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The Intercultural Question and the Interpreting Professions

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Navigation and circulation in city audio guides: a comparison between Italian and English

Maria Elisa Fina

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse Italian, British and American city audio guides from a contrastive perspective, in order to identify possible differences in the way(s) audio guides are structured in Italian and in English and, hence, to shed light on issues concerning the creation of English versions of Italian audio guides.

The study takes as a starting point the set of guidelines provided by Neves (2015) to create accessible descriptive guides, and focuses on the aspects related to navigation and circulation. A corpus of fifty professional city audio guides is qualitatively investigated in order to determine the presence and distribution of features related to navigation and circulation, and to identify relevant strategies adopted in the audio guides to favour circulation and navigation. Differences between audio guides in Italian and in English are identified and discussed, and the findings are then compared to Neves's guidelines. Finally, on the basis of the results, translation issues are addressed by providing a list of aspects that could be taken into account when producing English versions of Italian audio guides.

1. Introduction

Along with significantly transforming communication in the tourism domain, new technologies have also contributed to the reshaping of tourist genres by producing interactive, multimodal texts for tourism promotion.

Within this category of multimodal genres, we find audio guides, which can be classified into two macro-categories: city audio guides and museum audio guides, the previous dealing with a variety of sites (castles, palaces,

monuments, open spaces), the latter dealing specifically with artworks such as paintings, sculptures, and similar.

Audio guides have started to raise academic interest only around the 2000s, with studies focusing mainly on techniques for improving usability (Petrelli *et al.* 2001; Luyten and Coninx 2004; Alfaro *et al.* 2005) and accessibility for users with disabilities (Knapp *et al.* 2004; Landau *et al.* 2005; Ghiani *et al.* 2008; Ruiz *et al.* 2011, Neves 2015). As far as the translation of audio guides is concerned, there seems to be a gap in academic research, except for a study by Tempel and ten Thije (2010), who investigated appreciation of cultural and linguistic adjustments in multilingual museum audio tours by international visitors.

To the best of my knowledge, this study represents the first attempt to contrastively analyse audio guides in Italian and in English for translation purposes. As a part of a wider research on audio guides in all their features (Fina 2016), in this study we will focus on specific aspects, which are presented and developed in the following paragraphs.

2. ‘Guiding’ in audio guides: preliminary observations

The audio guide as a tourist genre is presumably designed for particularly independent travelers wishing to sightsee at their own pace and according to their own preferences, without the constraints involved in human-guided tours.

In terms of Dann’s classification of tourist genres according to the stage of trip at which they are used (1996), the audio guide should be designed to be used on-trip, while sightseeing. In terms of communicative function, audio guides cannot be considered promotional texts designed to attract potential visitors. Instead, audio guides are expected to perform mainly an informative function, that is to describe the historical, cultural and artistic significance of the sites, and to *guide* the visitor while sightseeing.

In this study the concept of *guiding* is not limited to ‘guiding knowledge acquisition’ by highlighting the most interesting historical/cultural/artistic aspects of the sites (in the same way as printed tourist guidebooks do), but is also intended in terms of what in tour guiding has been defined as the “instrumental role of the guide” (Cohen, 1985: 17), i.e. facilitating way-finding, navigation and physical access to sites.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the extent to which aspects related to circulation/way-finding and navigation occur in city audio guides in Italian and in English, and the way they are dealt with, in order to highlight possible differences between the audio guides in Italian and those in English.

3. Reference model: guidelines for accessible audio guides

The investigation of circulation/way-finding and navigation in city audio guides draws on studies by Neves, who carried out extensive research on accessible tourism for the blind, with particular reference to multi-sensory communication in museums and best practices in accessible tourism in various countries.

She has defined a series of guidelines for creating descriptive guides (2015) as a result of a three-year EU-funded project¹ (ADLAB), which involved analysing texts in order to identify best practices, testing such practices in audio description on blind and sight-impaired subjects, and drafting strategic guidelines for use by professionals, service providers, teachers and students. The research focused not only on the audio description of films, but also on other forms of audio description, including descriptive audio guides.

The set of guidelines for producing audio guides are categorised by Neves according to the object of description, i.e. descriptive guides of open spaces, architecture, exhibitions, artefacts, paintings, photographs, ‘how-to...’). Neves also provides a specific section dedicated to ‘circulation’, which includes guidelines for way-finding and navigation. These can be summarised as follows (adapted from Neves 2015)²:

Way-finding

- Position the person in relation to the surroundings and in terms of the direction to be taken and give clear distinctive landmarks to identify their position;
- Keep directions to the minimum;
- Provide clear “locators” where people will need to change direction (“turn left or right” might not be enough);

¹ <http://www.adlabproject.eu/>

² The guidelines can be retrieved from

<http://www.adlabproject.eu/Docs/adlab%20book/index.html> (last accessed November 2016).

-
- Offer elements for reinforcement/conferral of position (e.g. “on your left you will find a big door”)

Navigation

- Present the equipment in general terms;
- Describe the layout of the keyboard;
- Identify the keys: number pad, back and forward, rewind, jump and select;
- Explain how to select and activate content, how to pause, repeat and change volume;
- Explain how the map/visit plan and the audio guide work together;
- Explain how the information is organised (sequential, stops, layers, ...);
- State the expected time span for the guided visit.

In short, according to these guidelines, instructing the visitor on how to use the audio device as well as locating and directing the visitor in relation to the immediate surroundings may play a key role for increasing accessibility in audio guides and allowing people with disabilities to fully enjoy the audio experience in the same way as non-disabled people do.

Considering that the guidelines provided by Neves are based on tests conducted on users³, the study presented in this paper is based on the assumption that the presence of the features listed in the guidelines may improve the visiting experience offered by the audio guide. It is important to specify that although the ADLAB project addresses in particular sensorially disabled people, the set of guidelines is meant to benefit also non-disabled people, as clearly stated in the ‘aims and objectives’ section of the dedicated website⁴. Hence, an audio guide designed to be accessible for impaired users is very likely to be accessible for *any* user. Thus, we are moving from a concept of ‘accessibility’ intended as “to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life”⁵ to a more comprehensive meaning, by which what is ‘accessible’ is easy to find, get and use, and also easy to understand and enjoy⁶.

