

The Expression of Emotions in the Spanish and Italian Filmic Audio Descriptions of *The King's Speech*

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Abstract

This paper puts forward a three-layered model for the analysis of linguistic items in filmic audio description (AD). The model is applied to three Spanish and Italian audio described scenes of the drama film *The King's Speech* (Hooper, 2010). The aim is to evaluate lexical items that are chosen to verbalize information on characters' emotional condition, or *psyche*. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs used in the compared ADs will be analysed taking into consideration the communicative function(s) associated with each scene. The overall objective of the research is to shed light on the linguistic strategies that could potentially be used in AD to enhance the communicative value of the audiovisual source text, guiding the choice of informative or expressive rendering in AD to foster the audience's engagement with the narrative. Results suggest that it might be useful to identify the communicative function of a given scene; this can turn into a valuable criterion, to be given due credit when creating AD.

Key words: audio description, meanings, analysis, emotions, storyworld, *psyche*, connotation, denotation, linguistic strategies.

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Introduction

As a mode of translation, audio description (AD) constitutes the verbal reformulation of content conveyed by visual, nonverbal signs (Zabalbeascoa, 2008, p. 23). Filmic AD presupposes a thorough analysis of the source text, whereby audio describers are expected to infer “what the intentionality probably is and what interpretations the text may allow” (Guido, 1999, p. 61). Indeed, this phase is crucial for the selection of the linguistic features to be used in the rendering.

Films and AD can be considered different but related text types. In fact, their communicative essence is inherently multimodal, as messages are conveyed through distinct semiotic systems that the addressee is expected to recognize and decode. For the interaction to be successful, it is necessary that receivers interpret appropriately the sender’s intentionality.

Yet, to detect the “correct interpretation of a text” for faithful translational reproductions is made difficult (Romero-Fresco & Chaume, 2022, p. 77) by the (still) scarce attention dedicated to the meaning potential of resources other than language within the field of Translation Studies (Adami & Ramos Pinto, 2020, p. 74), as well as by the huge variety of possible combinations of signs that express meaning in films. This may be one of the reasons behind the promotion of objectivity rules advocated by most guidelines on AD (AENOR, 2005; Snyder, 2007; Rai et al., 2010), recently challenged by proposals of more interpretive and subjective uses of language (Kruger, 2010; Orero & Vercauteren, 2013; Palmer & Salway, 2015; Fresno et al., 2016; Geerinck & Vercauteren, 2020). Empirical research conducted in this direction has also yielded fruitful results, showing the users’ favourable opinion towards alternative descriptions (Szarkowska, 2013; Ramos Caro, 2016; Walczak & Fryer, 2017; Bardini, 2020).

Since “accessing words involves accessing contents and vice versa” (Satpute & Lindquist, 2021, p. 207), the semantic value of the lexical items used in AD may help to “offer a *richer* and more detailed understanding *and enjoyment* [emphasis added]” of a film or audiovisual event (Holsanova, 2016, p. 49).

This paper proposes a model for the analysis of lexical items used in AD when specific communicative functions are in focus. Drawing upon notions of cinematography (Bordwell et al., 2017; Rondolino & Tomasi, 2018) that help to identify the communicative aim of a given scene uncovered by the interplay of narrative features (Bandirali & Terrone, 2009), the framework aims to shed light on potentially effective linguistic strategies to resort to when writing an AD text concerning the characters’ expression of emotions.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows: section 1 delves into the notion of *psyche* as the component of the narrative storyworld representative of the characters’ internal dimension in films. Section 2 introduces the analytic framework for the language used in AD. Some methodological considerations are made in section 3. In section 4, the model is applied to Spanish and Italian AD scripts provided for three takes of the drama film *The King’s Speech* to verbalize the characters’

expression of emotions¹. In section 5, results are discussed, and avenues for further research are presented.

1. The Emotive Dimension in Film Narrative and Psychology

Before delving into the features of AD, it seems useful to briefly investigate the main components of the film as an audiovisual source text. Films fall within the set of “communication act[s] involving sounds and images” (Zabalbeascoa, 2008, p. 21), where “the individual steps of text production [...] decide which modes are used in which combination to achieve a communicative aim” (Kaindl, 2013, pp. 258–259). Put differently, as message senders, filmmakers make deliberate decisions to elicit the ideal interpretation of the message since – as in any context of communication – “a certain emitter’s intention of signification [is] encoded with the help of a certain system of signs” (Slama-Cazacu, 2015, p. 66).

In film production, this is achieved through the interaction of form and style: the former suggests the narrative features that are worth enhancing, depending on the meaning aimed at. The style of the film shapes the way these elements are shown, pointing at the production of “the effect the movie has on its viewer” (Bordwell et al., 2017, p. 304). This is usually conveyed through a combination of techniques such as *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, and editing (Rondolino & Tomasi, 2018).

Hence, it can be inferred that films stem from a narrative project, which determines the stylistic choices to be made in the production phase. The narrative design of a movie starts from the construction of a storyworld, i.e., a fictional world inspired by models of art, nature, and natural science (Doležel, 1999), populated with human beings whose intentions and mentality enable them to behave and react (Doležel, 1999; Pinardi & De Angelis, 2006).

