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**ENHANCING CHILDREN’S MUSEUM EXPERIENCE:
A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE MOMA AUDIO PICTORIAL
DESCRIPTIONS**

ABSTRACT. In line with the definition of institutions as being “in the service of society” (ICOM 2022), over the past decade museums have developed new communication strategies to promote accessibility and inclusion in cultural heritage experiences. In pursuit of this goal, they have sought to diversify their communication approaches to reach categories of visitors that may not always have equal access to museum experiences, such as people with visual impairments or children. As a result, new and complex forms of communication have been created to meet the needs of these specific visitor groups.

This paper aims to investigate museum communication for children focusing on the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in Manhattan. The study proposes a linguistic investigation of a corpus of twenty audio-delivered pictorial descriptions in English, designed for normally sighted children. Building on the results of a previous investigation, the analysis focuses on the questions and invitations found in the scripts, and more specifically on the verbs used in these segments and the semantic categories they activate.

To this end, the segments of the scripts containing questions and invitations were automatically semantically tagged using the free *USAS* English web tagger (*UCREL Semantic Analysis System*). The tagging results were interpreted using the *USAS* Semantic Tagset, and the main semantic categories were identified. Finally, the use of verbs was analysed in context and framed within Faber and Mairal's (1999) taxonomy of domains of the primary lexicon of English verbs. In the conclusions, the results of the analysis are discussed from the perspective of popularization strategies.

Keywords: Museum of Modern Art; museum communication; popularization for children; social inclusion; semantic categories.

ABSTRACT. In linea con la definizione di istituzioni “al servizio della società” (ICOM 2022), negli ultimi dieci anni i musei hanno elaborato nuove strategie per rendere la comunicazione relativa al patrimonio culturale accessibile e inclusiva. A questo scopo, i musei hanno cercato di diversificare i loro approcci comunicativi per includere categorie di visitatori che non sempre godono di pari opportunità nella fruizione dell'esperienza museale, come i visitatori con disabilità visive o i bambini. Questo processo ha portato a forme complesse di comunicazione, progettate per soddisfare le esigenze di questi specifici gruppi di visitatori.

Questo articolo è incentrato sulla comunicazione museale per bambini e prende come caso studio il Museo di Arte Moderna (*Museum of Modern Art – MoMA*) di Manhattan. Nello specifico, lo studio propone un'indagine linguistica di un corpus di

venti descrizioni pittoriche in formato audio, in lingua inglese, progettate per bambini normovedenti. Partendo dai risultati di uno studio precedente, l'analisi qui proposta si focalizza sulle domande e sulle esortazioni, presenti negli script, rivolte ai destinatari, con particolare attenzione ai verbi utilizzati e alle categorie semantiche in essi coinvolte.

A tal fine, le parti degli script contenenti domande ed esortazioni sono state sottoposte a tagging semantico automatico mediante lo *USAS English web tagger* (*UCREL Semantic Analysis System*). I risultati del tagging sono stati interpretati facendo riferimento allo *USAS Semantic Tagset* al fine di identificare le principali categorie semantiche coinvolte nell'uso dei verbi. Infine, l'uso dei verbi è stato analizzato nel contesto e inquadrato all'interno nella tassonomia dei domini del lessico primario dei verbi inglesi elaborato da Faber e Mairal (1999). Nelle conclusioni, i risultati dell'analisi sono discussi dal punto di vista delle strategie di divulgazione.

Parole Chiave: *Museum of Modern Art*; comunicazione museale; divulgazione per bambini; inclusione sociale; categorie semantiche.

1. Museum communication, diversity and accessibility

Since its foundation in 1946, The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has been seeking to provide, in collaboration with its members, a definition of 'museum'

that would be shared and recognized worldwide. In Prague, on 24 August 2022, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM approved the proposal for the following new museum definition:

“a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.” (ICOM 2022)¹

Along with confirming the public and social function of museums (“at the service of society”), this definition clearly stresses the responsibility of museums in promoting accessibility, inclusion, and diversity (“open to the public, accessible and inclusive”). This turn was inevitable considering that in both research and professional practice there has been a shift in the focus of attention from an object-centred museum to a people-centred museum (Hein 2000). In this regard, although the definition “only incidentally mentions communication among many different types of activities” (Bartolini 2021, p. 109), communication is a powerful tool for making cultural heritage accessible also to those social groups who are not always provided with equal opportunities in the museum experience. Indeed, over the last decade museums have explored new approaches for increasing accessibility and inclusion in cultural heritage experience. Such approaches have resulted in complex forms of communication, among which we find audio description (AD) for the

¹ <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/> (last accessed 1st September 2024).

visually impaired, gaming and edutainment (especially for young visitors and children), digitally mediated communication (audio guides, apps), enriched tours involving touching or other sensory experiences.