³ http://www.adlabproject.eu/?page_id=47

⁴ The project aims were to: “[...] define a set of international standards and reliable guidelines for the industry and for all users”. See http://www.adlabproject.eu/?page_id=44 (last accessed November 2016).

⁵ Definition from the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD), (Article 9 – Accessibility). Available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml> (last accessed February 2016).

⁶ See definition of ‘accessible’ in the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners.

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/accessible> (last accessed

The assumption at the basis of this study is that information for self-orienting, navigation, and experience optimisation may play a key role in increasing the accessibility of city audio guides. In the following paragraph, we will illustrate the data and methodology used for the analysis, and we will also contextualise Neves's guidelines on navigation and circulation/way-finding in the specific genre of city audio guides.

4. Data and method

The investigation involves a corpus of fifty professional city audio guides, made up of 17 Italian audio guides, 17 British audio guides, and 16 American audio guides⁷. From now on, these three groups will be referred to as 'Italian Corpus', 'British Corpus' and 'American Corpus'.

In order to investigate the aspects related to circulation/way-finding and navigation, the guidelines provided by Neves were re-framed in the specific context of the city audio guide.

Starting from circulation/way-finding, considering that the tours contained in the audio guides do not cover a single site but a series of sites within a more or less extensive area of the city, we will consider the presence of directions to the various stops of the audio guide as the primary aspect related to circulation/way-finding. We will also see whether "locators" and/or "elements for reinforcement/conferral of position" are provided to facilitate self-orienting.

The guideline "Keep directions to the minimum", instead, will be disregarded, as in city audio guides the length of directions will depend on the distance between the two stops involved. Furthermore, as the guidelines also refer to maps/visit plans (section "Navigation"), we will also investigate the presence and types of accompanying maps of the tour and their correlations with navigation and way-finding.

As for navigation, considering that the audio guides selected for the analysis are in mp3 format and can be run on smartphones or other devices that the user is supposed to fully master, the guidelines about presenting the equipment and explaining how to use it may not be relevant to city audio guides. However, since audio guides may also include over 20 audio tracks, it could be interesting to check whether instructions on how

November 2015)

⁷ See *References* for the list of the corresponding websites.

the audio tracks are organised and related to the map, or indications on when to stop and resume the audio, are provided.

To sum up, the features that will be investigated in city audio guides are: 1) the presence of accompanying maps, 2) directions to the various stops of the tour, 3) instructions, and any other useful information favouring safe and smooth sightseeing.

Each feature is first quantified in all three corpora in terms of number of audio guides in which they occur; then, differences between the three groups are identified; finally, the findings are compared to the guidelines proposed by Neves.

What we are interested in is not only quantifying the presence of these features in the three groups of audio guides, but also identifying particular strategies adopted in the audio guides to facilitate circulation/way-finding and navigation, as well as discussing the possible effects that they might have on the visitor's experience. Thus, strategies that are particularly relevant to optimising circulation and navigation will be taken into consideration for the final purpose of this study, regardless of their frequency patterns.

5. Maps

The presence of an accompanying map of the tour can be considered a useful item allowing independent visitors, who prefer sightseeing on their own, to easily orient themselves within that specific trail, without having to locate their position on big city maps or activate GPS and maps on their mobile phones, especially if these devices are used to play the audio tracks. It should also be remarked that international visitors are unlikely to activate GPS while sightseeing because, depending on mobile network carriers, this service could be very expensive unless an international roaming package has been activated in advance.

Table 1 lists the types of map found in the corpus and their distribution across the three groups of audio guides:

| Type of map | ITA | UK | USA |
|--------------------|-----|----|-----|
| screen only map | 1 | 1 | // |
| link to Google map | 3 | 1 | // |
| printable map | 6 | 11 | 14 |
| no map | 7 | 4 | 2 |

Table 1 – Types and occurrences of maps in each corpus

We immediately notice that the Italian Corpus is also the one displaying the highest number of audio guides with no related map. The most common option in all three groups is the printable map, but this feature is definitely more prominent in audio guides in English, as in the British and the American corpora it occurs in more than half of the audio guides. In a few audio guides, a link to a Google map is provided. Due to space constraints, we will not go through the features of the various types of maps, and we will just discuss a few aspects of them.

The choice of directing users to a Google map may be due to an intention to make the audio guide experience highly customisable. Indeed, particularly independent users will appreciate the possibility to customise the map provided by the audio guide according to personal preferences by using Google features in all their potential. In addition to the trail to follow, they may also display other interesting items not included in the audio guide, such as restaurants, off-the-trail sites and similar.

Worth noticing in this regard are the Google maps provided in the audio guides of *Milano* and *Modena*, in which the link directs users to a generic Google map, which they can customise according to a list of options, as shown in Figure 1:



Figure 1 – Google map of *Milano*

By ticking the *Itinerari*' box, numbered stops and a marked trail appear. The landmarks of this trail, though, do not correspond to the audio tracks provided in the downloaded folder. Interestingly, the user may also choose to display events, other cultural and artistic sites, accommodation, etc. The *'stampa risultati'* button (see item in the green circle) allows users to print the customised map and take it with them while sightseeing and listening to the audio guide. Hence, the map in this case does not seem to have been designed to uniquely match the tour offered by the audio guide, but rather to serve as a 'companion' for the user throughout his/her stay in the destination.

In the customisable map of *Modena*, instead, there is no 'print' button, and neither numbered stops nor a marked trail are displayed. Thus, the map is not intended to match the tour, as it is completely unrelated to the audio tracks provided in the downloaded folder.

As far as printable maps are concerned, most maps in all three corpora include numbered and/or titled stops. In most American maps – as opposed to very few occurrences in the Italian and the British corpora – the stops on the map are related to a separate list of numbered or titled stops, which provides the visitor with an overview of the stops included in the tour and helps him/her to keep track of the tour progress.