Each storyworld is equipped with a set of narrative components that interact and originate causal chains of events in the story. In this article, we focus on *psyche*, the mental and internal configuration of individuals in the storyworld (Bandirali & Terrone, 2009).

Within the narrative field, *psyche* corresponds to the complex of sensory, emotional, and mental activities that take place in the characters’ minds, determining the development of the story. As a matter of fact, the individual’s mental and emotional capacities shape their intentions and objectives (*telos*), values (*ethos*), dispositions and preferences (*aisthesis*), memory and past actions (*epos*), among others (Bandirali & Terrone, 2009, p. 92).

The distinctive features of this narrative component are also found in the definition of “emotion” provided in psychology by Cabanac, who states the following:

¹ The sample analysed in this paper is part of a wider corpus of 52 scenes taken from six drama films on which the qualitative research has been carried out (nine scenes were taken from *The King's Speech*). In the present article only three takes are analysed, as extending the corpus would need more space than that available to us.

‘emotions’ [...] are all intense mental events aroused by exposure of the subject to situations more or less related to motivation, either positive or negative but all resulting in a behavior oriented to, or away from, the stimulus. (Cabanac, 2002, p. 76)

Experiencing an emotion also leads to alterations in the individual’s nervous system, provoking “changes in our expressions, face, voice, and bodily posture. We don’t choose these changes; they simply happen” (Ekman, 2003, p. 37). The “Facial Action Coding System” (FACTS; Ekman & Friesen, 1978), provides a snapshot of distinctive patterned sets of the muscular movements activated after the elicitation of each of the six basic emotions (joy, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, and anger). Even though the stimuli that elicit emotions vary across cultures and contexts, the features of the individuals’ facial features in the expression of the six basic emotions are universal and help to identify the specificities of each of them (Ekman, 1972), as we shall see in the analytic section.

2. From Meaning Retrieval in Films to AD Language: A Three-Tiered Framework

At the time of writing AD, the audio describer will have watched the film, detected its main narrative features, and analysed the meanings that spread from the interaction between modes (AENOR, 2005; Benecke, 2022). This step usually leads to the selection of the lexical items to employ in the verbal rendering (see Holsanova, 2022). In the next sections, each phase of the process envisaged in AD creation is going to be explored.

2.1. Film Analysis

The production of an AD script always presupposes an attentive analytic watching of the film. In this phase, the text’s properties and prospective crisis points are looked for in the light of the verbal delivery, as “[t]he purpose of the translator is primarily to produce a target text conveying their interpretation of the writer’s meaning” (Dicerto, 2018, p. 54).

This does not seem an easy task – and there is no established framework to resort to when dealing with multimodality in translation. Kaindl (2013, p. 264) suggests that beyond investigating the composition of each mode and its functioning, research should focus on the observation of how they interact. This is what Adami and Ramos Pinto (2020, p. 74) refer to as “semiotic knowledge”, which entails the consideration of “the meaning potentials of specific gestures, facial expressions, proxemics, music, filmic effects, camera angles, colour, clothing and so on [...] to represent reality, shape affect, identity, politeness/distance, formality/informality, and to modulate truth values [...]”.

When film analysis for AD purposes is involved, these competences should be integrated with the inspection of the cinematographic techniques employed by the filmmaker so as to pinpoint the film’s prominent narrative. By gaining expertise in understanding why and how certain narratological features are given priority in audiovisual products, the audio describer could get an overview of the meanings stemming from the film (Remael et al., 2015).

According to Bordwell et al. (1993; 2017), when watching a film, we are provided with four types of meaning:

- (i) Referential meaning: allusion to particular items of knowledge outside the film that the viewer is expected to recognize.
- (ii) Explicit meaning: significance presented overtly, usually in language and often near the film's beginning or end.
- (iii) Implicit meaning: significance left tacit, for the viewer to discover upon analysis or reflection.
- (iv) Symptomatic meaning: significance that the film divulges [...] often against its will, by virtue of its historical or social context.

Film meanings and their level of explicitness could be metaphorically distributed along an iceberg: the tip exposes referential and explicit connotations; implicit and symptomatic meanings, which require a deeper inspection to be grasped, lie beneath the surface.

At a micro-level, this approach could manage to bring to the surface the communicative aim associated with each film scene and guide the choice of the most adequate words to use in AD, as we are now going to see.

2.2. AD Creation

In the phase of AD scripting, the audio describer is required to select the relevant information from the audiovisual source text and to choose the linguistic items that are deemed appropriate for its transposition. Taking into account that “[ADs] activate inner images and perceptions in the end-users and make it easier for them to understand and experience what is happening” (Holsanova, 2022, p. 60), the language used plays a pivotal role in fostering film enjoyment and immersion (Walczak, 2017; Walczak & Fryer, 2017). The same occurs in communicative exchanges, where the interactant chooses the words suitable for their illocutionary aim within the context, selecting them from a variety of alternatives. Hence, the communicative goal to be achieved determines the linguistic strategies adopted to express specific meanings.