The focus of this paper is museum communication for children, which will be investigated in a small corpus of audio-delivered pictorial descriptions² in English produced by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in Manhattan for normally sighted children.

2. Knowledge dissemination for children: relevant studies

Of the various types of museum barriers identified by Dodd *et al.* (1998) – physical access, access to information, cultural access, emotional/attitudinal access, financial access, access to the decision-making process, intellectual access, and sensory access – the barriers most relevant to children can be identified in intellectual access. This is due to children's limited experience in visiting cultural venues and, more importantly, their age-related cognitive needs. Bridging the knowledge gap between expert guides and non-expert child audiences can be challenging, as children's cognitive and linguistic skills are not yet fully developed. Consequently, concepts and vocabulary that are familiar to lay adults may well be perceived as

² The term 'audio descriptions' will not be used for these audio texts because while audio descriptions are specifically designed for the visually impaired, the MoMA audio texts analysed in this paper are designed for normally sighted children.

specialised knowledge by children. Furthermore, while simplification is necessary to make content accessible to children, it also involves the risk of trivialisation (De Marchi 2007).

Knowledge dissemination – or popularization – is defined as “a vast class of various types of communicative events or genres that involve the transformation of specialized knowledge into ‘everyday’ or ‘lay’ knowledge, as well as a recontextualization of scientific discourse” (Calsamiglia and van Dijk 2004, p. 370). Given the cognitive needs characterising child audiences, popularization practices are crucial in making visual art accessible and inclusive. Over the last decade, popularization for children in English studies has been investigated in various domains, such as science, newspaper articles, history books, EU institutions, legal knowledge, health knowledge, tourist promotion, cultural heritage.³

To the best of my knowledge, museum communication for children has been investigated by Sezzi (2019) in a study of the Tate Gallery’s website for children (Tate Kids), and in a later study of Tate Kids, MetKids, and MoMA’s Destination Modern Art (Sezzi 2022). Regarding spoken genres, the MoMA audio-delivered pictorial descriptions for children have been analyzed in two previous studies: one focusing on the use of soundscape-based narratives (Fina 2020) and the other on popularization strategies from a multimodal perspective (Fina 2022). The latter study demonstrates that popularization is achieved through various types of questions and

³ For a full account see. F. Bianchi, S. Bruti, G. Cappelli, E. Manca (eds.), *Popularizing, Disseminating and Rewriting for Young Audiences*, special issue of “TOKEN”, 15, 2022.

invitations/exhortations that directly address the child visitor. Building on this previous result, the present paper offers further insight into the communicative strategies employed in these texts by focusing on the verbs used in the exploratory phase of the audio texts to encourage, guide, and enhance the child's exploration of the artwork.

3. The study: data and methodology

The data include the following twenty pictorial descriptions⁴ in English, which were downloaded from the *Kids* section of the MoMA's website:

1. *The Red Studio* (Henri Matisse)
2. *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (Piet Mondrian)
3. *One: Number 31* (Jackson Pollock)
4. *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (Barnett Newman)
5. *The Dream* (Henry Rousseau)
6. *Frontal Passage* (James Turrell)
7. *House by the Railroad* (Edward Hopper)
8. *The Sleeping Gypsy* (Henri Rousseau)
9. *The Piano Lesson* (Henri Matisse)
10. *Still Life #30* (Tom Wesselman)
11. *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin* (Gino Severini)
12. *The Migrants Arrived in Great Numbers* (Jacob Lawrence)
13. *Christina's World* (Andrew Wyeth)
14. *Untitled* (Mike Kelley)
15. *Splatter Chair I* (Richard Artschwager)
16. *Guitar* (Pablo Picasso)
17. *The Magician* (Jean Dubuffet)
18. *Flag* (Jasper Johns)
19. *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (Umberto Boccioni)
20. *Martin, Into the Corner, You Should Be Ashamed of Yourself* (Martin Kippenberger)