The presence of a marked trail linking the various stops to each other seems to be more frequent in audio guides in English, with this feature occurring in more than half of the audio guides in both the British and the American corpora. In those not featuring the marked trail, the fact that stops are numbered helps visitors understand where to go first. The presence of a marked trail does not necessarily make the map more intelligible, though. In the maps of *Lexington* and *Little Rock Arkansas*, indeed, even though a marked trail is displayed, the absence of numbered stops makes it difficult to understand where to go first, as shown in Figure 2:

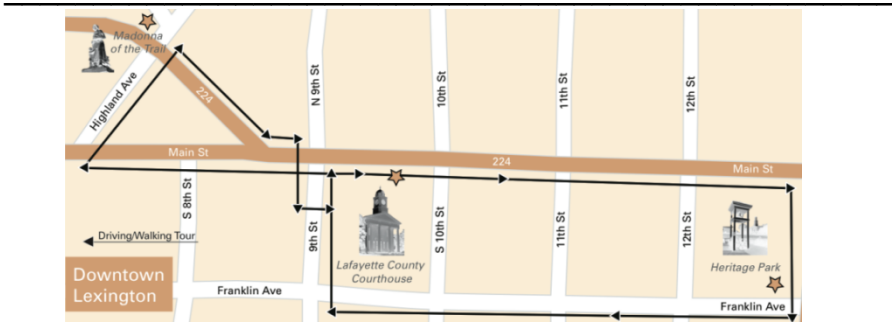


Figure 2 – Printable map of *Lexington*

This means that the visitor will necessarily have to listen to the first track to understand where the tour starts from. Smaller groups of maps also contain features such as thumbnails of the sites to be visited and practical information (opening hours, distance segment, indication of the North point), but these features do not mark a clear difference between the three groups of audio guides and, more specifically, between Italian and English. Particularly interesting is the map reported in Figure 3:



Figure 3 – Printable map of *Edinburgh New Town* printable map

The pictures are lettered and related to a list of items displaying the names of the sites. Additional pictures of notable historical characters are also displayed, along with the names of the characters they depict. Thus, the map not only offers previews of the sites to be visited, but also of the historical contents of the audio guide. This map is also interesting for the fact that optional audio chapters are marked in red.

The map of *London by Rick Steves* displays a note on street width, tube stations and viewpoints as indicated in the legend reported in Figure 4 (see circled items):

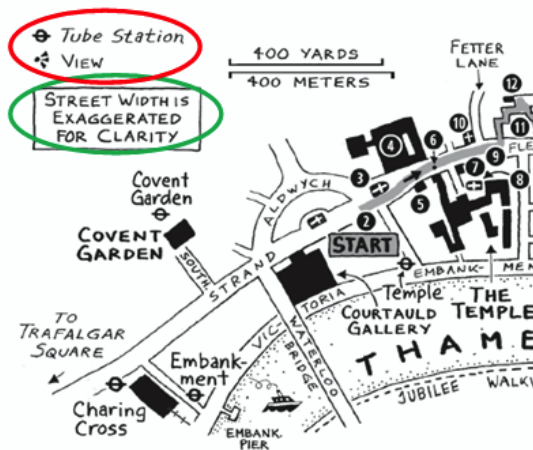


Figure 4 – Printable map of *London by Rick Steves*

As far as the Italian Corpus is concerned, only the *Bologna* map indicates the start and end points and the duration of the tour, and also provides instructions on how to use the audio guide, as reported in Figure 5:

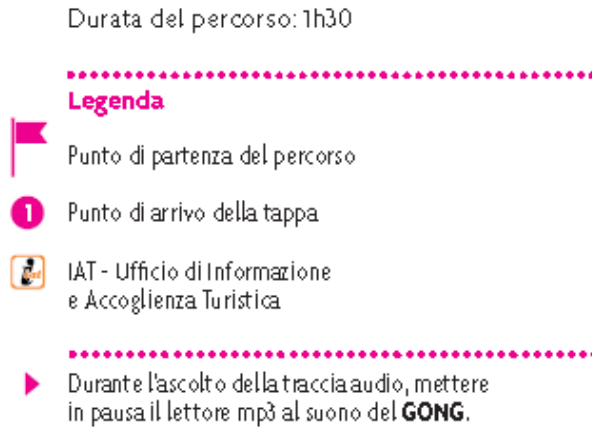


Figure 5 – Printable map of *Bologna*

Interestingly, the lines on bottom of the picture instruct the visitor to pause the player when they hear a GONG sound, which signals the end of descriptive sections and occurs immediately after directions. Thus, it also indicates when the visitor has to move on to the next stop. We will now investigate the presence of circulation/way-finding- and navigation-related contents in the scripts of the audio guides.

6. Circulation/way-finding and navigation in the scripts

Following the contextualisation of Neves's guidelines developed in paragraph 4, the content types related to circulation/way-finding and navigation identified in the audio guides are 'instructions', 'safety advice' and 'directions'.

These were identified in the introductory sections of the audio guides and in the body of the scripts, and will be analysed separately.

6.1 Instructions

The content type 'instructions' in the audio guides includes information on how to use the audio guide, how the audio tracks are organised and related to the map, or when to stop or resume the audio. Instructions were found both in the introductory sections and the body of the scripts, and their presence in the three corpora is summarised in Table 2. As far as

introductory sections are concerned, these occur in most of the audio guides, and basically contain generic information on the tour, such as the area or the sites that will be explored, usually accompanied by welcome addresses and, especially in the Italian audio guides, background information on the history of the city. Obviously, the presence of instructions in the introductions refers only to the number of audio guides actually featuring an introductory section, and not to the whole corpus:

| | ITA | UK | USA |
|---|------|------|------|
| Instructions in the introductions | 0/12 | 6/16 | 7/13 |
| Instructions in the body of the scripts | 6/17 | 9/17 | 8/16 |

Table 2 – Occurrence of instructions in the three corpora⁸

A complete absence of instructions can be noticed in the Italian introductions, whereas in the British and the American corpora, instructions are always present. A few examples are provided below:

- (1) Each audio point, marked on the accompanying map, corresponds to the track number, so you should start track 2 when you reach audio point 2, and so on. (Cambridge, track 01, min. 00:22)
- (2) When you hear this sound [*sound signal*], it signals the end of the current track, before we move on through the tour. When you hear this sound [*sound signal*], please pause the CD⁹ – it gives time to allow you to reach the next location before providing you with more information. (London East End, track 01, min. 02:18)
- (3) As you'll have seen, the walk is made up of number tracks, or chapters like in a book, making it really easy to stop and start this walk whenever you want. Each chapter starts with directions and then tells you about the sites and the chapter numbers correspond to the numbers on your map. If you don't have access to a printer for the map, don't worry, the walk can still be done without one, just make sure you hear the directions. If you miss them, jump back to the start of the chapter to hear them again. The chapters will

⁸ A few introductions also contain practical information such as tour duration, start and end points and length of the tour.