It follows that successful communication spreads from the ability of the agents involved to originate and interpret meaning drawing from a shared set of mental schemata. As a matter of fact, “any message we produce gets to the recipient with the implication that we have put it in the form we thought was optimal for the recipient to process in order to obtain information about what we wanted to communicate” (Dicerto, 2018, pp. 47–48). This is what the theory of Generalized Conversational Implicatures (henceforth GCI) aims to illustrate.

GCI represents “a generative theory of idiomaticity, that is to say a set of principles guiding the choice of the right expression, to suggest a specific interpretation, and as a corollary, a theory for accounting for preferred interpretations” (Levinson, 1995, p. 94). What makes the framework relevant to our

research is its capacity to envisage the formulation of specific inferences that stem from the use and the style adopted by the speaker/writer to verbalize concepts through language. In the light of the recursive patterns they may unveil if applied to AD, we now introduce a brief definition of the three GCI heuristics of Quantity (1&2) and Manner, followed by a proposal for their application to audio description.

- a. Q(uality)1: “What is not said is not the case”, or “Describe what you see, and imply no more thereby”.

Based upon the rule of “not to postulate more entities than necessary” (Levinson, 1995, p. 102), this principle equals the choice to “objectively recount the visual aspects of an image” (Snyder, 2010, p. 17), through which words are primarily assigned linguistic and referential meanings in AD (Benecke & Dosch, 2004; Snyder, 2010; Blindsight Project, 2014). This strategy could be resorted to when the film scene prioritizes the narration of circumstances and events that make the plot develop, conveying explicit and referential meanings (Bordwell et al., 2017). Hence the need for the AD script to inform the audience of what is going on, signalling actions and events without any further allusion.

- b. Q(uality)2: “Concise but iconic descriptions are stereotypically and specifically identified”, or “Be concise but mean more thereby”.

In GCI theory this principle entails the selection of semantically charged lexicon to refer to implied but easily inferable facts. In AD, its employment may result in “meticulous”, “visually intense” and “concise” renderings (Perego, 2018), in which words are attributed connotative meanings² that also reveal the audio describer’s manifest intervention. Expressions consistent with this principle might be suitable when relevant features of the characters are to be emphasized, in circumstances in which the information may enrich the reception of the passage and foster the detection of additional meanings (see Kruger, 2010; Mälzer-Semlinger, 2012; Palmer & Salway, 2015). The principle may also be adopted when the implicit and symptomatic meanings of the film are involved.

- c. M(anner): “Marked descriptions warn ‘marked situations’”.

The definition hints at the tendency to emphasize certain information through specific language structures. Along with Q2, this principle is labelled “iconic” (Levinson, 1995, pp. 103–104). The “marked descriptions” Levinson refers to are instantiated by morphologically complex and prolix or periphrastic expressions, as well as unusual constructions that may show a less neutral register (Levinson, 2000, p. 137). Examples of marked choices in AD scripting may also consist of the creation of prolix or periphrastic renderings and infrequent strategies in the construction of phrases, such as cleft sentences or atypical patterns of thematic structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This principle could prove effective in those cases in which some narrative elements are made salient in the film and need to be signalled accordingly in AD.

²In this article, the notion of “connotative meaning” undertaken corresponds to the definition provided by Nida (1982, p. 91), who states: “What is at play here is the effect produced by the use of lexical items in this light [...]. This aspect of the meaning which deals with our emotional reactions to words is called connotative meaning”.

2.3. Audio Described Film Reception

AD plays a pivotal role in the reception of the film, also in the light of the cognitive processes activated during the watching experience. Turning back to the several layers of film meaning, it can be stated that explicit and referential meanings may allow the audience to recognize characters, places, and events, making it possible to follow the story. These are deemed key to film comprehension, consisting of:

[S]ome beliefs or talk about a film postulate something concretely there – say, the characters represented, the action of the story, and the dramatic point of significance of it all. Comprehension grasps the meanings denoted by the text and its world (Bordwell, 1993, p. 95).