⁴ <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/289> (last accessed 3 July 2024). These are the pictorial descriptions in Table 1 that were available at the time of data collection. Due to regular re-organisation of the website, the pictorial descriptions analysed in this study (or some of them) might no longer be available on the website

In the previous study, the scripts were copied and pasted in single Word files; furthermore, the contents were compared with the recordings and checked for consistency. Then, the scripts were annotated by means of *QDA Miner Lite*⁵, a software for qualitative analysis which allows to annotate texts according to sets of codes. The set of codes created for the analysis included, among other features, different types of questions (narrative questions, didactic questions, questions aimed at description) and invitations.

In the present study, in order to investigate the verbs used in the exploratory phase of the MoMA audio texts for children, the starting point is the segments of the scripts containing questions and invitations, which have been automatically semantically tagged using the free *USAS* English web tagger (*UCREL Semantic Analysis System*). The semantic tagging was then interpreted with the help of the *USAS* Semantic Tagset, and any data interpretation errors made by the automatic tagging were checked and corrected. Finally, the use of verbs in the selected segments will be analyzed and framed within Faber and Mairal's taxonomy of domains of the primary lexicon of English verbs (1999).

In the conclusions, the exploratory phase of the MoMA audio texts for children will be discussed in relation to the results.

⁵ <https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware/> (last accessed 25 September 2021)

4. The study: analysis

The analysis will revolve around the following research question: in the explorative phase, what are the main semantic categories activated by the verbs used in the selected segments (questions and invitations) and what are the implications in terms of popularization?

Before delving into the linguistic analysis, a brief overview of the general features of the audio texts under investigation will be useful in order to illustrate what we mean by ‘exploratory phase’.

4.1.General features

Although the collected texts vary in length (both in word count and duration), they tend to be limited to an average of 220 words and approximately two minutes in duration. This is unsurprising, given that children have a particularly short attention span, and longer descriptions could more easily result in a loss of focus. The descriptions are also variable in the way information is organised. Despite this, two main phases can be identified: a narrative or descriptive phase and an exploratory phase, as described in Table 1:

Table 1 – General structure of the pictorial descriptions

	Phase	Content
1	Narrative/descriptive phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Narration of the story underlying the artwork- Description of what is depicted
2	Exploratory phase	<p>Invitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- to visually explore the artwork- to ‘interact’ with the artwork

These phases and their related contents are not to be considered as separate and independent, but rather as interrelated and often blended. Indeed, they tend to be run in parallel, as invitations to visually explore are usually followed by the indication of what can be seen in the artwork. ‘Interaction’ with the artwork may involve changing the proximity to/distance from the artwork for more accurate observation of details, as well as playing games aimed at favouring memorization and raising interest.

The scripts are delivered by a presumably professional speaker (a male or female narrator), and the speech is uttered in a clear way, with purposeful pauses and a well-pace rhythm. In some of the audio texts, second speakers intervene in the narration. These are either actors impersonating fictional characters that narrate the represented

story or children engaged in a ‘peer-to-peer’ discussion of the represented objects or people in the paintings.⁶

Finally, at the extra-verbal level, the MoMA audio-delivered pictorial descriptions can be defined as soundscapes, with soundscape being a composite semiotic system in which speech, music and sounds interact and create a meaning potential (van Leeuwen 1998). In the MoMA audio texts music and sounds do not seem to have been chosen randomly: in several cases they are actually “narrative/description-specific” (Fina 2017, p. 94), as they evoke feelings and emotions that are in line with the stories or concepts that are being delivered by the speaker. Similarly, the sounds inserted in the audio texts can be defined as “confirmatory sounds” (Crook 2019, quoted in Fryer 2010, pp. 206), i.e., sounds that reinforce or amplify the information provided through the narration/description.⁷

We will now proceed with the linguistic analysis, which will focus on the verbs used in the exploratory phase.

⁶ For a full account of these features, see Fina 2022.

⁷ For a full account on the use of music and sounds in the MoMA audio-delivered pictorial descriptions for children, see Fina 2020.

