters per word proportion. According to ARI, the source text (13.63) was

[302] The original English versions of the panels - representing Standard English - are introduced at this stage to gather and compare reliable data on Italian and English before and after the inclusive rewriting process. However, as mentioned previously, the texts were initially translated from Standard Italian to Easy Italian and then from Easy Italian to Easy English.

[303] Here is the link for the website: https://www.analyzemywriting.com (last accessed July 2023).

understandable for Twelfth Grade students (17-18 years old), whereas the target text (3.8) is perfectly readable for children from Second Grade (7-8 years old) (Smith & Senter, 1967). An example of the Flesch-Kincaid index, based on sentence and word length, is in Text 5, where the rewriting transforms the text from an "Average level" of legibility to "Very easy to read"[304] (Analyze My Writing, 2023). In the case of Text 2, both SMOG (Simple Measure of Gobbledygook) and Coleman-Liau indexes display how the translated label has improved readability in terms of syllables per word and characters per word. This enhancement renders the EL version appropriate for a young audience (Second Grade children) (Smith & Senter, 1967). This overview of indexes corroborates the thesis that all labels are easier to read and understand and suitable for everyone, from children to people with intellectual disabilities.

As far as lexicon is concerned, the percentage of words from the HFW oscillates from 91,25% in Text 1[305] to 100% in Text 2, with an increase in the percentage in all panels. This shows the extensive use of words that are accessible from everyday language. Nevertheless, lexemes not part of the HFW have been used and explained to contextualise Italian art for English receivers.

The general assumption is that the intervention in the English text confirms the previously adopted international guidelines but shapes it slightly according to the English language and the English receivers. As Tables 4.6 and 4.7 display, English texts follow the same path of 'easification' (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 70) as the Italian ones. What can be clearly seen in the figures and graphs is that the study conducted through *Analyze My Writing* classifies quantitative information that corroborates the subjective qualitative translator's intervention.

On a global level, the texts respect the European and international guidelines for the Easy Language (IE, 2009; IFLA, 2010) and the specific guidelines for the English language (ODI, 2010; Barrow R. et al., 2011; UKAAF, 2022; and others, cf. also *Chapter II*). Therefore, many aspects follow Easy Italian guidelines, and in general, labels reflect the originals, tracing the structure of the five Easy Italian texts. There are no marked differences between the Italian and English EtR versions, the principal dissimilarity being that the latter have the same function but a different addressee/audience, who may need more contextualisation of an Italian work of art. Here, we will only show the slight modifications compared to the text in Easy Italian, adding a linguistic-translational reflection on the Easy English facing text. As previously stated, the source text (referring to Easy Italian) was created for an Italian audience with intellectual disabilities. From the view of

[304] Data interpreting table available at this link: urly.it/3wqx2 (last accessed August 2023).
[305] Text 1 is the only one with no striking difference from the original text, due to the number of repetitions of *Tiepolo* (which occurs five times) and *Carmelites* (which occurs two times) in such a short text, following the rule of "be consistent. Use the same word to talk about the same thing" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7). In fact, only *Tiepolo* and *Carmelites* are not part of the Word Frequency List.

content selection, syntax, lexical and graphic nature, the choices remain the same, except for a few necessary modifications. In fact, the guidelines for the English EL reiterate the importance of writing texts that only contain essential information[306], conveying notions through a concrete and tangible language (SCOPE, 2015; Scottish Accessible Information Forum, 2011).

Overall, we adhered to North Yorkshire County Council's suggestion of "don't 'translate' it line for line – think about what the document as a whole is communicating and how best to make this clear in easy read" (2011, p. 10) even if it leads to a complete re-organisation of the flow of information (*Ibid*., p. 12). This guidance performs as a methodological thread in line with the source text in Easy Italian. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the museum label is a textual typology that has only recently been examined and translated from the point of view of inclusive language. Therefore, there is still no well-defined methodology for translating it, as it represents an emerging field of analysis that needs further investigation. One of the debated themes is the fact that there is a very thin line between translation and adaptation of texts into Easy Language. Very often, certain parts of a text are sacrificed at the risk of losing an essential piece of the original version, and it happens that texts are, instead of being retranslated, abridged and substantially adapted (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 81). Perego and Rocco (*Ibidem*) hold that:

> This is closely linked to the way content is treated and reduced compared to the source text and the extent of informative compression used (…) in any EL version of a source text. The line between intralingual translation and heavy adaptation or full rewriting of a text for comprehensibility purposes is still blurred and could be language- and culture-specific (*Ibidem*).

Our particular case of intervention - on panels with precise dimensions - certainly does not contribute to defining the faint dividing line between translation and substantial text reduction. In our case study, we could speak of a text that is both a translation and a slight adaptation of the source text due to the particular textual typology. The original text is written in a smaller font size, and the panel can, therefore, enclose a more significant portion of text. Some propose, like Sciumbata (2022b), a much larger panel and caption in Easy Language, where, on the one hand, the content is not sacrificed. On the other hand, in terms of usability and logistics, it becomes rather imposing as an insertion into the museum ecology. The length of the text (panels about more than one metre in height) could also intimidate the reader and, a fortiori, a person with reading difficulties. In this respect, we opted for a version of the source texts which would preserve its main objective but still fit within the dimensions of the standard panel in the museum.

The subsequent fixes and adjustments, which primarily dealt with linguistic-translational

[306] 'Be clear. Write only the key points. Use one idea per sentence' (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7).

aspects between the two languages but also with socio-linguistics issues, chiefly consisted of an adaptation of the content to a foreign audience and not a real re-semanticization[307] of the discourse contents since the process had already taken place during the rewriting in Italian EL.

In terms of organising information, as previously stated, labels generally maintain the same content selection and organisation of the choices made for Easy Italian texts. However, Text 1 presents a particular intervention**.** It was decided to add a guide to reading the Italian name Tiepolo, as suggested in parallel by Sciumbata in the occurrence of foreign terms for an Italian audience (2022, p. 117). A pronunciation guide could facilitate the word's pronunciation for a foreign audience. According to the "International Phonetic Alphabet" (IPA), the name would become ˈtjɛpolo[308]. Still, it was decided to simplify the decoding by referring to the words' pronunciation of certain diphthongs or letters in the English language. From the point of view of the structure of the text in macro-blocks, in order not to overload it with information, it was decided to divide this 'introductory' part related to the artist from the story's development in the subsequent block.

SCOPE guidelines suggest being precise with dates, numbers and times by making more specific references (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7). In Italian, however, Sciumbata often recurs to *tanto tempo fa* ('a long time ago') or similar structures (e.g., *molto tempo fa*, 'long ago') (*ivi*, 2022, p. 110), giving the text a more generic temporal connotation to make it easier to understand. Although both options are possible in Italian and English, to 'be specific with dates and time' is more encouraged for the English language (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7)[309]. Therefore, we substitute the expression of time *tanti anni fa* ('many years ago') in Text 1 in Easy Italian with the exact date of creation of the artwork (that is, 1745) in the corresponding version in Easy English. On the other hand, Text 3 presents a precise date in the Easy Italian version (*Questo quadro è del 1616*), and the Easy English translation follows it ('This painting is from 1616').

In terms of syntax, following SCOPE's guideline (2015), we opted for substituting any phrasal verbs (*verb + adverb/preposition*) and compound forms (such as *verb + noun*) with shorter and simpler verbs options (e.g., get about = walk; make a decision = decide) (2015, p. 8). A specific suggestion for the English language is not to use contracted forms (e.g., *don't*) (Mencap, 2000, p. 3), although well diffused in the everyday language. Some panels present them in the original English versions (e.g., in Text 1: 'We *don't* really know').

ODI (2010, p. 28) guidelines for Easy English highlight how textual fluidity should recall

[307] In the sense of conferring novel and distinct significance.
[308] The phonetic transcription of the Italian language can be found in the *Dizionario di Pronuncia Italiana Online* at the following link: https://www.dipionline.it/ (last access May 2023).
[309] SCOPE's guidelines recommend being precise also with sizes and amounts (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7).

speech also from a syntactical stance. This means further simplifying sentence structure to convey information most linearly and, as when we do it orally, sometimes not rigorously following grammar. Easy English - as Easy Italian - should be inspired by language pragmatics. We, therefore, adopted the same approach in the rewriting process. For instance, a sentence could start with prepositions such as *but* (ODI, 2010, p. 28): in Text 1, *ma rimane un segno del taglio nel quadro* is left unchanged in Easy English, 'but there is a mark of the cut in the painting'. Furthermore, the ODI English language guidelines (2010, p. 27) suggest adding an explanation when introducing a problematic term, so periphrasis is left in Easy English as in the original Easy Italian version, such as in Text 1, where the meaning of the term 'Carmelites' is clarified in the subsequent sentence.

Generally, the five Easy English labels align with international guidelines regarding limiting pronouns. How pronouns are employed in a text is an essential aspect of Easy Language since they could create uncertainty in comprehension if not directly linked to a nominal referent (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 79).

In the specific case of allocutives, Easy English labels address the visitor using *you* as a more general form of address, while the Italian source texts adopt the informal *tu* ('you') (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 76). Examples such as 'You can read' and 'Can you find' (both in Text 1) align with the tendency to favour using direct pronominal forms such as *we* and *you* (Barrow R. et al., 2011, p. 16). SCOPE guidelines (2015, p. 7) formulate it as follows: 'Be direct. Address readers as 'you''.

Comparing the two EL versions in terms of pronominal forms, even if the nominal referent is always expressed, in a few cases, the Easy Italian version reflects its original pro-drop language, such as in Text 1: *Riesci a trovare il taglio nel quadro?* ('Can ~~you~~ find the cut in the painting?') with an implied subject typical in Italian everyday language (*tu, "*you"). On the contrary, in English, using *you* as a form of address is grammatically indispensable as it is a non-pro-drop language (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 79).

The Easy English versions follow the English language structure of a modifying adjective preceding a noun (AdjN) (Dryer, 2013), changing the syntactical order in the sentences, such as in Text 5, where *I capelli chiari* (representing Italian language NAdj's order) becomes 'light hair' or in Text 3 *un vestito giallo lungo,* 'a long yellow dress'. Similarly, this inversion happens with every syntagm.

Syntactical structures are further simplified in Easy English. In Text 5, *Per questo gli uomini religiosi sono tutti nel quadro* becomes 'All religious men want to be in the painting', without interfering with the causal connection with the previous sentence. Another example is in Text 4, where *serve per far parte* is translated into *is part of* facilitating the reading of the clause. In Text 2,

serve a stupire becomes 'can surprise': the intransitive verb *servire* (*servire* + *a* + infinitive) is simplified in Easy English using the modal verb 'can'.

Regarding predicates, Text 1 shows a particular example. The temporal category in the first paragraph was changed, as the past simple of the Easy Italian was replaced with the present historical tense, which thus refers to the great painter in general 'Tiepolo is a very famous Italian painter', without a historical connotation, which on the contrary, was considered a more appropriate clarification for the Italian audience. However, the following paragraphs maintain the past tense of Easy Italian in order to convey a mysterious air to the chronology of events illustrated that took place in a distant past.

As in Easy Italian, headings respect the international guidelines and are, therefore, direct and clear, clarifying and condensing the content of the *panels for young and old*. A heading should always present the main point of a text (IE, 2009, p. 17). We can observe that the titles have remained interrogative propositions in Easy English. Numerous guides published, for instance, by *Easy Read Online*[310] - a British company specialised in Easy Language - prove questions can be inserted in the titles. However, Perego and Rocco (2022, p. 77) point out that this approach departs from the IE (2009) and IFLA (2010) recommendations, as the guidelines discourage incorporating questions in materials written in Easy Language. Furthermore, specifically for the English language, ODI guidelines invite to 'avoid using questions, as people with learning disabilities are often weary of questions' (ODI, 2010, p. 28).

By contrast, in Italian, writing titles as interrogative sentences is a well-established habit (e.g., *Di chi è questo cappello?,* 'Who does this beret belong to?' in the original Text 5), and we implemented and adopted this direct style in almost all Easy Italian panels. Commenting on the use of questions in Easy Italian, Perego (Perego, 2020b; Perego & Rocco, 2022) argues: 'The focusing, reassuring and facilitating potential of questions can make the text (…) less intimidating and help the reader to understand what they are reading, as well as to activate previous knowledge and make predictions, thus increasing the likelihood of understanding' (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 77). We decided to maintain the same stylistic/communicative choice for the Easy English versions as a way of sparking curiosity in visitors for a textuality that deals with art[311].

[310] Easy Read Online offers a variety of accessible documents free to share, available at this link: https://www.easy-read-online.co.uk/ (last access June 2023). An example of an EL document using questions is "LGBTQIA+. What do all the letters mean?".

[311] Furthermore, in Museum Studies, questions are considered a stimulating element to insert in exhibit labels, especially when imagining inquiries the same visitor might ask himself (Serrell, 2015, p. 178). This stylistic and communicative choice works with every visitor entering the gallery, and it is not referred only to people with reading difficulties or intellectual disabilities. While conducting our video observation on families, we could not help but notice how the questions used as titles attracted several different types of visitors during our research study, not only the

Furthermore, from a stylistic-communicative viewpoint, in Text 2, although in the original English language, the text is already more persuasive with the use of the first-person plural pronoun (e.g., 'we find'), the Easy-to-Read versions present a greater explication and contextualisation of the elements in the texts than the source texts, rendered and respected in both Easy Italian and Easy English. An example is using demonstratives as determiners to point features in the painting or the painting itself, as at the beginning of Text 2 with *Questo quadro* ('This painting'). Nonetheless, there are cases where the text in Easy English is more engaging with the use of allocutives and forms of engagement with the reader, such as in Text 1 with 'You can read', which introduces an explication in the text but also involves the visitor in the first person.

As regards lexicon, most lexemes are part of the *Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary American English*[312] (2010), which De Mauro himself (Chiari & De Mauro, 2014, p. 113) compares to his New Basic Vocabulary of Italian (NVdB*)* as the most similar dictionary to his creation. High-frequency words (HFW) (e.g., *painting, hat*, *simple,* etc.) - listed in the Frequency Dictionary - bring clarity to the text and can be handled more effectively than low-frequency words by readers (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 75). The resulting careful selection of terms represents the "Keep language familiar. Choose words based on 'everyday' spoken language. (…) Choose a language that is widely understood" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 9).

An example of the procedure is in Text 4, where *per dare l'acqua alle piante* in Easy Italian is translated into 'to give water to plants' in Easy English instead of just using the verb 'to water' since it is not part of the HFW. The dictionary indicates the lexeme 'water' as a noun form (n). Another example is 'barefoot' in Text 2, which would have been the correct translation for the Easy Italian *a piedi nudi*. However, the term is not part of the HFW, while the separated terms 'bare' and 'feet' are, hence the division into two lexemes in the text. Within the label, the same happens for *semplicità*: 'simplicity' is not present in the HFW; therefore, it was translated into 'simple things'. Always in Text 2, the correspondent of the Easy Italian verb *stupire* 'to amaze' is not part of the HFW; hence, it was translated into 'to surprise' since the lexeme *surprise* is present in the high-usage vocabulary both in verb (v) and noun (n) form.

In some instances, we left the explicatory sentence present after a difficult term in Easy Italian, though the correspondent English word is an HFW's lexeme. For instance, in Text 3, the term

ones we were there to analyse. Indirectly, we had a thermometer of those texts' impact on everyone entering the museum galleries.

[312] Routledge's Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary British English entitled *A Frequency Dictionary of British English. Core Vocabulary and Exercises for Learners* (Brezina & Gablasovais, 2024) is being published as a first edition, so the work refers to the US version.

portrait is part of the English high-frequency words. Nevertheless, the explication of the term in the following sentence is left, as it is considered a helpful guide to clarify the label's content further. The English guidelines also confirm the effectiveness of repetition and suggest not to use pronouns and synonyms (SCOPE, 2015, p. 7), so the numerous repetitions of nouns in the text in the Easy Italian language were not removed. As ODI guidelines state: "Repetition is better than variety. Use the same word or form of words when referring to the same thing. You can also introduce sentences on the same topic with the same form of words" (ODI, 2010, p. 28; NYCC, 2011, p. 13). In so doing, for example, the repetition of *quadro* in Text 5 becomes the recurrence of *painting*, even to the detriment of cacophonies like, for instance, 'artists to paint the painting'. Although the term *picture* was preferable, we followed the guidelines avoiding synonyms. Moreover, the term *painting* is lexically more diffused than the word *picture*, according to the HFW. The lexical choice extends to all panels.

Interestingly, in Text 1, for the benefit of English readers (and, as previously mentioned, of international readers), it was decided to present the painter only with his surname *Tiepolo*, as this is how he is known to the general public. Since this name is known to a large section of the public, we decided to avoid complicating decoding for a foreign audience by inserting his name *Giambattista*, which could present greater difficulty in reading the text. As a matter of fact, in many English art texts, the artist is often just referred to as Tiepolo[313]. This choice was perpetuated throughout the text, where only the artist's surname *Tiepolo* is repeated. This decision is because, as the main guideline 'taking the public into account' (Scottish Accessible Information Forum, 2011) is considered a benchmark from which to start, the artist's surname is more generally well-known to the public.

We opted for maintaining a communicative and informal writing style, trying to implement it where possible. For instance, in Text 4, in the final interrogative sentence, the verb *scegliere* (*Tu che simbolo scegli per il tuo gruppo segreto?)* instead of translating the predicate with the verb *choose,* we decided to make it more colloquial using the verb *pick*, transforming the question in *What symbol do you pick for your secret group?.*

In the national guidelines for the English language, the use of bold font or boxes (or glossaries)

[313] As a demonstration**,** this is an example extracted from the official guide available online for the Met Museum of New York:

> *Allegory of the Planets and Continents*, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Italian, 1752.
>
> The canvas, which is among Tiepolo's largest and most dazzling oil sketches, represents Apollo about to embark on his daily course across the sky. Deities around the sun god symbolize the planets and allegorical figures on the cornice represent the Four Continents. On April 20, 1752, Tiepolo presented this preliminary sketch to Carl Philipp von Greiffenklau, prince-bishop of Würzburg, as his proposal for the decoration of the staircase ceiling of the Residenz, often considered the artist's greatest achievement and a landmark of European painting.

Available at this link: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437790 (last access May 2023).

for difficult words is suggested from the first time they appear in the text, while in every other case, it is asked not to use it (Barrow R. et al., 2011, p. 12). Regarding the bold font, for the Italian language, Sciumbata suggests that boldface should be used for words introducing new and complex terms and to guide the reader's reading by highlighting essential keywords to understand what the text is about (2022, p. 109). North Yorkshire County Council guidelines suggest 'not exaggerating with boldface type'. Still, at the same time, they state that it is justified to 'use boldface to emphasise words, but use it sparingly because it is distracting and can intimidate the reader" (NYCC, 2011, p. 14). SCOPE guidelines (2015, p. 11) confirm highlighting the primary information.

Regarding the word boxes, the English version of the guidelines suggests using 'a glossary at the end of the document', but it was not considered appropriate in this case. On the use of the glossary, there are conflicting opinions: while on the one hand, it is undoubtedly considered as support, on the other hand, its consultation requires the reader to move away from the primary text and then return to it, and this could be confusing for a person with reading difficulties (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 80), all the more so in the museum context examined in our case study. The Easy English and the Easy Italian versions explain terms that are not part of the high-usage vocabulary within the text without including a glossary, as Inclusion Europe's guidelines propose (IE, 2009, p. 10). Moreover, logistically, adding a glossary would also be very complex to implement in a text as small as the museum panel.

Regarding graphics, an interesting discussion emerged on using images and their correlation with the text. As previously mentioned, it was decided not to add images for the Easy Italian versions of the panels. The museum context is a singular case study: from a semiotic point of view, the artworks above the panels could be considered a sufficient visual guide for analysing the texts. However, what emerges when comparing different guidelines is that, in the case of the English Easy-to-Read Language, images are not only recommended but are considered an integral part of the language and not optional. This is already stated in the very definition of Easy-to-Read in English, as reiterated in the following examples:

> Easy read is a way of making written information easier to understand, by using simple language and illustrating the information with pictures (NYCC, 2011, p. 5).

> Easy English focuses on presenting key information rather than all the details. Words are combined with images to enhance the message for the reader. (SCOPE, 2015, p. 2).

One could criticise the rewriting work for not including images. However, the semiotic perspective adopted in the Italian retranslation was decided to be maintained, also for reasons of space related to the size of the panels[314].

Among the recommendations for Easy English is to 'use font size 16 or larger for headings', whereas the size for the body text suggested is the same as for the Italian guidelines (14 points)[315]. However, space is enhanced by doubling the line spacing since 'white space is thinking space' (SCOPE, 2015, p. 10). This justifies the slightly increased titles' font size and wider space among sentences in Easy English compared to the text in Easy Italian[316]. Both language rewritings in Easy-to-Read guarantee a clean and usable[317] layout (Perego & Rocco, 2022, p. 74).

After retranslation, texts should be read aloud to ensure they sound as natural as possible. If not, texts should be revised (ODI, 2010, p. 30). The final and most crucial step is to 'check with the audience' (ODI, 2010, p. 30): before publication, drafts should be validated by people with intellectual disabilities. The validation process pragmatically represents inclusivity by including the real protagonists in the work. On the other hand, it is also fundamental to let the translator know of any textual deficit and improve his work. Nonetheless, in this work, the test will be conducted from a pedagogical perspective, observing families at the museum, studying inclusive rewriting impact and any challenges Easy Language may cause. Testing pragmatically Easy Language rewritings will constitute the next phase of research.

4.3 Conclusions

This chapter detailed the path that led to the retranslations into Easy Italian and Easy English of the *Pinacoteca di Brera*'s family panels. In quantitative terms, through corpus linguistics and descriptive statistics, the chapter brings out the level of complexity of the texts in terms of readability by sounding out the different language levels before the translation work– demonstrating, from a language inclusion stance, the need for intervention on the source texts in standard Italian language - and afterwards - showing a more linear and easily understandable rendering of the texts, in this case analysing both Easy Italian and Easy English versions.

[314] Although the texts in this paper do not include images, it is interesting to point out that the Australian SCOPE guidelines suggest their left-hand position to "present images on the left, then the writing. This may support the person to 'read' the image and then read the text or have the text read to them" (SCOPE, 2015, p. 15), instead of placing them right or central as in Easy Italian (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 130).
[315] In Italian, the title is not distinguished in size from the body of the text (Sciumbata, 2022).
[316] However, the examples in this chapter are to scale since panels in the museum need a larger font.
[317] The new frontiers of inclusion consider usability an equally significant factor. Perego defines it as 'the extent to which something is user-oriented, cognitively effective and satisfactory. Text usability is linked to text complexity, which determines its readability and lack of ambiguity' (Perego, 2020a, p. 19).

Supported by quantitative data, in qualitative terms, following the *translation commentary* framework (Venuti, 2018), the analysis breaks down the retranslations in the two Easy Languages, unearthing the translator's reflections in the first phase of the study of the Italian source text, and in the second phase of commentary and explanation of his translation process, illustrating her reasoning starting from the choice of contents to the patterns of translation strategies. The intention was to maintain the museum's cultural context within the labels and the panels' distinctive interactive pedagogical nature, aware that Easy Language "is not a simple translation of existing documents into easier to understand language" (NYCC, 2011, p. 6) but a though-out process to make the critical elements in the text stand out to guarantee understanding to all (*Ibidem*). The work adheres to national guidelines that, as already pointed out, are still relatively scant and lack a shared unique vision and to international ones, which, being universal, do not respond to the specificities of every single language. The linguistic-translational reconstruction shows that the artistic-cultural field, in terms of inclusive translation and especially Easy Language, is still under-investigated.