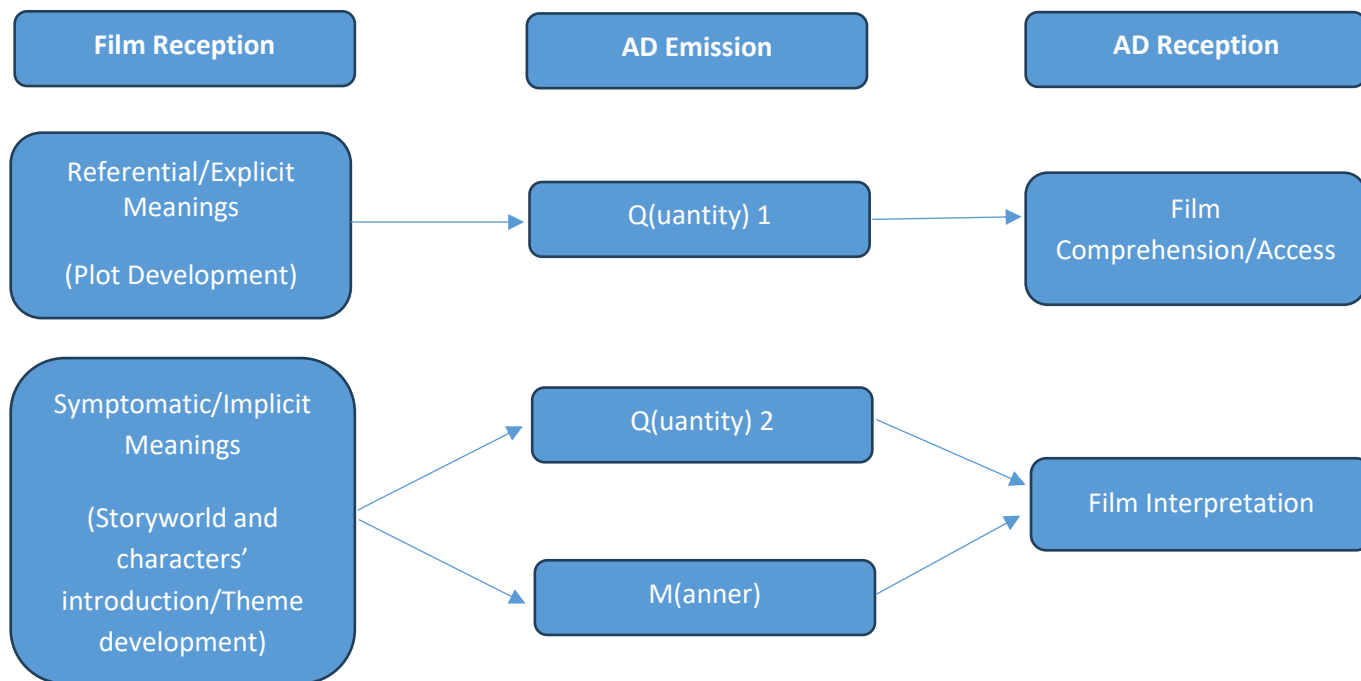
On the other hand, symptomatic and implicit meanings imply inspecting beyond what is represented, in the attempt to look for further significance. This allows interpretation:

[i]nterpretation [...] ascribes abstract and nonliteral meanings to the film and its world. It ascribes a broader significance, going beyond the denoted world and any denoted message to posit implicit or symptomatic meanings at work in the text (Bordwell, 1993, p. 96).

This further confirms the need to take into consideration the peculiarity of each scene when it comes to audio describing visual content, as each narrative portion may privilege certain communicative functions over others based on the meanings conveyed. From this viewpoint, adopting an unvaried style in the language of AD turns out to be quite challenging and possibly less suitable for enhancing film reception. One may surmise that an objective, predominantly informative stance in AD could prove effective when the descriptions of events that make the story develop are in focus. In situations where the narrative highlights relevant details related to the characters and the narrative storyworld, marked structures and connotative meanings could originate iconic descriptions and foster a more vivid film interpretation.

Image 1

A Three-Tiered Framework for AD Analysis



Source: Author's own elaboration

In the next section, the model will be applied to the analysis of three Spanish and Italian AD fragments provided for the drama film *The King's Speech* (Hooper, 2010). The focus is oriented towards the lexical items used in AD to verbalize the characters' *psyche*.

3. Methodology

Taking into consideration the multiple layers of meaning stemming from the film and its scenes, the analysis of the audiovisual source text has the communicative value of the scenes as its leading criterion for the evaluation of the lexical items used in AD.

The Spanish AD has been downloaded from Audesc Mobile, an application for mobile devices implemented by the Spanish National Organization of the Blind (ONCE)³. The content downloaded has then been transcribed by the author of this article. The Italian AD script has been written and

³ Audesc allows users to download the recorded AD of movies, short movies, and documentaries that will be synchronized with the original soundtrack of the multimodal product (<https://cti.once.es/noticias/audesc-mobile-la-audiodescripcion-en-nuestra-mano>)

provided by Senza Barriere, an Italian social non-profit cooperative whose staff members are specialized in creating audio-films for blind and visually impaired users⁴.

Verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs used in the compared ADs are analysed and classified according to their lexico-semantic features. Focus is on the potential of the words used to veer towards “photographic enumeration” (Orero & Vercauteren, 2013, p. 197) providing a faithful rendering of the character’s facial expressions and gestures, or to allude to metaphorical and illustrative connotations related to their inner world and emotional condition.

Verbs are classified according to Halliday’s (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) model of Systemic-Functional Grammar (SFG), which provides useful tools for the analysis of language in context. SFG allows for a distinction between the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions associated with language. The ideational metafunction covers the way in which reality is represented verbally in the clause, identifying the nature of the undergoing processes as: actions (material processes), inner reactions to occurring events or conscious experiences of perception (mental processes), or modes of identification and classification (relational processes). Located between material and mental processes are behavioural processes, that hint at the individual’s attitude or physiological states. The taxonomy also encompasses verbal processes that instantiate several forms of verbalization in language, and existential processes, through which the presence of objects, individuals, or events is signalled (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 170–171).

The interpersonal metafunction in SFG regulates the relationship that exists between the speakers and their addressees, as well as between the speakers and their message. The textual metafunction deals with the overall construction of meaning arising from the text as a whole, unveiling patterns of thematic structure, information structure, and cohesion.

Nouns, adjectives, and adverbs used in AD are detected and classified through exploratory analysis, which sheds light on the semantic fields most frequently mentioned in the selected corpus of AD fragments compared.