4.2. The use of verbs in questions and invitations

The *Coding Retrieval* tool of *QDA Miner Lite* allows users to retrieve all the segments labelled under a specific code. This feature was used to retrieve all the segments featuring questions and invitations.

In line with the stated purpose of the study, only segments containing verbs where the listener is the subject will be analysed, as these verbs' semantic categories are the focus of our interest. Verbs that merely describe the identity or actions of the depicted characters or objects, instead, will not be considered. Although how artworks are described per se is an interesting topic, it lies outside the scope of this paper and will not be covered due to space constraints.

4.2.1 Questions

In the previous study of the MoMA audio texts (Fina 2022, pp. 326-31) three types of questions were identified:

- 1) narrative questions, i.e., questions regarding possible outcomes in the story represented in the painting and posed to sustain tension and keep the young visitor interested (e.g., “What do you think will happen next?” or “Is he[the lion] going to eat her?”);

2. didactic questions, i.e., wh- questions regarding the objects or characters represented in the painting (e.g., “Now what do you see?”); these were found to be frequently used also in museum websites (Sezzi 2019);

3. questions aimed at description, i.e., questions posed by the narrator to indicate or describe details of the artwork, and often introduced by expressions like “Did you see ...?”, “Can you see/find ...?”.

In the segments containing questions, the most frequently used verbs – where the subject is the listener – are the following: ‘see’ (9), ‘find’ (5), ‘notice’ (4), ‘think’ (4). The verbs ‘see’ and ‘find’ occur with the modal verb ‘can’, as in the following examples from the corpus:

- (1) Where do you think we are? (*The Red Studio* by Matisse)
- (2) What do you notice about the way he made the works of ART in his studio [p] compared to how he made the everyday OBJECTS in his studio, like the furniture? (*The Red Studio* by Matisse)
- (3) Do you see a gap or a seam in between? (*Flag* by Johns)
- (4) But can you find the musician? (*The Dream* by Rousseau)

The automatic semantic tagging of the utterances in which these verbs appear allows us to identify the semantic category associated with each of the listed verbs. For clarity issues, the 21 labels at the top level of the tagset hierarchy are indicated in Figure 1:

Figure 1 – Top level labels in the *USAS* category system⁸

A general and abstract terms	B the body and the individual	C arts and crafts	E emotion
F food and farming	G government and public	H architecture, housing and the home	I money and commerce in industry
K entertainment, sports and games	L life and living things	M movement, location, travel and transport	N numbers and measurement
O substances, materials, objects and equipment	P education	Q language and communication	S social actions, states and processes
T Time	W world and environment	X psychological actions, states and processes	Y science and technology
Z names and grammar			

The results of the semantic tagging for each of the four verbs are listed in Table 2:

⁸ D. Archer *et al.*, *Introduction to the USAS category system*, October 2022. https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/usas_guide.pdf (last accessed 27 August 2024).

Table 2 – Semantic categories associated with ‘see’, ‘find’, ‘notice’ and ‘think’

Verb	Tag code	Top level labels	Semantic category
See	X3.4 (Do you see...?)	Psychological actions, states and processes	Sensory: sight
	Z4 (Can you see...?)	Names and grammar	Discourse bin
Find	A10	General & abstract terms	Open/closed; Hiding/Hidden; Finding; Showing
Notice	X3.4	Psychological actions, states and processes	Sensory: Sight
Think	X2.1	Psychological actions, states and processes	Thought, belief
	Z4	Names and grammar	Discourse bin

As can be seen, the verbs ‘see’, ‘notice’, and ‘think’ are labelled as ‘psychological actions, states and processes’. However, the occurrences of ‘see’ in the question “Can you see...?” has been tagged as discourse bin – i.e., expressions that serve discourse-level functions rather than contributing directly to the core content or meaning of a sentence. This might be explained by the assumption that the automatic tagger considered the verb part of the expression ‘Can you see (what I mean)?’ which, if decontextualized, could be classified as a discourse marker. A similar issue occurs with some instances of ‘think.’ In both cases, however, the analysis of the co-text (and context) clearly shows that the use of these verbs reflects psychological/sensory

processes. Indeed, the narrator is basically challenging children's ability (which is explicitly expressed by the use of the modal 'can') to spot items in the artwork ("Can/Do you see...?"), as well as fostering their critical thinking skills by encouraging them to draw hypotheses about the story underlying the artwork, as in the following examples:

- (5) Where is this woman, and why is there a lion with her? Look closely at the painting. What clues can you find? (*The Sleeping Gypsy* by Rousseau)
- (6) Now, look down in the bottom right-hand corner. Can you find the letters V-A-L-S-E? (*Dynamic Hieroglyphic* by Severini)

These excerpts show that the meaning of 'find' is closely related to that of 'see,' as finding an item logically involves first seeing (or spotting) it. From a popularization perspective, these questions implicitly invite children to employ their observation skills.

The final step in this analysis involves framing the use of the analyzed verbs within Faber and Mairal's taxonomy of domains in the primary lexicon of English verbs (1999, pp. 279-293). The verbs 'see,' 'find,' and 'notice' fall under the "Perception"⁹ category (p. 286), while the verb 'think' belongs to the "Cognition"¹⁰ category (pp.

⁹ Described as "To become aware of the existence of somebody/something" (1999, p. 286).

¹⁰ Described as "To become aware through one's mind" (1999, p. 286).

286-287).¹¹ Thus, the popularization of art occurs by prompting children to activate both perceptual and cognitive processes. This is significant because it encourages children to become active participants in the exploration, rather than passive listeners, by stimulating their observation and critical thinking skills.

4.2.2 The use of verbs in invitations

The previous study (Fina 2022) shows that invitations are used to prompt the listener to observe the painting or identify items in it, as in the following examples:

- (7) Look closely at the painting.
- (8) Take a few moments to walk around this sculpture (*Unique Pose of Continuity* by Boccioni)
- (9) Try to find them. (*The Red Studio* by Matisse)

Other instances of invitations, instead, prompt children not only to observe, but also to play or ‘interact’ with the artwork:

- (10)[...] use your finger in the air to trace where your thread is going. Follow it as far as you can. (*One Number 31*_Pollock)

¹¹ Cf. S. Soler Gallego, *Painting with words: A corpus study of audio description of art*, in L. Carlucci and C. Álvarez de Morales (eds.), *Insights into Multimodal Translation and Accessibility*, Granada, Ediciones Tragacanto 2015, pp. 15-35.

The main verbs used in the invitations found in the scripts are ‘try’ (7), ‘look’ (9), ‘take’ – in the expressions ‘take a few (more) steps’ (3) or ‘take a moment/a few moments to ...’ (2) – and ‘walk’ (3). The results of the automatic semantic tagging are displayed in Table 3:

Table 3 – Semantic categories associated with ‘try, ‘look, ‘take ...’ and ‘walk’

Verb	Tag code	Top level labels	Semantic category
Try	X8	Psychological actions, states and processes	Try
Look	X3.4	Psychological actions, states and processes	Sensory: Sight
Take	A9	General & abstract terms	Getting and Giving; Possession
Walk	M1	Movement, location, travel & transport	Moving, coming, and going

Again, we can see a dominance of the category relating to psychological actions, states and processes. Looking at the co-text and context of the occurrences, an interesting use of the verb ‘try’ can be noticed:

- (11) Try making your own action pose. How can you show energy and motion? (*Unique pose of continuity* by Boccioni)
- (12) Try imitating what you see in them [four yellowish photographs]. (*Martin into the corner* by Kippenberger)

The invitations in these extracts can be defined as examples of edutainment – i.e., entertainment that is designed to be educational. Imitation is indeed part of the games that children play to have fun, so imitating the pose of the sculpture is likely to be perceived by children as a fun activity. However, by imitating the pose, the child is also more likely to remember the artwork itself along with the meaning underlying the pose of the sculpture. From the point of view of popularisation, we can assume that this form of interaction with the artwork helps to bridge the gap that children may perceive between themselves and the art.