CHAPTER V

Assessing the impact of retranslation on families' interaction

Quello che è necessario per qualcuno, finisce per diventare utile per tutti.

What is necessary for some ends up becoming useful for everyone.

Lucio Cottini[318]

This chapter presents the final part of the field study. Firstly, it will illustrate fragments from the second part of the data collected with families to emphasise the impact of Easy-to-Read Language on their interactions. Secondly, the chapter proposes a comparative analysis and discussion of all the data collected, highlighting the research's key findings. Following that, to build upon our research's pedagogical documentation, results from a focus group with the Educational Services of Brera Art Gallery are presented, co-creating a final discussion and communal interpretation of the project's findings. Lastly, the chapter considers some of the possible limitations of the research project.

[318] Cottini (2019).

5.1 Video Observation after retranslation

This part of the fieldwork consists of studying what happens with families[319] at the exhibit face with the *panels for young and old* translated into Easy-to-Read Language, notably if the interaction is improved and differs from the findings of the collected data before retranslation. In order to compare and contrast the results obtained and gain a comprehensive vision of the panels' impact, we replicated the experiment in the exact location in front of the same artworks of the initial field study. We therefore concentrated, among the panels retranslated in Easy-to-Read Language (shown in the preceding *Chapter IV*), on the impact of two specific labels. In the subsequent paragraphs, we will present selected fragments of performances to emphasise the influence of a more accessible language.

5.1.1 Giambattista Tiepolo's *Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the Prophet Elijah and the souls in Purgatory*

The first *panel for young and old* that we analysed in Chapter III was *Una pagina mancante* ('A missing page'), and it is presented in the Easy-to-Read Language rewriting (*Text 1*). *Figures 5.1, 5.2* and *5.3* show how the new panel was installed on a support positioned next to the traditional label underneath the artwork, that is Giambattista Tiepolo's masterpiece named "Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the Prophet Elijah and the souls in Purgatory". The new physical label was realised with the assistance of the museum's Educational Services. After arranging all the required material, microphone tests and camera repositioning[320] occurred before recording volunteers entering Room 34 of the Brera Art Gallery. In the next paragraph, we will discuss the findings in detail, mainly concentrating on the evolution of the interactional dance between visitors.

[319] As illustrated in Chapter II (*Methodology*), this second part of the data is collected from families different from those who participated in the first part of the field study. The research objective was to capture a more natural and spontaneous reaction to the texts. Nevertheless, their observed interactions could be influenced by the texts and the volunteers' individual differences (See Note 163).

[320] The goal was to maintain a framing as similar as possible to the first part of the study.

Dov’è il taglio nel quadro?

Giambattista Tiepolo è un **pittore** italiano molto famoso.

Giambattista Tiepolo **ha dipinto questo quadro** tanti anni fa.

Tiepolo ha dipinto la storia dei **carmelitani**.

I carmelitani sono uomini religiosi.

Qualcuno ha **tagliato** il quadro in due parti.
Il museo ha riunito le due parti,
ma rimane un **segno** del taglio nel quadro.

Riesci a trovare il taglio nel quadro?
Perché qualcuno ha deciso di tagliare il quadro?

Text 1. The *panel for young and old* in Easy-to-Read Language entitled “Dov’è il taglio nel quadro?” (‘Where is the cut in the painting?’) [321].

[321] Here is the translation of the panel in Easy English. On this note, the text’s layout and the characters’ size are not faithful to the guidelines. The intent here is only to provide the respective translation.

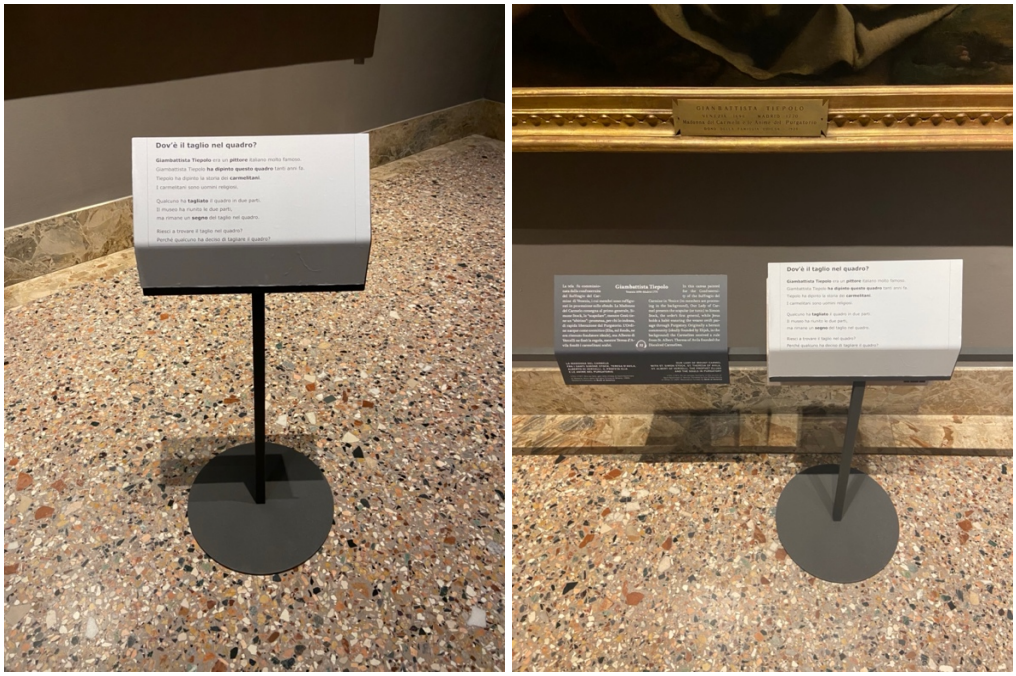
Where is the cut in the painting?

Tiepolo is a very famous Italian **painter**.
You can read Tiepolo as Teeapallo.

Tiepolo **painted this painting** in 1745.
Tiepolo painted the story of the **Carmelites**.
The Carmelites are religious men.

Someone **cut** the painting into two parts.
The museum has reunited the two parts,
but there is a **mark** of the cut in the painting.

Can you find the cut in the painting?
Why did someone decide to cut the painting?



Figures 5.1 and 5.2 The "panel for young and old" in Easy-to-Read Language is displayed underneath the artwork.

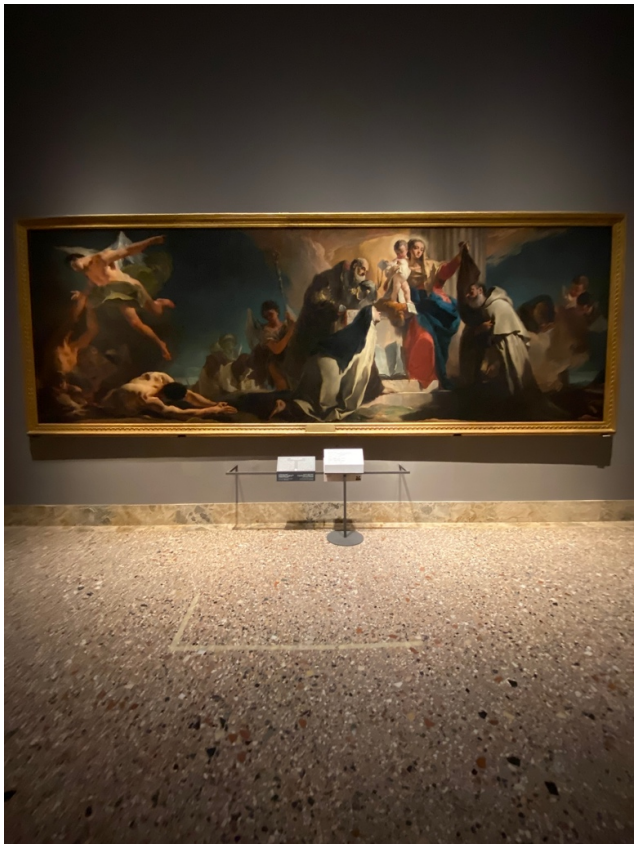


Figure 5.3 Giambattista Tiepolo's *Our Lady of Mount Carmel with St. Simon Stock, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Albert of Vercelli, the prophet Elijah and the souls In Purgatory.* To the right, the new label in Easy-to-Read Language.

5.1.1.1 Findings

The interactional patterns found in this second phase of the work confirm the selection of the most prevalent ones from the initial part. Specifically, *Telling and tagging* (Christidou, 2012; Diamond, 1986) and *Animating through display 'doing'* (Christidou, 2012) constantly recur in all the video observations scrutinised, and we will present examples of both types of interaction. Therefore, the most recurring types of choreography are confirmed as before the retranslations, testifying an existing interactional dimension that was present even before the work towards a more inclusive language. However, the interaction evolves as it becomes more dynamic and involves more verbal and non-verbal language. From the point of view of bodily movement, there is greater expression through one's body by both adults and children. From a conversation analysis point of view, it is noteworthy how the content of the discourse changes and gives more space to the children's imagination. The dialogue becomes "a process of transformation" (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 139). This pedagogical documentation describes, through the lens of interactionism, how the parent-child interchange evolves at the museum, thanks to the presence of a highly readable text. As in Chapter III, the examples in the subsequent pages illustrate how the interactional patterns can often overlap and intertwine; nevertheless, the presentation in definite typologies helps to make a more precise illustration of the data.

5.1.1.1.1 Telling and tagging

Transcript 5.1 - Father (P) and son (F) (IMG_0666)

They approach hand in hand. The child reads the title in a low voice. F: "Dov'è il taglio nel quadro?" *Text-echo*
P: *The father repeats*: Dov'è il taglio…
F: Nel quadro". ***He continues reading (text-echo).*** *Once finished, they move away to observe the painting better*. Dov'è il taglio?
P: Dov'è il taglio nel quadro?
F: *they begin to observe and move laterally in front of the painting.* **Se è un taglio dovrebbe essere verso il centro** - *iconic gesture: he shows the center of the painting with his hand. They continue to move to the other side.*
P: beh, Dipende. *They continue to explore the picture until the child runs and says*
F: **Eccolo! No…forse ho visto qualcosa…***and approaches his father, touching his arm with his hand.*

P: dove?
F: **Forse lì..aspetta! Vieni, magari da qua si vede meglio** *and drags him to the other side.* No, non vedo niente. *He moves back to observe. He approaches the painting again. (A dance movement performance)*
P: **potrebbe essere qua** - *and the father indicates a point* - **Guarda che qui c'è la riga** *tagging*
F: È vero!
P: Non lo so, potrebbe…
F: Sì c'è una riga! *nodding*
P: L'hanno restaurato bene *he smiles*
F: **Sì vedi che lì c'è una riga che sale.** *tagging* **Secondo me è quello lì. Poi vediamo…**
P: E secondo te perché l'hanno tagliata?
F: Non saprei.
P: Boh, può darsi per spostarlo…per trasportarlo…magari…visto che è grosso!
F: **Qua c'è scritto qualcuno ha tagliato** *text-tagging*
P: Eh lo so che qualcuno ha tagliato *the father approaches the child*
F: **Quindi ci sarà stato qualche motivo. Qualcuno aveva avuto qualche motivo. È che se non sappiamo chi è**…*he puts his fingers on his chin in a questioning pose.*
P: Può essere. *They read the traditional panel* (…) Boh, magari per portarlo.
F: Bello.
P: Ti piace?
F: **Sì, ho letto anche qua è interessante** - *he points to the traditional label and looks at his father.* Ok. *He looks around observing the work and the other artworks around it.*
P: Bene. **Ti vuoi spostare da un'altra parte?**
F: **Aspetta solo un attimo.** *He gets closer to the painting.*
P: **Sì, sì, tutto il tempo che vuoi…** *the child moves away to see the painting from a different perspective. He approaches the panels again.*
P: **Hai visto come facevano i disegni…come le dita della suora** *tagging*
F: Sì.
P: **Guarda le pieghe, le pieghe dei piedi…**
F: **Erano bravi! La gente che li disegna deve essere stata brava.**
P: Sì. *Hand by hand they walk away.*

The first example illustrates the museum experience of a father and his son. It is an example that embodies *telling and tagging* but encompasses other interactional types at its core. The father and child approach the artwork hand in hand, and what strikes immediately is that the child spontaneously starts to read the panel aloud in Easy Language without encouragement from the father. The reading takes place in total autonomy, embodying the *text-echo*[322] phenomenon, during which the father physically approaches his child to listen to and be close to him.

At the end of the reading, the interactional pattern of the *telling* begins to unfold, divided into the phases of [*questioning-answering-arguing-interpreting/explaining*], which immediately demonstrates a dynamic interaction between the two observed visitors. The father starts by repeating the question in the panel's title, "Dov'è il taglio nel quadro?" ('Where is the cut in the painting?'). The child begins to reflect, "Se è un taglio dovrebbe essere verso il centro" ('If it is a cut, it should be towards the centre') by moving his hand in an *iconic gesture* (McNeill, 1992) that simulates the position of the cut according to his vision, in what is defined as an *interpreting/explaining* interaction. From this first phase of the exchange of answers defined as *answering*, a dance begins in front of the painting in which father and son move around, exploring the surface around it to observe it more carefully.

In the exchange of opinions (*arguing*), they continue to explore the painting until the child runs and says "Eccolo! Forse ho visto qualcosa" ('There it is! Maybe I saw something!'), he approaches his father and physically drags him to the left side of the painting, in his opinion the right place to spot the cut "Forse lì, aspetta! Vieni, magari da qua si vede meglio…" ('Maybe there, wait! Come, maybe you can see better from here...') (*Fragments 5.1*). In proposing his point of view, the child invites his father to physically observe from his perspective, in what in interactional studies is called *attracting someone as an audience*, which has many forms but, in this case, is declined in non-verbal language in *pulling someone physically over* and in verbal language with the use of verbs of motion like "Vieni" ('Come') (Christidou, 2012, p. 312). The child's enthusiasm speaks through his body, which is added to that of the father in the first form of *tagging* we encounter: "Potrebbe essere qua. Guarda che qui c'è la riga ('It could be here. Look there's the line here') says the father, pointing to a precise spot in the picture (*Fragment 5.2*). The *tagging* unfolds with the pointing gesture, demonstratives, and spatial adverbs, maintaining the relationship with the son with the verb "guarda" ('look'). In listening to his father, the child nods by actively interacting with the speech and performance he is doing. He responds, in bodily *mimesis* (Apolito, 2014), in turn by *tagging* "Sì, vedi che lì c'è una riga che sale. Secondo me è quello lì" ('Yes, you see there's a line going up there. I

[322] All the terms in italics refer to the coding schema presented in *Chapter II* (Methodology) to analyse the sociocultural functions that occur during museum interaction (Allen, 2002; Christidou, 2012; Heath et al., 2010; McNeill, 1992).

think that's it there'), moving his right hand tracing a line in the painting, while providing his interpretation (*Fragment 5.3*).

The exchange continues with the father proposing to his son the second question of the label "E secondo te perché l'hanno tagliata?" ('And why do you think they cut it?') repeating the pattern of *telling* [*questioning* + *answering* + *interpreting*] providing interpretations himself and listening to the son's reflections, who refers to the text "Qua c'è scritto che qualcuno ha tagliato" ('It says here that someone cut it') adding "Quindi ci sarà stato qualche motivo. Qualcuno aveva avuto qualche motivo. È che se non sappiamo chi è" ('So there must have been some reason. Someone must have had some reason. It's just that if we don't know who he is'). While reasoning, the child also expresses doubt through his body, placing his hand on his chin in an interrogative pose (*Fragment 5.4*). They continue to observe the painting together, and the child bursts out with an *affective comment* of *pleasure* (Allen, 2002), saying, "Bello…Ho letto anche qua è interessante" ('Nice... I read it's interesting here too').

What is surprising is how the museum time expands. This becomes evident when the father asks him if he is ready to move on to something else, and he replies to the father as he approaches the painting again, observing it: "Aspetta solo un attimo" ('Just wait a moment'). The child desires to continue exploring the work in an interaction that becomes a complex network between him, the work of art, his father, the museum space and the label. An exchange that also leads to new reflections beyond those proposed by the panel's game-like activities, such as the concluding one by the father who, in a final *tagging* (*Figure 5.6*), invites his son to observe the pictorial style in the painting. The child concludes the interaction with an *affective comment* of *pleasure*: "Erano bravi! La gente che li disegna deve essere stata brava" ('They were good! The people who drew them must have been good!') as they slowly walk hand in hand towards another work of art.

The example shows a dynamic *telling and tagging* exchange between father and son, between stories, interpretations, doubts, and mysteries to be solved. The verbal and non-verbal language of the child - but also the father - merge and explode in his moving from side to side, scrutinising carefully, talking, shifts in gaze and position, all of which express a living engagement with the work, representative of his aesthetic experience. The relationship with the father reinforces the experience. However, an important component of autonomy starts with the independent reading of the text in Easy-to-Read language. It then flows into the dialogue between the two, enriching their 'participation framework' (Goffman, 1981, p. 226). The reading of the text is smooth and unhindered, allowing the child to devote all his time to the activity proposed in the panel. Nevertheless, the activity proposed in the panel acts as a catalyst for a more attentive, dialogued observation of the work: with his father, the child constructs meaning, reflects, notes additional details and appreciates the artistry. The Easy-

to-Read language encourages interaction, emphasising how important it is to create educational material starting from the beginning of the museum visit, i.e., from understanding the text to letting the child consequently play with the activities proposed in the panel.

Fragments 5.1

Fragment 5.2

Fragment 5.3

Fragment 5.4

Fragment 5.5

Fragment 5.6

5.1.1.1.2 Animating through "displaying doing"

Transcript 5.2 - Mother (M) and son (F) (IMG_0668)

F: *he reads the text in a low voice with the help of the left index.* **Cosa sono i carmelitani?**
M: **i carmelitani sono eh…** *in the meantime she approaches her son, placing her hands on his shoulders* **un ordine religioso,** *she approaches her son's face* **come I francescani, I dominicani, dei frati e…quindi lui ha dipinto la storia dei carmelitani** *they move a little and alternate their positions while observing the painting.*
F: l'hanno tagliato in due.
M: Hai visto l'hanno tagliato in due e loro l'hanno riunito *they move away to better observe the painting*
F: è vero sembra tagliato il gambo *tagging.* C'è anche…
M: Tu l'hai visto il taglio?
F: **Se guardi lì…vedi che c'è tipo una specie di riga…** *tagging*
M: Qua…*mimesis, tagging in response*
F: **Come se lì hanno pitturato così, lì**. *Tagging - he comes closer,* ***gesture of painting*** **- Vedi? Ma perché l'hanno fatto?** *Reading labels silently.* **Ah, è stato il museo. Guarda… "ma rimane un segno del taglio nel quadro"** *he points to the text and then to the painting (text-echo)*
M: **e perché qualcuno ha deciso di tagliarlo?**
F: **Boh, oggi ci son persone che anche al Museo Egizio, ci son persone che scrivevano sulle statue** ***gesture of writing*** *- during the storytelling he turns towards his mother, looks her in the eyes.*
M: **Però questo l'hanno fatto tanto tempo fa credo. Perché avranno deciso di tagliarlo?**
F: "Riesci a trovare il taglio nel quadro?" (*text-echo*) Sì. "Perché qualcuno ha deciso di tagliare…" *he moves away again*
M: Per trasportarlo?
F: **Magari qualcuno di ultrareligioso.**
M: Ah dici… *They continue talking as they walk away*
F: Magari sì.
M: **…come sfregio dici?**
F: **Sì, secondo me sì.**

This second example shows a mother-child interaction in which *animating through "display doing"* is present, intertwined with other interactional patterns presented below. The video observation begins with the child reading the text in a low voice with the help of the index finger of his left hand (*Fragment 5.7*). The reading takes place autonomously, represents the *text-echo* phenomenon, and ends with the child asking for clarification from his mother on the term *carmelitani* ('Carmelites'), "Cosa sono i carmelitani?" ('What are Carmelites?') (Interactional *questioning* phase). These first seconds of interaction already provide a holistic view of the potential of Easy-to-Read language: the linguistic simplification makes the text more linear and allows the child to read it by himself, but respects the source text and does not give a simplistic rendition. This is exemplified by allowing room for questions, acknowledging their pedagogical value as an integral part of the parent-child exchange (Rinaldi, 2003, p. 3)[323]. Asking for clarification on the text occurs even after the retranslation, "despite" Easy-to-Read language (see the following paragraph *5.3*), demonstrating how a text retranslated in an inclusive key does not imply we are necessarily dealing with lexical loss: the child nevertheless discovers a new term. The difference lies in the great space given to its autonomy, which allows him to have a more comprehensive museum experience that transcends from solely focusing on decoding a text with the help of people accompanying him.

Proceeding with the interaction analysis, the mother answers the question in words (*answering* phase). At the same time, with her body, she approaches her son, anthropologically seeking a physical - and emotional - connection with him. A dance begins that leads the two to move closer and further away from the painting to observe it until the child shares his vision with the mother through verbal and non-verbal *tagging*: "Se guardi lì, vedi c'è tipo una specie di riga" ('If you look there, you see there's like a kind of line') (*Fragment 5.8*). The mother reflexively repeats the *tagging* through *mimesis* (Turner, 2018) and *backchannel* (Kjellmer, 2009; McCarthy, 2003), which is part of creating a shared *identification* to analyse particular aspects of the picture. The child continues his negotiation of meaning by *animating through "display doing"* while reconstructing the history of the painting starting from the panel, "Come se lì hanno pitturato così" ('As if they painted like that there'). He animates his discussion with his body, indicating the gesture of painting and moving his hand from top to bottom to imitate a brush stroke (*Fragments 5.9*), "transposing action to the object" (Heath & Vom Lehn, 2004, p. 12). This definition exemplifies how adding motion to convey his thoughts shows a high level of engagement with the proposed task, the artwork and his mother.