⁹ The speaker refers to a CD probably because the audio guide was first produced in a CD format and then made available on the Internet in the downloadable mp3 format, but without updating the script.

automatically run on, but you can always pause your player whenever you want. [...] Make a note on what chapter you were on when you stopped – some mp3 players reset when they're turned off. (London by StrollOn, track 01, min. 00:23)

In excerpt (1), instructions are focused on how the audio tracks relate to the stops in the printable map, thus indicating to the visitor how to continuously keep track of the visit progress. This also relates to how audio tracks are announced by the speakers. Indeed, in almost half of the audio guides in English, the stop number is also referred to by the speaker at the beginning of each audio track, so as to make sure that the visitor is listening to the correct audio track:

- (4) You should now be at audio point 3, on King's Parade in front of St Catharine's College. (Cambridge, track 03)
- (5) Stop three – Sheffield City Hall (Sheffield, track 03)
- (6) Stop two – Union Station (Denver, track 02)

In excerpt (2), instead, the visitor is instructed on how to interpret the two different sound signals in relation to circulation, whereas in excerpt (3) the visitor is provided with an overview of the structure of the audio guide and the way audio tracks are organised, along with specific tips to optimise navigation (“Make a note on what chapter you were on when you stopped – some mp3 players reset when they're turned off”). Interestingly, the speaker also reassures the visitor about the possibility of smoothly taking the tour without a map thanks to the directions provided for each stop. In the American Corpus, instructions are very similar to those found in the British Corpus. The most complete instructions are reported below:

- (7) You probably saw that the guide comes in a series of segments, one for each stop on the tour. Each one of these is a single track on your player. The segment numbers are announced for each segment. They are also shown on your map. Now, our segment numbers might not translate exactly to the track numbers on your player. To avoid potential confusion, we announce the segment number for each segment. Right now, you are listening to the Intro segment. The first part of the actual tour will be segment 1. One more thing. At the end of each segment, we'll tell you that it's the end, so you'll know to pause your player until you reach the next stop. (Philadelphia by AudioSteps, track 01, min. 00:11)

Here, the minute description of how the audio tracks are organised is probably due to fact that the tour includes 49 ‘segments’. Thus, in order to avoid confusion, the speaker clearly explains how the audio tracks are announced and how they work together with the map. Finally, in *Washington National Mall* we also find a detailed explanation for self-orienting when driving:

- (8) Driving in the nation’s capital can be a different story. [...] First, all the lettered streets run east and west. *A* Street is closest to the Mall, and the streets follow the alphabet as you drive away from the Mall. The numbered streets run North and South, with 1st Street running alongside the Capitol and going up as you move away from it. Last, the streets named for states run in angles to the numbered and lettered streets and often fit into traffic circles. (Washington National Mall, track 01, min. 01:00)

This type of information will certainly be appreciated by international visitors, and it is useful not only for circulation during the tour itself but also during the holiday experience in general.

Differently from introductions, in which instructions occur only in audio guides in English, in the body of the scripts instructions were found in all three corpora, although only in the British and the American corpora do they characterise at least half of the audio guides. Instructions in the body of the script are often provided to indicate when to play the next track and when to pause or resume the audio. Here are a few examples:

- (9) Per riprendere la visita e la mia narrazione ti basterà poi ascoltare la traccia numero 2. A più tardi. (Ferrara, track 1, min. 10:56)
[To resume the tour and narration you will just need to play track 2.]
- (10) Tornando su via IV novembre, dopo pochi passi sulla destra vedrete il Tempio Malatestiano. Quando sarete arrivati al tempio, ascoltate il file numero 6. (Rimini, track 05, min. 04:48)
[Retracing *via IV Novembre*, after a few steps, you will see on your right the *Tempio Malatestiano*. When you are there, play track 6.]
- (11) Cross carefully over the roundabout and head down to your right and make your way to the railings overlooking Victoria Street below. Pause the audio now and, when you are ready, play track 2. (Edinburgh Royal Mile, track 01, min. 06:10)
- (12) Climb the steps immediately to your left, turn left again at the top, and then you’ll see the curved part of the sundial. Now press ‘pause’,

- and press 'play' when you get to the sundial. (London by StrollOn, chapter 2, min. 00:28)
- (13) You're coming up on the intersection, you're going to pause the tour here and cross over Walker. Walk straight ahead for one block and then cross Rusk. Listen to the next track on the other side of Rusk. Press 'pause' now. (Downtown Houston, track 02, min. 04:07)
- (14) If you've exited at the Smithsonian Station and are on the Mall, keep your player running. If not, pause your player until you exit the metro station and are standing on the Mall. Restart your player after you've exited the metro. (Washington National Mall, stop 00, min. 01:55)

Although this feature occurs in an equal number of British and American audio guides, it is actually more frequent in the British Corpus, since in four American audio guides instructions occur only once or twice throughout the whole tour, while in the British audio guides (and also in the Italian ones) they occur in each audio track.