Ekman’s taxonomy of the Universals in Facial Expression of Emotion (1972) is adopted to detect which of the six basic emotions between joy, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, and anger (or their combination) the characters may be feeling; then, the strategies used in the Spanish and Italian AD scripts to transpose these nonverbal signs are examined. As in every form of translation, more so in AD, the consideration of contextual factors is deemed crucial for the analysis; for this reason, we look at how the multimodal co-text, i.e., the combination of signs composing the frame under analysis (Adami & Ramos Pinto, 2020) interacts with its multimodal context, here referred to as the set of frames preceding and following the one at issue. The three scenes analysed are introduced in the next section.

⁴ <https://www.senzabarriere.org/>

4. The Contrastive Analysis

4.1. *The King's Speech*: A Brief Summary

The King's Speech is a drama film directed by Tom Hooper (2010). It is based on the true story of the British king George VI – Bertie, as his family usually called him – who ascended to the throne in 1936 after his brother's abdication. The film focuses on the relationship between the King and Lionel Logue, a speech therapist hired to solve the former's stammering problems. The controversial relationship between Lionel and the King brings to the surface the protagonist's nervous and unstable disposition. Logue's help is crucial because, thanks to the speech therapist, the King manages to overcome some issues related to his tormented past, eventually improving his self-esteem.

The centrality of the main character is what makes the film particularly suitable for our research. As a matter of fact, the intersection between narrative and cinematographic techniques guides the audience's attention towards Bertie's development, focusing on his mental and psychological transformation⁵. The selected corpus of scenes under examination depicts salient moments in which Bertie's reactions are foregrounded and implicit information on his characterization is conveyed.

4.1. Scene 1: George V's Death (00:45:12–00:45:40)


Bertie becomes King in quite challenging circumstances: his older brother David is heir to the throne, but is engaged to Wallis Simpson, a divorced woman, and is not willing to separate from her. David does not even seem to have the authority and sense of responsibility required to fulfil his royal role. One of the events in which this lack of virtue becomes evident takes place shortly after George V's death. As soon as his father passes away, David's theatrical reaction leaves the attendants speechless: after falling into his mother's arms, he runs out of the room in which all the attendants stand.

Bertie runs after his brother to reproach him for his behaviour but reacts helplessly when he realizes the real reason for David's dismay. Indeed, the new King now feels trapped, as accession to the throne is not compatible with his affair with Wallis. As David leaves, the camera concentrates on Bertie's disappointment.

⁵ The choice of a movie produced by an English film distributor (and consequently having English as its original language) as the selected audiovisual source text has been constrained by the shortage of drama films for which ADs are provided in both Spanish and Italian.

Table 1

George V's Death

Co-text (cinematography)	Distinctive facial features (Ekman's taxonomy 1972)	Context (previous and following shot)
Visual: Bertie's close-up Audio: Tense extradiegetic music	Short vertical forehead wrinkles, hard stare quality. Lips parted, lower lids tense and raised.	Previous shot: Visual: Bertie's full shot Audio: Extradiegetic music and dialogue Following shot: Visual: Full shot of Lionel's house (new scene) Audio: Intradiegetic sound (radio announcing George V's death)
	 <i>Fear; anger</i>	

Source: Author's own elaboration

The emotions detected through the observation of Bertie's nonverbal behaviour seem to be confirmed by contextual factors. Given David's exaggerated attitude and his general lack of interest in governing, it may be no wonder that his more responsible younger brother is concerned about the future of the reign.

By pinpointing the narrative components that interact in the investigated scene, we can identify two prevailing communicative functions. On the one hand, this passage aims at making the story develop, signalling that after the King's death a change has taken place; on the other hand, it provides the spectator with more information items on Bertie and his concern, unveiling his strong sense of responsibility. Table 2 illustrates the linguistic strategies adopted in the compared scripts to convey information on Bertie's emotional condition as David leaves the scene:

Table 2

AD Scripts

Spanish AD	Bertie se enciende un cigarrillo, preocupado. (Bertie lights a cigarette, worried)
Italian AD	Il duca rimane solo, cammina avanti e indietro, si guarda attorno agitato e si rifugia nel fumo. (The duke remains alone, walks back and forth, looks around, overwrought, and takes refuge in smoking)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the ADs of *The King's Speech*

The two versions differ in more than one aspect. From a quantitative viewpoint, the Spanish AD resorts to a single and concise clause to convey information, whereas the Italian version introduces four clauses – mainly connected through asyndeton – to provide a description of the visuals.

As regards the linguistic items, the Spanish version adheres to a merely objective style, which is meant to inform the audience on the character's actions. The AD revolves around the material process that mentions the act of lighting a cigarette ("se enciende"; lights), verbalizing part of the individual's "outer experience" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 170).

A more straightforward reference to Bertie's emotional condition is made through the adjective "preocupado" (worried), alluding to his concern through a strategy that is in line with the recommendations on the use of specific adjectives provided by the Spanish norm (AENOR, 2005, p. 5). Notwithstanding the use of the adjective overtly referring to Bertie's feelings, the informative, Q1 principle seems to prevail in the description, guiding the audience's attention towards the centrality of his actions. Taking into consideration the context – hence, the tension concocted by the dramatic extradiegetic music and the harshness of David's words, uttered in the previous frames – the audience's cooperation is required, in that it is left to the latter to infer that Bertie may be smoking in an attempt to release his tension.