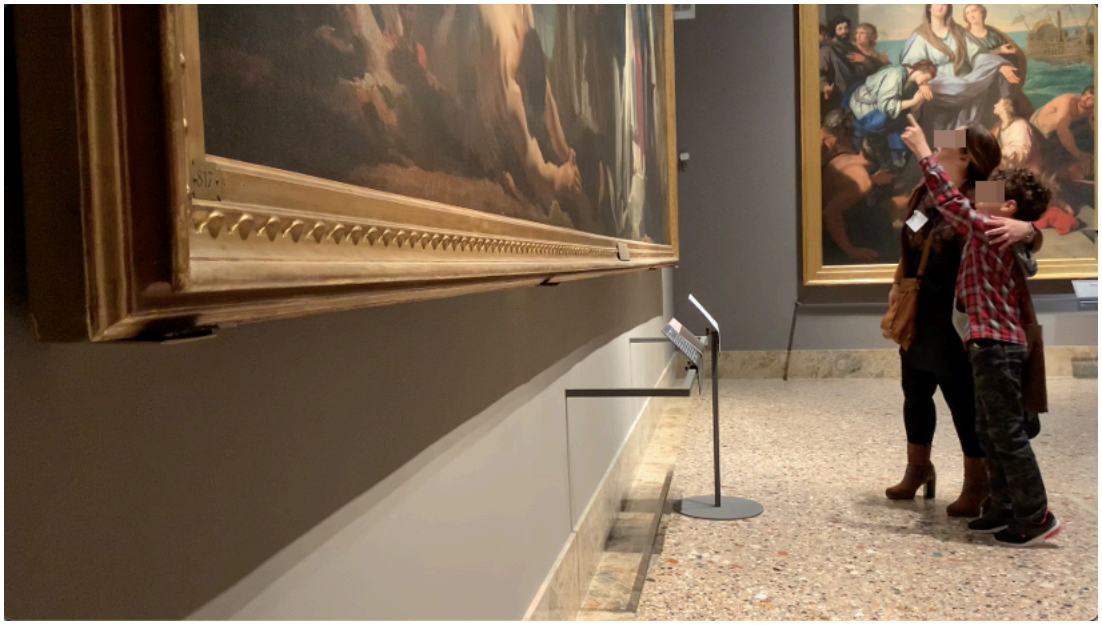
In an alternation of *questioning*, *answering*, and *text-echo*, the two observe the painting carefully until the mother asks the question in the label again, "E perchè qualcuno ha deciso di

[323] In the vision of the "child-researcher" who investigates the world (Rinaldi, 2003, p. 3). For further information, see *Helping Children Ask Good Questions* (Forman, 1989).

tagliarlo?" ('And why did someone decide to cut it?') (*questioning*) and the child responds by telling one of his experiences as a possible explanation, through *storytelling* "Ci sono persone che come al Museo Egizio (…) scrivevano sulle statue" ('There are people who, like at the Egyptian Museum (...) wrote on the statues') [*Answering = storytelling + animating through "display doing"*]. The child shifts his gaze towards his mother to recall an experience at the museum, probably shared by the two. In the *storytelling*, the child refers to his visit to the Egyptian Museum in Turin, providing a pragmatic example of an aesthetic experience of Deweyan's memory, where the purpose is also to create bridges between previous and present experiences, shaping his learning history (Dewey, 1934/2020). When he talks about people who wrote on statues, he adds to the verb *scrivere* ('to write') a bodily movement and an animation which enrich his words with a sense of motion, a second example of *animating through "display doing"* (*Fragments 5.10*) The interaction ends with the *arguing* phase replied by the mother, "Però questo l'hanno fatto tanto tempo fa credo" ('But they did this a long time ago I think') to which the son responds by starting the *interpreting* phase "Magari qualcuno di ultrareligioso" ('Maybe someone ultra-religious') on which the mother asks for clarification "Come sfregio dici?" ('As a disfigurement do you say?') (*explaining*). Upon her son's affirmative response, which seals their agreement on a co-construction of meaning, they slowly move away from the work of art.

In recalling past events and sharing different points of view with the mother, the child's active engagement manifests itself in his full aesthetic experience made of gestures, stories and opinions, demonstrating how the panel for families, although proposing a key to understanding, does not limit the families' museum fruition but also acts as a stimulus for telling new interpretations, in their co-creation of their path in front of the work of art and inside the museum. Easy-to-Read language acts as a framework for this interaction, transforming it more into a sharing of stories and emotions, facilitating the starting point, i.e., understanding the text, but also facilitating the general enjoyment of the experience, without distorting the exhibit in itself and respecting the context to which it belongs. The result is a more enriching interaction between parent and child and the cultural *locus* that unfolds around their performative expression.

Fragment 5.7



Fragment 5.8

Fragments 5.9

Fragments 5.10

5.1.2 Gentile da Fabriano's *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*

The second *panel for young and old* we analysed in Chapter III was entitled *A piedi nudi* ('Barefoot'), and presented here is the Easy-to-Read Language retranslation (*Text 2)*. *Figures 5.4, 5.5* and *5.6* show the new retranslation, presented on a label affixed to an iron stand, positioned under Gentile da Fabriano (Gentile di Niccolò di Giovanni)'s "Coronation of the Virgin with Saints" alongside the traditional label. The field study's logistics in Room 22 followed the same organisational arrangement for the first piece of art in Room 24 of the *Pinacoteca di Brera*. The following paragraphs will examine the findings in detail.

Da dove viene questo quadro?

Questo quadro proviene da una chiesa.

In chiesa, il quadro **dà un messaggio** alle persone.

Per esempio, l'**oro** serve a **stupire** le persone.

Nel quadro ci sono personaggi a **piedi nudi**.

I piedi nudi ricordano l'importanza della **semplicità**.

Come immagini la chiesa in cui si trovava il quadro:

- piccola o grande?

- Semplice o ricca?

Text 2. The *panel for young and old* in Easy-to-Read language entitled "Da dove viene questo quadro?" ('Where does the painting come from?')[324].

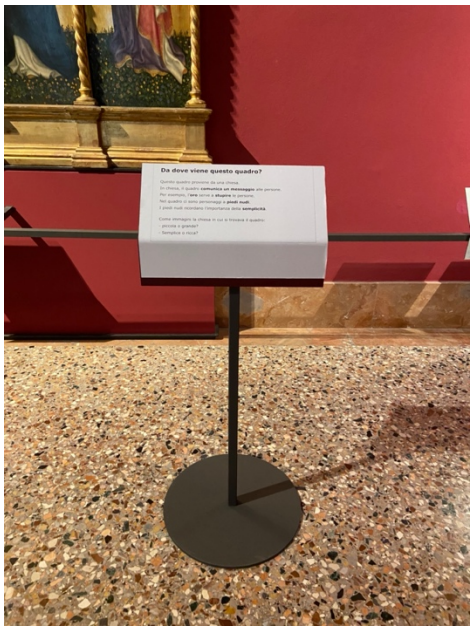
[324] Below is the retranslation in the English Easy-to-Read language of the panel. The considerations for the first label in Note 321 also apply to this translation.

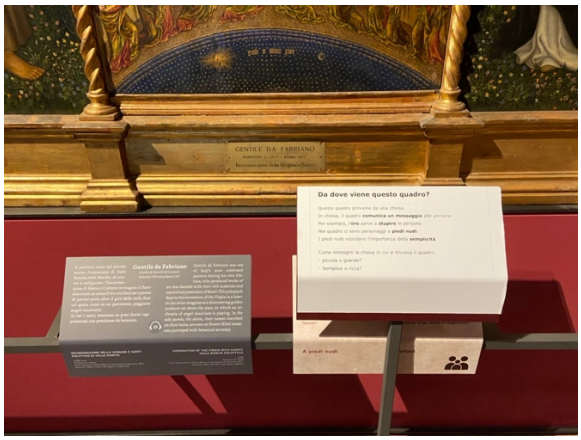
Where does this painting come from?

This painting comes from a church.
In church, the painting **communicates a message** to people.

For example, **gold** can **surprise** people.
There are figures in **bare feet** in the painting.
Bare feet remind people of the importance of **simple things**.

How do you imagine the church where the painting was?
- Small or big?
- Simple or rich?





Figures 5.4 and 5.5 The "panel for young and old" in Easy-to-Read Language. The label is displayed underneath the artwork.

Figure 5.6 *Coronation of the Virgin with St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Dominic and St. Mary Magdalen; St. Peter Martyr, St. John the Baptist, St. Francis and a Franciscan Saint (Valle Romita Polyptych) by* Gentile da Fabriano. To the right, the new panel in Easy-to-Read Language.

5.1.2.1 Findings

With this latest video observation session conducted, *Telling and tagging* and *Animating through "display doing"* (Christidou, 2012) are reconfirmed as the most prevalent interactional patterns in the collected material. As in other previously illustrated cases, it will be noted that they are not the only interactional patterns that take place; several are intertwined - but rarer - with these two central interactional performances, which occur in all parent-child interactions observed. Identifying these two main performances as consistent facilitates the organic presentation of the results, encouraging comparison of the data and the in-depth analysis of some more specific aspects linked to the individual experiences. The results align with the engagement observed before Tiepolo's artwork following the retranslations. This supports the thesis that Easy-to-Read language can be an effective linguistic tool for implementing inclusion in the museum and can be ideally suitable for children and their families. In front of the works of art, interaction intensifies for all children - even those with special educational needs and, as we will see in the ensuing pages, with Italian as a second language (L2).

5.1.2.1.1 Telling and tagging

Transcript 5.3 - Mother and daughter (IMG_0649)

M: Leggi tu? Dai! *She indicates the text.*
F: Leggi tu!
M: *Mother reads. They approach the text together.* (…) "Nel quadro ci sono personaggi a piedi nudi" *The little girl looks up twice during the reading, even at the final questions.* Allora innanzitutto vediamo se c'è, dove c'è tutto l'oro. Allontaniamoci un po' perché sennò non riusciamo a vedere tutto - *they move away to observe the painting.*
F: **Praticamente è tutto fatto d'oro.**
M: È tutto fatto d'oro…
F: Più o meno…
M: …quasi.
F: **Ci sono i disegni che sono disegnati col pennello e poi il resto è praticamente d'oro…è tutto d'oro.**
M: Eh, sì.
F: **Beeello.** - *with surprise. They observe the painting.*

M: Bellissimo. Perché diceva che "l'oro serve per stupire" *(Text-echo)* e infatti, ti viene da fare "oooo"
F: Ti attira.
M: Ti attira sì, perché brilla. Poi "**nel quadro ci sono personaggi a piedi nudi**" (*Text-excho)*.
F: Quasi…quasi tutti.
M: **Quello, quello…** *tagging*
F: **però quelli lì sono a piedi nudi** *tagging*
M: **anche loro sono a piedi nudi.** *tagging*
F: **No quei due lì hanno le scarpe**. *tagging*
M: Eh sì, no perché si vede una punta anche quello.
F: E il resto…e tutti gli altri sono a piedi nudi.
M: Quello in alto non si vede alla sinistra. Quello di fianco sì è a piedi nudi. Quello con le calze rosse…
F: Quello sembra che abbia le calze!
M: Le calze sì, non è a piedi nudi.
F: L'altro secondo me…cioè non si vede mica…
M: Perché i piedi nudi è il simbolo? …Della semplicità. Vediamo un po': "**come immagini tu la chiesa dove potrebbe esserci?**"
F: **Per me è grande.**
M: Molto grande.
F: **perché questo è già grande di suo** - *broad gesture with hands* - **sarebbe nella chiesa piccola** - *gesture with hands* - **praticamente dovrebbe occupare quasi tutto lo spazio** - *she opens her arms.*
M: **Sì** *nodding* **effettivamente sì,** anch'io anch'io mi immagino una chiesa molto grande, moltoo ricca, molto gran…moolto sfarzosa - *hand gesture, shift in gaze towards her daughter* - come chiesa, molto importante.
F: **È praticamente fatto tutto d'oro.** *They continue to observe*
M: **Bellissimo**.
F: **Bello**.
M: Vuoi dire qualcos'altro? Vuoi notare qualcos'altro? Hai notato qualcos'altro?
F: No, basta.
M: Bello. Bello, bello.
F: Ah sì, che **hanno quasi tutti hanno l'aureola.**

M: Hanno tutti l'aureola.
F: Tutti.
M: Tutti, sì. Chi è che l'ha fatto? Gentile da Fabriano.
F: è scritto lì. *Tagging*
M: **"Incoronazione della Vergine e Santi". Son tutti santi, è per quello che hanno l'aureola.**
F: **Aaaah** *amazement* **capito! Bello.**

This first instance in front of the work of Gentile da Fabriano shows the *telling and tagging* of mother and daughter unfolding during their interaction, also composed of other interactional patterns that we will illustrate below. The dialogue begins with the mother's invitation to read the text, declined by the little girl who prefers to listen to her mother reading, following her voice while reading the text in silence (*reading labels silently*). Even though the mother is the one who reads the family panel (*text-echo*), the little girl demonstrates that she follows and understands the reading with movements, such as looking up during her mother's reading to observe the artwork in the process of *identification* of certain aspects of the work illustrated in the text. To exhibit her understanding, the little girl starts the dialogue by noting the use of gold in the painting and adding a personal reflection on the material and painting technique. In her *telling,* there is a first comment on the work of art, which flows into a first *affective talk of intrigue* (Allen, 2002): "Beeeeello (…) Ti attira" ('Beautiful (...) It attracts you') with a surprised tone - the little girl's mouth opening physically expresses the sense of amazement (*Fragment 5.11*). Her mother agrees with her, and after observing the painting, she returns to the *text-echo*, the interactional element that starts an analysis of the work of art. The *telling* becomes *tagging*, and a choreography performed by the two begins, which leads to what we could define as a 'shared *tagging*': first the little girl, then the mother, then together, move in pointing gestures to identify the barefoot characters "Quello, quello", ('That, that'), "Però quelli lì sono a piedi nudi" ('But those over there are barefoot'), "Anche loro sono a piedi nudi" ('They're barefoot too'), "No quei due hanno le scarpe" ('No, those two have shoes'), expressing the interactional pattern of *tagging* through not only their physicality, but the use of demonstratives and spatial adverbs (in sequence, *Fragments 5.12, 5.13, 5.14*).

The mother and daughter continue to pay great attention to the details of the piece of art, exchanging their points of view. The mother returns to ask the question in the panel, "Come immagini tu la chiesa dove potrebbe esserci?" ('How do you imagine the church where there could be?') (*questioning*). The little girl replies, justifying her point of view [*answering = interpreting + arguing*], "Per me è grande (…) perché questo è già grande di suo, nella chiesa piccola dovrebbe occupare quasi tutto lo spazio!" ('For me it's big (...) because this one is already big, in the small church it should take up almost all the space!'). The little girl also responds with her body recurring to *iconic gestures*

(McNeill, 1992): while she talks about churches of different sizes, she associates the use of her arms with the semantic content of the speech, talking about a church *grande* ('large') (opening her arms wide) and *piccola* ('small') (closing her arms). (*Fragments 5.15*). The use of verbal and non-verbal language confirms the child's engagement during her experience at the museum. The mother agrees with her and expresses it by *nodding* and then sharing her thoughts.

The observation continues, is conscientious and attentive and culminates in other *affective comments of pleasure* from both on the work "Bello", "Bellissimo", "Bello. Bello. Bello." (All repetitions of 'nice' and 'beautiful') adjectives who return in the final stages of interaction to close the conversation. The mother stimulates the dialogue with the little girl, as she invites her to observe the painting again until the little girl notices an additional characteristic of the picture (interactional phase of *feature*): "Che hanno tutti quasi l'aureola" ('That they all almost have halos'). She and her mother reconstruct the meaning of the work from its title (*naming* phase): "Sono tutti santi, è per quello che hanno l'aureola" ('They are all saints, that's why they have the halo') and, still surprised, they move away from the piece of art.

This interaction shows a *telling and tagging* enriched in verbal and non-verbal cues, guided by the mother but followed by her daughter effortlessly. Linearity in understanding the text starts from Easy-to-Read language and progresses, reflected in the mother-daughter communication, which occurs without obstacles but is rich in many facets. The time together is dedicated to observing the work longer to notice its details. It is a reformulated time in which they dedicate themselves to dialogue with their emotions, art and loved ones. The relational and emotional experience leads to various moments of amazement, reconstructing new aspects of the work and appreciating its beauty, describing an interaction in which discovery and knowledge are driven by surprise and curiosity (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 91).

Fragment 5.11

Fragment 5.12

Fragment 5.13

Fragment 5.14

Fragments 5.15

Transcript 5.4 - Father (P) and daughter (F) (IMG_0655)

P: Che cos'è questo qua Vera[325], secondo te, eh? Vediamo, leggiamo! *They approach the panel.* Leggi, leggi, leggi. "Da dove vieni questo quadro"? Da do vieni questo quadro secondo te? *He reads the frame of the painting.*
F: "Questo quadro proviene da" (*text-echo*) *she starts reading*
P: Gentile da F-Fabriano…Fabriano, 1370 Roma, pensa da Roma, *he reads the title* (…) *tagging.* (…) Vediamo. "Questo quadro…" (*text-echo*)
F: "Questo quadro proviene da una chiesa. (…) Nel quatro ci sono pe-personaggie a piedi nudi" - *she continues reading (text-echo)*
P: **E dove sono a piedi nudi? Ah ecco qua.** *Tagging* **Vedi, qui. Qui.**
F: **Qui. Lì. Là.** *tagging*
P: Ma comunque i monaci, sai che i monaci tanto tempo fa andavano a piedi o con i sandali sì? *He indicates their feet*
F: Ma sono tutti senzaaaa
P: **No questi qua mi sa che ci son scarpe, vedi** *tagging*. Vai vai, leggi avanti.
F: "I piedi nudi ricordano l'importanza delle semplicità" *(text-echo)*
P: **Quindi cosa vuol dire secondo te? Semplicità?**
F: Mhmm…
P: …che uno povero non ha soldi per comprare e quindii senza scarpe è come tutti altri, hai capito? Magari c'era tanta povertà. *They read together the final questions.* Quindi, sicondo te?
F: Ricca.
P: Ricca di?
F: diii… immagini.
P: Ma ricca aspetta - *He rereads, points to the text* - **"Come immagini la chiesa in cui si tro-vava il quadro".** Mhm?
F: **Grande**.
P: Piccola o grande secondo te chiesa?
F: Grande.
P: Perché qui si dici come immagini la chiesa in cui si trovava il quadro?
F: Grande.

[325]As previously illustrated, the names of the volunteers have been changed to respect the families' privacy.

P: **Tu dici che è grande la chiesa? Boh, può essere** - *he looks at the work again* - **Ma comunque le chiese sono sempre grandi** - *gesture.*
F: *The little girl rereads the question.* **"Semplice o ricca?"** (*Text-echo*) **Ricca.**
P: **secondo me… può essere una e l'altra. Per me.**
F: Ricca. È ricca.
P: **Ma può essere. Perché comunque questo qui** - *tagging* - **magari…questo è un quadro così ma per me può essere anche tutto dorato questo qua** - *he indicates the frame*
F: Sì, tutto dorato - *she approaches the painting pretending to touch it, shift in gaze towards his father*
P: **No, no…è bello. Questi sono angeli.** *tagging* **Però io non mi ricordo tutti angeli guarda uno, due, tre, quattro, cinque, sei, sette, otto.** Ma mi sembra che ce ne deve essere 14 angeli. Quanti saranno gli angeli? - ***The little girl imitates her father and begins to count the figures in the painting.*** *The father rereads the panel.* - **Aspetta ma i spiegazionii… "A piedi nudi", vedi?** - *tagging* - È proprio ti dicono per i piedi vedi…che questo quadro qua era proprio specificato, ma chi che è più curioso comunque doveva capire che **questi monaci che sono a piedi nudi perché loro son più semplici, più aperti per le persone, per questo. Vedi anche lì, guarda, vedi** - *tagging, the little girl starts looking around* - **Tutti a piedi nudi.**
F: **Sì. Sono quasi tutti come questo. Tutti nudi tranne questo e questo**. *Tagging*
P: **sì, ma anche lì eh** - *Tagging.*

We included a second highly illustrative example of *telling and tagging*, as, in this instance, it becomes a fundamental part of the investigation carried out by a father with his daughter in search of some aspects hidden in the painting. The couple also embodies the principle of inclusiveness at the heart of this research, given that for father and daughter, Italian is an L2 and not their mother tongue. The Easy-to-Read inclusive language of the text allows the couple to discover the altarpiece independently and live a full and rich dialogic exchange experience.

The example is a triumph of *telling and tagging*, which becomes a vehicle for expressing the thoughts of both father and daughter and a tool for sharing points of view in following the activity proposed by the label. The interaction begins with the father, who actively involves her daughter from the beginning: enthusiastically calls her by her name (known as *person reference*) and asks her opinion, arousing her curiosity: "Cos'è questo qua Vera, secondo te?" ('What is this here, Vera, in your opinion?) - with the "secondo te" ('in your opinion') being an interrogative fragment known as "tag" (Christidou, 2012, p. 119) to engage with the daughter's response; it is in turn also used by the father himself as "secondo me" ('in my opinion') during the interaction, to introduce his thoughts.

Her father invites her to read: “Vediamo, leggiamo!” (‘Let’s see, let’s read!’) (a form of *Attracting someone as an audience*). The father is enthusiastic and begins to reconstruct the history of the painting, starting from its frame, in which information about the work is engraved on a small label - such as the name of the author and the work and its creation date. In the meantime, the little girl accepts her father’s invitation and reads aloud. The reading is linear and fluent, with two minor reading inaccuracies due to her lack of mastery of the Italian language and the natural influences of her mother tongue (L1) (*quatro* instead of *quadro* ‘framework’; *personaggie* instead of *personaggi* ‘characters’) that do not hinder the overall experience of reading the label (*text-echo*). The little girl stops reading only when her father wonders where the barefoot characters referred to in the text are: “E dove sono a piedi nudi?” (‘And where are they barefoot?’) (interactional *questioning* phase). Upon finding an answer, it begins a performance of *tagging* “Ah, ecco qua. Vedi, qui. Qui.” (‘Ah, here it is. See, here. Here.’), commenced by the father (*Fragment 5.16*), followed by her daughter, “Qui. Lì. Là” (‘Here. There. There’) (*Fragment 5.17*), rich of pointing gestures, spatial adverbs and demonstratives. In a hunt to locate the peculiar physical features of the characters in the painting, the arms meet in ‘shared *tagging*’ (*Fragment 5.18*). The father contextualises the concept of bare feet related to the monks, saying, “tanto tempo fa andavano a piedi o con i sandali, sì?” (‘a long time ago they went on foot or in sandals, yes?’) - with *sì* (‘yes’) used as an interrogative fragment to involve the daughter. Their careful study of the painting and exchange of opinions continues as the reading progresses. The child completes the reading aloud in an interactive *text-echo* process facilitated by the Easy-to-Read language. They focus on the theme of “semplicità” (‘simplicity’) that the father proposes to her daughter, asking her what it could mean according to her: “Quindi cosa vuol dire secondo te? Semplicità?” (‘So what does it mean in your opinion? Simplicity?’) (*questioning*). The *answering* phase takes place on the father’s part, who, seeing his daughter hesitant about her response, tries to explain the concept to her, according to his point of view. Together, they read the questions and found the solution, but not without first having scrupulously reread the text and observed the work of art again. In the exchange, the pattern [*telling* = *questioning* + *answering* + *arguing* + *interpreting*] is repeated while the two negotiate the meaning until they agree. In interpreting the painting, they also reflect on its sumptuousness, given its use of gold. The father underlines this feature physically by *tagging* towards the painting and its frame, moving his hands following the perimeter of the painting, a performance to which, as a consequence, the daughter responds reflexively by pointing to the frame while playing, pretending to touch it (*Fragments 5.19*).

The last phase of the exchange between daughter and father is a new conversation arising from the observation relating to the *angeli* (‘angels’) noticed in the painting. The father begins to count them verbally and nonverbally with his hands, in a lively *telling and tagging*, which also

becomes a process of identifying the new elements in the painting (known as *identification*) (*Fragments 5.20*). In the *mimesis* of performances (Apolito, 2014), the daughter follows him rhythmically and counts by moving her arm and fingers in search of the angels painted in the work of art (*Fragments 5.21*). In this last exchange, they clarify one aspect of the painting - the concept of bare feet - enriching its meaning and noticing new aspects of the piece of art, thus making them central to their personal experience of the painting. The little girl observes these emerging features curiously until the end, with a final *tagging* alone in front of the painting just before walking away (*Fragments 5.22*).

This example narrates a rich bodily interaction between a parent and a child, synonymous with an interactional experience full of involvement marked by additional reflections and punctual observations. Easy-to-Read Language is an indispensable tool, particularly in situations like the one depicted here, where, even though the family has not fully mastered the Italian language, EtR allows them to enjoy a rich museum experience. Thus, the enhanced family panel becomes a tangible tool that goes "beyond inclusion" (Kozyra, 2021, p. 78), fostering participation in the museum and achieving its primary objective of making all visitors talk about art.