The indication of when to stop and resume the audio is particularly useful when the stops of the tour are all included in one single audio track, because in this case the visitor needs to know when to pause the audio to avoid going on with narration while s/he is still walking towards the next stop:

- (15) Now follow the main road further on into the dockyard until you reach some picnic tables on your left, and then resume the audio. (Portsmouth, min. 18:04)
- (16) When you're ready to move off again, pause your machine and leave Trafalgar Square through Admiralty Arch, opposite the entrance to the Strand. (London Westminster and West End, min. 15:31)
- (17) Pause the tour until you are stopped on 13th Street. (Lexington, min. 11:18)

In two audio guides, instructions also concern the possibility of customising the audio guide, thus enabling the visitor to skip contents s/he might not be interested in:

- (18) Avanza a sinistra sotto il Voltone e sbuchi su Piazza del Nettuno di cui, se vuoi, puoi continuare ad ascoltare la storia, oppure passa alla tappa successiva. (Bologna, track 4, min. 00:01)
[Step forward to the left under the *Voltone* and you will find yourself in *Piazza of Nettuno*. Keep playing this track if you wish to learn about

the *Piazza*, otherwise play the next track.]

- (19) If you want information about two nearby famous pubs, then please pause the recording and go to number 4 or, if you want to hear information on Lord Brougham, who was born in a house on the north side of the square and was connected with the anti-slavery movement, go to number 5. If you do not wish to hear about dear old Lord Brougham or pubs, shame on you, but skip to number 6. (Edinburgh New Town, track 03, min. 02:32)

Finally, another particular feature can be found in *London East End*, where at some relevant point the speaker illustrates the content of the following audio tracks, thus allowing the visitor to operate a selection according to his/her preferences:

- (20) The Tower of London is split into five sections on this disc. Track 15 describes the historical background of the White Tower. Track 16 covers the expansion of the buildings now known as the Tower of London. Track 17 is all about the executions at the tower. [...] (London East End, track 14, min. 01:44)

The example shows how long, elaborate content about the same site can be distributed in more audio tracks – rather than one only – according to specific criteria. In this way, the visitor is provided with a clear overview of the topic, and is facilitated in identifying what might be more interesting to him/her.

6.2 Safety advice

Circulation may also be favoured by safety advice. The presence and distribution of this content type in both the introductions and the body of the scripts are reported, for each corpus, in Table 3:

| Type of practical information | ITA | UK | USA |
|--|------|------|------|
| Safety advice in the introductions | 1/12 | 8/16 | 8/13 |
| Safety advice in the body of the scripts | 0/17 | 8/17 | 6/16 |

Table 3 – Occurrence of safety advice in the three corpora

Differently from instructions, which do not occur in the Italian introductions but could be found in the body of a number of Italian scripts, safety advice seems to be an (almost) exclusive feature of audio guides in English. This content type occurs in around half of the British and the American introductions, and concerns mainly dealing with traffic in busy roads, but also avoiding other dangers:

- (21) Crossing of roads will normally be with the aid of pedestrian traffic lights, but you should always take care of passing traffic and be safety conscious when stepping off pavements. (Dublin, Viking and Medieval Dublin 1, min. 01:07)
- (22) Oh, and, please, don't forget, in Britain we drive on the left, which means that when you cross the road, traffic is usually coming from your right, but most chapters begin and end in one place anyway, so you hardly ever have to walk and listen at the same time. (London by StrollOn, track 01, min. 01:34)
- (23) Make sure to hold on to children's hands and use extra caution while in the vicinity of the 16th Street Mall. Although vehicular traffic is prohibited on the Mall, the Mall Buses move quickly and come close to sidewalks, so be aware of them at all times. All of the areas you'll visit on this tour are considered safe and are typically well populated. However, for your own safety, stay alert at all times. This walking tour is highly recommended for daylight hours. However, if you'll be walking after dark, be aware that certain points of reference and views mentioned may not be visible. If you choose to walk at night, use extra caution and bring along a friend, if possible. (Denver, Intro, min. 01:33)
- (24) Last thing: this is a busy city, so keep alert, don't turn your brain off just 'cause you've headphones on. Any time you cross the street, make sure you press 'pause' and cross carefully. Just use your head and you'll be good. Alright, got it? Easy. (Downtown Houston, track 01, min. 02:26)

Thus, we can see that smooth circulation is not intended merely as way-finding, but also involves making sure that the visitor adopts appropriate behaviour so as to avoid incurring danger. In example (22) the information on driving in Britain provides useful tips for visitors coming from countries with different driving rules. Particularly detailed and varied advice can be found in excerpt (23), whereas in excerpt (24) safety advice is not only reduced to the essential, but is also provided in a very informal style.

In the Italian Corpus, safety advice could be found only in the introduction of *Padova*:

- (25) Oltrepassa il cancello principale dei Giardini, e fai attenzione alle biciclette. (Padova, track 1-1, min. 00:48)
[Cross the Gardens' main gate, and watch out for bicycles.]

The unusual recommendation to watch out for bikes (“*fai attenzione alle biciclette*”) may be particularly useful for visitors living in towns or cities significantly different from Padua in terms of transport habits.

As far as safety advice in the body of the scripts is concerned, recommendations are not generic as in introductory sections, but are provided in specific situations:

- (26) Might I suggest, before you do that, that you take the headphones off and watch out for cars. It's two-way traffic. (Bath, track 07, min. 00:39)
(27) First proceed back up Bridge Street, cross Cook Street but be careful – there are no pedestrian lights here and the junction is a bit complicated. (Dublin, stop 10, min. 03:04)
(28) Let's go there now. You'll be crossing two busy streets, so please be careful. (Chicago, track 002, min. 01:27)
(29) As we walk, be careful up ahead, there's a driveway here. Watch out for cars coming in and out. (Downtown Houston, track 23, min. 00:22)

A stylistic difference can be noticed between excerpt (30) and the remaining excerpts: in the former, safety advice is provided as a polite request (“*Might I suggest...?*”) so as not to sound imposing, whereas in the other excerpts imperatives are used.

The presence of safety advice in audio guides in English only could be framed within intercultural studies, by referring to the distinction proposed by Hall (1990) between High Context (HC) communication and Low Context (LC) communication. This distinction is based on whether in communication the information lies more in the text (LC) or in the context (HC), with ‘text’ being the “transmitted information” and ‘context’ being “the amount of information the other person can be expected to possess on a given subject” (1983: 61). Hence, Hall distinguishes between HC cultures, which are more context-oriented (e.g. the Mediterranean culture), and LC cultures, which are more text-oriented (e.g. the Anglo-American culture).