The Italian AD adopts a relational attributive process that specifies the state in which the subject finds himself, signalling that Bertie is now alone ("Il duca rimane solo"; The duke remains alone). The introduction of the information at the beginning of the rendering perhaps manages to imitate the camera movement that now shows the main actor standing in the middle of the screen. Bertie's royal title is put in thematic position (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 64–67) in lieu of his proper name, in a plausible attempt to originate lexical variation in the character's naming, as advocated by Senza Barriere guidelines (Busarello & Sordo, 2011, p. 26). The following clause is connected to the previous one through asyndeton; it refers to Bertie's actions, expressed by material processes that allude to his moving back and forth ("cammina avanti e indietro"; walks back and forth).

Following is a behavioural process, to which an evaluative adjective is connected; the construction entails the mention of a nervous Bertie, who looks around, as if he did not know what to do in this circumstance ("Si guarda intorno, agitato"; looks around, overwrought).

The juxtaposition of a number of clauses referring to the character's behaviour introduces rhythm to the description and evokes the tense atmosphere that dominates the scene. The apex of the climax created by the four clauses is achieved in the last phrase, in which the figurative use of a material process directly alludes to Bertie taking refuge in smoking ("si rifugia nel fumo"; takes refuge in smoking). The latter may be considered a linguistic strategy falling within the range of concise but iconic descriptions that are specifically identified, as theorized in Q2. This is due to the fact that the brief reference to the character's attempt to take refuge in smoking seems to evoke the stereotypical behavioural pattern of smoking in the belief that it reduces stress and anxiety.

Even though the Italian script resorts to a considerable number of words, its construction seems to reproduce faithfully Bertie's helplessness regarding his brother's lack of concern. This linguistic strategy enables AD to emphasize the character's internal condition, as opposed to David's, thus underlining relevant features of his behaviour and, consequently, contributing to his characterization and enhancing the communicative aim associated with the scene.

4.2. Scene 2: The Party (00:58:40–01:00:59)

Notwithstanding his initial unwillingness, David succeeds his father to the throne but decides not to separate from Wallis. It soon becomes clear that the King's private life is not the only flaw in his rule: he only seems to care about mundanity, showing no concern towards political issues and foreign affairs, the worst being Hitler's threatening rise to power.


This is the main accusation Bertie makes to his brother during a party organized by the King and his partner in Balmoral. Bertie follows David into the wine cellar in the attempt to talk to him privately and berates him for adopting dissolute behaviour, privileging his private life over the country's welfare.

David seems rather indifferent to his brother's words and shows a sarcastic attitude during the whole conversation until, back at the party, he overtly accuses Bertie of taking elocution lessons to improve his articulatory abilities and dethrone him. David's accusation completely freezes Bertie who, defenceless, needs to lean against the wall to stay on his feet.

The communicative aim associated with the scene seems to be oriented towards showing opposing features in the main character's disposition. At the beginning, the duke looks authoritative and severe toward his brother, but as the latter doubts his loyalty, Bertie's attitude changes. In this case, too, the focus is on his reaction to his brother's words.

Table 3

The Party

Co-text (cinematography)	Distinctive facial features (Ekman's taxonomy)	Context (previous and following shot)
Visual: Bertie's medium close-up Audio: dialogue and intradiegetic sound	Raised curved eyebrows; long horizontal forehead wrinkles. Wide opened eyes.	Previous shot: Visual: medium close-up of Bertie speaking to David Audio: Intradiegetic music and dialogue
	 <i>Surprise</i>	Following shot:

Visual: Bertie’s medium close-up
Audio: Intradiegetic sound and dialogue.

Source: Author’s own elaboration

Bertie looks surprised by his brother’s accusation, to the point that he does not manage to speak. His reaction, expressed through his nonverbal behaviour, is verbalized differently in the Spanish and in the Italian AD scripts:

Table 4

AD Scripts

Spanish AD	Los dos se miran frente a frente. Bertie se bloquea. (They stare at each other. Bertie is locked)
Italian AD	Lo sdegno di Bertie si spegne. (Bertie’s disdain fades).

Source: Author’s own elaboration based on the ADs of *The King’s Speech*

The strategies whereby the scripts convey information on the character’s surprise seem, again, to differ. In the Spanish AD, a mental clause of perception signals the eye contact between the two brothers (“Se miran frente a frente”; They stare at each other), followed by the representation of Bertie’s reaction, expressed through a material process (“Bertie se bloquea”; Bertie is locked). In line with the Q1 principle, the choice made aims “not to postulate more entities than necessary” (Levinson, 1995, p. 102), faithfully verbalizing the visuals. The adoption of this strategy may be due to the intent to let viewers infer the nature of Bertie’s shock from the multimodal context. In fact, the auditive channel allows the audience to perceive that Bertie does attempt to utter words, but he does so in vain.