Fragment 5.16

Fragment 5.17

Fragment 5.18

Fragments 5.19

Fragments 5.20 and 5.21

Fragments 5.22

5.1.2.1.2 Animating through "displaying doing"

Transcript 5.5 - Father (P) and daughter (F) (IMG_ 0657)

Both read the label silently.
F: **…Comunica qualcosa?** *Shift in gaze and position towards his father*
P: Sì…**cosa comunica?**
F: **Dice che qua, là i piedi nudi ricordano l'importanza della semplicità.** *Tagging*
P: **Giusto. Giusto, amore.** *nodding*
F: "Dove immagini la chiesa in cui si trova il quadro? Piccola o grande, semplice o ricca?" - *Text-echo, she continues reading*
P: **Noi siamo arrivati dalla terra, giusto?**
F: Mhmm *nodding*
P: **E quando tocchi la terra con i piedi nudi c'è un…? Magnetismo** - *he joins his hands to represent magnetism, referring to the bare feet in the painting which rest on the grass, by synecdoche, on the Earth* - …**Bello, di scarica, di semplicità…no?** *He moves his hands downards*
F: Mhmm - *nodding*
P: Ok. **Hai visto che c'è scritto anche in inglese? Capito?** *tagging*
F: **Così almeno quelli che non… cioè…quelli che non sanno parlare l'italiano magari sanno l'inglese leggono quello in inglese.** *Shift in gaze and position towards his father*
P: **Giustamente. Qual è la lingua più diffusa nel mondo?**
F: **L'inglese.**
P: **Bravissima. Bravissima.**
F: "Gentile da Fabriano, 1370…" *She reads the traditional label, where she finds the author and date of creation.*
P: **Io la trovo…vedi qua c'è scritto la domanda, no?** Piccola o grande no? *He indicates the text*
F: Semplice o ricca? (*they read aloud together*)
P: **Io la trovo troppo ricca e troppo grande per me.**
F: Troppo ricca e troppo grande. **Sì in effetti** perché… s*he moves away to get a better look*
P: **Perché il colore oro cosa dà…***iconic gestures*
F: **Dà sentimento di ricco.**
P: **Brava. Dà l'impressione di …no?** *He moves his hands*
F: **Sì esatto in effetti è molto molto molto ricca e fin troppo grande secondo me.** *They walk away from the artwork*

This example recounts dialogue full of reflection between father and daughter, in which the interaction primarily takes shape with the *animating through "display doing"*, made explicit especially from the father by guiding his daughter's reflections. Animating is the primary but not the only interactional pattern, and as we will see, it is also intertwined with other interactions, such as *telling and tagging*.

The interaction with the artwork begins by independently reading the *panel for young and old*. Both read the label silently (*reading label silently*) and stay quiet for a few moments. The little girl breaks the silence, seeking confirmation of her understanding of the label's content by opening the interaction with her father and asking him, "Comunica qualcosa?" ('Does it communicate something?') regarding the framework's objective expressed in the accompanying text. The father asserts and asks her what it communicates. The little girl responds by providing a compelling summary of the central theme of the painting, referring to the panel by pointing to it and saying: "Dice che qua (…) i piedi nudi ricordano l'importanza della semplicità" ('She says that here (...) the bare feet remind us of the importance of simplicity'), in a phenomenon of both physical *tagging* with the movement of the body towards the panel and verbal with the use of the demonstrative (*Fragment 5. 23*). The same physical appropriation of spaces denotes the mastery and understanding of the text, by opening the arms and also through the position of the feet, aiming at showing the text to his father (Vom Lehn et al., 2001, p. 201) [326]. The father confirms his daughter's vision by physically asserting with *nodding* and by speaking by calling his daughter "amore" ('love') (a form of *person reference*), confirming that the assumption is correct. This first phase of *questioning* and *answering* demonstrates how the child has perfectly understood the text on the Easy-to-Read panel and how the more accessible text allows her to read independently and start a conversation with her father.

The daughter goes back to reading the activities proposed by the panel but out loud (*text-echo*), sharing them with her father. At this point, the father begins with a philosophical-religious reflection to contextualise the theme of bare feet and their spiritual value for his daughter. He explains it, *animating through display "doing"*, coordinating voice and bodily movements in conveying the message: "E quando tocchi la terra, con i piedi c'è un magnetismo (…) Bello, di scarica, di semplicità" ('And when you touch the earth, with your feet there is a magnetism (...) Beautiful, of discharge, of simplicity'). The concept of magnetism is expressed by moving the hands vertically starting from the bottom - with reference to the earth, concerning the bare feet in the painting, which rest on the grass, and by synecdoche, on the Earth - and bringing them closer to each other, while the little girl observes attentively. Similarly, in describing the energy coming from the earth, the father

[326] Interaction studies suggest studying analytically also the lower part of the body, illustrating how, in an exchange, feet can contribute to the negotiation of significance.

moves his arms downwards (*Fragments 5.24*). It is a corporeity that completes the meaning of the speech and the theme presented to the daughter. A lively interaction in which the phenomenon of "*transposing the object to the body*" (Heath & Vom Lehn, 2004, p. 18) occurs, in which the father transposes the theme of bare feet present in the painting onto his own body to illustrate it to his daughter, going beyond the panel's content. The explanation and the related performance are understood, as the little girl asserts with *nodding*.

Bilingual texts provide further food for thought and investigation between father and daughter, who co-construct the meaning of using English as the museum's international language. "Così almeno quelli che non sanno parlare l'italiano sanno l'inglese e leggono quello in inglese" ('So at least those who can't speak Italian know English and read it in English') states the little girl, shifting his gaze and position towards his father in the interactional phase of *interpreting*. During the interaction, playful *questioning* and *answering* occur, stimulated by the father, who always provides new input for discussion. Her father encourages and congratulates her on her correct observations, praising her "Bravissima, bravissima" ('Very good, very good'). Together, they reconstruct the primary information about the polyptych and finally return to the questions proposed in the panel. "Io la trovo troppo ricca e troppo grande per me" ('I find it too rich and too big for me') replies the father, pointing to the text on the panel and continuing to observe the work (*tagging*) (*Fragment 5.25*). The daughter agrees and walks away to get a more complete view of the work of art. In their sharing, the father motivates his point of view (*arguing* phase) first by combining words with gestures, emphasising his opinion by adding gestures (known as *iconic gestures* (McNeill, 1992)). Then, he expresses himself only through body language: "Dà l'impressione di…no?" ('It gives the impression of... no?'), where the space of the missing adjective is given to physicality, opening and moving the hands. The interrogative *tag* "no?" aims to confirm his daughter's reception of the sense of greatness he is referring to (*tag questions*) (*Fragments 5.26*). The little girl understands and argues in two moments "dà sentimento di ricco" ('gives a feeling of richness') "sì esatto, in effetti è molto molto ricca e fin troppo grande secondo me" ('yes exactly, in fact, it is very very rich and almost too big in my opinion') (*arguing* phase). The latter completes the other's gestures with words, going in time and following the rhythm of the musical conversation in an aesthetic experience based on the co-construction of meaning. They then walk away from the artwork.

This example depicts a lively interaction in which father and daughter swiftly exchange opinions and reflections. The panel's content is a starting point from which new reflections arise. Its use of more straightforward language does not hinder but prompts new stimuli and thoughts between the two actors; it serves as a gateway to more complex dialogues guided by the father yet followed by the little girl without hesitation. The young girl demonstrates her independent understanding of

the panel's text for families, then initiates conversation and follows her father's reasoning. She dynamically engages by playing and answering the questions on the label and with those posed by her dedicated companion. The outcome is the development of 'active' family learning (Borun et al., 1997, p. 279) at the museum.

Fragment 5.23

Fragments 5.24

Fragments 5.25 and 5.26

5.2 Comparative Analysis and Discussion of Data

This paragraph summarises the results of the case study by comparing data from before and after retranslation (*Chapter III* and preceding pages, respectively). Its purpose is to highlight the significant findings related to families' performances in front of the two paintings and address the research questions presented in the introductory chapter. These queries were as follows:

BEFORE RETRANSLATION

Do *panels for young and old* improve families' interaction at the museum?

- What happens 'at the exhibit face'? How does families' pedagogical relationship unfold in the museum? How do families co-create meaning with their performances?
- Is *Brera Art Gallery*'s inclusive mission accomplished?
- From a linguistically inclusive perspective, can labels be improved?

AFTER RETRANSLATION

Does the Easy-to-Read Language have an impact on families' interaction?

- What happens 'at the exhibit face'? Can language simplification ease families' interaction? In what ways do Easy-to-Read labels influence interaction?
- Is *Brera Art Gallery*'s inclusive mission accomplished?
- Is Easy-to-Read Language suitable for children?

5.2.1 Key Findings

Firstly, the study wanted to highlight the complexity of languages implemented in interacting with others and the space surrounding us in our learning process, describing what happens when learning in an informal context such as the museum (Christidou, 2012; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hein, 2000). Countless connections bud from one another within the museum context, especially in a dynamic and constantly evolving "verb" museum such as the *Pinacoteca di Brera*. Stimuli are provided to children by the museum ecology, architecture, rooms, works, museum staff, labels and the children's carers. In turn, the parents actively participate in this incredible discovery, which reunites the past and the future through a present moment (Dewey, 1934/2020).

The complexity of the interaction and, in it, the recognition of the educational value of the relationship and how it takes shape in front of a work of art are represented in pedagogical documentation using different lenses belonging to sociology to describe the different performances that intertwine and complement each other constituting the aesthetic experience of families. They are borrowed lenses that help us see the documentation in a new way, allowing it to disclose something new which might escape more superficial observation. What emerges is an interactional framework that precisely examines the movements and words of the visitors as we observe and recognise their immense pedagogical value for the child exploring the museum for the first time[327], but also for his carer. The linguistic-translation lens is then added to the pedagogical-sociological lens, leading to a reading of the data more concerned with the linguistic inclusion of families in the museum.

As a first step, scanning the videos allowed us to identify, in the form of *coding*, the most recurrent interactional patterns: *telling and tagging* and *animating through "display doing"* (Christidou, 2012, p. 309), which gave shape to the joint construction of meanings of the families inside the cultural institution. These two types of performances intertwine and are found in all the data analysed. However, as presented in the illustration of the examples, each case also has more specific interactional characteristics - always identified through *coding*. The two interactional macro-divisions allowed us to observe better both what happens in the specific interaction and to have a general vision of all the material collected - ex-ante and ex-post retranslations - confirming their recurrence in the second phase of video observation following retranslations. The two sociocultural means provide a depiction of the intricate ways in which families interact in the museum context. The dialogical dance unfolds and is woven and influenced by the museum space, the works of art, the

[327] All the children involved in the project were excited to participate as they had never been to the *Pinacoteca di Brera* in Milan. This observation aligns with the data on Italian families at the museum (Borrione et al., 2021; Friel, 2021). It demonstrates how, on a general level, few children visit our cultural heritage with their families today, and fruition needs to be more encouraged.

targeted labels, and the other family members. The parent-son relationship moulds the aesthetic experience of questions, analysis, emotions, and thoughts conveyed verbally and nonverbally through gazes, upper and lower limb movements, and facial expressions[328]. Acting as a starting point for the analysis, *telling and tagging* and *animating through "displaying doing"* made it possible to compare the data collected before retranslation (*Chapter III*) with those after retranslation (preceding pages), making emerge in a sort of 'compare and contrast' both the similarities and the dissimilar elements from the point of view of interaction - interpreted in a pedagogical key - and from the point of view of language inclusion - interpreted in a linguistic-translation key. Below, we summarise the main results that emerged from the comparison.

The first part of the data (*Chapter III*) highlights the interactional dimension of the museum experience and the positive impact that the *panels for young and old* have on families' interaction. Compared to traditional labels (*paragraph 3.3.3.1*), results show a significant engagement improvement fostered by the panels. We illustrated several examples by classifying them according to the two major interactional patterns in the corpus of data collected in the two locations chosen within the museum. Family audiences present a way of interacting with artworks and their labels that revolves around relationships. Children and parents complete meaning-making through talk and bodily conduct, as their learning process happens through negotiating significance. An aesthetic experience, based on talk and confrontation with others, incarnates the Brera Approach: learning in the museum happens when children co-create meaning with others (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. xxiv).

However, in the presented results, recurrent elements may be considered from a pedagogical and linguistically inclusive perspective worth inspecting more. What happens in front of both paintings is that, in most cases, the parents read the label to their child (*Transcript 3.2*; *Transcript 3.4; Transcript 3.5*). Children do not read the label autonomously, or if they start reading aloud, they stop reading as soon as they encounter a problematic term. The parent continues reading, but sometimes words can be challenging to understand, even for adults (as in the first example in *Transcript 3.1*). Occasionally, children misread words, and parents intervene, suggesting the right solution (*Transcripts 3.1, 3.2* and *3.4*). Parents get involved with verbal and nonverbal explanatory strategies to make the text more linear to children - who sometimes repeat the words without knowing their meaning (*Transcript 3.3*) or directly ask for their significance (*Transcripts 3.3* and *3.5*) - by providing summaries, reformulating the text, recurring to storytelling and explaining challenging terms, embedded with cultural references or rhetorical figures used in the original text - all aspects

[328] Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions during part of the data collection in the museum, we could not study facial expressions in depth as using sanitary masks was mandatory, which hindered a more detailed analysis of that facet.

that may not be readily understandable to let a child read and comprehend the text independently (*Transcripts 3.2* and *3.3*).

These are all elements of high pedagogical value; nonetheless, children's vaunted autonomy is hindered if their understanding of texts is entirely dependent on their caregivers, causing an unbalanced interaction in terms of relationships and time. Much of the interaction is slowed by dedicating time to the panels' textual analysis to ensure children understand it before observing the painting, expressing their reflections, or committing themselves to play. In doing so, the museum experience is anchored to reading the text instead of having the freedom to engage in the playful activities proposed by the family labels, which should act as stimuli of creativity through conversation. With parents' explanations or reformulations occupying most of the interaction, it prevents children's imagination from blossoming. It precludes them from directing the experience as they wish, expressing their emotions freely before a work of art. On the contrary, while playing from the panels, children could tell their inventiveness through their infinite languages, shaping a personal learning process and developing unforeseen and stimulating situations.

The museum context, being an Informal Learning Environment (ILE), unlike the school context, has a different pedagogical nature that flourishes through its galleries based on children's freedom and curiosity, which has hidden unexploited potential that needs to be fully acknowledged (Andre et al., 2017; Brajčić & Kuščević, 2022; Crowley et al., 2014; Screven, 1993). Although the purpose of learning is the same, the museum's avenues peculiar fruition leads us to consider incidental factors such as *museum fatigue*[329] (Rosa, 2021) and *museum time* (Serrell, 1997), which require different management of time and experience, especially with a target such as children, compared to what could happen in the classroom[330].

In a museum, children's *illocutionary performance* (Searle et al., 1980) is influenced by their understanding of the panels' messages, constituting a fundamental part of the "visual literacy" process praised by the Museum Director, Dr James Micheal Bradburne. Regarding this mission, which is permeated with his idea of a museum-library, the Director states:

[329] Refer to *Chapter III*, Note 240.

[330] There are also successful hybrid fusions of the two contexts, as in the case of the projects entitled *scuola diffusa* ('widespread school') or *museo diffuso* ('widespread museum'), both in the perspective of the *didattica diffusa* ('widespread teaching'), of which the Italian city of Reggio Emilia has been a successful experimental laboratory. Still, this research project falls into something other than these more specific categories. For further information, please consult Mottana & Campagnoli (2020) and the following websites: https://www.comune.re.it/novita/notizie/lesperienza-di-scuola-diffusa-diventa-proposta-didattica-e-pedagogica-nazionale ; https://www.musei.re.it/educazione/per-la-scuola/progetti-speciali/la-scuola-in-museo/ (last accessed January 2024).

> Non si va nelle biblioteche per guardare i libri, ma per approfondire, scoprire e leggere. Nei musei lo sguardo è considerato sufficiente. Per chi non sa leggere un quadro, l'osservazione è abbastanza, almeno in apparenza. Come suggerito dall'aggettivo che la completa, l'arte visiva dovrebbe avere, e spesso ha, una componente visiva che può essere apprezzata da chiunque. Non sarebbe tuttavia meglio conoscere la storia dei soggetti ritratti? Sapere perché quella veste è blu e non rossa? Perché proprio quel blu, e non un altro? (….) Parlo di una forma di alfabetismo visivo, di un approfondimento della lettura dei quadri che vada oltre il semplice impatto. Parlo del far entrare il quadro nel mio vissuto, come quando leggo un romanzo e i suoi testi diventano pagine della mia storia personale. Non è da escludere la bellezza in sé: l'impatto emotivo di un colore o di un ritratto bello-in-sé resta. A questo va aggiunta una componente di approfondimento, una lettura sotto traccia. Altrimenti, il potenziale di cui l'artista è consapevole al momento della creazione dell'opera – egli sa perché ha scelto quel blu e non un altro – rimane inespresso.[331]

In the similarity of a painting to a book, the label accompanying a work of art takes on a significant meaning, as it becomes a valuable learning tool (Serrell, 2015, p. x). Therefore, the textual dimension within the museum becomes an essential component to facilitate the in-depth study of the history of an exhibit, helping visitors go beyond the gaze. Reading the *panels for young and old* helps visitors read the painting more deeply and enriches their museum experience. The substantial value of interaction is increased with meaning and suggestions that lead to more intense fruition of the work of art and to cultivating its memory in children and adults (Haden, 2018; Nina, 1994). A deeper dive analysis shapes the aesthetic experience of what Bradburne defines as "una lettura sotto traccia" ('an under-the-radar reading'), which allows children to give rise to new suggestions and give space to their ideas, moving in rhythm with others through comparison, cultivating a sense of community. Nevertheless, the community becomes truly inclusive when everyone participates actively. The issues illustrated become more problematic in the case of the child with special educational needs, for whom the existing family label results as inappropriate to live a complete museum experience equal to her peers involved in the same project. Her mother's effort is evident and eloquent when trying to acquaint her with the painting and the related activities (*Transcript 3.4*).

These results, supported by the linguistic analysis conducted in *Chapter IV*, outlined the

[331] This is an extract from Manferdini's interview (2023) with Director Bradburne. The English rendition is as follows:

> We do not go to libraries to look at books but to learn more, discover and read. In museums, looking is considered sufficient. For those who cannot read a painting, observation is enough, at least apparently. As suggested by the adjective that complements it, visual art should have and often does, a visual component that anyone can appreciate. However, wouldn't it be better to know the history of the subjects portrayed? Do you know why that robe is blue and not red? Why exactly is that blue and not another? (….) I am talking about a form of visual literacy, a deepening of the reading of paintings that goes beyond simple impact. I am talking about letting the painting enter my experience, like when I read a novel and its texts become pages of my personal story. Beauty cannot be excluded: the emotional impact of a colour or a beautiful portrait remains. To this must be added an in-depth component, an under-the-radar reading. Otherwise, the potential that the artist is aware of when creating the work – he knows why he chose that blue and not another – remains unexpressed.

terrain for improving text readability through Easy-to-Read language. The textual and interactional dimensions should intertwine in a more inclusive perspective. Panels' textuality, with difficulties such as unclear titles, words not part of the high-usage vocabulary (for instance, technical terms related to the world of art), rhetorical figures, and specific historical and cultural references - impairs comprehension as much of the interactional time is dedicated to decoding the labels' meaning. In contrast, texts should focus on providing understandable peculiar insights into the paintings as a starting point to foster dialogue among families. Making the text easier to understand for a child would encourage his sense of inquiry and allow him to fully engage with the artwork and express his thoughts and feelings instead of struggling to comprehend the language or giving up altogether. Accessible language could guarantee a more interactive experience for every child and, by extension, every visitor exploring the museum.

The second part of the data (preceding pages) shows how family interaction is enhanced by Easy-to-Read language. Through the primary division into the two interactional patterns, it was possible to analyse the specific contents of the interactions in front of the two works of art. The most recurring types of interaction before the retranslations are confirmed, testifying a significant interaction even before the work on the texts in a more inclusive direction. However, the interaction evolves, becomes more dynamic and engaging, and involves more verbal and non-verbal language for all visitors. From the point of view of bodily movement, there is a greater expression through one's body on the part of both adults and children through communication full of glances, shifts in postures and movement in the museum space, physical approaches between parents and children, between children and the labels, between children and the works of art. Nevertheless, what is striking is how, above all, from a conversation analysis stance, the content of dialogue changes and gives more space to the children's imagination. The pedagogical documentation depicts, through the lens of interactionism, how the parent-child dialogue evolves at the museum due to the presence of a high-readability text.

Firstly, children can read the text autonomously aloud (*Transcript 5.1* and *5.4*), silently (*Transcript 5.5*), or if it is the parent reading, they scrupulously follow the narration while immediately starting to observe the canvas (*Transcript 5.3*). They demonstrate understanding of the panels' text: it is the children themselves who spontaneously start the conversation (*Transcripts 5.3* and *5.5*), effectively summarising the content of the panel (*Transcripts 5.2, 5.3* and *5.5*) or suggesting a first observation of an aspect of the work and actively answering the questions in the labels (*Transcripts 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5*).

What happens is that the interaction, although also present in the ex-ante observation, increases and takes a different direction, especially in terms of content. The interaction does not mainly consist of analysing the text since the children can easily understand it by themselves and return to using the panel as conceived to "talk about art"[332]. Talking about art starts from the ideas offered in the text and follows an entirely personal emotional flow, co-constructed by the parent-child couple. The questions do not disappear (*Transcript 5.2*) - with their recognised pedagogical value (Rinaldi, 2021, p. 30) - but the interaction becomes more complex and multifaceted. In a relational and emotional experience, children express themselves in reasoning by expressing their vision and doubts (*Transcripts 5.1* and *5.2*). In a richer negotiation, the couple cogitate and think logically, argue - the children more than before - reflect on the texts, stop to appreciate the beauty of the works with amazement, therefore dedicate more time to the exhibits, delving into the themes of the paintings and appreciating their beauty (*Transcripts 5.3* and *5.4*).

Children dynamically take over the space in every corner, exploring the area which intersects with the work of art from every possible viewpoint (*Transcripts 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4*) while playing and involving their parents. In some cases, reading the family panel leads children to curiosity about other texts in the museum (*Transcript 5.1*). There is the desire to stay in front of the exhibit longer, an enthusiastic feeling summarising the intensity of the engagement with *Brera*'s masterpieces (*Transcript 5.1*).

The linearity of effective communication starts from reading and understanding *the panels for young and old*, a fluidity in interaction that expands the notion of time while children discover surprisingly new aspects of a work of art. During this reformulated time, new observations arise that are not linked to the text, for instance, on the technique of the paintings (*Transcripts 5.1* and *5.3*), identifying new characteristics of the artwork or finding new information in the text, reconstructing them together (*Transcript 5.3*), or arguing with storytelling relating to experiences already lived (*Transcript 5.2*) - note that previously it was an interactional tool, together with the reformulation of the text, which only adults resorted to - in case they wish to argue their thoughts. The interaction follows a dynamic rhythm, supported and reinforced by parents. However, a vital component of autonomy in children's exploration arises from their independent reading and understanding. This then allows them to share their impressions with the parent, communicate what they feel about the experience, and to be able to dedicate themselves to the proposed activities. The panel's content is a starting point from which new reflections arise. New contemplations emerge from the activities for a more attentive, dialogued observation of the work: in the meeting of different sensitivities, children construct meaning, reflect, note additional details and appreciate the artistry. New reflections,

[332] Refer to *Chapter III*, *par*. 3.1.2.

questions and insights arise both from the text and from the observation of the work - to which it is possible to give more space while also giving value to silence (Le Breton, 2019) - in a more fluid conversation with faster rhythms (*Transcripts 5.4* and *5.5*).