Katan (2004) has extensively studied the differences between HC and LC cultures, and has classified the features of HC and LC communication (with particular reference to the Italian and the British cultures) in transactional communication as follows (2006: 60):

| <i>LCC</i> | <i>HCC</i> |
|--|---|
| Text (explicitness) | Context (implicitness) |
| Information (facts) | Communication (feelings, opinions) |
| Low Information Load (small chunks) | High Information Load (large chunks) |
| KISS (keep it short and simple) | KILC (keep it long and complete) |
| Reader friendly (peer-peer) | Writer oriented (expert- non-expert) |
| Instrumental | Expressive |
| Linear (cause-effect, main points) | Circular (background, details) |
| Informal | Formal |
| Direct | Indirect |

More specifically, the difference in the presence of safety advice in the audio guides may be framed within ‘explicitness’ vs. ‘implicitness’. Most safety recommendations reported throughout the analysis may sound trivial, since they are part of a widely shared way of doing things when visiting a new city. The fact that they are provided by British and American producers may be an indicator of the Anglo-American culture’s tendency towards a LC orientation, according to which the information, no matter how trivial it may seem, needs to be made *explicit* in the text.

The safety of visitors is plausibly a concern also for Italian producers, but safety advice is not provided in the Italian audio guides probably due to the Italian culture’s HC orientation, according to which the recommendations provided in the British and the American audio guides are part of an *implicitly* understood way of doing things, even when visiting a new city.

In the specific case of introductions, the fact that content types related to navigation and way-finding were found in introductions in English only could be interpreted in terms of ‘linear’ vs. ‘circular’, with the introductions in English focusing more on key points relevant to the user’s experience with the audio guide, while a separate, wider analysis of

the Italian introductions¹⁰ revealed that most Italian introductions tend to focus mainly on the historical background of the city described in the audio guide, and to a far greater extent than most introductions in English. Due to space constraints and the focus of this study, the complete analysis regarding this aspect of the introductions will not be reported in this paper.

6.3 Directions

As the term ‘audio guide’ itself suggests, audio guides are expected not only to provide historical and artistic information on the sites included in the tour, but also to *guide* the visitor in way-finding.

Directions to reach the sites are provided in most of the audio guides, as reported in Table 4:

| ITA | UK | USA |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 10/17 | 14/17 | 14/17 |

Table 4 – Occurrence of directions in each corpus (n. of audio guides)

As can be seen, though, they tend to more frequent in the British and the American audio guides. In paragraph 5 we saw that a number of audio guides in the three corpora are not accompanied by any map. Thus, the first thing to be investigated is whether these compensate for the lack of maps with directions, as reported in Table 5:

| Audio guides with no map | Presence of directions |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Cagliari | ✓ |
| Catania | ✓ |
| Ferrara | ✓ |
| Firenze | // |
| Matera | ✓ |
| Savona | // |
| Taranto | // |
| London East End | ✓ |
| London by Tim Richards | ✓ |

¹⁰ Carried out as part of a PhD thesis on audio guides (Fina 2016).

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| London Westminster and West End | ✓ |
| Greenwich Village NYC | ✓ |
| Washington Capitol Hill | ✓ |

Table 5 – Directions in the audio guides with no accompanying map

The audio guides of *Firenze*, *Savona* and *Taranto* include neither a map nor directions. Thus, they do not actually *guide* the visitor anywhere: each audio track starts directly with the description of the corresponding site, and it is entirely up to the visitor to find the way to the next stop. This type of audio guide is notably different from most of the audio guides in both Italian and in English, that are structured as real walking tours, with stops linked to each other by directions.

As for audio guides with no maps but providing directions, examples of directions are provided below:

- (30) Ora dirigetevi verso via Martini, la stradina a sinistra della Loggia Massonica, dando le spalle alla Torre. (Cagliari, track 5, min. 02:19)
[Now move towards *via Martini*, the lane on the left of the *Loggia Massonica*, leaving the *Torre* behind.]
- (31) Quando giungerai a via Buonporto prosegui fino ad incontrare la prima trasversale a destra, che è via Granchio, la quale ti condurrà a via Carmelino. Dovrai percorrere per un breve tratto via Borgo di sotto, per poi imboccare via Praisolo, attraverso cui potrai giungere finalmente a Casa Romei, posta all'angolo tra via Praisolo e via Savonarola. (Ferrara, track 3, min. 06:29)
[When you reach *via Buonporto*, proceed until you reach the first cross street on the right, which is *via Granchio*, which will take you to *via Carmelino*. You will need to walk a short stretch of *via Borgo di sotto*, to take then *via Praisolo*, by which you will reach *Casa Romei*, on the corner between *via Praisolo* and *via Savonarola*.]
- (32) Track 8 – The Royal Exchange.
Walking to the Royal Exchange would take approximately 5 minutes. Continue into Mansion House Street, cross over the pedestrian crossing on your left, in front of the Northwest Bank. At the next set of lights, cross over Princes Street and continue straight ahead into Threadneedle Street. The Royal Exchange is the building behind the horse-mounted statue of the Duke of Wellington in front of you. (London East End, track 08, min. 00:07)
- (33) When you're ready, carry on walking through the square by taking the exit that's straight ahead of you as you entered. You'll immediately come to Charing Cross Road. Walk over Charing Cross

Road carefully and keep walking along the street that continues on the other side of it, Cranbourn Street. You'll pass a crossroads. Carry on straight ahead into what becomes Long Acre and soon you'll see Covent Garden Underground Station on your right hand side. When you get to the Tube station, turn right and walk down Covent Garden Piazza and the Market. So I'll just repeat, leave the square by the street straight ahead of you, keep walking in a straight line until you come to Covent Garden Tube station, then turn right, walk down to the Piazza and start your machine again. (London Westminster and West End, min. 26:42)

As can be seen, directions can be more or less detailed depending on the tour itself. In (32), the speaker also indicates the time required to reach the next stop, while in (33) the speaker repeats and summarises the directions so that the visitor does not have to go back with the audio if s/he missed part of them. Furthermore, "locators" are often provided to favour self-orienting and for reinforcing position, such as "*dando le spalle alla Torre*" in (30), "*all'angolo tra via Praisolo e via Savonarola*" in (31), "At the next set of lights" in (32), "You'll pass a crossroads" in (33).