As for the verb ‘take’, although the semantic tagger classifies it under abstract terms, its co-text (‘take a few steps’) in the invitations suggests that, like ‘walk’, it falls under the Movement label, since the lexical item ‘step’ is classified as M1 (moving, coming and going). This semantic category is also relevant to popularisation: Indeed, the invitations to move closer to or farther from the artwork are typically aimed at helping children recognize key aspects – sometimes even peculiar ones – of the artwork, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

(13) Take a few more steps back. Now look at the most important part of the painting. What? You can't see one? In most paintings the artist shows us what's important. But here, the colors and paint are spread all around so your eyes roam all over. (*One Number 31* by Pollock)

(14) Let's take a walk around this artwork.
It's twelve and a half feet long, made up of different colors and patterns and forms - pink, blue, orange, and green stripes. (*Untitled* by Kelley)

In excerpt (13) the child visitor is invited to distance from the painting to fully grasp the key feature that characterises Pollock's work – namely, the unique way colour is used – distinguishing it from other paintings. Similarly, in excerpt (14) walking around the painting is part of the popularization process: by doing so, the child visitor will be able to observe the many colours, patterns and forms that define Kelley's piece.

In Faber and Mairal's (1999) taxonomy, the activated categories are 'perception' ('look') and 'movement' ('walk' and 'take+ a few steps'). The verb 'try' is difficult to classify as it depends on the co-text that follows. In both excerpts (11) and (12) it can be linked to movement, since in the former the child is asked to reproduce a pose and, in the latter, to imitate what is depicted in some photographs: both actions involve moving the body and/or making facial expressions.

This part of the analysis seems to confirm that the exploratory phase is entirely visitor-oriented, with children being invited not only to observe in depth but also to interact with the artwork. In terms of popularization, movement- and perception-related processes have the potential to make the museum experience dynamic and fun, thereby enhancing the child audience's appreciation of the artwork.

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

Based on the results of the analysis, we are now able to answer the research question posed in Section 4: in the explorative phase, what are the main semantic categories activated by the verbs used in the selected segments (questions and invitations) and what are the implications in terms of popularization?

The analysis has revealed a dominance of semantic categories related to perceptual and psychological processes. The use of the verbs ‘see’ (accompanied by the modal *can*) and ‘find’ in questions and the use of the verb ‘look’ in invitations challenge children’s observational skills. As a result, perceptual processes are activated, with children being invited to make active use of sight to visually explore the artwork.

Intertwined with these perceptual processes are the psychological processes, activated by the verbs ‘notice’ and ‘think’ in questions, and by the verb ‘try’ in invitations. What comes into play here is children’s critical thinking: far from offering ready-made interpretations of the artwork, the narrator constantly encourages children to engage with the artwork and come up with ideas regarding the presence of specific items or possible outcomes of the story, rather than just passively staring at the artwork.

Finally, movement-related processes also come into play, as the verbs ‘take (a few steps)’ and ‘walk’ are used in invitations to help the child visitor grasp the key features of the artwork and hence ‘familiarise’ with it. The switch from an object-

centred view of the museum to a visitor-centred one is particularly visible here, as body involvement is part of a dynamic and active museum experience.

What are the implications of perceptual, psychological and movement-related processes in terms of popularization? The activation of these processes may be assumed to have a significant impact on the child's museum experience: the exploration of the artwork is not conducted in a lecture-style manner, but rather in an interactive way. This interaction engages the psychological dimension whenever the child visitor is encouraged to observe, identify or notice something, as well as to think or reflect on the meaning of the depicted items or the story behind their visual representation. The physical dimension comes into play whenever the child visitor is invited to move in relation to the artwork, whether to better observe its features, reproduce them, or play games with the artwork. Thus, the key popularization strategy from a broader perspective seems to involve making the encounter with the artwork a process of guided but active discovery, potentially incorporating edutainment strategies.

To conclude, a few considerations about the educational effectiveness of this type of popularization are necessary. As already mentioned in the previous study (Fina 2022), according to Sabatini (2017), p. 66) the risk inherent in the “co-construction of knowledge through children's engagement” is that it may trivialize or spectacularize the museum experience by making it “fun but forgettable” (*ibidem*). However, in the case of the MoMA audio texts for children, we can reasonably argue that edutainment

does not seem to compromise the educational value of the art experience. In fact, this value seems to be preserved and reinforced by the cognitive processes activated during the explorative phase, particularly those involving critical thinking. Whether these processes are genuinely effective in fostering learning and knowledge acquisition can only be confirmed through cognitive studies involving child audiences.

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