Using accessible language can stimulate new ideas and discussion among families. Contrary to preconceived notions, a 'simple' linguistic tool such as Easy-to-Read Language becomes a gateway to more 'complex' themes and reflections (see paragraph *5.4* below), embodying inclusion as active participation, the main objective of the Brera Approach. The sense of inclusion acquires a deeper nuance of meaning when the Easy-to-Read language allows a family with Italian as their second language (L2) to play and discover new aspects of a work of art (*Transcript 5.4*), with a fluidity that surprises and testifies how much the expository clarity of a text can prove an essential requirement for museum fruition, acting as an opportunity for accessing art for a large portion of the Italian population that does not master Italian language yet. In this instance - as for the previously mentioned case of a child with language difficulties (*Transcript 3.4*) - a more understandable language can be the only vehicle for discovering art, whereas for the other children observed, it proves to foster the already existent intergenerational dialogue. More transparent language facilitated all project participants, leaving no one excluded. The educational value of the *panel for young and old* is enhanced by becoming a practical tool to promote inclusion and, by extension, a sense of community inside the Brera Picture Gallery, achieving its primary aim of encouraging all visitors to discuss art[333].

The Easy-to-Read Language encourages and eases interaction, acting as a framework for families' dialogical exchange, which evolves into sharing feelings and creative ideas. A more accessible language is perfectly suitable for children and, in general, families exploring the museum. Language simplification improves text comprehension and enhances children's aesthetic experience while respecting the cultural context to which labels belong. Furthermore, the fact that the labels for families provide guided inputs for discussion does not imply that they limit families' art fruition, as we demonstrated that they act as stimuli for their interpretations of the museum through a piece of art. The outcome is a more enriching interaction between parents and children and the picture gallery environment surrounding their expressive performance. The resulting dynamic pedagogical communication also emphasises the role held by museum 'analog' texts as relevant and potent educational tools in shaping children's museum experience still today, notwithstanding the new digital media overtaking museums (Serrell, 2015, p. x).

From a museum education perspective, the retranslations have rendered the language more user-friendly and encouraged a deeper comprehension of the exhibit. Consequently, families can value the art more profoundly, and children are more prone to pose questions and explore their

[333] Refer to *Chapter III*.

analyses, co-creating significance and enriching their art fruition. This way, a "crystalising experience" (Walters & Gardner, 1984, p. 306) can happen in their museum learning. From a linguistic stance, the case study underscores the significance of inclusive language in building a museum that pragmatically solves inclusivity issues by being welcoming and accessible to all visitors. At the Brera Art Gallery, this would bring to fruition the idea of the museum as a thoughtful and hospitable person - an integral part of their Brera Approach[334] - as well as representing a put into practice of the new International Council of Museums definition (ICOM, 2022).

5.3 Focus group with the Educational Services of the Brera Art Gallery

Research using pedagogical documentation implies sharing the data and interpretations collected to create communal interpretations of the results that try to go beyond individual subjectivities, leading to collective growth and awareness (Edwards et al., 1998; Rinaldi, 2021). In order to accomplish this, a part of the Educational Services of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* staff - the group that worked with us to carry out this field research - participated in a focus group. From an inclusive leadership viewpoint (Ryan, 2006), the purpose is to engage individuals directly involved in museum education daily, and that specifically created the original texts for the *panels for young and old*. The aim is to collect opinions, impressions and points of view as dissimilar as possible in order to create a composite reading of the data by transforming personal impressions into collective ones, building a community of researchers (Malaguzzi, 1998, p.86) - where the museum staff becomes a researcher itself, as in the Reggio Emilia Approach - that wants to learn how to make today's museums more inclusive through a collaborative reflection on Easy-to-Read language and its impact on families. The focus group (following FG) will contribute to having a more comprehensive vision of the fieldwork conducted in the museum, according to the standpoint of the museum personnel. The results of the discussion with the museum staff will be presented below.

[334] Refer to *Chapter III.*

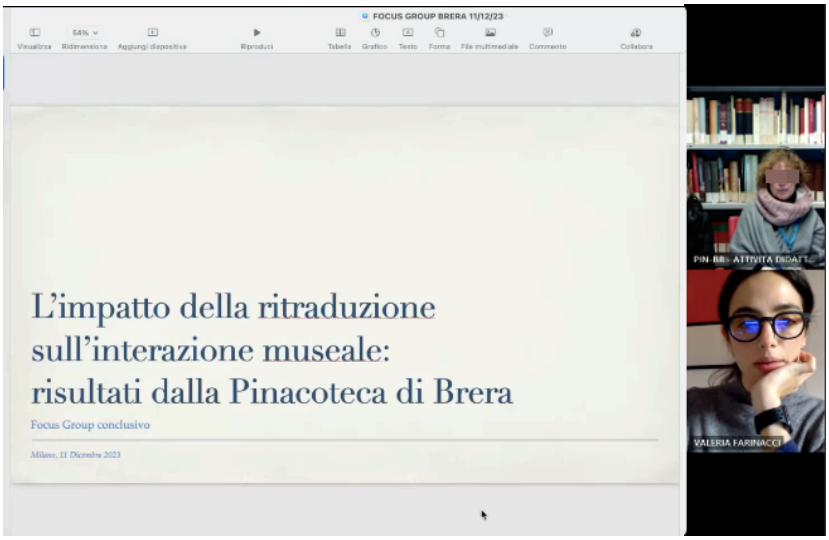


Figure 5.7 Screenshot from the focus group conducted online with the Educational Services of the museum.

5.3.1 Data Session and Discussion of Findings

The first part of the FG consisted of presenting the key findings of the research (paragraph *5.2.1*) to proceed with a reflection on the illustrated data. Open-ended questions were previously prepared, but the FG's approach primarily followed the natural flow of the conversation, not adhering to all the questions but giving rise to spontaneous reflection as the topics were discussed. To initiate the debate, we asked for an opinion on the project to collect first impressions. The feedback collected by the staff was positive. It immediately led to a reflection on their work with the *panels for young and old*, since in creating the labels for families, there has already been a simplification intervention on their part, which has faced the challenge of proposing sacred artworks and explaining them clearly to the general public:

> Noi lavoravamo qua già da tanto tempo e diciamo in un'ottica di didattica, di spiegazione al pubblico, non ci siamo mai posti il problema per esempio di spiegare chi è Maria o chi è Gesù (…) Noi ci occupiamo prevalentemente di arte sacra quindi ci sta che vista una, due, tre quattro Madonne dopo dici vabbè ma tanto lo capiranno! Invece no, invece quando abbiamo iniziato a scrivere le "didascalie grandi e piccoli" abbiamo messo in discussione qualunque testo, qualunque parola abbiamo avuto: lunghe, lunghe discussioni sul mettere *Bibbia* anziché *testo sacro* poi ha vinto *testo sacro* perché era più inclusivo rispetto a *Bibbia* e appunto abbiamo cercato di spiegare tutto questo (N1)[335].

[335] "We have been working here for a long time, and let's say from a didactic perspective of explanation to the public, we have never asked ourselves the problem of, for example, explaining who Mary is or who Jesus is (...) We mainly deal with sacred art; therefore, after seeing one, two, three or four Virgin Maries, you say okay, they'll understand them anyway! But no, when we started writing the labels for young and old, we questioned any text, any word we had: long,

In their writing work, therefore, a lexical challenge emerges first and foremost linked to the content of the artworks and the historical-artistic context in which they are found. Elements previously taken for granted emerge in creating a textual typology suitable for families. The writing process, therefore, begins with an awareness of how the clarification of the contents cannot be taken for granted, assuming that the public will then be able to understand on their own. Autonomy is essential, but the right inputs must also be provided to enjoy the work. The first limitation that occurs to the staff and which they talk about is that of space:

> Qual era il limite di questa cosa? Lo spazio. Dobbiamo stare dentro le 500 battute, se spieghi tutto quello che vuoi spiegare non ti bastano 500 battute. A quel punto abbiamo capito che potevamo lavorare su un unico argomento. Se tu vedessi la prima stesura delle didascalie vedresti come sono molto diverse da quella che poi sono state esposte nel museo, perché appunto le prime erano un'altra cosa, con più argomenti, cercavamo di mettere tutto…il desiderio di spiegare tutto, impossibile praticamente (N1)[336].

The "desiderio di spiegare tutto" ('desire to explain everything') on the part of the museum staff clashes with the space available for labels; therefore, the choice is made to concentrate on a central aspect of the piece of art, a work resulting from multiple drafts of the text with the necessary corrections. Awareness of the *labor limae*, a painstaking textual reworking carried out with care and attention, leads the museum personnel to positively appreciate the work of linguistic simplification in the research.

> Il lavoro di semplificazione lo capiamo, il lavoro che hai fatto tu lo capiamo. Ancora di più quando abbiamo lavorato in Easy-to-Read su 10 capolavori con la guida "Museo per tutti" dove abbiamo messo in discussione ciò che già avevamo messo in discussione (N1)[337].

The objective of the FG was also to stimulate a reflection with the staff on their experience with Easy-to-Read Language, which took place with the "Museo per tutti" ('Museum for all') guide created with the National non-profit Association called *L'Abilità*. The work done with Easy-to-Read Language leads the staff to appreciate the research endeavour and also express how, in the process of

long discussions about putting the *Bible* instead of the *sacred text,* then *sacred text* won because it was more inclusive than *Bible*. We tried to explain all this precisely" (N1).

[336] "What was the limit of this thing? Space. We have to stay within 500 characters; if you explain everything you want to explain, 500 characters are not enough. At that point, we realised we could work on a single topic. If you saw the first draft of the labels, you would see how they are very different from the ones that were then displayed in the museum, because the first ones were something else, with more topics, we tried to put everything... the desire to explain everything, practically impossible" (N1).

[337] "We understand the simplification work, we understand the work you did. Even more so when we worked in Easy-to-Read language on 10 masterpieces with the "Museum for everyone" guide, where we questioned what we had already questioned" (N1).

linguistic simplification, they have been questioning themselves a lot as for the initial drafting of texts for families. The difference, however, lies in the "Museum for All" being a guide, which comprises several pages - in both paper and digital format - with ample space to explain the contents. The staff, therefore, values the work carried out in the research, which involved dealing with a more complex textual typology, namely labels, and recognises the positive impact of Easy-to-Read language on interaction. A discussion arises on evaluating the expansion of the use of the already existing guide "Museum for All" as "didascalie di ulteriore supporto in più per chi volesse utilizzarle" ('labels of further support for those who wish to use them') (N2). However, some argue by motivating how the text in Easy-to-Read Language in the guide presents a detailed description of the works with keywords and biography, which should be reduced if placed as a panel text following a work of art. On this aspect, a discussion emerges in the FG on the new studies on Easy-to-Read Language labels within museums (Sciumbata, 2022a; Span 2023) and how they try to solve the problem of the space necessary for the explanation of all the contents by creating very long panels that flank the painting. The staff is surprised by the theoretical approach of the studies on Easy-to-Read Language and how much, in their opinion, needs to be explored further from the perspective of museum education. This leads to a broader reflection on the fact that theoretical-linguistic aspects sometimes clash with the museum reality and that few studies from an art education and art engagement perspective evaluate the tangible impact the tools have in the museum.

> Ci si stanca prima ancora di iniziare, nel senso che poi alla fine è meno inclusivo della didascalia tradizionale (N2).

> Certo, quei pannelli lunghissimi di cui parlavi tu sono proprio il frutto di una teoria non sperimentata, altrimenti non si sarebbero mai sognati di mettere quei pannelli così lunghi! (N1)[338].

Since the beginning of the FG, their interest in transforming existing labels for families into labels in Easy-to-Read language has been evident. The staff, in turn, asks for opinions, for instance, on converting the textual dimension of the panels into digital. However, it was underlined that a digital version of a label may favour *interactivity* but not *interaction* (Heath et al., 2005; Heath & vom Lehn, 2008), as fostering interpersonal interaction and social cooperation with digital tools is more complex. Digital museum communication requires more in-depth studies to make interactive use of technology truly participatory, thus completing the museum's educational mission. A discussion arose on the critical pedagogical role that textual labels still play in museums today and

[338] "You get tired before you even start, in the sense that, in the end, it is less inclusive than the traditional label" (N2). "Of course, those very long panels you were talking about are precisely the result of an untested theory otherwise they would never have dreamed of putting up those very long panels!" (N1).

on the difficulty encountered by the staff in creating a new audio guide for families - a tool primarily designed for individual use at the museum - to make it more participatory. The work requires much time and is still in the planning phase. The encountered challenges are, for instance, the need for specific means and the technical difficulties related: "devi dare fisicamente la possibilità che la sentano tutti e in museo non puoi avere la filodiffusione" ('You have to allow everyone to hear it physically, and in the museum, you can't have piped music') (N1) to involve all the family. There is also the concern that parents will see it as "baby parking" (N1), as it could become a place of stalemate for children instead of an opportunity for a dynamic collective enjoyment of the museum. The long and detailed work on the texts for the audio guide aims to make them "accattivanti" ('captivating') and "coinvolgenti" ('engaging') (N1), but this is very complex for the staff to achieve.

Overall, their experience with Easy-to-Read language through the guide "Museums for All" aligns with the inclusive design of this research project, which wishes to extend its use to more different types of public and not just to those with cognitive difficulties.

> Riguardo alla guida che abbiamo fatto in Easy-to-Read noi ci siamo poste proprio il problema a monte, pensando non solo alle disabilità cognitive ma anche a persone che magari…ai bambini piccoli o persone che hanno difficoltà con la lingua italiana. Cioè questo ce lo siamo posto, ed esattamente la nostra idea era proprio quella che "museo per tutti" doveva essere proprio per tutti, e quindi queste didascalie, questi racconti, questa spiegazione dell'opera presente nella guida per noi era anche un punto di partenza per ampliare la platea che poteva usufruire di queste opere (N2).

> N2: La lingua facile io cerco di promuoverla tutte le volte che mi capita.
> N1: Sì ecco per noi è diventato un testo che proponiamo a tutti quelli che non sono specialisti. La proponiamo sempre in continuazione, per cui per noi è diventato uno strumento…è diventato il primo strumento che utilizziamo per tutti[339].

Easy-to-Read has become the first language of fruition at the museum, partly fostered by the guides' online distribution, which facilitates the dissemination of the tool[340]. Consequently, an Easy-to-Read language option within the museum has also positively broadened its audience, with

[339] "Regarding the guide we made in Easy-to-Read, we posed the problem upstream, thinking not only of cognitive disabilities but also of people who perhaps... young children or people who have difficulty with the Italian language. We asked ourselves this, and our idea was precisely that a "museum for all" should be for everyone. Therefore, these labels, these stories, and this explanation of the work in the guide were also a point of departure to expand the audience that could benefit from these works" (N2).

"N2: I try to promote the Easy Language whenever I get it.
N1: Yes, it has become a text that we propose to all those who are not specialists. We always propose it continuously, so it has become a tool... it has become the first tool we use for everyone".

[340] We assume that the staff's sensitivity to accessible language has also grown while collaborating on this research project for three years.

proposals for participation from associations dealing with cognitive disabilities, who previously did not request visits.

> N1: E da che abbiamo questa guida arrivano anche moltissime richieste di associazioni che si occupano delle difficoltà cognitive mentre prima non si vedeva nessuno. Adesso noi ne abbiamo un bel po': la Paideia, l'Abilità, l'Arca, il Tulipano…e poi insomma tante altre, per cui appunto noi abbiamo allargato un pochettino il nostro pubblico con una guida che vabbè non è stata semplice da fare…
> N2: Diciamo è stata una bella sfida, però…
> N1: Il risultato c'è.
> N3: Sì, infatti.[341]

The fruits of the work collected are derived from the notable commitment of the staff, who have undergone specific training to work with Easy-to-Read language. Nonetheless, there was no shortage of difficulties in working on the texts, in particular from a lexical point of view of presenting artistic and cultural concepts:

> Abbiamo cercato il termine più appropriato dove non riuscivamo proprio a spiegare, la fatica che abbiamo fatto a spiegare le parole più semplici come *santo,* come *santuario,* come *spirito* inteso come fantasma… trovare la parola giusta non è stato facile (N2) [342].

Speaking of the current state of the museum, which is experiencing a transitional phase following the end of the mandate of museum director James Michael Bradburne[343], keeping the theme of inclusion alive in the future of the museum is a concern that is deeply felt by the people working in the Educational Services of the museum.

> N1: (…) staremo a vedere per tutto il nostro lavoro di inclusione e di interazione, perché basta solo che arrivi uno una che non so, abbia come unico obiettivo quello di fare mostre mercato a go go, "il blockbusters delle mostre" come lo chiamava il Bradburne e va tutto a ramengo…
> F: Siete in una fase transitoria adesso.

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[341] "N1: And since we have had this guide, there have also been many requests from associations that deal with cognitive difficulties, while before, we didn't see anyone. Now we have quite a few: the *Paideia*, the l'*Abilità*, the *Arca*, the *Tulipano*...and then, in short, many others, so we have broadened our audience a little with a guide which, oh well, was not easy to do…
N2: Let's say it was a good challenge, but…
N1: The result is there.
N3: Yes, indeed".

[342] "We looked for the most appropriate term where we couldn't explain, the effort we had to explain the simplest words like *saint*, like *sanctuary*, like *spirit* understood as ghost... finding the right word wasn't easy" (N2).

[343] When writing this paragraph, the new Director of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* has just been proclaimed: Angelo Lorenzo Crespi (16 December 2023). https://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_dicembre_16/brera-angelo-crespi-nuovo-direttore-della-pinacoteca-il-ministro-da-il-via-al-dopo-bradburne-1fa4ad0f-35c9-4c51-b44d-c0f5feefcxlk.shtml (last accessed December 2023).

N1: Siamo nel limbo hai presente? Proprio nel limbo più assoluto.

N2: Non credo che si faccia un passo indietro sull'inclusione perché comunque è un argomento di cui…

N1: Ma non è necessario fare un passo indietro, basta ignorarla, basta ignorarla.

N2: Eh vabè, ma non è un argomento che si può più ignorare oramai.

N1: Guarda puoi liquidarci parlando dell'inclusione come direttore del museo dicendo "ah siamo inclusivi, siamo così" …ma se poi per esempio io chiedo di stanziare dei soldi e tu non me li stanzi, io ti chiedo di fare una cosa e tu non me la fai fare, eccetera eccetera…Tu puoi dirlo quanto vuoi di essere inclusivo ma poi alla fine non lo sei, perché esserlo significa anche perderci del tempo, dei soldi. Bisogna lavorarci e ci vogliono soldi, tu guarda per la LIS adesso quanti soldi stiamo spendendo…[344]

The staff's concern is that inclusion could be ignored by new museum management by not dedicating adequate time and funding to it. A reflection is born on the theme of inclusion and how fundamental and essential it is today to achieve good museum practices. Speaking of possible improvements, the team desires to make the museum even more inclusive.

> Noi vorremmo arrivare ad avere una percentuale adeguata di inclusività in museo. Non si può arrivare a tutti, però ogni volta che affrontiamo un nuovo pubblico cerchiamo sempre di lavorare e di avere un prodotto per lui (N3) [345].

An example is the current work on fruition tools in Italian Sign Language (known by the acronym LIS from *Lingua dei Segni Italiana*), which presents additional levels of difficulty given the fact that the LIS language does not include historical-artistic terms (for instance, the staff mentions that the term *Rinascimento* 'Renaissance' is not present in the LIS)[346] and the desire to create an audio-video guide in LIS to involve even more types of public and not just the hearing and speech impaired, a public with which the museum still work little as they acknowledge difficulty in creating a meaningful interaction. Therefore, not only a video guide but also an audio one, a specification that

[344] "N1: (...) We'll see for all our work of inclusion and interaction because all it takes is for someone to arrive who I don't know has the sole objective of holding market exhibitions go go "the blockbusters of exhibitions" as he called it the Bradburne and everything goes to waste…
F: You are in a transitional phase now.
N1: We're in limbo, you know? Right in the most absolute limbo.
N2: I don't think we're taking a step backwards on inclusion because it's still a topic that...
N1: But you don't need to take a step back, just ignore it, just ignore it.
N2: Oh well, but it's not a topic that can be ignored anymore.
N1: Look, you can dismiss us by talking about inclusion as museum director by saying "ah we're inclusive, that's how we are", but then, for example, if I ask to allocate money and you don't allocate it to me, I ask you to do something and you you don't make me do it, etc. etc.... You can say all you want about being inclusive, but ultimately, you aren't because being inclusive also means wasting time and money. We need to work on it, and it takes money; look at how much we are spending for LIS (Italian language sign) now..."

[345] "We would like to achieve an adequate percentage of inclusiveness in the museum. We can't reach everyone, but every time we face a new audience, we always try to work and have a product for them" (N3).

[346] For further information, see *Grammatica, lessico e dimensioni di variazione nella LIS* ('Grammar, lexicon and dimensions of variation in LIS') (Cardinaletti et al., 2015).

they care about given that often the mistake is to create some tools for a target but exclude other types of the public when all creative educational tools must be "il più inclusivo possibile" ('as inclusive as possible'). What emerged was a reflection and appreciation of translation work in inclusive terms, recognising the significance of both the doctoral project they contribute to realising and the other projects they are working on, in an awareness of the far from easy challenges the translator must face when translating into an inclusive key.

The inclusion work of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* is also aimed at visually impaired and blind visitors in collaboration with the ANS (*Associazione Nazionale Subvedenti*, National Association of the Blind), with work on audio descriptions and tactile bas-reliefs. During the discussion on working with bas-reliefs, they underline the importance of clear language when writing all texts, emphasising how, following Secchi's studies (Secchi, 2011, 2018, 2022), a bas-relief alone is not sufficient:

> Il discorso dei bassorilievi è un discorso molto ampio. Sì, tu metti il bassorilievo ma poi non finisce lì il lavoro, perché un bassorilievo da solo non serve a niente, assolutamente a nulla, ma per nessuno, non solo per ipovedenti e non vedenti ma anche per gli altri. Cioè il solo toccare non serve assolutamente a niente per cui deve essere coadiuvato da una spiegazione, questa spiegazione è sempre nell'ottica di un'autonomia del visitatore (N4) [347].

The desire to extend their designed tools to everyone is, therefore, the underlying theme of museum education at the *Pinacoteca di Brera*, with the value constantly recognised in the autonomy of the visitor. However, a growing awareness that autonomy cannot exist without expository clarity binds all the materials created for the public.

Subsequently, observations and criticisms of the project during its actualisation were collected. The observations were positive, and the staff noted the families' enthusiasm for participating in the project.

> Tutti volevano partecipare e rendersi partecipi di questa esperienza. Anche perché probabilmente han sentito le famiglie che prima avevano già fatto questa esperienza e quindi per loro probabilmente era una cosa bella insomma da fare, un'esperienza da vivere (N2) [348].