We will continue the investigation of directions in relation to maps by checking whether the remaining audio guides with no directions do include at least a map allowing the visitor to self-orient. Table 6 also reports the type of map associated to each audio guide:

| Audio guide with no directions | Presence of a map |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lecce | screen only (app) |
| Milano | Google map |
| Modena | Google map |
| Perugia | Google map |
| Glasgow | printable map |
| Leicester | Google map |
| Manchester | printable map |
| Elgin | printable map |
| Washington by Audioviator | printable map |

Table 6 – Maps in the audio guides with no directions

It is not by chance that half of the audio guides with no directions (in both languages) include a link to a Google map, which compensates for the lack of directions, allowing the visitor to customise the trail according to

personal preferences and priorities. These audio guides are not formally structured as walking tours, but the presence of the link to a Google map suggests that the visitor is offered the possibility to create his/her own tour by customising the Google map according to his/her preferences.

Another aspect of directions to be investigated in relation to maps is the reference to the cardinal points. In most cases, the audio guides referring to the cardinal points either in directions or when locating buildings are accompanied by a printable map in which the North point is indicated or the drawing of a compass is oriented on the map in reference to the visiting area. However, in a few audio guides, directions are given referring to the cardinal points even though the map of the tour is not included or, if included, it is not oriented in reference to the cardinal points. This occurs in *Greenwich* and *Lexington*:

- (34) If you turn around again and head west along Waverly Place, across 5th Avenue, you can see more survivors from that era at 19 through 26 Washington Square North. (Greenwich Village NYC, min. 07:17)
- (35) Now, head east and cross 11th Street. (Lexington, min. 06:31)

Since in *Greenwich* we do not find any accompanying map, and the map of *Lexington* does not include the North point indication (see Figure 2), international visitors who are not used to be directed in reference to the cardinal points in their mother tongue might have problems when moving from one stop to another. In the specific case of *Lexington*, we should also take into account the fact that in the map of the tour the stops are not numbered, and this could further complicate self-orienting. However, in excerpt (38), the indication “across 5th Avenue” helps the visitor identify the right direction.

In the *Albany* audio guide, before starting the tour, the visitor is positioned in relation to the surroundings and is given key information to self-orient during the tour. The same happens in the introduction of *Edinburgh New Town*, in which the speaker indicates the direction towards which the tour will take place:

- (36) We’re now ready to walk to our next tour location. During the tour, we’ll instruct you to head north, south, east or west. As a frame of reference, standing in front of, and facing, the Quackenbush House, the Hudson River is located straight ahead. You can’t see it from where you’re standing, but the river is not far away, situated to the east of the city’s downtown district. And because the city was built

-
- on a hill, the river is always downhill from any point. So, let the river be your guide, much as explorers, centuries ago. (Albany, min. 07:05)
- (37) Geographically, the tour will take you along the main street of the first Georgian New Town from here in St Andrew Square to Charlotte Square, travelling from east to west following the original grand plan of the architect James Craig. (Edinburgh New Town, track 01, min. 00:40)

These excerpts are perfectly in line with Neves's guideline "Positioning the person in relation to the surroundings", and the fact that this occurs at the beginning of the tour further facilitates circulation, as it allows the visitor to self-orient since the start.

Finally, in *Little Rock Arkansas*, instead, the lack of numbered stops in the map is compensated for by clear and precise directions in which numerous "locators" are indicated:

- (38) Walk through Riverfront Park toward Markham, walking along the black fence with the wavy metal decoration, beneath the vine-covered pergola, past the bust of Count Pulaski, then pausing at the granite-paved alley behind the buildings. (Little Rock Arkansas, track 03)

Despite the fact that most of the audio guides are designed to follow a well-defined trail, in a few cases the possibility of taking detours is offered, with directions provided accordingly:

- (39) Se avete scelto l'itinerario ridotto, andate alla traccia numero 8. (Cagliari, track 4, min. 03:29)
 [...] Se state seguendo l'itinerario nella forma ridotta, dovete percorrere via Martini, posta a sinistra rispetto alla facciata della Loggia Massonica. [...] (Cagliari, track 8, min. 00:31)
 [If you chose the short itinerary, then go to track number 8.
 (...) If you are following the short itinerary, you will need to walk *via Martini*, which is on the left of the *Loggia Massonica's* façade.]
- (40) At this point, there are two optional short detours you can take. To visit the Cambridge University Library, you will need to head left, cross Queen's Road and follow Burrell's Walk. After around 150 metres a turning on the left will lead you to the Library.

[...] The other possible detour here is to your right along Garret Hostel Lane to Garret Hostel Bridge. (Cambridge, track 08, min. 00:06)

- (41) At this point, we'd like to give you an option of completing the entire tour or continuing on with an abbreviated version. The abbreviated version would omit the Society Hill area, which consists of 8 stops and covers a very beautiful and historic upper-class neighborhood just behind us. This abbreviated version would include the final three stops on our tour, which are the Todd House, Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Visitor Center. If you choose to only complete the last three stops, you'll need to advance your tour to stop number 25, the Todd House. [*directions*] (Philadelphia WelcomeWalks, track 16c)

When the detour implies skipping tracks, instructions for navigation between the audio tracks are provided accordingly, as in excerpts (39) and (41).

Finally, the position of the directions within the audio guide structure is also important, as it is relevant to navigation. In most audio guides the directions are either at the beginning or at the end of each track, depending on the sequence of the stops. In the former case, should the visitor decide to skip a track, s/he will only have to listen to the beginning of the following track just to catch the directions. In two cases, however, the directions are provided in separate tracks between the various stops. In this way, the visitor may skip tracks about the sites s/he does not wish to stop at and, at the same time, will easily find the directions to the desired stop. This happens in *Philadelphia by Audiosteps* and *Philadelphia Constitutional*, in which the directions are provided in separate tracks, and these audio tracks are also easily identifiable because they are named accordingly.