The Italian script adopts a highly expressive tone: a noun pertaining to the semantic field of sensation is indeed followed by the figurative use of a material process (“Lo sdegno di Bertie si spegne”; Bertie’s disdain fades). The description does not straightforwardly hint at Bertie’s surprise, but it seems to express concisely and meticulously the rapid change in his attitude, adhering to the Q2 principle. The severity of his reaction is to be contextualized taking into consideration the narration at the macro-level. At this phase of the story, Bertie is working with dedication to overcome his stammering problems; the speech therapy with Lionel seems to be at its highest peak, and on many occasions, Bertie realizes that he has improved a lot. In this circumstance, he speaks angrily to his brother, showing an unusual attitude; as soon as the King replies harshly to him, however, Bertie appears powerless again, as he does not manage to properly defend himself. Hence, in this scene, the main character’s reaction may be compared to Sisyphus’ desperation in perceiving the uselessness of his efforts. In light of this, the choice to resort to more evocative language may prove effective in

expressing more than what is verbally stated, providing succinct yet iconic information on Bertie's characterization.

4.3. Scene 3: The Accession Speech (01:11:50–01:13:30)


David's lascivious attitude soon becomes unacceptable, so the members of Parliament suggest that he abdicate in favour of Bertie. The latter accepts the role against his will, as he does not seem to feel at ease with the idea of reigning and having to speak in public frequently.

In the scene under analysis, Bertie is waiting in the Antechamber of St. James's Palace; he is soon to give his Accession Speech. He is in the full regalia of an Admiral of the Fleet's uniform, evidently tense. As his attendants invite him to access the Council Chamber, Bertie moves forward in the big space and appears before a group of people waiting for him, among whom Members of the Parliament and other High Commissioners also stand.

The atmosphere is tense and heavy; silence prevails as the only audible sound comes from intradiegetic noise made by the attendants who stand up as the King appears. Bertie's unease is conveyed through the alternance of close-ups and long shots that allow us to perceive the formality of the event and the audience's expectations. The design of the room also plays a role, as in front of the King many portraits of his predecessors symbolize an ideal paradigm he will have to adhere to.

Table 5

The Accession Speech

Co-text (cinematography)	Distinctive facial features (Ekman's taxonomy)	Context (previous and following shot)
Visual: Bertie's medium close-up Audio: intradiegetic sound	Short vertical forehead wrinkles; hard stare quality, mouth corners drawn back. Lips stretched.	Previous shot: Visual: full shot of the Council Chamber Audio: Intradiegetic sound
	 <i>Fear</i>	Following shot: Visual: Long shot of the Council Chamber Audio: Intradiegetic sound

Source: Author's own elaboration

The analysis of the source text signals that Bertie is frightened by the circumstance. In fact, despite the improvements in his articulatory abilities, the pressure he feels does not allow him to pronounce

words fluently. The AD scripts provided below refer to the frames in which Bertie apprehensively appears before his audience.

Table 6

AD Scripts

Spanish AD	Bertie se coloca frente al nutrido grupo de personas que le esperan en silencio. (Bertie stands before the large group of people who are silently waiting for him).
Italian AD	Il monarca, con fare regale, entra nella sontuosa sala dove è schierato l'intero Consiglio. Le movenze del re mostrano il suo desiderio di essere all'altezza del suo ruolo, i lineamenti tesi rivelano il suo disagio nel ricoprirlo. (The monarch, with a regal attitude, accesses the luxurious room in which all the members of the Council are lining up. The King's movements show his willingness to be capable of his new role, his nervous features disclose his discomfort in taking it up).

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the ADs of *The King's Speech*

From the comparison of the ADs, two different snapshots emerge. The Spanish version verbalizes the visuals through a predominantly informative linguistic rendering, compatible with Q1 principle. A material process is used to refer to Bertie standing in front of the members of the Council ("Bertie se coloca frente a [...]"; stands before [...]), leaving the reference to Bertie's mood unspoken. An implicit cue could be detected in the use of the adjective referring to the huge audience of spectators he has in front of him, as well as from the adverbial phrase alluding to them silently waiting for his speech ("Bertie se coloca frente al nutrido grupo de personas que le esperan en silencio"; Bertie stands before the large group of people who are silently waiting for him). In this case, the description of the context could lead the audience to indirectly grasp the pressure that the character may be feeling.

The brevity of the Spanish AD clashes with the Italian version, that opens by signalling the King's presence in the palace. The interpretive nature of the locution that qualifies the King's attitude in accessing the Chamber ("con fare regale", with a regal attitude), along with the evaluative adjective alluding to the formality of the event through the description of the space ("entra nella sontuosa sala dove è schierato l'intero Consiglio"; accesses the luxurious room in which all the members of the Council are lining up), seem to reproduce verbally the tense ambience dominating the scene. Also in this case, the main character is not mentioned by his first name, as would be the rule in standard, informative description; his royal title is used instead ("Il monarca"; the monarch).

In the following clause, the parallelisms made between the character's nonverbal behaviour and his emotional condition seem to instantiate the adoption of M principle in AD scripting. The references to Bertie's movements and facial features are indeed connected with his willingness and his discomfort. The two mental processes of perception ("mostrano"; show/ "rivelano"; disclose) relate to a variety of nouns pertaining to several semantic domains. The mentions of Bertie's attitude ("le

movenze del re"; the King's movements), of his mental state ("desiderio"; willingness/"disagio"; discomfort) and of his facial features ("lineamenti tesi"; nervous features) originate a prolix construction that brings to the surface the audio describer's evaluative stance ("Le movenze del re mostrano il suo desiderio di essere all'altezza [...], i suoi lineamenti tesi rivelano il suo disagio nel ricoprirlo"; The King's movements show his willingness to be capable [...], his nervous features disclose his discomfort in taking it up).