However, having helped recruit families of volunteers for the research, the Educational Services staff noted how the enthusiasm of the teacher, who involved and accompanied the families

[347] "The discussion of bas-reliefs is extensive. Yes, you put the bas-relief, but then the work doesn't end there because a bas-relief alone is of no use, absolutely nothing, but for no one, not only for the visually impaired and the blind but also for others. Just touching serves no purpose and therefore must be supported by an explanation; this explanation is always with a view to the visitor's autonomy" (N4).

[348] "Everyone wanted to participate and take part in this experience. Also, they probably heard from the families who had already had this experience before, and therefore, for them, it was probably a nice thing to do, an experience to live" (N2).

to the museum, was fundamental for the experiment's success. Thus, they underline the value and the great possibilities a more solid museum-school relationship could offer for everyone's growth.

> N1: L'unica cosa che ci siamo dette prima di iniziare è che nell'organizzazione della sperimentazione l'unico problema che abbiamo riscontrato è nella ricerca delle famiglie, abbiamo capito che appoggiandoci alle scuole era indispensabile che l'insegnante ne fosse entusiasta.
> N2: Sì, l'entusiasmo dell'insegnante è stato fondamentale per la buona riuscita della sperimentazione.[349]

During the data presentation, the theme of linguistic simplification is understood in its facets, giving rise to a noteworthy discussion on the sense and significance of "simplifying", its effectiveness, and the pedagogical benefits it brings to the child and also to the adult who approaches the work of art.

> N2: Semplificare qualunque argomento, che non vuol dire banalizzarlo, ti fa arrivare sempre dritto all'obiettivo.
> N4: È anche più difficile appunto semplificarlo.
> N2: Rende tutti più partecipi, nel senso che la persona che non comprende quello che legge…
> N3: …si perde.
> N2: Come il bambino che fa leggere al genitore perché si perde nel discorso. La semplificazione del linguaggio ti rende più partecipe perché ti rende più consapevole, più sicuro di te stesso, di dire comunque…
> N1: …te la sei cavata da solo.
> N2: Sì. Sono qui e capisco quello che mi circonda[350].

Speaking of possible research insights, the issue that the staff wants to work on and that wants to be explored in depth in research is how to improve museum communication by effectively intertwining it with museum education, thus respecting the inclusive mission of the institution. The most significant difficulty encountered by the staff is, in fact, not that of creating personalised educational tools but of ensuring that they reach the right audience who need them, a gap that cannot effectively relate the proposals offered by the museum with its visitors. The central theme is that of

[349] "N1: The only thing we said to ourselves before starting was that in organising the experimentation, the only problem we encountered was in the search for families; we understood that by relying on schools, it was essential that the teacher was enthusiastic about it.
N2: Yes, the teacher's enthusiasm was fundamental to the experiment's success."
[350] "N2: Simplifying any topic, which does not mean trivialising it, always gets you straight to the goal.
N4: It is even more difficult to simplify it.
N2: It makes everyone more involved, in the sense that the person who doesn't understand what he reads...
N3: …you get lost.
N2: like the child who makes the parent read because he gets lost in the conversation. The simplification of language makes you more involved because it makes you more aware and surer of yourself to say anything...
N1: …you managed on your own.
N2: Yes. I am here, and I understand what is around me."

the autonomy of visitors, and the interest of the museum staff is in everything that can increase this aspect in the museum enjoyment of all target audiences[351].

> Vorrei che il pubblico che arriva abbia il suo strumento e che lo trovi, perché altrimenti io lo posso anche creare ma dopo resta lì. È per quello che dico che parlare di inclusività è molto facile ma poi metterla in pratica è molto più complesso (N1).

> N2: Forse sì sarebbe questo sarebbe un punto che bisognerebbe approfondire e studiare molto: come rendere autonomo il visitatore. Perché l'autonomia, noi l'abbiamo vista, è indispensabile. Non si può pensare più di ridurre l'apprendimento informale del pubblico solo alle visite guidate, devi trovare tutta una serie di strumenti. Noi abbiamo lavorato tantissimo in questi anni per trovare più strumenti possibili per far sì che il visitatore sia autonomo ma come andarlo a prendere? Come dirgli che ci sono questi strumenti? Come fai a capire che sono lì per loro e come trovare quello giusto? Perché noi ne abbiamo tanti, ma ci siamo scervellati non sai quanto per capire come deve arrivare al pubblico giusto: con i filtri sul sito, prendendo una cosa piuttosto che un'altra, cercando di dirlo all'inizio, cercando di dare un formato grafico particolare…noi ogni strumento che creiamo è un lavoro di comunicazione importante.
> N3: Noi non siamo mica arrivati a una quadra su questa cosa, noi non siamo capaci ancora di creare lo strumento e darlo esattamente al pubblico che ne deve fruire, è un lavoro comunque faticoso.
> N4: Su questo sarebbe interessante vedere come si sta sperimentando sulla comunicazione in museo per arrivare ai pubblici e per far sì che siano autonomi. [352]

For instance, a staff member talks about the unexplored potential in museums for eye-tracking studies:

[351] Our field research began by introducing the volunteers to the various types of labels for families, thus making a presentation that is part of the museum communication work. Nevertheless, this does not happen in the daily life of the museum; no individual presents each person with options suitable for their unique experience.

[352] "I would like the public who arrives to have their instrument and to find it because otherwise, I can also create it, but afterwards, it stays there. That's why I say that talking about inclusiveness is very easy, but putting it into practice is much more complex" (N1).

"N2: Maybe yes, this point should be explored and studied a lot: how to make the visitor autonomous. Because autonomy, as we have seen, is indispensable. We can no longer think of reducing the public's informal learning only to guided tours; you must find a whole series of tools. We have worked a lot in recent years to find as many tools as possible to ensure that the visitor is independent, but how do we go and pick him up? How do you tell him that these tools exist? How do you know they are there for them, and how do you find the right one? We have many, but we racked our brains for how long to understand how it should reach the right audience: with the filters on the site, choosing one thing rather than another, trying to say it at the beginning, trying to give a graphic format particular…every tool we create is a vital communication job.
N3: We haven't reached an agreement on this; we are not yet capable of creating the tool, and giving it precisely to the public who must use it is still tiring.
N4: It would be interesting to see how communication is being experimented with in museums to reach the public and ensure that they are autonomous."

> Lì secondo me c'è un mondo infinito per la comunicazione, per arrivare alla comunicazione. Sarebbe semplicissimo perché basterebbe testare dove appunto gli occhi puntano per capire esattamente dove devi mettere la cosa giusta nel punto giusto (N1) [353].

A practical question, therefore, of inclusion in museum communication, for which the team has difficulty communicating the various possibilities of use in the museum, which are accessible but not immediately usable and therefore pragmatically not very inclusive. Sociological, pedagogical and anthropological studies on visitors are, therefore, an essential element in the development of museum offers and in evaluating their effectiveness. These studies could contribute, on the one hand, to delineating a gradual path in which various options are tested with the public until finding the right one for visitors and, on the other, to find a way to understand how to communicate with a specific target audience effectively.

Regarding the development of inclusion, the FG recognises the lack of inclusive homogeneity between Italian museums. A unified perspective of inclusivity can be promoted by sharing good inclusive practices and enhancing networking among national cultural institutions. The team claims that museums work in isolation, whereas enhancing collaboration could create progress for the future of cultural heritage, especially towards a more inclusive museum scenery. There is a lack of a collective vision of accessibility within national museums. An instance of this is the work done on Easy-to-Read Language:

> N1: Un altro nostro intento è quello di fare rete con gli altri musei, insomma di recepire cose positive degli altri musei ma anche divulgare quello che noi abbiamo fatto, in modo che appunto ci sia una sorta di omogeneità tra i musei.
> N2: Deve essere proprio istituzionalizzata l'uniformità, e invece…
> N1: Esatto quello è il nostro punto massimo, cioè quello di avere istituzionalizzate delle cose che per noi sono fondamentali e che sono nostre e basta, ma se fossero di tutti sarebbe meglio. Questo è un altro punto di arrivo lontanissimo[354].

[353] "In my opinion there is an infinite world there for communication, to reach communication. It would be very simple because it would be enough to test where your eyes are pointing to understand exactly where you need to put the right thing in the right place" (N1).

[354] "N1: Another intent of ours is to network with other museums, in short, to incorporate positive things from other museums, but also to spread what we have done so that there is a sort of homogeneity between the museums.
N2: Uniformity needs to be institutionalised, and instead…
N1: Exactly, that is our maximum point, that is to have institutionalised things that are fundamental for us and that are ours, and that's it, but if they belonged to everyone, it would be better. This is another very distant point of arrival."

The discussion also addressed the more classic connotation of the term 'translation', reflecting on the importance of the presence of texts translated into the English language within the museum. Finally, in the awareness that the work at the museum is never finished and constantly evolving and therefore improvable, the paramount need is the coherence of the materials created and offered to the public. The staff talks about how it often happens in other contexts that some art historians create materials without realistically thinking about their end-users. The writers are often the first not to observe the works more carefully. If the gaze in Brera's motto, *Ad occhi aperti* ('With open eyes')[355], becomes an essential vehicle of emotion and reflection, the art historian must first recognise its value and put it into practice.

> N1: Noi tendenzialmente ci mettiamo in gioco senza problemi e non ci facciamo nessun tipo di problema cioè noi rilavoriamo, riguardiamo, ritestiamo, ripensiamo…il lavoro quindi non è mai finito praticamente.
> N2: No. Ci mettiamo spesso in discussione.
> N1: Assolutamente. Sì, sì.
> N2: Per quello non finiamo mai, non diciamo mai "ok questo l'abbiamo fatto basta, punto" no, potremmo sempre migliorarlo.
> N1: È sempre così.
>
> Quello che noi facciamo e che vogliamo sempre fare è che deve tutto essere molto coerente. Cioè non mettiamo un bassorilievo per dire abbiamo messo il bassorilievo, dietro ci deve essere un lavoro che deve essere per chi deve usufruirne. Noi qui in museo abbiamo la nostra bolla e pensi che tutto sia così, vai in un altro museo banalmente qui vicino entro e mi trovo le caposcheda in braille sulla base a terra della statua nonché la didascalia (caposcheda) sempre sulla base. Io già come visitatrice normodotata non vado a vedere là sotto, vuoi che un non vedente vada a toccare esattamente là sotto nel basamento dell'opera? E tu anche dici: ma allora ma per chi l'hai fatto questo lavoro? L'hai fatto per te? Perché è ovvio che bastava pensarci cinque secondi… cioè non lo mettere fai prima, è meglio non metterlo quando è così (N2).
>
> Ma un visitatore tipo e ti dico, quel museo era anche vuoto, come puoi pensare che ne tragga un beneficio se tu mi metti la didascalia con caposcheda a quattro metri di distanza sulla parete? (N1).
>
> In storia dell'arte (…) c'è tanta tanta teoria, che poi basterebbe banalmente guardare il dipinto per non parlare così tanto. Però vabbè l'esempio che racconto sempre anche ai bambini del nostro bacio di Hayez: quell'ombra lì dietro ha scaturito milioni di testi con milioni di ipotesi tra cui quella che è finita anche nell'audioguida ufficiale, che è quella di un soldato che sta arrivando ed è questo il motivo per cui stia scappando. Ma se tu lo avessi guardato bene, tu che hai scritto quel testo lì avessi guardato che lì…c'è una cuffietta. C'è una signora! Quell'ombra lì in realtà si vede benissimo chi è: è una balia, è una donna! Per cui questo soldato dove sei andato

[355] See *Chapter III*, par. *3.1*.

a prenderlo? Non potevi guardare prima di dire cose? È proprio un esempio lampante di come veramente scrivono testi senza guardare (N1) [356].

The staff expressed great interest in the collected data, asking to receive it to scrutinise it more carefully. What emerges from the discussion of the pedagogical documentation in the FG is a confirmation of how the theme of inclusion is inseparable from the contemporary concept of the museum, and Easy-to-Read language is one of its possible declinations as a vehicle for museum enjoyment suitable for multiple audiences. The same staff uses it as the primary tool, recognises its impact on different target audiences, and wishes to expand its usage, not only with the already existing "Museums for All" guide but also by creating new labels in Easy-to-Read language for families. The FG has increased the staff's awareness of the value of interaction in shaping a meaningful museum fruition, both in adults and children discovering the galleries. Substantial and recognised throughout the group is the educational value of the aesthetic experience and how an accessible language can promote both learning and integration at the museum, at school, and in the community.

[356] "N1: We tend to get involved without any problems, and we don't have any problem, that is, we rework, we look again, we retest, we rethink... the work is practically never finished.
N2: No. We often question ourselves.
N1: Absolutely. Yes, yes.
N2: That's why we never finish, we never say, "Okay, we've done this, that's it." No, we could constantly improve it.
N1: It's always like this."

"What we do and always want to do is that everything has to be very coherent. That is, we don't put a bas-relief to say we put the bas-relief; behind it, there must be a work for those who have to use it. We here in the museum have our bubble, and you think everything is like this; you go to another museum nearby, and I enter and find the braille header on the base of the statue on the ground and the label (header) also on the base. As an able-bodied visitor, I don't go to look down there, do you want a blind person to go and touch exactly down there in the base of the work? And you also say: But then who did you do this job for? Did you do it for yourself? Because it's obvious that it was enough to think about it for five seconds... that is, don't put it first, it's better not to put it when it's like this (N2)".

"But a typical visitor, and I tell you, that museum was also empty, how can you think that he will benefit from it if you put the label with the header four meters away on the wall? (N1)".

"In art history (...), there is so much theory that it would simply be enough to look at the painting not to talk so much. But oh well, the example that I always tell the children of our kiss by Hayez, that shadow behind there, has given rise to millions of texts with millions of hypotheses, including the one that also ended up in the official audio guide, which is that of a soldier who is coming and that's why he's running away. But if you had looked at it carefully, you who wrote that text there had looked that there... there is a cap. There's a lady! That shadow there, in reality, you can see very well who she is: she is a nurse, she is a woman! So, where the hell did you go to get this soldier? Couldn't you have looked before saying things? It's just a clear example of how they write texts without looking (N1)".

Table 5.1 Summary of results.

Easy-to-Read Language and inclusion at the Brera Art Gallery
Emerged themes during the discussion
- The museum as a place of exchange and conversation - Pedagogical role of exhibit labels - The 'desire to explain everything' - Difference between *interactive* and *interaction* - The value of linguistic simplification - Awareness of the importance of a more transparent and more accessible language as a vehicle for everyone, not just for those with disabilities - Museum communication and museum education are closely related to each other - Importance and value of visitor's autonomy - There is no visitor's autonomy without textual expository clarity on the part of the museum - Availability of staff to question and modify education tools already created - Recognition of the role of the inclusion expert translator
Difficulties encountered and insights
- Often, those who write for the museum are the first not to observe the works of art and tend to write too much - Those who deal with inclusion in the museum stop at the theoretical level and get lost in putting it into practice - Absence of guidelines on inclusion on a national level to be respected by all cultural institutions - Absent exchange and collaboration on good practices between museums in Italy - Gap between museum communication and museum education - Inclusion of hearing and speech impaired, visually impaired and blind visitors: difficulty in creating involving educational tools - Difficulty in writing in Easy-to-Read Language: selection of contents and lexical choices - Theoretical-linguistic aspects clash with museum reality - Difficulty in writing for families - Difficulty in creating a 'captivating' and 'engaging' audio guide for families - Overall necessary coherence between the materials created - The enormous possibilities of a better museum-school relationship
Desiderata
- Increase inclusion at the museum - Extend educational tools to all visitors - Keep inclusion alive in the future, even under a new management

Conclusions
- Inclusion is recognised as fundamental in the making of good museum practices - Easy-to-Read is currently the most proposed language by staff among different types of audiences, including children - Recognised the pedagogical value of relationship, even within the museum context - Awareness of the positive results obtained with the Easy-to-Read language - The staff wants to create labels for families in Easy-to-Read language to encourage interaction

5.4 Further Considerations

This project has successfully shown the positive impact of Easy-to-Read Language on all families at the museum. Nevertheless, to have a more comprehensive view of the study, this paragraph will briefly touch upon some aspects of the research project where Translation Studies and Pedagogy may not align. The theoretical framework's interpretation of inclusive language may not perfectly align with certain pedagogical currents. In particular, from the profound and rich encounter with the Reggio Emilia Approach, an issue that needs further insights and could become a possible limitation has emerged: the value of complexity and its positive impact on the learning process. Drawing on linguistic, philosophical, and pedagogical lenses to highlight discrepancies, we will examine why inclusive simplification should not be feared when discussing museum education.

5.4.1 Limitations of the research project: a philosophical-pedagogical side note on the topic of complexity

The concept around which the perspective of linguistic inclusion presented in this research revolves is what in linguistics is called *linguistic simplification*:

> The term 'linguistic simplification' refers to any process that reduces the structural complexity of a text while trying to preserve its meaning and information content. Simplification is intended to make the text more comprehensible and more suited to the needs, knowledge, and proficiency level of the reader (or listener) without rendering it childish or simplistic (Sigal, 2013).

At the origin of creating an inclusive project of this type is the theory that a text must be 'simplified', i.e., removed from the most difficult phonological, lexical/morphological, semantic and syntactic parts so that more people can understand it. In the case of Easy-to-Read Language, with a specific focus on people with intellectual disabilities, it is achieved by recurring to various means, following the national and international guidelines as a reference point. However, as highlighted in the definition above, simplification never aims to render a text "childish or simplistic".

From a pedagogical point of view[357], inclusive education operations are widely supported and positively affect openness to differences, as Cottini (2019) suggests. Nonetheless, according to some pedagogical currents, in particular from the perspective of the Reggio Emilia Approach - the context in which this translation research flourished - a noteworthy reflection has emerged on the fact that, at the origin of the Easy Language, and more specifically of the national and international Easy-to-Read language guidelines presented and adopted here, there is a vision of disability that looks at what is missing in people with intellectual disabilities, where instead there should be a need to also look at what are the strengths and unexpressed possibilities of this vulnerable audience, that is the gaze that the Reggio Emilia Approach has on the child[358]. The perspective sees all children as "powerful" since they all "have special needs and special rights" (Smith, 1998, p. 201), going beyond the description of possible insufficiencies. Therefore, this viewpoint should be applied to all children universally; valorising their peculiar potential allows them to build knowledge by recognising the richness of differences (Smith, 1998, p. 205). Bearer of his 'hundred languages', every child, if encouraged, can learn by finding his alternative paths. This is also reflected in the issue of labelling disabilities: in the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia, the expression *children with "special rights"* substitutes for the canonical *children with "special educational needs"* (Manera, 2022, p. 149; Smith, 1998, p. 201).

Looking beyond the concept of disability, the same perspective is therefore encouraged by the Reggio Emilia Approach when creating material also in the case of non-disabled children, by viewing each child as a 'rich child' (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 397), with a wealth of languages and resources to express himself and decode his intricate exploration of the world. In this context, the linguistic simplification process could be seen as an attempt to remove the communicative complexity of the museum panels. According to this vision, this operation of linguistic inclusion, if carried out excessively, risks compromising the aesthetic experience at the museum, impoverishing the learning path and thus becoming a potential limit to contemplate while illustrating this research. From this perspective that gives value to complexity - in this case, understood as children's difficulties with the text - follows an invitation to review the concept of 'simplicity' in another light, to reflect on difficulties as added value and less on what could be seen as an endeavour to remove difficulties from the text, thus denying the pedagogical value of the complexity of the whole.

[357] This reflection resulted from a meeting that became essential for developing the research project, which took place during the Doctorate in *Reggio Childhood Studies*, in which the Easy-to-Read Language was presented to the research group to create a shared reflection on the topic.

[358]The theme of inclusion and disabilities is an integral and deeply felt part of the Reggio Emilia Approach; Loris Malaguzzi himself contributes to the development of a model of inclusive pedagogy thanks also to his 19 years of experience at the Municipal Psycho-Pedagogical Medical Center of Reggio Emilia (Manera, 2022, p. 148; Barbieri, 2019, p. 345).

What emerges from this necessary questioning is, therefore, that the concept of "simple" in the Reggio Emilia pedagogical perspective differs from the concept of "simple" adopted in the field of linguistics and translation, having different connotations. By delving into the use of the term and its possible negative connotations in education, it also emerged that in pedagogy, we often talk about linguistic simplification for intellectual disabilities, defining it as *esplicitazione* ('explanation, clarification') supported by integrative descriptions (Gargiulo & Arezzo, 2017, p. 86). An illustrative clarification is, *de facto*, what happens and has happened in this work during the retranslation in an inclusive key with Easy-to-Read Language. The contents are explained with more transparent language; complex terms are made explicit but not removed from the text nor dumbed down - this is the true meaning of 'to simplify'. In essence, the goal is never to sacrifice the subject's complexity. In a multi-disciplinary dialogue, it may be necessary to rethink the terminology adopted to prevent confusion.

To argue the limits highlighted in the research project[359], a theoretical study is needed that reflects on a concept opposed to simplicity around which this study revolves, namely that of complexity. The philosophical-epistemological thought that enhances complexity[360] has implications in all scientific sectors of investigation, intertwining uncertainties and "multidisciplinary problems" (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 9) (i.e., linked not only to philosophy but to linguistics, pedagogy, to engineering, to anthropology, to each science in its dialogue with the others) with the challenges that it entails to face (*Ibidem*). The criticism that is made in an inclusive operation like ours is, therefore, that the path of linguistic simplification, more generally of the simplification carried out by the "advocates of simplification" (Morin, 1988, p. 59) represents an "easy" path, "hasty" and "approximate" to face the far from linear reality with all its many facets. It is an ingenious expedient to avoid facing the gnosiology of the world, where Morin states that in reality, "it is also the complex that we are dealing with" (*Ibidem*). As De Mauro articulates:

[359] From a Reggio Emilia perspective, another aspect questioned is the categorisation of specific products for a type of audience, such as panels for families or Easy-to-Read Language for people with intellectual disabilities. Although in both cases, it has already been widely discussed how they are products created for a specific audience but can then be extended to everyone, as is inherent in the very concept of inclusion, the Reggio Emilia Approach raises the a priori issue of the specific division for categories, the "made for" a specific type of public, not recognising their intentions. The question is: if it is really for everyone, why specify? An example is the invitation to play with objects that are not "children's" toys, as suggested on the official website at the following link: https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/athomewiththereggioapproach/playing-with-everyday-objects/ (last accessed January 2024). The result reflects the value of definitions and the weight of labels in society, both from a deontological and epistemological point of view.

[360] For further information, see *La sfida della complessità* ('The challenge of complexity') by Edgar Morin, in the new Italian edition of *Le Lettere* published in 2017.

> Alcuni, che hanno gran pratica di scrivere e parecchia anche di leggere, si inalberano a sentire questi discorsi. Essi hanno le loro ragioni e vanno, anche loro, capiti. Temono che la richiesta di parlare in modo adatto ai destinatari di un discorso porti alla faciloneria, al semplicismo. Sanno o sono convinti di sapere quanto oscuro, difficile, perfino in parte misterioso è il mondo in cui viviamo. Sanno o credono di sapere che vi sono esperienze rare e strane, difficili da raccontare e descrivere. Sanno o credono di sapere che vi sono questioni scientifiche, filosofiche di grande complessità, che esigono fatica per essere studiate, apprese, comprese (…). Temono che sforzarsi di parlare con limpidezza voglia dire cancellare tutto ciò. Voglia dire dare un'immagine falsa e falsamente rassicurante del difficile Universo e del complicato Pianeta in cui viviamo (2019, p. 146).[361]

The term complexity becomes, in the eyes of contemporary scholars, the only word that can best represent the changes taking place in our era. Complexity becomes a plural epistemological noun, "the complexities" (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 7), with their multiple paths. The constantly evolving world in which we live leads us to redefine the concept of scientific investigation from the perspective of multidimensionality (*Ibidem*), which is increasingly the order of the day and constitutes any attempt at analysing a research topic beforehand.