To sum up, while in the introductions contents related to navigation and circulation were found in audio guides in English only, as far as the body of the scripts is concerned the main difference between Italian and English is marked solely by the presence of safety advice which, differently from instructions, does not occur at all in the Italian scripts. The lack of a map of the tour is always compensated for by directions, and similarly, the lack of directions is compensated for by a map in the British and American corpora always, but only mainly so in the Italian Corpus (see Tables 5 and 6).

7. Discussion of results

The analysis of features related to navigation and circulation/way-finding in the audio guides has revealed a number of differences between audio guides in Italian and audio guides in English.

First of all, the absence of a map of the tour is more frequent in audio guides in Italian. The explanation for this can only be obtained by asking the Italian producers themselves. A possible explanation could be that the presence of a printable map is not deemed essential because it can actually be obtained in many other ways, on the Internet or directly on site.

As for ‘introductions’, it was noticed that content related to navigation and circulation characterises introductions in English only, with instructions explaining how the audio tracks relate to the map, and with safety recommendations being provided to facilitate smooth and safe sightseeing. Since the differences between audio guides in Italian and in English highlighted in the analysis concern smaller parts of the whole corpora, it is obviously impossible to generalise, but these results could be considered a starting point for further research on more data to determine whether we can speak in terms of different ways of conceiving the audio guide genre across different cultures. The differences between Italian and English start to wear thin in the body of the scripts, with instructions, directions, indication of “elements for conferral of position” and possibility of detours characterising both audio guides in Italian and in English. In both languages, directions are never limited to generic indications such as ‘turn right/left’, but always include “locators” and reference points to favour self-orienting and make sure that the visitor takes the right direction. In this regard, audio guides in Italian and in English are definitely very similar.

Finally, the analysis of the combination map/directions has shed light on two possible ways of conceiving the audio guide genre.

In paragraph 6.3 we noticed that a number of Italian audio guides are structured as independent audio tracks starting directly with the description of the corresponding sites, without a specific trail to follow, nor directions linking the various stops. These audio guides constitute a sub-type of the audio guide genre and could be more appropriately named ‘audio commentaries’, as opposed to most audio guides – especially in English – which are structured as ‘audio walking tours’. In walking tours, the visitor is directed throughout a specific trail related to an

accompanying map with stops corresponding to the audio tracks, and with directions provided accordingly.

It should be remarked that the structural differences characterising these two sub-genres do not mark a difference or a shift in the main function of the audio guide which, as discussed in a detailed investigation of the audio guide contents (Fina 2016), is to present the visitor with the historical, cultural and artistic features of the sites. However, audio walking tours, and especially those in English, tend to be characterised by a more practical focus, which – we may argue – also reveals an intention to *guide* the visitor in the same way as a human guide would do.¹¹ Considering that this aspect tends to characterise more prominently audio guides in English, issues arise about how to create English versions of Italian audio guides, especially when these are structured as ‘audio commentaries’. This issue will be discussed in the following paragraph. However, before drawing observations about the creation of English versions of Italian audio guides, the findings will be discussed in reference to the guidelines provided by Neves (2015).

8. Conclusions

The guidelines related to circulation/way-finding are more frequently satisfied by most audio guides in English, with the presence of printable maps constituting a first step towards “position[ing] the person in relation to the surroundings and in terms of the direction to be taken” (especially in maps characterised by a marked trail and features such as North indication and distance segment), but also by a number of Italian audio guides. The visitor is also directed towards the various stops, with “locators” provided when a change in direction is necessary, and “elements for reinforcement/conferral of position” are indicated.

As for navigation, instructions are not only more frequent in audio guides in English (contained in at least half of the audio guides) but are also more elaborate with respect to their Italian counterparts. Indeed, in line with Neves’s guidelines, due to the higher occurrence of accompanying maps they may also “explain how the map/visit plan and

¹¹ A detailed investigation of the contents of the audio guides (Fina 2016) has revealed that in audio guides in English the speaker tends to take on the role of a real guide to a greater extent than in most Italian audio guides.

the audio guide work together” and “how the information is organised” (sequences, stops, layers).

The compliance of the audio guides with Neves’s guidelines can be approximately summarised as in Table 7:

| ITA | UK | USA |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 50% | 80% | 80% |

Table 7 –Compliance with Neves’s guidelines

The 30% difference between Italian and English is determined by the more frequent lack of printable maps in the Italian Corpus and the lack of contents related to navigation and circulation in the introductions.

The data presented in this study do not determine striking differences between audio guides in Italian and in English, but in line with the purpose of this paper, we will now attempt to provide suggestions for creating English versions of Italian audio guides.

It should be understood that the lack of contents related to circulation and navigation may not necessarily affect the overall appreciation of the audio guide by users. That said looking at the differences highlighted in this chapter and keeping as a reference model Neves’s guidelines, features that *could* be taken into account when producing English versions of Italian audio guides in relation to navigation and circulation are:

1. a printable map of the tour with numbered stops and a marked trail;
2. items of interest or use marked on the map;
3. practical information in a dedicated section of the map (e.g. safety advice, opening hours, contact and booking information);
4. opportunity to customise the tour, with information on the content of supplementary tracks and possibility to skip them;
5. directions in separate audio tracks;
6. positioning the visitor in relation to the surroundings, especially if directions are provided referring to the cardinal points;
7. an informative introductory section in a separate audio track, with the following elements:
 - a) information on how the audio tracks are organised and announced in reference to the printable map;
 - b) safety advice and any other useful information (e.g. driving rules, indication of the visitor’s centre, etc.);

8. directions to the next stops, to be supported by a printable map with a marked trail;
9. indication of the time needed to reach the various stops, especially if the tour covers extensive areas;
10. instructions on when to pause and resume the audio, if the audio guide covers all the stops in one single audio track.

Reception studies in the two languages involved are needed to validate these suggestions as possible guidelines for audio guide production.

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