The narration in the analysed scene seems to guarantee the development of the story, as Bertie is actually called on to play a new role. This strategy also makes the character's inner conflict manifest, showing his unwillingness to ascend the throne. In the light of the representation of the fear the character may be feeling at this stage of the narration, the connection between Bertie's body language and his sensations brings to the surface the tacit meaning that spreads from the scene under analysis.

5. Discussion and Preliminary Conclusions

This paper has proposed a model for the analysis of the language used in AD when the characters' emotional condition is in focus. It has been applied to a contrastive analysis of Spanish and Italian AD fragments provided for three scenes of the drama film *The King's Speech*, as part of a wider research project. The study has examined words employed in the scripts in the attempt to find a connection between the communicative aim underlying narration in films and the linguistic features that could enhance them most in AD. The underlying premise is that, in order to guarantee access and enjoyment of the film, the style of AD should take into consideration the layers of meaning emanating from each scene.

The passages analysed have brought to light differences in the strategies of verbalization adopted in the compared ADs.

The Spanish version seems to favour informative-oriented approaches to message formulation, through which words are used in their literal meaning. Hence, in most of the cases, Q1 principle seems to prevail, regardless of the communicative value detected in the scenes analysed. This approach complies with the indications provided by the Spanish norm, which establishes that "any subjective point of view must be avoided" (AENOR, transl. in Rai et al., 2010, p. 17). The complexes of verbs, nouns, and adverbs analysed tend to make the character's actions explicit, providing a faithful transposition of the image into words. Information more straightforwardly related to the character's *psyche* is expressed through the use of evaluative adjectives that allude to their mood. This also seems in line with the recommendations of the norm, which favour specific adjectives over "those of an imprecise meaning" (Rai et al., 2010, p. 16).

Another plausible reason for the brevity of the Spanish AD may be content-related: taking into account the relevance of the soundtrack in modulating the dramatic tension throughout the film, the

conciseness of the script may reveal the intention to guarantee access to the visuals without drowning out the diegetic sounds.

The Italian in-house guidelines too, promote objectivity, recommending that audio describers “carefully abide by the visuals, avoiding plainly subjective renderings” (Busarello & Sordo, 2011, p. 26, our translation). Yet, the same guidelines state that the AD text should suit the style of the movie, in order not to interfere with the flow of emotions it conveys to its audience (Ibid.). It is probably for this reason that the Italian AD tends to provide more illustrative renderings ascribable to the combination of principles Q1, Q2, and M.

When a scene aims to introduce the character, the verbs used pertain to a variety of processes that instantiate both the actions *and* the attitude of the King. Some examples are the material processes used figuratively to convey information on the inner dimension of the character in highly dramatic moments, as well as the mental processes of perception employed to construct parallelisms between the King’s appearance and his feelings.

The use of nouns reveals a preference for lexical variation, as shown by the common names used in lieu of proper names. Another distinctive feature is detected in the selection of items that invoke an interpretive rendering of the visuals, made through references to the semantic domains of sensation and cognition, among others. The straightforward allusion to the character’s disdain, as well as to his desires and discomfort in scenes aimed at introducing his personality, may help to conjure up mental images related to his behaviour throughout the story, providing useful information on his characterization.

Like the Spanish script, the Italian AD uses adjectives to make the character’s mood explicit through a reduced number of words. Even though their employment is reasonably less frequent than that of verbs and nouns, adjectives qualify the character’s actions, giving prominence to *psyche* in scenes aimed at moving the story forward and introducing the character.

Finally, even though the reduced number of adverbs does not allow significant conclusions to be drawn, the cases detected seem to confirm the tendency of the Spanish version to resort to the objective verbalization of the visuals, while the Italian AD uses adverbial locutions to qualify the main character’s attitude.

The results of the analysis seem to confirm that the communicative aim of film scenes should be given due consideration in the light of AD. The enhancement of the implicit meanings originating from the interaction of several semiotic systems should indeed be given priority over the rigid distinction between totally denotative or exclusively connotative strategies of content verbalization in AD, in order to aim for more immersive and enjoyable experiences. Even though the discussion proposed has to be viewed in the light of an incipient stage of the investigation, it seems reasonable to reconsider the potential of words and structures for evoking meanings beyond the “photographic enumeration” (Orero & Vercauteren, 2013, p. 197), where necessary, in order to align language to the style of the film to be audio described.

We believe that more research is vital to supplement conclusions with consistent information on general tendencies shown by the compared languages in terms of the preferred style of description and potentially advantageous verbalization strategies. Empirical research should also be conducted, to investigate the users' preferences with respect to verbal renderings of distinct types of emotion. Finally, the application of the model to the analysis of other components of the narrative storyworld and of other film genres is essential to test its validity in assessing the potential of the linguistic resources that are used in AD.

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