Complexity is an ambivalent challenge, with two faces that recall the two-faced Janus (*Ibidem*): indeed, there is no complexity without simplicity since it acquires value thanks to the complementarity of its opposite, as suggested by one of the "paths to complexity" proposed by the philosopher Edgar Morin in his construction of a "method of complexity" (Morin, 1988, p. 59). The apparent contradiction of two cognitions, which instead become complementary, opens up an honest "dialogue with contradiction", whereby we are led to "place in a relationship, at the same time complementary and contradictory, some fundamental notions that are necessary for us to understand our universe" (Morin, 1988, p. 55).

It is this rediscovered *continuum*, a spherical conception of reality where everything is intertwined, where complexity and simplicity are the extremes of a *unicum* that begins again, is renewed, and is infinite, just like the possible itineraries of scientific investigation, like the n^n research questions that arise from it. A spherical knowledge, never concluded, never entirely tangible, fuels our curiosity and constant questioning of the reality surrounding us. A sphere that rotates rapidly and incessantly, which is the emblem of an ecological thought (Bateson, 2000) where interrelationships are the lifeblood of continuing along the tortuous and inexhaustible path of knowledge in a

[361] "Some, who have much practice in writing and also much reading, get angry at hearing these speeches. They have their reasons, and they, too, must be understood. They fear that the request to speak in a way suited to the recipients of a speech leads to superficiality and simplism. They know or are convinced they know how dark, difficult, and even partly mysterious our world is. They know or think they know that there are rare and strange experiences that are difficult to tell and describe. They know or believe they know that there are scientific and philosophical questions of great complexity, which require effort to be studied, learned, and understood (...). They fear that trying to speak clearly means erasing all of this. It means giving a false and falsely reassuring image of the difficult Universe and the complicated Planet in which we live".

"relationship of multiple dimensions" (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 7) that interact with each other. The result is a:

> Intreccio di itinerari, con le loro specificità e differenze, con la consapevolezza che proprio approfondirle sia l'unica via per la comunicazione reciproca, per la loro integrazione, ibridazione, distinzione, per la costruzione di un discorso sulla complessità in grado di produrre sempre nuovi punti di vista, e del carattere irriducibilmente plurale dei punti di vista che di volta in volta concorrono e si contrappongono nella costruzione di ogni universo di discorso (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 9)[362].

From the meeting of different points of view, new unknowns arise, and new "types of questions" are defined (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 8). In the complexity of reality, the awareness breaks out that today's is "a new infinity (...) of never-completed knowledge" (Morin, 1998, p. 60), and uncertainty about the "*hybris* of omniscience" flourishes (Ceruti, 1988, p. 25), an awareness of the unreality of the finiteness of knowledge, and that all the answers return to being questions again (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 7).

Morin's seventh way of complexity, that of the "crisis of closed and clear concepts" (1988, p. 53), represents the contemporary reality in which a clear and defined principle causes concern: it is a strong breaking point with the secular "Cartesian idea" according to which "clarity and distinction of ideas are an indication of their truth" when expressed in a "clear and distinct manner". The contemporary crisis of "absolute demarcations sees the truth manifest itself in ambiguities and apparent confusion" (*Ibidem*). In the age of complexity, certainties are crumbling, and rocks of beliefs stand out on the scientific horizon, no longer supporting precise investigation methodologies. A theme is thus investigated by considering all its facets, even opposites, to understand its intrinsic meaning in its most hidden contradictions (Bocchi, Ceruti, 1998, p. 8). The concept of complexity does not exist without that of simplicity, and in building a discourse on simplification, deepening the value of complexity is the only way to build a universal discourse and not just local, based on a single perspective. Like two sides of the same coin, two different itineraries for travelling that meet in a "frontier place" - l'*auberge du lointain* ('the remote hostel') as in Berman's translation metaphor (1995) - the two definitions coexist, leading to one into the other. The general explanation that emerges from them is "in movement, circular" and reflects one of the paths proposed by Morin for complexity, the one based on the hologrammatic principle according to which "the part is in the whole but also the whole is in the part" (1988, p. 52), trying to grasp the meaning by going "from the parts

[362] "Interweaving of itineraries, with their specificities and differences, with the awareness that deepening them is the only way for mutual communication, for their integration, hybridisation, distinction, for the construction of a discourse on complexity capable of always producing new points of view, and of the irreducibly plural character of the points of view that from time to time compete and contrast in the construction of every universe of discourse".

to the whole and from the whole to the parts. The understanding of global or general phenomena requires links, comings and goings, going back and forth between singular points and sets" (*Ibidem*).

Thus, a new concept of complexity is defined as more "creative and fruitful" because it also includes the concept of simplicity. This demonstrates what was argued by Bocchi and Ceruti (1988) and Morin (1988; 2017), how all knowledge is multidimensional and strictly linked to an "individual" experience increasingly directed towards a "multidimensional thought" (Morin, 1988, p. 57). The "redefinition of coordinates" (Ceruti, 1988, p. 25) becomes "an opportunity for new that which is possible" by discovering different "aspects of the same reality", which must be "distinguished" but at the same time made "communicating" (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988, p. 10).

> (…) Tutte le complessità a cui ho fatto riferimento, costituiscono il tessuto della complessità. *Complexus* è ciò che viene tessuto insieme, e il tessuto deriva da fili differenti e diventa uno. Tutte le varie complessità si intrecciano e si tessono insieme, per formare l'unità della complessità. Ma l'unità del *complexus* non viene con ciò eliminata dalla varietà e dalla diversità delle complessità che l'hanno tessuto (Morin, 1988, p. 56)[363].

The response to the recognition of complexity is the path towards an increasingly "dialogical thought" (Morin, 1988, p. 58), where distant concepts coexist, structuring, as Morin (1988) claims, a "method of complexities (…), which requires us to think without ever closing concepts, to break closed spheres, (...) to force ourselves to understand multidimensionality" (*ivi*, p. 59). Knowledge itself, as the famous French sociologist states, "is a dialogue with the universe", which must continue to be open, entering "the game between clarity and darkness which is exactly complexity" (Morin, 1988, p. 58). Morin describes dialogue by presenting the concept of "uni duality":

> Due logiche, due "nature", due principi sono connessi in un'unità senza che con ciò la dualità si dissolva nell'unità. (…) Anche la scienza obbedisce alla dialogica. (…) Vi è sempre una dualità e un conflitto tra le visioni, (…) intercorrono rapporti di complementarità e di antagonismo. (…) La dialogica "feconda" porta con sé l'idea che gli antagonismi possono essere stimolatori e regolatori (*Ibidem*)[364].

The philosopher goes on to reveal analogies with the democratic form of government. In fact, like democracy, the proposed dialogue "is based on a rule aimed at safeguarding diversity, and thus

[363] "(…) All the complexities I have referred to constitute the fabric of complexity. *Complexus* is that which is woven together, and the fabric arises from different threads and becomes one. All the various complexities intertwine and weave together to form the unity of complexity. However, the unity of the *complexus* is not thereby eliminated by the variety and diversity of the complexities that have woven it together".

[364] "Two logics, two "natures", two principles are connected in a unity without the duality dissolving in the unity. (…) Even science obeys dialogics. (…) There is always a duality and conflict between visions, (…) relationships of complementarity and antagonism exist. (...) The "fruitful" dialogue suggests that antagonisms can be stimulants and regulators".

also aiming at the protection of minorities" (*Ibidem*). In this research project, to build a discussion on simplicity, it is necessary to take into consideration the great value of the "democratic fabric" of complexity, seeing in simplification - its mirror concept - a tool that recognises and fully supports its value but decodes it by allowing it to be narrated, despite its feared unspeakability, with all its darkness and magic:

> Parlare e scrivere con limpidezza, nel modo più ordinato e largamente accessibile che sia a ciascuno possibile, non significa cancellare dalla vista ciò che è raro, strano, difficile, complesso, faticoso, oscuro, misterioso. Anzi, se qualcosa di ciò esiste, parlarne limpidamente, appropriatamente significa proprio rappresentare e presentare ciò in parole. Significa sforzarsi di cercare le parole più comunemente note tra quelle più appropriate e le frasi più lineari per dare espressione alle difficoltà, oscurità, incertezze del nostro esistere (De Mauro, 2019, p.146)[365].

In the words of De Mauro, a renowned Italian linguist and former Minister of Public Education, who collaborated with Loris Malaguzzi and contributed to the research on the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia (Argan et al., 1996; De Mauro & Erbani, 2011), a communal interpretation can be found to unravel the issue raised. From a linguistic-translation point of view, i.e., the theoretical framework of reference adopted by this research, the much-feared linguistic simplification is a tool to make complex contents accessible and clear, which are unfortunately indecipherable for many people. It has a substantial social value, which is also recalled by Article 21 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic (refer to *Chapter I*) and in the right to understanding, which must be guaranteed for all Italian citizens (De Mauro, 2019, p. 154). Simplicity acquires an ethical value, pragmatically representing civic sense, in helping the entire population contemplate complexity's beauty and richness. Specifically linked to the language in our national case study[366], the approach extends to every imaginable context, including international ones, that may require it.

De Mauro states (2019, p. 146) that simplicity should be the tool for all who write and translate texts for a large audience. The writer has to allow others to understand what is written using words that as many people as possible can understand. "Whoever neglects this does his job badly", states De Mauro categorically (2019, p. 147). Expository clarity is a necessity that is better understood and welcomed when it comes, for instance, to administrative language, given that even those who praise complexity recognise the difficulty of *bureaucratese* as an obstacle to essential communication.

[365] "Speaking and writing clearly, in the most orderly and widely accessible way possible for everyone, does not mean erasing from sight what is rare, strange, difficult, complex, tiring, obscure, mysterious. Indeed, if something of this exists, talking about it clearly and appropriately means precisely representing and presenting it in words. It means searching for the most commonly known words among the most appropriate ones and the most linear sentences to express our existence's difficulties, obscurities, and uncertainties".

[366] At this final stage, it is essential to recognise the work's cultural specificity. Replicating the investigation in another context and language may require adjustments.

However, the same welcome should occur in the most varied contexts, institutional and otherwise, "at least in communication aimed at a broad type of public" (De Mauro, 2019, p. 225)[367].

Especially in a cultural institution such as a museum - it is crucial to highlight that our case study and subsequent discussion are centred on the museum context rather than the school setting, as the latter has many other intricate pedagogical nuances to be considered - it is paramount to promote the use of clear and understandable language accessible to all individuals. Otherwise, there is the risk that exhibitions will continue to be the exclusive prerogative of professionals, hindering the active involvement of citizens in the aesthetic experience of society and never managing to make them feel like a contributing part of the artistic beauty of the cultural heritage. By communicating effectively, the museum allows people to become passionate about art, be intrigued by it, understand something about it even if they are not experts, and desire to return. This creates a relationship of trust and loyalty with the visitor who wishes to return to a place where he feels welcomed, of which he feels an integral part. Welcoming and inclusion also pass through the words that are used. We are responsible for recognising their power and social value if we work with the public and if, as in a museum, we aim to involve citizens.

It should be noted that linguistic simplification remains one of the opportunities - not the only one - within a broad spectrum in which very different variables come into play. The variety of options the museum offers enhances visitors' autonomy[368], underlining the most expansive freedom of choice in experiencing the museum. At their leisure, visitors can follow their own pace and choose the visit route that is most suitable for them. However, among the diverse possibilities available, the museum must propose a form of inclusive language (both within the structure through the textual dimension offered by different tools and outside it through the digital/virtual dimension, for example on the website). In doing so, the museum can pragmatically ensure freedom of choice for everyone wishing to explore its exhibits. In our study, this opportunity takes the form of a didactic excursion in which, thanks to the same tool, the entire class group puts inclusion into practice and lives a collective aesthetic experience.

Morin's hologrammatic principle (1988, p. 52), which portrays the complex society in which the "everything" of our community "is present" in each of us, also pours out into the contemporary conception of language: in our language used in everyday life, there is the society that we live, and our experience has repercussions from a lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic point of view. The

[367] The medical field is one such example. For instance, the study of Pedrini (2022) demonstrates how translators who are not aware of *Easy* and *Plain Language* when converting an easy text into another language do not adopt the necessary precautions to ensure linguistic inclusion, creating texts whose expository clarity does not follow European guidelines nor respect the purpose of the *source text*.

[368] As previously presented, the *Pinacoteca di Brera* itself underlines the great value of autonomy for visitors in their museum experience and aims to enhance it.

words reflect the path we have come as a society. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that the community is truly inclusive and that the language that describes it is, first and foremost, a concrete example. It is a starting point for a desired "intellectual and moral reform of the whole society" (De Mauro, 2019, p. 155) for a community that, in its democratic language, recognises and includes differences in order to provide "all possible uses of words for all people"[369] (Rodari, 1973/2013, p.6).

It is a "historical leap towards the thought of complexity" (Morin, 1988, p. 60), shaping our conception of the world and crossing the boundaries that were once defined and definitive. Living with uncertainty is an aleatoric category of value (Rinaldi, 2021, p.138) as "doubt, uncertainty and feelings of crisis are seen as resources and qualities to value and offer, conditions for openness and listening, as requirements for creating new thinking and perspectives" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 14). The result is the recognition of how, dichotomously within 'complexity', the richness of the concept of 'simplicity' also coexists.

> I termini con cui diamo corpo alle idee non sono semplicemente denotativi. Si caricano di significati emotivi e le teorie sono spesso sorrette e attraversate da un pathos metafisico che consente collegamenti continui con la storia più sfuggente dei modi di sentire (Rossi, cited in Ceruti, 1988, p. 25).[370]

In this framework of thought, aimed at recognising the value of simplicity without denying that of complexity, we find the compromise solution between the two worlds. A possible encounter between the two visions could be creating an Easy Language Plus (at the moment, there are few studies explicitly referring to the German language) (Maaß, 2020), where according to a specific target of readers - in our case, children - the language is edited to be more straightforward but not overly simplified. Taking into account not only the linguistic aspects but also the pedagogical perspective, which may perceive Easy-to-Read language as too 'limiting' for typically developing children - although the data analysed have demonstrated the children's difficulties in dealing with the original texts - this compromise could nevertheless be found between the two spheres.

As there is no unique version of Easy-to-Read language since it could change according to its audience, a pedagogical proposal more in line with the Reggio Emilia Approach could be, when retranslating, to explicate certain aspects of the texts and not the entire content, in line with the 'hard fun' theory (Papert, 2002) and therefore not considering the child 'a poor child' (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 397) by 'facilitating' his work of discovery. Improve the clarity of the text while safeguarding some original aspects of the source text, such as the rhetorical figures: if ignored, their pedagogical

[369] In its surprising relevance, Gianni Rodari's famous expression describes how civic sense passes through language.
[370] "The terms with which we give substance to ideas are not simply denotative. They are loaded with emotional meanings and the theories are often supported and crossed by a metaphysical pathos that allows continuous connections with the most elusive history of ways of feeling".

and cognitive value, highlighted in Contini (Contini, 2017, 2018, 2021; Contini & Giuliani, 2021; Contini & Cardarello, 2018) and Reggio Children studies (Corte et al., 2022), could be considered a loss and have an impact on the imaginative power of the word in children's thought-language correlation when conversing. A new retranslation is a final proposal for the work presented here, a hypothesis to be tested that aims to open a bridge of dialogue between the two visions, hoping that it can encourage conversation and research on Easy Language by dialogically intertwining these two academic fields[371].

Questioning these aspects leads to a more complete vision of the research project and the theme of linguistic simplification both in terms of Translation Studies and Pedagogy, enriching the vision of the work and developing new awareness. Simplification is a topic of ideological controversy, a theoretical *vulnus* between two distinctive perspectives on reality. Although we cannot reconcile the distinctive views on the topic with this doctoral thesis, we must highlight the importance of the cross-disciplinary debate between Translation Studies and Pedagogy. This rich exchange has raised thought-provoking interconnected issues related to Easy-to-Read language and education that require further research to be inspected.

5.5 Conclusions

With this last part of the research study, we want to demonstrate how, in the project of retranslation of the labels into Easy-to-Read language, from the perspective of *Universal Design* (UD)

[371] An example could be the retranslation of Text 1 (see page 180) as follows:

> **Where is the scar in the painting?**
> Paintings are like books because they tell stories. Tiepolo paints this painting to tell the story of the Carmelites. However, at some point, the painting was split into two parts. As a result, the painting lost pages of its story and became incomplete. The Brera Art Gallery has managed to sew the parts of the painting back together, but one scar remains. Can you find the scar? Why do you think someone decided to cut the painting?

Compared to the Easy English version (see page 202), this retranslation maintains the simile in the Source Text (ST): that of the painting compared to a book, with the canvas representing the book pages. In the ST, this aspect becomes the common thread of the entire narration behind the artwork illustrated in the label. The new Target Text (TT) proposal follows the same narration, making the storytelling more straightforward while providing leeway for complexity. The revised retranslation retains the metaphorical language of the *scar* and the act of *sewing* undertaken by the museum to restore the painting; furthermore, complex terms like *Carmelites* are maintained to spark curiosity in children, and there is an overall avoidance of detailed explanations. The text's layout is preserved to minimise end users' stigmatisation, following the standard language version (Maaß, 2020, p. 275). This retranslation could represent a fair compromise between the two visions, being more demanding and likely to ignite creative exploration for children. However, it is essential to highlight how this is only a draft and a retranslation proposal that does not correctly represent Easy Language Plus nor the pedagogical vision of complexity. With this awareness in mind, it is also important to stress that Easy Language Plus is an under-researched topic with very few experiments specifically related to the German language (*Ibidem*). Further research is needed to outline its linguistic features, test its efficacy, and expand its application to more languages.

- a term first coined by the architect Ron Mace in the 1980s[372] - which leads in *Design for All* (DfA) (EIDD 2004[373]), the use of a more transparent and more linear language becomes a democratic opportunity for everyone. Within the group of children with whom we worked - with their respective carers - there was a small percentage of children with special needs and others whose native language was not Italian. To involve the entire class group, we decided to propose the same visit to everyone through Easy-to-Read retranslations, avoiding implementing separate paths during the educational trip. This allowed all children a self-directed museum experience of involvement and interaction, confirming the Easy-to-Read language perfectly suitable for children at the museum.

From the interactional stance - the main analytical focus applied in our research to evaluate the impact of the retranslated texts - the documentation demonstrates how dialogical interaction is a fundamental and recognised element in the interface with the work of art, fostered by the panels for families, a precious opportunity to enrich the interchange further. *Panels for young and old* offer a perspective to talk about art, and visitors reinterpret it freely according to their situational and relational context. In this digital era, exhibit labels can still be considered a museum educational resource if well designed. Nevertheless, in comparison with the first part of the data collected before the inclusive rewritings, the interaction evolves; the children express themselves in their hundred languages - or more than a hundred, as De Mauro would argue (Argan et al., 1996, p. 57) - showing a greater involvement with the work, the texts, the museum space, the activities proposed, and the parents at their side.

Thanks to the Easy-to-Read Language, the children understood the text independently and more efficiently and could dedicate themselves to the activity of the panels. The interaction, though present in the *ex-ante*, is more prosperous and focuses more on the enjoyment of the museum experience. The process of reading and understanding the texts sparks creativity enriching the parent-child exchange. By having at their disposal a maximally comprehensible text, families can therefore dedicate their museum time to the proposed activities, starting from observing the painting. Through a more inclusive language variety such as Easy-to-Read, museum engagement is extended to all children participating in the project and their families, including the ones with disabilities and those from different cultural backgrounds. There are signs of interactional improvement in all cases analysed, conveyed both in the form of bodily movement and contents expressed orally.

[372] There is no precise date attesting to the invention of the definition, but this new philosophy opened the doors to understanding inclusion in all fields in the following years. According to Mace: "Universal design is a design that's usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation of specialised design". More information on the official website is available at this link: https://universaldesign.org/definition (last accessed January 2024).

[373] The European Institute for Design and Disabilities (EIDD) introduced the newly updated philosophy of *Design for All* at the Stockholm 2004 conference. From the official website: https://dfaeurope.eu/ (last accessed January 2024).

Although Visitor Studies currently focus more on the interactional dimension, much more can be done to explore its declinations that take shape directly in front of an artwork and their importance in defining the audience's museum experience - and reflexively, their learning process. Furthermore, video observation is a resourceful tool for improving museum offerings: the contributions that audio-visual recording could offer to Museum Studies are innumerable and could help design better museum spaces for all visitors. The possibility of sharing the video data collected with the museum's Educational Services staff made the documentation pedagogical, giving rise to a critical shared reflection on the essential nature of inclusion in the museum. The data discussion led to a very positive appreciation of the work carried out, having an immediate impact on the museum's agency: a new awareness of the possibilities of Easy-to-Read Language has blossomed, as the personnel wants to create new Easy-to-Read Language materials as a permanent museum proposal for all visitors. The desire is to extend this example of good practice to the entire Italian museum system, raising more awareness on the topic.

To conclude, Easy-to-Read Language was created to ensure language inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. Nevertheless, it can also aid those who face difficulties understanding a text, such as children, migrants in a transitional phase of language learning or older people (Sciumbata, 2022, p. 17). As language mirrors society, cultural institutions such as museums must pragmatically contribute to fostering inclusivity with forms of language optimisation like Easy-to-Read Language. The objective is to develop a cultural democracy through practising in the museum space what Roghi (2023) defines as an "internship of democracy", ensuring an engaging visiting experience for all audiences. Easy-to-Understand (E2U) languages can make museums more accessible and fulfil their social mission, strengthening community networks by implementing actions that encourage active participation while guaranteeing equal rights for all (ICOM, 2024[374]).

[374] From the ICOM Official Website, available at the following link: https://icom.museum/en/research/cultural-democracy-and-inclusion/ (last accessed January 2024).

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions

Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.

Verna Myers[375]

This work aimed to investigate an emerging inclusive language variety, that of Easy Language, in relation to new application contexts - the museum setting - and new possible end users - families. To analyse families' language inclusion in their museum visit, a multifaceted theoretical framework emerges, in which linguistic themes are interwoven with pedagogical ones to obtain a more comprehensive view of the research topic. In the field of museum practice, museum communication and museum education flow into each other. Therefore, the thesis, with a view to linguistic inclusion and museum education, combines the world of Translation into dialogue with that of Pedagogy, recounting a translation experience within an informal learning context such as the museum, stitching it all together in a pedagogical documentation that aims to recount the inclusion of families in the museum. The multidisciplinary vision that has emerged results from the interdisciplinary context in which this research has grown. We will summarise the results below.

[375] Dr Myers is an Inclusion strategist and American activist (Cho, 2016).

The first part of the pedagogical documentation (ex-ante retranslations) highlights the interaction of families in front of works of art, highlighting the positive value it has in their museum experience. Interaction can be depicted as an intricate interface of different languages sparked among two or more visitors by the museum ecology, taking place during informal learning between galleries. By providing tools that foster engagement, the museum becomes "alive", actualising the concept of a museum as a "verb" that animates culture and encourages the development of a learning avenue comparable to a social forum. The *Pinacoteca di Brera* places the value of interaction at the centre and encourages exchange through its *panels for young and old*, which prove to be a successful tool that fosters the parent-child dialogue dimension in their museum enjoyment. With its *Brera Approach*, the museum confirms its avant-garde role and recognition as a best practice case in the field. It applies the *constructivist museum* theories that connect society and education and proposes a laboratory of different narratives – of which the family panels are part– that can help cultivate relationships. Family labels are part of the visual literacy path, praised by Director Bradburne, that guides the reader in supporting his actorship. As a result, children actively respond to the museum's invitation to talk, co-creating dialogue and artwork significance with their parents. Families become the protagonists of *infinite games* (Carse, 1987 cited in Bradburne, 2000, p. 151), open to countless interpretations.

Interactional patterns borrowed from sociology help to present in detail the behavioural nuances that take place in front of works of art and allow us to observe in more detail what happens in the co-construction of meaning that takes place within the museum. Compared with traditional panels, where interaction is partially fulfilled, the study of sociocultural means shows how the involvement is greater with panels specially designed for families, with playful activities that allow the child to establish connections with the accompanying adult and the work of art. It is an exchange that enriches also the adults involved, with the museum becoming a social context and meeting place. The interaction between the two actors influences the child's learning and aesthetic experience in an exchange where infinite languages meet and complete each other, stimulating a deeper reading of the lived experience. In the museum's role as storyteller, the panel thus plays a significant role in children's enjoyment of the artworks and their stories. With its *user-languages,* it is the meeting point between the museum and families (Bradburne, 2000, p. 98). The explosion of creativity and imagination conveyed through verbal and non-verbal languages starts with the reading of the label; nonetheless, if its understanding is compromised, it risks reducing the interactional experience to a one-way encounter, unhinging its balance, making it more of a clarifying process of the adult towards the child than a dynamic exchange between two interlocutors, in which the child gradually reconstructs the meaning and proposes his point of view. Data findings describe this recurrent

linguistic asymmetry, which causes what Wilkinson et al. define as "atypical interaction" (2020). Investigated results from both a pedagogical and a linguistic inclusion perspective reveal that autonomy - an element recognised as fundamental to the museum's educational mission - is compromised in the children, who rely on their parents' decoding of the text. It is the latter, in most cases, who read aloud the texts and then explain them. Rarely do children read aloud, and if it happens, it is when they are asked to: they struggle to read more complex terms and interrupt reading. Much space is left for questions concerning the meaning of terms encountered, the pedagogical value of which is unquestionable, but what happens is that the interaction revolves solely around the decoding of the text, of which the parents become mediators for the children by resorting to various ingenious explanatory strategies. The children understand the proposed text solely with the help of the parents, developing only functional competence (Corniglia, 2023)[376]. The resulting unbalanced interaction does not make the child autonomous and free. It stops exploration at the level of understanding the text, which does not let build a dynamic exchange to go beyond the text with reflections and creative activities not anchored to it. Indeed, this is the main objective for which the panels are designed: to give rise to *illocutionary performance* (Searle et al., 1980) and the pragmatics of the learning experience. Also, concerning time, once the interaction is slowed down in order to understand labels, the aesthetic experience in front of the painting is significantly reduced, and the possibilities of creating new value with art, cultivating memory, imagination, multiple interpretations and a sense of inquiry become blurred. Therefore, children's performance is influenced by text comprehension and readability.

Based on these data-driven observations, from a linguistic inclusion stance, the video observation of all the volunteers makes it possible to highlight the elements that create difficulties in interaction, from the often unclear titles that do not directly explicate the content of the text or the activity to be carried out, to complex words (for instance, terms that are not part of the high-usage vocabulary, technical terms, specific artistic-cultural references) that could be clarified and that instead create hindrances for children and often also for parents. Data findings, encompassing observation of young visitors with language difficulties or families whose native language is not Italian, highlight how inclusive rewritings are even more necessary for these users, illustrating that the panels in standard language are an obstacle to their complete museum fruition. All these results

[376] Corniglia (2023), talking about inclusive books for children, states: "Non si cresce come lettori, infatti, se il piacere manca. Casomai ci si dedica all'esercizio della decodifica, ci si allena ad affinare comprensione e interpretazione, ma se scarseggiano la soddisfazione e il gusto di farlo, il tutto si riduce a una mera competenza funzionale" (*Ivi*., p. 16). Here is the English version: "One does not grow as a reader, in fact, if pleasure is lacking. If anything, one dedicates oneself to the exercise of decoding, one trains oneself to refine comprehension and interpretation, but if the satisfaction and enjoyment of doing so is lacking, the whole thing is reduced to a mere functional competence" (*Ibidem*).

combined outline the terrain for improving text readability through Easy Language.

The subsequent research phase, from a linguistic-translational perspective, analyses the texts in detail. It proposes Easy Language versions of a corpus of selected labels in Italian and English, giving rise to a reflection on the challenges of the textual typology both in terms of content selection and the related consequences on aspects such as the graphics and practical outcome - given the typically reduced dimensions of museum panels - and about technical, historical and artistic references and the influence they also have on the lexical and explanatory choices made in the texts. The goal is to balance the desire to guarantee the quality of accessible content while respecting the historical-artistic context in which the translator works. The reflective description of the entire translation process, lingering also on the similarities and differences between English and Italian, shows how writing in Easy Language is anything but a simple task. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the translations reveals an improvement in the texts in terms of readability. These are the retranslations used to implement the second phase of the field experimentation.

The second part of the pedagogical documentation (ex-post retranslation) shows how Easy Language enhances family interaction. It displays how Easy Language enables the whole group of volunteers during their educational trip to enjoy the museum experience through a common tool: the panels retranslated into Easy Language. Easy Language is a variety of languages that made it possible to include everyone, from families with children with special needs to families whose native language is not Italian. The children create a self-directed museum experience, with increased interaction and dialogue as they discover the museum space and the stories behind the works of art, strengthening the relationship and dialogue with loved ones at their side.

From an interactional point of view, in comparison with the data from the first phase, although the interaction was also present before, a greater involvement of the children in the museum experience emerges. The family panels continue to offer a perspective on art, to which the parent-child pair gives shape in relation to their situational and relational moment. However, with their clearer language, labels allow the children to take action and, in the encounter with each other, give different and more profound readings of art as an experience each time.

In relation to the first part of the data, one notices an evolution in the interaction; it is richer, more corporeal and dialogue-based, and it leads the children to explore the work and the space around them, starting from the activities proposed in the panels, in a dance of performances that meet and intertwine with the museum's space, developing relationship within the ecology of art surroundings - representing Myers (2016) concept of inclusion as dancing with the Other. The contents of the conversations also evolve, giving more space to the children's imagination. The children can understand texts with total autonomy, reading aloud or following their parents' reading, showing

immediate comprehension. They engage collectively in the playful activities proposed by the panels, developing a parent-son relationship moulded by reflections, questions, insights, and wits. Interaction is richer, allowing children and adults to welcome the museum's invitation to go beyond the text. Often, the children start the conversation by effectively summarising the text, suggesting an initial interpretation, or answering the questions in the activities. Thus, they become the main actors: Easy Language helps children take control of their reasoning, unravelling new conducts in the museum as in a "flow experience" (Cziksentmihalyi, 1993, cited in Bradburne, 2000, p. 161).

The panel becomes a starting point from which increasingly personal paths unfold, co-constructed by the child and the adult. There continue to be doubts and questions - with their pedagogical value - but the child has a more active role, starting with understanding the source text, making the interaction more complex and multifaceted. Easy Language does not set itself as a limit but invites families to tell something else, to read the work in new ways, to recount their impressions with new languages creatively, not concentrating their shared experience on reading and decoding the text, given the often brevity and fragmentary nature of the museum experience before a work of art. Families' involvement and enjoyment are palpable, and they develop through the parent-child exchange of ideas; with a text that is easier to understand, families prolong their time in front of the work, focusing more on attentive observation. The paintings are admired, and hidden details are discovered in a dialogue interwoven with silence, giving it new meanings (Le Breton, 2019).

All children involved in the experimentation benefit from a more linear language, and the interactional patterns and data collected show that talk and bodily movements are enriched in the discovery process. Moving in rhythm with others, children acquire new skills while cultivating a sense of community. Clear language fosters children's sense of inquiry and improves engagement while giving space to their expressivity. The documentation thus brings out how the dialogue evolves thanks to the presence of highly readable texts and recounts the children's reasoning made up of doubts and points of view. It is a richer negotiation of meanings, made up of arguments - this time also moved by the children - appreciation and amazement of the beauty of art. Furthermore, it physically increases children's space exploration, for instance, by taking unusual viewpoints when observing an exhibit. From the family labels in Easy Language, new reflections also arise on the techniques used in the works, finding new information about the paintings, reconstructing them, or storytelling by linking present experience to lived experience. Ex-ante retranslations, interactional patterns such as storytelling and reformulations were only made by adults, whereas here, their role is to support and reinforce the dynamic rhythm of the interaction.

The documentation process reveals that a more accessible language can foster and not limit the dialogical exchange among families. Easy Language provides a universal key to open new

imaginative scenarios in the blooming of infinite languages creatively staged by children and their caregivers. Results emphasise how an enhanced interaction starts from a clear understanding of texts by the actors involved in the performance. In this view, Easy Language can be a valuable, inclusive tool to let all children experience an enriching and engaging museum visit, and it acts as a framework for family interaction. Thanks to a more transparent language, all children and adults involved have the same opportunity to have a rich aesthetic experience in the museum, to learn, to share, and to discover themselves through the Other and through Art in an educational school trip in which the same didactic tool is proposed for all. Easy Language is a possible museum educational offer—not the only one[377]— which makes it possible to realise that "L'arte diviene di tutti" ('art becomes everyone's) (Magnani, 2023[378]), putting the visitor at the centre, aligning with the new International Council of Museum definition (ICOM, 2022). It thus confers the image of a welcoming and supporting museum, an *agora* that cements inclusivity within a community, increasingly distant from the archaic concept of the museum as "the sacred grove for the chosen few" (Bradburne, 2000, p. 162).

The whole documentation (ex-ante video observation + retranslations + ex-post video observation) becomes truly pedagogical when shared with the museum staff. The resulting discussion highlights how the contemporary museum cannot separate itself from the theme of inclusion. Its declension in linguistic inclusion becomes a requirement recognised and felt by the museum personnel, who positively evaluate the retranslations into Easy Language of the *panels for young and old* designed by them and recognise their positive impact on the families' visit to the museum.

The research raises staff awareness of the value of interaction for children and all visitors in enriching their museum experience and the importance of studying visitor behaviour to improve museums' educational tools. It also impacts the museum's agency: the wish of the *Pinacoteca di Brera*'s Educational Services staff is to create new Easy Language panels to be displayed in the museum's galleries, recognising the aesthetic and educational value they can have on different audiences.

The versatility of the Easy Language is demonstrated by their promotion and use of the "Museum for All" guide (see *Chapter I*) in Easy-to-Read Language with multiple audiences, with the Easy Language thus becoming the principal language variety adopted to let everyone discover art in the museum. The debate also reveals the museum's desire to experiment with new and different

[377] In the museum context, Easy Language can become an opportunity in a broad spectrum of educational offerings. Furthermore, regarding resource implications, it is optional that all museum materials be transformed into Easy Language, given how resource-intensive this inclusive mission can be for a cultural institution today.
[378] From Palazzo Magnani Foundation's official website: https://www.palazzomagnani.it/edu/progetti-di-accessibilita/l-arte-mi-appartiene/ (last accessed April 2024).

inclusive languages to make the museum a welcoming home for all, where everyone can be part and take part in the community[379].

From the shared pedagogical documentation, it emerges that Easy Language (EL) is a topic of great interest for museums that aim to ensure accessibility and inclusion, and that EL is becoming a universal tool proposed to the widest variety of visitors by the staff during museum visits, encompassing children and adults as suitable end users. Significantly, on the last *National Day of Families at the Museum* (2023), cultural institutions distributed a booklet in Easy Language to all families in order to make the experience concretely accessible to all[380].

In the discussion of the results, the intense stigmatisation that Easy Language suffers in the eyes of society also emerges; simplifying is seen as a loss of richness, complexity, and a trivialisation of reality. Nevertheless, as argued by numerous scholars and language experts, simple does not mean trivial, and Easy Language becomes a way to tell complexity to those who struggle to understand it, not a way to deny it (De Mauro, 2019; Piemontese, 1996); it becomes an optimisation of language that embodies a possibility to make communication effectively democratic, i.e. more comprehensible to as many people as possible within society, in order to make them feel an active part of a community. A possibility, but not the only one, in the sense that by promoting Easy Language, its advocates do not want to remove different forms of language from the communication landscape. In the spectrum of available language variations, we aim to stress the importance of having the possibility to choose, especially within a place that proclaims itself open to all, like the museum.

Easy Language, a form of language created for people with intellectual disabilities, thus confirms itself as a tool that can be extended to more types of audiences, such as families (and especially children) and in more varieties of contexts, such as museums, bringing to fruition that social mission of the museum and of society as a whole that wants to guarantee active participation in the most diverse sectors to as many people as possible. The research thus fulfils its primary purpose, that of "documenting to include", by illustrating a case study that aims to raise awareness on the issue of accessibility and linguistic inclusion in the context of cultural heritage and how inclusive language can foster the interactional framework of the museum experience.

This, etymologically speaking, wants to be a "(non) conclusion", as Reggio Emilia's *atelierista* Mara Davoli would say (Davoli et al., 2023), which tries to freeze a frame in the research journey, aware that it is always in the process of becoming, with evolving suppositions that may

[379] When writing this concluding section, the Brera Museum has announced a new project on Spoken Easy Language entitled "Illustrami l'Arte" ('Show me the art'), in which children collaborate with individuals with intellectual disabilities (Galimberti, 2024).
[380] For more details see *Chapter I*.

change dress, and themes that may require a different reinterpretation. “Conclusion” is a term that cages this research and marks its boundaries when the intention is to open the doors to ever-new reflections and points of view and to investigate the theme of making information accessible as broadly as possible. The case study is a snapshot of a moment in the research, aware of how it can change and be interpreted differently by other subjectivities and sensitivities. It wants to pull the strings of the discourse without giving something definite and specific since the value category of our sense of doing research and the engine of the sense of inquiry is precisely uncertainty (Rinaldi, 2021, p. xx). Moreover, in the uncertainty of this work, in its proposed readings of the subject, in its doubts and limitations, new avenues for doing research are opened up for an ongoing search for meaning.

6.1 Paths for future research and desiderata

There is still much to be investigated regarding Easy Language in terms of research. Being a multifaceted topic, there are many possible perspectives of study, weaving together different research fields. In the following pages, we will outline some paths for future research and conclude with the desiderata.

Many current works are anchored to a theoretical level and need practical development. Among the principal paths for future research is a lack of reception studies that, through practical application, can demonstrate how to improve the guidelines or, in general, the linguistic characteristics that define Easy Language. There is a lack of specific studies that test Easy Language in different fields and formats, crossing the broad spectrum of multimodal and multimedia communication (e.g., audiovisual material or spoken language are in their infancy as research areas). There is a lack of studies on the principal target group, persons with intellectual disabilities, but also on more types of audiences that could benefit from Easy Language as well as on who should then use these guidelines, such as text editors. Also, the reaction of readers with typical development needs to be deepened. There is also a lack of more targeted studies on the reading and comprehension process implemented by different types of audiences. To undertake these research paths, realms such as pedagogy, linguistics, translation, psychology and sociology could collaborate and make the results more comprehensive.

Overall, there is a lack of international collaboration (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021, p. 15) in both institutional and academic research, a network that needs to be strengthened and from which countries like Italy could benefit, drawing inspiration from the good practices of states that are further ahead in the realisation of a more linguistically inclusive society. Besides projects, international cooperation could also lead to comparing studies on different Easy Languages.

In linguistic terms, Corpus Linguistics could collect texts in Easy Language for more in-depth analysis and quantitatively compare the readability and comprehensibility of the texts in order to define and improve Easy Language features. Specifically, readability indices should be developed for an audience with intellectual disabilities to examine the usability and textual complexity (Perego, 2021; Sciumbata, 2020, 2022). The holistic aim is to improve rewritings, seeing it as a process that can continually be refined over time (Kimble, 1992).

This research revealed that even in the case of the Easy Language, the **'**one size fits all' principle does not work. One should consider creating language varieties that start from the Easy Language concept but evolve to become tailor-made for a specific audience, however utopian it may be to reach and respect the needs of each user. An example is the studies on children, a target group that needs to be investigated in depth. Linguistically, interesting analyses could implicate creating a more specific variant of language simplification, such as an experimental form of *Easy Language Plus* (Maaß, 2020), as discussed in *Chapter V.* Another example could be a specific Easy Language targeted at people with dyslexia.

In the pedagogical sphere, it would be interesting to explore its potential through inclusive experiments in the school context, such as the illustrated Fredduselli's project (2016), by working on inclusive workshops that can involve the entire class group, not just children with disabilities, while measuring their inclusive impact. Furthermore, another area worth investigating is studying whether Easy Language can be implemented for non-disabled children – for instance, recurring to Easy Language as a didactic tool for second language learners (Ahrens, 2022) - and in which contexts it may be too limiting - an example is the case of creative writing, which has reasonably different objectives and educative purposes, as pointed out by Piemontese (2023).

Furthermore, in the perspective of *libri senza aggettivi* ('books without adjectives'), Grasso and Corniglia (Corniglia, 2023; Grasso, 2023) invite us to rethink and remove definitions that label material as "for a certain disability" and cultivate a variety of linguistic possibilities that become keys to access for all children, disseminating materials with various forms of accessible language that can be used by all within the educating community. As the first scholar points out, "Books designed expressly for the pleasure of releasing beautiful stories to people with one or more disabilities are not precluded to people without disabilities, and the reverse is also true"[381] (Grasso, 2023, p. 12), realising that idea of *sconfinamento* ('trespassing') on the subject of disability that marks another path for research on the topic.

[381] Translated from the original Italian text: "I libri concepiti espressamente per il piacere di sprigionare belle storie a persone con una o più disabilità, non sono preclusi alle persone che non ne hanno, ed è vero anche il contrario" (Grasso, 2023, p. 12).

Regarding content being made accessible, the application of Easy Language is still in its early stages, especially in Italy. There is a great variety of information to be simplified, not only those which are essential to ensure everyday life in the public façade (e.g. in the medical field, in the relationship between doctor and patient) but also, for example, the field of entertainment, media, education and culture. Within the latter, an instance is the field of literature. It would represent a step forward to offer the possibility of reading great classics of literature to people with disabilities. However, it is a challenge for translators and a much-debated issue with conflicting views on managing their simplification.

In the technical and technological sphere, new frontiers are exploring the possible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in drafting texts, assisting editors to optimise the writing process, or supporting people with disabilities in the reading and comprehension process.

In the desiderata, this thesis aspires to shed light on Easy Language and its possible applications in museums, raising awareness among museum staff. What emerged from the focus group with the Picture Gallery's Educational Services is a missing museum's network and a communal distinctive vision of language inclusion, which would also help disseminate examples of good practices from which cultural institutions can mutually take inspiration. However, a general lack of a common front at the national level exists. There is a strong need to raise awareness among institutions and organisations to unify a position and promote Easy Language, putting inclusion into practice and developing unique guidelines for the Italian language that can become a point of reference for all involved (Perego, 2021). This fragmented landscape, derived from the lack of a common stance on the issue, also impacts the legislative level. In this perspective, there is a desire that public and political awareness of the issue may grow in a country where the battle for linguistic clarity has been waged by exponents such as Gramsci, Don Milani, and Calvino, even though there is still a strong tendency (or 'temptation' as De Mauro defines it) in the Italian language to recur to more erudite terms (2016)[382].

A missing component in this research is co-creating the texts directly with people with intellectual disabilities from the beginning of the process or at least in the final part of the revision. Although not included in this thesis, there is an ongoing collaboration with *Anffas Nazionale* to improve the texts created through collaboration with the first recipients. This further part of the work makes it more complete and inclusive - in addition to testing it on families, the test with the specific target audience enriches the work. It brings new reflections on Easy Language and the specific context of application. Another path to take, albeit complex at times to implement as manifested in various

[382] De Mauro wrote: "La tentazione di ricorrere al sinonimo più colto o che suona tale pare tuttora scritta nel profondo stesso della lingua che usiamo" ('The temptation to resort to the most cultured synonym or one that sounds like it still seems to be written in the very depths of the language we use') (2016).

guidelines we have dealt with, is to involve persons with intellectual disabilities not only in research and the development of this form of language but also in training, designing projects that can involve and make them active contributors to the improvement and dissemination of Easy Language.

In the museum field, our pedagogical perspective has led us to focus on families, and especially on children, in the museum. However, our interest would be to extend the field studies and investigate the linguistic inclusion of more types of audiences and their behaviour in the museum: people with disabilities, non-disabled adults, and tourists. Regarding formats, it would be interesting to investigate from a linguistic-translational point of view how to make Easy Language texts effective when available on an audio guide or audio description and the challenges for the multimodal varieties in question. In interactional terms, another aspect worth investigating is how to make an audiovisual or, in general, multimedia format not only interactive but also interactional since these tools often isolate the user and diverge from the idea of the museum as a public space. In this regard, it would be interesting for Visitor Studies to go more deeply into the interactional perspective, now recognised as an indispensable element in the museum experience, declining it also in the pedagogical perspective, aimed at testing the didactic tools created by the Educational Services of museums and how visitors use them. It would make it possible to improve them, making the museum aware of what happens inside the museum, enhancing its offers, outlining more targeted routes for those who need them, and becoming more inclusive. Knowing more about the museum experience would allow museums to increase awareness and define museum communication tailored to each visitor.

Concerning the Video Observation methodology, the thesis aims to demonstrate its usefulness and richness in the construction of pedagogical documentation, which offers endless possibilities for reinterpreting the data on the basis of the research intentions and disseminating the results. In our case, it becomes interactional, pedagogical, and linguistic, following the thread of inclusion. Also, in the case of museums, as Heath et al. suggest (Heath et al., 2010), this methodology exceeds tools such as questionnaires distributed at the end of the visit that do not capture the real essence of the visit. In contrast, the video investigates the essence of informal learning at the museum that happens live, in *medias res* between galleries. Video observation enhances Visitor Studies, allowing a deeper understanding of what happens when visitors explore a museum's galleries. It guides the institution to refine its communication techniques and didactic offerings, improving the museum's relationship with its users (Bradburne, 2000, p. 147). Understanding what happens in front of works "makes the difference between a museum where visitors merely poke about the exhibitions, and a museum that supports its users by creating a world where they can exercise and develop new activities, a world where time can be concentrated" (Bradburne, 2000, p. 163).

In this perspective of museums as demiurges of new worlds, the wish is that cultural

institutions can increasingly communicate with a more transparent and accessible language, supporting the social fabric and shaping a dialogic community based on the right to access cultural heritage for all, generating new value for society. Making words *habitable* (Petit, 2010) means making the world comprehensible, including allowing everyone to engage in aesthetic experiences - such as a visit to the museum. Reconnecting with a public place like the museum and weaving networks between different audiences through the reasoned use of words create a strong bond between persons and territory. The social ripple effect is significant: experiencing beauty through inclusion means encouraging citizens of all ages to desire and expect these characteristics to become those of all life and society, echoing the Malaguzzi political perspective (Rinaldi, 2021). That is the final desiderata, that inclusion becomes increasingly a participatory issue, namely a democratic issue, and that in this scenario, we shall not forget that, as Carofiglio emphasises, ‘democracy lives on precise words’ (2017).

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